

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGY AND PASCHAL MYSTERY IN TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY

ANNE HUNT

*[Editor's note: Rejection of the model that takes the human mind as the prime analogy for divine life is common in contemporary trinitarian theologies. Balthasar's approach to the mystery of the Trinity through Jesus' paschal mystery also raises a challenge to the psychological analogy and to systematics in general. The author suggests, however, that the psychological model, appropriately transposed in light of Lonergan and Doran, offers a healthy complement to Balthasar's trinitarian theology. Each analogical approach has its validity, value, and hazards.]*

TRINITARIAN THEOLOGY is enjoying a surge of interest and creativity in contemporary Roman Catholic theology and from a variety of theological perspectives.<sup>1</sup> Works on the Trinity present considerable differences in approach and emphasis. A common characteristic feature of

ANNE HUNT is an Australian Catholic laywoman who received her D.Theol. from Melbourne College of Divinity in 1995. She is the author of *The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery* (Liturgical, 1997) and *What Are They Saying about the Trinity* (Paulist, 1998). She teaches at Yarra Theological Union, Melbourne.

<sup>1</sup> For Latin American liberation trinitarian theology, see Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, trans. Paul Burns (London: Burns and Oates, 1988); for feminist trinitarian theology, see Elizabeth A. Johnson, *She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse* (New York: Crossroad, 1992); Catherine Mowry LaCugna, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991); for ecologically attuned trinitarian theologies, see Denis Edwards, *Jesus, the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology* (Homebush, N.S.W., Australia: St. Paul's, 1995); for a critical retrieval of the Thomistic synthesis, see Anthony Kelly, *The Trinity of Love: A Theology of the Christian God* (Wilmington, Del.: Michael Glazier, 1989), and *An Expanding Theology: Faith in a World of Connections* (Newtown, N.S.W.: E. J. Dwyer, 1993). For the interconnection of the Trinity and the paschal mystery, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. and intro. Aidan Nichols (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1990). Social models of trinitarian theology are evidently in favor. By social models, I mean trinitarian theologies that focus on the Trinity as a community of persons and seek to explicate the social and political ramifications of that understanding of the Trinity for the human community. It is as though, after centuries of concern for trinitarian orthodoxy, we have now come to the point of seeking a trinitarian orthopraxis. The very popularity of these socially and politically oriented approaches to the Trinity also attests to a certain sense of remoteness, even irrelevance, of the classical Latin Augustinian-Thomistic form of trinitarian theology in regard to the practicalities of contemporary Christian life.

many of the newly emerging trinitarian theologies, however, is their rejection of the psychological analogy, the linchpin of the classical Latin treatment, which took human acts of intellect and will as a way of explicating the mystery of the Trinity and the immanent processions.<sup>2</sup> Another characteristic feature is a very strong emphasis on the personal, relational, and social aspect of being, as well as its ramifications for human being, coupled with the rejection of any hint of an essentialist metaphysics that accords priority to categories of substance over categories of relation.<sup>3</sup>

Hans Urs von Balthasar stands as something of a maverick in the field. So captivated by the sheer mystery of the Trinity as revealed in Jesus, he seems quite unconcerned for its social applications and economic and political ramifications.<sup>4</sup> Instead, he offers a profoundly inspired and highly evocative reflection on the Trinity as it is revealed in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. Based on that reflection, he rejects the classical psychological analogy and seeks instead to explicate God's being, including the trinitarian processions, not in classical terms of absolute being, *Actus Purus*, and its acts of intellect and will, but rather in terms, as revealed in the paschal mystery, of the self-emptying, self-sacrificing, and intrinsically dynamic nature of love, not *Ipsium Esse Subsistens* but *Ipsium Amare Subsistens*. A sophisticated critique of Augustinian-Thomistic trinitarian theology pervades Balthasar's work.<sup>5</sup> In his rejection of the psychological analogy, Balthasar meets what one might call the "social models" of trinitarian theology that are currently enjoying considerable popularity.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to them, however, it is doxology, not praxis, that is Balthasar's primary concern. Faith, according to him, is first of all an esthetic act; it is a seeing or a beholding of the glory of the Lord, before it is a

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that, while the psychological analogy is rejected, the classical notions of trinitarian theology—procession, mission, relations, person—continue to serve to describe the mystery.

<sup>3</sup> In reaction to this criticism of the classical Latin approach, some theologians of neo-Thomist persuasion, W. Norris Clark, S.J., foremost among them, have mounted vigorous defences of the Thomistic synthesis, in which the Latin tradition of trinitarian theology finds its most elegant and refined expression. They argue that the relational aspect of being is there, at very least implicitly, even if, because of different questions operative in Aquinas's time, it is not strongly emphasized; see W. Norris Clarke, *Person and Being*, The Aquinas Lecture 1993 (Milwaukee: Marquette University, 1993). But the defensive reaction itself in effect confirms that the relational element is not clearly evident in the Thomistic approach.

<sup>4</sup> For critical appraisal of Balthasar's lack of existential subjective concerns, see, e.g., Hilary A. Mooney, *The Liberation of Consciousness: Bernard Lonergan's Theological Foundations in Dialogue with the Theological Aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, Frankfurter Theologische Studien (Frankfurt: Josef Knecht, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> For a helpful discussion of Balthasar in regard to Aquinas, see James J. Buckley, "Balthasar's Use of the Theology of Aquinas," *Thomist* 59 (1995) 517–45.

<sup>6</sup> See n. 1 on social models.

believing and before it finds expression in praxis.<sup>7</sup> Balthasar would have us turn and behold Jesus Christ in his paschal mystery and therein find the icon of the triune God. There the glory of our trinitarian God is revealed. Balthasar would persuade us that all other analogies and models simply pale into insignificance in relation to the revelation of the glory of inner-trinitarian love that is given in the person of Jesus Christ in his paschal mystery.

My aim here is to reflect on Balthasar's extraordinary contribution to trinitarian theology in the light of its classical Latin form and the psychological analogy that has for centuries enjoyed unrivalled hegemony as the classical explanation for the trinitarian processions. That Balthasar's trinitarian theology does not connect in any obvious way with its classical Latin form is perplexing. How can one understand the relationship between the two? Is Balthasar's virtuosic contribution a brilliant but passing shooting star in the theological sky? Where does it stand methodologically? Why has it emerged only at this recent stage of the tradition, oddly contemporaneous with the development of more socially and politically oriented models for trinitarian theology, with which it otherwise has little in common other than the rejection of the psychological analogy? Although Balthasar, together with proponents of the social models for trinitarian theology, rejects the psychological analogy, does this imply that the psychological analogy is utterly obsolete? Or do its medieval metaphysical wrappings perhaps conceal a precious pearl of trinitarian truth there to be retrieved, one that would in fact lend leverage to the urgent contemporary desire to have trinitarian theology motivate us to social engagement and action for justice in our world, and one that would perhaps offer an important complement, even corrective, to Balthasar's theology? I begin with a brief outline of Balthasar's contribution.

#### BALTHASAR'S REJECTION OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGY

Balthasar insists that the paschal mystery provides the indispensable hermeneutic for an understanding of the Trinity.<sup>8</sup> "The cross alone is God's final exegesis, who here proves himself once for all as love."<sup>9</sup> The paschal mystery and the mystery of the Trinity are inextricably interconnected. The mystery of the cross, the descent into hell, and the Resurrection can only be understood in terms of the eternal

<sup>7</sup> See John J. O'Donnell, *Hans Urs von Balthasar* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1992) 18–82.

<sup>8</sup> In fact, Balthasar recognizes the "central place of the *triduum mortis* for all theology" (*Mysterium Paschale* 12). For a more detailed study of Balthasar's trinitarian theology and its connection with the paschal mystery, see my *The Trinity and the Paschal Mystery* (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1997).

<sup>9</sup> Balthasar, "God is His Own Exegete," *Communio* 13 (1986) 284.

drama of inner-trinitarian love. Only love is credible.<sup>10</sup> “Basically, in Jesus Christ’s death, descent into hell, and Resurrection, only one reality is there to be seen: the love of the triune God for the world, a love which can only be perceived through a co-responsive love.”<sup>11</sup> Love is *id quo maius cogitari nequit*. According to Balthasar, this is what the Latin theological tradition has overlooked—the sheer glory of God’s trinitarian love that has been revealed to us—and instead given primacy to being rather than to love.

Balthasar rejects the Augustinian-Thomistic model that takes the human mind and its acts of intellect and will as the prime analogy for divine life. He argues from a number of perspectives. If the Father’s giving of self to the Son and the self-giving of both to the Holy Spirit correspond neither to a free choice nor to necessity but to the very essence of God (*non voluntate nec necessitate, sed natura* [Formula “Fides Damasi,” DS 71]), then, in the ultimate analysis, the divine essence can only be love, no matter how we resolve the question as to how to distinguish between the two processions. The New Testament clearly attests that the Father’s sending of the Son was an act of love and that the Son is not only perfect image of the Father, but perfect response and surrender in love. Moreover, if the immanent Trinity corresponds to the economic Trinity and if the missions of the divine persons are the extension of their processions, then both processions must be understood as processions of love.

Balthasar eschews a consideration of human consciousness as primary analogy for the Trinity of divine persons. He is deeply suspicious of any kind of turn to the human subject and insists on the “permanent onesidedness” of revelation.<sup>12</sup> When Balthasar looks to human experience for analogies, he favors the trinitarian theology of Richard of Saint Victor: the trinitarian analogy of the lover, the beloved, and their love. Ultimately, Balthasar finds both intersubjective and intrasubjective analogical approaches inadequate. He considers that the intersubjective model of love in Richard of Saint Victor “fails to take into account the crude anthropomorphism involved in a plurality of beings,”<sup>13</sup> while the intrasubjective psychological analogy of Augustinian-Thomistic theology, that focuses on the *imago trinitatis* in the human

<sup>10</sup> See Balthasar, *Love Alone The Way of Revelation A Theological Perspective*, ed Alexander Dru (London Burns & Oates, 1968) As Peter Henrici has commented, the statement “love alone is credible” is probably the densest summary of Balthasar’s thought (“The Philosophy of Hans Urs von Balthasar,” in *Hans Urs von Balthasar His Life and Work*, ed David L Schindler [San Francisco Ignatius, 1991] 153)

<sup>11</sup> Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* 262

<sup>12</sup> Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord A Theological Aesthetics 1 Seeing the Form*, ed Joseph Fessio, S J , and John Ruches, trans Erasmo Leiva-Merkakis (San Francisco Ignatius, 1982) 181

<sup>13</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama Theological Dramatic Theory 3 Dramatis Personae Persons in Christ*, trans Graham Harrison (San Francisco Ignatius, 1992) 527

soul, is so concentrated on the individual as to be guilty of a certain "I-centeredness" (*Ichgeschlossenheit*).<sup>14</sup>

For Balthasar to take the paschal mystery as not merely redemptive "for us" in its effect but revelatory of trinitarian being (analogy properly speaking of the immanent Trinity) is quite remarkable. But what is more startling about his trinitarian theology is the priority he gives to Jesus' descent into hell, despite the scant biblical warrant for doing so. Balthasar bemoans the fact that a theology of hell and Holy Saturday has been neglected and forgotten in the theological tradition. "And yet Holy Saturday stands as the mysterious middle between cross and Resurrection, and consequently properly in the center of all revelation and theology. And here in the center like an unexplored, inexplicable blank spot on the map!"<sup>15</sup> He argues that, there at the midpoint of those three holy days of the sacred triduum, the descent into hell on Holy Saturday is a trinitarian as well as a soteriological, indeed a christological event. It preeminently reveals the glory, albeit a hidden glory, or inner-trinitarian love; "it is precisely in the kenosis of Christ (and nowhere else) that the *inner* majesty of God's love appears, of God who 'is love' (1 John 4:8) and therefore a trinity."<sup>16</sup> Here, as Balthasar is quick to note, he is indebted to the theological charism of the contemplative Adrienne von Speyr and her mystical experiences of the descent into hell.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast to the prevailing view among the Fathers of the Church that the descent was a glorious entry into the underworld,<sup>18</sup> for Balthasar it is far from being an active descent. It is rather a "sinking down" into the abyss of death, an utterly passive "being removed," as in the burial of a corpse.<sup>19</sup> This passivity of the Son's descent stands in stark contrast to the active self-surrender of Jesus on Good Friday.

<sup>14</sup> Balthasar, *Theologik 2: Wahrheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1985) 56. See also John J. O'Donnell, "Hans Urs von Balthasar: The Form of His Theology," *Communio* 16 (1989) 466; and his "The Trinity as Divine Community: A Critical Reflection upon Recent Theological Developments," *Gregorianum* 69 (1988) 7.

<sup>15</sup> Balthasar, *The von Balthasar Reader*, ed. Medard Kehl and Werner Löser, trans. Robert J. Daly and Fred Lawrence (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1985) 404.

<sup>16</sup> Balthasar, *Love Alone* 71.

<sup>17</sup> Balthasar writes: "It was Adrienne von Speyr who showed the way in which Ignatius is fulfilled by John, and therewith laid the basis for most of what I have published since 1940. Her work and mine are neither psychologically nor philologically to be separated: two halves of a single whole which has as its center a unique foundation" (*My Work: In Retrospect* [San Francisco: Ignatius, 1993] 89, also 19, 30, 105-7. See also Balthasar's *First Glance at Adrienne von Speyr*, trans. Antje Lawry and Sergia Englund (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1981) and *The von Balthasar Reader* 403-4.

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Polycarp, *Epistle to the Philipppians* 1; Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Magnesians* 9; Irenaeus, *Against the Heretics* 3.20.4; 4.22.1; 4.27.2; 5.31.1; 5.33.1; Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 72; Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata* 6.6; Origen, *Against Celsus* 2.43; Tertullian, *On the Soul* 55; Athanasius, *Epictetus* 5-6.

<sup>19</sup> Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics 7: Theology: The New Covenant*, ed. John Riches, trans. Brian McNeil (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1989) 230.

There, on the cross, his death is the supreme act of his liberty; but on Holy Saturday, in this passive "being removed," Jesus' surrender is characterized by the utter passivity of being dead. In the descent into hell, his obedience is the obedience of the dead Christ.<sup>20</sup>

The mystery that Balthasar would have us behold is the mystery of God who descends into hell and enters into the utter loneliness and hellish desolation of the sinner ("a being-only-for-oneself"<sup>21</sup>) in the absolute weakness and vulnerability of love. In Balthasar's theology, the descent represents Jesus' solidarity with humanity in its sinfulness (without, however, any cooperation in sin itself: Jesus is "free among the dead," not bound by any of the bonds of sin). It is Jesus' complete identification with the sinner in his death, in his radical separation from God, in his hellish desolation and utter loneliness as a being-only-for-oneself, and in his complete powerlessness to redeem himself. At this point, Balthasar takes us to the extremes of paradox. In the descent into hell, God experiences God-forsakenness and God-estrangement. For him it is precisely here that the glory of the Lord is revealed: "It is 'glory' in the uttermost opposite of 'glory,' because it is at the same time blind obedience, that must obey the Father at the point where the last trace of God seems lost (in pure sin), together with every other communication (in pure solitariness)."<sup>22</sup>

This is absolute glory because it is absolute love. Herein lies the essential meaning and significance of the descent. God, who is love, having accomplished on the cross the divine judgment on sin,<sup>23</sup> in the descent freely takes responsibility for the flourishing of creation, in the context of human freedom and sin. In the descent, trinitarian love itself enters into the realm of death and desolation and gathers our lostness into God's triune self, thus revealing the sheer graciousness and glory of the love that is God. Henceforth, even hell belongs to Christ; even hell is taken up and into the trinitarian communion of love.<sup>24</sup>

Here one finds another subtle rejection of the psychological analogy by Balthasar. In death, Jesus becomes the Father's silent unheard Word. In the silence of the Word, when the Word is a non-Word, in blind obedience and reduced to dead silence, our redemption is achieved and trinitarian love is revealed. The incarnate Word does not speak in words or concepts but in wordless acts of boundless love. The great mystery of trinitarian love unfolds and enacts itself in the silence

<sup>20</sup> Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* 172. Also see John J. O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, Heythrop Monograph Series (London: Sheed & Ward, 1988) 66–69.

<sup>21</sup> Balthasar, *The von Balthasar Reader* 422.

<sup>22</sup> Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord* 7.233.

<sup>23</sup> Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* 119, also 136 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Balthasar, *The von Balthasar Reader* 420–2; and his "The Descent into Hell," *Chicago Studies* 23 (1984) 223–36.

of the Word, in a pure act of love. Love alone is credible, Balthasar reiterates. Even that lapidary expression connotes a rejection of the psychological analogy.<sup>25</sup>

Throughout his remarkable explorations, Balthasar works within an explicitly traditional Christian view of the Trinity. What underpins his trinitarian theology and its interconnection with the paschal mystery is his insight that the trinitarian processions, as traditionally understood, already imply movement and dynamism in God. Balthasar does not deny the validity of substance-based metaphysics of classical theology, but he attempts to express a divine liveliness and dynamism in God that the traditional treatment fails to convey.<sup>26</sup> He assiduously avoids the attribution of mutability to the divine being. The linchpin of his argument is that the very grounds for the possibility in the economy of the Incarnation and the paschal mystery are to be found in "what one can, by analogy, designate as the eternal 'event' of the divine processions."<sup>27</sup> He explains: "That God (as Father) can so give away his divinity that God (as Son) does not merely receive it as something borrowed, but possesses it in the equality of essence, expresses such an unimaginable and unsurpassable 'separation' of God from Godself that every other separation (made possible by it!), even the most dark and bitter, can only occur within this first separation."<sup>28</sup>

In other words, Balthasar recognizes that the separation and union of the paschal event are grounded in the separation and union within the eternal inner-trinitarian event of divine life, where the Father does not cling to his divinity, but "in an eternal 'super-kenosis', makes himself 'destitute' of all that he is and can be so as to bring forth a con-substantial divinity, the Son."<sup>29</sup> He recognizes that in this primordial "separation" of God from God, lies, from all eternity, the "space" for all the contingencies of human freedom. This inner-trinitarian "event" of God's love always and already contains within it that infinite distinction and distance within unity that grounds "all the modalities of love, of compassion, and even of a "separation" motivated by

<sup>25</sup> Similarly, in the context of a discussion of person and mission, where Balthasar distinguishes between a *Geistessubjekt*, a conscious subject, and a person, Balthasar makes what is effectively another correction to the classical treatment of the processions. According to Balthasar, a *Geistessubjekt* has intellect and will, but only becomes a *person* in the mission that he or she receives from God. "It is when God addresses a conscious subject, tells him who he is and what he means to the eternal God of truth and shows him the purpose of his existence—that is, imparts a distinctive and divinely authorized mission—that we can say of a conscious subject that he is a 'person'" (*Theo-Drama* 3.207).

<sup>26</sup> See Gerry O'Hanlon, "Does God Change? H. U. Balthasar on the Immutability of God," *Irish Theological Quarterly* (1987) 161–83; and his *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1990).

<sup>27</sup> Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* viii.

<sup>28</sup> Balthasar, *Theodramatik 3: Die Handlung* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1980) 302.

<sup>29</sup> Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* viii.

love"<sup>30</sup> and all the risks inherent in the creation of truly free human beings. In this way, the whole salvation event occurs "within" the divine intersubjectivity, "in" that infinite "space" between the infinite divine persons. Every possible drama between God and the world, even the human person's outright rejection of God, is already contained in, allowed for, and infinitely transcended in that eternal, supra-temporal "event" of inner-trinitarian love, wherein the Father begets the Son. As Balthasar explains, "It is a case of the play within the play: our play 'plays' in his play."<sup>31</sup> The drama between God and the world lies "within" this primordial inner-trinitarian "drama" between God and God, in that intradivine difference between Father and Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. "We are saying that the 'emptying' of the Father's heart in the begetting of the Son includes and surpasses every possible drama between God and the world, because a world can only have its place within the difference between the Father and the Son which is held open and bridged over by the Spirit."<sup>32</sup>

Balthasar thus argues that the whole salvation event can be understood as occurring within that eternal divine event whereby the Father generates the Son. The drama of salvation history is in fact only possible because of the inner-trinitarian drama of the Father's generation of the Son and their mutual spiration of the Holy Spirit, their mutual love. The relations between Father, Son, and Spirit are what make the paschal mystery and, indeed, all events ad extra possible. In more technical terms, the inner-trinitarian "event" of self-giving and self-emptying love is the condition of possibility for divine activity in kenotic events ad extra, containing within itself all of the modalities of love, such as kenosis, abandonment, suffering, death, and descent, that occur in creation in the course of salvation history. The kenotic form of Jesus Christ in the paschal mystery is therefore not new or foreign to God. It is the created form of what is always already in God. In Balthasar's theology, all forms of kenosis ad extra are contained within that primal kenosis ad intra that is the Father's generation of the Son. The generation of the Son manifests the complete self-giving of the Father to the Son, a self-yielding surrender of divine being. It represents the first kenosis and allows for the possibility of all other forms of kenosis. Similarly, the Son's self-giving to the Father in his death on the cross is already contained within this eternal generation; in fact, it is a modality of the Son's procession.

In this way Balthasar not only avoids any attribution of mutability or change to God, for God does not become what God was not. God is in the paschal mystery what God is eternally. Balthasar also firmly grounds the redemptive "for us" of the paschal mystery in this eternal

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. viii–ix.

<sup>31</sup> Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory 1: Prologomena*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988) 20.

<sup>32</sup> Balthasar, *Theodramatik* 3.304.



self-giving, self-surrendering, self-sacrificing love, the being-for-one-another, that is the essence of inner-trinitarian life in se. But for him it is no accident that the revelation of God takes place in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. Indeed, he would have us understand that the mystery is a distinctly paschal mystery because it is a trinitarian mystery. The paschal mystery of death, descent, and Resurrection in its essence expresses and enacts the very essence of God's triune being; it reveals what God is in God's eternal triune self.

For Balthasar's understanding of the Trinity the paschal mystery itself serves as analogy, properly speaking, not as mere metaphor. As he explains, one can see in "the Lord's actions . . . not only a sublime *metaphor* of eternal love, but Eternal Love itself."<sup>33</sup> He rejects the traditional explication of the processions in terms of the acts of intellect and will and maintains that both processions should be understood as processions of love. In response to a question about how to distinguish the two immanent processions, Balthasar adopts a more Franciscan approach and appeals to Bonaventure's notion of exemplarity wherein the Son proceeds *per modum exemplaritatis* (by way of exemplarity or image) and is the inner self-expression of God, while the Spirit, bond of the mutual love of Father and Son, *vinculum amoris*, proceeds from their mutual love *per modum liberalitatis* (by way of liberality or generosity of love).<sup>34</sup>

Balthasar offers an affectively charged entry into the mystery of Trinity and a formidable challenge to the authority of the psychological analogy in traditional Latin trinitarian theology. Yet at this point one is inclined to hesitate, especially since the psychological analogy has served to explicate the mystery of God's trinitarian being with considerable persuasive and plausible explicative power for two millennia. Moreover, while not an article of faith, the teaching that the processions of Son and Spirit take place by way of the divine acts of intellect and will is firmly grounded in the scriptural witness that the divine self-communication unfolds in terms of Word and Spirit of Love, which surely pertains to the divine consciousness. Admittedly, the psychological analogy is a pale image compared to the revelation of trinitarian love in the paschal mystery, yet it is surely a legitimate one. What then is the connection between these two seemingly unconnected and unconnectable analogies?

#### ROBERT DORAN'S HYPOTHESIS

Robert M. Doran, whose work (as he describes in his own words) "lies within the horizon of consciousness and understanding cleared by the works of Bernard Lonergan,"<sup>35</sup> offers an approach to this question from

<sup>33</sup> Balthasar, *Prayer*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1986) 184.

<sup>34</sup> See Balthasar, *Theologik 2: Wahrheit Gottes* (Einsiedeln: Johannes, 1985) 150.

<sup>35</sup> Robert M. Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990) 8.

a refined methodological perspective. With Doran's assistance, one can attempt to articulate the connection between the analogies and the categories they engage, as well as the theological methods of which they are the fruit, in terms of the dynamics of human subjectivity.<sup>36</sup>

Lonerger's analysis articulates the dynamics of intentionality in terms of the unfolding movement of inquiry that proceeds from the experience of the data of sense and of consciousness through insight and rational judgment to responsible decision. Doran argues that depth psychology should take its place in theological foundations alongside cognitive theory. He notes that Lonergan's analysis of intentionality leaves aside the affective-symbolic drama that accompanies the operations of each intentional level and that permeates all cognitive and existential praxis. Doran insists that, while the intentional aspect, in its integrity, consists in the disinterested orientation of consciousness to the transcendental objectives of intelligibility, truth, reality, goodness, and participation in the unrestricted love that is the very life of God, there also exists what he calls the psychic aspect of interiority that lies in the *esthetic* dimension of human subjectivity and that permeates all of our intentional operations. In its integrity, Doran explains, this esthetic dimension participates in intentionality itself, and constitutes the sensitive orientation to the beautiful.<sup>37</sup> In other words, there is another constitutive dimension of human consciousness besides the intentional operations of knowing and willing that Lonergan elucidates, a dimension that Doran calls the sensitive psyche, but that can be described more fully as an esthetic and dramatic operator of human integrity and artistry.

Doran argues for the duality of the constitution of human consciousness. There is not only the spiritual but also the psychic dimension of human subjectivity. Consequently, he maintains that human consciousness is not adequately submitted to self-appropriation until the sensitive psychic component is accorded the same type of rigorous analytic attention that Lonergan has given to the dimension of intentionality.<sup>38</sup> Doran insists that Lonergan's analysis of subjectivity be complemented by an understanding and appropriation of the esthetic participation of the psyche in the intentionality of the subject. He proceeds in this way to build on Lonergan's analysis of intentionality. The fruit of his appropriation of the psychic dimension of consciousness is a distinctly psychological complement to Lonergan's theological foundations. In effect, Doran adds the notion of "psychic conversion" to

<sup>36</sup> See the following works of Robert M. Doran: "Psychic Conversion and Lonergan's Hermeneutics," in *Lonerger's Hermeneutics: Its Development and Application*, ed. S. McEvenue and B. Meyer (Washington: University Press of America, 1989) 161–208; *Theology and the Dialectics of History*; "Prolegomenon for a New Systematics," *Grail* 10 (1994) 75–87; and "Lonergan and Balhasar: Methodological Considerations," *TS* 58 (1997) 61–84.

<sup>37</sup> Doran, *Theology and the Dialectics of History* 170.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 637.

the foundational conversions objectified by Lonergan, a foundational reality of authentic subjectivity in the realm of the psyche. Psychic conversion, Doran explains, is "a transformation of the subject, a change both illuminated and often mediated by modern depth psychology. It is a reorientation of the specifically psychic dimension of the censorship exercised over images and affects by our habitual orientations, a conversion of that dimension of the censorship from exercising a repressive function to acting constructively in one's shaping of one's own development."<sup>39</sup>

Doran's extension of foundations into the realm of the imaginal has significant implications for theology, because it is the foundations that ground the derivation of theological categories; it is in terms of the theological categories that, to use Lonergan's words, "[a] theology mediates between a cultural matrix and the significance and role of a religion in that matrix."<sup>40</sup> Lonergan identifies two sets of categories, general and special, for systematic theology.<sup>41</sup> General theological categories, which are shared with other disciplines as well as theology, have their critical grounding in the operations of the intending subject. Their basis is "the attending, inquiring, reflecting, deliberating subject along with the operations that result from attending, inquiring, reflecting, deliberating and with the structure within which the operations occur."<sup>42</sup> Special categories, on the other hand, derive from specifically religious experience and express those realities that are particular to theology. These special categories are proper to theology. Lonergan thus locates general categories in terms of transcendental method (the authentic or unauthentic person) and special theological categories in terms of religious conversion (the interiorly and religiously differentiated consciousness, "the authentic or unauthentic Christian, genuinely in love with God or failing in that love, with a consequent Christian or unchristian outlook and style of living."<sup>43</sup>) What is pertinent here is that when Lonergan's grounding of theological categories in an analysis of intentionality is complemented by Doran's appropriation of the role of the sensitive psyche in human subjectivity, the special theological categories are then grounded and generated not simply in terms of religious conversion (in the realm of intentionality) but in the realm of psychic conversion, the realm of the imaginal. The *generative* power of theological foundations is, in this way, radically enhanced.

In his recent ground-breaking discussion of the connection between the theologies of Lonergan and Balthasar, Doran locates the relationship between them precisely here, in terms of theological categories and their grounding in interiority.<sup>44</sup> He proposes that Lonergan's transcendental theological anthropology illuminates the ground and pro-

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. 9.

<sup>40</sup> Bernard J. F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Seabury: New York, 1972) xi.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 281 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 285-86.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. 292.

<sup>44</sup> Doran, "Lonergan and Balthasar."

vides the key to the generation and derivation of systematic theology's *general* categories, while Balthasar illuminates the ground of *special* categories that are proper to theology. Those special categories are derived from the esthetic-dramatic elements of Christian experience and provide an esthetic and dramatic base for authenticity or inauthenticity.

Applying Doran's thesis to the question of the connection between the traditional treatment of trinitarian theology and its linchpin, the psychological analogy, and Balthasar's trinitarian theology and its analogical approach to the mystery of the Trinity by way of its interconnection with the paschal mystery, one can usefully locate the connection in terms of theological categories and their basis in human subjectivity. From this perspective, the psychological analogy is grounded in general categories derived from an analysis of human consciousness and its intentional operations of knowing and willing. The analogy is thus not only biblically justified by the revelation of the divine Word and Spirit of Love; it is theologically valid, critically grounded as it is in the operations of the intending subject. On the other hand, Balthasar's trinitarian theology, wherein the paschal mystery itself is the analogy, is expressed in categories special to theology. These special categories are derived from the esthetic-dramatic constitution of Christian faith as experienced in the revelation of the esthetic form and dramatic pattern of the divine self-communication of the triune God in the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ. These categories are fundamentally grounded in the sensitive psyche, the esthetic-dramatic operator of human integrity, as Doran describes it. In summary then, following Doran's hypothesis, the classical psychological analogy derives from an analysis of human intentionality, while Balthasar's trinitarian theology speaks from and to the psychic dimension of human subjectivity and the experience of conversion. In this way Doran's methodological framework enables us at least to situate and to justify both analogies for trinitarian being in terms of the generation and use of general and special categories in systematic theology and the grounding of those categories in an analysis of human subjectivity.

The further question is why Balthasar's trinitarian theology has emerged in human consciousness only at this recent stage of the tradition? In my judgment the answer lies in the contemporary cultural context within which Balthasar's theology strives to mediate meaning. Whether or not one accepts Doran's thesis about psychic conversion or indeed the larger framework of Lonergan's transcendental method, it remains true that Balthasar's theology of the Trinity is effective in mediating trinitarian meaning to contemporary consciousness. Expressed in highly affectively charged esthetic-dramatic categories that resonate with modern Christian experience, it strikes deep chords with the contemporary affective experience of the self. Balthasar's incarnationally concrete trinitarian theology resounds with remarkable power

and intensity.<sup>45</sup> From this vantage point, it is no accident that it has emerged in 20th-century Europe in a culture where the very question of God is itself hugely problematic and the being of God by no means self-evident.<sup>46</sup> In the wake of the cataclysmic horrors of Auschwitz, of ethnic cleansing, and of other unimaginable evils, cries of protest are heard against an omnipotent deity who allows such evils or fails to prevent them. This is the cultural context in which Balthasar turns to the mystery of the trinitarian God of love, "who so loved the world that he gave his only Son," in the descent into hell. There Balthasar finds and proclaims a mystery of incredible hope and unimaginable love. In a world conscious of the absence of God, Balthasar's trinitarian theology points to God as real and present where God most seems to be absent. In a world afflicted by a sense of alienation and isolation, his trinitarian theology reveals a God who descends to the very depths to find us and enters into our very God-forsakenness. This is a God whose power is the power of self-gift and self-yielding, whose divine sovereignty manifests itself not in holding on to what is its own but in its abandonment, whose omnipotence refuses to be anything but the impotent omnipotence of self-giving love.

#### BERNARD LONERGAN'S SUGGESTION

Lonerger intimated how an integration with the psychological analogy might occur in a brief comment in one of his later writings on Christology:

The psychological analogy has its starting point in that higher synthesis of intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness that is the dynamic state of being in love. Such love manifests itself in judgments of value. And the judgments are carried out in decisions that are acts of loving. Such is the analogy found in the creature. Now in God the origin is the Father, in the New Testament named *ho Theos*, who is identified with *agapê* (1 John 4:8,16). Such love expresses itself in its Word, its Logos, its *verbum spirans amorem*, which is a judgment of value. The judgment of value is sincere, and so it grounds the Proceeding Love that is identified with the Holy Spirit . . . and each in his own distinct manner is subject of the infinite act that God is, the Father as originating love, the Son as judgment of value expressing that love, and the Spirit as originated loving.<sup>47</sup>

From this perspective, one can understand the psychological analogy, as it has been classically applied to trinitarian theology, in terms of

<sup>45</sup> It does indeed seem that something more than that which Lonergan describes as pertaining to the intentional-spiritual realm of consciousness is at work, and that something of what Doran describes in regard to the psychic realm of consciousness, a kind of 'psychic conversion,' is involved.

<sup>46</sup> See Michael J. Buckley, *At the Origins of Modern Atheism* (New Haven and London: Yale University, 1987).

<sup>47</sup> Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," in *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (New York: Paulist, 1985) 93-94.

what one might describe as an ascending (or "from below") application of the analogy from human experience, based on the adage *nihil amatum nisi praecognitum*, knowledge precedes love. This "from below" application has suffered both the limitations of human understanding in its extrapolations from human subjectivity to the divine subjectivity and a certain degree of intellectualist distortion whereby the intellect has been given priority over the will, or knowledge over love.

Loneragan points to an alternative, a descending (or "from above") application of the analogy that has its starting point in "that higher synthesis of intellectual, rational, and moral consciousness that is the dynamic state of being in love." In this "from above" form of the analogy, as Lonergan expresses it, the mystery of the Trinity is articulated in terms of love: the Father as originating love, the Son as judgment of value expressing that love, and the Spirit as originated loving.<sup>48</sup> Both processions are understood first and foremost as the processions of love, and each of the divine persons as a subject of the infinite act of love that God is. This descending form of the psychological analogy offers not only a correction of the intellectualist distortion that the classical application of the psychological analogy has suffered, and to which Balthasar rightly objects, but also the possibility, and even responsibility, of a radical reappraisal of the authority that the analogy in its ascending form has enjoyed for so long.

But Balthasar rejects the approach to trinitarian theology by way of the psychological analogy (from the creature to God), even if purified of intellectualist distortion. This is clear from his insistence on the "permanent onesidedness" of revelation. His theological point of departure is not the ascent of the human person to God, but the descent of the trinitarian God who is Love (1 John 4:8) to humankind in its sinfulness. He effectively adopts a very different descending approach to the mystery that has its starting point in divine rather than human subjectivity. Balthasar invites us to see that the paschal mystery manifestly reveals the mystery of trinitarian divine love that is not extrapolated from our experience. It reveals that, quite unlike human experience wherein love is one possibility among others, self-giving love is *the* manifestation of divine power, freedom, and glory. The omnipotent impotence of the divine love is the glory of the Lord, a love that refuses to be anything but self-giving love, scandal though it was to the Jews and folly to the Greeks and, no doubt, as it continues to be to contemporary sensibilities.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>48</sup> As in Lonergan's earlier writing, the word is a judgment of value. It is the *order* of treatment which is novel here, and which in fact Tony Kelly takes up and pursues in his critical retrieval of the psychological analogy, as we shall discuss later in this article.

<sup>49</sup> One could express the connection between the two analogies in terms of the more traditional systematic categories of *analogia entis* (the classical psychological image) and *analogia fidei* (Balthasar's paschal mystery analogy). Note, however, that Balthasar, in contrast to Barth, was a strong defender of the analogy of being. He recognized that the

The paschal mystery of trinitarian love undoubtedly challenges any claim to a priority of knowing over loving, intellect over will. Admittedly, it may indeed be true in human love, in our finite experience, that love presupposes knowledge; but this need not be true of God, *Actus Purus*, in whom being and love are coextensive, knowledge and love contemporaneous. Here Balthasar meets Lonergan who recognized that in the dynamic state of being in love wherein the psychological analogy has its starting point, "the old adage, *nihil amatum nisi prius cognitum*, yields to a new truth, *nihil vere cognitum nisi prius amatum*."<sup>50</sup> We know from our limited experience of human loving that, in a certain sense, love does presuppose knowledge, but we also know that only when we love the other, do we then really know the other. Love has a knowledge that is its own; but that knowledge born of love necessarily expresses itself in what are at least implicitly judgments of value and explicitly responsible decisions or loving actions, as the paschal mystery itself manifestly demonstrates. There the divine love expresses itself in judgment on sin (the death on the cross) and enacts itself in responsible acts of love for the sinner and for the welfare of creation (the descent into hell).

Balthasar is right in insisting that faith is first a seeing, a beholding, a contemplation, a reception of the divine word (whatever the use of ocular or aural or other metaphors, Balthasar's meaning is the deeply felt and sensed experience of the divine), before it is a believing and long before it is a conceptualizing of our understanding of that revelation, and longer still before it is a praxis. The classical psychological analogy is unquestionably secondary, chronologically and logically, to that profound experience of Christian faith. Balthasar is also right in that the psychological analogy simply pales in comparison to the revelation of God given in the person of Christ and in his paschal mystery. He would have us behold the form of Jesus Christ in the paschal mystery that is the enactment of the divine love and the icon of trinitarian being. Love alone is credible. The paschal mystery is a mystery of love. From this perspective, the two processions are properly understood in terms of love and aptly described in terms of Bonaventure's notions of exemplarity and liberality.

But just as there are hazards in the ascending approach to trinitarian theology (from the creature to God), there are also hazards in a descending approach (the immanent Trinity as revealed in the economic). As McDade comments, Balthasar's theology "seems to float, angel-like, above the particularity of human history, touching earth only to ascend again for further improvements to the theological edi-

---

*analogia fidei* does not exclude the *analogia entis*, but rather that the latter is properly situated within the former. For a discussion of analogy in Balthasar's work, see James V. Zeitz, "Przywara and von Balthasar on Analogy," *Thomist* 52 (1988) 473-98.

<sup>50</sup> Lonergan, "Christology Today" 77.

fice."<sup>51</sup> Gerard O'Hanlon observes that "[f]rom one who is so conscious of the reality of evil there is a curious lack of engagement with the great modern structural evils."<sup>52</sup> Though a deep sense of the problem of evil and of the desolation and alienation afflicting modern consciousness pervades Balthasar's work, there is also, as McDade and O'Hanlon point out, a certain remoteness from the concrete created world in which we live with its social demands, political struggles, and moral dilemmas. Balthasar seems quite unconcerned about any particular social or even personal existential context. Here Balthasar's trinitarian theology of paschal love would find a salutary reminder in the psychological analogy in the sense that love necessarily makes judgments of value that necessarily find expression in responsible decisions and loving actions or commitments. Love expresses itself intelligently and enacts itself responsibly.

Here then, I suggest, is a precious pearl of trinitarian truth to be retrieved from the classical psychological image of the Trinity, a necessary complement, even corrective, to Balthasar's trinitarian theology. The love poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5) finds its expression not just in some other-worldly contemplation and adoration of the divine glory but in contemplation in action for love and justice in the world, just as the divine love expressed itself and enacted itself in judgments of value, responsible decisions, and loving engagements and commitments to the world in the paschal mystery of Jesus' death, descent, and Resurrection. Here too, Balthasar stands to be challenged by what I have called the social models of the Trinity and their emphasis on the social and political-economic ramifications and ethical imperatives that necessarily follow from the trinitarian faith we proclaim, while, at the same time, he rightly challenges those social models to the degree that they tend to focus on the merely functional and pragmatic aspects of trinitarian theology.

The psychological analogy also offers a salutary reminder to the world of modern moral discourse that, as Alasdair MacIntyre has observed, is characterized by interminable debates on questions of value and morality, bereft of a rational way of assessing competing moral claims, because of a lack of consensus on judgments of value and a reluctance to make such judgments.<sup>53</sup> To a moral discourse that lacks intelligibility and rationality in its deliberations on our moral and social attitudes and commitments, the psychological analogy, appropriately transposed into terms meaningful and accessible to contem-

<sup>51</sup> John McDade, "Catholic Theology in the Post Conciliar Period," in *Modern Catholicism Vatican II and After*, ed Adrian Hastings (London SPCK, 1991) 429

<sup>52</sup> Gerard O'Hanlon, "Theological Dramatics," in *The Beauty of Christ An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed Bede McGregor and Thomas Norris (Edinburgh T & T Clark, 1994) 109

<sup>53</sup> Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue A Study in Moral Theology*, 2nd ed (Notre Dame University of Notre Dame, 1984), also his *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame University of Notre Dame, 1988)



porary consciousness, offers a corrective to the serious possibility of a voluntarist distortion that would leave judgments of value and the concrete demands of responsible decision and loving action dangerously subject to the arbitrariness of individual assessment based on personal interest, desire, and need.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALOGY REVISITED

The psychological analogy would offer something significant both to Balthasar's trinitarian theology which resists engagement in the practicalities of Christian life in the world and to the social models of the Trinity that often contend with ideological distortions. Yet, as I have observed, many newly emerging trinitarian theologies reject the psychological analogy.

Admittedly, the Thomistic form of mediation of meaning has broken down in the contemporary context. Divorced from the metaphysical framework that supports it, the classical approach is unable to function effectively in mediating religious meaning to modern consciousness. The metaphysically fashioned classical expression of the psychological analogy seems remote from the contemporary experience of self; modern empirically organized culture views the Thomistic explication of trinitarian theology as very far removed from the biblical data of salvation history. For the psychological analogy to be persuasive in contemporary culture, it needs to be transposed into experiential and existentially meaningful terms that are more meaningful to contemporary consciousness.

Tony Kelly has attempted a critical retrieval of the classical tradition of trinitarian theology by transposing the psychological analogy into the terms of Bernard Lonergan's intentionality analysis of the conscious intending human subject, wherein the peak state of consciousness is being-in-love.<sup>54</sup> Kelly effectively makes a correlation between human being-in-love and the foundational Christian experience of God as Love, as Being-in-Love, and so re-casts the Thomistic trinitarian theology wherein God is Being, pure being, in terms of God as Being-in-Love. In this way, Kelly effects a transposition from the Scholastic metaphysically fashioned psychological analogy to a more phenomenologically oriented description of the mystery of the Trinity, based on the experience of Love that is the foundation of faith's realism (and it is this experience of divine love that is the foundation of Balthasar's theology). In Kelly's treatment, the philosophical account of the psychological analogy yields to a psychological account of faith's experience.

More important than the transposition of the psychological analogy per se is the fruitfulness of the transposed analogy in terms of effective mediation of meaning in the lives of modern Christians. From Kelly's reworking of the analogy, the Trinity reemerges pregnant with mean-

<sup>54</sup> Anthony Kelly, *The Trinity of Love* esp. 139-73.

ing for a trinitarian orthopraxis that addresses and motivates contemporary cosmic, ecological, psychological, political, and interfaith concerns, as is evident in the variety of applications Kelly attempts. In other words, one finds that the psychological analogy, when released from its undoubtedly outmoded metaphysical wrappings, continues to be genuinely meaningful, fruitful, and productive. Thus transposed, the analogy not only continues to enjoy considerable explicative power and once again *erves* an understanding of the triune God who is revealed in Jesus Christ as love, but inspires and, indeed, demands responsible Christian decision and action in the world.<sup>55</sup>

#### RAMIFICATIONS FOR SYSTEMATICS

Vatican I's identification of the three classical techniques of systematic theological reflection, in terms of analogy, interconnection, and eschatological liberation, offers a helpful perspective from which to comment on the psychological and paschal-mystery analogies in trinitarian theology: "Now reason, if it is enlightened by faith, does indeed when it seeks persistently, piously and soberly, achieve by God's gift some understanding, and that most profitable, of the mysteries, whether by analogy from what it knows naturally, or from the connection of these mysteries with one another and with the final end of humanity."<sup>56</sup> The psychological analogy, as first articulated by Augustine, later developed and brought to refined metaphysical precision by Aquinas, and later still refined further by Lonergan in terms of intentionality analysis, represents theological understanding according to the first technique identified by Vatican I, the technique of analogy with the truths known naturally. With its starting point in human subjectivity, it begins with the analogy in the creature and moves (from the creature to God) to an understanding of the divine processions within the divine subjectivity. It moves from a consideration of the natural to the supernatural, from realities that can be expressed in general categories to realities that are ultimately expressed in special categories. What one finds in the reference to Lonergan's later comment is a further refinement of the psychological analogy, albeit essentially the same analogy, but this time "from above" in human consciousness, starting with human being in love (moving on to judgments of value and then to decisions), as distinct from Lonergan's earlier explorations of the psychological analogy "from below," starting with insight (moving on to word and then to decision).

Balthasar, on the other hand, in connecting Jesus' paschal mystery with the mystery of the Trinity, is effectively engaging the second technique to which Vatican I referred, that theological understanding

<sup>55</sup> See also Tony Kelly, *An Expanding Theology*.

<sup>56</sup> *Constitution on Divine Revelation (Dei Filius)*; Latin text in DS 3016, English translation from *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols., Norman P. Tanner, ed. (Washington: Georgetown Univ., 1990) 2.808.

that is achieved through the inner connection of the mysteries with one another. Balthasar recognizes that the paschal mystery is not just metaphor but analogy properly speaking for the divine being. However, this use of analogy is not the use of analogy that Vatican I identified. The analogy to which Balthasar refers is in fact the analogy between the immanent Trinity and the economic Trinity (as distinct from natural and supernatural realities). Balthasar moves from one set of realities expressed in special categories (the economic Trinity) to the same set of supernatural realities, expressed in different but still special categories (the immanent Trinity).

What is significant here is that Balthasar's trinitarian theology in fact prompts the realization that the technique of interconnection of the mysteries allows for a new way of using analogy in theology. The three theological techniques identified by Vatican I need not be mutually exclusive. Analogical thinking is effectively exercised in a new way in each case. Hence the Trinity is not only connected to the paschal mystery, but within the horizon of faith, the paschal mystery analogically illustrates something of the eternal life of the Trinity.

Against the foil of the classical treatment of trinitarian theology, one notes that Balthasar's trinitarian theology also brings into surprisingly sharp focus the degree to which the classical form of systematic trinitarian theology is detached and oddly abstracted from the events of salvation history, fashioned without much direct connection with the actual events of revelation and our experience of salvation, in particular the revelation of God in Jesus Christ and his paschal mystery. As Balthasar himself commented, despite the development of fervent Passion mysticism in the Middle Ages and impetus given to it by the saints of the time, official theology never succeeded in constructing a genuine theology of the *triduum mortis*.<sup>57</sup> Instead, a rather abstract manner of approaching theology came into prominence, with such a degree of abstraction that Aquinas, e.g., can actually suggest that any one of the three divine persons could have become incarnate.<sup>58</sup>

As François Durrwell pointed out, the traditional theology of redemption developed in such a way that Jesus' salvific work was seen to consist in his Incarnation, his life, and his death on the cross.<sup>59</sup> The death and the Resurrection were not clearly recognized as being integrally related in the way that the biblical data strongly suggests. When and if the Resurrection was mentioned, it was not in terms of its role in effecting our salvation, but more as an addendum or validation, an epilogue or apologetic proof in regard to a fullness of redemption that was understood as essentially external to it. The Resurrection was thus effectively shorn of its properly *theological* significance.

<sup>57</sup> See Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale* 36–41.

<sup>58</sup> *Summa theologiae* 3, q. 3, a. 5.

<sup>59</sup> François Durrwell, *The Resurrection: A Biblical Study*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (London: Sheed and Ward, 1960).

Both Durrwell and Balthasar argued that the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ is the special place where God is revealed. They recognized that the paschal mystery is not only redemptive "for us" but revelatory of God's being. As Balthasar expressed it, the paschal mystery is an icon of God's eternal triune being; it is analogy, properly speaking. Viewed from this perspective, it is no accident that the revelation of the mystery of the Trinity takes place in the dynamic modality of Jesus' paschal mystery. The paschal movement conveys the eternal trinitarian relations in a paradigmatic way that is expressive of the eternal trinitarian relationality and being.

Such a determinedly revelation-centred approach raises a keen challenge to traditional systematics at the level of the unthought and unseen in theology, with potentially major ramifications for systematics in both method and yield. Such an approach results, for example, in a radical refashioning of our understanding of the Trinity and the divine perfections, as is evident in Balthasar's work, wherein divine immutability and impassability as classically understood are seriously called into question and a more nuanced understanding emerges in which receptivity, for example, emerges as a divine perfection, as a perfection of love.<sup>60</sup>

With their focus on the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, these theologies radically challenge much of philosophically fashioned theology. They show how philosophically fashioned it is, especially in regard to the divine being and perfections. They stand to challenge or to question, the degree to which systematics is philosophically constructed rather than being more critically grounded in the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.<sup>61</sup> At the very least, this kind of approach unsettles the metaphors and analogies that theologians have come to take for granted in systematic theology. It challenges the hegemony that the psychological analogy and, indeed, the technique of analogy (in its classical form, as expressed by Vatican I) has enjoyed for so long in trinitarian theology.

Admittedly, the trinitarian theologies that emerge in this way are by

<sup>60</sup> For detailed discussions of Balthasar in relation to the immutability of God, see O'Hanlon, "Does God Change?" and his *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*.

<sup>61</sup> Note again that Balthasar does not repudiate the patristic and scholastic tradition, but he considers that a fuller understanding of the divine being is possible, one that more adequately expresses the trinitarian dynamism that the paschal mystery manifests. "If we look back from the mature Christology of Ephesus and Chalcedon to the hymn of Philippians 2, and do so with the intention of not exaggerating its capacity for 'dogmatic' assertiveness, we can hardly help registering a 'plus factor' in its archaic language—stammering out the mystery as this does—to which the established formulae of the unchangeability of God do not really do justice. One senses a further residue of meaning, with which the German, English and Russian kenoticists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries sought to come to terms" (*Mysterium Paschale* 26). The point is that the paschal mystery reveals that God is manifestly more glorious than philosophically fashioned notions of immutability and impassibility could convey or admit.

no means as neat or rigorous as the Thomistic synthesis. But it is hardly surprising that the paschal mystery serves to challenge the very neatness of our systematics as well as the classical solutions to the profound existential questions that emerge from the human condition. Articulating the mystery of the Trinity in the context of the paschal mystery enables Balthasar and, for example, Jürgen Moltmann, another outstanding exponent of this approach, to grapple with the reality of God's genuine engagement in the life, struggle, and suffering of the world. It offers new possibilities for addressing the questions of suffering, death, despair, and desolation, the theodicy question, and the challenges of protest atheism, with a (theo)logic that is based, not on refined philosophical notions of being and the logic of reason, but on the phenomenon of love tangibly disclosed in the paschal mystery.

This theological development is both constructive and deconstructive—constructive in the sense that it insists on a return to the events of salvation history, deconstructive in the sense that, in a postmodern way, it effectively undoes any attempt to absolutize reason and “being” in theology. But it serves to deconstruct not systematics as such but the metaphysical in systematics. It challenges the philosophically fashioned notions of God we have come to accept and arouses the healthy suspicion that perhaps it is metaphysics rather than revelation that has led us to understand God as a being with these divine perfections. The result is a theology that is demonstrably better equipped to meet the contemporary demand for evidence of God and the very plausibility of Christian faith in that context.

Balthasar is not antimetaphysical. In fact, two of the seven volumes (in English) of *The Glory of the Lord*<sup>62</sup> are devoted to metaphysics.<sup>63</sup> As he explains, “For although theology thinks and develops on the basis of its own presuppositions, it makes use of the human-philosophical forms of consideration and results of investigation at every step on this

<sup>62</sup> Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*, ed. Joseph Fessio, S.J., and John Riches, 7 vols. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982–91); see esp. vol. 4 (*The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity*) and vol. 5 (*The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*).

<sup>63</sup> In specific regard to Aquinas, Balthasar describes him as “the greatest artist of order and organization in the history of thought” (*The Glory of the Lord* 3.284). Though Balthasar also describes Aquinas as “more of a philosopher than a theologian” (ibid. 3.9), he is generous in his praise of Aquinas’s charism for metaphysics and applauds his metaphysics as “the philosophical reflection of the free glory of the living God of the Bible” (ibid. 4.406–7). Admittedly, Balthasar is critical of Aquinas’s esthetics, his theological esthetics as distinct from his philosophical esthetics, and chooses to omit Aquinas from his treatment of a sequence of theological estheticians, arguing that “[i]t may be that a deep and lucid philosophical aesthetics has been developed, but that it has failed to achieve a theological translation, that is, to be seen as the unfolding of a theology based on the biblical revelation” (ibid. 2.21). But Balthasar is not critical of Aquinas’s metaphysics as such. Overall, Balthasar’s use of Aquinas is more constructive than critical; see James J. Buckley, “Balthasar’s Use of the Theology of Aquinas,” *Thomist* 59 (1995) 517–45.

path. . . . The entire fullness—the gold, frankincense, and myrrh of human thought—is not too much to be presented to the Word of God which has become nature.”<sup>64</sup> Indeed, he concludes this exploration with a chapter, “The Christian Contribution to Metaphysics,” wherein he argues that the Christian is called to be the guardian of metaphysics, responsible for the development of a comprehensive and contemporary metaphysics for our time.<sup>65</sup> And this is precisely the point—the need for a renewed Christian metaphysics, one that more adequately expresses the emerging awareness of person and being, one that incorporates personalist categories of love and the relationality constitutive of love as intrinsic to personhood.

Ultimately the paschal mystery challenges all our systematizing, the tenets on which the system is built and the very possibility of a system at all. Most of all, it offers a sobering and salutary reminder that systematics attempts to say more and to do more than it properly can say and do. The mystery that one seeks to express cannot and will not be contained in any systematic theology, no matter how critically grounded, refined, elegant, or rigorous. Systematics itself has a certain paschal character, as Lafont and Kelly have suggested.<sup>66</sup> Balthasar’s trinitarian theology is a notable example of the divine mystery exploding into our theologizing and blowing open our most heroic attempts to conceptualize and systematize.

<sup>64</sup> Balthasar, “On the Tasks of Catholic Philosophy in Our Time,” *Communio* 20 (1993) 187.

<sup>65</sup> Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord* 5.646–56.

<sup>66</sup> Ghislain Lafont, *Peut-on connaître Dieu en Jésus Christ?* *Cogitatio Fidei* 44 (Paris: Cerf, 1969); Lafont, *God, Time and Being*, trans. Leonard Maluf (Petersham, Mass.: St Bede’s, 1992); and Tony Kelly “The ‘Horrible Wrappers’ of Aquinas’ God,” *Pacifica* 9 (1996) 185–203.