

Analogy and Kenosis

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THE ESSAY THAT FOLLOWS deals with what, at first, appears to be a puzzle rather unrelated to kenosis, or to kenosis in the thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar: the analogy of being, what it “does” for Balthasar, and what it does not do. Nor is the essay a historical excavation of Balthasar’s metaphysical roots, though it does touch upon key influences on his thought. Nor indeed does the essay strive to make kenosis appear as the appositive solution—the idea “next to” analogy, responding to its problems under another name—for those places where the analogy of being surrenders its effective power. The relation between the two horizons, analogy and kenosis, is much more compounded than this. We will see that kenosis and its economic correlate, obedience, serve a distinct role in Balthasar’s thought, allowing him to pivot in directions that analogy cannot, or in any case does not, provide. Most markedly, kenosis assists Balthasar in moving decisively toward a theology of the Cross and the glorification of the world.

Beyond yet not apart from the effort of understanding Balthasar the historical figure, there is the task of understanding Balthasar’s work, and of rendering it understandable through interpretation. It is this latter effort that is the focus of the essay here, and in interpreting Balthasar, I will move both toward and away from his own resources in order to study anew the puzzle that Balthasar is and that he presents to his readers. The essay, therefore, proceeds in the following order: first as an exploration of key elements of Erich Przywara’s analogy of being, with essential contributions from Gustav Siewerth and Bernard Lonergan; then a study of Balthasar’s metaphysical frame as it shapes the conclusion of his theological aesthetics, the transition to his theological dramatics, and founds his theological logic; finally, an examination of where the *analogia entis* “fails” at the last,

whence kenosis rises in a provocative and complicated way.

In and Beyond the Analogy of Being

Przywara's analogy of being, as magisterially presented in *Analogia Entis* (1932), focuses on the "intrinsic breadth of tension proper to 'essence-in-and-beyond-existence.'" ¹ How he arrives here, which is to say how he arrives at an analogy that has no "ultimate" middle term, ² is fundamental to grasping what he does and not mean by "analogy." Przywara begins his argument with what he calls "meta-ontics" and "meta-noetics." In this, metaphysics faces a primordial decision, which is whether to ask about being with respect to the act of knowledge or being with respect to the object of knowledge. ³ Przywara does not oppose meta-ontics and meta-noetics to one another so much as relate them each to the other as invested, differently, in the puzzle of being. Broadly speaking, the first finds its lineage in figures like Aristotle and Plato and others of the "classical" tradition, while the second operates in philosophers like Kant and Heidegger. ⁴ Neither functions successfully without movement into the other, each moving from inverted directions, as it were. Meta-ontics asks about the categories of creaturely being "itself," and cannot help but work backward from this into questions about the knower of creaturely being; meta-noetics strives to understand consciousness, and yet transcends itself to ask what it is that consciousness knows. Both, for Przywara, can be brought together—yet not united or identified—in "the problem of the act." ⁵ Or rather, metaphysics as a whole, a creaturely metaphysics, is engaged with the problem of the act, from which and toward which these two dynamic queries (ontic and noetic) move.

With "the act," metaphysics as a discipline cleaves itself both to consciousness and to being, to the act of knowing and the being that is known in the act, to the knower that knows only in the act of knowing being. The meta-ontic and meta-noetic thus interpenetrate. "If consciousness and being are thus connected to one another in the problems of both act and of being," writes Przywara, "then the final problem of metaphysics must be just this mutual belonging—this 'to one another'—itself (which is

¹ Erich Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, trans. John Betz and David Bentley Hart, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014), 131.

² That is to say, the analogy of being is not a comparison, and it is not a comparison of two things to a third. This produces a "tension" in the *analogia entis*, which we will explore more in short order (see Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 134–36).

³ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 121.

⁴ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 120.

⁵ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 123.

to say, the structure of the 'world'), which subsists in this 'to one another.'"⁶ So, metaphysics is "about" three problems that coincide: act, being, and "to one another."⁷

It is important to realize that metaphysics, for Przywara, includes consciousness as much as it does being and act. "Even in the case of an extreme, predominantly meta-ontic method," writes Przywara, "the meta-noetic point of departure is unavoidable."⁸ The "to one another" of being thus describes not just mutual interdependence, but also transcendence; and not just transcendence in general, but also the transcendence of the thinking subject. That is to say, Przywara's dialectical tension between "ontics" (being) and "noetics" (consciousness) does not rest at a point of opposition, but rather the tension understands the two to mutually abide in one another. In this, Przywara approximates the same insight as Lonergan. For Lonergan, the structure of cognition and the structure of the universe are isomorphic.⁹ They resemble one another in their essential heuristic shape. Says Lonergan:

Just as cognitional activity is the becoming known of being, so objective process is the becoming of proportionate being. Indeed, since cognitional activity is itself but a part of this universe, so its heading to being is but the particular instance in which universal striving toward being becomes conscious and intelligent and reasonable.¹⁰

Here Lonergan invokes the metaphysical dictum that all created or proportionate being becomes. That is, being comes "to be" in a manner appropriate to each being that is. Lonergan casts this dictum in terms of being "becoming known" and being "heading to being," which Przywara calls "meta-noetics" and "meta-ontics." For both thinkers, being *is*, and *strives to be*.

Przywara's "to one another" is therefore somewhat mysterious until it receives this further development. On the one hand, with it Przywara refers to a rising ethical element inherent to metaphysics inasmuch as it makes

⁶ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 123.

⁷ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 124.

⁸ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 123.

⁹ Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 3, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 456–57.

¹⁰ Lonergan, *Insight*, 470.

way for and describes human action and the good.¹¹ “To one another” is in this sense “toward others.” At the same time, “to one another” is the self-transcending movement of creaturely being itself. Being not only is, but also becomes; being not only becomes, but rises toward finality.¹²

The mutuality of noetics and ontics is in one respect the measure of creaturely metaphysics as always pointed toward or tended toward a “beyond” that it itself, that creaturely being itself, does not strictly contain. Przywara names the “problem” of metaphysics as “essence in-and-beyond existence” (*Sosein in-über Dasein*), and with this formula he seeks to describe the continual movement toward transcendence, and it is a formula he nuances considerably as his argument progresses.¹³ In another respect, the mutuality of noetics and ontics has a distinctly aesthetic cast for Przywara. Essence and existence, whether considered under the shadow of consciousness or of act, have a “liminal,” and so creaturely, quality, and so also—in their distinction and unity in an existent being—the quality of becoming (as above). Creaturely being, suspended between being and non-being, bears in itself a teleological becoming, a going toward an “ideal,” a finality, which is beautiful.¹⁴ Becoming has an aesthetic character, not in any superficial sense, but rather in the sense that the truth and goodness of being, of a being, are unified. Thomas attributes to beauty a share in truth as well as goodness, an intellective quality as well as an appetitive, which Przywara relates to the ambiguous “circle” of *anima* and *res* in a thing.¹⁵ This requires some explanation.

If creaturely being is, in the particular case of any one being, an essence that is in existence, it is in existence as this or that being. At the same time, this or that being is becoming more (or less) this or that being. So, to perceive a being is at once to perceive its facticity as a thing and the “more” that it is, and that it is becoming. Here it is important to grasp that facticity and “more” are not, respectively, matter and spirit. In Thomistic terms, grasping the goodness of a being (for now we leave aside its intelli-

¹¹ Lonergan works out this notion of being in relation to the desire to know (see *Insight*, 373–75). The latter half of *Insight* spends its time unfolding its implications. Przywara relates the becoming of proportionate or creaturely being more directly to its stance before God (see *Analogia Entis*, 125–26, 157–59).

¹² Przywara’s (aesthetic) discussion of *energeia* and *morphe* reflects much of this (see *Analogia Entis*, 125–54, esp. 152–53). Truth itself participates in the ecstatic rhythm of created being: “truth, as what is ‘beyond history,’ makes itself known always only in history, but it reveals itself ‘in history’ as ‘beyond history’” (152).

¹³ It first appears on *Analogia Entis*, 124.

¹⁴ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 126.

¹⁵ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 128.

bility)¹⁶ also means grasping its formal cause. To be clear, the formal cause of a being is an explanation of that being's existence in terms of its "shape" (as in the shape of a statue), which at once describes qualities of a being's "whatness" (what it is) and its "whyness" (in terms of "in what way" it is what it is). Formal causality, says Lonergan, is the "intelligibility immanent in sensible data."¹⁷ If we extend that logic, we can see how, for Thomas, the grasp of formal causality is not a grasp of form apart from matter. It could not be, since "what" and "why" are not only grasped through the sensible, but also only known in the sensible. The shape of a statue does not sit apart from its stone. We can also see that the perception of formal causality is at once a grasp of a being and a grasp of a being as caused. A being at once "is" itself and points beyond itself (to its cause) by being. This is Przywara's *in-über*. These goodnesses, the "in" and the "beyond," are not identical goods, though they are related by similitude (united by a "circle"). So Thomas says in the *Summa theologiae*, which Przywara himself cites.¹⁸

As of yet, we are left with a partial explanation of the ambiguous aesthetic circle of *anima* and *res*. Przywara makes it clear that beauty is the unity of *anima* and *res*, the unity of a being that is *Sosein in-über Dasein*. But what of "becoming," and what of the "ideal"? That is, what of finality? First, Przywara describes how creaturely being, in its becoming, is also a "passing away." This passing away is both chronological in the sense of "now" and "then," and synchronic in the sense of a suspension, in any moment, between being and nonbeing. Here Przywara relies on Augustine's image of the "cascading torrent" of creaturely being. Or, if we were to put the Augustinian idea in the language of the *Confessions*, we would describe how the self—even the present self—is only known through memory. For Przywara, "it is just this 'passing away' that gives the 'whole' its peculiar resonance: just as a spoken work of art depends upon

¹⁶ Przywara offers a picture something like this, described according to "rhythm," in *Analogia Entis*, 157–58. Form points always to God, but in a back-and-forth between a priori and a priori metaphysics, between questions that overlap in their mutual immanence and transcendence. "For the question concerning God and the creature is, as we have seen, the final consequence of the question concerning the ground, end, and definition. . . . But the relation between the ground, end, and definition and the grounded, directed and determined . . . is a direct likeness of the question concerning the 'ultimate' ground, end, and definition."

¹⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 101–102.

¹⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] I, q. 6, a. 4; Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 128.

each verse, each syllable, each letter, ‘passing away.’”¹⁹ Beauty appears now in the familiar Balthasarian frame as “wholeness,” and here Przywara is particularly concerned with diachronic and synchronic wholeness. Przywara returns to the theme later in his text:

In that the beautiful is in an absolute sense the *perfectio* (in *ex perfectione universi*) and thus more or less convertible with God (which is what lies at the foundation of the peculiar demonism of the beautiful), it is also the maximal expression of creaturely frailty. For it constitutes itself in the ‘swinging back and forth of nothingness’ (of which music is the exemplar).²⁰

In other words, beauty has a double-sided relationship to finality, to the why and when of becoming, that is both “horizontal” and “vertical.” Beauty is for Przywara the transcendental wholeness of a being that is becoming in time according to its form, and beauty is the perfection of a being from above, or rather, according to its finality. This lends to beauty a marked ambiguity among the transcendentals, even for Przywara, who has a definite interest in naming beauty as a transcendental. At the same time, beauty’s suspense between transcendentality and the other transcendentals, its further suspense between object and soul, between being and becoming, is what renders beauty especially helpful for a creaturely metaphysics.²¹

Everywhere Przywara is concerned with the analogy of being as a “suspended” reality. This is not to say that analogy is precisely halfway between equivocity and pure identity as a kind of middle term, as a point on a map. Przywara is after a dynamic that is much more complex, and complexly difficult. If a “middle” is to be had—and here Barthian suspicions begin while also receiving a response—it is the simultaneously “dissimilar” and “proportionate” middle of the beautiful, held in rhythm between *apophysis* and *kataphasis*; held in rhythm, that is, by an analogical rhythm, which is in-and-beyond.²² Nor is Przywara the only metaphysician to detect this difficulty in analogy. As Siewerth insists, “in every

¹⁹ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 264–66. Przywara’s sources range from Augustine’s commentaries on the Psalms to *De vera religione*. In the *Confessions*, see books 10–11.

²⁰ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 286.

²¹ There is something of a mirror of this argument in Przywara’s later essay “Image, Likeness, Symbol, Mythos, Mysterium, Logos” (1956), also available in the translation of *Analogia Entis*.

²² Erich Przywara, “Metaphysics, Religion, Analogy,” in *Analogia Entis*, 409–29, at 419–21.

‘analogous’ case a complex structure of con-struction or ordering-together exists, the gathering and ordering of which is determined not by simple elements, moments or features, but by multi-elemental relations or relationships.”²³ Analogy is, in other words, something of a moving target, and quite richly so. For Przywara, this movement is “rhythm.”

Siewerth casts the suspension or tension of analogy in a more ontic-linguistic frame. “If one goes back to the verb (*αναλέγο*), one first encounters the meaning ‘picked up’ and ‘collected’ in a sense that is stronger than the simple *λέγειν*. Somehow the collected items are ‘taken in’ or ‘collected again,’ which evidently refers to a more unified meaning in the sense of ‘re-collecting.’”²⁴ In this thread of argument, analogy gathers together meanings and beings and relates them to one another. The tension is in the relations-between, which includes elements of equivocation and identity as well as analogy. In Siewerth’s parlance, this tension is an “interplay” (*Ineinander*), one comparable to (though not the same as) Przywara’s “rhythm,” in the sense that the “need for and mystery of a ‘philosophical language’ lie in this interplay of identity, analogy and equivocation in all possible words.”²⁵ Analogy is the unfolding tension of being and language as it becomes.

There is also a Lonerganian “suspendedness.” He arrives at it by a method somewhat different from either of our Germanophone interlocutors. For Lonergan, to be able to answer the question “What is being?” would require what he calls an “unrestricted act of understanding.” “Being is completely universal and completely concrete,” he argues; “apart from

²³ Gustav Siewerth, *Analogie des Seienden* (Einselden: Johannes, 2003), 10: “Zugleich zeigt sich, daß in jeder ‘analogen’ Sache ein komplexes Bau- oder Ordnungsgefüge vorliegt, dessen Fügung und Ordnung nicht durch einfache Elemente, Momente oder Merkmale, sondern durch mehrgliedrige Bezüge oder Verhältnisse bestimmt ist.”

²⁴ Siewerth, *Analogie*, 9: “Geht man auf das Tätigkeitswort (*αναλέγο*) zurück, so trifft man zunächst auf die Bedeutung von ‘Auflesen’ und ‘Sammeln’ in einem gegenüber dem einfachen *λέγειν* verstärkten Sinn. Irgendwie wird das Gesammelte ‘aufgenommen’ oder ‘wieder gesammelt,’ was offenbar auf eine einigendere Zuordnung im Sinne einer ‘Ver-sammlung’ verweist.”

²⁵ Siewerth, *Analogie*, 15. “Daraus ergibt sich für das Wesen der Sprache, daß ihre isolierten Wortbedeutungen allesamt von Äquivokationen und Analogien oder auch von ‘äquivoken Analogie-bezügen’ durchwaltet sind, deren verwirrende Vielfalt sich mit dem Beziehungsreichtum des analogisierenden Denkens steigert und nur durch die angestrengteste Sorgfalt in ihrer beirrenden Macht eingegrenzt und überwunden werden kann. Not und Geheimnis einer ‘philosophischen Sprache’ liegen in diesem Ineinander von Einsinnigkeit, Analogie und Äquivokation aller möglichen Worte beschlossen.”

it, there is nothing; and so knowledge of what being is cannot be had in anything less than an act of understanding everything about everything.”²⁶ Human beings, though they have an unrestricted desire to understand being, do not have the capacity to make an unrestricted act of understanding. The idea of being, therefore, is absolutely transcendent.²⁷ Proportionate being, especially proportionate rational being, is thus “suspended” in the unrestricted desire to know and its inability to know all things unrestrictedly (this would be the way God knows).

Perhaps more appropriately, given how Siewerth and Przywara both wrote and revised in the 1960s while founding their works on their efforts from previous decades, the Lonergan of the 1940s also inscribes human knowing with a similar suspension.²⁸ In this iteration, human beings have two ends, a natural and a supernatural one. Both potencies (toward an end) are “in” human nature inasmuch as the first is natural or proportionate, and the other is obediential and disproportionate (that is, supernatural).²⁹ This is not unlike Przywara’s formulation of the problem.³⁰

With an eye to Balthasar, there are some aspects of the Przywara “beautiful” that require shading-in. One of the most important elements of beauty that we have yet to view is its relation to the ethical, and thus to the good. Przywara links both the true and the good to the “circle” between *anima* and *res*, with the truth of being tending toward *anima*, and the goodness of being tending toward *res*. To put it another way, the truth of being, of any proportionate being, tends toward knowing, which is immaterial; the goodness of being tends toward being-made, toward ethics.³¹ These are, for Przywara, “opposite directions.”³² Beauty, with its peculiarly “suspended” quality, its circle, tends toward both, and so—along with the one—assures the unity of the transcendentals.³³

This would mean that Przywara’s metaphysical structure allows for finality not only in the sense of becoming according to a form, but also in the sense of a “fittingness,” a consonance, of form that is at once beautiful and good. It is a peculiarity in Przywara that Balthasar adapts and

²⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 666.

²⁷ Lonergan, *Insight*, 667.

²⁸ Bernard Lonergan, “De ente supernaturali,” in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 19, *Early Latin Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), esp. 139–149.

²⁹ Lonergan, “De ente supernaturali,” 147, 149.

³⁰ See John Betz, “Translator’s Introduction” in Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 49–50.

³¹ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 127–28.

³² Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 129–30.

³³ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 128.

rearranges, perhaps most obviously in the interplay between the subjective evidence and objective evidence in *Glory of the Lord*, but particularly in *Theo-Logic*. In the first volume, for example, Balthasar's interest in phenomenology and his tutelage under Przywara offer themselves as a transfiguration of Thomas Aquinas along the lines of the consciousness of the knowing subject. Balthasar is more thorough, or at least more descriptive, than Przywara in his attachment to phenomenological subjectivity, but Przywara's aesthetic rhythm of ontics and noetics (and polarity) is shot through the volume. Below we will see in more detail how Balthasar tries to work out a relationship between beauty and finality specifically in *Theo-Logic* and beyond, a move that is the similitude of Przywara's inasmuch as he relates beauty to finality, but dissimilar in its unfolding.

In perhaps more straightforwardly Thomist terms, Lonergan attributes "the dynamic aspect of the real" to finality. This is a "directed" dynamism, which Lonergan uses to describe how potency moves to act (dynamism), and how form, potency, and act are a unity (directed), and yet "just what that dynamic direction may prove to be is a further question."³⁴ Here Lonergan clarifies a common misnomer or confusion between final causation and formal causation. He explains: "The directed dynamism of finality is not determinate in the more obvious meanings of that term. . . . On the contrary, the essential meaning of finality is that it goes beyond such determinations."³⁵ Which is to say, a simplistic relationship between being and becoming presumes an exact unfolding to "some determinant individual or species or genus," and in doing so misunderstands finality. Proportionate being comes to be in increasingly complex and more integrated manifolds, which, while available entirely to the knowledge of God, are not available in their entirety to the knowledge of human beings. Here Lonergan returns to his own version of suspendedness, as he points out that—even should we posit human knowing as somehow the "height" of created being—the desire to know remains unrestricted, and so surpasses any supposed limit or height of possibility.³⁶

A Balthasarian iteration of this same problem focuses on the mysteriousness of being, a mysteriousness that Balthasar anchors with the ecstatic quality of beauty. In *Theo-Logic*, Balthasar describes how being communicates its "index" and "value," or its truth and goodness, which co-inhere as transcendentals. The "ground" of this communication is "bottomless" or "groundless." "All truth," writes Balthasar, "goes back to this groundless

³⁴ Lonergan, *Insight*, 472.

³⁵ Lonergan, *Insight*, 473.

³⁶ Lonergan, *Insight*, 472–74.

ground.”³⁷ Much as in Przywara, beauty appears at this crossroad to both encapsulate and further the argument. Balthasar associates beauty in particular with the “groundlessness” of being, with the mystery of being, which cannot be fully grasped by a created mind. Beauty is “the immediate manifestation of the never-to-be-mastered excess of manifestation contained in everything manifest.”³⁸ Beauty also testifies to the transcendence of the good and the true, to their simultaneity, and beauty stands between them as a guarantee of their unity and of their mysterious excess.³⁹ Balthasarian finality receives a sketch along largely phenomenological grounds as he roots the becoming of being in the becoming of the free subject who knows and wills, who desires to know in an “unlimited” way, corresponding to the limitlessness of being.⁴⁰ (Here is a rather remarkable agreement with Lonergan.) Balthasar wants to “end” his metaphysics with love, which again supports a finality that is only God’s to fully know. But for Balthasar, this is cause for the subject’s free surrender to God, who is in himself, in his Trinitarian life, “groundless surrender.”⁴¹

As this extended discursus on metaphysics draws to a close, it bears saying that I am by no means insisting that Przywara, Siewerth, Lonergan, and Balthasar conceive of metaphysics identically. That is rather not the point. I am using their consonance with one another in order to understand the analogy of being not simply more accurately, but also more complexly. Their sounding-together leads to understanding, an understanding more nearly captured by the word *connaissance*: knowledge as knowing-together (as in its Latin root, *cognosco*).

Our argument thus far has explored Przywara’s analogy alongside some of its correlates. A fundamental law of analogy is “essence in-and-beyond existence.” This ecstatic rhythm pairs together human knowing and objective being, and their attendant philosophical traditions, without collapsing the two. Such a turn toward the knower is also visible in the likes of Lonergan through different conceptual mechanisms, but in both Przywara and Lonergan (and Siewerth), the creature ends up in “suspension” before the creator. For Przywara in particular—and Balthasar follows this impulse—the suspended-ness of a creaturely metaphysics has a particularly aesthetic

³⁷ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory*, vol. 1, *The Truth of the World* [TL I], trans. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 221–23.

³⁸ Balthasar, TL I, 223.

³⁹ Balthasar, TL I, 224.

⁴⁰ Balthasar, TL I, 270.

⁴¹ Balthasar, TL I, 272.

cast, with respect to the wholeness of being and with respect to the becoming of being. With the above established, in what follows we will begin to ask questions about these various metaphysical outlines when they fall under the light of Christology.

Metaphysical Analogy and Christology

Balthasar follows his mentor Przywara in associating the analogy of being with a Chalcedonean Christology. They formulate the association somewhat distinctly. My goal here is not to entirely resuscitate either Balthasar's or Przywara's argumentation, summaries of which can be found elsewhere.⁴² Here I will sketch some relevant features of the association, especially those elements that are important to the latter argument of this essay.

The *analogia entis* is, as we have seen, an attempt to describe the infinite disproportion between God and the world while acknowledging an analogous similarity that is suffused with the mystery of its disproportion. The incarnate Son, who is himself the unconfused union of the creaturely and the divine, bears in himself this mystery of likeness and unlikeness in the relation between his two natures. This association of analogy and Christology bears with it some attendant dangers. I do not wish to repeat myself, so a quotation in which I summarize Balthasar's position will hopefully suffice:

The Incarnation cannot be made identical with the analogy of being, or God and the world are collapsed into a single horizon. Nor can the analogy of being serve as the necessary foundation for the Incarnation, or Barth was right all along: the analogy of being is really the single principle upon which Catholicism rests regardless of Christ. The Incarnation can *fulfill* the analogy of being, but not in such a way that the Incarnation is made necessary to created being or created being made necessary to the Incarnation. We are left with von Balthasar's answer, as expressed in his *Epilogue* to the trilogy: the *analogia entis* is "made present [*gegenwärtigende*] in Christ." Thus, "the essential polarity of worldly Being, whose poles can only be understood through each other," that is, the polarity that characterizes the analogy of being and every analogous rela-

⁴² For Przywara, see especially Jonathan M. Ciraulo, "Divinization as Christification in Erich Przywara and John Zizioulas," *Modern Theology* 32, no. 4 (2016): 479–503; for Balthasar, see Anne M. Carpenter, "Measuring Metaphysics," in *Theo-Poetics: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Risk of Art and Being* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 82–116.

tionship immanent to creation, “inevitably points to an identity as ground—which however . . . cannot be constructed from the poles themselves.” The Incarnation illuminates the analogy of being because the two are not the same.⁴³

Elsewhere, Balthasar calls the Incarnation the “concrete *analogia entis*.”⁴⁴ It is important, however, to recall the above risks in a claim such as this. Essentially, if the Incarnation is the concrete analogy of being in a non-analogous sense, then the Incarnation is not only inevitable, but also non-gratuitous. Balthasar’s wish, alongside the recovery of the analogy of being, is to protect the absolute freedom of God to decide to save the world, and preserving this freedom requires this caution of ours. Others who fall differently on the Catholic or Orthodox spectrum of possibilities with respect to the Incarnation, or who follow Maximus the Confessor distinctly, might well respond differently to the difficulty, or to the difficulty of analogy, or they might see no difficulty at all.⁴⁵ Balthasar’s interest in Barth and his hesitance toward Hegel at least suggest that calling the Incarnation the “concrete *analogia entis*” is a difficulty that *ought* to shadow our understanding of his work.

It is not entirely clear how Balthasar means the claim, nor is it clear that it is to be taken as his central metaphysical claim with respect to Chalcedonian Christology. It is certainly true that Balthasar is deeply invested in and continually speculative about the unconfused, unmixed, undivided, unseparated union of natures in Christ. He clearly maps much of his understanding of the analogy of being onto this union, inasmuch as its proportions and disproportions might model the relation between the natures. This makes sense in a particularly lucid way now that we have studied analogy through the eyes of three other interlocutors: Przywara, Siewerth, and Lonergan.

As in Siewerth’s brief but critical point, analogy is not related in identical ways to the things that it relates to. This would mean, in the Incarnation, that we do not have a simple or single formulation of the relation between the two natures of Christ. Or, in terms of Przywara’s “rhythm,”

⁴³ Carpenter, “Measuring Metaphysics,” 101.

⁴⁴ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: A Theological Dramatics*, vol. 3, *The Person in Christ*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 222.

⁴⁵ Jordan Daniel Wood has troubled the whole matter of the degree to which Balthasar may borrow, or appropriately borrows, Maximus; see “Creation Is Incarnation: The Metaphysical Peculiarity of the *Logoi* in Maximus the Confessor,” *Modern Theology* 34, no. 1 (2018): 82–102.

the movement in-and-beyond of our questions about created being is itself a moving viewpoint depending on the questions at hand. So too, then, with respect to the questions we might ask about the relation between Jesus's humanity and his divinity, at least as natures. Or, to borrow from our discussion of form and finality, we might say that the *Gestalt* or form of Christ presents us with a unique identity between form and finality, at least inasmuch as the "what" of Christ is also a salvific "for what purpose." In this specific way, Incarnation is salvation.⁴⁶ But, to put it provocatively, this does not mean that analogy is also salvific. *How* it is not, not *whether* it is not, is really the question that matters, and it is one of this essay's essential questions. Balthasar does not entirely follow his mentor, and as we will see in more detail below, the Balthasarian use of the analogy of being has its limits even in his own thought.

Given the above considerations, it seems reasonable to say that the formulation "the analogy of being is *gegenwärtigende* in the Incarnation" is (at least provisionally) the nearer claim. That the analogy of being is "made present" is not so much a softening of Balthasar's position as it is a more precise grasp of its relative meaning—and it *is* a highly relativized meaning. It is entirely about the relativity that obtains between the two natures, the radical disproportion and simultaneous similarity that describes the relation between the two natures *as natures*. Thus their relation, the relation of creation to Creator, is made present in the Incarnation. It is not a description of their union, as if the analogy of being were a ready-made tool by which divinity and humanity were brought together. Nor is it a description of the single subject of the Incarnation. This latter point will be important later.

The total bearing that "concrete *analogia entis*" or "analogy of being made present" has on Balthasar's work is a genuinely open question. The particular shape that I offer here seems, however, to be plausible. It also gives a peculiar shading to the disagreement, or at least difference, between Balthasar's and Przywara's Christologies. John Betz characterizes the former as wary of the degree of the latter's apophaticism, while Przywara suspects Balthasar's kataphaticism: "To judge from their correspondence, . . . Przywara concluded that Balthasar's aesthetics moved too much in the opposite direction of his *analogia entis*, that is, not toward an ever greater

⁴⁶ This may or may not modify a critique of Balthasar that has him far too strongly emphasizing the Cross. That remains something of an open question. Nevertheless, for something like this logic, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory*, vol. 2, *Truth of God* [TL II], trans. Adrian J. Walker (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 281–86.

dissimilarity *in infinitum*, and thus into mystery, but toward the greater similarity . . . Von Balthasar expresses a concern that the rhythm of the *analogia entis* is ultimately so dynamic as to compromise the givenness of the form of revelation.⁴⁷

For Przywara—using the *Summa*—the human being at first appears as the “middle” in the structure of created being, as material and spiritual, as “permeable in its spiritual life to the pure spirits who govern the corporeal.”⁴⁸ Yet, for Przywara’s Thomas, it is “*God* who is the ‘middle’: as the one in whom alone all multiplicity and all correlated antitheses are one.”⁴⁹ Przywara is quick to deny that this sense of “middle” is identical with the personal revelation of God as mediator in Christ. He is nevertheless strong in his insistence that “Christ appears as *the* reality of the way in which God-the-middle takes up the All [of creaturely being].”⁵⁰ Or, as Przywara clarifies, “what is meant by the concrete form that ‘God as middle’ assumes in the mediator is: ‘oneness with the infinite above-and-beyond’. . . as a ‘oneness with (through the vicarious bearing of) the nothingness of sin.’”⁵¹ It should be noted again that, similar to Balthasar, Przywara does not identify the analogy of being with the Incarnation. Still less could this be possible given Przywara’s propensity to emphasize the “beyond” in the “in-and-beyond” of analogy. Przywara’s apophatic rhythm, to borrow from Betz’s characterization, nevertheless enables his courage in associating the “middle” of analogy and the mediator, Christ.

It is arguable that Przywara’s insights, especially those in the latter half of *Analogia Entis*, receive some kind of fulfillment in Balthasar’s “relativized” analogical, Christological position. That is, Balthasar’s position offers a reconciliation of two essential claims that Przywara makes at the end of his most famous text. The first claim is as follows: “God is not truly recognized as God,” says Przywara, “until we become aware of him not merely as that ‘being than which none greater can be thought’ (*ens quo maius cogitari non potest*), but as that ‘being who is beyond anything that can be thought’ (*aliquid supra id quod cogitari potest*).”⁵² Thus Przywara sides with Thomas rather than Anselm, and in doing so supports a radically apophatic foundation for a “creaturely metaphysics.” The analogy of being appears here as well—and this is his second major claim—as the

⁴⁷ See Betz, “Translator’s Introduction,” 113n312.

⁴⁸ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 298.

⁴⁹ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 299.

⁵⁰ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 301.

⁵¹ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 302.

⁵² Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 289.

principle that is “the very *potentia oboedientialis* that stands in immediate relation to the God of supernature.”⁵³

To expand this in somewhat more detail: for Przywara, the analogy of being is a theological position as much as, if not more so than, it is a philosophical one.⁵⁴ Thus the analogy of being, which is about *creatures*, stands “in immediate relation” to the God who utterly transcends it (who is utterly not a creature). Przywara does not entrap God in analogy so much as lay created being at God’s feet. Were we to put this in Lonerganian terms, we could recall his position (as above) in *De ente supernaturale*, where he argues that the desire for a supernatural vision of God is “in” human nature as an obediential potency. Or, perhaps nearer to Przywara, we could cite Maurice Blondel’s position in *L’Action*, where the action immanent to a creature is inexplicable without positing a theory not of grace, but of the supernatural (whence grace).⁵⁵ Przywara claims this sort of relation in a fundamental way for *all* of proportionate being:

The *analogia entis* shows itself to be—in the strongest sense—a “creaturely principle” and, thus, as consisting in the illimitable openness of the movement of becoming. . . . It is the principle of a metaphysics that measures out the “all” of the creaturely: not because this metaphysics deduces the all from this principle, but because it opens itself to the all in this principle. It is the principle of a metaphysics that sees the all as ordered to God as its origin and defining end: not because it takes this principle to comprehend the all from the vantage of God, but because its openness allows it to experience the all as pointing through and beyond itself to God.⁵⁶

Here we have a recapitulation of all that we have learned from Przywara: the analogy of being is a theological position, one that does not describe the “all” of creation except to describe its relation beyond itself, its transparency to the creator.⁵⁷

Theo-Logic I repeats this basic image of creation, but Balthasar is less cosmic in scope as he sticks more nearly to the experience of the contin-

⁵³ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 311.

⁵⁴ Ciraulo, “Divinization as Christification,” 488.

⁵⁵ Maurice Blondel, *Action: Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice* (1893), trans. Oliva Blanchette (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 358–62.

⁵⁶ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 310.

⁵⁷ Cf. Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 312.

gent knower. Balthasar describes created being's transparency to its creator variously as an "infinity" in created being that cannot be mastered and that points beyond itself,⁵⁸ as a hiddenness that remains in being in its very unconcealment,⁵⁹ and as an openness or opening beyond created being itself.⁶⁰ Balthasar does not begin with the "in-and-beyond" of the meta-ontic and meta-noetic, but he does—in his own version of *De veritate*—bind together Przywara's insights with a phenomenology of the knower of truth. "To be sure," Balthasar writes, "truth as a whole is in principle unveiled (because all truth is truth), yet it remains infinitely transcendent and veiled in its totality. For this very reason, it awakens in the knower a yearning for *more*."⁶¹ This is something of a Balthasarian "unrestricted desire to know," since the knower desires to know all of being "as a whole," and yet cannot attain a (divine) view of the whole of being.

One of Balthasar's most Przywaran moments early in *Theo-Logic* appears when he posits a "shifting middle" within the reason of the created subject, a kind of "balancing act" between reason as measure/judgment and as reception/perception.⁶² Przywara's in-and-beyond receives a new calibration, as it were. The in-and-beyond of analogy receives attention not as objective/subjective, ontic/noetic approaches to being—though indeed that comes later—but as an interpenetration that occurs within the consciousness of the knowing subject. Truth is the measure of an object, the measure of a being within a consciousness, but both desire (for more) and the reception of a being that remains "other" than the knower press consciousness beyond itself in its own knowing. To put it another way, Balthasar transfigures the "rhythm" of analogy along the lines of consciousness.⁶³

It is Przywara who says that "the mystery of unity with and in the tri-personal God . . . becomes the site of the most formal manifestation of the distance between God, the creator, and the creature."⁶⁴ Przywara insists, as we saw, that God cannot be known *in se*; he also insists that created being bears an obediential potency toward the transcendent

⁵⁸ Balthasar, *TL* I, 87–88.

⁵⁹ Balthasar, *TL* I, 206–16.

⁶⁰ Balthasar, *TL* I, 39.

⁶¹ Balthasar, *TL* I, 40.

⁶² Balthasar, *TL* I, 42.

⁶³ He does this especially in *TL* I, 267–70; cf. *TL* II, 81–86, which maps out a relationship with being similar to Przywara's "circle" and borrows heavily from his "rhythm," but Balthasar with particular attention toward Christology and continual reference to the experience of the knower.

⁶⁴ Przywara, *Analogia Entis*, 354–55.

God. That is, the “all” of being ecstatically moves in-and-beyond before the utterly unknowable God. Przywara thus strives for a balance, as it were, between the absolute transcendence of God and the transparency of being to God. Such a balance is maintained when Balthasar relates the two natures of Christ to one another, not as if the relation itself were the mysterious hypostatic union of the natures, but as if the relation of creation to Creator is made present in the proportion and disproportion of humanity to divinity. Whether made present or made concrete or manifested, analogy obtains “already” before the Incarnation, and yet, with the Incarnation, does not determine the inexpressible and unique union of natures in Christ.

But Przywara may well be more radical than this. For him, the mysterious rhythm of analogy, the “ever greater” in-and-beyond of Lateran IV, “alone can be said constitute religion’s formal law.”⁶⁵ That is, the creature as such is caught up in the suspendedness of analogy, and it is ever and always present, even in mystical experience. It describes the relationship between metaphysics and religion as well.⁶⁶ Przywara adapts Walter Otto’s work on Greek religion and myth in order to situate the analogical Logos of philosophy, which oscillates between the unveiling of Logos and a retreat to myth and mystery, to symbol, and back again in a continual forward and reversed arpeggio of sorts.⁶⁷ This is how Przywara can rise to a radical apophaticism, where even union with Christ is a kind of darkness of ever-greater difference.

Balthasar is less willing to follow Przywara’s radicality, or it may be more accurate to say he is less willing to follow how it plays out in Przywara, a full account of which is outside of our scope in this essay. Beyond a requisite deference to Barth, there are systematic reasons for this Balthasarian hesitance, as we will see below. Even as Balthasar works hard to appropriate Przywara’s understanding of the analogy of being, and indeed works to follow Przywara’s Christological use of the analogy of being, there is also a note of caution in Balthasar’s effort. That is, Balthasar’s dialogue with Barth has him framing the metaphysical claim with great care. Notice, in *Theo-Logic*:

⁶⁵ Przywara, “Metaphysics, Religion, Analogy,” 424.

⁶⁶ Przywara, “Metaphysics, Religion, Analogy,” 427–28. It also describes the relationship between Augustine and Thomas, who are ciphers for dynamics something like the meta-noetic and meta-ontic.

⁶⁷ Przywara, “Metaphysics, Rhythm, Analogy,” 460–62.

God's immanencing into the world in Jesus Christ can be neither constructed (Hegel) nor postulated (Baius) starting from the world. Precisely in John, where the world has already been created in the Logos and fashioned in conformity to him, this immanencing is received as pure "grace" (Jn 1:14, 16–17). But in light of the foregoing discussion, we realize that the incarnate Word comes into "his own property" (Jn 1:11). Hence, he does not travel merely into a foreign land (as Karl Barth says) but into a country whose language he knows, . . . the ontological language of creatureliness as such.⁶⁸

Here Balthasar explicitly recalls the language of Lateran IV, especially in the preceding pages, while never quite announcing that Jesus is the concrete *analogia entis*. This is perhaps an attempt to preserve the grace of the Incarnation, or it is governed by Balthasar's interest in beauty's relationship to language and image, or both. Or, in yet another possibility, it might be an attempt to find a way "between" Augustine and Hegel.⁶⁹

We might say that Przywara's musicality is what allows him to align the analogy of being so closely with Christology, and that Balthasar is not in blanket agreement with this Przywara's "rhythm." Understood wrongly, the association of the analogy of being with Christology results in a pan-Christ that neither Barth nor, indeed, Przywara desire. Balthasar, with "analogy of being made present" in particular, thus relativizes some of the stronger apparent *implications* of Przywara's Christological claims with respect to the analogy of being, introducing his own apophaticism about how far rhythm can in fact carry a Christology.⁷⁰ We will see in the next section how Balthasar does not abandon analogy so much as he pivots to a different set of insights and methods. Perhaps this difference between the two men, to whatever degree it is in fact a difference, helps to explain—while not entirely explaining—a turn in Balthasar's *Glory of the Lord* that I will sketch below.

⁶⁸ Balthasar, *TL* II, 84; cf. 81–83.

⁶⁹ Balthasar, *TL* II, 85.

⁷⁰ Here I speak only of implications with respect to Przywara. A full grasp of his Christological analogy has yet to really make its way into the Anglophone world, and it would do us and Przywara no good here to over-characterize Przywara. Nor indeed do I mean to be conclusive about this difference between Balthasar and Przywara so much as to notice it, as Betz has already done, and to try to make sense of it.

Concrete *Analogia Entis* and Kenosis

We are thus left to consider how Balthasar's iteration of analogy operates to one extent or another in his reflections on kenosis, most especially the kenosis of the incarnate Son in the economy of salvation, which is undergirded by the eternal *Ur-kenosis* of the Father in the immanent Trinity. We must also genuinely wonder what Balthasar's "concrete *analogia entis*" (or *analogia entis* "made present") does and does not do in his functional Christology.

It is already notable that, in his most important descriptions of Christological kenosis, especially the kenosis of the Cross, the analogy of being is operant in the form of a distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity. This is most readily apparent in his discussion of the glorification of Christ in volume 7 of *Glory of the Lord*: "We must now simultaneously see and follow two lines, that of the dispensation (in the work of salvation) and that of the Trinity (in the unity of Father and Son)."⁷¹ Balthasar often speaks in terms of both lines, economic and immanent, which at times seems to entangle the eternal God in chronological time.⁷² But this would be to fail to take Balthasar at his word, which, while by no means a simple word, is a precise and consistent one.

Before we can see how the above is so, we need to move backward a couple of steps to articulate Balthasar's theology of kenosis in general. In his volume on the New Testament, Balthasar frames kenosis by first insisting on the uniqueness of the "subject" in whom there is an encounter with the totality of the world's sin, a subject who also makes effective God's saving will for the world. For Balthasar, this subject has to be God, since in no other case can the world's "no" and God's will "collide" with one another without remainder.⁷³ He insists, then, that the subject of the kenotic "becoming sin" of the Incarnate One, and the subject of its necessary antecedent, the kenosis of the Incarnation itself, is the preexistent Son.⁷⁴ Here Balthasar appears to again mire himself in a mythic God struggling against the cords of history. Notice, however, that Balthasar's goal at the moment is (1) to establish that the Incarnation and Cross involve "the assuming of the concrete human destiny," rather than crea-

⁷¹ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 7, *Theology: The New Covenant* [GL VII], trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 249.

⁷² See Steffen Lösel, "Unapocalyptic Theology: History and Eschatology in Balthasar's Theo-Drama," *Modern Theology* 17, no. 2 (2001): 201–25.

⁷³ Balthasar, GL VII, 211.

⁷⁴ Balthasar, GL VII, 212.

tureliness itself, and (2) to describe how the subject, not the natures, of the Incarnation, how *that* subject, is the Son.⁷⁵ He is speaking of the subject of the economy, the Son, who is also the eternal Son. If Balthasar is to tread the delicate line between history and myth, he does so—when speaking in this way—to preserve the unity of divine agency, and the unity of the Incarnation. If this logic is, in its reference to natures/subject, rather Chalcedonian, then its emphasis on the single subject of the Incarnation is also rather Cyrillian.

Note that the analogy of being is still operant in the above logic. For Balthasar to insist that God assumes human destiny rather than creatureliness *in se* maintains God's status as God—that is, as transcendent. His explicit invocation of the two-natures doctrine of Chalcedon shows his continued awareness of Christ as concrete *analogia entis*, especially as we studied it in the previous section. The character of what he says shifts according to whether Balthasar is considering the natures or the subject of the Incarnation.

Balthasar next moves to incorporate Mikhail Bulgakov's understanding of kenosis. Much could be said here, and its most important qualities have been indicated by Jennifer Newsome Martin among others.⁷⁶ I wish to add some notes about the metaphysical framework supporting Balthasar's argument in this section of volume 7 of *Glory of the Lord*, and I will also correlate the argument to others he makes elsewhere.

The *Ur-kenosis* of the Father that is the begetting of the Son finds a first expression in proportionate being through creation itself, and in “the second and truest kenosis” of the Incarnation, which Balthasar describes as a single, ever-intensifying or ever-more manifest event. Even here, Balthasar urges the reader to remember that “no necessity” of creation, and no “law,” can demand kenosis of the Creator.⁷⁷ At one and the same time: analogy strides its way through Balthasar's logic in order to insist that the Incarnation cannot be merely derived from created being, *and* Balthasar strides onward to posit something more. What God *did* do in history, Balthasar argues, shows us that “God could do what he did in reality do, and . . . his self-abasement and self-emptying were no contradiction of his

⁷⁵ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 212; see also 216–17, 223–24.

⁷⁶ Jennifer Newsome Martin, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Critical Appropriation of Russian Religious Thought* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 185–94; Martin, “The ‘Whence’ and ‘Whither’ of Balthasar's Gendered Theology: Rehabilitating Kenosis for Feminist Theology,” *Modern Theology* 31, no. 2 (2015): 211–34; Katy Leamy, *The Trinity: Hans Urs von Balthasar and His Sources* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2015).

⁷⁷ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 214.

own essence.”⁷⁸ The kenosis of the Son in the economy of salvation therefore has to be meaningful in terms of the immanent Trinity. Balthasar then sets out to show how this can be the case.

The economic kenosis of the Son expresses itself in history as obedience, as the theandric willing of salvation unto the last breath and even beyond the last. This is possible in Jesus’s humanity “because obedience to God and waiting upon his will belong to the fundamental structure of the creature.” Yet Jesus’s kenotic obedience is not simply creaturely obedience; it is also a unique kenosis available only to him as Son of the Father, available by virtue of the kenosis of the Father that the Son is forever the relation to.⁷⁹ Salvation is not, then, the unveiling of creaturely being as it “already” is or was to be; it is not salvation as some kind of inner form of proportionate being. Salvation is the unveiling of the Triune God who freely creates, and who freely saves.⁸⁰

Jesus’s obedience extends beyond death into being-dead, in total solidarity with sinners,⁸¹ gathering them together as they cannot gather one another,⁸² as he endures the *krisis* of divine judgment not only “then” but also for all time.⁸³ For Balthasar:

This act of seizing fate and destiny, and wrenching them out of their axes, takes place in the deepest silence of death. The Word of God has become unheard, and no message forces its way upwards to speak of its journey through the darkness: for it can do this only as not-word, as not-form, through a not-land, behind a sealed stone.⁸⁴

We ought to notice, even at this last aesthetic image of the Crucified One in silent solidarity with the dead, that Balthasar is eager to reiterate the involvement of the Trinity. This Trinitarianism is not only at the level of appropriating various economic deeds to one or another of the Persons, though it does involve that. It is also Trinitarian in the insistence that the *single* divine will of the Triune God undergirds the entire momentum of

⁷⁸ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 215.

⁷⁹ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 217.

⁸⁰ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 218–19. “Hiddenness” and mystery reappear precisely here, since nothing within creation could anticipate the way, or rather the meaning of, the Messiah.

⁸¹ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 230.

⁸² Balthasar, *GL VII*, 226.

⁸³ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 227.

⁸⁴ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 234.

salvation.⁸⁵ Here Balthasar is in firmly traditional territory while straining the powers of speculation to literal silence.

What, precisely, has Balthasar achieved here? We cannot say that he has abandoned analogy, certainly not as its discernible struts remain in place. He has nevertheless pivoted to a distinct theological task, one not entirely contained by analogy. Or, if contained by analogy, nevertheless possessed of its own relatively independent role in Balthasar's soteriology. Kenosis is, on the one hand, a tightly drawn analogy: the *Ur-kenosis* of the Father is not the kenosis of the Incarnation, but the two are bound together by the same divine subject: the Son. As the Son is eternally, so he acts in the economy. So: as in eternity he is the result of the Father's kenosis, so the Son's own kenosis in the economy communicates the mystery of the Father whose perfect image he is. This is, for Balthasar, how the Son can be called Eucharistic.⁸⁶

But this is not really to answer the question of why Balthasar has made this turn toward kenosis, nor does it explain the "what" of his theological pivot aside from that it involves kenosis and salvation. We can say, at least provisionally, that Balthasar does not find metaphysics sufficient to describe the totality of the biblical data, especially as that data describes God's saving action. We can also say that what God *did* do, that this act of redemptive kenosis on the part of the whole Trinity, forces Balthasar backward, as it were, to try to explain how redemptive kenosis is not divine self-contradiction.⁸⁷

Perhaps ironically, then, recalling a previous metaphysical principle will help us begin to see what Balthasar is trying to do. Lonergan's "finality" (final causation), as we saw above, is "dynamic" (about change), and it is "directed" (a unity of form, potency, and act). Finality is not, however, determinant in any straightforward way. That would be to confuse form and final-ness. Because being is "manifold," is complex, and because it integrates complexly (we might imagine a whole biosphere . . . planets . . . the cosmos), human minds have to ask further questions about being, such as why it is and for what it is. I cannot use a seed to figure out the entire universe. This is because I can only know things discretely. I am not God, who is the unrestricted act of understanding for whom finality is determinate. So, when Balthasar starts to ask about "the concrete human destiny"

⁸⁵ Balthasar, *GL* VII, 233, 254.

⁸⁶ He sets this up as early as the first volume: Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, vol. 1, *Seeing the Form* [*GL* I], trans. Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2009), 555–59, esp. 559.

⁸⁷ Balthasar, *GL* VII, 214–25.

that the Son assumes, the concrete destiny that is redeemed in the work of the Incarnation, these are questions of natural and supernatural finality, which the complexes of “analogy” and of metaphysics can assist, but cannot answer. For Lonergan, this insight requires further questions asked of finality, never to be entirely grasped; for Balthasar, the indeterminacy (so to say) of determinacy that persists in finality requires new categories to complement, or to drive, its questions.

To frame the movement toward this puzzle in Balthasar still more generally: all three panels in the trilogy presume “form” under various aspects, keyed to particular transcendentals (beauty, goodness, truth); all three consider the threat of “non-form” in some way. But form and non-form, *Gestalt* and *Ungestalt*, involve the problem of obedience in both the aesthetics and the dramatics (for now we leave aside the logic). *Ungestalt* becomes an especially acute problem in *Theo-Drama*, where Balthasar wonders whether the beauty he depicts in such detail in *Glory of the Lord* can survive freedom’s collision with sin and death.⁸⁸ In kenosis and obedience, both the aesthetics and the dramatics express concern for freedom, even as freedom is more generally the emphasis of the dramatics, especially in secondary literature. Still, the surrender of the believer to the glory of revelation is a turning of the will.⁸⁹ So also obedience arises first in the theological aesthetics and carries over into the dramatics, as does kenosis. In both cases, Balthasar is concerned with freedom and with willing. This is because, for Balthasar, beauty immediately elicits the question of freedom.⁹⁰ Here is a direct manner of relating beauty and finality, though conceived differently from Przywara’s.

Human freedom and human history, while metaphysical in their own ways, are not exhausted by metaphysical explanation. Even without Lonergan: if Blondel’s analysis of human action includes the metaphysical and historical as distinct but simultaneous in the human agent,⁹¹ then Balthasar’s movement toward freedom seeks to describe such a simultaneity.⁹² The *analogia entis* made present in Christ can thus only ever be a partial response to and description of salvation, because it is not about human autonomy or its shipwreck. In other words, it is never quite able to

⁸⁸ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatics*, vol. 2, *Dramatis Personae: Man in God* [TD II], trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 27–28.

⁸⁹ See the discussion of “attunement” in Balthasar, *GL* I, 213–50, esp. 235–50.

⁹⁰ See Balthasar, *TD* II, 31–32.

⁹¹ Blondel, *Action*, 314–29.

⁹² Balthasar, *TD* II, 207–42.

describe in fullness the concrete human destiny the Incarnation assumes. This also helps to explain Balthasar's turn, in volume 7 of *Glory of the Lord*, toward emphasizing the single subject of the Incarnation, since with this turn we are now more explicitly prepared to describe the theandric unity of the Incarnate One. Balthasar, ever reliant on Maximus the Confessor, conceives of this theanthropic activity as a unity of divine and human willing.⁹³ While it may well be the case that Maximus goes elsewhere in his ultimate synthesis,⁹⁴ it is certainly the case that Balthasar makes this theological move. He turns to Bulgakov.

Given the above, it is too simple to say that kenosis and obedience are a theological response to the problem of freedom in history. The claim nevertheless foregrounds an essential Balthasarian concern, which is a concern for human existence and human action as lived out in the concrete world. Przywara apophatic rhythm receives a reply, or better, the prompt of a further question: what of history? What of being in-and-beyond human history? This is, as we have seen, a question that metaphysics can found but cannot answer. By this I do not mean to deny a certain difference of kataphatic and apophatic emphasis between Przywara and Balthasar. It is, instead, to unveil a difference—I do not quite say disagreement—between the two men, a difference operating at a distinct theological register.

This difference is easier to see in Balthasar's description of Christ's glorification, as he lays it out in direct response to his own theology of kenosis in *Glory of the Lord*. Balthasar begins by recalling the mysteriousness of the resurrection, whose glory is at once manifest and hidden. This is an attempt to avoid rendering glorification into a purely gnosiological, conceptual endeavor.⁹⁵ It also aids Balthasar in emphasizing that the obedience of the Son is an expression of his divinity, specifically of the Trinitarian decision to save the world, rather than serving as an expression of a (merely) "spontaneous decision of his human ego."⁹⁶ A human ego's decision is, at least in some sense, comprehensible; the divine decision is not. The hiddenness and manifestness of the glory of Christ stresses the affirmation of his divinity, but this affirmation is not to be separated out from the event of the Cross. So: if, in Philippians 2, Jesus is exalted after his obedience unto death (2:9), then Balthasar reads this exaltation as *because* of Jesus's obedience, which Balthasar interprets as fundamentally Trinitar-

⁹³ Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003).

⁹⁴ See Wood, "Creation is Incarnation," 97–98, 101.

⁹⁵ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 242–43.

⁹⁶ Balthasar, *GL VII*, 247.

ian. Jesus's obedience, then, is not only the economic expression of who he is as eternal Son; it is also the working out of, the execution of, the divine will to save. Thus Balthasar vacillates between speaking of the Father's will for salvation as carried out by the Son in the Spirit—that is, speaking in terms of an economic expression of intra-Trinitarian life—and speaking of it in terms of the one Triune God's will for salvation.⁹⁷ Balthasar uses both modes, intra-Trinitarian and Trinitarian unicity, in order to insist that “the ray of the supramundane love (Jn 17:5) does not only fall upon the obedience of the Cross to transfigure it: it breaks forth from within this obedience too.”⁹⁸

Jesus's agreement to the Cross and resurrection is at once a theandric act by which human willing is united to salvation, and an expression of a “yes” already given, the “yes” by which the Trinity decides for creation (first kenosis) and for salvation (second, “truest” kenosis). The first sense of agreement is the much-explored intersection of Balthasar and Maximus the Confessor over the two wills of Christ; the second sense of agreement is the intersection of Balthasar and Bulgakov over kenosis. There is, however, a third, “hidden” sense of agreement by which Balthasar opens the way to the Christian moral life and a theology of history. If the first two kenotic agreements to salvation are Christological properly speaking, this third is Christological by way of participation. Furthermore, this participation is, while not *non*-ontological, nevertheless a “leaning-in” to Maximus and to Bulgakov to deal in categories other than those of being.

Close on the heels of his own summary, Balthasar turns to the work of the Spirit and of the Church. Because he has traced a line of obedience from the Trinity to Christology, he is able to extend that line into the life of the Church:

Fraternal love is continually described as obedience to the new commandment of Jesus (Jn 13:34; 14:15, 24; 15:10–17), because it takes on then the form of his own love; thus and only thus does it become for the world the testimony that cannot be refuted (“so that all may recognize,” 13:35), not in virtue of its own power, but as nourished and borne by the testimony of the Spirit, in remembrance and interpretation. . . . When later the Holy Scripture of the new covenant becomes the document of the self-understanding of the Church in her obedience to Jesus's word, commandment and

⁹⁷ See Balthasar, *GL* VII, 248–49.

⁹⁸ Balthasar, *GL* VII, 250. Or on the next page: “But the obedience of the Son is itself eternal love” (251).

example, then it will necessarily be the “announcement that brings to mind” what happened in divine truth under the cover of historical phenomena.⁹⁹

Christian love, as obedience to love, is both verb and noun: Christian obedience means “to love,” and this obedience to love is obedience to “Love.” Analogy supports the stage even here, since Christian obedience falls under the “form” of Jesus’s obedient love rather than falling under identification with that love. At the same time, the life of the Church as a life of loving remembrance of divine truth revealed in history rises upward beyond “mere” analogy and ontology. The glory of God in Christ is the sharing of a life precisely as a *life*. A life that is to be lived. Kenosis, economically expressed in Jesus’s obedience, becomes the sharing and enabling of a life.

We have at last arrived at where we have striven to be, which is with a sense of where in Balthasar’s thought analogy makes way for kenosis, and where kenosis, while not a supplement to analogy, nevertheless enables something theologically distinct. It is, in a way, a simple thesis: Christ, as the *analogia entis* made present, is more than the *analogia entis* made present. Salvation is more than this, too, as Przywara and Balthasar would surely agree.¹⁰⁰ The thesis takes a more complex turn if we consider the elements of Balthasar’s move “away” from analogy and, differently but no less really, away from Przywara. Balthasar constrains the Christological *analogia entis* to the relation between the natures, as amplified by Maximus the Confessor’s use of Chalcedon, to describe the theandric unity of the two wills of Christ. Balthasar also moves to consider the single, unique subject of the Incarnation, the Son, as defined by his intra-Trinitarian life, its economic expression, and the double role of kenotic obedience: the Son’s obedience to the Father as Son, thus unveiling in time his eternal relation to the Father; and the Son’s agreement to the Cross and resurrection as the manifestation of the single divine will to save. Kenosis and obedience, enmeshed as they are for Balthasar in freedom and willing, thus make way for the beginnings of a theology of history, which he sets out to articulate elsewhere, and which this essay simply stages.

If Przywara saw too much kataphatic unveiling in Balthasar’s *Glory of the Lord*, it is perhaps because Balthasar sets out not to explain the mystery of glory itself, but to describe the mystery with an interest in setting out

⁹⁹ Balthasar, *GL* VII, 255.

¹⁰⁰ Of this agreement, I cannot say much, though it is at present an exciting and interesting lacuna in Anglophone Przywara scholarship.

the conceptual framework for his dramatics and its theory of history. Or, to put it in terms of more recent scholarship, there are those that suspect that Balthasar's view of "the whole" is too wide-ranging and confident for theology.¹⁰¹ That may or may not be the case, and there is no space to decide one way or another here. But this critique needs to recollect the metaphysical framework of finality, which leaves the *analogia entis* at loose ends, and in response to which Balthasar adopts a complex deployment of kenosis and obedience. This deployment is not Balthasar's guesswork for what takes place where human thought dare not travel. It is his theoretical mechanism for describing the working out of finality in history, which is wholly determinant only from God's point of view. Obedience is not the end; it is the urgency of the present moment, which is the only view we have. Or, to locate it in terms of Balthasar's influences: Przywara's analogical rhythm gives way to Blondel's theory of action.

Conclusion

We are left to remember the large and complicated matter of the Balthasar of history and the Balthasar of interpretation. Does the entangling of various Thomists (Przywara, Siewerth, Lonergan), the *analogia entis*, and a Balthasarian iteration of Bulgakov's kenosis describe the theologian, or a desired version of the theologian? It is hard to say definitively, though it has not been the goal of this essay to articulate the Balthasar of pure history, should such an interpretation be possible at all. It is perhaps much more the case that the *connaissance* made possible by the sources gathered above is *conveniens* with respect to the fundamental shape of Balthasar's work. In terms of Balthasar's metaphysics, scholars have been wont to consider Balthasar to be the theologian of the analogy of being, the theologian of the transcendent God who is (as in Nicholas of Cusa) *Non-Aliud*. This is not wrong. It is even essential. It is also but the scaffolding holding together the stage, and it is not all the metaphysical or even Thomist scaffolding at that.

To summarize: Przywara's analogical "in-and-beyond" appears in Balthasar in more radically phenomenological and less radically Christological terms, and Balthasar effects this transformation by means of his interpretation of Maximus the Confessor's theandric willing, whereby the two natures of Christ—which relate to one another according to the logic of the *analogia entis*—transcend mere analogy through Christ's united willing, and through the single subject of the Incarnation, which is the divine Son. Balthasar continues his arc away from, or perhaps, distinctly

¹⁰¹ Karen Kilby, *Balthasar: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012).

from and not without, analogy via his description of Jesus's kenotic obedience. Kenosis, obedience, freedom, and willing become major features of his theological dramatics, but arrive first in an aesthetic context in *Glory of the Lord*. Balthasar thus prepares the transition from aesthetics to dramatics. To put the move in terms that echo the aesthetics: the glorification of Christ, brought about because of his obedience in the Spirit, makes possible a mysterious participation in that glory, where the Spirit incorporates to Christ's body, and makes to be, every free act of Christian obedience to the command to love. In the theological logic, the movement appears again: analogy also surrenders to what is "more than" itself, this time to the truth of God in history. Balthasar's turn toward kenosis is thus, in metaphysical terms, a turn toward a method of working out metaphysical (natural and supernatural) finality from the perspective of created being. That is, from the perspective of human history. So it is that Balthasar's final word at the end of each panel in his triptych is not analogy, but rather the mysterious *ecstasis* of praise. N.V