Perceiving Splendor: The "Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses" in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics

Perceiving Splendor:

The "Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses" in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics

A dissertation presented

by

Mark Johnson McInroy

to

The Faculty of Harvard Divinity School

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Theology

In the Subject of

Theology

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

May 2009

HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL

DISSERTATION ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

The undersigned, appointed by the

Committee on the Study of Religion

have examined a dissertation entitled

Perceiving Splendor:
The "Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses" in
Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics

presented by Mark J. McInroy

candidate for the degree of Doctor of Theology and hereby certify that it is worthy of acceptance.

Signature _____

Typed name: Prof. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza

Signature _____

Typed name: Prof. Sarah Coakley

Signature _____

Typed name: Prof. Ronald Thiemann

Signature _____

Typed name: Prof. Kevin Madigan

Date: 27 April, 2009

Advisors: Profs. Sarah Coakley & Francis Schüssler Fiorenza **Author: Mark Johnson McInroy**

Perceiving Splendor:
The "Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses" in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics

ABSTRACT

This study argues that the so-called "doctrine of the spiritual senses" should be recognized as a vital component of the theological aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988). The doctrine of the spiritual senses has been interpreted in the Christian tradition in a variety of ways. In its epistemological sense, it generally claims that human beings can be made capable by grace of perceiving "spiritual" realities. After a lengthy period of disuse within systematic theology, Balthasar recovers the doctrine in the mid-twentieth century and articulates it afresh in his theological aesthetics. At the heart of this project stands the task of perceiving the absolute beauty of the divine form (*Gestalt*) through which God is revealed to human beings. Although extensive scholarly attention has focused on Balthasar's understanding of revelation, beauty, and form, what remains curiously neglected is his model of the perceptual faculties through which the human being beholds the form that God reveals. I argue that Balthasar draws upon the fecund tradition of the spiritual senses in an effort at developing the anthropological structure requisite to perceiving the "splendor" (*Glanz*) of divine revelation. In other words, it is precisely through the spiritual senses that one performs the epistemologically central task of "seeing the form."

Furthermore, to the minimal extent that Balthasar's understanding of the spiritual senses has been treated at all, no source properly acknowledges the remarkable manner in

which he creatively rearticulates the doctrine in his aesthetics. I therefore additionally claim that Balthasar integrates elements of the classic doctrine of the spiritual senses with the thought of his contemporaries, and that from this intersection emerges a highly original understanding of the spiritual senses. I also explain how, in the various interactions and tensions between Balthasar and Barth, on the one hand, and Balthasar and Rahner, on the other, the importance of this theme in Balthasar's thought has been overlooked in the secondary literature to date.

Perceiving Splendor:
The "Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses" in Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics

Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without scholarly guidance from a number of different quarters. First, I wish to thank my advisor, Sarah Coakley, for her unflagging support throughout the process of writing this dissertation. She has overseen this work from start to finish, and I have benefitted enormously from her incisive commentary, her close attention to texts, and her keen eye for the relevance of this topic for the contemporary theological climate. Francis Schüssler Fiorenza not only generously agreed to take over the administrative aspects of advising my thesis after Sarah Coakley's move to Cambridge University, he has also terrifically shaped my intellectual development. He has provided an invaluable sense of the thought-world out of which Balthasar's theology arises, and his ability to contextualize my inquiry has aided this project tremendously. Ronald Thiemann has been an exceptionally stimulating and supportive conversation partner as my work has developed, especially with regard to the subtleties of Karl Barth's theology, aesthetics, and the broader significance of Balthasar's thought for modern theology. Kevin Madigan could not have been more supportive of my scholarly endeavors throughout my doctoral study, and our many discussions of Bonaventure and Balthasar have importantly influenced this study. I also owe a great deal to other Harvard faculty members, especially François Bovon, Francis X. Clooney, Karen King, David Lamberth, and Stephanie Paulsell.

I am immensely grateful to my friends and colleagues at Harvard University and Harvard Divinity School for years of camaraderie throughout the travails of graduate study, and, more concretely, for insightfully responding to numerous chapter drafts throughout the years. Special thanks go to Mary Anderson, Faye Bodley-Dangelo, Tim

Dalrymple, Sutopa Dasgupta, Philip Francis, George Gonzalez, Brett Grainger, Paul Dafydd Jones, Tamsin Jones, Piotr Malysz, Cameron Partridge, Mark Scott, John Senior, Katherine Shaner, Rachel Smith, Charles Stang, Robert St. Hilaire, Bryan Wagoner, and Mara Willard.

I have also been fortunate to exchange ideas about my topic with a number of scholars at other American institutions, including William Abraham, Fred Aquino, Peter Casarella, Philip Clayton, Boyd Taylor Coolman, Brian Daley, Philip Endean (during a recent visit to Boston College), Paul Gavrilyuk, Garth Green, Thomas A. Lewis, Cyrus Olsen, Shelly Rambo, and William Wainwright.

I have nothing but profound gratitude to the theological faculty at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg, where I was able through a Frederick Sheldon Traveling Fellowship to spend a year doing research on my topic. Most particularly, I am thankful to Hansjürgen Verweyen and Helmut Hoping. Hansjürgen Verweyen's penetrating insight into my work is matched only by his generosity toward me and my project. Helmut Hoping not only kindly agreed to serve as my *Doktorvater* for the 2007-2008 academic year, he also invited me into his circle of doctoral students and allowed me to present a chapter of my study in his doctoral colloquium. I also benefitted from a number of stimulating conversations about Balthasar's thought within German-speaking academic circles, both at the University of Freiburg and beyond. My gratitude extends to Martin Bieler, Antonio Cimino, Benjamin Dahlke, Markus Enders, Gisbert Greshake, Julia Knop, Aaron Looney, Thomas Möllenbeck, Robin Stockitt, Klaus von Stosch, Magnus Striet, Jan-Heiner Tück, and Andrej Wierzinski.

Archive work was made not only possible, but immensely enjoyable by Frau Cornelia Capol at the Balthasar Archiv and Hans-Anton Drewes at the Barth Archiv, both in Basel, Switzerland. To each of them I am deeply grateful. Special thanks also to Lois Rankin for her translation of Agnell Rickenmann's article from the original Italian.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my family. To my mother, Jan, my debts and gratitude are immeasurable. In particular regard to this project, she has not only generously offered her editorial expertise in reviewing multiple chapter drafts, she has also inspired in me a delight in the English language that I hope manifests itself on the pages of this study. My father, John, stands behind this work in countless ways. And my brother, Adam, has simply been an inspiration to me throughout my life. Thank you all.

And last, to Suzanne, for her unfailing love and support during the writing of this study. She, more than anyone else, has been with me through every step of this project. Without her it never would have been completed.

To my parents, Jan and John

Abbreviations

The Works of Hans Urs von Balthasar:

GL I	*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*. Vol. I: *Seeing the Form*.
GL II	*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*. Vol. II: *Studies in Theological Style*s: *Clerical Styles*.
GL III	*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*. Vol. III: *Studies in Theological Styles: Lay Styles*.
GL IV	*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*. Vol. IV: *The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity*.
GL V	*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*. Vol. V: *The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*.
GL VI	*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*. Vol. VI: *Theology: The Old Covenant*.
GL VII	*The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*. Vol. VII: *Theology: The New Covenant*.
TD I	*Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. Vol. I: *Prolegomena*.
TD II	*Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. Vol. II: *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*.
TD III	*Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. Vol. III: *Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*.
TD IV	*Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. Vol. IV: *The Action*.
TD V	*Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. Vol. V: *The Final Act*.
TL I	*Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory*. Vol. I: *The Truth of the World*.
TL II	*Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory*. Vol. II: *The Truth of God*.
TL III	*Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory*. Vol. III: *The Spirit of Truth*.

Introduction

The influence of the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) on Catholic and Protestant thought in the latter half of the twentieth century has been widespread and profound. He is best known for the particular manner in which his thought confronts the anthropocentrism of modern theological schemes: namely, through his use of aesthetic categories in mediating divine revelation to humanity. At the heart of this "theological aesthetics" stands the task of perceiving the absolute beauty of the divine form (*Gestalt*) through which God is revealed to human beings.

Although extensive scholarly attention has focused on Balthasar's understanding of revelation, beauty, and form, what remains curiously neglected is his heavy reliance on the so-called "doctrine of the spiritual senses" in his theological aesthetics. Partly because he is often read in opposition to Karl Rahner as adopting the revelation-centered theological method of Karl Barth, Balthasar's theological anthropology has been largely occluded from scholarly view. However, I argue that Balthasar's account of the reception of revelation differs significantly from Barth's and can only be explained via reference to the spiritual senses. That is, at the core of Balthasar's aesthetics lies the idea that our perceptual faculties must become "spiritualized" if we are to perceive the splendor (*Glanz*) of the form through which God is revealed. The spiritual senses tradition thus emerges as an essential resource for Balthasar's articulation of this spiritual aesthesis. Without reference to the spiritual senses, I claim, one cannot explain how divine revelation is perceived by the human being in Balthasar's aesthetics.

In deploying the spiritual senses in his theological aesthetics, however, Balthasar is not content simply to repristinate the doctrine out of its patristic and medieval versions.

Instead, he places the idea of the spiritual senses as it has been articulated throughout the Christian tradition in conversation with the thought of his contemporaries, most particularly Karl Barth, Romano Guardini, Gustav Siewerth, and Paul Claudel. What emerges from this dialogue is a reforged model of the doctrine that displays noteworthy discontinuities from its historical instantiations. It is thus my further contention that Balthasar uses his contemporary interlocutors to advance a highly creative rearticulation of the doctrine that is importantly distinct from its historical precedents.

On the "Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses"

A preliminary question must be faced at the outset: what exactly is the "doctrine of the spiritual senses?" The fact is that the term is not deployed univocally throughout its long history. Today the phrase is typically used to denote a set of five "spiritual" perceptual faculties that function in a manner analogous to their corporeal counterparts. In other words, just as there are corporeal senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell that apprehend physical objects, so too are there spiritual senses of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell that perceive "spiritual" entities (God, Christ, angels). In the early twentieth century, Augustin Poulain and Karl Rahner, in separate but influential studies, developed a "definition" of the spiritual senses as fivefold, "analogical" uses of the language of sensation.[1] That is, they argued that there are indeed five discrete spiritual

[1] Augustin Poulain, S.J., *Des Grâces D'Oraison* (Paris: V. Retaux, 1901). Published in English as *The Graces of Interior Prayer*, trans. Leonora L. Yorke Smith (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., 1910). Karl Rahner, S.J., "Le début d'une doctrine des cinq sens spirituals chez Origène," *Revue d'ascetique et de mystique* 13 (1932): 112-145. The article was translated into German and printed in abridged form in Karl Rahner, *Schriften zur Theologie*, Band XII: *Theologie aus Erfahrung des Geistes*, ed. Karl Neufeld, S.J. (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1975), 111-136, then later published in English as "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," in Karl Rahner, *Theological Investigations*, vol. XVI: *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology*, trans. David Morland, O.S.B. (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 81-103. Karl Rahner, "La doctrine des 'sens spirituels' au moyen-âge, en particulier chez S. Bonaventure," *Revue*

senses, and they further insisted that the language of sensation not be understood "merely metaphorically."[2] Instead, they claimed that we observe in these descriptions of encounter with God and spiritual entities a "stronger," "analogical" use of sensory terms.[3] It was this version of the spiritual senses tradition that Balthasar inherited and utilized, though not—as we shall shortly show—without added novelties of his own.

Status Quaestionis

At the outset of a study such as this it is pertinent to review the state of scholarship on Balthasar's engagement with the complex Christian tradition of the spiritual senses. In spite of the repeated references to this theme throughout his corpus, Balthasar's appropriation of the doctrine remains largely unexamined at present. Only a

---

d'ascetique et de mystique 14 (1933): 263-299. Rahner wrote another essay on Bonaventure published in 1934: "Der Begriff der Ecstasis bei Bonaventura," *Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik* 9 (1934): 1-19. These two articles were combined by Karl Neufeld and published as "Die Lehre von den 'geistlichen Sinnen' im Mittelalter," in *Schriften zur Theologie*, Band XII: *Theologie aus Erfahrung des Geistes*, ed. Karl Neufeld, S.J. (Zürich: Benziger Verlag, 1975), 137-172. The English translation is from this 1975 German version, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 16: *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology*, trans. David Morland (New York: Crossroad, 1979) 104-34.

[2] Poulain emphatically holds, "With the mystics, the words to *see* God, to *hear*, and to *touch* Him are not mere metaphors. They express something more: some close analogy" (*The Graces of Interior Prayer*, 90). Spiritual seeing, for example, is in an important way quite similar to physical seeing. A "merely metaphorical" use of such terms, by contrast, bears only a "distant or restricted resemblance," on Poulain's analysis. Rahner adopts Poulain's criteria and employs them in examining a vast range of patristic and medieval texts. For the methodological prologue to Rahner's analysis, see "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," 81-82. Of course, some may find this particular understanding of metaphor reductive. A "metaphorical" use of sensory language, on these accounts, simply indicates a use of sensory language that does not actually retain any sensory or perceptual dimension. For example, in the colloquial expression, "I see what you mean," the term, "seeing" is used in a metaphorical sense. For purposes of this examination, I use the term in the manner in which it has been used in scholarship on the spiritual senses, the various shortcomings of such a limited concept of metaphor notwithstanding.

[3] Of what, one might justifiably ask, does this "close analogy" consist? Poulain draws on the notion of "presence" in order to outline the conditions for the resemblance between the spiritual and corporeal senses. He explains, "Does the soul possess intellectual spiritual senses, having some resemblance to the bodily senses, so that, in an analogous manner and in diverse ways, she is able to perceive the *presence* of pure spirits (*la présence des purs esprits*), and the presence of God in particular" (*The Graces of Interior Prayer*, 88)? It is, therefore, precisely when one speaks of detecting an immaterial "presence," to Poulain, that he or she is using sensory language in a "non-metaphorical" manner.

handful of scholars have observed that the spiritual senses are a noteworthy feature of Balthasar's aesthetics,[4] and even among those who are aware of the doctrine's significance, only Stephen Fields and Agnell Rickenmann have undertaken article-length investigations of the topic.[5] Rickenmann provides an excellent summary of Origen's position on the spiritual senses and a helpful exposition of Balthasar's overall goals in his theological aesthetics. Fields offers an instructive account of key points of contrast between the readings of Bonaventure advanced by Balthasar and Karl Rahner. However, due in large part to the brevity of any article-length treatment of the issues, neither Fields nor Rickenmann gestures toward the wide array of influences on Balthasar's creative rearticulation of the doctrine, nor do they investigate the systematic significance of the spiritual senses in relation to Balthasar's theory of form. As the essays by Rickenmann and Fields are the only articles on the topic, and there is at present no full-length study of Balthasar's use of the spiritual senses tradition, the secondary literature on this aspect of Balthasar's thought is unexpectedly incomplete.

---

[4] Balthasar's use of the spiritual senses receives brief mention in the following works: Hansjürgen Verweyen, *Ontologische Vorraussetzungen des Glaubensaktes* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1969), 172. Manfred Lochbrunner, *Analogia Caritatis: Darstellung und Deutung der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasars* (Freiburg: Herder, 1981), 175. Peter Casarella, "Experience as a Theological Category: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Christian Encounter with God's Image," *Communio* 20 (Spring 1993): 118-128, 122. Roland Chia, *Revelation and Theology; The Knowledge of God in Balthasar and Barth* (New York: P. Lang, 1999), 82-86. Victoria Harrison, "*Homo Orans*: von Balthasar's Christocentric Philosophical Anthropology," *Heythrop Journal* 40 (1999): 280-300, 299. D. C. Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth* (New York: Fordham, 2004), 279-285. Anthony Cirelli, "Form and Freedom: Patristic Revival in Hans Urs von Balthasar" (doctoral dissertation: Catholic University of America, 2007), 225-229. Although Louis Dupré does not address Balthasar's use of the spiritual senses tradition specifically, he does take up similar themes in his "The Glory of the Lord: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetic," in David L. Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 183-206.

[5] Stephen Fields, "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses," *Theological Studies* 57 (1996), 224-241. Agnell Rickenmann, "La dottrina d' Origene sui sensi spirituali e la sua ricezione in Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Rivista Teologica di Lugano* 6 (2001): 155-168.

At the risk of oversimplifying the reasons for this lacuna, much can be explained by reference to Balthasar's well known emphasis on resuscitating an *objective* revelatory claim for modern theology. That is, Balthasar's resistance to theologies that follow Kant's "turn to the subject" has influenced many commentators on his texts to focus on the *object* of theology in his thought, and examinations of his model of the human *subject* have been comparatively minimal as a result. Indeed, the most notable point of contrast between Balthasar and Rahner is often said to be that, whereas Rahner (and, more broadly, all of so-called "transcendental Thomism") is concerned with the transcendental structure of the human subject, Balthasar is deeply critical of this approach, and he instead focuses his theological attention on that which lies *beyond* the human being.[6] The spiritual senses, then, may have gone largely unnoticed because of the fact that they, as epistemological features of the human being, do not occur to many Balthasar scholars as especially pertinent to the broader themes of his theology.

Additionally significant on this question of scholarly neglect are the myriad hermeneutical difficulties the doctrine of the spiritual senses presents to its interpreters.

---

[6] Balthasar himself contrasts his approach with that of Rahner in an interview late in life, commenting as follows: "Rahner has chosen Kant, or, if you prefer, Fichte: the transcendental starting point. And I—as a Germanist—have chosen Goethe, [who stressed] the form (*Gestalt*), the indissolubly unique, organic, developing form (*Gestalt*)—I am thinking of Goethe's poem *Die Metamorphose der Pflanzen*—this form (*Gestalt*) *Communio* [is] something that Kant, even in his aesthetics, never really dealt with." Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Geist und Feuer," *Herder Korrespondenz* 30 (1976): 75. English translation in Edward Oakes, *Pattern of Redemption* (New York: Continuum, 1994), 72-73. Balthasar's remarks on Pierre Rousselot provide another illustrative example: "Rousselot, in his manner of expression and thought-habits, still remains too close to the Kantianism he is trying to surpass…For him, too, the synthetic power remains one-sidedly a part of the subjective dynamism, borne by grace. He does not sufficiently attribute this synthesis to the efficacy of the objective evidence of the form of revelation" (*GL* I, 176-177). Balthasar's theological method, then, in contrast with this view, undoubtedly emphasizes the *object* of theology over against any "Kantianism," and he is quite clear in claiming that this object itself sets the terms for encounter and delimits its possibilities. To ascribe the synthetic power of which Balthasar speaks to the subject alone undermines the self-organizing nature of the object of theology on Balthasar's model. See also Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation*, trans. Alexander Dru (London: Sheed and Ward, 1970), esp. 25-42. Original German: *Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe* (Einsideln: Johannes Verlag, 1963), esp. 19-32.

The very term, "spiritual senses," tends to disorient more than illuminate, and it often initially brings to mind the spiritual sense of scripture as a hermeneutical approach to the Bible. The notion of the spiritual senses as a set of perceptual faculties analogous to the physical senses remains relatively unknown, and even to those familiar with the idea, a number of issues complexify interpretation of the doctrine enormously.[7]

And yet, it is clear that Balthasar himself regards the spiritual senses as significant. His interest in the doctrine can be observed as early as 1934. In October of that year he wrote a letter to the German philosopher Josef Pieper, in which he commented on Rahner's then recently-published studies on Origen and Bonaventure.[8] Just a few years later, in his Origen anthology, Balthasar grouped together over 150

[7] It should additionally be noted that simply interpreting Balthasar on any topic is a notoriously difficult task, and elucidating his many comments on the spiritual senses proves to be no exception to this general rule. Even Balthasar's most sympathetic interpreters acknowledge that there has been a problem in Balthasar reception. Noel O'Donaghue, for one, memorably remarks, "The first volume of the English translation of Balthasar's *Herrlichkeit* is diffuse, repetitive, oracular, and every bit as heavy as its 683 pages of relentless German-Swiss theologizing would lead one to expect. Yet it is a joy to read." Noel O'Donaghue, "A Theology of Beauty," in *The Analogy of Beauty*, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 1-10, here 1. In a similar vein, Larry Chapp writes of Balthasar's theology as follows: "Hans Urs von Balthasar is one of the most important Catholic theologians of this century. However, his theology is exceptionally complex and is difficult to summarize or encapsulate. This complexity is due to the very nature of Balthasar's theological method which is a mystical, contemplative meditation on the overall aesthetic 'wholeness' of God's revelation in Jesus. Unfortunately, this more 'aesthetic' approach has the negative effect of rendering his theology somewhat diffuse and non systematic. This makes it extremely difficult to analyze." Larry Chapp, *The God Who Speaks: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theology of Revelation* (San Francisco, London, Bethesda: International Scholars Publications, 1996), Preface. Last, David Moss and Edward Oakes frankly disclose that, "At least among professional theologians, Hans Urs von Balthasar tends to perplex more than he manages to inspire." In David Moss and Edward T. Oakes, S.J., Introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*, David Moss and Edward T. Oakes, S.J., eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-10, here 1. In characteristic Balthasarian fashion, then, a frequently opaque account of the spiritual senses is put forward in *The Glory of the Lord*, and as a result it is not immediately obvious to Balthasar's reader how carefully certain aspects of his reading of the spiritual senses tradition are considered, nor how well they serve many of Balthasar's overarching aims in his theological aesthetics. Although we will find in some instances that Balthasar simply does not provide his reader with sufficient clarity, I also suggest that a number of claims in Balthasar's texts that may at first glance appear to be overly epigrammatic can in fact be shown through careful analysis to have highly developed theoretical backing.

[8] This letter is quoted in Manfred Lochbrunner, *Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine Philosophenfreunde* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2005), 15.

passages from Origen's works that describe, in his terms, "spiritual 'super-sensibility'" (*geistliche Übersinnlichkeit*).[9] Balthasar also discussed the spiritual senses in his monograph on Maximus the Confessor[10] and he made use of the spiritual senses in "devotional" works such as *Prayer*[11] and, much later, *Christian Meditation*.[12]

Moreover, toward the end of his career, Balthasar made clear reference to the importance of the spiritual senses in relation to his theological aesthetics. In an address given at the Catholic University of America in 1980, he commented, "My intention in the first part of my trilogy called '*Aesthetik*' was not merely to train our *spiritual eyes* to see Christ as he shows himself but, beyond that, to prove that all great and history-making theology always followed this method."[13] Balthasar, then, not only regarded the spiritual senses as important for his own theological project, but he additionally held that the notion of spiritualized perception had been employed throughout the history of Christian theology. Most important to this study are the references to the spiritual senses that pervade *The Glory of the Lord*; in the first volume of his aesthetics Balthasar writes that his assessment of the human being "culminates" in his treatment of the spiritual senses.[14]

---

[9] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Origen, Spirit and Fire: A Thematic Anthology of His Writings*, trans. Robert Daley (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), esp. 218-257. Original German: *Origenes, Geist und Feuer: Ein Aufbau aus seinen Werken* (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1938).

[10] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*, trans. Brian Daley, S.J. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003). Original German: *Kosmische Liturgie. Maximus der Bekenner: Höhe und Krise des griechischen Weltbilds* (Freiburg: Herder, 1941). Later published as *Kosmische Liturgie: Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1961).

[11] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Prayer*, trans. Graham Harrison (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986). Original German: *Das Betrachtende Gebet* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1955).

[12] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Chrisian Meditation*, trans. Mary Skerry (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989). Original German: *Christlich Meditieren* (Freiburg: Herder, 1984).

[13] Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Theology and Aesthetic," trans. Andrée Emery, *Communio*, 8 (Spring 1981): 62-71, 66 (emphasis added).

[14] *GL* I, 365.

Progression of Argument and Chapter Outline

This study is organized around two sets of questions. First, why does Balthasar write what he does about the spiritual senses? Who are the key figures in his reading of the spiritual senses tradition, and how does he interpret those figures? In other words, the first issue this study addresses is that of influences. This will be the concern of chapters 1–3. Second, we shall ask: what does Balthasar do with the idea of the spiritual senses in his own theology? How does he render the doctrine? What place do the spiritual senses occupy in his theological aesthetics? How does the doctrine function? The second question, then, is that of the constructive position and systematic significance of the spiritual senses in Balthasar's own thought. This will be the concern of chapters 4–6.

A more specific account of the exact manner in which these two sets of questions are addressed now follows.

Chapter 1 examines Balthasar's reading of patristic figures on the spiritual senses. Origen receives greatest emphasis here, both because of the fact that he stands at the beginnings of the spiritual senses tradition (Rahner credits him with "inventing" the doctrine), and because of his special significance for Balthasar. Broadly speaking, the most distinctive feature of Balthasar's approach to these patristic figures entails the positive reading he gives to the corporeal senses to which the spiritual senses are analogous. That is, many patristic authors can justifiably be read as articulating a "dualist" understanding of the doctrine whereby the spiritual senses are disjuncted from their corporeal counterparts. We shall see in chapter 1, however, that Balthasar repeatedly reads patristic authors as valuing the corporeal dimension to perception (albeit within certain limits, as will be examined below) in addition to its spiritual counterpart.

Intriguingly, too, Balthasar locates in Pseudo-Macarius an atypical rendering of the spiritual senses that entails undergoing with Christ his passion, death, and resurrection in order to receive one's spiritual senses. Finally, we shall observe throughout this chapter that it is first and foremost Rahner who mediates the doctrine of the spiritual senses to Balthasar, as Rahner's patristic studies are perpetually in the background of Balthasar's own examination of these figures.

Chapter 2 investigates Balthasar's reading of figures from the medieval and early modern periods. Bonaventure is most significant among medieval expositors of the spiritual senses, and Ignatius of Loyola for Balthasar's reading of the early modern period. As was true in his reading of the patristic authors, so too does Balthasar celebrate the material dimension to perception in the medieval and early modern figures he examines, drawing from those versions of the doctrine the most positive reading of the physical senses that he can summon. In this chapter we shall also see that Balthasar finds in Bonaventure one who regards the spiritual senses as possessed of an explicitly aesthetic dimension, an attribute that has obvious affinities with Balthasar's project and his own appropriation of the doctrine.

Chapter 3 looks closely at the influence of Balthasar's contemporaries on his articulation of the spiritual senses, with special attention to Karl Barth, Romano Guardini, Gustav Siewerth, and Paul Claudel. Here I shall show that Balthasar actually evinces substantial discontentment with the versions of the doctrine articulated throughout its earlier history, and that Barth and Siewerth, in particular, guide Balthasar's use of so-called "personalism" in his own rearticulation of the spiritual senses.[15] I also show that

[15] Although Balthasar's engagement with "personalism" is wide-ranging, in this study I confine my examination to those versions of the idea most directly relevant to his doctrine of the spiritual senses.

all four of the modern figures he uses equip Balthasar with an anthropology of "unity-in-duality" between body and soul. He then uses this anthropology to frame the doctrine of the spiritual senses such that spiritual perception and corporeal perception occur in a single unified act.

Having assessed in the first three chapters of this study the various influences on Balthasar's understanding of the spiritual senses, I describe in chapter 4 Balthasar's own rendering of the doctrine in his theological aesthetics. Here I cull various aspects of Balthasar's engagement with the sources outlined in the previous chapters in order to highlight key features of his constructive version of the doctrine. We will see that Balthasar advances a highly original understanding of the spiritual senses that is importantly distinct from those models that precede him.

Chapter 5 goes on to examine the role played by the spiritual senses in Balthasar's theological aesthetics, and it is here that I put forward the central claim of this study. Inasmuch as Balthasar calls for perception of the form, and inasmuch as that form consists of both sensory and "supersensory" aspects (i.e., a material component and a "spiritual" dimension, *species* and *lumen*, forma and splendor), some account of the way in which this human perception exceeds the material realm is absolutely essential to the success of Balthasar's project. In other words, it is precisely because the form itself is possessed of both sensory and supersensory aspects that the *perception* of that form must be both sensory and supersensory. Balthasar's theological aesthetics thus clamors for a doctrine of the spiritual senses; in fact, one could go so far as to claim that if such a doctrine did not already exist, then for purposes of his theological aesthetics Balthasar would need to invent it.

Chapter 6 explores the far-reaching implications of the claim made in chapter 5, looking in particular at the ways in which Balthasar's understanding of fundamental theology, the operation of grace in the human being, and the relationship between natural and supernatural should be reconsidered in light of this new understanding of the centrality of the spiritual senses to his project.

Contribution to Scholarship

In examining these aspects of Balthasar's appropriation of the spiritual senses tradition, this study contributes to scholarship at a number of different levels. First, the thesis adds to a growing body of literature on the spiritual senses tradition. In particular, it demonstrates that the doctrine of the spiritual senses, long viewed as something of a curiosity by many modern theologians and historians, in fact occupies an essential position in the thought of one of the most significant theologians of the twentieth century. Far from an obscure relic destined for insignificance, the spiritual senses are shown here to have an unexpected relevance for modern theology, and, in particular, for the burgeoning field of theological aesthetics.

Second, this dissertation contributes to the ongoing reception of Balthasar's monumental *oeuvre* by observing that crucial features of his thought are illuminated by reference to the doctrine of the spiritual senses. Most apparently, situating Balthasar in the trajectory of scholarship on the spiritual senses gives his readers some sense of what to do with the dizzying array of sensory language he uses in his theological aesthetics. That is, placing Balthasar in the spiritual senses trajectory guards against collapsing his use of sensory language into "merely metaphorical" descriptions of the encounter with

God. Additionally, Balthasar's engagement with the spiritual senses offers a corrective to those who regard him as relatively unconcerned with theological anthropology, and his use of the doctrine demonstrates a depth of epistemological interest that some scholars may find surprising. Furthermore, when the spiritual senses are shown to be central to Balthasar's theological aesthetics, we see that his understanding of perception, faith, nature, and grace are all importantly inflected by his use of the doctrine.

Third, this thesis charts new avenues through which to appreciate previously unexamined lines of influence between Balthasar and a number of his contemporaries. Claiming that Rahner stands behind one of the most important features of Balthasar's thought underscores the fact that, despite their frequently discussed theological differences, an important commonality obtains between these two most influential Catholic theologians of the twentieth century. Additionally, to claim that Karl Barth had a hand in shaping Balthasar's model of spiritual perception strikes one as a highly counterintuitive suggestion that stands to deepen and expand our understanding of the relationship between these two seminal figures in twentieth-century theology. In this claim, then, I add to scholarly assessments of the relationship between Balthasar and Barth by arguing that Barth is important to Balthasar not only in terms of his emphasis on revelation and his Christocentric approach to theology, but also, more unexpectedly, for his theological anthropology and his claim that the human being is capable of perceiving God.

With a sense of the development of our argument now in place, we now turn to Balthasar's engagement with patristic versions of the spiritual senses.

Chapter 1

"In the Spirit of Origen:" Balthasar's Exploration of Patristic Versions of the Spiritual Senses

This chapter examines Balthasar's use of patristic authors in his appropriation of the spiritual senses tradition. Here I demonstrate that Balthasar is influenced by the versions of the doctrine found in a number of patristic figures, particularly Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185-ca. 254).[16] Although Balthasar's reading of the spiritual senses in Origen and others takes up a wide range of issues, in this chapter I focus on the four most pertinent themes of his examination of patristic versions of the idea: first, Balthasar repeatedly shows interest in those versions of the doctrine that fit the Poulainian-Rahnerian definition of being fivefold, "non-metaphorical" uses of the language of sensation. This reading of the spiritual senses has far-reaching implications for Balthasar's theological aesthetics, as will be explored below. Second, although one finds significant variation throughout the tradition regarding what, exactly, the spiritual senses perceive, Balthasar consistently evinces interest in versions of the doctrine that regard Christ as the object of spiritual perception. Third, Balthasar shows an unswerving preoccupation with maximizing the value placed on the corporeal senses and the body in relation to their spiritual counterparts. Fourth, whereas the spiritual senses are often understood in the patristic setting as being given to those who, through much practice, have attained the final stage of the spiritual life and been granted so-called "mystical" experience, Balthasar downplays the role of practice in acquiring one's spiritual senses, effectively repositioning the place of the spiritual senses in the spiritual life such that they are granted among the general gifts of grace.

[16] I borrow the chapter title from Werner Löser's well known study, *Im Geistes des Origenes: Hans Urs von Balthasar als Interpret der Theologie der Kirchenväter* (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht, 1976).

It should be said at the outset of this chapter, of course, that Balthasar has been criticized for his approach to patristic thought. Specifically, he is often regarded as allowing his own theological concerns to dictate his approach to the church fathers, and one finds a frequently expressed worry among contemporary patristic scholars that he is not attentive enough to the actual figures and texts he examines.[17] In light of the potential for Balthasar to obscure the voices of the fathers with his own agenda, it will be the special concern of this chapter to evaluate his approach to the spiritual senses to determine whether or not he has inappropriately read himself and his own theological preoccupations into the texts he examines. In some cases we will see the Balthasar that patristic scholars have come to expect; in other cases, however, I demonstrate that Balthasar actually reads those figures with greater attentiveness than one might anticipate on the basis of his reputation alone.

The chapter will proceed as follows: first, I will examine Balthasar's reading of "mainstream" patristic figures in the spiritual senses tradition (at least, according to Rahner and Balthasar): Origen, Evagrius of Pontus (345-399), Diadochus of Photice (ca. 400-ca. 486), and Pseudo-Macarius (dates uncertain).[18] Second, I will examine two figures whose significance Balthasar considerably amplifies in comparison to the treatment they receive in Rahner's study: Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and Maximus

[17] Brian Daley, for one, conveys this view as follows: "So thoroughly has he exploited his patristic scholarship to advance his overall concerns that he often puzzles those whose interests are primarily directed towards understanding early Christian theology in its own context." Brian Daley, S.J. "Balthasar's Reading of the Church Fathers," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 187-206, 187. Dom Polycarp Sherwood, although ultimately appreciative of Balthasar's work, voices a similar concern. See his "Survey of Recent Work on St. Maximus the Confessor," *Traditio* 20 (1964): 428-437, 429-430.

[18] These four are the main figures treated by Rahner in his study of patristic versions of the spiritual senses, and Balthasar precisely follows this Rahnerian trajectory in terms of the degree of emphasis he places on each figure.

the Confessor (ca. 580-662). Last, I will investigate Balthasar's curious neglect of the articulation of the spiritual senses in Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335-ca. 394).

Origen of Alexandria

In his earliest study on Origen, published in two parts in 1936 and 1937, Balthasar makes explicit reference to the spiritual senses;[19] two years later, in 1938, he publishes his anthology, *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, with a substantial section of his text specifically devoted to Origen's treatment of the topic.[20] In fact, in the latter volume Balthasar locates over 150 different passages throughout Origen's works that pertain to the spiritual senses. Furthermore, in his own introductory comments to this assemblage of texts, Balthasar indicates both the importance of the doctrine and the significance of Origen in its history: "Origen was the first to build up the doctrine of the spiritual senses which has remained a core element of all later mystical theology."[21] In the first volume of his theological aesthetics, published in 1961, Balthasar again offers an account of Origen's understanding of the spiritual senses, this time as part of a reprise of the history of the doctrine preceding his own constructive use of the idea.[22]

---

[19] "Le Mysterion d'Origène," *Recherches de science religieuse* 26 (1936): 511-562 and 27 (1937): 38-64. For Balthasar's treatment of the spiritual senses, see 554-562. Later published in a single volume as *Parole et Mystère Chez Origène* (Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1957). In the 1957 republication, Balthasar includes a subheading with the title "Sens Spirituel" in the volume's table of contents.

[20] *Origenes, Geist und Feuer: Ein Aufbau aus seinen Werken* (Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1938). Later published in English as *Origen, Spirit and Fire: A Thematic Anthology of His Writings*, trans. Robert J. Daley (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1984). For Balthasar's treatment of the spiritual senses, see *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 218-257.

[21] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 218.

[22] *GL* I, 365-368.

Although the influence of Origen's theology on Balthasar has been well documented among his commentators,[23] only Agnell Rickenmann has written an article-length study taking up in particular Balthasar's reading of Origen's doctrine of the spiritual senses.[24] Rickenmann provides an excellent account of Origen's position on the spiritual senses and a helpful summary of Balthasar's overall goals in his theological aesthetics, but his actual assessment of Balthasar's appropriation of Origen on this topic is quite brief. Rickenmann notes Balthasar's tendency to read his own theological concerns into the texts he examines,[25] but he does not offer an evaluation of specific aspects of Balthasar's reading of Origen's doctrine of the spiritual senses. Below I supplement Rickenmann's scholarship by examining the four dimensions outlined at the beginning of this chapter in particular regard to Balthasar's interpretation of Origen.

---

[23] See especially Werner Löser, *Im Geistes des Origenes: Hans Urs von Balthasar als Interpret der Theologie der Kirchenväter* (Frankfurt am Main: Josef Knecht, 1976); Elio Guerriero, "Von Balthasar e Origene," *Rivista Internazionale di Teologia e Cultura: Communio* 116 (1991): 123-134. Francesco Franco, *La passione dell'amore: L'ermeneutica cristiana di Balthasar e Origene* (Bologna: EDB Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 2005); Thomas Böhm, "Die Deutung der Kirchenväter bei Hans Urs von Balthasar – Der Fall Origenes," 64-75, in *Logik der Liebe und Herrlichkeit Gottes: Hans Urs von Balthasar im Gespräch*, ed. Walter Kasper (Ostfildern: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 2006); Franz Mali, "Origenes—Balthasars Lehrer des Endes?" 280-290, in *Letzte Haltungen: Hans Urs von Balthasars "Apokalypse der deutschen Seele" neu gelesen*, ed. Barbara Hallensleben (Fribourg: Academic Press, 2006). Balthasar once said that he never felt more at home than in Origen's thought. In an interview first published in 1976, he says, "Origen remains for me the most brilliant, the most encompassing interpreter and lover of the Word of God. I am nowhere more at home than with him." "Spirit and Fire: An Interview with Hans Urs von Balthasar," trans. Nicholas Healy, *Communio* 32 (Fall 2005): 573-593, 593. Original German, "Origenes bleibt für mich der genialste, der weiträumigste Ausleger und Liebhaber des Wortes Gottes. Nirgends ist mir so wohl wie bei ihm," in "Geist und Feuer: Ein Gespräch mit Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Herder Korrespondenz* 30 (1976): 72-82, 81. Among the distinct doctrinal issues where Origen's influence is readily seen, the most notable may be Balthasar's appropriation of Origen's universalism in his eschatology. See Werner van Laak, *Allversöhnung: Die Lehre von der Apokatastasis, ihre Grundlegung durch Origenes und ihre Bewertung in der gegenwärtigen Theologie bei Karl Barth und Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Sinzig: Sankt Meinrad Verlag, 1990).

[24] Agnell Rickenmann, "La dottrina d' Origene sui sensi spirituali e la sua ricezione in Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Rivista Teologica di Lugano* 6 (2001): 155-168.

[25] Rickenmann writes, "This dogmatic interest, not without reason, has been much criticized," 167 (private translation by Lois Rankin).

Balthasar on the Fivefold, "Analogical" Nature of the Spiritual Senses in Origen

Balthasar clearly reads Origen as articulating a version of the spiritual senses that is in keeping with the fivefold, "analogical" definition of the doctrine articulated by Poulain and Rahner. What is intriguing and instructive for our investigation, however, are the subtle indications Balthasar gives as to what is at stake for him in the spiritual senses' performing a fivefold perception of the divine.

Regarding the fivefold criterion developed by Poulain and Rahner, we observe in *Spirit and Fire* a clear commitment to locating such an understanding of spiritual perception in Origen's writings. Balthasar actually culls various texts from Origen's corpus that pertain to the five different spiritual senses and arranges them under subheadings of "hearing," "sight," "touch," "smell," and "taste."[26] So, for example, Balthasar constructs a fifteen-page meditation on spiritual sight by assembling passages from Origen's *De Principiis*, *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, *Commentary on John*, and other texts; he does similar editorial work with the remaining four spiritual senses. Balthasar, then, clearly seeks to demonstrate to his readers that Origen holds all five senses to function in spiritual perception.

[26] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 232-257. For those familiar with Origen's works, the most immediately striking aspect of this decision on Balthasar's part is the extent to which he rearranges Origen's many comments on spiritual perception into thematically determined topics. Although Origen does indeed speak of forms of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell that perceive the divine, his remarks on these various forms of sensation are scattered throughout his works, not arranged according to particular sense faculties. It is here that we see Balthasar's editorial hand at work, as passages from Origen's early writings, such as *De Principiis* (229-230) and the *Commentary on the Psalms* (222-225), are placed next to later works such as *Contra Celsum* (244-249) and the *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (249) with no mention of the fact that these items come from different periods in Origen's thought. In dating these texts I follow Pierre Nautin, *Origène: Sa vie et son oeuvre* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 366-371, 410. Brian Daley has remarked that Balthasar's anthology on Origen is appropriately subtitled "Ein Aufbau aus seinen Schriften," as the German *Aufbau* translates as "a construction," and thus conveys the great extent to which Balthasar has organized Origen's writings into arranged topics. "In calling the collection 'ein Aufbau'—literally, 'a construction'—Balthasar…emphasizes that the systematic arrangement of the excerpts in this collection is itself a central dimension of his interpretation of Origen…systematic, interpretative arrangement is clearly a central purpose of the collection" (203-204).

In *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar again demonstrates his interest in accentuating the fivefold nature of spiritual perception. He quotes the following passage from Origen's *Contra Celsum*, which is a frequently cited text in the scholarship on the spiritual senses:

> There is, as the scripture calls it, a certain generic divine sense (θείας τινὸς γενικῆς αἰσθήσεως) which only the man who is blessed finds on this earth. Thus Solomon says (Prov. 2:5): "Thou shalt find a divine sense" (ὅτι αἴσθησιν θείαν εὑρήσεις). There are many forms of this sense: a sight (ὁράσεως) which can see things superior to corporeal beings, the cherubim or seraphim being obvious instances, and a hearing which can receive impressions of sounds that have no objective existence in the air, and a taste which feeds on living bread that has come down from heaven (γεύσεως χρωμένης ἄρτῳ ζῶντι καὶ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ καταβεβηκότι) and gives life to the world (John 6:33). So also there is a sense of smell which smells spiritual things, as Paul speaks of "a sweet savour of Christ unto God" (2 Cor. 2:15) and a sense of touch in accordance with which John says that he has handled with his hands "of the Word of life" (1 John 1:1).[27]

In this passage we observe forms of sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch that perceive "spiritual things," and it is no surprise that Balthasar and others see it as the *locus classicus* of the spiritual senses in Origen. In his theological aesthetics Balthasar also simply writes, "It was *Origen* who, so to speak, 'invented' the doctrine of the 'five spiritual senses' (*fünf geistlichen Sinnen*)."[28]

With respect to the question of "analogical" or "metaphorical" uses of the language of sensation in Origen's texts, Balthasar aligns himself with a reading that understands the sensory language in Origen's texts as more than metaphorical, figurative expressions. In his introduction to the topic in *Spirit and Fire*, for example, Balthasar summarizes Origen's teaching on this matter as speaking of an "inner 'divine' faculty of perception," and, even more emphatically, "spiritual 'super-sensibility'" (*geistliche*

[27] *GL* I, 368. *Contra Celsum* I, 48. Original Greek text in Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia Graeca* (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866), vol. 11, 749AB, cited hereafter as *PG*. Published in English as *Contra Celsum*, trans. Henry Chadwick (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 44.

[28] *GL* I, 367.

Übersinnlichkeit).[29] The fact that Balthasar summarizes Origen's views with these particular terms is highly significant on this matter. That is, in rearticulating Origen's views with talk of "inner perception" and "super-sensibility," Balthasar demonstrates a desire to preserve the perceptual character of Origen's thought on the topic. Although he does not follow Poulain and Rahner in using the specific language of "analogy" over against "metaphor" to speak of the relation between the spiritual and corporeal senses in Origen, it is nevertheless plain that in *Spirit and Fire* he regards Origen as using the language of sensation in more than a metaphorical sense.

In *The Glory of the Lord*, too, Balthasar steers interpretation of the spiritual senses away from an understanding that would regard them as merely metaphorical ways of speaking about the operations of the mind. He writes, "The distinguishing qualities of the 'spiritual senses' are manifestly far more than mere paraphrases for the act of 'spiritual' cognition."[30] Balthasar seeks to establish in his theological aesthetics the notion that these spiritual senses should be understood as faculties of perception through which one has a multi-sensory encounter with the Word of God: "Only he can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell Christ whose spiritual senses, for their part, are alive: only he, that is, who is able to perceive Christ as the true Light, as the Word of the Father, as the Bread of Life, as the fragrant spikenard of the Bridegroom who hastens to come."[31] According to Balthasar's reading of Origen, then, the "spiritual" is indeed perceived by the human being, and he resists any reduction of the language of sensation to mere paraphrases for cognition.

---

[29] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 218.

[30] *GL* I, 369.

[31] *GL* I, 369.

Demonstrating an added level of hermeneutical sophistication, however, Balthasar also recognizes that Origen at times refers to only one "divine sense" (αἴσθησις θείᾳ).[32] In his theological aesthetics, he contends, "Origen constructed the doctrine that there exists 'a general sense for the divine' which is subdivided into several kinds."[33] One immediately notices, of course, that Balthasar in this passage does not hold Origen's talk of this single sense as *excluding* a doctrine of five spiritual senses. Whereas recent Origen scholarship on this topic has become caught up in determining whether Origen espouses *either* a doctrine of five spiritual senses *or* an understanding of one spiritual sense,[34] Balthasar simply observes that Origen discusses both understandings of spiritual perception in his writings.

We observe a similar juxtaposition regarding "analogical" and "metaphorical" uses of the language of sensation in Origen's texts. That is, Balthasar in his reading of Origen includes some figurative interpretations of the significance of hearing, seeing, etc. in Origen's thought, thereby echoing a sort of casual sliding between analogical and metaphorical uses of language actually evidenced in Origen's texts themselves. In *Spirit and Fire*, for example, Balthasar at certain points offers a highly figurative interpretation of Origen's use of the language of sensation that is used in addition to the analogical one. Spiritual hearing in Origen, for example, is said by Balthasar to be used in "the inner dialogue that takes place without sound from the soul to God and from God to the

[32] *Contra Celsum* I, 48. *PG* 11, 749AB. Chadwick, 44.

[33] *GL* I, 368.

[34] Marguerite Harl, for example, holds that Origen espouses only one spiritual sense, and that his descriptions of all five spiritual senses do not actually convey his position. See Marguerite Harl, "La 'bouche' et le 'coeur' de l'apôtre: Deux images bibliques du 'sens divin' de l'homme ('Proverbes' 2, 5) chez Origène," in *Forma Futuri: Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino* (Turin: Erasmo, 1975), 17-42.

soul,"[35] indicating that it bears a strong analogy to corporeal hearing. And yet, Balthasar also says in the very same sentence, "'hearing' is the inner readiness and 'listening attitude' of the soul towards God."[36] To speak of hearing as "inner readiness" or a "listening attitude," of course, does not preserve its *perceptual* character; we are no longer referring to perceiving a "bodiless voice." Instead, I would argue that Balthasar slides into a figurative understanding of "hearing" that links it to notions of openness and obedience to God's direction to the soul. To "hear" in this sense is to ready oneself for what might be revealed by God. And yet, crucially, that revelation may very well occur through the "analogical" understanding of spiritual hearing that perceives a voice where there is no sound in the air.[37] In the final analysis, then, we have here not only an unproblematic sliding between metaphorical and analogical uses of language in Balthasar's reading of Origen, but also an interdependence between the metaphorical and analogical senses in which spiritual hearing can be understood.

Balthasar thus implicitly rejects the dichotomies that have been drawn in Origen scholarship between (1) a single divine sense and five spiritual senses, and (2) "analogical" versus "metaphorical" uses of sensory language. Balthasar does not engage in an extensive questioning of the scholarly apparatus that has been used to

---

[35] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 232.

[36] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 232.

[37] Balthasar performs a similar juxtaposition regarding spiritual smell in *Spirit and Fire*. On the one hand, he puts forward a highly figurative reading of the significance of spiritual smell: "The spiritual sense of smell is what is popularly called 'having a nose for,' but in relation to the things of God. Those who have this sense can, from the things of this world, smell out what is Christian" (254). On the other hand, he clearly does not think that this metaphorical use of language precludes an alternative understanding of spiritual smell that allies it with perception: "The fragrance of God flow[s] out into the world only because, in the self-emptying (kenosis) of God, the jar of nard (his body) broke open. Souls pursue this fragrance with longing until, in the mystical body, the fragrance of the creature and the Creator mysteriously mingle" (254).

exegete Origen's comments on the spiritual senses. However, I would suggest that his approach to Origen's texts on this topic both anticipates such critiques and remains truer to Origen's position than a method that forces one into choices ill-suited to Origen's texts themselves.

Balthasar, then, harbors no illusions of univocity in Origen's uses of the language of sensation. He is, however, most interested in those moments when Origen articulates a fivefold model of spiritual perception. The question that naturally arises is: what is at stake for Balthasar in locating such a model of the spiritual senses? Why insist on this reading? In *Spirit and Fire*, he gives some indication of the reasons he focuses on fivefold models of the doctrine when he writes, "The tremendous significance of the doctrine of the inner senses is revealed fully only by looking into the activity of the individual senses. Each sense contains a different mode of spiritual contact with the divine."[38] Balthasar, then, holds not only that Origen does in fact espouse a doctrine of specifically five spiritual senses; he also regards their full import to involve the *distinctiveness* of the five ways in which the human being comes to know God. Each spiritual sense, on Balthasar's reading of Origen, permits a different mode of engagement with the divine.

Additionally, and most significantly for the overall goals of this study, in *The Glory of the Lord* Balthasar offers a fascinating glimpse into the broader significance of this reading of Origen's doctrine of the spiritual senses:

> The five individual sensory senses are but the fall and scattering into the material of an original and richly abundant capacity to perceive God and divine things. According to Origen, these divine things can never be reduced to a mystical unity without modes, but, rather, they possess a

[38] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 232.

> fulness and glory that far transcend the lower fulness and glory, of which material multiplicity is only a distant reflection and likeness.[39]

In a move with tremendous implications for his own theological aesthetics, then, Balthasar reads Origen as claiming that the perception of the divine cannot be distilled down to "a mystical unity without modes." Instead, it is a necessarily varied phenomenon. Why should this be the case? In Balthasar's words, "It is decisive that the object of the 'spiritual senses' is not the *Deus nudus*, but the whole of the 'upper world' (*die ganze obere Welt*) which, in Christ, has descended to earth."[40] In other words, one of the reasons that the spiritual senses should be interpreted as fivefold is that their *object* is not the *Deus nudus*, but rather an abundant sphere, brought to earth through Christ, in relation to which all five spiritual senses are active in distinctive ways. If the spiritual senses are not fivefold, if they ultimately collapse into a single mode of perceiving God, then we remain aesthetically un-attuned to the richness of the "upper world." In short, it takes all five spiritual senses to perceive such grandeur.

It is one thing, of course, to say that the spiritual senses must be fivefold because of the nature of their objects. It is quite another to establish that Origen does in fact regard these objects as Christ and the "whole of the 'upper world.'" Next, then, we examine this aspect of Balthasar's reading of the objects of the spiritual senses in Origen's thought.

---

[39] *GL* I, 369.

[40] *GL* I, 370.

Balthasar on the Objects of the Spiritual Senses in Origen

Balthasar's reflection on the objects of the spiritual senses in Origen can be divided into three distinct, yet interrelated claims. Balthasar holds that, for Origen, (1) the spiritual senses perceive Christ, and (2) through Christ, "the whole of the 'upper world,'" which (3) precludes the possibility of the spiritual senses perceiving as their object the "Deus nudus," as Balthasar puts it.

Regarding the first point, Balthasar in his theological aesthetics draws on a number of quotations from Origen's texts locating Christ or the Word as the object of the spiritual senses. He alludes, for example, to Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, which reads, "Christ is grasped by every faculty of the soul," and then goes on to list all five spiritual senses in their application to Christ.[41] Balthasar also quotes from *Contra Celsum*, as mentioned above, in which Origen writes, "There is a sense of smell which smells spiritual things, as Paul speaks of 'a sweet savour of Christ unto God' (2 Cor. 2:15) and a sense of touch in accordance with which John says that he has handled with his hands 'of the Word of life' (1 John 1:1)."[42]

In *Spirit and Fire*, too, an overwhelming number of Balthasar's quotations from Origen's texts mention Christ or the Word as the object of various forms of spiritual

[41] "Christ is grasped by every faculty of the soul. He is called the true Light, therefore, so that the soul's eyes may have something to lighten them. He is the Word, so that her ears may have something to hear. Again, He is the Bread of life, so that the soul's palate may have something to taste. And in the same way, He is called the spikenard or ointment, that the soul's sense of smell may apprehend the fragrance of the Word. For the same reason He is said also to be able to be felt and handled, and is called the Word made flesh, so that the hand of the interior soul may touch concerning the Word of life." *In Cant*. II, 9. Latin text in W. A. Baehrens, *Origenes Werke*. *Die Griechischen Chrislichen Schriftsteller* (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1925), vol. 8, 26-289 (hereafter cited as *GCS*), here 167. Published in English as *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*, trans. W.P. Lawson (Westminster: Newman Press, 1957), 162 (translation slightly altered).

[42] *Contra Celsum* I, 48. *PG* 11, 749AB. Chadwick, 44.

perception.[43] Taking a small sample from those texts, we find the following from Origen's *Commentary on Luke*: "The apostles therefore saw the Word not only because they saw Jesus in the flesh, but because they saw the Word of God."[44] Balthasar also quotes a portion of the scholia from Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs* that reads, "Whoever has a pure sense of smell and through understanding of the divine Word can run after the fragrance of his ointments (cf. Cant 1:4 LXX), that person has a 'nose' which is sensitive to spiritual fragrances."[45] Balthasar additionally finds in *Contra Celsum* mention of Jesus as the object of spiritual touch: "In a manner more spiritual than physical, Jesus 'touched' the leper in order to heal him, it seems to me, in two ways: not only to free him …from physical leprosy by physical touch, but also from that other leprosy by his truly divine touch."[46] One might add to Balthasar's quotations a number of other passages from Origen's texts.[47] Simply put, it would be difficult indeed to contest the claim that Origen deems Christ to be the object of various forms of spiritual sensation.

---

[43] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 218-257.

[44] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 237. *In Luc* hom. 1. *GCS* 9, 7. Published in English as *Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke*, trans. J. T. Lienhard (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996). English translation in *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 237.

[45] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 255. *In Cant.. schol. PG* 17, 282D. English translation in *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 255.

[46] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 250. *Contra Celsum* I, 48. *PG* 11, 749AB. Chadwick, 44.

[47] In *De Principiis*, for example, Origen writes about anointing Christ with the "oil of gladness" and about those who "run in the odor of his ointments." *De Principiis*, II, 6, 6. *PG* 11, 214C. Published in English as *On First Principles*, trans. G. W. Butterworth (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973), 113. He also richly describes "The only begotten Son of God…pouring (*infundens*) himself by his graces into our senses (*sensibus*), may deign to illuminate what is dark, to lay open what is concealed, and to reveal what is secret." *De Principiis*, II, 6, 6. *PG* 11, 214C. Butterworth, 113-114 (translation slightly altered).

On the second point, although Balthasar does not clarify the meaning of his phrase "the whole of the 'upper world,'" one does find in Origen a number of instances in which it is not Christ alone but rather an entire spiritual realm that seems to be the object of the spiritual senses. In *Contra Celsum*, as mentioned above, Origen writes about "a sight (ὁράσεως) which can see things superior to corporeal beings, the cherubim or seraphim being obvious instances, and a hearing which can receive impressions of sounds that have no objective existence in the air."[48] Interestingly, too, in the first book of Origen's *Commentary on John*, he provides a description of those who see Wisdom, "delighting in her highly variegated intelligible beauty, seen by intelligible eyes alone, provoking him to love who discerns her divine and heavenly charm."[49] In that same text, Origen also writes, "The Savior shines (ἐλλάμπων) on creatures that have intellect and sovereign reason, that their minds may see (βλέπῃ) their proper objects of vision (ὁρατὰ), and so he is the light of the intellectual world."[50] In *De Principiis*, Origen again discusses his idea that we perceive "intelligible things." He writes:

> A rational mind…is placed in the body, and advances from things of sense, which are bodily, to sense objects (*sensibilia*) which are incorporeal and intellectual. But in case it should appear mistaken to say as we have done that intellectual things are objects of sense (*sensibilia*), we will quote as an illustration the saying of Solomon: "You will find also a divine sense." By this he shows that those things which are intellectual are to be investigated not by bodily sense but by some other which he calls divine.[51]

In these passages, then, we find cherubim, seraphim, things superior to corporeal beings, Wisdom, "proper objects of [the mind's] vision," and "intelligible things" listed

---

[48] *Contra Celsum* I, 48. *PG* 11, 749AB. Chadwick, 44.

[49] "ἐνευφραινόμενος τῷ πολυποικίλῳ νοητῷ κάλλει αὐτῆς, ὑπὸ νοητῶν ὀφθαλμῶν μόνων βλεπομένῳ." *In Joan*. I, 11. *PG* 14, 40D. Published in English as *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, trans. Philip Schaff, *ANF* 9 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1959), 303.

[50] *In Joan*. I, 24. *PG* 14, 68B. Schaff, 312.

[51] *De Principiis*, IV, 4, 10. *PG* 11, 364. Butterworth, 327-328 (translation slightly altered).

among the many objects of the spiritual senses. There would seem to be little reason to constrain our reading of their objects to any one spiritual entity, as Origen does indeed appear to have in mind an entire realm of spiritual objects that can be perceived by the spiritual senses.[52]

Regarding the third point, Balthasar argues that the two claims above preclude a reading of the doctrine that holds the *Deus nudus* to be their object. Although Balthasar does not develop the particular way in which he is using this term, we can reasonably surmise that he resists a reading of the spiritual senses that would have them progressing beyond the two modes of spiritual perception just mentioned in order to perceive the "naked God" who is beyond all form.[53] Balthasar's approach here is not unlike that which he takes to Bonaventure's texts, in which he opposes the notion that the spiritual senses apply to "the transcendent God in himself," instead privileging a reading on which their object is "the form of God in his revelation."[54] In this regard Balthasar's

---

[52] One more speculative note might be made about Balthasar's reading of the "whole upper world" as the object of the spiritual senses in Origen. It may be significant that Balthasar studied Plotinus under Hans Eibl in Vienna before beginning his formal theological education in 1929. One observes an extraordinary, extensive parallel between the reading of Origen advanced by Balthasar and Plotinus's remarks about objects of intellectual perception found in the *Enneads*. The following passage is especially relevant: "What we have called the perceptibles of that realm [i.e., the noetic realm] enter into cognizance in a way of their own, since they are incorporeal, while sense-perception here—so distinguished as dealing with corporeal objects—is fainter than the perception belonging to that higher world, but gains a specious clarity because its objects are bodies; the man of this sphere has sense-perception because existing in a less true degree and taking only enfeebled images of things There: perceptions here are dim intellections, and intellections There are vivid perceptions." *Enneads* 6, 7, 7. In response to this passage, John Dillon remarks, "We have here, in Plotinus' theory, a far greater degree of 'mirroring' of the noetic world by the sense-world than is traditional in Platonism. Everything here is also There, in another, more exalted, mode." Given the reading of Origen offered by Balthasar, one cannot help but note that in both cases an extensive "mirroring" is occurring between sensible and super-sensible realms. Plotinus, of course, does not advocate the Christocentrism that Balthasar claims for Origen here, but it may be worth considering the notion that Balthasar is reading Origen through Plotinus on the spiritual senses.

[53] In a similar vein, Balthasar directs a number of derisive comments at "naked faith" throughout his theological aesthetics. See *GL* I, 53, 80, 121, 341, 411, 416, 420, 607.

[54] *GL* II, 321. We will take up this aspect of Balthasar's interpretation of Bonaventure in chapter 2.

interpretation is actually on solid ground, as Origen makes very few comments indeed on the perception of such a God. Instead, the overwhelming evidence points to the Word and a number of other spiritual entities as the objects of spiritual perception. In short, we can reasonably say that Origen regards spiritual perception to be just as varied in its objects as corporeal perception. A vast realm lies beyond the world of sense impressions, and it is through the spiritual senses that we come to perceive this rich world.

Balthasar on the Disjunct between the Spiritual and Corporeal Senses in Origen

The question of how Balthasar regards the disjunctive nature of Origen's doctrine of the spiritual senses provokes a complex, seemingly paradoxical response. At certain moments we see Balthasar resisting the sharp divide that is so often drawn between the spiritual and corporeal senses in Origen. At other moments, however, we observe Balthasar prescinding from this particular facet of his rehabilitation of Origen and acknowledging the separation between the spiritual and bodily senses. Ultimately, I argue that Balthasar resists so-called "Platonic" readings that would have Origen radically devaluing the material order,[55] but I also contend that he indicates that Origen

[55] The reader of Balthasar's *oeuvre* is struck by both the frequency and the vigor with which Balthasar denounces "Platonism" throughout his theological writings. It seems that one can enter into his *oeuvre* at any point and find a comment directed against a "Platonic" position. And yet, at many junctures his text remains unclear in regard to the precise object of its criticism. It is true that Balthasar does in a number of instances speak with considerable precision about Greek philosophy, painstakingly distinguishing between Aristotelian, Stoic, and Platonic elements in a figure's thought, or being quite deliberate about distinguishing Platonism from the Middle Platonism and Neo-Platonism that followed it. For example, in "The Fathers, the Scholastics, and Ourselves," Balthasar writes, "We should not forget how strongly Platonism and even neo-Platonism had been permeated at the time of the Fathers with Aristotelian and Stoic elements. Not only the Antiochenes, as born rivals of the Alexandrians, but even Origenist theology, is permeated with such elements. Certain tractates of Gregory of Nyssa cannot be imagined without Poseidonius, and even less can the construction of Chalcedonian theology and the *Summa* of the Damascene be understood without Aristotle." "The Fathers, the Scholastics, and Ourselves," "The Fathers, Scholastics, and Ourselves." Communio: International Catholic Review 24 (Summer 1997): 347-96, 378. However, on many other occasions Balthasar sweepingly uses the term "Platonism" with little hesitation to encapsulate centuries of philosophical reflection under a single broad rubric. Further complicating this

can get him only so far in his own efforts at uniting spiritual and corporeal senses. That is, Balthasar rescues Origen from the most negative reading of Origen's assessment of the body and materiality, according to which the material order not only inhibits spiritual progress but is additionally regarded as evil.

First, then, let us examine the extent to which Balthasar resists the prevailing dualist reading of Origen on the spiritual senses. In his comments on Origen's understanding of spiritual sight in *Spirit and Fire*, he notes the high value Origen places on both corporeal vision and "the flesh" (*das Fleisch*) that it sees. Drawing from Origen's *Homilies on Luke* and fragments from his *Commentaries on the Psalms*, Balthasar writes of Origen's conception of the vision of God, "This way [to the vision of God] does not mean a leaving behind of the incarnate Christ: rather, union with Christ is made perfect precisely through his flesh (*sein Fleisch*)."[56] The passage from Origen's Psalm commentary speaks of the "God who will visibly come," and here Origen claims that the coming of God in Christ means that "visibly" pertains not to the spirit, but rather to the flesh. In an even more positive evaluation of bodily sensation, the passage from Origen's *Homilies on Luke* actually privileges physical perception, claiming the superiority of Simeon's seeing Christ with the eyes of his flesh over his previous faith

---

picture is the fact that some commentators on Balthasar's writings have actually declared him to be far too Platonist himself in his own constructive theology. See especially Noel O'Donoghue, "Do We Get beyond Plato?: A Critical Appreciation of the Theological Aesthetics," in *The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. Bede McGregor, O.P. and Thomas Norris (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 253-266.

[56] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 244.

based in reason.[57] To Balthasar, all of this amounts to both a high assessment of bodily perception and a positive evaluation of the material order itself in Origen's thought.

Interestingly, however, whereas in *Spirit and Fire* Balthasar demonstrates a fairly unambiguous desire to liberate Origen from those who would read him as objectionably dualistic, in *The Glory of the Lord* we observe a much more measured, qualified assessment of this feature of Origen's thought. Here Origen's well known passage from *Contra Celsum* plays a major role in Balthasar's reading. In that text, Origen remarks:

> Our Saviour, knowing that these two kinds of eyes belong to us, says, "For judgment came I into this world, that those who do not see may see and that those who see may become blind" (*John* 9:39). By those who do not see he is obscurely referring to the eyes of the soul, to which the Logos gives the power of sight, and by those who see he means the eyes of the senses. For the Logos blinds the latter, that the soul may see without any distraction that which it ought to see. Therefore, the eye of the soul of any genuine Christian is awake and that of the senses is closed. And in proportion to the degree in which the superior eye is awake and the sight of the senses is closed, the supreme God and His Son, who is the Logos and Wisdom and the other titles, are comprehended and seen by each man.[58]

Here we see a clear formulation of Origen's understanding of the relationship between the spiritual and corporeal senses. The Father and the Son are perceived by the spiritual senses only "in proportion to the degree in which" the corporeal senses are closed. It would seem, then, that in this portion of Origen's writings we find a model of the spiritual senses in which the corporeal is not valued positively—nor is it even regarded neutrally—in its relation to spiritual things. Instead, the ordinary, corporeal senses

---

[57] The key passages from Origen read as follows: "'For mine eyes have seen thy salvation' (Lk 2:30). For before, said [Simeon], I believed by way of understanding, I knew through reasoning; but now I have seen with the eyes of my flesh and am thus brought to fulfillment." *In Luc* hom. 15. *GCS* 9, 92-94. English translation in *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 248. "'Our God will visibly come' (cf. Ps 50:2-3 LXX). Now if our God will visibly come, but this God is Christ, and Christ came in the flesh, this 'visibly' thus means the flesh. For the flesh of Christ was endowed with bodily senses so that he could give himself with passion to those become worthy through devotion." *Ps Co* frag., 49, 3. Original Greek and Latin text in Jean-Baptiste Pitra, *Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi parata*, vol. 3 (Parisiis: A. Jouby et Roger, 1883), 50. English translation in *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 248.

[58] *Contra Celsum*, VII, 39. *PG* 11, 1476B. Chadwick, 427.

actually detract from the cultivation of the spiritual senses, and the former must be mortified, blinded, or otherwise diminished if the spiritual senses are to develop.

In response to this passage, Balthasar asserts, "If both sensibilities are thus, ontically as well as noetically, but different states of the one and only sensibility, it nevertheless follows that, in a Platonic sense, they cannot both be actual at the same time: Adam's spiritual eye for God is closed by his fall through sin, while at that moment his sensory eye opens."[59] In spite of his efforts at rehabilitating Origen through his insistence that spiritual and corporeal sensation are at bottom "one sensibility," Balthasar nevertheless acknowledges that in Origen we observe a doctrine of the spiritual senses in which the development of one set of senses occurs *at the cost of* the other set of senses.[60]

Balthasar, however, still maintains that Origen had a positive regard for materiality and "the world," more broadly understood.

> We cannot simply systematize the Christian and Biblical Origen to make him conform with the Platonic Origen. The world and matter are not evil; only the free will can be evil. For this reason, the material state as a whole remains a good likeness and an indicator for the upward-striving spirit; and in Christ, in whose flesh there is nothing evil, the lower sensibility unqualifiedly points the way to the heavenly sensibility.[61]

Balthasar, then, argues that we do see in (at least one version of) Origen a higher value placed on creation than is typically thought to be the case. And yet it is also telling that Balthasar does not in his theological aesthetics attempt to dismiss the Platonic Origen or make him out to be a betrayer of the "real" Origen. The relationship between the Christian and biblical Origen and the Platonic Origen is not one of true versus false.

---

[59] *GL* I, 369.

[60] Balthasar additionally indicates in the above passage that the reason for this mutual exclusivity lies in Origen's engagement with Platonism, thus substantially qualifying the extent to which he holds Origen to have transcended its influence.

[61] *GL* I, 369.

Instead, Balthasar places them in a curious juxtaposition. Unexpectedly, then, the theologian who is habitually accused of being overly systematic in his approach to the church fathers leaves unresolved a tension in Origen's thought between Christianity and Platonism. Balthasar lets Origen speak on his own terms more than his reputation would lead one to believe, at least on this particular facet of the spiritual senses.

From a broader perspective, of course, Balthasar's reading can be considered as a comparatively modest attempt to rescue Origen from the most extreme, disjunctive version of the possible relationships between corporeal and spiritual sensation. That is, on Balthasar's reading, Origen does not in fact succumb to a model whereby the physical realm in which the corporeal senses operate is regarded as categorically evil. Instead, I would argue that what we see in Balthasar is a repositioning of Origen according to which materiality is not evil, even though it does nevertheless detract from the functioning of spiritual sensibility. In his attempt to locate figures for whom spiritual and corporeal sensation are united with one another, Balthasar will need to look elsewhere.

Balthasar on the Development and Place of the Spiritual Senses in Origen's Thought

Both the development of the spiritual senses in the individual human being and their place in Origen's system of thought seem to be of surprisingly little interest to Balthasar.[62] In *The Glory of the Lord* Balthasar makes no mention of Rahner's key claim that the spiritual senses become active for Origen in his final stage, *enoptike*, where they

[62] For Origen, just as one must undertake substantial efforts in order to strengthen one's physical faculties, so too must one practice in order to develop the spiritual senses (see *In Ezech*. hom 11 n.1. *GCS* 8, 319-454, here 423). This practice consists of freeing oneself from the desires of the flesh (*Contra Celsum*, VII, 39. *PG* 11, 1476B. Chadwick, 427), educating oneself such that one can discern the spiritual sense of scripture (*In Cant.* I, 4. *GCS* 8, 166. Lawson, 79), and prayer (*Contra Celsum*, VII, 44. *PG* 11, 1484-1486. Chadwick, 431-433. See also *De orat*., 9, 2. *GCS* 2, 295-403, here 318-319. Published in English as *Prayer, Exhortation to Martyrdom*, trans. John O'Meara (Westminster: Newman Press, 1954), 39-40).

are used only by "the perfect" (i.e., those who have progressed through the first two stages, *ethike* and *physike*).[63] In fact, in his treatment of the spiritual senses Balthasar does not mention at all the three stages of the spiritual life in Origen's thought. And yet, I submit that what little Balthasar does say in this arena actually indicates a highly significant reworking of Origen's understanding of the doctrine. In particular, it is telling that Balthasar leaves unexamined Origen's understanding of the various practices that the human being must undertake in order to cultivate the spiritual senses. Instead, in his reading of Origen, Balthasar focuses almost exclusively upon the grace of God that makes such perception possible. In *Spirit and Fire*, for example, Balthasar makes clear the prominent role of grace in his interpretation of Origen. He writes, "Through grace Christians have received a sensory capacity for the divine,"[64] not mentioning the notion that rigorous practice has been understood to be a key constituent of Origen's rendering of the doctrine.

One significant implication of this rereading of Origen is that, in not explicitly reserving the activation of the spiritual senses for the *enoptic* stage of the spiritual life, Balthasar repositions the doctrine within Origen's thought such that it pertains not to the

[63] Origen divides the spiritual development of the human being into three distinct stages. The first stage, *ethike* (*moralis*), involves the elimination of sinful desires and the cultivation of virtue; the second stage, *physike* (*naturalis*), entails acquiring a proper attitude toward created things as having a certain purpose granted by the Creator; the third stage, *enoptike* (*inspectiva*), involves the contemplation of "things divine and heavenly." *In Cant*. Prol. 3. *GCS* 8, 75. Lawson, 40. It would seem that there is good reason to place the operation of the spiritual senses in the enoptic stage, as this final stage explicitly entails the transcendence of corporeal vision for the purpose of beholding the divine: "The study called inspective is that by which we go beyond things seen and contemplate somewhat of things divine and heavenly, beholding them with the mind alone, for they are beyond the range of bodily sight." *In Cant*. Prol. 3. *GCS* 8, 75. Lawson, 40. Importantly, too, one reaches the enoptic stage only after having mastered both *ethike* and *physike*. That is to say, one observes in Origen an understanding of the mystical life that entails successive progression such that the second stage is not reached without having mastered the first, and the third stage is not reached without having mastered the second.

[64] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 218.

experience of God attained by those few persons who have become "perfect," but rather to the "gifts of grace" more generally understood.[65] In *Spirit and Fire*, he makes the case that "one can call these senses 'mystical' in the broad sense, but they are, at least initially, given along with grace itself and as such are not really mystical phenomena, still less an unveiled experience of God."[66] In *The Glory of the Lord*, too, Balthasar is no less explicit about his resistance to a "mystical" understanding of Origen's use of the doctrine. He writes, "How should we interpret Origen? It will not do to go…in the mystical direction."[67]

It must be said on this point, however, that Balthasar has here arguably allowed his own theological preoccupations to dictate his reading of Origen more than Origen's texts themselves. Rahner convincingly establishes that the spiritual senses are activated in the *enoptic* stage of the spiritual life. In *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar claims to have refuted Rahner's interpretation of Origen by exposing as pseudonymous certain passages from Origen's *Commentary on the Psalms*.[68] Rahner uses these passages to

[65] The *enoptic* stage is often thought to be the stage of the spiritual life in which "mystical" experience takes place, for Origen. Rahner notes that Origen simply calls this final stage "mystical" in his *Homilies on Jeremiah* (*In Jer*. Fragm. 14. *GCS* 8, 241. English translation in Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," 92), seemingly equating the two. The fact that the spiritual senses are typically positioned in this stage of the spiritual life has led Origen's commentators to see in them an understanding of specifically "mystical" experience. Rahner cites a key passage from Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs* that reads, "And so those who have reached the highest degree of perfection and blessedness rejoice with all their senses in the Word of God." *In Cant*. I, 4. *GCS* 8, 105. Lawson, 79. See Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," 95. Summarizing the significance of this claim for his reader, Rahner then writes, "This agrees exactly with Origen's conception of the 'perfect', when he explains the Word of God and God himself as the object of the spiritual faculties" (95). The spiritual senses, then, are regarded as activating in the final stage of the spiritual life, for Origen, where they are employed by the individual human being in mystical encounter.

[66] *Origen: Spirit and Fire*, 218.

[67] *GL* I, 369.

[68] Balthasar demonstrates that these passages in fact belong to Evagrius in Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Die Hiera des Evagrius," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 63 (1939): 86-106, 181-206.

support his enoptic-stage reading of the spiritual senses, and therefore Balthasar thinks he has undermined Rahner's reading. However, Rahner's interpretation actually relies much more heavily on Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs*, which unequivocally positions the spiritual senses in the final, enoptic stage.[69] Whereas Balthasar makes a strong case on the points above that is well grounded in the texts he examines, then, his reading of Origen remains distanced from his primary texts and appears to reflect primarily his own concerns. In regard to this particular subtopic within Balthasar's treatment of Origen's doctrine of the spiritual senses, then, Balthasar seems to fall prey to the characterization of his scholarship so often leveled on him by patristics specialists.

In the above discussion we identified and assessed a number of aspects of Balthasar's reading of Origen's articulation of the spiritual senses. Balthasar regards Origen as articulating a fivefold, "analogical" doctrine of the spiritual senses through which Christ and the upper world are perceived. He also holds that important portions of Origen's writings demonstrate that he places a high value on the body and the corporeal senses to which the spiritual senses are analogous, even though he acknowledges that other parts of Origen's texts indicate a more negative view. Last, Balthasar attempts to reposition the spiritual senses such that they are not given exclusively to "the perfect," but are instead among the general gifts of grace. In this particular instance, we have seen, Balthasar lives up to his reputation as one who imports his own theological predispositions into the texts he examines. In the other cases, however, I have argued that Balthasar allows Origen to speak on his own terms more successfully than do other

[69] Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," 94. *In Cant.* I, 4. *GCS* 8, 101-108. Lawson, 74-83.

exegetes of patristic texts. With this reading of Origen now in place, we turn to Balthasar's reading of other key patristic figures in the spiritual senses tradition.

Evagrius of Pontus

Whereas Balthasar's engagement with Origen's articulation of the spiritual senses merits thorough consideration from a number of different angles, his reading of Evagrius of Pontus consists of a more straightforward analysis. Balthasar, like Rahner, regards Evagrius as the next figure of note in the development of spiritual senses after Origen. And Balthasar, like Rahner, treats Evagrius only briefly in comparison to the robust examination that both modern theologians undertake with Origen. In fact, the few comments Balthasar does make indicate a dismissive stance toward the Evagrian shape that the doctrine takes in Origen's wake.[70] The three points below inform not only how Balthasar reads Evagrius; they also grant us considerable insight into the aspects of the tradition that Balthasar values for his own theological aesthetics.

First, Balthasar reads Evagrius as compromising the fivefold understanding of the spiritual senses advanced in Origen. In his reprise of the history of the doctrine in *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar comments, "In spite of an occasional mention of the spiritual organs and senses (*Cent.* 2, 80 and especially *Cent.* 3, 35), in Evagrius everything is absorbed into an inescapable mystical reduction to unity."[71] Given the high value

[70] One should not presume on this basis that Balthasar was dismissive of Evagrius's thought as a whole. In fact, Balthasar published two articles on Evagrius in 1939: "Die Hiera des Evagrius," *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 63 (1939): 86-106, 181-206; "Metaphysik und Mystik des Evagrius Pontikus," *Zeitschrift für Askese und Mystik* (1939): 31-47. The latter has been published in English as "The Metaphysics and Mystical Theology of Evagrius," *Monastic Studies* 3 (1965): 183-195.

[71] *GL* I, 370. And yet, it should be said that Evagrius does speak at many junctures about the five spiritual senses, and to call his mention of spiritual organs "occasional" seems a bit disingenuous. See *Cent.* II, 28, 62, 80; VII, 27, 44. Rahner, "The Spiritual Senses According to Origen," 98.

Balthasar places on the idea that there are indeed five spiritual senses and that Christ and the whole of the upper world are perceived through them, these comments on Evagrius indicate a decidedly negative evaluation of the doctrine.

Second, Balthasar reads Evagrius as irredeemably dualistic in his rendering of the relationship between the spiritual senses and their corporeal counterparts. In *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar states, "Because the negation of the sensual leads to the positing of the spiritual, Evagrius can praise the sensorium (αἴσθησις) for the spiritual [*De Orat*. 28 and 41]."[72] He further says of Evagrius, "The same spirit 'perceives' or 'feels' spiritually what it perceives and feels sensually…the spiritual act of experiencing can be contrasted with the sensual and passible act of experiencing in such a way that *they mutually exclude one another*."[73] Whereas Balthasar goes to great lengths to defend Origen from the charge of dualism (to the extent that it is feasible), we do not observe a similar attempt to rescue Evagrius in *The Glory of the Lord*. We see in Balthasar's assessment of Evagrius a model in which the spiritual senses can grow only at the cost of their corporeal counterparts. The sensual must be denied if the spiritual is to develop.

The third point on which Balthasar resists the Evagrian version of the spiritual senses is the decisive one, I think, and it explains Balthasar's lack of interest in investigating counter-evidence to the first and second points just raised. Balthasar writes of Evagrius's model of the spiritual senses, "Because the one who prays strives to go beyond all forms (*Formen*) and every definable state, he can at the same time praise 'perfect *anaisthesia*', or 'feelinglessness' (*De Orat.*, 120), as the highest state of

[72] *GL* I, 267.

[73] *GL* I, 268 (my emphasis).

prayer."[74] It is the language of going "beyond all forms" that is especially significant. That is, the reason that Evagrius's various descriptions of the spiritual senses are ultimately irrelevant, to Balthasar, is that on the Evagrian understanding of the experience of God all form is surpassed and one is brought into a state of feelinglessness. The spiritual senses, then, clearly belong to an inferior state of relationship with God according to Balthasar's reading of Evagrius.

Balthasar, then, regards Evagrius as significant inasmuch as he passes the spiritual senses tradition down to later figures, but he hardly articulates a version of the doctrine that Balthasar seeks to follow. In fact, Evagrius is instructive for our examination primarily on the points on which Balthasar resists him. Particularly significant is Balthasar's insistence that the spiritual senses are not surpassed as one progresses beyond all forms, as we will see in his reading of other patristic figures.

Diadochus of Photice

Balthasar regards the version of the spiritual senses in Diadochus of Photice in much the same way as he does that of Evagrius: namely, as an item of passing interest between the rich understandings of the idea advanced by Origen and by Pseudo-Macarius. In his reprise of the history of the spiritual senses in *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar simply states, "Diadochus, too, expressly allows for only *one* spiritual sense,"[75] then moves on to the version of the doctrine articulated by Pseudo-Macarius. Elsewhere

[74] *GL* I, 267. Balthasar also writes of Evagrius in a similar vein, "For the light of God, in which we see everything that has form, is itself formless [*De Orat.* 67, 72; *Cent.* I, 35], and only he who has been wholly freed from form can behold the face of the Father (*De Orat.* 114)." *GL* I, 267.

[75] *GL* I, 370.

in his theological aesthetics, Balthasar echoes this reading of Diadochus: "The soul has but one sense of spiritual sensation which is oriented to God."[76] This assessment of Diadochus is indeed the majority opinion on the topic, as argued most effectively by Gabriel Horn.[77] Simply put, the brevity of Balthasar's treatment of Diadochus' articulation of the spiritual senses indicates that his interest lies in articulations of the doctrine that are fivefold, for reasons explored in his reading of Origen above. Diadochus, it would seem, has little to teach Balthasar on the matter of the spiritual senses.

Pseudo-Macarius

Balthasar's treatment of Pseudo-Macarius demonstrates once again the significant extent to which he relies upon Rahner's scholarship to frame his own inquiry into the spiritual senses tradition.[78] Balthasar explicitly mentions Rahner's essay in his assessment of Macarius' version of the doctrine, and he cites many of the same passages from Macarius' *Spiritual Homilies* as does Rahner. Balthasar also concurs with Rahner in regarding Macarius as more faithful to Origen's doctrine of the spiritual senses than either Evagrius or Diadochus.[79] In fact, both Rahner and Balthasar could be said to

[76] *GL* I, 279.

[77] Gabriel Horn, "Le sens de l'esprit d'après Diadoque de Photice," *Revue d'Ascetique et Mystique* 8 (1927): 402-419. See also Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," 100.

[78] Balthasar treats Pseudo-Macarius in two sections of *The Glory of the Lord*, vol. 1, both of which are found within his discussion of "The Subjective Evidence."

[79] *GL* I, 370. Cf. Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' according to Origen," 101. A key constituent to Macarius's being "more faithful" to Origen involves the fact that he, like Origen, articulates an understanding of the spiritual senses that is once again fivefold.

regard Macarius as the most significant figure among Greek patristic expositors of the spiritual senses after Origen.

Four features of Balthasar's reading of Macarius stand out for our assessment. First, and most straightforwardly, Balthasar celebrates the fivefold version of the spiritual senses found in Macarius. He explains, "Origen's five senses again emerge in the Pseudo-Macarius," then quotes portions of the *Spiritual Homilies* that unambiguously speak of five spiritual senses.[80] Second, as we saw in Balthasar's treatment of Origen, so too with Macarius do we observe that Balthasar searches for the most positive assessment of materiality that he can possibly gather from the texts he examines. Balthasar is searching for aspects of the tradition that unite the corporeal and the spiritual senses, and he finds an ally in Macarius. For example, regarding Macarius' understanding of the Incarnation, Balthasar writes, "For Macarius, this event whereby God participates in the realm of the senses in Christ is the positive expression of his love: through the sensual, we are to come to know God's spiritual love."[81] Later in the same volume, Balthasar continues, "A dualistic interpretation is impossible: for it is the same senses which first are earthly and then become heavenly through the infusion of grace. We have to do here with a 'change and exchange of states (κατάστασις)' by virtue of imitating Christ."[82] Here we observe a decidedly higher value placed on the corporeal senses than we saw in Origen's texts. Not only is the material body not evil (as some of Origen's writings claim, on Balthasar's reading), but the material body actually informs and enriches our

[80] *GL* I, 370. *Hom*. 4, 7. Original Greek text in *PG* 34, 450-820, here 477B. Published in English as *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies* and *The Great Letter*, trans. George Maloney (New York: Paulist Press, 1992), 53.

[81] *GL* I, 270.

[82] *GL* I, 370.

life with God. It is precisely *through* the corporeal that we know the spiritual; the very same senses are transformed from physical to spiritual perceptual faculties.

Second, whereas Rahner insists that the spiritual senses for Macarius are entirely natural faculties of the soul, Balthasar holds that they are instead dependent on divine grace for their proper operation. Strangely, Balthasar and Rahner both point to the very same passage from Macarius' fourth homily to support their respective claims. On this particular point, however, it is hard to dispute Balthasar's interpretation, as Macarius' text clearly indicates the importance of grace:

> The five rational senses of the soul (πέντε λογικαὶ αἰσθήσεις τῆς ψυχῆς), if they have received grace from above and the sanctification of the Spirit, truly are the prudent virgins. They have received from above the wisdom of grace. But if they continue depending solely on their own nature, they class themselves with the foolish virgins and show themselves to be children of this world.[83]

It is hard to imagine a more straightforward dismissal of the idea that the spiritual senses are natural faculties, and yet Rahner claims, "Pseudo-Macarius regards these five spiritual senses as natural faculties, since, according to him, their operations can remain on a purely natural plane, i.e. without grace."[84] Although Balthasar does not accentuate the fact that he disagrees with Rahner on this point, he does take great pains to dismiss any interpretation of Macarius that would deny the centrality of grace. Balthasar writes, "The man who prays has a twofold 'experience': that God becomes palpable in his grace, and that there exists no relationship between man's effort and his perception of God."[85] This insistence on the absolute gratuity of grace is a theme that we will see in Balthasar's

[83] *Hom*. 4, 7. *PG* 34, 477B. Maloney, 53.

[84] Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," 101.

[85] *GL* I, 273.

treatment of later figures in the spiritual senses tradition, and it is a key feature of his own articulation of the doctrine, as will be shown in chapter 5.

Third, and most unusually, Balthasar reads Macarius as advancing a model of the spiritual senses in which one receives one's spiritual senses only after having undergone with Christ his passion.[86] Balthasar makes this claim on the basis of two features of Macarius' thought. First, Balthasar understands Macarius as articulating an understanding of the doctrine in which the senses are made "spiritual" as a result of Christ joining himself to the human soul. Quoting Macarius' *Spiritual Homilies*, Balthasar writes that Christ

> came to change, transform, and renew our nature, to create anew and to mingle with his divine Spirit our soul, which had been laid waste by the passions following the first sin. He came to create a new *nous*, a new *psyche*, new eyes, new ears, a new spiritual tongue, in short, new men from those who believed in him.[87]

According to Balthasar, however, this experience of Christ in which he "mingles" with the human soul is first and foremost an experience of *suffering with* Christ. Balthasar expounds, "As probably nowhere else in all of Eastern theology, this 'experience' of Christ is primarily an experience of the Passion, a lived stigmatization: 'To some the sign of the Cross appeared as a splendour of light, and it impressed itself upon the interior man' (Hom. 8, 3)."[88] Christ in his grace may transform the corporeal senses, but this union and transformation come at a cost. In fact, Balthasar even goes so far as to say that the identification with Christ's suffering leads the human being to a descent into hell:

---

[86] *GL* I, 269-275, 370-371. This aspect of Macarius's understanding of the doctrine is not observed by Rahner.

[87] *GL* I, 371. *Hom.* 44, 1. *PG* 34, 780A. Maloney, 223.

[88] *GL* I, 271. Similarly, Balthasar also writes, "Religious experience is the sensorium with which the soul perceives God, an instrument restored by grace and steeled by the suffering of God in Christ." *GL* I, 272.

> The image of Christ's descent into hell, for instance, in order to return the lost Adam and his whole race to heaven, is applied to the individual: he himself is hell and, far from God, he experiences himself to be such. 'Your heart is a burial chamber and a grave'. The torrent of hell flows in you; you are 'submerged in the waves; you have drowned and are dead', and Christ is the diver that comes to take you up from your own depths (11, 10).[89]

In tones reminiscent of his own theology of Holy Saturday,[90] then, Balthasar reads Macarius as mapping Christ's descent into hell onto the individual human being, and, importantly, this pattern of death and resurrection has a direct bearing on his reading of Macarius's doctrine of the spiritual senses. Balthasar writes, "It is in Christ's grace, therefore, in his dying and rising, that the 'old man' is created anew and that the old fleshly senses become spiritual."[91] The spiritual senses, then, according to Balthasar's reading of Macarius, grow in the human being through a radical *Christomimesis* in which one enters not only into Christ's suffering and passion but into his death and resurrection as well. It is only on the other side of death that one receives one's spiritual senses.

I submit that this Macarian formulation of the spiritual senses profoundly influences one of the most unusual features of Balthasar's own rendering of the doctrine later in his theological aesthetics. As will be examined more thoroughly in chapter 4, Balthasar's understanding of the spiritual senses is one in which, as he puts it, "Our senses, together with images and thoughts, must die with Christ and descend to the underworld in order then to rise to the Father in an unspeakable manner which is both sensory and suprasensory," and he later writes, "it is our own senses and, with them, our spirit, our whole person that, dying with Christ, rise unto the Father."[92] This aspect of

---

[89] *GL* I, 272.

[90] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*, trans. Aidan Nichols, O.P. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1990).

[91] *GL* I, 371.

[92] *GL* I, 425.

Balthasar's rendering of the doctrine is certainly atypical in relation to the tradition as a whole, and I submit that it is his reading of Macarius's version of the idea that lies behind this unusual and noteworthy feature of Balthasar's thought.

Thus far we have seen Balthasar replicate Rahner's history of the spiritual senses with remarkable consistency. In spite of a few differences on specific interpretive matters, as we have observed, Balthasar assigns a significance to Origen, Evagrius, Diadochus, and Pseudo-Macarius that precisely mirrors the importance Rahner attaches to each of these figures. Just as Rahner sees the spiritual senses beginning with Origen, passing unremarkably to Evagrius and Diadochus, and flowering once again in Pseudo-Macarius, Balthasar also views the history of the doctrine unfolding in similar fashion. We will next examine Augustine of Hippo and Maximus the Confessor, both of whom Balthasar substantially amplifies in terms of their significance for the spiritual senses tradition. After this task is complete, we will look at Balthasar's curious neglect of Gregory of Nyssa.

Augustine of Hippo

Whereas Rahner makes only passing mention of Augustine's understanding of the spiritual senses at the end of his treatment of patristic figures, Balthasar gives considerable attention to Augustine's position on the doctrine, especially in the second volume of his theological aesthetics.[93] Balthasar thus significantly augments the role of Augustine in the spiritual senses tradition in comparison to the treatment he receives from

[93] See especially *GL* II, 95-143. Balthasar published three translations of Augustine's works throughout his career: *Aurelius Augustinus, über die Psalmen* (Leipzig: Hegner, 1936); *Aurelius Augustinus, das Antlitz der Kirche* (Einsideln-Köln: Benzinger, 1942); *Aurelius Augustinus, Psychologie und Mystik* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1960).

Rahner.[94] I argue below that this increased emphasis on Balthasar's part occurs because of the fact that he finds in Augustine the particular notion that the *beauty* of the divine is perceived through the "eye of the mind."[95] Although other patristic figures certainly advance the notion that the spiritual senses perceive the divine, they do not discuss in so thorough a manner the notion that the spiritual senses have the capacity for appreciating God's beauty. Augustine, then, emerges as a crucial resource for Balthasar's conceptualization of the *aesthetic* capacities of the spiritual senses, which are, of course, a central component of his project in *The Glory of the Lord*.

In the second volume of his theological aesthetics, Balthasar offers a variety of quotations from Augustine's writings on vision and beauty, between which he intersperses his own reflections. The following passage from *The Glory of the Lord* is worth quoting at length. Balthasar writes:

> The *oculus mentis*, the *oculus interior*, is as such the *lux mentis*, and yet only a completely healthy and specially schooled eye is able to look into the eternal sun…"Seeing the beauty of things must be left to those who as a result of a divine gift are capable of seeing it."[96] This is true above all of seeing the beauty of God himself, access to which and passion for which will be given only to the

[94] It should be said here that other scholars treat Augustine's doctrine of the spiritual senses in greater depth than Rahner, too. Most notably, P. L. Landsberg, "Les sens spirituels chez Saint Augustin," *Dieu vivant* 11 (1948): 83-105.

[95] As a terminological note, we should mention that Augustine distinguishes between three (not two) kinds of vision: physical vision, "spiritual" vision, and "intellectual" vision. Importantly, however, by use of the term "spiritual" vision, Augustine does not indicate the "spiritual senses" as described in other authors, but rather use of the imagination in "seeing" an object that has already left one's field of physical vision. By "intellectual" perception, by contrast, Augustine means to convey what is commonly spoken of as "spiritual senses," since intellectual perception is the means by which one perceives the divine on Augustine's model. The significance of this nuance for the spiritual senses discussion is that Augustine is clear in this instance that the human faculty that perceives the divine is *not* to be confused with the acts of the human imagination. Intellectual sense perceives God, to Augustine; it does not conjure images that it wishes could be the divine. See Augustine, *De Genesi ad Litteram*, XII, 6-14. Original Latin text in *PL* 34, 173-484. Published in English as *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John Hammond Taylor (New York, NY: Newman Press, 1982), vols. 41-42, here 42, 185-198.

[96] *De Libero Arbitrio*, 3, 36. Original Latin text in Jacques-Paul Migne, ed., *Patrologia Latina* (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-1855), vol. 32, 1221-1310, here 1289. Hereafter cited as *PL*. Published in English as *On Free Choice of the Will*, trans. Thomas Williams (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993). Above translation in *GL* II, 99.

> person who, through having become himself pure and light, learns to see God's light. Such a person alone begins to have a "taste" for God and "an eye for the only true beauty,"[97] that of "the good and beautiful God, in whom and from whom and through whom everything is good and beautiful."[98]

According to Balthasar's reading of Augustine, then, the "eye of the mind" or "inner eye" beholds the beauty of God.

Importantly, however, Balthasar locates in Augustine two more aspects of the aesthetic capacities of intellectual vision, both of which serve Balthasar's overarching purposes in his theological aesthetics. First, it is significant that intellectual vision perceives not only God's beauty, but also the beauty of God *through* the beauty of the world, according to Balthasar's reading of Augustine. Balthasar writes,

> This training in seeing also leads, when the soul becomes pure and open, to that "spiritual seeing" of God in his works of which Paul speaks in Romans (1, 20): *invisibilia ipsius per ea quae facta sunt intellecta conspiciuntur*. But this seeing succeeds only when the sight, leaving all finite things behind, has already reached the divine (*sempiterna ejus virtus et divinitas*) and looks back from there on what can become for it an entrance and an epiphany.[99]

In other words, once spiritual or intellectual sight has been granted the vision of God, one then "sees" God throughout the created order. Although this particular passage emphasizes that one *first* sees God, and *then* sees God's presence in all things, Balthasar writes that "certainly Augustine will also ascend from the beauty and order of the world to eternal beauty,"[100] citing Augustine's *On True Religion* as support of this alternate

---

[97] *Soliloquies*, 1, 14. Original Latin text in *PL* 32, 868-903, here 876. Published in English as *Soliloquies*, and *Immortality of the Soul*, trans. Gerard Watson (Warminster, England: Aris and Philips, 1990). Above translation in *GL* II, 99.

[98] The last quotation is taken from Augustine's *Soliloquies*, 1, 3. *PL* 32, 870. English translation and block quotation from *GL* II, 99.

[99] *GL* II, 101.

[100] *GL* II, 100.

directionality.[101] The point to bear in mind is that, much as Balthasar emphasizes the "whole of the upper world" to be the object of the spiritual senses in Origen, so too does he focus in Augustine on the notion that spiritual seeing witnesses the divine presence throughout the creation.

It is also highly significant that Balthasar reads Augustine as holding that intellectual vision perceives not only the beauty of God but specifically the beauty of Christ. In fact, according to Balthasar's reading of Augustine, it is only through acquiring spiritual sight that one can overcome Christ's physical ugliness and perceive his spiritual beauty. Balthasar notes that, for Augustine,

> A person must love Christ and have pure eyes to see his inner spiritual beauty,[102] because for those who stand at a distance, and certainly for his persecutors, he is veiled to the point of ugliness.[103] But his veiling of his beauty was not just inspired by his wish to be like us, who are ugly, in all things, but also by his desire to make the ugly beautiful by his love.[104]

In a similar vein, Balthasar also intones, "Everything follows the path of love which leads inwards. 'Christ's beauty is all the more lovable and wondrous the less it is physical beauty.'"[105] Although Balthasar does not in his own theological aesthetics draw the

---

[101] Augustine writes in that text, "There is no lack of value or benefit in the contemplation of the beauty of the heavens…But such a consideration must not pander to a vain and passing curiosity, but must be turned into a stairway to the immortal and enduring." *De Vera Religione* 52. Original Latin text in *PL* 34, 121-172, here 145. Published in English as *Of True Religion*, trans. Louis Mink (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1959). Above translation in *GL* II, 100.

[102] Cf. *Enarr in Ps* 127, 8. Original Latin text in D. Eligius Dekkers, O.S.B., and Johannes Fraipont, *Corpus Christanorum Series Latina*, vol. 40 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1956), 1872-1873. Hereafter cited as *CCSL*. Published in English as *Expositions of the Psalms*, trans. Maria Boulding, O.S.B., ed. John E. Rotelle, O.S.A. WSA III/15-20 (New York: New City Press, 2000-2004).

[103] Cf. *Enarr in Ps* 43, 16. *CCSL* 38, 487-8. *Enarr in Ps* 44, 14. *CCSL* 38, 503. *Enarr in Ps* 103, I, 5. *CCSL* 40, 1476-1478.

[104] *GL* II, 135.

[105] *GL* II, 136. *De civ Dei* 17, c. 16, 1. Original Latin text in *CCSL*, vol. 48, 580-581. Published in English as *City of God*, trans. John Healey (London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1967). Above English translation in *GL* II, 136.

inversely proportional relationship between physical and spiritual beauty posed by Augustine here, it is nevertheless striking that for Augustine, as for Balthasar, spiritual vision entails not only seeing beauty but seeing in particular the beauty of Christ. In our investigation of Bonaventure in chapter 2 we will see a similar relationship between the spiritual senses and this Christocentric aesthetic.

The surprising aspect of Balthasar's interpretation of Augustine is that whereas he is quick to dismiss the accounts of the spiritual senses in Evagrius and Diadochus on account of their reduction of the five spiritual senses to a single mode of perceiving the divine, he relaxes this standard in his treatment of Augustine. Although it is true that Augustine famously describes a fivefold inner perception in his *Confessions*,[106] the vast majority of his comments on the spiritual senses pertain to vision alone. In his *Literal Meaning of Genesis*, which constitutes one of his most sustained discussions of a "sensory" encounter with God, Augustine treats exclusively vision.[107] At the heights of conceptual detail, then, spiritual senses such as hearing, smell, taste, and touch fall from Augustine's consideration.

Of course, it is not difficult to surmise that Balthasar is willing to relax the strict criteria he imposes on Evagrius and Diadochus because of Augustine's rich descriptions

---

[106] Balthasar does not miss the opportunity to quote this passage in *GL* I, 379. Augustine writes, "But what do I love, oh God, when I love Thee? Not the beauty of a body nor the rhythm of moving time. Not the splendour of the light, which is so dear to the eyes. Not the sweet melodies in the world of sounds of all kinds. Not the fragrance of flowers, balms, and spices. Not manna and not honey; not the bodily members which are so treasured by carnal embrace. None of this do I love when I love my God. And yet I do love a light and a sound and a fragrance and a delicacy and an embrace, when I love my God, who is light and sound and fragrance and delicacy and embrace to my interior man. There my soul receives a radiance that no space can grasp; there something resounds which no time can take away; there something gives a fragrance which no wind can dissipate; there something is savoured which no satiety can make bitter; there something is embraced which can occasion no ennui. This is what I love when I love my God." Augustine, *Confessions*, X, 6. Original Latin text in *PL* 32, 659-867, here 782. Published in English as *Confessions*, trans. Henry Chadwick (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 183.

[107] *De Genesi ad Litteram*, XII, 6-14. *PL* 34, 173-484. Taylor, vol. 42, 185-198.

of the perception of God's beauty. It is nevertheless significant that, as much as Balthasar celebrates those versions of the doctrine that are fivefold, one observes a distinct privileging of sight in his understanding of the aesthetic capacities of the spiritual senses, both in his reading of Augustine above and, I would argue, in his own use of the spiritual senses, as will be examined in chapter 5.

Maximus the Confessor

As with Augustine above, so also with Maximus do we find a figure whose significance for the spiritual senses tradition Balthasar amplifies in comparison with the brief treatment he receives from Rahner.[108] Balthasar treats of Maximus's understanding of the spiritual senses in his 1941 monograph,[109] and although he does not take up Maximus's thought in a sustained manner in his theological aesthetics, I nevertheless hold that Maximus has special significance for Balthasar's articulation of the spiritual senses. In particular, I claim below that Maximus is important for Balthasar's idea that the spiritual senses become active specifically in the *liturgical* setting. Before examining this aspect of Maximus's thought, however, we should observe that Balthasar locates in Maximus certain themes that we have seen in his reading of the spiritual senses tradition.

[108] Rahner only mentions Maximus in a footnote at the end of his essay, and even then he simply writes, "In the 7th Century Maximus the Confessor matched the five spiritual senses with the powers of the soul which were familiar from other sources." Cf. *Ambiguorum Liber sive de variis difficilibus locis SS. Dionysii Areopatitae et Gregorii Theologi*, in *PG* 91, 1031-1417, here 1248A.

[109] *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003). Originally published in German as *Kosmische Liturgie. Maximus der Bekenner: Höhe und Krise des griechischen Weltbilds* (Freiburg: Herder, 1941). Later published in a second edition as *Kosmische Liturgie: Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1961). In 1941 Balthasar also published *Die Gnostischen Centurien des Maximus Confessor* (Freiburg: Herder, 1941).

It should be unsurprising by this point to find that Balthasar celebrates both the fivefold articulation of the spiritual senses found in Maximus and the high value placed on the material aspect of creation in Maximus's texts. Balthasar expounds on the former point as follows:

> Maximus even undertakes to work out a kind of correspondence between the five senses and the spiritual faculties of the soul by conceiving of the former as "exemplary images" of the latter. So the organ and sensible root of the (theoretical) intellect is the eye, the organ of the (practical) reason the perceiving ear, the organ of the emotive soul the sense of smell, that of the passionate soul the sense of taste, and that of the vital principle the sense of touch.[110]

Regarding the latter point, Balthasar writes that, for Maximus, "The soul does not contaminate itself…by its turn toward the world of sense."[111] Balthasar quotes Maximus's *Centuries on Love* as evidence of this regard for the material world: "It is not food that is evil, but our gluttony; not procreation, but fornication; not money, but avarice, not glory, but our thirst for glory. Thus there is nothing evil in things but the misuse [we make of them], which grows out of the disorder of the mind in making use of nature."[112] These aspects of Maximus's thought are uncontroversial, permitting us to move to the most intriguing aspect of Balthasar's reading.

Although his mention of the point is brief, it is nevertheless instructive that Balthasar reads Maximus as holding that the spiritual senses function in particular within liturgy. He writes,

> Maximus speaks positively…of the "spiritual senses:" if a person has them, he "realizes" in an experiential way the mystical content of the liturgy,[113] the true meaning of Jesus' gift of himself in

[110] *Cosmic Liturgy*, 304.

[111] *Cosmic Liturgy*, 305.

[112] *Capita de Charitate*, 3, 4, in *PG* 90, 959-1082, here 1017CD. *Cosmic Liturgy*, 305.

[113] *Mystagogia*, in *PG* 91,658-721, here 704A. *Cosmic Liturgy*, 286.

> the Eucharist[114]…through a concurrent "divine perception" (αἴσθησις θεία) that is aware [*mitwahrnimmt*] of the intelligible content *in* the symbolic ceremony.[115]

It would seem, then, that the liturgical setting is a key locus within which the spiritual senses are active, according to Balthasar's reading of Maximus. As we will see in chapter 5, there is a notable congruence between this understanding of the operation of the spiritual senses and Balthasar's own articulation of the idea, as liturgy for him is integral to the function of spiritual perception.

Curious Neglect: Gregory of Nyssa

One of the most puzzling features of Balthasar's engagement with patristic development of the spiritual senses is the lack of attention he gives to Gregory of Nyssa. This neglect on Balthasar's part is especially odd given that (1) Balthasar has an obvious, demonstrable interest in the spiritual senses from an early date, and (2) he was thoroughly acquainted with Nyssen's thought. Regarding the latter point, Balthasar actually translated Nyssen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs* and published an article-length study of him in 1939, followed by an expanded monograph published in 1942.[116] It is stranger still to consider that Balthasar actually studied Nyssen under Henri de Lubac at Lyon-Fourviere alongside Jean Daniélou,[117] as Daniélou devotes a considerable portion

---

[114] *Quaestiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra* 36, in *PG* 90, 244-785, here 381B. *Cosmic Litrugy*, 286.

[115] *Mystagogia*. *PG* 91, 700B. *Cosmic Liturgy*, 286.

[116] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Der Versiegelte Quelle: Auslegund des Hohen Liedes*. Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1939; "Présence et Pensée. La philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse," in *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 29 (1939): 513-549; *Présence et Pensée: Essai sur la philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1942); published in English as *Presence and Thought: An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995).

[117] Regarding his period of study under de Lubac, Balthasar offers the following recollection: "While all the others went off to play football, Daniélou, Boulliard, and I and a few others (Fessard was no longer there) got down to Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, and Maximus. I wrote a book on each of these." In Peter Henrici,

of his well-known work *Platonism et Théologie Mystique* to Nyssen's "doctrine of the spiritual senses."[118] It seems highly plausible that Balthasar and Daniélou would have discussed at some point Nyssen's understanding of the spiritual senses.

And yet there is no mention of Nyssen's articulation of the spiritual senses in *The Glory of the Lord*, and Balthasar mentions his version of the idea only once in *Presence and Thought*. In the latter text, Balthasar writes in a footnote on Nyssen's understanding of desire, "Certainly the spiritual senses are not identical to the ordinary senses of the soul…but there is a continuity between them and not a break: thus the Song of Songs uses sensual symbols to initiate the soul into divine things."[119] In his Maximus study, too, Balthasar indicates at least his awareness of Nyssen's position in the history of the tradition. There he writes, "Origen and his disciples, of course, and later Gregory of Nyssa, Pseudo-Macarius, and Diadochus of Photike, spoke of an intellectual and spiritual brand of sensibility that was needed in order to enliven the poverty of abstract thought and bring it to full flower, through experiential contact with an intelligible or mystical object."[120] In spite of this awareness, however, Balthasar seems not to regard Nyssen's understanding of the spiritual senses as noteworthy in *The Glory of the Lord*.

Why would this be the case? One possibility is that we see here once again the influence of Rahner's scholarship in framing Balthasar's study of the spiritual senses

---

S. J., "A Sketch of von Balthasar's Life," trans. J. Saward, in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. David L. Schindler (San Francisco: Communio, 1991), 7-43, 11. Original German: *Prüfet alles—das Gute behaltet* (Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 1986), 9.

[118] Jean Daniélou, *Platonism et Théologie Mystique: essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de Saint Grégoire de Nysse* (Paris: Aubier, 1944), esp. 235-266.

[119] *Presence and Thought*, 160.

[120] *Cosmic Liturgy*, 285.

tradition. At the end of his examination of patristic material, Rahner mentions the "obvious" influence of Origen in this arena, then writes of Nyssen, "In his exposition of the Song of Songs the theory of the five spiritual faculties is explicitly presented as a teaching of the 'philosophy' of the Song of Songs. Further evidence is here unnecessary."[121] It may be the case, then, that Rahner's cursory dismissal of Nyssen's version of the doctrine led Balthasar to adopt a similar attitude to this feature of his thought.

And yet Balthasar was most likely exposed to Daniélou's informed reading of Nyssen's understanding of the spiritual senses as well, and there would be no clear reason to privilege Rahner's study. It is true that *Platonism et Théologie Mystique* was published in 1944, two years after *Presence and Thought*, and this could have delayed Balthasar's exposure to the richness of this feature of Nyssen's theology. Nevertheless, Balthasar would have had ample time to integrate Nyssen's model of the spiritual senses into *The Glory of the Lord*. Moreover, Nyssen's articulation of the doctrine would seem to be an especially attractive option, given the extent to which Nyssen holds the bodily senses in high esteem. That is, one of Nyssen's most significant breaks with Origen arguably involves the high regard he has for the corporeal senses in relation to their spiritual counterparts.[122] Such a positive assessment of the body is clearly in keeping with Balthasar's goals in his theological aesthetics, making it all the more puzzling that Balthasar does not use Nyssen's thought on the topic.

---

[121] Rahner, "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen," 102.

[122] He describes his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* as "a guide for the more fleshly-minded," thereby positioning this work in opposition to that of Origen. *In Cant.*, Prol. Original Greek text in H. Langerbeck, ed., *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*, vol. 6 (Leiden: Brill, 1986), 4 (hereafter cited as *GNO*). English translation by Casimir McCambley (Brookline, MA: Holy Cross, 1987), 35.

As another possibility, it may be the case that Nyssen's *apophatic* model of the spiritual senses dissuaded Balthasar from incorporating his version of the doctrine into the theological aesthetics. Stephen Fields has noted Balthasar's interest in a *cataphatic* understanding of the spiritual senses in his reading of Bonaventure, as will be examined in chapter 2. If this assessment is accurate, then it stands to reason that Balthasar would shy away from Nyssen's articulation of the spiritual senses, as Nyssen describes in his *Commentary on the Song of Songs* the "dark embrace" between the human being and God that does not benefit from clear vision or understanding.[123]

Conclusion

We have observed in this chapter the influence that patristic understandings of the spiritual senses have on Balthasar's thought, as evidenced in his early patristic scholarship and his theological aesthetics. A number of themes emerge from our analysis. First, we have seen that Balthasar is attracted to those versions of the doctrine that articulate a fivefold perception of the divine (Origen, Pseudo-Macarius, Maximus), and we observed his dismissive attitude toward those models of the spiritual senses that collapse into a single divine sense (Evagrius, Diadochus). Second, we have noticed Balthasar's attempts to locate Christ and the "upper world" as the object of the spiritual senses (Origen, Pseudo-Macarius, Augustine). Third, we have seen Balthasar's desire to find the most positive rendering of the corporeal senses to which the spiritual senses are analogous (Origen, Pseudo-Macarius, Maximus). Fourth, in regard to the question of

[123] *In Cant.*, VI. *GNO* 6, 178-183. McCambley, 130-133. It is also interesting to note that in this first homily on the Song of Songs, Nyssen speaks of spiritual touch, taste, and smell, which are the three spiritual senses that are later in the medieval period mapped onto the will instead of the intellect. *In Cant.*, I. *GNO* 6, 34-42. McCambley, 43-56.

how one acquires one's spiritual senses, we have observed Balthasar's downplaying of practice and his emphasis on divine grace (Origen and Pseudo-Macarius), and the correlative broadening of those who are capable of receiving the capacity for spiritual perception (Origen).

In addition to these recurrent themes, we have also seen influences on Balthasar's understanding of the spiritual senses that seem to be particular to certain figures. In Augustine we have observed an alignment between spiritual vision and the beauty of God. In Maximus we have seen the idea that the spiritual senses become active within the liturgical setting. Most intriguingly, in Pseudo-Macarius we have observed the idea that the spiritual senses become active after one has suffered Christ's passion, died, and been resurrected with him.

Last, and as a comment on Balthasar's reading of the spiritual senses tradition as a whole, I would hazard the notion that the most significant reason Balthasar does not integrate Gregory of Nyssa into his reading of the history of the spiritual senses is that he is not actually all that interested in retelling and rounding out the history of the doctrine by seeking out neglected figures in the tradition. Instead, I hold that Balthasar in *The Glory of the Lord* shows a desire to bring historical instantiations of the doctrine into conversation with the thought of his contemporaries, especially Karl Barth, Romano Guardini, Gustav Siewerth, and Paul Claudel. Indeed, in *The Glory of the Lord* the only figure treated at any length outside of the "mainstream" rendering of the tradition (i.e., as beginning in Origen, then passing to Evagrius, Diadochus, and Pseudo-Macarius) is Augustine, and we can easily imagine that in this one case Balthasar simply could not resist addressing Augustine's rich descriptions of aesthetic capacities of spiritual

perception. Ultimately, then, I would argue that Balthasar is greatly influenced by patristic versions of the spiritual senses, but I additionally suggest that his primary interest lies in reworking the idea of spiritual perception in a modern idiom for his theological aesthetics. Before turning to Balthasar's engagement with his contemporary interlocutors, however, we shall in the next chapter examine his reading of the spiritual senses in the medieval and early modern periods.

Chapter 2

Balthasar's Reading of Medieval and Early Modern Versions of the Spiritual Senses

Having put forward in chapter 1 an account of the patristic influences on Balthasar's doctrine of the spiritual senses, this chapter will outline the role played by medieval and early modern expositors of the doctrine in Balthasar's theological aesthetics. Balthasar's reading of Bonaventure (ca. 1217-1274) and Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) merit our foremost attention, as Balthasar exhibits in his exposition of these figures a number of telling interpretive decisions that shed important light on his own use of the spiritual senses tradition. In his reading of Bonaventure, Balthasar takes up many of the same issues we explored in the previous chapter: the object of the spiritual senses, their stage in the spiritual life, their relationship with the bodily senses, and their aesthetic capacities.[124] Importantly, too, as was the case with Origen, with Bonaventure we once again observe Balthasar's lack of interest in discussing the various practices one may undertake in order to cultivate spiritual perception. In his reading of Ignatius, however, Balthasar offers for the first time an examination of the role that practice can play in acquiring the spiritual senses. Balthasar also finds in Ignatius one who unites corporeal and spiritual senses to a degree not achieved in the tradition that preceded him, as will be shown below.

---

[124] Latin quotations taken from the Quaracchi edition of Bonaventure's works: *Opera Omnia* (10 vols. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902), hereafter cited as *Opera Omnia*. Unless otherwise noted, English translations of Bonaventure's works are as follows: *Itinerarium mentis in Deum* from Bonaventure, *The Soul's Journey into God*, in *Bonaventure*, trans. Ewert Cousins (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1978); *Breviloquium* from Bonaventure, *The Breviloquium*, in *The Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1960), vol. 2; *De Reductione artium ad theologiam* from Bonaventure, *On Retracing the Arts to Theology*, in *The Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1966), vol. 3, 13-32. *Soliloquy on the Four Spiritual Exercises*, in *The Works of Bonaventure*, trans. José de Vinck (Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1966), vol. 3, 35-129. Abbreviations used in citations from Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentaries are understood as follows: III *Sent*. dist. 27 art. 2 q. 1: Book III of the *Sentences* commentary, *distinctio* 27, *articulus* 2, *quaestio* 1. Also, fund.=*fundamentum*, dub.=*dubium*, c.=*conclusio*.

Bonaventure

Balthasar follows Rahner in regarding Bonaventure as the most significant figure in the spiritual senses tradition after Origen.[125] However, Balthasar disagrees with Rahner on a number of interpretive matters, as noted by Stephen Fields.[126] Specifically, Balthasar reads Bonaventure as articulating a version of the spiritual senses (1) with the Word in Christ as their object, (2) situating them in the second, "illuminative" stage of spiritual development,[127] where (3) they find fullest expression in a *cataphatic* grasping of the Word and (4) are conjoined with the bodily senses of the human being. By contrast, Rahner holds that, for Bonaventure, the spiritual senses (1) have as their object the transcendent God, (2) are situated in the final, "unitive" stage of the spiritual life, (3) are perfected in an *apophatic* "learned ignorance," (4) and are disjuncted from the bodily senses.[128]

Importantly, however, I demonstrate here that too exclusive a focus on points of contrast with Rahner's interpretation of the spiritual senses obscures other noteworthy aspects of Balthasar's appropriation of Bonaventure's thought. Most significantly, I argue that Balthasar draws extensively from Bonaventure's corpus when he makes the

---

[125] Karl Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 16: *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology*, trans. David Morland (New York: Crossroad, 1979), 104-34.

[126] Stephen Fields, "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses," *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 224-241.

[127] Bonaventure's three stages of the spiritual life are well known. The first stage is that of *purification* (the purgative way); here the individual reflects on his or her sinfulness and then turns to a different life. The second stage is that of *illumination* (the illuminative way), in which the person turns from thoughts of his or her own wretchedness and knowledge of the forgiveness of God to behold God's splendor in created things. The third stage is that of *perfection* (the unitive way), in which the individual undertakes a "mystical" progression toward God that seeks and ultimately finds union with the divine. See also Stephen Brown's introduction to *The Journey of the Mind into God* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), ix-xviii.

[128] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 109-117; 126-128.

claim—which is key to his theological aesthetics—that the spiritual senses have a specifically *aesthetic* dimension. As we saw in Balthasar's reading of Augustine in the previous chapter, Balthasar understands Bonaventure as another figure who aligns the spiritual senses specifically with the *beauty* of Christ. The fact that Bonaventure consistently speaks of the spiritual senses' perceiving beauty—and the additional fact that he deliberates at length on the notion that beauty is a transcendental property of being—makes for a set of theological priorities that align with those of Balthasar to a remarkable extent.

Additionally, as we saw in Balthasar's reading of Origen, so too in his examination of Bonaventure do we observe that he makes virtually no mention of practice in the cultivation of the spiritual senses. That is, one aspect of Bonaventure that Balthasar does *not* explicitly integrate into his own theological project is the idea that one can actively undertake various efforts to foster the growth of one's spiritual senses. Instead, as I will develop more thoroughly in chapter 4 of this study (which examines the distinctiveness of Balthasar's interpretation of the doctrine), he advances a model of the spiritual senses in which grace plays a central role in the cultivation of one's spiritual senses.[129]

Last, in his reading of Bonaventure, Balthasar importantly repositions the spiritual senses such that they pertain not to "mystical experience," as he understands it, but rather to "Christian experience" more broadly considered. That is, Balthasar re-categorizes the spiritual senses such that they are fundamental features of "ordinary Christian faith"

[129] Of course, every figure who articulates a doctrine of the spiritual senses throughout the history of the church ascribes an essential role to grace. However, what those figures also typically do—which Balthasar does not—is speak of the manner in which practice is also required in this realm.

rather than faculties that are employed only at the rare, fleeting heights of "mystical encounter."[130] In so doing, Balthasar has the spiritual senses doing much of the heavy lifting in his theology, as they are employed not at the summit, so to speak, but rather at the very foundations of faith.

Scholarship on Bonaventure's Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses

The 1920s and 1930s witnessed a remarkable upsurge of scholarly interest in Bonaventure's doctrine of the spiritual senses.[131] Most significant among these studies is that of Jean-François Bonnefoy, whose 1929 *Le Saint-Espirit et ses dons selon Saint Bonaventure*[132] serves as the chief point of reference for much subsequent examination of the doctrine. Succinctly put, Bonnefoy holds that Bonaventure uses the term *sensus spiritualis* equivocally throughout his writings, and he therefore concludes his examination with the claim that Bonaventure is inconsistent on the matter of the spiritual

[130] *GL* I, 301.

[131] Ephrem Longpré, O.F.M., "La théologie mystique de S. Bonaventure," *Archivum Franciscan Historicum* 14 (1921): 36-108, esp. 51-53; Ephrem Longpré, "Bonaventure," *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* (Paris, 1937), 1:1768-1843; F. Andres, *Die Stufen der Contemplatio in Bonaventure Itinerarium* (Münster, 1921); Raoul Carton, *L'experience mystique de l'illumination interieure chez Robert Bacon* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1924), 242-245; Etienne Gilson, *La philosophie de Saint Bonaventure* (Paris : J. Vrin, 1924); Bernhard Rosenmöller, *Religiöse Erkenntnis nach Bonaventura* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1925); Dunstan John Dobbins, *Franciscan Mysticism* (New York: J. F. Wagner, 1927); J. M. Bissen, *Les degrés de la contemplation* (Paris, 1928-1930); Stanislaus Grünewald, O.M.Cap., *Franziskanische Mystik* (Munich: Naturrechts Verlag, 1932); Jean-François Bonnefoy, *Une somme bonaventurienne de théologie mystique* (Paris, 1934); H. Koenig, *De inhabitatione Spiritus Sancti* (Mundelein: Apud Aedes Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum, 1934); Stanislaus Grünewald, "Zur Mystik des hl. Bonaventura," *ZAM* 9 (1934): 124-142; 219-232; F. Beauchemin, *Le savior au service de l'amour* (Paris, 1935); F. Imle, *Das Geistliche Leben nach der Lehre des hl. Bonaventura* (Werl, 1939). For a contemporary treatment of these issues, see Fabio Massimo Tedoldi, *La dottrina dei cinque sensi spirituali in San Bonaventura* (Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1999).

[132] Jean-François Bonnefoy, *Le Saint-Esprit et ses dons selon Saint Bonaventure* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1929).

senses.[133] Bonnefoy's thesis thus becomes a touchstone for later investigations of the doctrine in that it accentuates the ambiguities with which any one-sided reading of Bonaventure must contend. Importantly, too, in its claims of irreconcilable discrepancies it represents one extreme to which interpretation of Bonaventure's doctrine can go. In fact, Rahner uses Bonnefoy as something of a foil for his own argument for consistency in Bonaventure's doctrine of the spiritual senses, as he holds that Bonnefoy's conclusions would leave one unable to derive any meaning from Bonaventure's texts on the topic. This issue will recur in our examination of Balthasar's reading below.

Balthasar on the Object of the Spiritual Senses in Bonaventure's Thought

Among the most important interpretive decisions Balthasar makes in his approach to Bonaventure's texts is his claim that the object of the spiritual senses should be regarded not as "God in his transcendence" but rather as the Word in Christ. Balthasar writes, "The chief texts identify the eternal Word as the object of this experience of God through the senses, the Word in his nuptial relationship to redeemed and sanctified man."[134] Balthasar alludes to two key passages from Bonaventure's texts to support this claim. The first, from Bonaventure's *Breviloquium*, reads as follows:

> The sublime beauty of Christ the Bridegroom is seen, in so far as he is splendour; the highest harmony is heard, in so far as he is word; the greatest sweetness is tasted, in so far as he is the wisdom that contains both, word and splendour; the sublimest fragrance is

[133] Bonnefoy comments on the then extant scholarship on Bonaventure as follows: "The basic error of these attempts to bring together the various statements on the subject lies in the view that all the passages in which Bonaventure speaks of 'sensus spiritualis' deal with one and the same phenomenon" [Le défaut initial de ces essais de concordance est, à notre avis, de n'avoir vu qu'une seule et même réalité dans tous les passages où saint Bonaventure parle de *sensus spirituales* et par suite d'avoir traduit uniformément cette expression polysème par un terme n'ayant qu'une signification, celle de faculté]. Bonnefoy, *Le Saint-Esprit et ses dons selon Saint Bonaventure*, 214. Quoted in Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 110.

[134] *GL* II, 320.

> smelled, in so far as he is the word inspired in the heart; the greatest delight is embraced, in so far as he is the incarnate Word.[135]

Bonaventure here gives clear indication that the spiritual senses perceive Christ via five different forms of spiritual perception. Balthasar comments on this passage by saying, "Here, the tree of the spiritual senses is related to the full height of the form of God in his revelation: not indeed to the transcendent God in himself…but precisely to the three dimensions of the Word of revelation."[136] In contradiction to the notion that it is the transcendent God who is the object of the spiritual senses, then, Balthasar here claims that the three aspects of the Word are the reality that the spiritual senses grasp.

Balthasar cites a similar passage from Bonaventure's *Itinerarium*:

> While she [the soul] accepts Christ, in her faith in him, as the uncreated Word, word and splendour of the Father, she recovers the spiritual hearing and sight—hearing that she may hear the address of Christ, sight that she may look on the rays of his light. When, further, she sighs in hope of receiving the inspired Word, she recovers the spiritual sense of smell through longing and inclination. When she embraces the incarnate Word in love, receiving pleasure from him and passing over to him through ecstatic love, she recovers taste and touch.[137]

In this passage from the *Itinerarium*, too, one finds no ambiguity regarding the object of the spiritual senses. They grasp Christ in a richly depicted, fivefold act of perception. Spiritual sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch all perceive the Word in Christ. In response to this passage, Balthasar similarly states, "the object of the senses is

---

[135] *Quibus videtur Christi sponsi summa pulchitudo sub ratione Splendoris; auditur summa harmonia sub ratione Verbi; gustatur summa dulcedo sub ratione Sapientiae comprehendentis utrumque, Verbum scilicet et Splendorem; odoratur summa fragrantia sub ratione Verbi inspirati in corde; astringitur summa suavitas sub ratione Verbi incarnati, inter nos habitantis corporaliter et reddentis se nobis palpabile, osculabile, amplexabile per ardentissimam caritatem, quae mentem norstrum per ecstasim et raptum transpire facit ex hoc mundo ad Patrem. Breviloquium* V, 6. *Opera Omnia* V 258b. Quoted in *GL* II, 320-321.

[136] *GL* II, 321.

[137] *Dum per fidem credit in Christum tanquam in Verbum increatum, quod est Verbum et splendor Patris, recuperat spiritualem auditum et visum, auditum ad suscipiendum Christi sermones, visum ad considerandum illius lucis splendores. Dum autem spe suspirat ad suscipiendum Verbum inspiratum, per desiderium et affectum recuperat spiritualem olfactum. Dum caritate complectitur Verbum incarnatum, ut suscipiens ab ipso delectationem et ut transiens in illud per exstaticum amorem, recuperat gustum et tactum. Itinerarium* IV, 3. *Opera Omnia* V 306b. Quoted in *GL* II, 323.

the same: the entire vertical extension of the revelation in the Word."[138] So we see, then, that the two passages typically regarded as the "main texts" in Bonaventure's treatment of the spiritual senses speak of the fivefold perception of the Word, not the spiritualized sensation of the transcendent God.[139]

Balthasar here is responding to Rahner's assertion that "as acts of contemplation the spiritual senses simply have God as their primary object" in Bonaventure's thought, and that the contrary notion that the spiritual senses apprehend Christ in a fivefold act of perception is "rather forced" (*un peu forcé*).[140] Rahner finds key support for this claim in two passages from Bonaventure's works, the first of which is taken from the *Itinerarium*. Referring to the understanding of spiritual taste described there, Rahner writes, "Spiritual taste consists in 'suscipere ab ipso (Deo) delectationes.'"[141] That is, spiritual taste, to Rahner, "receives its delight from God." According to Rahner, it is therefore God (*Deo*) who is the object of the spiritual sense of taste. A quick look at the primary text, however, shows that in this quotation Rahner has actually substituted the word *Deo* for Bonaventure's term, *Verbum incarnatum*. That is, the passage in question reads, "When, through charity, [the soul] embraces the *incarnate Word* by receiving delight from him

---

[138] *GL* II, 322.

[139] Balthasar further directs his reader to Bonaventure's additional references to Christ as the object of the spiritual senses throughout his writings. For example, Balthasar observes that in one of his epiphany sermons, Bonaventure writes that Christ is "lovely and refreshing to look upon in accordance with man's double power of sight: the inward sight which sees the divinity, the outward sight which sees the manhood" [*Sic oculis depurates ab omni lippitudine peccati sit iucundum et delectabile intueri ipsum secundum publicem visum hominis, scilicet interiorem quantum ad Deitatem, et exteriorem quantum ad humanitatem*] *Sermo 1, Dominica Infra Octavam Epiphaniae*. *Opera Omnia* IX 171b. *GL* II, 329.

[140] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 114-115.

[141] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 116. Rahner leaves the passage in its original Latin; in translation it reads, "receiving delight from him [God]." *Itinerarium* IV, 3. *Opera Omnia* V 306b.

and passing into him in ecstatical love, it recovers taste and touch."[142] In direct, clear contradiction to Rahner's claim that God is the object of spiritual taste, then, Bonaventure in fact makes clear in this passage that the object of this spiritual sense (and spiritual touch, too, for that matter) is the *Verbum incarnatum*.

The second text used by Rahner in this connection necessitates a more complex examination. Taken from Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary, the passage speaks of the *simplex contuitus*, which Rahner describes as the form of sight "reserved to purity of heart, which 'alone is permitted to gaze upon God.'"[143] Here Rahner follows Bonnefoy in taking the *simplex contuitus* to be a simple vision of God that grants knowledge of eternal truth.[144] It is thus not Christ, according to Rahner, but rather the transcendent God who is "seen" through this vision. The crucial question to ask, however, is whether or not it is in fact a "spiritual sense" of which Bonaventure speaks in his description of the *simplex contuitus*. Bonnefoy, whom Rahner claims to follow on this point, prefers to separate his treatment of the spiritual senses from his examination of the *simplex contuitus*, including his examination of the latter under his treatment of intelligence.[145] Much depends, of course, on how we define our terms, but it should be said that the actual words, *sensus spiritualis*, do not appear in this portion of Bonaventure's text. He

---

[142] *Dum caritate complectitur Verbum incarnatum, ut suscipiens ab ipso delectationem et ut transiens in illud…recuperat gustum et tactum*. *Itinerarium* IV, 3. Emphasis added, *Opera Omnia* V 306b.

[143] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 116. *Beatitudinus munditiae cordis, cuius est Deum videre*. III *Sent*. dist. 35 q. 3. *Opera Omnia* III 778a.

[144] He writes, "For an account of the 'simplex contuitus' we need only follow P. Bonnefoy. It involves a vision of the first truth which is immutable, and of its eternal ideas which form the ultimate principles of all creation. This 'contuitus' finds its internal unity in our becoming aware of the direct operation of eternal truth upon our own spirit. Of course this simple vision of God is not a direct perception of the divine essence free of any intermediary" (Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 116).

[145] Bonnefoy, *Le Saint-Esprit et ses dons selon Saint Bonaventure*, 176-185.

does speak of *videre* as it pertains to God, but it is worth entertaining the possibility that Bonaventure intends something distinct from the *sensus spiritualis* of which he speaks at other points in his writings.

Regarding the two quotations from Bonaventure's *Breviloquium* and *Itinerarium* quoted by Balthasar above, Rahner indicates an awareness of the passages, and he even cites portions of them in his study.[146] Instructively for our examination, however, he writes in response to this aspect of Bonaventure's thought, "This description of the object of the spiritual senses undeniably possesses both depth and beauty, but it must also be admitted that the attempt to discover a special object for every sense, a 'ratio' through which it perceives the Word, is rather forced."[147] Crucially, then, Rahner derives his argument against the idea that the Word in Christ is the object of the spiritual senses not from an internal critique of Bonaventure's thought but rather from Rahner's own preconceived idea that the notion of a fivefold perception of Christ is a bit contrived. One wonders, of course, what sort of presuppositions animate Rahner's comments in regard to which of Bonaventure's ideas are credible and which are not. It is certainly surprising to witness here a moment in which the contemporary viability of Bonaventure's thought seems to be dictating Rahner's otherwise largely historical study.

---

[146] Rahner writes, "A comparison between the two main passages from the *Breviloquium* and *Itinerarium* points to Christ as the reality grasped by the spiritual senses, the 'verbum increatum, inspiratum, incarnatum'. Spiritual hearing grasps the 'verbum increatum', so that the soul hears its voice and highest harmony. Spiritual sight perceives the Word, because the soul is dazzled by its light and brilliant beauty. The spiritual sense of smell perceives the 'verbum inspiratum' when the soul experiences the lofty aroma of the Word. Spiritual taste savours the 'verbum increatum' when it enjoys the sublime delight of its sweetness. The spiritual sense of touch grasps the 'verbum increatum' and its powerful grace." Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 115.

[147] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 115. "On ne peut refuser à cet exposé de l'objet des sens spirituels la profondeur et la finesse. Mais il faut bien reconnaître aussi qu'il y a quelque chose d'un peu forcé à vouloir découvrir pour chaque sens un objet particulier, une 'ratio' spéciale selon laquelle il atteint le Verbe." "La doctrine des 'sens spirituels,'" 276.

Further betraying his concerns with the constructive potential of the doctrine of the spiritual senses, Rahner writes, "Even though Bonaventure's dialectical skill and his ingenuity in drawing distinctions can cope with this difficulty, the impression remains that, despite the parallels with the physical senses and their object (splendor, harmonia, fragrantia, dulcedo, suavitas), a genuinely penetrating analysis of the specific character of the spiritual gifts as acts of contemplation has not been achieved."[148] Here, then, Rahner acknowledges that Bonaventure has developed an inventive set of parallels between the spiritual and corporeal senses, yet he remains critical of this model because of an "impression" that they do not describe the contemplation of God incisively enough. Unfortunately for his reader, Rahner does not develop further the basis on which this impression has been made; he instead dismisses the texts in question and moves on to his next topic. We can see, however, that the texts that speak most clearly regarding the object of the spiritual senses are those that designate Christ as their object.

Balthasar on the Stage of the Spiritual Senses in Bonaventure's Thought

Regarding the stage in the spiritual life in which the spiritual senses become active, Balthasar makes the point that the above passage from Bonaventure's *Itinerarium* points to the second, illuminative stage, and not the third, unitive stage as the proper location of the spiritual senses. He observes that Bonaventure includes the spiritual senses in the section of the *Itinerarium* that has to do with the contemplation of God's image in the soul of the human being (a thoroughly "second stage" topic).[149] Most

[148] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 115.

[149] *GL* II, 321.

significantly, however, Balthasar observes that in Bonaventure's thought the *object* of the spiritual senses largely dictates the stage of the spiritual life in which they should be situated. The fact that the spiritual senses have the Word in Christ as their object—and not the transcendent God—thus further strongly suggests that they belong in the second, illuminative stage of the spiritual life. Balthasar makes this point regarding the spiritual senses as follows: "Their dwelling place, in which they develop in an organic unity, is not the lowest stage, the world of mere faith, nor the highest, the ecstasy, but the wide middle area of sapiential contemplation, which has as its object the total form of revelation that is the threefold Logos."[150]

Rahner makes the opposite point, claiming that the spiritual senses for Bonaventure do not belong among the "gifts of the Holy Spirit" (which are granted in the second, "illuminative" stage), but rather among the blessings of beatitude, which are given in the final, "unitive" stage of the spiritual life.[151] However, Bonaventure himself would seem to situate the operation of the spiritual senses in the second stage of the spiritual life. Specifically, the passage from the *Itinerarium* quoted above troubles Rahner's interpretation yet again, as it gives his reader good reason to locate the spiritual senses in this illuminative stage. It is ordinarily understood in examinations of Bonaventure that, of the six chapters of the *Itinerarium*, chapters 1 and 2 pertain to the first stage of the spiritual life, chapters 3 and 4 to the second stage, and chapters 5 and 6

[150] *GL* II, 325.

[151] Rahner writes, "A closer examination of the principles of these acts, that is, of the spiritual senses, leads to the…conclusion…that the operation of the highest principles, the blessings of beatitude, is involved." (Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 112).

to the third stage.[152] The text in question comes from chapter 4 of the *Itinerarium*, which would situate it in this second stage of the mind's journey to God. One wonders on this point if Rahner has not imposed Origen's model of the spiritual senses, by which they become active in the final, *enoptic* stage of the spiritual life, onto Bonaventure's texts.

Balthasar on the Cataphatic Nature of Bonaventure's Model of the Spiritual Senses

Balthasar's handling of the *cataphatic* nature of the spiritual senses in Bonaventure's thought requires careful analysis. Key to his position is his resistance to Rahner's claim that the spiritual senses reach their height in an ecstatic, *apophatic* "learned ignorance" (*docta ignorantia*).[153] In particular, Balthasar suggests that the spiritual senses perform the function of making one *ready* for ecstasy, but they do not continue to function as the soul is vaulted to this ecstatic state.

The issue is complex enough to merit actually beginning with Rahner's scholarship on the topic before treating Balthasar's reading of Bonaventure. In his claim that the spiritual senses reach their height in "learned ignorance," Rahner contrasts two aspects of Bonaventure's unitive stage: the intellectual *simplex contuitus* and the volitional or affective *excessus ecstaticus*. Whereas the former may constitute the greatest degree of *understanding* of God that the human being can attain, the latter grants the human being the highest form of union. Rahner writes, "The 'simplex contuitus', vision, is the final goal of human understanding on earth, and yet it is not the last step of mystical progress or the highest form of contemplation in this world. For 'contuitus'

[152] See, for example, Stephen Brown's introduction to the *Itinerarium* in the English translation, esp. pp. xv-xviii.

[153] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 117.

only offers, according to Bonaventure, a 'contemplatio mediocris' in contrast to 'contemplatio perfecta', the 'excessus ecstatici.'"[154] In other words, Rahner sees Bonaventure's affective notion of union with God to claim that the intellect is surpassed in the final stage of contemplation (excepting the exceedingly rare instances of *raptus*)[155] and a form of union that is non-intellectual is then achieved. This *excessus ecstaticus*, most often translated simply as "ecstasy," is, in Rahner's terms, "the experience of the will, the union with God of a more direct love."[156]

Rahner's argument here rests on his novel attempt to yoke together ecstasy and spiritual touch in Bonaventure's thought. Regarding the *excessus ecstaticus*, he writes, "Its act is 'spiritual touch', the highest spiritual sense. Ecstasy and spiritual touch are one and the same."[157] That is, Rahner claims that when Bonaventure speaks of spiritual touch in his writings, one should understand him to be speaking of an "ecstatic" form of union characterized by a dark, obscure "contact" with God.[158] Rahner's argument that the spiritual senses reach their height in an *apophatic*, learned ignorance, then, is based on his claim that spiritual touch should be equated with ecstasy.

However, it should be said on this point that Rahner spends very little time actually defending this portion of his argument (only one paragraph of his lengthy essay), and he summons remarkably few texts to his aid. From Bonaventure's many comments

---

[154] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 117.

[155] Rahner summarizes Bonaventure's understanding of *raptus* as follows: "'raptus'…is a direct, clear vision of God through the intellect, and is a foretaste of the beatific vision as an 'actus gloriae'. This is a privileged and exceptional state which Bonaventure thinks, for instance, St. Paul enjoyed, but not Moses" (Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 117).

[156] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 117.

[157] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 117.

[158] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 117.

on the spiritual senses, Rahner provides only four citations.[159] And yet, even the texts that he does use do not unequivocally support his thesis that spiritual touch and ecstasy are the same. The first two passages point to Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentaries; these texts, however, simply make clear that touch is the highest spiritual sense, but they do not make any mention of ecstasy.[160] More significantly, Rahner uses the portion of the *Breviloquium* quoted above in an attempt to support his notion that spiritual touch and ecstasy should be equated with one another. However, it is not at all clear that this text in fact supports his view. The passage from Bonaventure used by Rahner reads: "'The supreme delightfulness [of Christ] can be touched in that He is the Incarnate Word dwelling bodily in our midst, offering Himself to our touch, our kiss, our embrace, through ardent love which makes our soul pass, by ecstatic rapture, from this world to the Father.'"[161] Immediately prior to the passage used by Rahner, however, we actually see that Bonaventure speaks of all five of the spiritual senses—not just touch:

---

[159] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 126.

[160] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 126. The citations from Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentaries read as follows: "On the part of the intellect there is a twofold exercise in relation to the knowledge of any particular thing: either by its own intuition, and thus there is vision; or by an external influence or instruction, and thus there is hearing. But with respect to the affect, a threefold situation obtains: either remotely, and thus there is smell; or proximately, and thus there is taste; or in conjunction, and thus there is touch, which is the more perfect among all the senses, and it is more spiritual because it maximally unites to him who is the highest spirit" [*quia ex parte intellectus contingit dupliciter circa cognitionem alicuius exerceri: aut proprio intuitu, et sic est visus; aut aliena excitatione sive instructione, et sic auditus. – Circa affectionem vero triplicem contingit reperire statum: aut in remotione, et sic odoratus; aut in approximatione, et sic gustus; aut in unione, et sic tactus, qui est perfectior inter omnes sensus et spiritualior propter hoc, quod maxime unit ei qui est summus spiritus*]: III *Sent*. dist. 13. *Opera Omnia* III 292a. "In respect of an uncreated object, the mode of perception by means of touch and embrace is nobler than that by means of sight and beholding" [*respectu objecti increati nobilior est modus apprehendendi per modum tactus et amplexus quam per modum visus et intuitus*]: III *Sent*. dist. 27 art. 2 q. 1. *Opera Omnia* III 604b. (Rahner erroneously cites the above passage as from distinction 28).

[161] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 126. *Breviloquium* V, 6. *Opera Omnia* V 258b.

> The supreme beauty of Christ the Spouse is seen in that he is resplendence, his supreme harmony heard in that he is the Word, his supreme sweetness tasted in that he is Wisdom comprising both Word and resplendence, his supreme fragrance inhaled in that he is the Inspired Word within the heart, his supreme delightfulness touched in that he is the Incarnate Word dwelling bodily in our midst, offering himself to our touch, our kiss, our embrace, through ardent love which makes our soul pass, by ecstatic rapture, from this world to the Father.[162]

The passage does make mention of "ecstatic rapture," of course, but the precise relationship between spiritual touch and this state remains unclear. It could be the case, for example, that all five of the spiritual senses—and not exclusively spiritual touch—function to bring the individual to ecstatic rapture. Whereas Rahner's tendency is to single out one spiritual sense as the object of his attention, then, Bonaventure's text actually describes the operation of all of the spiritual senses vis-à-vis Christ. Rahner's justification for mentioning only one spiritual sense in this connection thus remains opaque. More significantly, however, it is not at all obvious from this passage that the spiritual senses are active *within* ecstatic rapture. Instead, this passage arguably suggests that the spiritual senses perform the function of making one *ready* for ecstasy, but that they do not continue to function as the soul is vaulted to the ecstatic state. Bonaventure could certainly be more straightforward about the matter, but taken in conjunction with the last passage that Rahner uses to support his thesis, the likelihood of this interpretation increases considerably. To that passage we now turn.

Rahner lastly points to a now familiar portion of the *Itinerarium* in order to make his claim that "ecstasy…arises from peace and this is expressly referred to spiritual

---

[162] *Quibus videtur Christi sponsi summa pulchitudo sub ratione Splendoris; auditur summa harmonia sub ratione Verbi; gustatur summa dulcedo sub ratione Sapientiae comprehendentis utrumque, Verbum scilicet et Splendorem; odoratur summa fragrantia sub ratione Verbi inspirati in corde; astringitur summa suavitas sub ratione Verbi incarnati, inter nos habitantis corporaliter et reddentis se nobis palpabile, osculabile, amplexabile per ardentissimam caritatem, quae mentem norstrum per ecstasim et raptum transpire facit ex hoc mundo ad Patrem. Breviloquium* V, 6. *Opera Omnia* V 258b.

touch."[163] Rahner quotes Bonaventure's text to say that the soul "'is transported to Him (the Word) in ecstatic love and recovers…touch.'"[164] However, Rahner's use of this passage misleads his reader in key ways. First, the ellipses that Rahner uses above exclude the words "gustus ut." That is, the passage actually reads "is transported to him in ecstatic love and recovers *taste and* touch (my emphasis)."[165] If Rahner wants to use this passage to support his claim that spiritual touch should be identified with ecstasy, then he must include spiritual taste in his assessment as well. Second, and more importantly, as was true in the portion of the *Breviloquium* just examined, so too does this passage serve not so much to undergird the notion that spiritual touch entails an ecstatic, apophatic union with the transcendent God, as it rather functions as the culmination of a rich description of the action of all five spiritual senses in relation to the *Verbum increatum*, *inspiratum*, and *incarnatum*.[166] Again, then, Rahner seems to have taken Bonaventure's remarks regarding touch out of context and given them unwarranted emphasis to the exclusion of the other spiritual senses. Last, and most significantly, the suggestion of the text seems to be that the spiritual senses are not so much active within ecstasy as they function *prior to* ecstasy. In fact, in the very same section of the *Itinerarium* as that used by Rahner, Bonaventure makes it even more clear that the

---

[163] Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 126.

[164] Rahner leaves Bonaventure's text in its original Latin, quoting it as follows: "ut *transiens* in illud (Verbum) per *ecstaticum* amorem recuperat…tactum." Rahner, "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages," 126. *Itinerarium* IV, 3. *Opera Omnia* V 306b.

[165] *ut transiens in illud per exstaticum amorem, recuperat gustum et tactum*. *Itinerarium* IV, 3. *Opera Omnia* V 306b.

[166] "When it [the soul] believes in Christ as the uncreated Word and resplendence of the Father, it recovers the spiritual senses of hearing and sight: hearing, in order to listen to the teachings of Christ; and sight, in order to behold the splendor of His light. When, through hope, it longs to breathe in the inspired Word, by this aspiration and affection it recovers spiritual olfaction. When, through charity, it embraces the incarnate Word, by receiving delight from Him and passing into Him in ecstatical love, it recovers taste and touch."

spiritual senses serve this preparatory function in relation to ecstasy. Bonaventure writes, "It is at this step, where the interior senses have been restored to see what is most beautiful, to hear what is most harmonious, to smell what is most fragrant, to taste what is most sweet, and to embrace what is most delightful, that the soul is prepared for spiritual ecstasies."[167] Even more clearly than is stated in the *Breviloquium*, then, this passage would seem to indicate that the spiritual senses are active in a stage of preparation that is distinct from ecstasy itself, thus calling into serious question Rahner's thesis that ecstasy and spiritual touch are one and the same.

Balthasar directly responds to Rahner's use of the portion of the *Itinerarium* that reads "through this [the operation of the five spiritual senses] the soul is laid open to the intellectual ecstasies (*mentales excessus*)."[168] Here Balthasar writes, "it is the five-fold sense-experience that brings the soul into the final readiness for the ecstasy: *disponitur anima ad mentales excessus*."[169] As also argued above, the spiritual senses, on Balthasar's reading, prepare the soul for this experience of ecstasy, but they are not active within ecstasy itself. Balthasar claims, "This chief text in no way therefore speaks of the spiritual senses as encompassing the experience of God in the ecstatic rapture (for example, as an immediate touching of the divine essence), as we find this later in John of the Cross, in the concept of *toques*."[170] Balthasar thus recognizes that later articulations of the spiritual senses have in fact identified ecstasy with spiritual touch, but he cautions

---

[167] *In hoc namque gradu, reparatis sensibus interioribus ad sentiendum summe pulcrum, audiendum summe harmonicum, odorandum summe odoriferum, degustandum summe suave, apprehendendum summe delectabile, disponitur anima ad mentales excessus. Itinerarium* IV, 3. *Opera Omnia* V 306b.

[168] *Itinerarium* IV, 3. *Opera Omnia* V 306b.

[169] *GL* II, 322.

[170] *GL* II, 322.

against reading Bonaventure through the lens of these later figures. In Bonaventure, Balthasar argues, we find a model of the spiritual senses importantly distinct from these later understandings of the doctrine.

Balthasar is, of course, aware of Bonaventure's understanding of ecstasy and its Dionysian heritage, and he recognizes the use of sensory terms there. Quoting from the *Sentences* commentary, he writes of Bonaventure's understanding of ecstasy as follows:

> The sight of the eye (*oculi aspectus*) can fix itself on God, so that it looks at (*aspiciat*) nothing else, and yet does not perceive (*perspiciet*) him, nor is allowed to see the splendour of his light, but on the contrary is raised up into darkness and attains to the knowledge that Denys…calls *docta ignorantia*.[171]

The key, however, lies in the precise manner in which such language of sensation is used in these portions of Bonaventure's texts. Alluding to both the *Sentences* commentary and the *Hexaemeron*, Balthasar characterizes Bonaventure's use of this language as follows: "Bonaventure describes this ecstasy as that in which love surpasses all knowledge; in an extravagant [*überschwenglicher*] way (since other words are lacking) sensory experiences can be adduced to shed light on the ineffable. But in any case, it is not a 'seeing' but rather a hearing of secret words, and above all a touching of one being by another."[172] Somewhat unexpectedly, then, Balthasar actually summons more textual evidence that would aid an *apophatic*, ecstatic reading than does Rahner, and yet Balthasar regards Bonaventure in these writings to be using the language of sensation in

---

[171] *GL* II, 324. Quotations from II *Sent*. dist. 23, 2 q3 ad 6. *Opera Omnia* II 546a.

[172] *GL* II, 324. Balthasar's remarks regarding hearing are based on Bonaventure's *Hexaemeron*: "at the summit is the uniting of love…only the affective faculty remains awake, and imposes silence on all the other faculties, and then man is estranged from the senses and set in ecstasy, and hears secret words which a man may not utter, because they exist only in the affective sense" [*in vertice est unitio amoris…sola affective vigilat et silentium omnibus aliis potentiis imponit, et tunc homo alienatus est a sensibus et in ecstasy positus et audit arcane verba quae non licet homini loqui, quia tanum sunt in affectu*] *Hexaemeron* 2, 29-30 (*Opera Omnia* V 341ab-342a), translation in Balthasar, *GL* II, 324. The passages regarding touch that are used by Balthasar are taken from III *Sent*. dist. 27, art. 2 q. 1. *Opera Omnia* III 604b, and III *Sent*. dist. 13 dub. 1. *Opera Omnia* III 292a.

an importantly different manner. Specifically, such attempts to describe the ecstatic experience of God *must* appeal to sensory terms "since other words are lacking." The implication of Balthasar's comments here would seem to be that use of the language of sensation in these instances arises not so much from the propriety of using such terms to describe ecstatic religious experience, but rather results from the impropriety of any other use of language for such experiences. Sensory terms, then, are the least inappropriate among a set of even more inappropriate options.

I would contend here that the difference highlighted by Balthasar maps onto the division outlined in the introduction to this study, by which an analogous use of sensory language was distinguished from a merely metaphorical use of such terms. Balthasar does not use such distinctions by name in his analysis, but I hold that when he insists that sensory language is used in an "extravagant" way in Bonaventure's descriptions of ecstasy, he is saying something similar to the notion that Bonaventure in these moments shifts into a *metaphorical* use of the language of sensation. That is, I read Balthasar as taking Bonaventure to slide into a highly figurative use of sensory terms here that is distinct from his use of the language of spiritual sensation in the second stage of the spiritual life. Conversely, Balthasar could be said to regard Bonaventure's use of sensory language pertaining to the second stage of the spiritual life to be of a strictly analogous character in that it bears a close resemblance to the corporeal senses (and it is not merely a figurative expression for the activity of the mind or soul).

On what basis, however, does Balthasar decide that Bonaventure's "third stage" language of sensation is "extravagant" and arguably metaphorical, and that the "second stage" language bears a more precise, arguably analogical relationship to its corporeal

counterpart? Could one not arbitrarily make the opposite move in reading Bonaventure's texts? Balthasar's decision in this regard is not without its interpretive difficulties, but I nevertheless claim here that his hermeneutic is defensible. To begin with, in Bonaventure's use of the language of sensation, there is often a difference in terminology between those spiritual senses that pertain to a *cataphatic* grasping of the Word in Christ and those uses of sensory language that pertain to *apophatic*, ecstatic union. Specifically, the majority of instances in which the actual term *sensus spiritualis* is used pertain to the second stage of the spiritual life. Conversely, in those instances in which ecstatic union with God is discussed, "touch," "sight," and "hearing" are used, but often the term *spiritualis* is not. The distinction is certainly subtle, but the general lack of the term "spiritual" in most "third stage" use of the language of sensation arguably suggests that Bonaventure has a different sort of thing in mind when he speaks of touch, sight, and hearing as they pertain to the transcendent God. We should certainly be cautious, for example, in attributing a "doctrine of the spiritual senses" to any figure in church history who happens to speak of the beatific vision. It is not implausible, therefore, to hold that Bonaventure uses a "proper" doctrine of the spiritual senses only in speaking of a *cataphatic* grasping of the Word in Christ, and his other occasional uses of sensory language are indeed another sort of extravagant use that is distinct from a strict definition of the spiritual senses.[173]

[173] Importantly, too, Balthasar is not negligent of the third stage of Bonaventure's notion of the spiritual life and its significance for the spiritual senses. The relevant point to make in this regard is that Balthasar understands the doctrine's relation to this stage very differently than Rahner does. That is, the "darkening" of the spiritual senses is not to be understood as an apophatic moment of ecstasy of union with the divine, but rather for Balthasar it is the inevitable flip side of the cultivation of the spiritual senses. That is, for Balthasar the spiritual senses conform themselves to Christ, and in so doing the human being undergoes a *death* with Christ. It is the *loss* of the object of the spiritual senses and the consequent taking on of *suffering* that marks their progression, not their growth in ever-increasing degrees of ecstasy. The human being is ultimately brought to life again on Balthasar's understanding of the development of the spiritual

Furthermore, it would seem to be significant that when Bonaventure speaks of all *five* spiritual senses, he unfailingly speaks of them in their relation to the Word in Christ. Conversely, when the "transcendent God" is discussed, touch, sight, and hearing are mentioned, but never all five senses. As outlined at the beginning of this study, one criterion by which a figure is measured in espousing a doctrine of the spiritual senses has to do with whether or not that individual has a function for all five spiritual senses. The fact that all five spiritual senses for Bonaventure are only used in this cataphatic grasping of the Word in Christ would suggest, then, that a doctrine of the spiritual senses by this strict standard can be applied only to the second stage of the spiritual life.

In an important sense, then, Balthasar actually reiterates Bonnefoy's conclusions, as he also claims that the language of sensation is used in importantly different ways throughout Bonaventure's texts. The distinction to be made between their understandings, however, is that Balthasar suggests that in some of those instances Bonaventure is using a doctrine of the spiritual senses, properly understood, and in other instances he simply is not. Again, the interpretive move is not without controversy, but it does present Bonaventure's reader a way of deriving meaning from his texts without having to attribute fundamental inconsistency to his use of the language of sensation. Significantly, too, I would contend that Balthasar's method for finding resolution on this difficult matter is preferable to that of Rahner, who actually has no way of dealing with evidence that resists his thesis other than suggesting that it is "forced."

---

senses, and the spiritual senses are restored, but it is not without suffering, the cross, and the grave. Thus one sees that even in his interpretation of the very same stage of the spiritual life Balthasar has a different reading of Bonaventure than does Rahner.

What is at stake in these distinctions? Could the spiritual senses for Bonaventure not perceive *both* the Word in Christ *and* the transcendent God? Why insist that they must apprehend only one reality or the other? Although the consequences of this debate may not be immediately apparent, Balthasar in fact resists Rahner's reading of Bonaventure for reasons that are at the very heart of his theological aesthetics. Specifically, Balthasar is concerned about any interpretation of the spiritual senses that regards them as fleeing the material world. Balthasar is thus concerned that Rahner's interpretation of Bonaventure, in celebrating the heights of ecstatic union with God, actually neglects the centrality of the *Verbum incarnatum*, and in so doing neglects the realm in which divine revelation decisively takes place. This set of concerns leads us to our fourth point of comparison, as Balthasar seeks in his interpretation of Bonaventure's doctrine of the spiritual senses to unite them with the corporeal senses such that "spiritual perception" is inextricable from its bodily counterpart.

Balthasar on the Relationship between Spiritual and Bodily Senses in Bonaventure

The bulk of Balthasar's effort in his treatment of Bonaventure's doctrine of the spiritual senses is directed toward establishing the intimate connection between physical and spiritual sensation in Bonaventure's thought. Here Balthasar emphatically resists a "dualist" reading of Bonaventure that would separate body from soul, and he instead insists that, for Bonaventure, spiritual sensation takes place in union with physical sensation.[174] Balthasar writes of Bonaventure, "One cannot suppose that the outer and

[174] The question of "dualism" in Rahner's reading of Bonaventure should be briefly addressed. It would seem to be more Fields—and less Rahner—who is actually insisting on a firm split between body and soul in the doctrine of the spiritual senses. Fields writes, "According to Rahner, Bonaventure conceives the spiritual senses, not as acts of the corporeal senses that have been elevated by grace, but as grace-aided acts

inner senses are two faculties separate from one another, perhaps indeed opposed to one another."[175] Such a reading of the spiritual senses, however, relies upon a non-dualist anthropology, and so Balthasar first indicates aspects of Bonaventure's texts that suggest such a unified understanding of the human being.

Right from the start, Balthasar makes his goal clear. At the very beginning of his treatment of Bonaventure's anthropology, Balthasar writes, "For Bonaventure, *man* is essentially the midpoint and summary of the world; this point must be made against anyone who would interpret his doctrine as one-sidedly spiritual, in flight from the world, ecstatic."[176] Against any reading of Bonaventure that would regard him as devaluing the material order in the name of a "spiritual" union with the divine (which Balthasar interestingly equates with ecstatic union), Balthasar offers numerous texts that speak of the exalted position of the body.[177] Drawing from Bonaventure's *Sentences* commentary,

---

of the intellect and the will in a soul essentially independent of the body" (235). Later in his article, Fields succinctly speaks of "Rahner's dualist interpretation of sense" (237). It is certainly true that Rahner speaks at great length about the spiritual senses as acts of the intellect and the will, but it should also be said that he does not specify their exact relation to the body. It is also true that Rahner mentions Alexander of Hales—an important influence on Bonaventure in this arena—as articulating a system of thought in which the spiritual senses "would only be hindered by the activity of bodily powers" (108). However, we should mention that Rahner's treatment of Bonaventure himself does not evince such a boldly put thesis regarding the body. In fact, nowhere in his examination of Bonaventure does Rahner explicate the relation between spiritual and bodily sensation. Of course, one might assume that Rahner holds Bonaventure to follow Alexander in this regard, and Rahner does not offer any evidence from Bonaventure's corpus that shows resistance to Alexander's dualist scheme. Furthermore, one could argue that Rahner's extensive descriptions of the intellect and the will strongly suggest that these aspects of the soul are thought of as independent from the body. It is worth noting, however, that Rahner himself does not overtly indicate dualism in Bonaventure's worldview; neither, however, does he attempt to counter a reading of Bonaventure as dualist in his theological anthropology.

[175] *GL* II, 319.

[176] *GL* II, 315.

[177] At an even more fundamental level, Balthasar draws his reader's attention to Bonaventure's regard for matter itself, noting that "matter has an *appetitus* towards form, and this *appetitus* gives it the capacity and disposes it for the taking-on of form. To this extent, matter is not *privatio pura*, but in its very nature has already something of beauty and light in itself." *GL* II, 311. Balthasar here refers to *Hexaemeron* II, 2. *Opera Omnia* V 336b, and II *Sent.* dist. 1, I, q1 ad 2. *Opera Omnia* II 17b.

Balthasar writes, "Of all material systems of organisation, the human body possesses the highest 'illuminated quality (*luminositas*) and subtlety', its 'harmony is greater than that of any other substance', just as 'its dignity is great because of the high harmony of the proportion of its parts.'"[178] In taking a body, the soul is not compromised, according to Bonaventure. In fact, Balthasar shows that Bonaventure thinks of the human soul as finding its *perfection* in its union with the human body. He again quotes the *Sentences* commentary as follows:

> The form of the composite is more perfect than any one part, because the parts are ordered towards the form of the composite. So the form of existence as man is more full and perfect than the form which the soul is by itself; since therefore the perfecting of grace and glory presupposes the perfection of nature, the whole man, not only the soul, must be transfigured.[179]

For Bonaventure, then, the soul is not created so as to be isolated from the body; rather it must be embodied in order to fulfill its purpose. Human beings are the midpoint of the world, Bonaventure holds, since they are the union between spirit and matter. It is for this reason that God became a human being, that Christ took a human body and did not merely appear to humanity as an angel, for the corporeal is the other half to the spiritual

---

[178] *GL* II, 316. Quotations from II *Sent*. dist. 17, 2, q2 c et ad 6. *Opera Omnia* II 423ab: *Ad illud quod obiicitur de ordine, dicendum, quod, etsi natura caelestis sit excelsior inter corpora simlicia secundum se considerate, non tamen excellit in gradu in comparatione ad ulteriorem formam suscipiendam; sed is est ordo, quod forma elementaris unitur animae mediante forma mixtionis, et forma mixtionis disponit ad formam complexionis. Et quia haec, cum est in aequalitate et harmonia, conformatur naturae caelesti; ideo habilis est ad susceptionem nobilissimae influentiae, scilicet vitae. Et sic in unione animae ad corpus rectus servatur ordo. Magna etiam est dignitas humani corporis propter magnam harmoniam et proportionalem coniunctionem suarum partium, ob quam in statu viatoris conformis fit naturae caelesti; in statu autem comprehensoris perficietur a Deo, non tantum, ut sit conformis, sed etiam, ut supra naturam caelestem sit exaltata et sublimata, ut ei congruat potissime habitatio caeli empyrei.* Cf. II Sent dist. 2 II, 1 q2. *Opera Omnia* II 73a-75b. Balthasar also writes, "Once it is transfigured, it will be so elevated and perfected that it will most fittingly be given a place in the empyrean above the heavenly natures." *GL* II, 316.

[179] *GL* II, 317. *Perfectior est forma compositi quam aliqua pars, quia partes ordinantur ad formam compositi: ergo completior et perfectior est forma humanitatis quam ipsa forma, quae est anima: ergo cum perfectio gratiae et gloriae praesupponat pefectionem naturae ; necesse est totum hominem, non tantum animam, glorificari.* IV *Sent*. dist. 43, I, q. 1, fund. 5. *Opera Omnia* IV 883a.

in creation. In fact, Balthasar summarizes Bonaventure as follows: "Man in his essence must bring his body into this blessedness, and through his body the whole physical world below which is ordered towards transfiguration through man."[180] The essence of the human being, then, is not the soul alone. Instead, the human being is a "unity-in-duality," since the soul does not live without the body and the body does not live without the soul. Furthermore, it is in the union between body and soul that the human being is perfected. Balthasar thus finds in Bonaventure an understanding of the human being as inherently united in body and soul.

This anthropology has a direct impact on the spiritual senses in Bonaventure's thought. The human being has been given a *duplex sensus*, Balthasar writes.[181] That is, the human being has a double range of senses, one inner and one outer, but one must not understand these faculties to be in any way separated from each other. In fact, precisely as the "midpoint" of the world, human beings represent the union of these two. Balthasar writes, "The animal sees only the physical, the angel the spiritual, but, 'for the sake of the perfecting of the whole', man had to 'come to be, endowed with a double range of senses, so that he could read the book written on the inside and on the outside: the book of Wisdom and her works.'"[182] In the human being one finds the synthesis of spiritual and physical, and this union is neither accidental nor shameful, according to Balthasar's reading of Bonaventure. As the human being is the union of the spiritual and the

[180] *GL* II, 317.

[181] *GL* II, 317.

[182] *GL* II, 318. *Ad perfectionem universitatis debuit fieri creatura, quae hoc sensu duplici esset praedita ad cognitionem libri scripti intus et foris id est Sapientiae et sui operas*. *Breviloquium* II, 11. *Opera Omnia* V 229a.

physical, so too do the perceptual faculties of the human being apprehend physical and spiritual realities in a unified act of perception.

On this point, Balthasar is able to find considerable textual support from Bonaventure's works. Most significantly, perhaps, he quotes a passage from Bonaventure's *The Reduction of the Arts to Theology* that speaks of a close relation between the spiritual and bodily senses:

> The sense of our heart (*sensus cordis*) must longingly seek what is beautiful, or what sounds well, or what smells sweet, or what tastes sweet, of what is soft to touch—must find it with joy, and untiringly strive after it anew. In this way, the divine Wisdom is contained in a hidden manner in sense-knowledge, and the contemplation of the five spiritual senses is wonderful in its correspondence to the bodily senses.[183]

This text clearly speaks to an intimate relationship between the spiritual and corporeal senses in Bonaventure's thought. The divine Wisdom is contained *within* sense knowledge, and that Wisdom is grasped in a unified act of perception in which a correspondence (*conformitatem*) obtains between the spiritual senses and the bodily senses.

In this connection Balthasar also examines Bonaventure's understanding of the human being in heaven as described in his *Soliloquies*. It is telling not only that Bonaventure speaks of all the faculties of sense being exercised by the human being in heaven, but also that "it is quite certain that the soul would never strive for the body to be assumed again, if the body, however transfigured it might be, were to disturb the contemplation of God in the least degree once it is assumed again."[184] The passage then

---

[183] *Sensus cordis nostri sive pulchrum, sive consonum, sive odoriferum, sive dulce, sive mulcebre debet desideranter quaerere, gaudenter invenire incessanter repetere. – Ecce, quomodo in sognitionesensitiva continetur occulte divina sapientia, et quam mira est contemplatio quinque sensuum spiritualium secundum conformitatem ad sensus corporales*. *De Reductio Art.* X. *Opera Omnia* V 322b.

[184] *Certum est enim, quod ipsa anima nunquam resumtionem corporis appeteret, si resumtum, etiam quantumcumque gloriosum, divinam contemplationem impediret.* *Soliloquies* IV, 21. *Opera Omnia* VIII 63b-64a.

goes on to say that the soul without the body is actually at a disadvantage: "The blessed do long for this [union with the body] because without the body their blessedness cannot reach perfection, their exultation cannot be satisfied; indeed, so great is their longing, that it actually hinders and blocks their contemplation in some measure."[185] In the fulfilled state of the human being in heaven, according to Bonaventure, the soul is actually hindered without the body. It is, of course, a different sort of body that is being described in these passages, but it is nonetheless highly significant that Bonaventure retains notions of sense perception and the intimate relation between the body and soul when he speaks of the person in heaven. Balthasar summarizes his understanding of Bonaventure's doctrine of the spiritual senses as follows: "After reading this statement, one cannot suppose that the outer and inner senses are two faculties separate from one another, perhaps indeed opposed to one another: rather, they must have their common root in the single intellectual-material nature of man, in which the general character of seeing, hearing, tasting, and so forth is based."[186]

Several aspects of Balthasar's interpretation of Bonaventure's understanding of the body in its relation to the spiritual senses are of note to us. First, whereas Balthasar in most instances places himself in thorough conversation with the extant secondary literature on the topics he examines, in his reading of the union of body and soul in Bonaventure he does not summon any allies to his cause. This speaks, I think, to the fact that Balthasar is charting an unusual course in his interpretation of Bonaventure's

---

[185] *Nunc autem, secundum Augustini sententiam et doctrinam, ipsae animae sanctae desiderant eius resumtionem et exspectant iteratam unionem ipsius, quia ipsarum sine eo non potest consummari felicitas nec satiari iucunditas; et adeo vehementer desierant quod etiam aliqualiter earum contemplationem impedit et retardat. Soliloquies* IV, 21. *Opera Omnia* VIII 64a.

[186] *GL* II, 319.

understanding of the relation between the material and the spiritual. One readily finds scholarship in this period that flatly holds Bonaventure to value the spiritual over the material in his thought.[187] Balthasar thus downplays the extent to which his reading of Bonaventure's regard for the body might be a novel one. Furthermore, the prevalence of readings of Bonaventure that clearly privilege the spiritual over the material points to the notion that Balthasar would not likely come up with his reading of Bonaventure without some other, prior influence. That is to say, one can find an understanding of Bonaventure as privileging the body in his texts, but I would contend that one must already be looking for it if one is to sift through the multitude of passages—and secondary literature—that would seem to suggest the opposite. In this regard it is certainly significant that Protestant theology at this cultural moment was rediscovering a "Biblical anthropology" that resists "philosophical anthropologies" by positing a radical unity between body and soul. Karl Barth, in particular, importantly articulates his understanding of the human being based on scriptural sources that, he claims, regard the human as a psychic-corporeal totality fundamentally united in body and soul.[188] As I will explore more thoroughly in chapter 3, Balthasar's extensive engagement with Barth's biblical anthropology, as evidenced in *The Glory of the Lord*, points to Barth as a likely source of the "anthropology of unity-in-duality" that serves as Balthasar's guide in his interpretation of Bonaventure.

---

[187] See, for example, Etienne Gilson, *La philosophie de Saint Bonaventure* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1924).

[188] Barth writes, "The statement that 'man is soul' would be without meaning if we did not immediately enlarge and expound it: Soul of one body, i.e., his body. He is soul as he is a body and this is his body. Hence he is not only soul that 'has' a body which perhaps it might not have, but he is bodily soul, as he is also besouled body." Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2: *The Doctrine of Creation*, trans. H. Knight, G.W. Bromiley, J.K.S. Reid, and R.H. Fuller (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), 350.

Looking at the widely divergent interpretations advanced by Balthasar and Rahner, we can see that interpretive difficulties surrounding Bonaventure's doctrine of the spiritual senses remain. However, as indicated in the above analysis, it is certainly significant that whenever Bonaventure speaks of the operation of five spiritual senses (*sensus spiritualis*), it is without a doubt the Word in Christ who is their object in the second stage of the spiritual life. Conversely, when the alternative thesis is entertained, ambiguities arise. In his use of sensory language in relation to God, Bonaventure never discusses the operation of all five spiritual senses, and the precise manner in which he uses sensory language is unclear. If one wants to understand the manner in which the doctrine of *five* spiritual senses functions in Bonaventure's theology, then Balthasar's interpretation presents unassailable evidence that the Word in Christ is their object. This position does not definitively resolve all ambiguities in Bonaventure's understanding of the doctrine, but Rahner's interpretation certainly presents us with more misleading use of quotations, ambiguities, and special pleading than does the Balthasarian alternative.

Neglected Aspects of Balthasar's Bonaventurian Inheritance

Whereas the above portion of our examination had its terms set by the Fields study, this part of our investigation takes up dimensions of Balthasar's reading of Bonaventure not handled by Fields or other Balthasar scholarship. I raise three topics here: (1) Balthasar's reading of the aesthetic inflection to the spiritual senses in Bonaventure's thought, (2) Balthasar's downplaying of the role of practice in his reading of Bonaventure, and (3) Balthasar's repositioning of the spiritual senses such that they

pertain not to "mystical experience," narrowly understood, but rather to a more general form of "Christian experience" foundational to faith in Balthasar's thought.

First, then, I argue here that the distinctly *aesthetic* dimension to Balthasar's own model of the spiritual senses finds its decisive influence in Bonaventure's rendering of the doctrine. That is, Balthasar reads Bonaventure as one who articulates not merely a model of the spiritual senses that perceives the Word in Christ in a fivefold, *cataphatic* grasping united with the corporeal senses; he also understands Bonaventure to be one for whom the spiritual senses perceive the *beauty* of the Christ form. The point may at first glance seem self-evident, but it is worth noting that many figures throughout Christian history do not necessarily align their doctrines of the spiritual senses with the perception of the beautiful.[189] In our examination of Origen, for example, we saw a florid depiction of the activity of the spiritual senses, but we did not observe in his texts the notion that the spiritual senses have an especially aesthetic configuration. By contrast, Bonaventure makes consistent reference to the idea that the spiritual senses perceive the beauty of Christ, and the significance of this fact is not lost on Balthasar.

Beauty is such a pervasive theme in Bonaventure's texts that its significance is often overlooked. For example, we have already seen that the main passages on the spiritual senses from the *Itinerarium* and the *Breviloquium* speak of the spiritual senses beholding the beauty (*pulchritudo*) and resplendence (*splendor*) of the Word in Christ.[190]

---

[189] More generally speaking, of course, any number of philosophers treat "perception" without necessarily developing an account of the perception of beauty. It is by no means a foregone conclusion, therefore, that the spiritual senses would be associated with this aesthetic dimension.

[190] "This takes place in accordance with the spiritual senses. Then the sublime beauty of Christ the Bridegroom is seen, in so far as he is splendour; the highest harmony is heard, in so far as he is word; the greatest sweetness is tasted, in so far as he is the wisdom that contains both, word and splendour; the sublimest fragrance is smelled, in so far as he is the word inspired in the heart; the greatest delight is embraced, in so far as he is the incarnate Word." *Breviloquium* V, 6. *Opera Omnia* V 259b. "At this

So, too, did we observe that the *Reduction of the Arts to Theology* speaks of the "sense of the heart" seeking after what is beautiful.[191] Bonaventure's *Soliloquy on the Four Spiritual Exercises* also mentions the senses of the resurrected body perceiving what is most beautiful. He writes, "The eye will see the most marvelous beauty."[192] In his sermons we also see that Bonaventure regards Christ as "lovely and refreshing to look upon in accordance with man's double power of sight: the inward sight which sees the divinity, the outward sight which sees the manhood."[193] Elsewhere in his corpus, Bonaventure fascinatingly writes of the spiritual senses producing refreshing delight through the variety of their perceptions. He explains that, in paradise other trees were planted around the tree of knowledge "so that man through the alternation of the fruits, through the varieties of the beauties and tastes, might avoid the boredom which tends to ensue from attention to one single thing, and that he might have the delight that the perceptions of the spiritual senses derive from variety and renewal."[194] In noting these passages from Bonaventure's works, Balthasar thus makes a point of conveying

---

stage, the inner senses are restored, in order to perceive what is most beautiful, to hear what sounds most lovely, to smell what is most fragrant, to taste what is most sweet, to touch what is most delightful." *Itinerarium* IV, 3. *Opera Omnia* V 306b.

[191] "The sense of our heart (*sensus cordis*) must longingly seek what is beautiful, or what sounds well, or what smells sweet, or what tastes sweet, or what is soft to touch—must find it with joy, and untiringly strive after it anew. In this way, the divine Wisdom is contained in a hidden manner in sense-knowledge, and the contemplation of the five spiritual senses is wonderful in its correspondence to the bodily senses." *De Reductio Art.* X. *Opera Omnia* V 322b.

[192] *Solil.* IV, 20. *Opera Omnia* VIII 63a. Quoted in *GL* II, 331.

[193] *Sermo 1, Dominica Infra Octavam Epiphaniae*. *Opera Omnia* IX 171b. Quoted in *GL* II, 329.

[194] *Quatenus varietate fructuum, multiformium pulcritudinum et saporum vitaret homo fastidium, quod accidere solet per conversionem ad unum, et haberet oblectamentum, quod ex varietate atque innovatione consurgit in spritualium notitia sensuum per experientiam multiformium obiectorum.* Quotation from *De plant. Par.* 9. *Opera Omnia* V 577a. Quoted in *GL* II, 333.

Bonaventure's understanding of the specifically aesthetic capacities of the spiritual senses in their perception of Christ.[195]

Crucially, too, Balthasar locates in Bonaventure not only a figure who has a regard for the aesthetic dimension to the spiritual senses; he finds one who also is interested in defending the notion that beauty should be regarded as a transcendental property of being. Here Balthasar is influenced by the scholarship of Emma Jane Marie Spargo and Karl Peter. Spargo's *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Bonaventure* demonstrates the enormous importance of beauty in Bonaventure's thought, which had been surprisingly neglected prior to her study.[196] Even more importantly, Peter's *Die Lehre von der Schönheit nach Bonaventura* offers an exposition of Bonaventure's argument for beauty as a transcendental property of being.[197] Balthasar, following Spargo and Peter, sees Bonaventure as one for whom beauty occupies an absolutely central place in the articulation of theology. Balthasar writes, "As the sensitive study of Karl Peter has demonstrated, the beautiful can effectively be shown to be a transcendental property of all being…and this property is necessarily present in a *circumincessio* in the one, the true, and the good."[198] In that the very justification for

---

[195] Balthasar also picks up Bonaventure's idea that Christ is the *most* beautiful. Balthasar writes, "As the measurement which appears and judges all things he is already the highest beauty, *perpulchrum*: 'It is this that gives all things their beauty: that he restores fair form to what has lost its shape, that he makes the beautiful more beautiful, and what is more beautiful he makes most beautiful.'" *GL* II, 331. *Hoc totum mundum pulcrificat, quia deformia facit pulcra, pulcra pulcriora et pulcriora pulcharrima.* Quotation from *Hex.* I, 34. *Opera Omnia* V 335a. For Balthasar, then, as for Bonaventure, Christ is absolute beauty; he stands at the center of all beauty, restoring to all things the beauty they have lost.

[196] Emma Jane Marie Spargo, *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure* (New York: Franciscan Institute, 1953). Reference given by Balthasar in *GL* II, 260.

[197] Karl Peter, "Die Lehre von der Schönheit nach Bonaventura" (doctoral dissertation, Basel, 1961); reference given by Balthasar in *GL* II, 260. Later published as *Die Lehre von der Schönheit nach Bonaventura* (Werl: Dietrich Coelde Verlag, 1964).

[198] *GL* II, 334.

undertaking a theological aesthetics in the first place rests on the notion that beauty has this status as a transcendental property of being, the centrality of Bonaventure for Balthasar's theological enterprise is brought into clear view.

The latter point is necessary in grasping the full significance of the former. That is, the fact that beauty is a transcendental for Bonaventure means that the spiritual senses, in perceiving the beautiful, do not witness an aspect of reality that can be regarded as peripheral or ornamental. Instead, the fact that the spiritual senses perceive the beauty of Christ means that they apprehend an aspect of being that lies at the very heart of reality itself. Bonaventure's notion that the spiritual senses perform this act of perceiving the beauty of Christ, thereby putting the human being in contact with being, could not more closely mirror Balthasar's concerns, as Balthasar makes remarkably similar claims throughout his theological aesthetics. For him, beauty is a transcendental property of being, the beauty of Christ is absolute beauty, and the spiritual senses are capable of perceiving this absolute beauty of Christ. In a telling passage from *The Glory of the Lord*, Balthasar writes, "An aesthetic element must be associated with all spiritual perception."[199] For Balthasar, then, a necessary relationship obtains between the spiritual senses and aesthetic appreciation. In his notion that the spiritual senses are aesthetically attuned, I hold that Balthasar is drawing most extensively from Bonaventure's formulation of the doctrine of the spiritual senses.

As our second neglected aspect to Balthasar's appropriation of Bonaventure's doctrine of the spiritual senses, we examine the fact that Balthasar, as is true in his reading of Origen and other patristic figures, curiously downplays the role of practice in

[199] *GL* I, 153.

the cultivation of the spiritual senses. That is, whereas previous articulations of the doctrine make clear that one cultivates the spiritual senses via a combination of human practice and divine grace, Balthasar does not report these aspects of the history of the doctrine in his own theological aesthetics. Bonaventure's notion, for example, that the soul grows stronger through the three-stage process of the spiritual life in which the *habitus virtutum*, the *habitus donorum*, and the *habitus beatitudinum* are cultivated, as outlined in the *Itinerarium*, is not conveyed in Balthasar's treatment.[200] That said, however, Balthasar generally has an appreciation for the idea that theology and "holiness" must be intimately intertwined. That is, Balthasar views theology as a discipline that is inextricable from prayer and devotion. It is all the more curious, then, that he does not represent to his reader those aspects of Bonaventure's texts that speak of the link between the cultivation of certain habits and the operation of the spiritual senses. I will examine more closely this aspect to Balthasar's distinctive rendering of the spiritual senses in chapter 4.

The final aspect of Balthasar's reading of Bonaventure that merits our attention has to do with the repositioning of the spiritual senses that one observes in *The Glory of the Lord*. By the term "repositioning" I mean that the spiritual senses, on Balthasar's reading of Bonaventure, are removed from the realm they have typically occupied throughout their history in Christian theology: namely, the "heights," so to speak, of mystical experience. Instead, through his "second stage" reading of Bonaventure's understanding of the spiritual senses, Balthasar locates the spiritual senses in a different

[200] See Rahner, 110-111; also *Itinerarium*: "Therefore, man of God, first exercise yourself in remorse of conscience before you raise your eyes to the rays of Wisdom reflected in its mirrors, lest perhaps from gazing upon these rays you fall into a deeper pit of darkness." *Itinerarium*, Prologue.

portion of the Christian life. Fields puzzles at the fact that Balthasar "shows a muted appreciation of Bonaventure's highly developed mysticism."[201] I would suggest that the reason for this shift in emphasis on Balthasar's part has to do with themes at the very heart of Balthasar's theology of experience. Clearly, as mentioned above, Balthasar is concerned that associating the spiritual senses with "mysticism," as the term is often understood, will allow for a notion of religious experience that takes flight from the world instead of remaining rooted within it. Additionally, I would argue that Balthasar proposes his particular reading of Bonaventure in the interest of guarding against the notion that the spiritual senses are enjoyed by only a few persons in the final, perfect stage of the spiritual life. This is done, I claim, in the interest of granting the spiritual senses a new degree of significance as an integral component to Balthasar's fundamental theology, as will be more thoroughly explored in chapter 6.

Balthasar's treatment of the spiritual senses in volume 1 of *The Glory of the Lord* is instructive in this connection. Well before the portion of that text formally titled "The Spiritual Senses," Balthasar offers a highly revealing account of "Christian experience" in which the spiritual senses figure prominently.[202] There Balthasar draws a distinction between mystical experience and what he calls "archetypal experience" (*urbildliche Erfahrung*), claiming that the former "is not the foundation of ordinary Christian faith."[203] The latter, by contrast, "is the encounter with God of the Bible, which is what lays out the foundation and the condition for all Christian experience."[204] As we will see

[201] Fields, "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses," 240.

[202] See *GL* I, 257-365.

[203] *GL* I, 301.

[204] *GL* I, 301.

later in our examination of Balthasar's use of Barth, Balthasar expressly brings the spiritual senses into his discussion of this meeting between the human being and God as portrayed in the Bible. The importance of this interpretive decision on Balthasar's part cannot be overstated, as his positioning of the spiritual senses within the realm of archetypal experience integrates them into the very foundations of Christian faith. Whereas the spiritual senses in Bonaventure have often been understood to come into play in the very last stage of the spiritual life, then, Balthasar's interpretation gives them a broader theological significance that will be fully explored when we examine the role played by the spiritual senses in Balthasar's theological aesthetics.

Ignatius of Loyola

The significance of Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556) for Balthasar is well documented,[205] and Ignatius' understanding of the so-called "application of the senses"

---

[205] Werner Löser, "Die Exerzitien des Ignatius von Loyola : Ihre Bedeutung in der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasars," *Communio* (Paderborn) 18 (1989): 333-351. Translated into English as "The Ignatian *Exercises* in the Work of Hans Urs von Balthasar," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. David L. Schindler (San Francisco : Ignatius Press, 1991), 103-120. Jacques Servais, *Une theologie des "Exercices spirituels": Hans Urs von Balthasar, interprète de saint Ignace de Loyola* (Rome: Tipografia Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1992). Jacques Servais, S.J., "Au fondement d'une théologie de l'obéissance ignatienne : *Les Exercices spirituels* selon H. U. von Balthasar," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 116 (1994) : 353-373. Leo O'Donovan, S.J., "Two Sons of Ignatius : Drama and Dialectic," *Philosophy and Theology* 11 (1998): 105-125. Erhard Kunz, "Ignatianische Spiritualität in ihrer anthropologischen Durchführung," in *Gott für die Welt: Henri de Lubac, Gustav Siewerth und Hans Urs von Balthasar in ihren Grundanliegen*, ed. Peter Reifenberg and Anton van Hooff (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 2001), 293-303. Andreas R. Batlogg, "Hans Urs von Balthasar und Karl Rahner: Zwei Schüler des Ignatius, " 410-446, in *Die Kunst Gottes verstehen: Hans Urs von Balthasars theologische Provokationen*, eds. Magnus Striet and Jan-Heiner Tück (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), 410-446. Werner Löser, "Hans Urs von Balthasar und Ignatius von Loyola," in *Logik der Liebe und Herrlichkeit Gottes: Hans Urs von Balthasar im Gespräch*, ed. Walter Kasper (Ostfildern: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 2006), 94-110. Werner Löser, "Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine ignatianischen und patristischen Quellen," *Geist und Leben* 79 (2006): 194-203.

in his *Spiritual Exercises* is also widely known.[206] However, there is at present no substantial treatment of the intersection of these two topics that would examine the importance of Ignatius' understanding of the spiritual senses for Balthasar's thought. Here I make two observations about Balthasar's interpretation of Ignatius in *The Glory of the Lord*. First, and most importantly, whereas Balthasar's engagement with other figures in the tradition shows little interest in the practices that one may undertake in order to cultivate one's spiritual senses, his reading of Ignatius evidences a sustained concern with practice for the first time in his rendering of the history of the doctrine. Second, the particular reading recommended by Balthasar indicates that he sees Ignatius as uniting spiritual and corporeal senses to an extent not previously achieved in the tradition.

Balthasar on Ignatius's Understanding of Practice and the Spiritual Senses

Regarding the first issue, we should mention the most obvious point: namely, that Ignatius's remarks about the "spiritual senses" are situated within his *Spiritual Exercises*, which is of course well known as a set of instructions for the practice of prayer.[207] There

[206] Joseph Marechal, S.J., "Un essai de meditation orientee vers la contemplation, " in *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques,* 2 vols. (Brussels, Edition Universelle, 1937), 2:362-382; "Application des sens," in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité: Ascétique et mystique, doctrine et histoire*, 17 vols. (Paris : G. Beauchesne et ses fils, 1932-1995), 1:810-828. Friedrich Wulf, S.J., "Die Bedeutung der schopferischen Phantasie fiir die Betrachtung nach Ignatius von Loyola," *GuL* 22 (1949): 461-467. M. Olphe-Gaillard, S.J., "Les sens spirituels dans l'historie de la spiritualité," in *Nos Sens det Dieu* (1954), 179-193. Hugo Rahner, "Die Anwendung der Sinne in der Betrachtungsmethode des hl. Ignatius von Loyola," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 79 (1957): 434-456. James Walsh, "Application of the Senses," *The Way Supplement* 27 (1976): 59-68. Etienne Lepers, "L'Application des sens," *Christus* 21 (1980): 83-94. Sergio Rendina, "La dottrina dei 'sensi spirituals' negli Esercizi Spirituals," *Servitium* 29-30 (1983): 55-72. Philip Endean, S.J., "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses," *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 391-418. Stephen Corder, *The Spiritual Senses in the Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola* (Berkeley. Calif.: Jesuit School of Theology, 2003).

[207] At the outset of his work, Ignatius writes, "By the term Spiritual Exercises we mean every method of examination of conscience, meditation, and contemplation, vocal or mental prayer, and other spiritual

is therefore an explicit inclusion of the spiritual senses within a program designed to foster their growth in the individual retreatant.[208] The most significant portion of these instructions for our purposes, known as the "application of the senses," occurs at the end of the first day of the second week, and reads as follows:

> It is profitable to use the imagination and to apply the five senses to the first and second contemplations [on the Incarnation and the Nativity], in the following manner. *The first point*. By the sight of my imagination I will see the persons, by meditating and contemplating in detail all the circumstances around them, and by drawing some profit from the sight. *The second point*. By my hearing I will listen to what they are saying or might be saying; and then, reflecting on myself, I will draw some profit from this. *The third point*. I will smell the fragrance and taste the infinite sweetness and charm of the Divinity, of the soul, of its virtues, and of everything there, appropriately for each of the persons who is being contemplated. Then I will reflect upon myself and draw profit from this. *The fourth point*. Using the sense of touch, I will, so to speak, embrace and kiss the places where the persons walk or sit. I shall always endeavor to draw some profit from this.[209]

Now, at this point the reader may notice a number of ambiguities in Ignatius' text. Most significantly, his mention of the "sight of my imagination" recalls the "imaginative senses" of which Poulain writes, as examined at the beginning of this study. These

---

activities, such as will be mentioned later. For, just as taking a walk, traveling on foot, and running are physical exercises, so is the name of spiritual exercises given to any means of preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections, and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul." *The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*, trans. George E. Ganss, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1991), 21.

[208] It is surely significant in this connection that Balthasar decided to enter the novitiate of the Jesuits after having completed one such retreat, and he conducted the *Exercises* again and again throughout his life. "Almost all of us were formed by the *Spiritual Exercises*…I translated the *Exercises* into German and had the opportunity of conducting them a hundred times over: here, if anywhere, is Christian joy. Here, if anywhere, is what it means to be a Christian in its 'primordial' sense: obedience to the Word that calls and growth in freedom for the expected response." Hans Urs von Balthasar, "In Retrospect," in *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*, ed. John Riches (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 194-221, here 199. See also Peter Henrici, "A Sketch of von Balthasar's Life," in *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*, ed. David L. Schindler (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991), 7-43, esp. 11-12.

[209] Ignatius of Loyola, *Ejercicios Espirituales*, 121-125. "Aprovecha el pasar de los cinco sentidos de la imagination por la primera y segunda contemplación, de la manera siguiente. El primer punto es ver las personas con la vista imaginativa, meditando y contemplando en particular sus circunstancias y sacando algiin provecho de la vista. El segundo : oir con el oido lo que hablan o pueden hablar ; y refletiendo en si mismo, sacar dello algiin provecho. El tercero : oler y gustar con el olfato y con el gusto la infinata suavidad y dulzura de la divinidad del animo y de sus virtudes y de todo, segiin fuere la persona que se contempla, refleltiendo en si mismo y sacando provecho dello. El cuarto : tocar con el tacto, asi como abrazar y besar los lugares donde las tales personas pisan y se asientan ; siempre procurando de sacar provecho dello." *Ejercicios Espirituales,* Candido de Dalmases, S.J., ed. (Santander: Sal Terrae, 1987). Ganss, 60-61.

imaginative senses, Poulain insists, are distinct from the spiritual senses in that the former call to mind sounds, colors, etc. *without* the actual presence of those objects to the human being. The spiritual, or "intellectual" senses, by contrast, perceive the presence of spiritual objects to the human being. The question naturally arises: is Ignatius speaking of the imaginative senses in this passage, or does he mean to describe the operation of spiritual, "intellectual" senses?

This question lies at the heart of a centuries-long debate on the interpretation of Ignatius. Juan de Polanco (1516-1577), who worked as Ignatius' secretary and commented on the *Spiritual Exercises* after Ignatius' death, sees both interpretive options in the above passage. Instructively, however, Polanco writes that those who are *inexperienced* may regard the application of the senses to pertain to the ordinary "senses of the imagination," and those who are more *practiced* in prayer can understand them as "the spiritual senses of the higher reason."[210] Achille Gagliardi (1537-1607) takes the second of these options in his commentary on the *Exercises*, memorably writing that in the application of the senses a form of prayer is achieved in which the understanding "is more fully enlightened by the same material [i.e., the Incarnation and Nativity], through a certain kind of intuition of it, as though it were actually present. Without any movement, or stirring of the mind, it beholds the whole matter in one moment, as if it had it there before the eyes."[211] The "senses" of which Ignatius speaks, according to Gagliardi's

[210] Juan de Polanco, *Monumenta Ignatiana*, Ser. II, (1955), 2 :300-303.

[211] Achille Gagliardi, *Commentarii seu Explanationes in Exercitia spiritualia Sancti Patris Ignatii de Loyola,* ed. Constantinus van Aken (Bruges : Descle'e de Brouwer, 1882), 23.

reading, occur at a high level of prayer in which one experiences an intuition of spiritual objects that seem to be present to the individual.[212]

However, the official 1599 *Directorium* chooses the former of the two interpretive options, by which the "application of the senses" is read as pertaining to the corporeal and imaginative senses (which are interestingly brought together in this reading). According to Gil Gonzalez Davila, who had a major hand in shaping the *Directorium*, the understanding advocated by Gagliardi "is more rarefied (*curiosa*) than what should generally be given to those who are simple-minded and uninitiated (*rudibus et inexpertis*) regarding these matters."[213] The application of the senses, then, according to this reading, is a lower form of prayer, easier than the meditation described above, and to be used by the inexperienced.

The details of this debate are of less importance than Balthasar's response to it, which is, essentially, to claim that commentaries on Ignatius have become caught up in a false dichotomy. In *The Glory of the Lord*, he writes, "In the interpretations of Ignatius the problem emerges as an either/or between the corporeal senses and the mystical sensibility, but both of these seem to be included by Ignatius…without their mutually suppressing or jeopardising one another."[214] Balthasar, then, blurs the distinctions that had been drawn between the application of the senses undertaken by beginners (which

[212] It is certainly interesting to note here a reading of Ignatius that correlates extensively with Poulain's understanding of presence and the "analogical" relationship between corporeal and spiritual senses. In fact, it may well be that Poulain is drawing from Gagliardi and other interpreters of Ignatius in formulating his criteria by which one may identify the spiritual senses.

[213] *Directoria Exercitorum Spiritualium: (1540-1599)* (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societas Jesu, 1955), 487.

[214] *GL* I, 378.

involve the corporeal and imaginative senses) and those undertaken in later stages of prayer (which entail the spiritual, or intellectual senses).

Crucially for our examination, too, in regarding the imaginative application of the senses as intertwined with the use of the "spiritual senses," Balthasar finally indicates an interest in the relationship between practice and the acquisition of the spiritual senses. That is, if using the spiritual senses is connected to using the imagination in a creative application of one's senses to the mysteries of faith, then this particular form of prayer emerges as a central arena within which the spiritual senses can develop. One "attunes" oneself to these mysteries. As Balthasar puts it,

> The "attunement" of man to the mysteries of salvation plays the greatest of roles in the *Spiritual Exercises*: man's disposition is to "correspond" and be harmonised, and this correspondence must be prayed for; however, as far as possible it must be created and acquired by man himself so that, in his spiritual-sensual totality, man may come to experience and realise the contemplated mystery by "applying his five senses" to it.[215]

If one wonders how the spiritual senses develop in Balthasar's reading of the tradition, then, one finds the greatest resource in the notion that one receives them when one "attunes" oneself through prayer, specifically the application of the senses to the mysteries of salvation.

It is significant that, given all the figures that Balthasar might focus upon with regard to the question of the relationship between practice and the spiritual senses, he chooses to focus on Ignatius on this issue. Werner Löser has noted the contrast in Balthasar's thought between, on the one hand, ancient and medieval models of the spiritual life, which "circled around a schema of the ladder of perfection," and the Ignatian understanding of the spiritual life, which understands "Christian perfection completely in terms of obedient listening to God's call, completely in terms of choosing

[215] *GL* I, 298.

God's choice."[216] One may question the division drawn by Löser here, but it is nevertheless striking how consistently Balthasar eschews a model of the spiritual life that involves strict hierarchies or successive stages. We observe a deep reticence on Balthasar's part to reserve the spiritual senses for any sort of "higher" prayer. Even in the treatment of Ignatius discussed above Balthasar preserves the possibility of the spiritual senses' occurring at the outset of the life of prayer, not necessarily in its advanced stages. He writes, "Here we see that the normal meditation is initially an external, imaginative act that involves looking, being present, and even entering into the drama.…But from the outset such a meditation is also, unconditionally, an interior realisation of the objective mystery of salvation which transforms even the sensory disposition."[217] Balthasar furthermore seeks to establish continuity between the sensorium of "ordinary faith" and the form of sensibility that applies to the experience of the "Godhead itself." Regarding Ignatius, he writes, "We can see that in this 'application of the senses' a fact is being set forth for our acceptance…that this sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) must become all embracing, and extend from the concreteness of the simple happenings in the Gospel to a point where the Godhead itself becomes concrete by being experienced."[218] According to this reading, then, there is no sharp division that can be appropriately drawn between the form of perception employed at the beginnings of the life of faith and the form of perception used in the most advanced stages of prayer. Instead, the Christian life involves a form of sensibility that becomes "all embracing."

[216] Löser, "The Ignatian *Exercises*," 107.

[217] *GL* I, 375.

[218] *GL* I, 376.

In one sense, then, Balthasar takes an interest in practice in the spiritual senses tradition through his engagement with Ignatius. We clearly observe an atypical emphasis on prayer here in comparison with his treatment of other figures in the tradition. In another sense, however, in shying away from strict hierarchies or successions of stages in the spiritual life, Balthasar preserves the possibility of the spiritual senses befalling the individual in a moment of surprising grace such that one could receive them at any point in the spiritual life.

Balthasar on the Relationship between the Bodily and Spiritual Senses in Ignatius

Our second point builds from the claims made above, and can be made with comparative brevity. In that Balthasar argues for non-exclusivity between the two interpretations of Ignatius outlined by Gagliardi and Davila, he also claims a continuity between spiritual and corporeal (and imaginative) senses in the individual human being. It is indeed telling that Balthasar renders the sixteenth-century debates about Ignatius in the following manner: "In the interpretations of Ignatius the problem emerges as an either/or between the *corporeal* senses and the mystical sensibility, but both of these seem to be included by Ignatius … without their mutually suppressing or jeopardising one another."[219] Balthasar thus casts one side of the debate as recommending the corporeal senses as the object of Ignatius's concern, even though the imaginative senses are equally prevalent in the discussion. That is, the debates in question initially centered around the *imaginative* senses and the spiritual senses; then the 1599 *Directorium* grouped the corporeal and imaginative senses together in the lower form of prayer for

[219] *GL* I, 378. Emphasis added. Balthasar also writes, "Spiritual senses…presuppose devout bodily senses which are capable of undergoing Christian transformation" (*GL* I, 378).

beginners in the spiritual life. Balthasar in this passage goes one step further by mentioning the corporeal senses without the senses of the imagination, demonstrating the extent to which he seeks to unite corporeal and spiritual perception in his reading of Ignatius' articulation of the spiritual senses. Balthasar offers justification for this reading as follows: "Since what must be realised is, objectively, God's worldly and corporeal form, it cannot be realised—precisely in its full perfection—other than in a total human way, in the encounter of the corporeal sinner who has been granted grace with the God who has corporeally become man."[220] In short, then, Ignatius' understanding of the Incarnation demands a rethinking of the value placed on corporeal perception, according to Balthasar's reading.[221]

Elsewhere in his corpus, Balthasar offers a fascinating glimpse into not only his understanding of the relationship between spiritual and corporeal senses in Ignatius but also the way in which this reading compares with those of the two other most prominent figures in the spiritual senses tradition, Origen and Bonaventure.

> The "application of the five senses" that concludes every theme of meditation in the Ignatian Exercises does not rise above the concrete form (*Gestalt*) which is seen in the Gospels, for the text explicitly demands that we should "see the persons with the inner eyes in recollection and meditation"; "hear what they are saying"; with the sense of touch "embrace and kiss the places in which the persons enter and where they remain"; and through such sense-experience come to the

[220] *GL* I, 376.

[221] Balthasar cites a passage from Ludolph of Saxony's *Life of Christ*, which Ignatius reports having read with great interest. "If you wish to derive fruit from these meditations, set aside all your worries and cares. With the affections of the heart make present to yourself, in a loving and delectable way, everything the Lord Jesus said and did, just as present as if you were hearing it with your ears and seeing it with your eyes. Then all of it becomes sweet because you are thinking of it and, what is more, tasting it with longing. And even when it is related in the past tense, you should consider it all as if it were occurring today.…Go into the Holy Land, kiss with a burning spirit the soil upon which the good Jesus stood. Make present to yourself how he spoke and went about with his disciples and with sinners, how he speaks and preaches, how he walks and rests, sleeps and watches, eats and performs miracles. Inscribe into your very heart his attitudes and his actions." Ludolph of Saxony, *Vita Jesu Christi*, ed. Rigollot (Paris, 1870), 9. *GL* I, 378. Balthasar comments on this passage as follows: "Even though the 'spiritual senses' are not explicitly mentioned, nevertheless something spiritual is attained with the corporeal senses and the imagination, something which clearly aims at making the mystery present." *GL* I, 378.

> smelling and tasting of the "infinite fragrance and sweetness of the Godhead." Ignatius does not speak, therefore, (like Origen and, after him, Bonaventure) of spiritual senses that grow in the soul when the bodily senses have been laid to rest.[222]

Although these comments about Bonaventure are certainly curious in relation to the positive reading of his understanding of corporeal sensation that Balthasar outlines in the second volume of his theological aesthetics, as examined above, they are also instructive for our investigation. It is particularly noteworthy that Balthasar ties the function of the senses to the "concrete form" (*Gestalt*), and that the corporeality of this form requires physical perception, as will be examined in chapter 5.

Conclusion

Throughout Balthasar's engagement with the spiritual senses tradition, we have observed that he consistently attempts to conjoin spiritual sensation with its corporeal counterpart in as thoroughgoing a manner as possible. The clearest manifestation of this concern, perhaps, involves the often predictable way in which he pushes interpretation of any given individual toward the most positive regard for the body and materiality that can be credibly attributed to that figure. In his reading of Origen, for example, we observed that Balthasar locates a "Christian and Biblical" Origen who celebrates the material order, although Balthasar recognizes the limits that this particular reading must confront, and he does not press his interpretation of Origen too far. Given this general trend of often juxtaposed views, it should not be completely surprising that Balthasar in one portion of his writings celebrates Bonaventure's regard for the body, yet in another portion criticizes Bonaventure in comparison to Ignatius.

---

[222] Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Das Schauvermögen der Christen," in *Skizzen zur Theologie V: Homo creatus est* (Einsiedeln, Switzerland: Johannes Verlag, 1986), 54-55.

We can certainly say that the foremost significance of Bonaventure for Balthasar's understanding of the doctrine lies in the aesthetic attunement that Balthasar finds in Bonaventure's model of the spiritual senses. The notion that the spiritual senses possess this aesthetic capacity is of clear import to Balthasar's own constructive use of the doctrine, as will be shown more fully in chapter 4.

Additionally, and pointing toward our treatment of the role played by the doctrine of the spiritual senses in Balthasar's theological aesthetics, it is certainly significant that Balthasar finds in Bonaventure's understanding of the spiritual senses not a doctrine regarding "mystical encounter," narrowly understood, but rather a resource for general Christian faith. In fact, I would argue that in Balthasar's reading of Bonaventure's understanding of the spiritual senses we see a general epistemological significance not claimed in previous readings of the doctrine. This broad importance of the spiritual senses to Christian faith is key to the central claims of Balthasar's theological aesthetics, as will be shown in the coming chapters of this study.

Lastly, we saw in Balthasar's reading of Ignatius an understanding of the role of practice in the cultivation of the spiritual senses. Specifically, we observed an emphasis on the "application of the senses" in the life of prayer, and we also saw the continuity between the use of the imaginative senses and the reception of the spiritual senses. Although Balthasar seeks to preserve the possibility that grace might befall the individual human being at any point in the spiritual life, he does nevertheless focus on practice in Ignatius to an extent that we do not see elsewhere in his reading of the spiritual senses tradition.

Having completed our assessment of Balthasar's reading of traditional figures in the spiritual senses tradition, we now turn to his use of modern figures in his creative rearticulation of the doctrine.

Chapter 3

The Spiritual Senses in a Modern Idiom: Balthasar's Contemporary Interlocutors

Having outlined in the previous chapters Balthasar's interpretation of key figures in the spiritual senses tradition, in this chapter I examine Balthasar's engagement with a number of his contemporary interlocutors, looking in particular at his reading of Karl Barth (1886-1968), Romano Guardini (1885-1968), Gustav Siewerth (1903-1963), and Paul Claudel (1868-1955). As indebted as Balthasar is to those articulations of the spiritual senses that precede him, I argue below that he does not seek merely to repristinate the doctrine from its patristic and scholastic versions in his theological aesthetics. Or, to put this point more directly: Balthasar considers the instantiations of the doctrine manifested in Christian history to be in need of significant supplementation for his own theological project. Although he examines a wide range of issues in his reading of modern figures, as will be examined below, two predominant themes emerge from his analysis. First, and most urgently, Balthasar holds that the spiritual senses must be mapped onto a "personalist" anthropology that conceives of the human being as a "being in encounter" and not as a discrete, isolable entity who is in any sense prior to

relationship.[223] The encounter with one's neighbor, according to Balthasar, is the "definitive" arena within which one receives one's spiritual senses.

Second, Balthasar locates in these modern figures an anthropology of "unity-in-duality" according to which corporeal and spiritual perception are inextricably intertwined with one another.[224] Of course, we have already seen that Balthasar maximizes the value placed on corporeal sensation throughout his reading of the history of the spiritual senses. And yet a tacit question has pervaded our examination thus far: namely, given that various figures in this history can be read in a number of different ways on this issue, why would Balthasar choose the interpretation that he does? What is the deeper influence that animates Balthasar's approach? In response to this question, Stephen Fields claims that Balthasar's guide is an anthropology of "unity-in-duality."[225] Quoting from *The Glory of the Lord*, Fields writes that Balthasar's anthropology asserts that "the human person constitutes no 'isolated "soul" who must work its way to reality by inferring it from phenomena.' [*GL* I, 406]… It affirms rather that sensation is ensouled."[226] Curiously, however, Fields does not offer his reader any direction in terms of figures who may have been influential in this arena, and as a result a lacuna in scholarship has persisted on this topic. Balthasar himself actually aids his reader considerably on this point, as the very text cited by Fields in fact reads, "*As Barth and*

[223] As Balthasar piercingly asserts his view on this matter, "With Barth, then, we must profoundly deplore the fact that the Patristic and scholastic anthropology strayed from this first of all Biblical premises concerning human reality [pertaining to the interpersonal dimension to the human being] and let itself be inspired by an abstract Greek concept of essence" (*GL* I, 382).

[224] After his treatment of modern figures, Balthasar summarizes their significance as follows: "The agreement that emerges from four thinkers of such different temperaments is striking. In his own way, each of them conceives man as a sensory-spiritual totality" (*GL* I, 405).

[225] Fields, "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses," 240.

[226] Fields, "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses," 227-228.

Siewerth stress, man is not an isolated 'soul' which must work its way to reality by inferring it from phenomena."[227] In this chapter, then, I explore Balthasar's use of Barth and Siewerth (and, to a lesser extent, Guardini and Claudel) to articulate this notion of an anthropology of unity-in-duality on which Balthasar's model of the spiritual senses is based.

Karl Barth

The relationship between Balthasar and Karl Barth is one of the most celebrated in modern theology. Barth had an enormous influence on Balthasar's thought, and it is increasingly acknowledged that Balthasar had a reciprocal impact on Barth's theology.[228]

---

[227] Fields, "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses," 227. *GL* I, 406 (emphasis added).

[228] Secondary materials abound on this relationship. For the most relevant scholarship, see the following: Englebert Gutwenger, S.J., "Natur und Übernatur: Gedanken zu Balthasars Werk über die Barthsche Theologie," *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 75 (1953): 82-97, 461-464. Grover Foley, "The Catholic Critics of Karl Barth, in Outline and Analysis," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 14 (1961): 136-155. Jérôme Hamer, O.P. , "Un programme de 'christologie conséquente': Le projet de Karl Barth," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 84 (1962) : 1009-1031. P. Corset, "Premières rencontres de la théologie catholique avec l'oeuvre de Barth (1922-1932): III Réception de la théologie de Barth," in *Karl Barth: Genèse et réception de sa théologie* (Genève: Labor et Fides, 1987), 151-190. Werner van Laak, *Allversöhnung: Die Lehre von der Apokatastasis, Ihre Grundlegung durch Origenes und ihre Bewertung in der gegenwärtigen Theologie bei Karl Barth und Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Sinzig: Sankt Meinrad Verlag, 1990). John Thompson, "Barth and Balthasar: An Ecumenical Dialogue," in *The Beauty of Christ*, ed. Bede McGregor, O.P., and Thomas Norris (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 171-192. Bruce McCormack, *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development 1909-1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). Roland Chia, *Revelation and Theology: The Knowledge of God in Balthasar and Barth* (Bern, Berlin, Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1999). Stephen Wigley, "The von Balthasar Thesis: A Re-examination of von Balthasar's Study of Barth in the Light of Bruce McCormack," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53 (2003): 345-359. John Webster, "Balthasar and Barth," in *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004). Hans-Anton Drewes, "Karl Barth und Hans Urs von Balthasar: Ein Basler Zwiegespräch," in *Die Kunst Gottes Verstehen: Hans Urs von Balthasars Theologische Provokationen*, ed. Magnus Striet and Jan-Heiner Tück (Freiburg: Herder, 2005), 367-383. Philip McCosker, "'Blessed Tension': Barth and Von Balthasar on the Music of Mozart," *The Way: A Review of Christian Spirituality Published by the British Jesuits* 44 (2005): 81-95. Wolfgang W. Müller, ed., *Karl Barth—Hans Urs von Balthasar: Eine theologische Zwiesprache* (Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2006). Martin Bieler, "Die kleine Drehung: Hans Urs von Balthasar und Karl Barth im Gespräch," in *Logik der Liebe und Herrlichkeit Gottes: Hans Urs von Balthasar im Gespräch,* ed. Walter Kasper (Ostfildern: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 2006), 318-338. Hans Martin Kromer, "Hans Urs von Balthasar und Karl Barth im Kontext der 'Apokalypse der deutschen Seele': Der Weg zur 'Umkehrung'," in *Letzte Haltungen: Hans Urs von Balthasars "Apokalypse der deutschen Seele" neu Gelesen*, ed. Barbara Hallensleben (Freiburg: Academic Press, 2006), 265-279. Stephen Wigley, *Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Critical Engagement* (London: T&T Clark; Continuum, 2007).

Balthasar took an interest in Barth at an early point in his career, offering a substantial analysis of his theology in Balthasar's *Apokalypse der Deutschen Seele* (1937-1939).[229] Balthasar also wrote a number of articles on Barth in the late 1930s and 1940s before publishing his well-known *The Theology of Karl Barth* in 1951.[230]

Scholarship on these two figures typically focuses on a number of familiar themes, such as Balthasar's response to Barth's condemnation of the *analogia entis*, the importance of revelation in each of their theological methods, and their shared Christocentrism.[231] However, one key feature of their relationship that remains to be examined is the extent to which Barth's theological anthropology is significant for Balthasar's highly creative rearticulation of the spiritual senses. Here I examine Balthasar's reading of Barth's anthropology, and I show—counterintuitively, it might seem—that it is actually Barth, of all people, who plays a key role in the reformulation of the spiritual senses that Balthasar puts forward in his theological aesthetics.[232]

---

[229] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Apokalypse der deutschen Seele: Studien zu einer Lehre von letzten Haltungen*, 3 vols. (Salzburg: Anton Pustet, 1937-1939). For Balthasar's treatment of Barth, see vol. 3, *Die Vergöttlichung des Todes*, 316-391.

[230] Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Karl Barth und der Katholizismus," *Theologie der Zeit* 3 (1939): 126-132. "Analogie und Dialektik: Zur Klärung der theologischen Prinzipienlehre Karl Barths," *Divus Thomas* 22 (1944): 171-216. "Deux Notes sur Karl Barth," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 35 (1948): 92-111. *Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung Seiner Theologie* (Köln: Verlag Jakob Hegner, 1951). Published in English in abridged form as *The Theology of Karl Barth* (New York: Reinhart and Winston, 1971). Complete text later published as *Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*, trans. Edward T. Oakes (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992).

[231] One occasionally finds an acknowledgment that Barth was significant for Balthasar's theological aesthetics inasmuch as Balthasar draws from Barth's *Church Dogmatics* II/1 in his claims for the "glory" (*Herrlichkeit*) of God's revelation. See in particular *GL* I, 53-57.

[232] One would not expect that the doctrine of the spiritual senses, which has typically been used throughout the Christian tradition as a way of figuring mystical experience, would be so decisively shaped in Balthasar's theology by Barth, whose thoroughgoing aversion to mysticism pervades his theological works. Especially relevant among Barth's works is Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2: *The Doctrine of Creation*, trans. H. Knight, G. W. Bromiley, J. K. S. Reid, and R. H. Fuller (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960), hereafter cited as *CD* III/2. Original German *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*, III: *Die Lehre von der Schöpfung*, 2 (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A. G. Zollikon, 1948), hereafter cited as *KD* III/2.

Specifically, I argue below that Balthasar reads Barth's theological anthropology as advancing an understanding of the human being as (1) necessarily in encounter with an other, (2) fundamentally united in body and soul, and (3) capable of the perception (*Wahrnehmung*) of God. This version of Barth—particularly the last point—will surprise the reader who is familiar with only his early theology, as Barth's *Epistle to the Romans* and *Church Dogmatics* I/1 give the overwhelming rhetorical impression that the *capax dei* in the human person has been so devastated by sin as to render impossible any experience of God.[233] Balthasar, however, accentuates this unexpected aspect of Barth's later work and draws from it for his own model of the spiritual senses, as will be shown below.

Balthasar on the Interpersonal Dimension of Barth's Anthropology

In the portion of *The Glory of the Lord* that Balthasar devotes to the spiritual senses, he claims that a "Biblical" anthropology must be developed for purposes of his rehabilitation of the doctrine.[234] The Bible—particularly, Barth's reading of the Bible—

---

[233] Barth's early dialectical theology holds this experience to be an absolute impossibility. At the conclusion of his *Church Dogmatics* I/1, however, Barth does allow for the human being's receipt of divine revelation. Even here, however, he also makes abundantly manifest that this is done as an act of the Holy Spirit without any agency on the part of the human being: "The act of the Holy Spirit in revelation is the Yea to God's Word, spoken through God Himself on our behalf, yet not only to us but in us." Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* I/1: *Doctrine of the Word of God*, trans. G. T. Thomson (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936), 518. Original German: *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik* I (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A. G. Zollikon, 1932). Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, trans. Edwyn C. Hoskins (London: Oxford University Press, 1933). Original German: *Der Römerbrief* (Bern, G. A. Bäschlin, 1919).

[234] Balthasar writes, "In order to justify these assertions [regarding the spiritual senses], we must above all take the theological anthropology of the Bible seriously and persevere in it in spite of all the objections advanced by systematic philosophy" *GL* I, 380. Right from the start, this move away from "philosophy" should come as a surprise to those familiar with Balthasar's theology in general—and his conversation with Barth in particular—who will no doubt recall Balthasar's *defense* of philosophy, not his apparent renunciation of it. However, it should be said that despite the immediate impression of this passage, Balthasar's target here is not so much philosophy as a whole as it is any method of examining the human being that seeks an essence that exists independently from, and prior to, relationality.

is appealing to Balthasar because it is there that he, quoting Barth, finds "the man who meets his God and stands before his God, the man who finds God and to whom God is present."[235] Absolutely essential to this ability to meet God and have God present to the human being is the notion that he or she is not an isolable subject, but rather one who is from the very start in relationship with an other. Balthasar writes that, for Barth, the human being of the Bible "is not examined 'in himself' (*an sich*), but, from the outset, in his 'vital act' and engagedness."[236] In other words, according to Balthasar's reading of Barth, the Bible portrays the human being as a one who is at his or her most fundamental level *already* in relation to others. There simply is no "I" to speak of anterior to the "I" *in encounter*.

This is so, to Barth, because when one attempts to define himself or herself in terms of autonomy or individuality, one forgets his or her status as creature of the creator. That is, Barth holds that the human being is most fundamentally a creature of God who necessarily stands in relation to God. Or, to put the point another way, the human being "is" only to the extent that he or she is created by—and related to—God. The very notion that one is "self-subsistent" is therefore an illusion, in Barth's understanding. He claims, "Perhaps the fundamental mistake in all erroneous thinking of man about himself is that he tries to equate himself with God and therefore to proceed on the assumption that he can regard himself as the presupposition of his own being."[237] It is in this context that we

---

[235] *GL* I, 381. *CD* III/2, 402.

[236] *GL* I, 381.

[237] *CD* III/2, 151. We should thus hear the subtle criticism in play in Barth's description of the human being who asserts such autonomy: "'I am'—this is the forceful assertion which we are all engaged in making and of which we are convinced that none can surpass it in urgency or importance; the assertion of the self in which we can neither be replaced by any nor restrained by any" (*CD* III/2, 229-230).

can appreciate Balthasar's charged (and otherwise rather cryptic) remark that "whenever an 'essence' of man is sought which is anterior to his being-with and even in opposition to it, then by this very fact one is already in the process of interchanging man and his Creator."[238] In other words, Balthasar, with Barth, is concerned that theological anthropology not forget its most fundamental premise: namely, that the human being is a creature of God who does not posit his or her own self-existence, but rather who always "is" in relation to the God who created him or her.

One should also observe that for Balthasar and Barth it is not merely the human being's status as creature of the creator that makes for this relationality with God. Rather, it is additionally the fact that God has reached out toward the human being and established him or her as a covenant partner. As Balthasar puts this point, "Biblical man is the one that has been found by God and has been chosen to be a partner of his Covenant, and he cannot understand himself except from this perspective."[239] For Barth, the human being is related to God only inasmuch as he or she has been sought out by God through the Word of God to be a covenant partner with God. One concrete result of this premise of anthropology is that the point of contact between God and the human being is established not because of anything inherent to humanity, but rather because God has reached out to us through the elected Jesus, who is "Man for God."[240]

With this said, we still need an account of how one is open to the *fellow* human being in addition to being open to God. That is, developing an understanding of how the

---

[238] *GL* I, 381-382.

[239] *GL* I, 381.

[240] *CD* III/2, §44.1, "Jesus, Man for God."

human being is related to God along the "vertical" axis, so to speak, does not necessarily bring anything to bear on relationships on the "horizontal," human-to-human plane. But Barth clearly does not limit the relationality of the human being to the God-human connection alone. Instead, the human being is also fundamentally open to the other human being in his or her midst. In order to account for the inter-human dimension to Barth's anthropology, Balthasar makes further appeal to Barth's Christology, specifically the *humanity* of Christ.

In short, Balthasar holds that the foundation for the inter-human dimension to the human being in Barth's thought lies in the fact that in Jesus we find one who is not only "Man for God" but also "Man for other Men."[241] As Barth puts this point, "If the divinity of the man Jesus is to be described comprehensively in the statement that He is man for God, His humanity can and must be described no less succinctly in the proposition that He is man for man, for other men, His fellows."[242] That is, in Jesus we see one who is at his core directed toward other human beings. As Barth describes the humanity of Jesus, "What interests Him and does so exclusively, is man, other men as such, who need Him and are referred to Him for help and deliverance."[243] Jesus' humanity, then, cannot be considered in isolation from his fellow human beings. Since he is at core a "man for others," we must instead think of him as always *in relation*: "If we see Him alone, we do not see Him at all. If we see Him, we see with and around Him in ever-widening circles His disciples, the people, His enemies and the countless millions

[241] See *CD* III/2, §45.1 "Jesus, Man for Other Men."

[242] *CD* III/2, 208.

[243] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* II/2: *The Doctrine of God*, trans. G. W. Bromiley, J. C. Campbell, I. Wilson, J. Strathearn, H. Knight, and R. A. Stewart (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1957), 130. Hereafter cited as *CD* II/2.

who have not yet heard His name. We see Him as theirs, determined by them and for them, belonging to each and every one of them."[244] For Barth, Jesus' humanity (his "I") should be understood to be determined by the Thou of his fellow human beings in addition to his being determined by the Thou of God. Given that our humanity bears *some* likeness to that of Jesus—despite the indissoluble difference between our humanity and his[245]—the fact that Jesus is directed toward his fellow human beings means that our humanity shares in this fundamental constitution toward relation.[246]

On Barth's anthropology, then, the human being is doubly directed toward relationality, foremost in regard to God and secondarily toward the neighbor. Barth puts this point memorably: "'I am'—the true and filled 'I am'—may thus be paraphrased: 'I am in encounter.' Nor am I in encounter before or after, incidentally, secondarily, or subsequently, while primarily and properly I am alone in an inner world in which I am

[244] *CD* III/2, 216.

[245] On Barth's model, one should not insist on the similarities between our humanity and the humanity of Jesus without first making abundantly clear the manifold differences. "Christology is not anthropology. We cannot expect, therefore, to find directly in others the humanity of Jesus, and therefore that final and supreme determination, the image of God. Jesus is man for His fellows, and therefore the image of God, in a way which others cannot even approach, just as they cannot be for God in the sense that He is. He alone is the Son of God, and therefore His humanity alone can be described as the being of an I which is wholly from and to the fellow-human Thou, and therefore a genuine I….On the other hand, when we ask concerning humanity in general, the fact of the distinctive humanity of Jesus clearly points us in a certain direction and warns us no less clearly against its opposite. If the humanity of Jesus consists in the fact that He is for other men, this means that for all the disparity between Him and us He affirms these others as beings which are not merely unlike Him in Him creaturely existence and therefore His humanity, but also like Him in some basic form. Where one being is for others, there is necessarily a common sphere or form of existence in which the 'for' can be possible and effective" (*CD* III/2, 222-223).

[246] Although Balthasar does not highlight the Trinitarian dimension to Barth's personalism, it should also be said that Barth grounds his notion of fellow humanity in his doctrine of the Trinity. That is to say, human beings may be regarded as beings in relation because they are made in the *imago Dei*, and the triune God is God in relationship. In Barth's words, "Humanity that is not fellow humanity is inhumanity.…The God who is no *Deus solitarius* but *Deus triunus*, God in relationship [cannot] be mirrored in a *homo solitarius*" (*CD* III/4, 117). Relationality inheres in the Triune God, and it is on that basis, to Barth, that the human being, as the image of God, is a fundamentally relational being.

not in this encounter."[247] Barth goes on to make his point even more emphatically when he writes, "We cannot accept any compromise or admixture with the opposite conception which would have it that at bottom—in the far depths of that abyss of an empty subject—man can be a man without the fellow-man, an I without the Thou."[248] In Barth's anthropology, then, relationality goes "all the way down," so to speak. The human *qua* human is constituted in encounter. This aspect of Barth's thought importantly inflects his understanding of perception, as will be examined below. For the moment, however, we will investigate the second noteworthy aspect of Balthasar's reading of Barth's theological anthropology: namely, his understanding of the human being as a "unity-in-duality."

Balthasar on Barth's Anthropology of Unity-in-Duality

Balthasar finds an ally in Barth in terms of uniting the spiritual senses with their corporeal counterparts. In fact, Balthasar explicitly celebrates as a "radically anti-Platonic formula" the following passage from Barth's *Church Dogmatics* III/2: "If the body is not organic body (*Leib*) but purely material body (*Körper*) when it is without soul, so the soul is not soul, but only the possibility of soul when it is without body."[249] In opposition to the "Platonism" against which he unrelentingly militates, then, Balthasar finds inspiration in the fact that, for Barth, there is no such thing as a disembodied soul, nor for that matter is there a "de-souled" body. Rather, the soul—in order to be more

[247] *CD* III/2, 247.

[248] *CD* III/2, 247.

[249] *CD* III/2, 378. *GL* I, 386.

than the mere possibility of a soul—is always embodied, and the body (*Leib*) is always "ensouled." The soul, then, must be regarded not merely as soul but rather always as "soul of one's body." As Barth puts this idea, "The statement that 'man is soul' would be without meaning if we did not immediately enlarge and expound it: Soul of one's body, i.e., his body.… Hence he is not only soul that 'has' a body which perhaps it might not have, but he is bodily soul, as he is also besouled body."[250] The soul does not dwell in the body incidentally, then, nor does it have any existence outside of the particular body to which it is inextricably conjoined.

Barth takes this unity of body and soul a step further in his suggestion that there is in fact a sharing of faculties between soul and body in the human being. That is, for Barth, the notion that the soul is always "enfleshed" and body always "besouled" resists the sort of dualism that would confine "thought" (*Denken*), to soul and "awareness," or "perception" (*Wahrnehmung*), to body. Instead, Barth claims that awareness occurs not only in the body but also in the soul, and he correlatively asserts that thinking is done not only by the soul but also by the body. Balthasar explicitly draws on this aspect of Barth's thought when, quoting Barth, he writes, "It is 'certainly not only my body, but also my soul which has awareness, and it is certainly not only my soul but also my body which thinks.'"[251] In other words, for Barth, the fundamental unity of the person means that neither thought nor awareness can occur through only one of these aspects of the human being.

---

[250] *CD* III/2, 350.

[251] *GL* I, 386, *CD* III/2, 400.

The outworking of this premise carries Barth to the conclusion that even the soul's reflection on itself takes place in the body. There is thus no realm of "pure thought" on Barth's model. As he puts this point, "I am continuously engaged in the act of becoming self-conscious....It all takes place in me and therefore in my soul. Yet it cannot be denied that this act in which my soul is at once subject and object is also wholly a corporeal act."[252] For Barth, then, every aspect of thought has an external dimension in the body.[253]

Just as there is no portion of the "I" that exists anterior to relation to the "Thou," then so too for Barth is there no aspect of the human being—not even the soul in its innermost thought—that is not directed outward toward the body and, more generally, the world. Balthasar seizes on this double openness of the human being when he writes, "The soul does not lose its sensibility even in its reflection on itself. In scholastic terms, the soul cannot attain to *reflexio completa* (or *abstractio*) without a *conversio (per phantasma) ad rem*, and here the *res* is the other—God and neighbour."[254] For Balthasar,

---

[252] *CD* III/2, 375.

[253] With this said, however, Barth's notion that soul and body are inseparable should not be taken to mean that they then are somehow *identical to* one another. To Barth, body and soul are not the same thing. They are inevitably and inextricably conjoined, but they are nevertheless distinguishable from one another. Barth writes, "Neither of them [soul and body] can be reduced to the other. Soul is not organic body; for life is not corporeal body, time is not space, and existence is not nature. Similarly, body cannot be soul" (*CD* III/2, 367). Part of this distinction consists in soul and body being ordered such that the former presides over the latter. Barth holds that "there is a higher and a lower, a quickening and a quickened, a factor that controls space and one that is limited by it, an element which is invisible and one which is visible" (*CD* III/2, 368). Mutual coinherence, then, need not suggest symmetry, and Barth is in fact clear that soul is in an important sense prioritized over body in his anthropology. Regarding the human being, Barth writes, "That he is wholly and simultaneously both soul and body does not exclude the fact that he is always both in different ways; first soul and then body" (*CD* III/2, 372). Although Balthasar is not explicitly concerned with clarifying these potential misunderstandings in his own exposition of Barth's anthropology, they are nevertheless significant points for understanding the notion of the human being that Barth advances.

[254] *GL* I, 385. Balthasar then quotes Barth at length: "I do not exist without also being this material body….Without having some command and making some use of them, I cannot be aware of objects different from myself. And without being aware of objects different from myself, I cannot distinguish

then, as for Barth, all thought involves not only a corporeal dimension; it additionally involves an engagement with the other that takes place through the body, thus rendering such reflection unavoidably interpersonal. These two features of Balthasar's reading of Barth's anthropology lead us directly into our treatment of perception below.

The Interpersonal and Spiritual-Corporeal Dimensions to Perception in Barth

With these two key aspects of Balthasar's reading of Barth in place, we are now in a position to understand the model of perception that emerges from his anthropology. We have seen that Barth regards the human as a being-in-encounter, and we have also seen that he insists upon a fundamental unity of body and soul that opens the human being outward to the world. The human being, then, is inevitably "driven out" into the world in a double movement, for there is no realm in which he or she is "properly alone," nor is there an intra-psychic, non-corporeal aspect to his or her being. A key implication of these two premises, for Barth, is that the human being is thus necessarily a *percipient* being. That is, the twofold openness of the human being—the fact that he or she is fundamentally in relation, coupled with the fact that all thought takes place in soul and body—ensures against a "self-contained self-consciousness" that would isolate him or her from the world. The human being thus necessarily perceives, and this perception is at root a spiritual-corporeal perception of the other. As Barth writes, "A being capable only of a purely self-contained self-consciousness (*Selbstbewusstsein*) would not be a

---

myself from others as the object identical with myself, and cannot therefore recognize myself as a subject….It may well be true that this act of knowledge is not seeing, hearing, or smelling or any perception communicated by my physical senses, but an inner experience of myself. Yet it is just as true that this experience…is also external and a moment in the history of my material body" (*GL* I, 386. *CD* III/2, 375).

percipient being. Man is not such a self-contained being. He is capable of self-consciousness, but he is also capable of receiving another as such into this self-consciousness of his."[255]

Crucially, however, for Barth this capacity to perceive the other, to receive another into one's self-consciousness is first and foremost grounded in the capacity to perceive God. That is, the human being does not possess a general capacity for perception into which the perception of God fits. Rather, the human being possesses the concrete capacity to perceive God, on which the general perception of others is ultimately based. Barth writes of the human being, "As he is ordained and it is given to him to perceive God, he is ordained and it is given to him to perceive generally, to be percipient."[256] Barth grounds this idea in the fact that God has chosen the human being as a covenant partner. As Barth expounds on this point:

> Man is capable of perceiving the God who meets him and reveals himself to him.…In dealing with man, God appeals to this ability.…Without this ability, every appeal would obviously be without object; and the meeting between God and man, as it took place in the history of the covenant, would obviously be impossible.[257]

Barth writes here in surprisingly confident tones about the ability of the human being to perceive God. To Barth, however, this ability simply *must be* a part of anthropology given the fact that human beings have entered into covenant with God. Reflection on the human being begins with the actual. Methodologically, then, one notices that Barth does not offer a conceptual account of how it is possible that the human being can perceive

[255] *CD* III/2, 399.

[256] *CD* III/2, 399.

[257] *CD* III/2, 399.

God; instead, this ability is simply presupposed as a necessary condition for God's establishing a covenant between God and humanity.[258]

At root, then, the human being is a being who perceives God, and all other perception occurs with this perception of God as its foundation. As Barth puts this point, "Man may sense and think many things, but fundamentally the perceiving man is the God-perceiving man…when the Bible speaks of perceiving man, there is nothing else which it is important or necessary for man to perceive."[259] With the Bible as his starting point, Barth develops an understanding of the human being in which the perception of which he or she is capable will always at root be perception of the divine.

Moreover, the perception of other things besides God must always be understood as having significance only inasmuch as that perception ultimately relates to God.

> Man perceives and receives into self-consciousness particular things.…But these are important and necessary for man only because God does not usually meet him immediately but mediately in His works, deeds, and ordinances, and because the history of God's traffic with him takes place in the sphere of the created world and of the world of objects distinct from God.[260]

This passage not only makes clear the centrality of God in all human perception, it also gives us a more specific sense of what Barth has in mind when he speaks of the perception of God in the first place. Specifically, Barth claims that the human being

---

[258] In his treatment of Barth's anthropology, Wolf Krötke echoes this observation, albeit without specific reference to Barth's understanding of perception. Krötke speaks of the role of the decision of the human being in making partnership with God, then writes, "It is also in this context that Barth's strong statements about the capacity of the human person to encounter God, to hear him, and to answer him are made. As the soul of the body, the human creature is 'qualified, prepared and equipped for this activity' (*CD* III/2, 396). This is an ontologically grounded creaturely capacity which is neither founded nor abolished by actual religiosity or a-religiosity. It is subject neither to debate nor to human disposition. It must be presupposed in theological anthropology as something self-evident" (170). Wolf Krötke, "Karl Barth's Anthropology," in *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. John Webster (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 159-176.

[259] *CD* III/2, 402. *GL* I, 386.

[260] *CD* III/2, 402.

primarily perceives God *mediately* in the created world and in history.[261] Importantly, too, this perception of God should not be regarded as in any way deficient in relation to the immediate encounter with God.

> First and last and all the time his perception has properly only one object, of which everything else gives positive or negative witness.…Thus in, behind, and over the other things which he perceives by sense and thought there always stands in one way or another the Other who through other things approaches and enters him, who wills to be sensed and thought by him, to be for and in him, not casting him off, not leaving him to himself, willing rather that man should be with Him and that He should be received and enclosed in his self-consciousness. In order that this may take place, man is percipient.[262]

For Barth, then, the fact that the "Other" who stands behind all things seeks out the human being through those things gives all perception a necessarily personal dimension. No single thing is independent of the God who created and presides over all that exists, and therefore every thing gives either positive or negative witness to God. Therefore, although Barth clearly develops the interpersonal aspect to perception on the human-to-human plane through his account of being with another above, it must be acknowledged that the perception that occurs between the human being and God—even when God is perceived mediately in God's works—contains no less of an interpersonal dimension.[263]

Crucially for our analysis, too, when Barth's anthropology of unity-in-duality is taken into consideration, we can see that his understanding of the perception of God does not involve merely the activity of the corporeal senses. That is, the constitution of the

---

[261] Given Barth's aversion to so-called "mystical" experience, it is unsurprising that he would prescind from claims about an immediate encounter with the divine in his account of perception (although he does, unexpectedly, suggest that such an encounter is merely unusual, and not impossible).

[262] *CD* III/2, 402-403.

[263] It is also certainly of interest, even if not directly related to the aims of this chapter, that Barth makes this capacity to perceive God the criterion by which the *rationality* of the human being is measured: "He does not have an abstract capacity of awareness and thought, but the concrete capacity to sense and think God. This is the object and content in virtue of which and in relation to which his nature is a rational nature" (*CD* III/2, 402). This connection between perception and rationality further gestures toward the centrality of the former for Barth's anthropology.

human being as a psychic-corporeal whole leads Barth to posit that perception must take place in a manner that reflects this totality. When this principle is applied to the perception of God in particular, we can see Barth come within a hairsbreadth of actually articulating a doctrine of the spiritual senses in his theological anthropology. In the exegetical portion of the *Church Dogmatics* that follows the above quotations, Barth dwells for some time on a reading of scripture that supports these claims. His exegesis culminates in his assertion, "The Old and New Testament ideas of 'hearing' and 'seeing' do not merely denote external, sensuous, or bodily perception. We have only to consider what is meant by the context when the biblical 'See' is uttered, or what the Old Testament understands by a 'seer,' or how comprehensive is the biblical 'Hear.'"[264] Remarkably, then, Barth reads the biblical witness as bearing testimony to a notion of perception of God that exceeds a strictly corporeal dimension.

With all of this said, however, we should reiterate the extent to which the perception of God is radically dependent upon divine grace in Barth's theology. That is, for the reader concerned that the above account of the perceptual capacities of the human being vis-à-vis God has begun to sound so Pelagian as to distort Barth beyond all recognition, it must be said that Barth offers a clear counterbalance to his claims regarding "the God-perceiving man." Specifically, Barth insists that the human being perceives God only because of the continual gift of grace that allows for such perception. "God is not in him as a matter of course. He would not be creature, but himself the Creator, if God were in him from the very outset, if it belonged to his nature to be master of God, if he did not stand continually in need of God's giving Himself to be his, of

[264] *CD* III/2, 405. *GL* I, 388.

God's approaching him from outside."[265] Here we are reminded, then, that for Barth the human being is capable of perceiving God only because God incessantly reaches out to him or her. All talk of a "capacity" for the perception of God should be viewed in this context of the continual gift of divine grace that makes such perception possible.[266]

In Barth, then, Balthasar finds a foremost expositor of biblical anthropology who develops an understanding of the human being as a being-in-encounter who is fundamentally united in body and soul.[267] Furthermore, these aspects of the human being are so thoroughly intertwined that even the body thinks, according to Barth, and even the soul perceives. The particular notion of perception that Barth has in mind is first and foremost the perception of God as revealed in the created order. We shall bring these

---

[265] *CD* III/2, 403.

[266] Furthermore, the reader should understand that, in all of this talk about the human being as one who is capable of perceiving God, Barth is referring first and foremost to Jesus Christ. That is, one must observe that when Barth speaks of "the human being" in his theological anthropology, he is always speaking primarily of Jesus Christ. It is Jesus Christ who can perceive God. It is only inasmuch as humanity in general shares something with the humanity of Jesus—in spite of the enormous differences between Jesus's humanity and our humanity—that other human beings may also be said to perceive God. It should come as no surprise that Barth's anthropology is done through Christology, but it is also worth explicitly observing this particular implication of Barth's first anthropological premise. This fact, coupled with the perpetual condescension of divine grace mentioned above, serves to contextualize and properly situate Barth's model of the perception of God.

[267] Balthasar, of course, is not wholly Barthian in his anthropology; he does not simply replicate Barth's understanding of the human being in his own theological anthropology. He does, however, interestingly downplay his differences with Barth in his treatment of the spiritual senses. Alluding to his well-known critique of Barth in regard to the *analogia entis* and the *analogia fidei*, Balthasar writes: "We need not here rehearse every nuance of Barth's anthropology, especially not that aspect of it which does not tolerate any relation (from the lower to the higher) between the social construct (*Bild*) and the revealed archetype of the Covenant. This doctrine, peculiar to Barth, need not detain us here because for him the total human image is founded on God's covenantal intention, to such an extent that, outside this archetype, the properly human cannot, in the last analysis, either understand itself or be made theologically comprehensible" (*GL* I, 383-384). What Balthasar objects to in Barth's theology is that Barth collapses creation into covenant, and that therefore a "Christo-monism" permeates Barth's theology whereby no aspect of creation retains its "relative autonomy" from Christ. Although Christ is indeed still the absolute on Balthasar's model of the relationship between nature and grace, he would argue that that which is relative (i.e., creation) in relation to the absolute nevertheless has a real and enduring significance that precludes its being collapsed into an exclusively Christological mold. Cognizant of this difference between his own theology and that of Barth, Balthasar nevertheless intriguingly insists that such matters are "of little consequence" in his treatment of the spiritual senses (*GL* I, 384). I will pursue this matter in greater depth in the treatment of nature and grace in chapter 6.

features of Barth's thought into conversation with Balthasar's model of the spiritual senses at the conclusion of this chapter. For now, let us turn to Balthasar's reading of Romano Guardini.

Romano Guardini

There has been a surprisingly small amount of academic attention given to the relationship between Balthasar and the widely known Catholic priest and theologian Romano Guardini.[268] Balthasar shared many of Guardini's concerns about rising to the challenges of modernity with traditional resources in order to renew twentieth-century German Catholic life, and he wrote a monograph on Guardini late in his career.[269] Although Balthasar's treatment of Guardini in *The Glory of the Lord* is brief in comparison to that of Barth, Balthasar does highlight three features of Guardini's thought that are highly significant for his rearticulation of the spiritual senses. First, Balthasar finds in Guardini an understanding of perception as a simultaneously spiritual and corporeal act, and, furthermore, this model of perception is specifically configured around the notion of form (*Gestalt*). Second, as was the case with Barth above, so too with Guardini do we observe an insistence that God is perceived in God's works. Guardini, however, adds to this understanding the notion that one perceives the divine

[268] This situation is starting to be remedied, largely due to the scholarly efforts of Manfred Lochbrunner. See Manfred Lochbrunner, "Guardini und Balthasar: Auf der Spurensuche einer Geistigen Wahlverwandtschaft," *Forum Katholische Theologie* 12 (1996): 229-246. Karl-Josef Kuschel, "Literature as Challenge to Catholic Theology in the 20th Century: Balthasar, Guardini and the Tasks of Today," *Ethical Perspectives* 7 (2000): 257-268. Manfred Lochbrunner, "Romano Guardini und Hans Urs von Balthasar: Integration von Theologie und Literatur," *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 34 (2005), 169-185. Manfred Lochbrunner, *Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine Philosophenfreunde: Fünf Doppelporträts* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2005).

[269] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Romano Guardini: Reform aus dem Ursprung* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1970). See also Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Der Unbekannte jenseits des Wortes," in *Interpretation der Welt: Romano Guardini zum 80. Geburtstag*, ed. H. Kuhn (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1965), 638-645.

with a special intensity in the liturgical setting. Third, Balthasar holds that, for Guardini, the ability to perceive God is given among the general gifts of grace, not as a special capacity reserved for the select few.

Balthasar on Guardini's Understanding of Perception and Form (Gestalt)

First, then, Balthasar finds in Guardini one who laments the bifurcated model of perceiving and thinking that has emerged in the modern period. Balthasar quotes a portion of Guardini's *Die Sinne und die Religiöse Erkenntnis* that reads, "This dislocation into abstract conceptuality and sensualistic corporeality must be overcome so that the living human reality can again emerge."[270] The sensual and the conceptual have become split apart from one another, in Guardini's view. Thinking has been uprooted from the images out of which it arises, and perceiving has devolved into a shallow means through which to engage the world. Balthasar summarizes this portion of Guardini's thought as follows: "Seeing has become a matter of observing and verifying to which is afterwards added the activity of an abstract intellect as it orders and elaborates what is perceived."[271] This model of seeing and thinking, according to Balthasar and Guardini, has deprived perception of its depth, and it has simultaneously robbed the intellect of its contact with the outside world. Balthasar refers to a portion of Barth's *Church Dogmatics* to elucidate Guardini's position; Barth claims that primitive people have a view of the world in which "nothing is represented as totally material and nothing as purely spiritual."[272] Instead,

---

[270] Romano Guardini, *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis: Zwei Versuche über die Christliche Vergewisserung* (Würzburg: Werkbung Verlag, 1950), 73. *GL* I, 390.

[271] *GL* I, 389-390.

[272] *CD* III/2, 519. *GL* I, 390.

there is an intermingling of the material and the spiritual such that, using Guardini's language, "all empirical affirmations are integrated with religious affirmations."[273]

In response to this situation, Guardini relies heavily on the notion of form (*Gestalt*) to develop an understanding of vision in which both the sensual and the "spiritual" are perceived by the eye in the act of seeing. He writes, "I see from the first instant 'forms' (*Gestalten*) in which every element is borne, and the whole is as fundamental as the sum of the particular parts. But such a form (*Gestalt*) is not only corporeal."[274] According to Guardini, then, the eye perceives the form *as a whole*, and this whole consists of more than merely material components. In fact, "the purely material thing does not exist; the body is from the outset determined spiritually."[275] Importantly, too, this "spiritual" dimension not only determines the form, according to Guardini; it can itself be *perceived*. He writes, "This spiritual element is not subsequently added to the sensory datum, for instance by the work of the intellect; it is grasped by the eye at once, even if indeterminately and imperfectly at first."[276] Balthasar summarizes this portion of Guardini's thought with the following claim: "The eye *sees* the vitality of the animal. In man, it *sees* (and does not 'infer') the soul in its gestures, expressions and actions; indeed it sees the soul even before the body, and the body only in the soul."[277]

---

[273] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 35. *GL* I, 390.

[274] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 19 (my translation).

[275] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 19. *GL* I, 390-391.

[276] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 19. *GL* I, 391.

[277] *GL* I, 391.

It should be said on this point that Guardini does not deny that thinking also plays a role in the perception of form. He writes, "Of course I must also think. All sensory perception is continually accompanied or shot through by a process of thinking that compares, distinguishes, orders, and illumines."[278] His question, however is "whether the perception (*Auffassung*) of every distinction is first and most fundamentally the result of thinking or a 'seeing perception' (*sehender Wahrnehmung*)."[279] In other words, Guardini wants to preserve the possibility that the perceptual faculties of the human being could pick up on aspects of form that are not strictly corporeal.

Balthasar, then, reads Guardini as resembling Barth in that both figures articulate a notion of perception that involves both sensual and super-sensual dimensions. Unlike Barth, however, Guardini begins phenomenologically with the notion of *Gestalt*. That is, whereas Barth's starting point is scripture and his method proceeds from what must be the case for the human being to have entered into a covenant with God, the starting point for Guardini's model of perception is one in which the organizing features of the form demand a notion of perception that exceeds the material realm. We have two different methods by which similar conclusions are drawn. Importantly, too, Guardini's understanding of the role of the form in spiritual perception correlates extensively with that of Balthasar, as will be explored in detail in chapter 5.

[278] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 30. *GL* I, 392.

[279] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 30 (my translation).

Balthasar on Guardini and the Loci *within Which Spiritual Perception Occurs*

As central as the category of *Gestalt* is for Guardini's rehabilitation of perception, it is important to note that the human being does not see just any form through this spiritual-corporeal perception. That is, one could begin phenomenologically and develop a model of perception as exceeding the corporeal realm that did not necessarily involve seeing specifically religious forms. Guardini, however, actually positions himself in the spiritual senses tradition in order to specify the *loci* within which spiritual perception occurs. He claims that (1) it is God the creator who is perceived through God's works in the world and (2) it is Christ who is perceived in the liturgical setting.

Regarding the first claim, Guardini makes a number of allusions to Augustine's "eye of the soul,"[280] and in fact the first half of his book is an extended meditation on Romans 1:19-21, to which Augustine refers in his statements on spiritual vision, as seen in chapter 1.[281] Interestingly, in one of his quotations of the Romans passage, Guardini even goes so far as to insert the term "the eye" into the text such that it reads, "For from the creation of the world his invisible things are seen with the eye of reason (*mit* [*dem Auge*] *der Vernunft*) in his works."[282] The Greek text itself does not mention an "eye," and the "seeing" (καθορᾶται)[283] of which Paul speaks is not typically taken to modify

[280] For example, Guardini writes, "The eye…moves from the corporeal form all the way to that height to which Augustine refers when he speaks of the 'eye of the soul.'" *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 53.

[281] *Die Sinne und die Religiöse Erkenntnis* is divided into two parts, the first of which is titled "Das Auge und die Religiöse Erkenntnis: Philosophische Erwägungen zu Römerbrief 1, 19-21."

[282] "Denn das [an sich] Unsichtbare von Ihm wird von Erschaffung der Welt her an seinen Werken mit [dem Auge] der Vernunft gesehen, nämlich seine ewige Macht sowohl als seine Göttlichkeit" (bracketed text in original), *Die Sinne und die Religiöse Erkenntnis*, 27.

[283] Or, more accurately, "is clearly seen."

"being understood" (νοούμενα).[284] For example, the translation of this passage found in the New Revised Standard Version reads, "Since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made." Guardini, then, inserts the term "the eye" into the text so as to yoke together "seeing" and "understanding" such that the two terms are rendered together as the "eye of reason." More interesting still, Guardini includes a footnote in his text in which he defends his editorial decision. He writes,

> "Nooumena kathoratai." This vision through the "nous," the higher reason, is not merely an analysis…but rather really a "seeing." It is possible that Hellenistic epistemology plays a part in the Pauline expression, whereby it is actually perceived not with sensory perception (*Wahrnehmung*), but with the pure perception (*Anschauung*) of the mind—in any case it deals with an "eye," not with abstract reason.[285]

Guardini, then, goes to significant lengths to insist that Paul does not intend an "abstract reason" with his use of the term νοούμενα, and that he instead in this passage speaks of a form of vision, an "eye" that perceives invisible things. Guardini's emendation of the text indicates a desire to ensure that the "seeing" of which Paul speaks is not taken in a metaphorical sense. Invisible things are in fact "seen" by the human being, albeit by the "eye of reason."

Guardini uses this interpretation of Romans 1:20 to claim that the eye of reason sees the creator through God's works. He writes, "Things bear witness to themselves as 'works'; indeed as works of divine power.…That power expresses itself in the manner in which things exist. This 'manner' is 'seen'—but with the 'eye of reason' (*Auge der*

[284] The Greek text reads τὰ γὰρ ἀόρατα αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ κτίσεως κόσμου τοῖς ποιήμασιν νοούμενα καθορᾶται ἥ τε ἀΐδιος αὐτοῦ δύναμις καὶ θειότης.

[285] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 27 (my translation).

Vernunft).…The eye cannot see God in himself, but in his deeds."[286] The object of the spiritual senses, then, is God the creator, who is seen through the things of the world. Balthasar picks up this feature of Guardini's thought, summarizing it as follows: "Now we can understand how, by referring to Rom. 1.18f., Guardini can demand of the eye and the senses that they see and perceive God. It is not God's unmediated essence that he means, but God's eternal power and glory, which are expressed in his works."[287] As was the case with Barth, then, so too in Balthasar's reading of Guardini do we observe that the perception of God occurs *mediately*, in God's works. Guardini does not highlight the personal dimension to this perception, as does Barth, but it is significant that Balthasar has drawn out from both Barth and Guardini a notion of perception that apprehends the divine in creation, remaining rooted, so to speak, in the things of the world without leaving them behind in the perception of God.

Unlike Barth, however, Guardini adds another dimension to spiritual perception in his claim that these senses are operative in liturgy. In fact, one could say that his reflections on the senses and religious knowledge culminates in the treatment of liturgy found in the latter portion of his book. Whereas the first half of Guardini's volume concentrates on Romans 1:19-21, the second half is devoted to the experience of God in the liturgical setting.[288] Guardini holds that the epiphany that takes place in liturgy has a particularly notable intensity and concreteness to it. This is the case, to Guardini,

---

[286] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 32 (my translation).

[287] *GL* I, 392.

[288] The title of this section of Guardini's text is "Die Liturgische Erfahrung und die Epiphanie" (Liturgical Experience and Epiphany). This is not entirely surprising, given that Guardini's most well-known writings deal with liturgy, particularly his classic work, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, now in its 20th edition. Romano Guardini, *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. Ada Lane (New York: Crossroad, 1998). Original German: *Vom Geist der Liturgie* (Freiburg: Herder, 1921).

because "the liturgy…does not have to do with abstract teachings and rules, but rather everything is the gazed-upon form (*anschaubare Gestalt*)."[289] In liturgy, the glory of God has become visible. As Guardini puts this point, "The 'Lord of Glory' (*Herr der Herrlichkeit*) can, if his grace desires, allow this glory to be visible as a liturgical symbol, so that we 'will be enlightened through the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ' (2 Cor. 4:6)."[290] In liturgy, then, God's glory becomes manifest as a symbol that is at once material and spiritual.[291] As Balthasar summarizes this aspect of Guardini's understanding of liturgy, "Christ expects that in its signs—bread and wine, the water of baptism, and others—we should recognise his presence."[292] It is Christ, then, who is present through the signs or symbols of the liturgy, giving himself to be perceived in an act that is at once sensory and super-sensory.

Balthasar on Guardini and the Place of the Spiritual Senses in the Christian Life

As our last point about Balthasar's reading of Guardini, it is worth noting that he regards the spiritual perception of which Guardini speaks to be among the general gifts of grace, not a special perception reserved for a few at the heights of so-called "mystical" experience. Building from the above comments on perceiving God in creation and in

---

[289] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 63. Guardini memorably captures the way in which this vision can occur in liturgy with a reflection on his own experience in Mass in the Monreale Cathedral in Palermo: "I turned around and saw that all of the eyes [of the worshippers] were directed toward the holy ceremony. The view of those looking eyes (*schauenden Augen*) remains unforgettable to me…here was indeed the ancient capacity to live in seeing (*im Schauen zu leben*). Of course these people also thought and prayed, but they thought in looking (*sie haben schauend gedacht*), and their prayer was prayer in seeing (*Gebet im Schauen*)." *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 61 (my translation).

[290] *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 60 (my translation).

[291] Guardini echoes this sentiment: "It is a free decision of the Lord of the liturgy that the 'sign' should be not only an indication, but also a revelation." *Die Sinne und die religiöse Erkenntnis*, 59. *GL* I, 393.

[292] *GL* I, 392-393.

liturgy, Balthasar writes of Guardini, "What we are dealing with here is…'normal' in a Christian sense, while our fall into rationalistic cerebralism and monotony can in a Christian sense by no means be considered normal."[293] As was true in his reading of Origen, Bonaventure, and Ignatius, then, so too with Guardini does Balthasar focus on the way in which the spiritual senses are given to the human being as a "normal" aspect of Christian life. One need not have passed through extensive stages of spiritual development to receive them, nor are they active in "mystical" experience alone. Instead, the spiritual senses are included among the general gifts of grace.

In Guardini, then, Balthasar locates a figure who builds a notion of perception that is simultaneously spiritual and corporeal from his theory of form (*Gestalt*). This understanding of the form presenting both sensory and super-sensory aspects to the human being in the act of perception mirrors Balthasar's own understanding of the spiritual senses to a remarkable extent, as does Guardini's notion of the spiritual senses perceiving the creator in God's works and Christ in liturgical setting.

Gustav Siewerth

Balthasar scholarship is still in the process of assessing the importance of Gustav Siewerth for Balthasar's thought.[294] To the extent that academic treatments of Balthasar

---

[293] *GL* I, 393.

[294] Manfred Lochbrunner, "Gustav Siewerth im Spiegel von Hans Urs von Balthasar, " in *Im Ringen um die Wahrheit Festschrift der Gustav-Siewerth-Akademie zum 70. Geburtstag ihrer Gründerin und Leiterin Prof. Dr. Alma von Stockhausen*, ed. Remigius Bäumer, J. Hans Bernischke, and Tadeusz Guz (Weilheim-Bierbronnen: Gustav-Siewerth-Akademie, 1997), 257-272. Peter Reifenberg and Anton van Hooff, eds., *Gott für die Welt: Henri de Lubac, Gustav Siewerth und Hans Urs von Balthasar in ihren Grundanliegen* (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 2001). Manfred Lochbrunner, *Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine Philosophenfreunde: Fünf Doppelporträts* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2005), esp. 143-188. Andrzej Wiercinski, *Between Friends—A Bilingual Edition: The Hans Urs von Balthasar and Gustav Siewerth Correspondence, 1954-1963* (Konstanz: Verlag Gustav Siewerth-Gesellschaft, 2005).

engage with Siewerth, they typically focus on Balthasar's use of Siewerth's reading of Thomas Aquinas and Martin Heidegger.[295] As a result, Siewerth's importance for Balthasar's rearticulation of the spiritual senses remains almost entirely unexplored. In particular regard to our theme, Balthasar holds Siewerth to be a key modern figure who emphasizes (1) the unity of body and soul in the human being and (2) the notion that the human being is necessarily in encounter with a "Thou." Balthasar summarizes the importance of these two features of Siewerth's (and Barth's) thought as follows: "As Barth and Siewerth stress, man is not an isolated 'soul' which must work its way to reality by inferring it from phenomena. Man always finds himself within the real, and the most real reality is the Thou—his fellow-man and the God who created him and who is calling him."[296] Somewhat strangely, however, Balthasar's brief exposition of Siewerth's thought as it is found in the first volume of *The Glory of the Lord* does not directly support the second of these claims. That is, the account of Siewerth that Balthasar offers in his theological aesthetics does not actually mention Siewerth's "personalist" views. As a result, we will make brief reference to other portions of Balthasar's corpus in examining his use of Siewerth's notion of the human being as a "being in encounter." For now, however, let us examine Balthasar's reading of Siewerth's anthropology of "unity-in-duality."

---

[295] Siewerth received his doctorate from the philosophical faculty at Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg in 1931. Martin Honecker served as his Doktorvater, but Martin Heidegger and Edmund Husserl were also among his teachers. His dissertation was later published as *Die Metaphysik der Erkenntnis nach Thomas von Aquin* (München-Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1933). Also relevant in this connection are his *Die Apriorität der Erkenntnis als Einheitsgrund der philosophischen Systematik des Thomas von Aquin* (Kallmunz-Regensburg: M. Lassleben, 1938) and *Das Schicksal der Metaphysik von Thomas zu Heidegger* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1959).

[296] *GL* I, 406.

Balthasar on Siewerth's Anthropology of Unity-in-Duality

Balthasar begins his exposition of Siewerth's thought with the notion of the "openness" (*Offenheit*) of the senses. That is, Siewerth understands the senses as "roads" or "ways" (from the Old German *sin*) to their objects.[297] Balthasar quotes a key portion of Siewerth's *Die Sinne und das Wort* that reads as follows:

> Openness is the essence of the senses…Therefore, what the senses perceive or see does not prompt them to a renewed exercise of their awareness, because in their openness they are always alert and expecting some manifestation. Forms and sounds do not therefore, awaken sight and hearing,… but rather emerge as colours and tones within the open landscape of the eye, where sight is always seeing, and in the open sphere of hearing, where the ear is always hearing.[298]

Siewerth emphasizes the fact that, when the senses perceive, they do not arouse consciousness of the fact that one is perceiving; rather, they bring to awareness features of the *objects* of their perception; they open out onto the world. Siewerth, then, concentrates his attention on the extent to which the senses are efficacious in bringing the "forms and sounds" of objects to the human being. As Balthasar succinctly summarizes this feature of Siewerth's thought, "The eye does not see its own seeing, but only the things themselves."[299] The senses do focus not on their perceptual acts themselves but rather on that which is *other*, outside of the human being in the world. Although Balthasar does not mention Siewerth by name in the *Epilogue* to his trilogy, one detects Siewerth's influence in the description of the openness of the senses found there: "The human senses are gates that are constantly open (and real!), letting the appearing and self-giving entities enter into the senses and helping them to unfold through the senses. The

[297] *GL* I, 394.

[298] Gustav Siewerth, *Die Sinne und das Wort* (Düsseldorf: Schwann-Verlag, 1956), 8-9. *GL* I, 394.

[299] *GL* I, 394.

eye does not learn to see; it has always been seeing."[300] For both Balthasar and Siewerth, then, the fact that the senses are used so effortlessly gestures toward the fundamental openness of the human being.

This notion of the senses as openness leads to two further claims that are of interest for our investigation.[301] First, for Siewerth this openness does not "stop," so to speak, at the level of the senses. Rather, the *whole person* is open to the world. In *Wort und Bild*, Siewerth claims, "Our senses are essentially the open heart of man (*das geöffnete Herz des Menschen*); they are the paths on which the heart's willing love (*mögende Liebe*) confronts things and beings and thus comes to power and riches, that is, to an actualised capacity (*Vermögen*)."[302] The senses are the media through which the inner aspect of the human being—here referred to as the "heart"—comes into contact with the world. In similar fashion to Barth's model of a soul that perceives, then, Siewerth posits a heart that senses. And, as for Barth's understanding of the soul, also for Siewerth's understanding of the heart does this inner aspect of the human being add another dimension to perception, as it is not merely the bodily senses that perceive, but rather the entire human being as a unity-in-duality, senses and heart.

Second, the openness of the senses allows for the "depth" of things to appear to the human being. That is, our open senses pick up on the fact that objects in the world are not reducible to their surface appearance. Although he does not make reference to the particular notion of *Gestalt* upon which Guardini relies, Siewerth does use a similar idea

---

[300] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Epilogue* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1987), 78.

[301] See also D. C. Schindler's helpful exposition of this feature of Siewerth's thought in *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth* (New York: Fordham, 2004), 282-285.

[302] Gustav Siewerth, *Wort und Bild* (Düsseldorf: Schwann-Verlag, 1952), 25. *GL* I, 395.

of forms (*Formen*) and the material through which they present themselves as both being perceived by the human being. As Siewerth expresses this aspect of his thought, "Essential forms (*Wesensformen*) shape themselves from and in the receptive foundation of matter; they develop and, as a formed image, have their existence in matter. As such they 'emerge', 're-present themselves' and 'appear.'"[303] The depths of things are shown through their concrete appearance, and, as is true for Siewerth's anthropology above, so too for things in the world do they exist as a unity-in-duality.

Another way to put this point about the depth of things presenting themselves is to say that, for Siewerth, there is a simultaneity or interpenetration of "objective" and "subjective" dimensions to the act of perception. As Siewerth puts this point, "The seeing is always at the same time the object seen....'*Anschauung*' (perception) is both the act of seeing and the objectivity of what is perceived....A sensation is both my feeling and what is offered to me in feeling."[304] Siewerth, then, draws a distinction between the experience of the perceiver and the object that the perceiver is experiencing, and he insists that the latter is not reducible to the former. This is so, according to Siewerth, because in the act of perception the human being does not remain within him or herself. As Siewerth puts this point, "Vision (sensory knowledge) has in itself moved out to the open and, thus, into that which is other. Awakened to itself by the light, vision has strayed from its origins and become 'lost' in the other and, hence, in the exteriority of spatial extension."[305] According to Siewerth, then, perception involves becoming "lost"

---

[303] *Die Sinne und das Wort*, 19-22. *GL* I, 395.

[304] *Die Sinne und das Wort*, 10. Balthasar comments on this passage, "This combination of subjective and objective aspects of perception holds…for the senses." *GL* I, 394.

[305] *Wort und Bild*, 13. *GL* I, 395-396.

in that which lies beyond the self. At the very same time that objects in the world are being received by the human being, the human being is also transcending him or herself, proceeding outward into the world. As Siewerth further reflects on this double movement, "To take something into oneself therefore does not mean to make it 'subjective', but rather to concentrate one's vision on the depth of Being manifesting itself in the image. It means, in other words, to empty oneself out more deeply to the stream of light of the real."[306] Human beings, then, according to Siewerth, are capable of a movement beyond the self, and in this "self emptying," they come into contact with the depth of Being that is shown through objects in the world.

All of this leads up to a set of claims about Siewerth's understanding of the perceptual capacities of the interior aspect of the human being, to which he refers in *Die Sinne und das Wort* as "reason" rather than "heart." Siewerth writes:

> Reason perceives Being (*die Vernunft vernimmt das Sein*)…reason fills up the empty receptive perception of the spirit and brings it along with things into the light of truth....Just as the senses see, hear, and feel in the openness of the world and the things in it, so, too, reason sees, hears, and feels in the foundation of Being, which rules, weaves, and breathes life. But reason's synthesizing perception is not something alongside the senses.[307]

Remarkably, then, although Siewerth does not espouse a doctrine of the spiritual senses per se, he does advance an understanding of reason as capable of seeing, hearing, and feeling Being.

Although Siewerth's manner of expression could certainly be more straightforward, in the basic claims advanced above we can see a number of now familiar themes in his description of the human being as a unity-in-duality, capable of a form of perception that exceeds the physical realm. However, as an important point of contrast

---

[306] *Die Sinne und das Wort*, 15. *GL* I, 396.

[307] *Die Sinne und das Wort*, 36. *GL* I, 396.

with the other models of spiritual perception described throughout this study, in Siewerth's idea that human reason can perceive Being there is no mention of the role of grace. That is, whereas the debate in regard to other figures in the spiritual senses tradition has had to do with the *sort* of grace that is required for the spiritual senses, in the case of Siewerth it would seem that no supernatural intervention is necessary for spiritual perception to occur. Siewerth advances his position as a philosopher, not a theologian, and the implications of his method are acutely felt on this point. The issue is complicated slightly by the "personalism" of Siewerth's position, as we shall see below.

Balthasar's Use of Siewerth's "Personalism"

Whereas the above treatment of Balthasar's reading of Siewerth's anthropology draws extensively from the first volume of *The Glory of the Lord*, in examining Balthasar's use of Siewerth's personalism we must appeal to other aspects of his work. The best starting point on this topic is Balthasar's account of the mother's smile, which he adopts from Siewerth and describes in detail in his 1967 essay "Movement toward God."[308] Balthasar opens his piece with a description of the birth of consciousness in the human being, which he sees as inextricably tied to the encounter with one's mother. As he puts this point, "The little child awakens to self-consciousness through being addressed by the love of his mother.…The interpretation of the mother's smile and of her whole gift of self is the answer, awakened by her, of love to love, when the 'I' is

[308] Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Movement toward God," in *Explorations in Theology*, vol. 3: *Creator Spirit*, trans. Brian McNeil, C.R.V. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993). See also Gustav Siewerth, *Metaphysik der Kindheit* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957).

addressed by the 'Thou.'"[309] According to Balthasar, the smile of the mother functions as the stimulus that brings the child to self-consciousness. Critically, too, such self-awareness cannot be achieved by remaining "within" the self, so to speak. Instead, consciousness is founded on a movement beyond the self that occurs at the initiation of the other. As Balthasar develops this point, "The event in which the spirit awoke to its being as 'I' was the interpersonal experience of the 'Thou' in the sheltering sphere of common human nature, indeed, more intimately still, in the sphere of the common flesh of mother and child."[310] It is certainly significant that the specific arena within which the child is awakened to self-consciousness is that which is given by his or her mother.[311] In the fifth volume of his theological aesthetics, Balthasar makes the fundamental importance of this particular relationship even more explicit. He holds, "There is no encounter—with a friend or an enemy or with myriad passers-by—which could add anything to the encounter with the first-comprehended smile of the mother."[312] This passage, of course, stands in some tension with Balthasar's understanding of the foundational position of the neighbor in receiving one's spiritual senses, as will be shown in chapter 4. However, the important point for the moment is that the human being, according to Balthasar's use of Siewerth's thought, cannot come into self-awareness without the encounter with another human being, rendered here specifically as the

[309] "Movement toward God," 15.

[310] "Movement toward God," 21-22.

[311] Balthasar further reflects on this relationship as follows: "In the beginning was the word with which a loving 'Thou' summons forth the 'I': in the act of hearing lies directly, antecedent to all reflection, the fact that one has been given the gift of the reply; the little child does not 'consider' whether it will reply with love or nonlove to its mother's inviting smile, for just as the sun entices forth green growth, so does love awaken love; it is in the movement toward the 'Thou' that the 'I' becomes aware of itself." "Movement toward God," 15-16.

[312] *GL* V, 617.

mother. In a similar fashion to Barth, then—albeit via a different method and with a different other—there is no "I" prior to the relationship with the "Thou."

In his reading of Siewerth, then, as in his reading of Barth, Balthasar finds one who considers the human being to be a being-in-encounter, fundamentally united in body and soul. Siewerth puts his own particular stamp on these two ideas through his understanding of the encounter with the smile of the mother and the openness of the senses, respectively. Furthermore, in the fact that Siewerth articulates a notion of spiritual perception independent of grace, and in the fact that the object of such perception is Being, Siewerth emerges as a figure of special import for our consideration of Balthasar's fundamental theology, as will be discussed in chapter 6. For the moment, however, let us turn to the last figure we will examine in our assessment of the many influences on Balthasar's doctrine of the spiritual senses, Paul Claudel.

Paul Claudel

Early in his career Balthasar was intensely occupied with the writings of the French poet Paul Claudel, and he continued to translate Claudel's works throughout his life.[313] Curiously, however, little work has been done on the relationship between these

[313] Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Auch die Sünde: Zum Erosproblem bei Charles Morgan und Paul Claudel," *Stimmen der Zeit* 69 (1939): 222-237. Balthasar translated the following works into German: Paul Claudel, *Fünf große Oden* (Freiburg: Herder, 1939). *Der seidene Schuh* (Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1939). "Verse der Verbannung, " *Rundschau* 40 (1940): 406-413. *Gedichte* (Basel: Sammlung Klosterberg, 1940). *Der Kreuzweg* (Luzern: Josef Stocker, 1940). *Mariä Verkündigung* (Luzern: Josef Stocker, 1946). *Strahlende Gesichter* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957). *Der Gnadenkranz* (Eindiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957). "Der Architekt," *Hochland* 51 (1959): 217-223. "Paul Verlaine," *Hochland* 51 (1959): 251-253. *Gesammelte Werk* (Einsiedeln-Zürich-Köln: Benziger, 1963). *Corona Benignitatis Anni Dei* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965). *Antlitz in Glorie und Vermischte Gedichte* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965). *Heiligenblätter* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965). *Singspiel für drei Stimmen* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965). *Die Messe des Verbannten* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1981).

two figures,[314] and the value of Claudel's writings for Balthasar's rearticulation of the spiritual senses remains largely unexplored at present.[315] In his exposition of Claudel's thought, Balthasar emphasizes two motifs that we have come to expect by now:
(1) Balthasar reads Claudel as advancing an understanding of the human being as united in body and soul, for whom perception is simultaneously spiritual and corporeal, and
(2) Balthasar finds in Claudel an understanding of the spiritual senses as particularly active in the Eucharist, in which Christ continues to make himself known "flesh to flesh."

Balthasar's Reading of Claudel on the Unity of the Human Being

Balthasar focuses his attention on Claudel's essay "La Sensation du Divin" in the portion of *The Glory of the Lord* that deals with the spiritual senses.[316] In his treatment of Claudel's anthropology, Balthasar begins with the claim that, for Claudel, "the body is a work of the soul, its expression and its extension in matter. Through the body the soul experiences the world and has a shaping effect upon the world."[317] In a refrain now familiar to us, we see here that Balthasar reads Claudel as positing an interdependence between body and soul in his understanding of the human being. Claudel, however, makes even more explicit than Balthasar himself the particular notion that the senses exist in the first place because of the *need* of the soul to engage with the outside world.

---

[314] Edward Block, Jr., "Hans Urs von Balthasar as Reader of *Le Soulier de Satin*," in *Claudel Studies* 24 (1997): 35-44. Manfred Lochbrunner, *Hans Urs von Balthasar als Autor, Herausgeber, und Verleger: Fünf Studien zu seinen Sammlungen (1942-1967)* (Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2002). Manfred Lochbrunner, *Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine Literatenfreunde: Neun Korrespondenzen* (Würzburg: Echter, 2007).
[315] D. C. Schindler mentions Balthasar's use of Claudel on this topic briefly in his *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 280-281.

[316] Paul Claudel, "La Sensation du Divin," in *Présence et Prophétie* (Fribourg en Suisse, Éditions de la librairie de l'Université, 1942), 49-126.

[317] *GL* I, 402.

As Claudel puts this point, "The senses are a product and the external form of our interior faculties and of that need which shapes the depths of our being in conformity to something outside us in order that we might perceive it and receive its impress."[318] For Claudel, then, the senses arise out of a longing in the innermost parts of the human being to conform with something beyond themselves.

Because of the fact that the senses bear witness to the desires of the human soul, Claudel suggests that we may acquire knowledge of the soul *through* those senses. He holds that "the correct way of coming to know the soul, therefore, is to consider the body and, from the external organs of perception, to draw conclusions as to the internally operating forces which use the senses and direct them after they have created them for themselves."[319] We can reason our way to understanding the soul with the senses as our starting point. They are reliable guides.

According to Balthasar, this implies that the soul is actually equipped with a set of interior senses that parallel our exterior senses. He summarizes this feature of Claudel's thought: "Philosophically, what was said was that it is the spirit-soul which hears, sees, and tastes…it creates for itself the material organs necessary for perception."[320] In other words, given that we possess senses that are products of the longing of our souls, and given that we possess five discrete senses, the evidence suggests that our souls themselves have interior senses that have produced analogates in the external body.[321]

---

[318] "La Sensation du Divin," 60. *GL* I, 402.

[319] "La Sensation du Divin," 60. *GL* I, 402.

[320] *GL* I, 403.

[321] Claudel indeed develops an understanding of five distinct interior senses in the human being. For sight, see "La Sensation du Divin," 84-97; for hearing, "La Sensation du Divin," esp. 71; also "Non impedias musicam," in *Les Aventures de Sophie* (Paris, 1937), 211; for touch, see "La Sensation du Divin," esp.

We have, then, yet another method by which the notion of the spiritual senses is developed. Furthermore, one cannot help but notice the primacy of the soul in Balthasar's reading of Claudel. That is, whereas the other modern figures he examines do not so clearly emphasize a hierarchy between soul and body, according to Claudel the senses exist in the first place only because the soul longs to bring them into being. They may ultimately be unified with one another, but the soul clearly dictates their configuration in the human being.

When it comes to the theological import of this model of exterior and interior senses, however, the directionality is actually reversed, according to Balthasar's reading of Claudel. That is, Balthasar holds that, for Claudel, "the God who became man begins with the external senses and moves back to the interior senses, awakening in the world that deep sensorium for himself, the non-worldly one, which had been dulled by sin."[322] The means by which human beings are stirred out of sinfulness, then, is the appeal God makes to their corporeal senses in the Incarnation. After commenting on the fact that the incarnate Word made himself known to our bodily senses, Claudel expounds on the function of Christ vis-à-vis the spiritual senses: "Likewise, he willed in his compassion to do the very same for our interior senses, to make himself available to their grasp and hold himself in readiness for them.…He turns to our senses, that is, to the different forms of our interior sensibility (*sens intime*)."[323] Inner perception follows from the outer,

---

116 ; for smell, see *La Cantate à Trois Voix* (Paris, 1943), *Conversations dans le Loir-et-Cher* (Paris, 1957) ; for taste, see "La Sensation du Divin," esp. 124-126. Citations in *GL* I, 403-405.

[322] *GL* I, 403.

[323] "La Sensation du Divin," 62. *GL* I, 402.

according to this understanding of the relationship between God and the human being.[324] Balthasar takes this to mean that "through the correct use of the external senses, we can encounter God in everything in the world. It presupposes this even as it integrates it into the higher dimension that it seeks to demonstrate. Claudel, in fact, is not thinking (as is Bonaventure, in Rahner's interpretation) of a naked mystical sense, so to speak."[325] Although he arrives at this conclusion through slightly different means, then, Balthasar once again finds a notion of spiritual sensing that encounters the divine in physical things in the world, remaining rooted in the material creation at the very same time that one is perceiving God.

Balthasar on the Importance of the Eucharist for Claudel

We would be remiss if we did not briefly mention the significance of the Eucharist in Balthasar's reading of Claudel. Indeed, Balthasar reads Claudel as grounding his notion of the perception of God not only in the Incarnation, as treated above, but also in the Eucharist. Balthasar describes Claudel's position as follows: "He is thinking of a supernatural and, at the same time, sensory perceptive faculty that can sense the specific quality of the divine Essence because it is founded upon God's Incarnation and upon the Eucharist."[326] In fact, for Claudel's model of spiritual perception, it is in

[324] It is striking that Claudel, like Guardini and Origen, indulges in a creative misinterpretation of scripture in developing his notion of the spiritual senses. Whereas Origen's favorite text is Proverbs 2:5 and Guardini's is Romans 1:20, Claudel's is 1 Corinthians 2:16, which he renders as speaking of the "sense (*sens*) of Christ" through which is placed in us the "sense (*sens*) for God" ("La Sensation du Divin," 60). One notices, of course, that 1 Corinthians 2:16 does not in fact mention a "sense" of Christ or God, but rather the "mind of Christ" (νοῦς Χριστοῦ) and the "mind of the Lord" (νοῦς κυρίου). Claudel, then, has emended the biblical text in order to accentuate the sensory character of our knowledge of God.

[325] *GL* I, 403.

[326] *GL* I, 403.

the Eucharist that we find the means by which we are able to continue to perceive the incarnate God after his resurrection and ascension. As Claudel puts this point, "He [Christ] willed to become flesh not only for a short time and for a few men, but or all epochs and all men."[327] Balthasar picks up on this special importance of the Eucharist, noting that, for Claudel,

> The Eucharist, in particular, is the adaptation of our being to God by the descent of the Word into the senses.…Not only does Spirit speak to spirit, but Flesh speaks to flesh.…It must, like it or not, learn to taste, to taste how God tastes—God himself, our means of sustenance, who has now become "accessible to our bodily organs."[328]

Crucially, too, it is in his discussion of the Eucharist that we see Claudel explicitly resist a dualism that could endure if he were only to speak of interior senses mirroring the exterior senses. In this portion of his text, however, Claudel unambiguously holds: "Our flesh has ceased being an obstacle; it has become a means and a mediation. It has ceased being a veil to become a perception." The Eucharist, then, is the primary locus within which spiritual perception occurs, and in it one finds the union of the spiritual and the corporeal par excellence.

Conclusion

In this final chapter examining the various influences on Balthasar's model of the spiritual senses, we have observed that his contemporary interlocutors provide him with a number of important resources for his rearticulation of the doctrine. First, and most importantly, in our examination of Barth and Siewerth above, we observed two key figures who articulate "personalist" views of the human being as a "being in encounter."

---

[327] "La Sensation du Divin," 61. *GL* I, 402.

[328] *GL* I, 401-402.

Balthasar indicates the importance of this particular feature of Barth and Siewerth's thought when he notes, "As Barth and Siewerth stress…man always finds himself within the real, and the most real reality is the Thou—his fellow-man and the God who created him and is calling him."[329] Coming into contact with the most real reality involves a meeting between subjectivities. Reality at its most fundamental level has a distinctly *personal* aspect. Indeed, Balthasar most clearly breaks from previous articulations of the doctrine of the spiritual senses when he, drawing on the notion of the human being as a being-in-encounter, integrates this interpersonal dimension into his doctrine of the spiritual senses. He writes, "In his love for his neighbour, the Christian definitively receives his Christian [or, spiritual] senses, which of course, are none 'other' than his bodily senses, but these senses in so far as they have been formed according to the form of Christ."[330] Through this anthropology, then, Balthasar claims to supply the necessary corrective to interpretations of the spiritual senses that have, according to him, regarded the human being as an individual entity prior to encounter. Balthasar insists, to the contrary, that the encounter with the Thou is an inextricable component of his doctrine of the spiritual senses.

Second, we have seen that all four figures above oppose an anthropology that would divide body from soul, and they similarly resist notions of perception that would separate corporeal from spiritual dimensions. As Balthasar summarizes their thought, "In his own way, each of them conceives man as a sensory-spiritual totality and understands man's two distinctive functions from the standpoint of a common centre in which the

[329] *GL* I, 406.

[330] *GL* I, 424.

living person stands in a relationship of contact and interchange with the real, living God."[331] What we have in these figures, then, is a thoroughgoing attempt to ground Christian life in the particularity of the senses. Although each of them reaches his conclusions by a different method, their collective effort at unifying body and soul in the human being exerts a profound influence on Balthasar's own rearticulation of the doctrine.

In terms of influences specific to each figure, one is perhaps most struck by the extensive parallel between Guardini's notion of *Gestalt* and Balthasar's use of the same term in his own constructive use of the doctrine. Siewerth's development of a purely philosophical account of spiritual perception and his model of the birth of consciousness in the human being are both of tremendous import for Balthasar as well, as will be demonstrated in chapter 6. Claudel's understanding of the importance of the Eucharist for the spiritual senses permeates Balthasar's thought, as will be indicated in our upcoming treatment of his own doctrine of the spiritual senses. Regarding Barth, one cannot help but notice that for Balthasar it is specifically the encounter with the neighbor—about which Barth speaks at length—in which one receives one's spiritual senses. With our assessment of the many influences on Balthasar's understanding of the spiritual senses, we now turn to the noteworthy features of his constructive use of the doctrine in his theological aesthetics.

[331] *GL* I, 405.

Chapter 4

Balthasar's Distinctive Rearticulation of the Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses

Having established in the first three chapters of this study an appreciation for the wide array of influences on Balthasar's understanding of the spiritual senses, in this chapter I describe Balthasar's own version of the doctrine in his theological aesthetics. Culling a number of points from our examination of Balthasar's reading of the spiritual senses tradition, six noteworthy features of his version of the doctrine are investigated. First, and most distinctively, Balthasar maps the spiritual senses onto an anthropology of "being-in-relation" whereby the encounter with the neighbor emerges as a key arena within which the human person receives his or her spiritual senses. Second, according to the anthropology of "unity-in-duality" that Balthasar finds in modern figures, he thoroughly interweaves spiritual perception with its corporeal counterpart such that the former cannot occur without the latter. Third, Balthasar emphatically contends that the object of the spiritual senses cannot be the "transcendent God," and that it is rather the concrete form of Christ, which is perceived in the world, Church, liturgy, and neighbor. Fourth, whereas the spiritual senses have been interpreted as pertaining to a "mystical" encounter with God reserved for a few, Balthasar repositions the doctrine such that the spiritual senses are granted to all among the general gifts of grace. Fifth, adopting the death-and-resurrection pattern of Pseudo-Macarius' version of the spiritual senses, Balthasar holds that one is given one's spiritual senses after suffering with Christ in his passion, death, and resurrection. Sixth, and most importantly for Balthasar's overall goals in his theological aesthetics, he gives the spiritual senses an explicitly aesthetic

dimension such that they are capable of apprehending and appreciating the splendor of the form.

In highlighting the distinctive features of Balthasar's rendering of the spiritual senses, I do not claim that his rearticulation of the doctrine is wholly unique. He certainly displays lines of continuity between his own model of the spiritual senses and those which have come before him. However, Balthasar does weave together various strands of this multifaceted tradition in a particular configuration such that he does not simply replicate the thought of his patristic and scholastic forebears. Moreover, highlighting the ways in which Balthasar's own articulation of the doctrine differs from those that have preceded him not only serves scholarship on the history of the spiritual senses, it also helps us to see more clearly the particular use to which Balthasar puts the doctrine in his own theology, which will aid our investigation in the next chapter of this study.

The "Personalist" Dimension to Balthasar's Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses

The most distinctive feature of Balthasar's rendering of the spiritual senses entails his integrating the encounter with one's neighbor into his understanding of the doctrine. Indeed, the notion that the human being receives his or her spiritual senses in the encounter with an "other" is not evident in the strains of the spiritual senses tradition that precede him. Balthasar certainly sees this feature of his thought as breaking with his patristic and scholastic forebears. In his engagement with Barth's "biblical" understanding of the human being as a "being-in-encounter," Balthasar holds, "With Barth, then, we must profoundly deplore the fact that the Patristic and scholastic

anthropology strayed from this first of all Biblical premises concerning human reality [pertaining to the interpersonal dimension to the human being] and let itself be inspired by an abstract Greek concept of essence."[332] As examined in the previous chapter, what Balthasar objects to in these patristic and scholastic anthropologies is the notion that the human being can first be considered a discrete, isolable entity who exists prior to encounter. Instead, the human person is always already "in relation" to an other. As Balthasar puts this point, "Man always finds himself within the real, and the most real reality is the Thou—his fellow-man and the God who created him and is calling him."[333] Coming into contact with the most real reality involves a meeting between subjectivities. Reality at its most fundamental level has a distinctly personal aspect.

Balthasar explicitly brings this personalist anthropology to bear on the spiritual senses in the portion of *The Glory of the Lord* he devotes to his constructive position. He begins this section with further insistence on the significance of the neighbor for his project: "There is *one* image…which stands wholly by itself and which is like no other image…this is the image of the fellow-man we encounter."[334] This *sui generis* image of the fellow-man, to Balthasar, confronts the human being and places a demand on him or her. "In you faith compels me to see, to respect, and to anticipate in action the supremely real image which the triune God has of you. In our neighbour faith is at each instant tested through the senses, and, if it is authenticated as faith, it immediately receives its sensory corroboration."[335] The encounter with the neighbor, then, is the arena within

[332] *GL* I, 382.

[333] *GL* I, 406.

[334] *GL* I, 423.

[335] *GL* I, 423.

which faith is tested, and Balthasar emphasizes the fact that this testing occurs through the senses. These remarks culminate in Balthasar's unprecedented claim, "In his love for his neighbour, the Christian definitively receives his Christian [or, spiritual] senses, which of course, are none 'other' than his bodily senses, but these senses in so far as they have been formed according to the form of Christ."[336] Balthasar thus gestures toward a deeply ethical aspect of his doctrine of the spiritual senses, and he sees through this personalist anthropology to its logical conclusion: if human beings are able to experience God at all, and if they are fundamentally constituted in an interpersonal act, then the experience of God must also occur as an encounter with the other.

The further implications of this interpersonal rendering of the spiritual senses will be explored below in the observation that the neighbor shows forth *Christ* in the midst of this encounter. For the moment, however, the point to be made is that this model of love of neighbor as integral to the reception of the spiritual senses is not found in the versions of the doctrine that precede Balthasar, and that it constitutes a highly distinctive reforging of the spiritual senses in his theological aesthetics.

The Unity of Spiritual and Corporeal Perception in Balthasar's Thought

Throughout his treatment of figures in the spiritual senses tradition we have seen Balthasar consistently read those figures as valuing corporeal perception to a greater extent than is typically thought to be the case among commentators on their texts. This comes as no great surprise, as one of the most apparent motifs within Balthasar's theological aesthetics as a whole is his repeated emphasis on the importance of sense

[336] *GL* I, 424.

perception for the theological task. In *The Glory of the Lord* he undertakes a tireless campaign against the "spiritualization" and "demythologization" of the Christian faith into a "Platonizing" flight from the concrete, material world.[337] Furthermore, as we just observed in the last chapter, Balthasar demonstrates a clear attraction to those anthropologies that consider the human being to be a "unity-in-duality," fundamentally united in body and soul.

It is nevertheless valuable to emphasize the extent to which Balthasar unites corporeal and spiritual sensation in his own reformulation of the spiritual senses. In his constructive rearticulation of the doctrine, Balthasar takes great pains to conjoin them in as thoroughgoing a manner as possible with the bodily senses to which they are analogous. He writes, "Perception, as a fully human act of encounter, necessarily had not only to include the senses, but to emphasise them…The centre of this act of encounter must, therefore, lie where the profane human senses, making possible the act of faith, become 'spiritual', and where faith becomes 'sensory' in order to be human."[338] For Balthasar, then, it is actually the corporeal senses *themselves* that become spiritual. The spiritual senses grow out of the bodily senses. There is therefore no parallel set of spiritual sense faculties that must then be brought together with the corporeal senses. Instead, the spiritual senses are transformed versions of the ordinary perceptual faculties of the body.

This move, of course, sharply breaks with the initial articulation of the doctrine of the spiritual senses found in Origen, for whom the spiritual and bodily senses are deeply

[337] See especially *GL* I, 51-57.

[338] *GL* I, 365.

disjuncted from one another.[339] Balthasar writes of the human being, "What is at stake is always man as a spiritual-corporeal reality…If he thinks as he ought then he allows to come into him also the God who, through perception, had announced himself to be there for him. Both things—sensory perception and spiritual thinking—are constantly considered in their unity."[340] Later in his theological aesthetics, Balthasar adds, "It is with both body and soul that the living human being experiences the world and, consequently, also God."[341] Thus the reader sees the "spiritual-corporeal" unity of the human being on Balthasar's model, and he or she also observes the key fact that—as a direct result of this anthropology of unity-in-duality—perception occurs as an act that is simultaneously corporeal and spiritual.

One of the many things this means is that spiritual perception is always rooted in the concrete, material world. Or, to put it more strongly, one never perceives spiritually without also perceiving corporeally. According to Balthasar's reformulation of the spiritual senses, then, there is no internal vision of God that occurs exclusively within the "eye of the mind." On Balthasar's model, the spiritual senses do not perceive immaterial presences. Instead, one necessarily perceives with the bodily senses when one perceives spiritually, and one perceives an object that is both material and spiritual, as will be explored in the next section.

---

[339] The reader recalls from chapter 1 that for Origen the "spiritual eye" of the human being opens only to the extent that the "physical eye" closes. The clear indication from Origen is not only that there is a radical disjunct between spiritual and corporeal senses, but that the development of one set of faculties is inversely proportional to that of the other.

[340] *GL* I, 384, 387.

[341] *GL* I, 406.

Balthasar on Christ as the Object of the Spiritual Senses

Connected to this concern about the corporeality of spiritual perception is a set of claims about the *object* of the spiritual senses in Balthasar's thought. Indeed, one of the reasons Balthasar so emphatically resists any trace of dualism throughout his theological aesthetics is that the object of spiritual-corporeal perception according to his own reformulation of the doctrine is Christ, specifically, the Incarnate Word. That is, given that the Word has taken on flesh, the material order has been given a capacity to bear God's presence.

Of course, the claim that Christ is the object of the spiritual senses, taken by itself, would not necessarily distinguish Balthasar's doctrine of the spiritual senses from those of his forebears. However, Balthasar's rearticulation of the spiritual senses is dissimilar from previous versions of the doctrine in his insistence that the spiritual senses absolutely cannot pertain to the *Deus nudus*, as Balthasar puts it. Although we certainly observed models of the spiritual senses that describe the encounter with Christ in figures such as Origen, Augustine, Pseudo-Macarius, and Bonaventure, we did not observe such emphatic rhetorical resistance to the possibility that they could apply to the "transcendent God" as well. In fact, there is some ambiguity on this aspect of the doctrine in certain figures in the tradition, which is the very reason Balthasar must exert such effort in his interpretation of the object of the spiritual senses. Balthasar's own constructive rearticulation of the doctrine, by contrast, is unambiguous in its resistance to the possibility of a "mysticism without modes," to borrow a phrase from his reading of Origen. On this point, he also claims, "A mysticism of radical union is necessarily alien

to the 'spiritual senses', but it is likewise alien to the Christian way as such."[342] Whereas one certainly finds other versions of the spiritual senses that emphasize Christ as their object, then, one is hard pressed to locate such ardent expression of the idea that the "transcendent God" absolutely *cannot* be the object of the spiritual senses.

This perception of Christ occurs within four particular arenas in Balthasar's thought. Specifically, Christ is present in the world, the Church, liturgy, and the neighbor. Regarding the first claim, that one perceives Christ in "the world," Balthasar's constructive position echoes the reading of Origen, Barth, and Guardini we saw in the first and third chapters of this study. Balthasar, however, lends an even more explicitly Christocentric emphasis to the notion that "the whole upper world" is the object of the spiritual senses, and that we perceive God mediately, in God's works. As Balthasar expounds on this notion of Christ as present in the cosmos: "If Christ is the image of all images, it is impossible that he should not affect all the world's images by his presence, arranging them around himself."[343] In other words, according to Balthasar, every image in the world has been affected by the Christ-form, in whom everything is in fact based. For this reason, the human being encounters Christ in all objects throughout the world. Balthasar describes this aspect of the experience of the human being as follows:

> This his sensory environment, in which he lives and with which he is apparently wholly familiar, is through and through determined by the central image and event of Christ, so that, by a thousand open and hidden paths, his wholly real and corporeal sense-experiences bring him into contact with that central point…he stands in the world which has been determined and established by the appearance of God and which is oriented to that appearance. The reality of creation as a whole has become a monstrance of God's real presence.[344]

---

[342] *GL* I, 378.

[343] *GL* I, 419.

[344] *GL* I, 419-420.

In no uncertain terms, then, Balthasar here holds that the human being encounters Christ through all things in the world. The creation bears the presence of Christ, and this fact is made manifest to human beings through his appearing in the world.

Second, Balthasar holds that Christ is perceived in the Church. In fact, he claims that the Church has a special capacity for showing forth Christ's presence: "The Church is the more immediate space in which his form shines. Not only is the Church illuminated by him like the images of the world; rather, suffused by his light, the Church actively radiates him onto the world."[345] In this active function, Balthasar endorses the notion that the Church has a particularly important role in relation to the spiritual senses. As he puts this point, "The Church, as a spiritual and sensory reality, mediates really between the believer's spiritual senses and the form of Christ."[346] The Christ form, then, is shown to the spiritual senses through the Church, and it is a part of the Church's mission to do so to all believers.

Third, Balthasar's reflections on the significance of the Church lead him into a consideration of the liturgy, in particular, as a primary arena within which the spiritual senses are operative. He speaks of the connection between these two things as follows: "Within the space of the Mother-Church, the features and gestures of Christ reach all believing generations as the sensory gestures of the liturgy."[347] In tones reminiscent of his reading of Maximus, Guardini, and Claudel, Balthasar also writes of "the continual offer of Christ's presentation in the Mass, of his grace in the Sacraments, of his effective

[345] *GL* I, 420.

[346] *GL* I, 420.

[347] *GL* I, 422.

action in the preached word."[348] In response to this continually condescending grace, liturgy "enhances" with incense, vestments, and music. In so doing, Balthasar holds that "the Church moulds the κόσμος αἰσθητός in conformity to the κόσμος νοητός of the reality of faith."[349] In one regard this liturgical action represents a "ground up" approach to building the experience of God. However, Balthasar also repeatedly insists that our various human efforts do not compel Christ to appear, and that in his grace Christ nevertheless, of his free volition, makes himself present through the sensory components of liturgy.

As our fourth point about the different arenas within which Christ is made manifest to the spiritual senses, we turn once again to the neighbor. After discussing the image of Christ in the world, Church, and liturgy, Balthasar singles out the neighbor as an image of Christ that is especially relevant to the spiritual senses. As mentioned above, he holds, "There is *one* image, however, which stands wholly by itself and which is like no other image…this is the image of the fellow-man."[350] What we did not address previously, however, is Balthasar's notion that "Our fellow-man as we encounter him is in every case our neighbour, and this neighbour of man's is Christ."[351] In the encounter with the neighbor, then, with whom one is necessarily in relation, one sees Christ. As Balthasar further reflects on this idea, "In his neighbour man encounters his Redeemer with all his bodily senses, in just as concrete, unprecedented, and archetypal a manner as

[348] *GL* I, 418.

[349] *GL* I, 423.

[350] *GL* I, 423.

[351] *GL* I, 423.

the Apostles when they 'found the Messiah' (Jn 1.41)."[352] Given these comments, we can now better appreciate the reasoning behind Balthasar's claim above, that the spiritual senses become active in the encounter with the neighbor. Specifically, one finds theological support for this phenomenon in the notion that it is specifically Christ whom we see in the neighbor.

Of course, the idea that Christ is found in the neighbor is hardly new to Christian theology. What is unusual, however, is Balthasar's notion that the spiritual senses are particularly active in this encounter. Furthermore, what is wholly unprecedented in the history of the spiritual senses is the specific idea that the relationship with the neighbor is one in which the human being finds him or herself in an I-Thou encounter permeated by spiritual-corporeal perception.

Balthasar on the Place of the Spiritual Senses in the Life of Faith

One of the most significant features of Balthasar's reformulation of the spiritual senses involves his repositioning the doctrine such that one receives the spiritual senses in "ordinary" Christian experience, as he calls it, among the general gifts of grace. In locating the spiritual senses in this place within the life of faith, Balthasar resists those models that situate the doctrine in the final stage of the spiritual life (for Origen, the "enoptic" stage; for Bonaventure, "unitive"). According to Balthasar, the spiritual senses are not exclusively offered to the few who have achieved the heights of so-called "mystical" experience. Instead, they are made available to all. In the portion of his theological aesthetics devoted to his constructive position on the topic, Balthasar claims, "If Christ is God's epiphany in the world, then by the very nature of that epiphany,

[352] *GL* I, 423.

provision has been made to insure that this emergence of the divine glory does not occur only before a few chosen ones…but precisely, really and truly, before the whole world."[353] Balthasar thus demonstrates his unequivocal opposition to the view that the spiritual senses are given to a select group of believers.

In this connection, Balthasar discusses the spiritual senses in a section of his theological aesthetics titled "Christian experience."[354] There Balthasar accounts for and resists the distinction that has been drawn in the modern period between the ordinary experience of faith and "mystical" experience. He claims, "The delimitation of a mode of experience which is 'mystical' in the narrower sense over against the experience of 'ordinary' faith…did not happen until modern times."[355] Balthasar holds that previous generations saw greater continuity between so-called "mystical" experience and "normal" Christian experience,[356] and he uses this blurred distinction to read the spiritual senses into a more broadly applicable form of Christian life. The importance of this interpretive decision on Balthasar's part cannot be overstated, as his positioning of the spiritual senses within the realm of ordinary Christian experience integrates them into the very foundations of Christian faith. Whereas the spiritual senses in Origen and Bonaventure

---

[353] *GL* I, 419.

[354] This portion of his theological aesthetics immediately precedes Balthasar's formal treatment of the spiritual senses. See *GL* I, 257-365. For examinations of Balthasar's understanding of experience, see the following: Markus Engelhard, *Gotteserfahrung im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars* (St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1998). Peter Casarella, "Experience as a theological category: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Christian encounter with God's Image," *Communio* 20 (1993): 118-28. Christophe Potworowski, "Christian experience in Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Communio* 20 (1993): 107-17. Raymond Gawronski, *Word and Silence: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Spiritual Encounter between East and West* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995).

[355] *GL* I, 297.

[356] "The late Middle Ages and even Baroque spirituality still think from an undivided centre. What, in a more modern sense, is called 'mystical' experience, at that time was still viewed as a particular unfolding of the general and, so to speak, 'normal' experience of the Christian who is seriously seeking to live faith" (*GL* I, 297).

have often been understood to come into play in the very last stage of the spiritual life, then, Balthasar's interpretation gives them a general theological significance. This issue will be fully explored when we examine the role played by the spiritual senses in Balthasar's theological aesthetics in the next chapter.

These claims are intimately related to another theme we have seen throughout our investigation: namely, Balthasar's lack of interest in the role of practice in patristic and medieval articulations of the spiritual senses. Indeed, as we saw in chapter 2, the only figure mentioned by Balthasar on the question of the role practice might play in cultivating one's spiritual senses is Ignatius of Loyola. Given the above analysis, we can see why Balthasar would gravitate toward Ignatius on this topic. Balthasar holds, "Ignatius of Loyola, who, speaking out of what undoubtedly was a most intimate mystical experience…sets up his 'rules for the discernment of spirits' as criteria for every Christian who is ardently seeking for God's will."[357] In other words, Balthasar finds in Ignatius one who understands the continuity between mystical experience and the experience of "every Christian." According to Balthasar's understanding, Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* are not tools for cultivating "mystical" experience in the narrow sense of the term. Instead, one uses them in ordinary faith to become attuned to God.

In specific regard to our theme, we saw in chapter 2 that the "application of the senses" pertains to a wide range of possibilities within Christian experience. Regarding this feature of Ignatius' thought, Balthasar writes, "We can see that in this 'application of the senses' a fact is being set forth for our acceptance … that this sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) must become all embracing, and extend from the concreteness of the

[357] *GL* I, 297.

simple happenings in the Gospel to a point where the Godhead itself becomes concrete by being experienced."[358] The Christian life involves a form of sensibility that becomes "all embracing." In shying away from strict hierarchies or successions of stages in the spiritual life, Balthasar preserves the possibility of the spiritual senses befalling the individual in a moment of surprising grace such that one could receive them at any point in the life of faith.

I suggest that the portion of Balthasar's text that articulates his constructive position reflects both this Ignatian inheritance and his campaign against achievement-oriented notions of progress in the mystical life. Indeed, some of Balthasar's sharpest comments in his theological aesthetics are directed against the notion that one might improve in the ability to perceive God. He writes, "No achievement, no amount of training, no prescribed attitude can force God to come to us!"[359] Balthasar thus emphasizes the great extent to which God is free in the decision to become present to humanity.

For Balthasar, then, the spiritual senses are reconfigured such that they enable only the self-emptying necessary for the glory of the Lord to be shown in its fullness. He writes, "To be a recipient of revelation means…the act of renunciation which gives God the space in which to become incarnate and to offer himself as he will. Only in this way is the sphere of the 'spiritual senses' given its proper place."[360] The cultivation of the spiritual senses involves simply *making room* for God, not striving toward greater

[358] *GL* I, 376.

[359] *GL* I, 418.

[360] *GL* I, 418.

knowledge and understanding. As Balthasar puts the point, "This purification of subjective attitudes is the way in which he is to encounter the real Lord and God in a fully human manner and with less and less dangers. God will enter precisely by the door which allows him full freedom of action."[361] The role of the human being is only to wait patiently and cultivate "indifference" such that he or she can go wherever God's call might lead.

The Death-and-Resurrection Motif in Balthasar's Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses

One of the most unusual features of Balthasar's rearticulation of the spiritual senses involves the brief claims he makes about receiving the spiritual senses as we undergo with Christ his death and resurrection. He holds that "our senses, together with images and thoughts, must die with Christ and descend to the underworld in order then to rise to the Father in an unspeakable manner which is both sensory and suprasensory."[362] As we noted in chapter 1, this formulation echoes the version of the spiritual senses in Pseudo-Macarius, and it finds a deep resonance with Balthasar's theology of Holy Saturday. However, it is certainly atypical in relation to the spiritual senses tradition as a whole. Balthasar adds to his reflections on this death-and-resurrection pattern, "It is our own senses and, with them, our spirit, our whole person that, dying with Christ, rise unto the Father."[363] He then closes his treatment of the spiritual senses with a quotation from

[361] *GL I*, 418.

[362] *GL* I, 425.

[363] *GL* I, 425.

Job 19: 26: "And after my skin has been thus destroyed, then in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another."[364]

It should be said that this particular aspect of Balthasar's understanding of the spiritual senses constitutes a highly enigmatic rendering of the doctrine. Balthasar does not develop this feature of his model of the spiritual senses beyond the passages quoted above, and those texts that he does provide, as we have seen, are not entirely straightforward as to their meaning. Moreover, this notion that the spiritual senses are received after one is resurrected with Christ would seem to be at odds with the bulk of Balthasar's comments on the spiritual senses, which claim that the spiritual senses can be granted at the very outset of the life of faith. It may be that Balthasar regards both of these features of his version of the doctrine as possibilities such that one does not occur at the exclusion of the other. Ultimately, however, we are left with more questions than answers on this particular facet of Balthasar's doctrine of the spiritual senses.

At the very least, we can certainly say that this element of the doctrine in Balthasar's thought is distinctive, even if not wholly unprecedented. That is, although we do find some similar thoughts expressed in Pseudo-Macarius, as noted in chapter 1, this notion that one receives one's spiritual senses after dying with Christ and being resurrected alongside him constitutes a noteworthy dissimilarity with the bulk of the spiritual senses tradition.

[364] *GL* I, 425. This passage from Job serves as the last word on not only the spiritual senses, but the whole of "The Subjective Evidence," as Balthasar calls the first half of volume 1 of *The Glory of the Lord*.

The Aesthetic Dimension to Spiritual Perception

Although it may at first seem obvious that the spiritual senses would have a distinctly aesthetic dimension, a moment's reflection yields the insight that one need not necessarily render the spiritual senses such that they appreciate beauty. Indeed, just as any number of theories of ordinary sense perception make no particular reference to aesthetics, so too does one find models of the spiritual senses that do not accentuate this aspect of spiritual perception.

Balthasar, however, drawing on Augustine and Bonaventure, does understand the spiritual senses as having this aesthetic dimension. As he succinctly expresses this point, "An aesthetic element must be associated with all spiritual perception as with all spiritual striving."[365] Furthermore, for Balthasar, as for Bonaventure, beauty is a transcendental property of Being, the beauty of Christ is absolute beauty, and the spiritual senses are capable of perceiving this absolute beauty of Christ. A necessary relationship therefore ties the spiritual senses to aesthetic appreciation. This feature of Balthasar's rendering of the doctrine is by no means unique, as it has notable precedents in the history of the spiritual senses. It is, however, a crucial feature of Balthasar's theological aesthetics, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter of this study.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have picked up various threads from Balthasar's reading of the spiritual senses tradition in order to illuminate his own distinctive rendering of the doctrine in his theological aesthetics. A number of noteworthy features of Balthasar's highly creative rearticulation of the spiritual senses have been observed. First, we have

[365] *GL* I, 153.

seen that Balthasar maps the spiritual senses onto a "personalist" anthropology according to which the encounter with the neighbor emerges as a key arena within which the spiritual senses are bestowed upon the human being. Second, we noted that Balthasar thoroughly conjoins spiritual and corporeal perception such that the two occur together in a single unified act. Third, Balthasar emphatically contends that the object of the spiritual senses cannot be the *Deus nudus*, and that it is instead Christ, who is perceived in the world, Church, liturgy, and neighbor. Fourth, whereas the spiritual senses have frequently been interpreted as pertaining to a "mystical" encounter with God reserved for a few, Balthasar repositions the doctrine such that the spiritual senses are granted among the general gifts of grace. Fifth, adopting a peculiar feature of Pseudo-Macarius' version of the spiritual senses, Balthasar holds that one is given one's spiritual senses after suffering with Christ, descending to the underworld, and being resurrected alongside him in glory. Sixth, and most importantly for Balthasar's overall goals in his theological aesthetics, he gives the spiritual senses an explicitly aesthetic dimension such that they are capable of apprehending and appreciating the splendor of the form. It is to this aesthetic capacity of the spiritual senses that we now turn in our examination of the crucial role of the spiritual senses in Balthasar's theological aesthetics.

Chapter 5

Perceiving Splendor:
The Role of the Spiritual Senses in Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics

In chapter 4 I argued for the distinctiveness of Balthasar's rearticulation of the doctrine of the spiritual senses. In this chapter the central claim of this study can finally be advanced: namely, that the spiritual senses function as the anthropological structure through which the form (*Gestalt*) is perceived, and that they therefore offer themselves as a crucial hermeneutical key to his project. At the heart of Balthasar's theological aesthetics stands the task of perceiving (*wahr-nehmen*)[366] the glory of the divine form through which God is revealed to human beings. Although extensive scholarly attention has focused on Balthasar's understanding of revelation, beauty, and form, what has not been sufficiently examined is his model of the perceptual faculties by which the human being is made capable of beholding the form that God reveals. I argue below that Balthasar draws upon the fecund tradition of the spiritual senses in an effort at thematizing the capacity of the human person to perceive divine revelation. Or, to use Balthasarian parlance, it is precisely through the spiritual senses that one performs the all-important task of "seeing the form."

To put this point even more emphatically, however, I argue in this chapter for the *necessity* of a doctrine of the spiritual senses for the fulfillment of Balthasar's goals as he puts them forward in his theological aesthetics. That is, inasmuch as Balthasar calls for the perception of "the form"—which, on Balthasar's ontology of form has both a sensory

[366] Balthasar deliberately hyphenates the word for "perception" in the German original of this theological aesthetics, *Herrlichkeit*, in an effort at exposing its suggestive etymology, making clear that for him perception (*Wahr-nehmen*) is literally "to take to be true," or, to further emphasize the point, it is a taking (*nehmen*) into oneself of the truth (*Wahr*). See Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis' translator's note in *GL* I, Prologue.

and supersensory aspect—some account of the way in which this human perception exceeds a strictly corporeal realm is absolutely necessary for the completion of Balthasar's project. In other words, it is precisely because the form itself is possessed of both sensory and supersensory aspects that the *perception* of that form must be both sensory and supersensory. Balthasar's theological aesthetics thus clamors for a doctrine of the spiritual senses; in fact, if a doctrine of the spiritual senses did not already exist, then for purposes of his theological aesthetics Balthasar would need to invent it.

The chapter will unfold as follows: first, the goals of Balthasar's theological aesthetics will be outlined, and his central categories of beauty, form, and perception will be treated. Second, Balthasar's remarks regarding the spiritual senses will be closely examined, and the significance of the doctrine for his theological aesthetics will be explored.

Balthasar's Goals in his Theological Aesthetics

We moderns have lost sight of the beauty of God's revelation, or so Balthasar contends in *The Glory of the Lord*. Balthasar describes his project as an "attempt to develop a Christian theology in the light of the third transcendental, that is to say: to complement the vision of the true and the good with that of the beautiful."[367] He undertakes this rehabilitation of beauty in response to what he regards as the widespread

[367] *GL* I, Foreword. It is crucial for an accurate assessment of Balthasar's theology as a whole to understand that, for him, a theology that bears witness to the beauty of the divine necessarily serves as a *complement* to theologies that develop the good and the true. That is, Balthasar regards his theological aesthetics as necessarily being accompanied by his extended meditations on "the good" (which he writes as his *Theo-Drama*) and "the true" (which he writes as his *Theo-logik*). In other words, reflection on "the beautiful" is but the first of three stages in theology, and is most certainly not an end in itself. It is for this reason that a theological aesthetics cannot stand alone, for Balthasar. In fact, it is precisely when goodness and truth are not upheld along with beauty that the specter of "mere aestheticism" rears its head, as beauty can thereby be severed from goodness and truth all the more easily.

impoverishment of theology in the modern period. Balthasar holds that modern theology has let itself be shaped too much by rationalism and the exact sciences, and that resuscitating the idea of "the beautiful" (τὸ καλόν, *pulchritudo*) as a theologically significant category constitutes a long-overdue return to celebrating the glory (*Herrlichkeit*) of God's revelation. Balthasar is not unaware of the derision that may be directed toward beauty.[368] However, he insists that such a cursory dismissal comes at a cost: "We can be sure that whoever sneers at [beauty's] name as if she were the ornament of a bourgeois past—whether he admits it or not—can no longer pray and soon will no longer be able to love."[369]

Crucially for Balthasar's rehabilitation of the aesthetic dimension to theology, beauty is not merely ornamental; talk of "the beautiful" does not pertain to surface appearance.[370] Rather, as a transcendental property of Being, beauty permeates all of reality at its very roots (as do the other transcendentals, truth and goodness).[371] In

[368] This disdain for beauty is actually less of an issue in the contemporary theological setting (due in large part to Balthasar's influence), than it was at the publication of the first volume of Balthasar's theological aesthetics in 1961. In an ironic turn of events, however, Balthasar could very well hold the opposite concern in the current setting: namely, that unreflective uses of beauty in its relation to theology give too much over to a worldly aesthetic, and that those projects that describe themselves as theological aesthetics do not in fact retain their properly theological starting point.

[369] *GL* I, 18.

[370] This aspect of Balthasar's thought is thoroughly documented among those who comment on his theology. See, for example, Aidan Nichols, *The Word has been Abroad: A Guide through Balthasar's Aesthetics* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), esp. 1-33.

[371] Stephan van Erp claims that Balthasar is unconcerned with the debatable question of whether "the beautiful" in fact remains a transcendental throughout the history of Western thought. "Instead of arguing for interpreting beauty as a transcendental, he merely states that the church fathers as well the mediaeval scholastics granted beauty the status of a transcendental." Stephan van Erp, *The Art of Theology: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics and the Foundations of Faith* (Leuven, Paris, Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), 138. It may be true that Balthasar does not himself argue for the status of beauty as a transcendental, but he does refer to other scholarly works that do in fact make just such an argument. Specifically, Balthasar is deeply influenced by the scholarship of Karl Peter, who outlines Bonaventure's argument for beauty as a transcendental. Karl Peter, Die Lehre von der Schönheit nach Bonaventura (dissertation, Basel, 1961); Reference given by Balthasar in *GL* II, 260.

witnessing true beauty (τό καλοκαγαθόν), or, better, "the true-and-beautiful," one comes into contact with the shimmering depths of Being itself as it shines forth to the human person.

Stephan van Erp has remarked that, for all Balthasar's talk of "the beautiful," he never does actually offer his reader a theory of beauty.[372] Although this assessment may be accurate in a technical sense, it is nevertheless significant that Balthasar does dwell for some time on how his use of the term "beauty" should—and should not—be understood in his theological aesthetics. Most particularly, Balthasar wants to make unambiguously clear that, although there is certainly a relationship between worldly beauty and divine glory,[373] the beauty of the world must never be taken to be identical with the glory of God. Instead, Balthasar maintains that an analogous relation obtains between worldly beauty and divine glory. That is, although there may indeed be some similarity between the beauty that is manifested in the world and the absolute glory of God, the dissimilarity between these two far outweighs any notion of sameness. Balthasar's project, then, indeed finds aesthetics at its center, but it should be noted that his concern is with aesthetics of a certain kind. He writes of his particular enterprise as follows: "We mean a theology which does not primarily work with the extra-theological categories of a worldly philosophical aesthetics (above all poetry), but which develops its theory of beauty from the data of revelation itself with genuinely theological methods."[374] For all

---

[372] Stephan van Erp, *The Art of Theology: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics and the Foundations of Faith* (Leuven, Paris, Dudley, MA: Peeters, 2004), 138.

[373] As Balthasar writes in one of his summaries of his work, "The 'glorious' corresponds on the theological plane to what the transcendental 'beautiful' is on the philosophical plane." Hans Urs von Balthasar, "In Retrospect," trans. Kenneth Batinovich, N.S.M., in John Riches, ed., *The Analogy of Beauty* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986), 213. Adapted from *Rechenschaft 1965* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965).

[374] *GL* I, 117.

his celebration of the aesthetic dimension to theology, then, it must be said that Balthasar is exceedingly clear in distinguishing his project from an "aesthetic theology." One key implication of this idea is that the standard for beauty is not found in any worldly aesthetic, but rather always finds its grounding in God. Importantly, then, all talk of "beauty" for Balthasar technically pertains to that which is of the world, whereas the aesthetic dimension to the divine is most precisely referred to in Balthasarian idiom as "glory."[375] More to the point, however, one must understand that in the very moment that Balthasar exalts beauty and its relation to the divine, he tirelessly reminds his reader to guard against imposing an "inner-worldly aesthetic" onto God's self revelation.

Regarding Balthasar's use of "the beautiful," then, we have so far seen his understanding of both its transcendental status and the difference between earthly beauty and divine glory. As a third aspect of Balthasar's notion of the beautiful, we should say that beauty is inextricably conjoined with the material "medium" for its expression.[376] As he puts this point, "The original of beauty lies not in a disembodied spirit which looks about for a field of expression and, finding one, adjusts it to its own purposes as one would set up a typewriter and begin typing, afterwards to abandon it."[377] The notion of beauty against which Balthasar writes would regard the union of the beautiful with the material form as merely incidental. By contrast, for Balthasar beauty is fundamentally conjoined with the concrete medium through which it is shown.

---

[375] It should be said that Balthasar does seem to let this distinction (which he so rigorously maintains at certain junctures in his work) be elided at many points in his theological aesthetics. Importantly, however, this elision occurs only in Balthasar's use of the term "beauty" to speak of God, and never in the opposite possibility that he use the term "glory" to speak of things in the world.

[376] *GL* I, 411.

[377] *GL* I, 20.

Form (Gestalt)

Balthasar's notion that beauty is always concretely manifested leads to the idea that beauty must take a form (*Gestalt*). That is, if the beautiful does not "begin," so to speak, as an incorporeal spirit that takes form upon itself in a second movement of sorts, then the beautiful must be conjoined with the material medium of its expression. Balthasar puts this point succinctly when he writes, "Only through form can the lightning-bolt of eternal beauty flash."[378] Significantly, too, the materiality of the form does not in any way compromise or diminish the beauty that shines through it. To Balthasar, the form is understood not as a mere material signifier for a spiritual content or meaning that lies beyond it. Rather, form carries "within itself," as it were, the content that it communicates. He writes,

> Visible form not only 'points' to an invisible, unfathomable mystery; form is the apparition of this mystery, and reveals it while, naturally, at the same time protecting and veiling it. Both natural and artistic form have an exterior which appears and an interior depth, both of which, however, are not separable in the form itself. The content (*Gehalt*) does not lie behind the form (*Gestalt*), but within it.[379]

Form, then, could be said to have two distinct, yet ultimately inseparable components in Balthasar's aesthetics. There is the materially manifested form, which is visible and concrete, and then there is the content of the form, which although "invisible," shines forth as mystery and depth through the material form. "We are confronted simultaneously with both the figure and that which shines forth from the figure, making it into a worthy, a loveworthy (*liebenswürdig*) thing."[380] Balthasar uses the Thomistic categories of *species* (or *forma*) and *lumen* (or *splendor*) to treat of these

---

[378] *GL* I, 32.

[379] *GL* I, 151. Translation amended.

[380] *GL* I, 20.

two aspects of the manifestation of beauty.[381] Whereas *species* refers in its strictest sense to the actual material form itself, *lumen* indicates the glory of Being shown through it.

However, if we think of *species* and *lumen* as separable from each other, then, Balthasar claims, "We still remain within a parallelism of ostensive sign and signified interior light. This dualism can be abolished only by introducing as well the thought-forms and categories of the beautiful. The beautiful is above all a form, and the light does not fall on this form from above and from outside, rather it breaks forth from the form's interior. *Species* and *lumen* in beauty are one."[382] Balthasar, then, holds a deeply non-dualist understanding of form. As he further expounds on this unity of the form:

> The appearance of the form, as revelation of the depths, is an indissoluble union of two things. It is the real presence of the depths, of the whole of reality, *and* it is a real pointing beyond itself to these depths….both aspects are inseparable from one another, and together they constitute the fundamental configuration of Being. We 'behold' the form; but, if we really behold it, it is not as a detached form, rather in its unity with the depths that make their appearance in it. We see form as the splendour, as the glory of Being. We are 'enraptured' by our contemplation of these depths and are 'transported' to them. But, so long as we are dealing with the beautiful, this never happens in such a way that we leave the (horizontal) form behind us in order to plunge (vertically) into the naked depths.[383]

Balthasar is clear, then, that the depths shown by the *Gestalt* cannot be separated from the very form through which they are revealed. Rather, the luminosity of Being remains "tied," as it were, to the particular, concrete form through which it shines.

The reader should here observe the instructive parallel between, on the one hand, Balthasar's notion of form as a fundamental unity of *species* and *lumen*, and, on the other hand, Balthasar's notion of the human being as one who is indivisibly conjoined in body and soul as a "unity-in-duality." Indeed, just as Balthasar maintains that one cannot think

---

[381] *GL* I, 117-118.

[382] *GL* I, 151.

[383] *GL* I, 118-119.

of "soul" alone on his anthropology, but rather one must always regard soul as "soul-of-one's-body," so too might one say that Balthasar's theory of aesthetics does not allow *lumen* to be detached from its material form. Rather, one must always regard *lumen* as "lumen-of-a-species" (or, "splendor-of-a-form"). The glory of God, for Balthasar, is always revealed through its material medium of expression.[384]

Importantly, too, just as one cannot go "beyond" the form in order to reach a more real, non-material reality in Balthasar's theology, neither can one get "behind" the form in the sense of breaking it down (*auflösen*) into its antecedent components. That is, the form cannot be adequately understood via an analysis of the ingredients that collectively constitute it, but rather the form must be perceived in its entirety. Here we see Balthasar's emphasis on the objectivity of *Gestalt*, as form is for him a whole that presents itself to us *as it is*. Balthasar writes, "If form is broken down into subdivisions and auxiliary parts for the sake of explanation, this is unfortunately a sign that the true form has not been perceived as such at all."[385] Balthasar's notion of *Gestalt* here bears an ostensible resemblance to the use of the term in "Gestalt psychology" inasmuch as "the whole" could be said to exceed the sum of its "parts." Balthasar, of course, takes his

[384] A key implication of this aspect of Balthasar's understanding of form is that the profundity of the form's revelatory capacity is by no means diminished because of its materiality. Beauty is always fundamentally joined with the medium through which that beauty is expressed, yet such fusion does not in any sense compromise beauty. To the contrary, it is *necessary* for the expression of beauty. Bolstering this claim of the revelatory capacities of form, we see Balthasar draw on Nicholas of Cusa's idea of "contracted" Being to insist that the entirety of being is shown through the form: "Here, where it is always the totality of being that presents itself in various degrees of clarity in the individual things that exist, the concept of *form* is appropriate. This means a totality of parts and elements, grasped as such, existing and defined as such, which for its existence requires not only a 'surrounding world' but ultimately being as a whole: in this need it is (as Nicholas of Cusa says) a 'contracted' representation of the 'absolute', in so far as it transcends its parts as members and controls them in its own confined territory" (*GL* IV, 29). This notion of the form as a "contraction" of absolute being further communicates Balthasar's idea that the form is a *presence* of absolute Being, and not a mere signifier that gestures to something beyond itself.

[385] *GL* I, 26.

notion of form substantially further than would Gestalt psychologists, as there is an intimate, ontological link between form and beauty, and thus between form and the other transcendentals, goodness and truth. "Whoever insists that he can neither see it nor read it [the form], or whoever cannot accept it, but rather seeks to 'break it up' critically into supposedly prior components, that person falls into the void and, what is worse, he falls into what is opposed to the true and the good."[386] The human being on Balthasar's model does not set the terms for his or her encounter with the form.

The ultimate form, or "super-form" (*Übergestalt*), to use Balthasar's terminology, is that of Christ. Building from what has just been said, we can see how Balthasar's theory of form lends him resources with which to treat the reality of God's presence in the world. In Christ, we do not see a mere pointer to the divine; Christ is not a sign. Instead, in the Christ-form, we encounter the divine *presence* in the very midst of creaturely reality.[387] The person of Jesus is the medium through which God is made known. Knowledge of God, then, is inextricably linked to this concrete form.

Much more could be said about Balthasar's notion of form.[388] For our immediate purposes, however, the most significant points to observe are, first, the fact that the form

---

[386] *GL* I, 20.

[387] *GL* I, 432.

[388] Michael Waldstein's comment on Balthasar's use of *Gestalt* (and its English translations) gestures toward the inexhaustibility of this key Balthasarian category: "It is very difficult to translate the German '*Gestalt*'. The editors of *The Glory of the Lord* have chosen 'form', which is probably the best option. Still, there are difficulties of which the reader must be aware. '*Gestalt*' can refer to the shape (either literally or in an extended sense) of a thing. This meaning is similar to that of 'form' (especially as developed in Aristotle's doctrine of *morphe* and in the Scholastic doctrine of *forma*). However, '*Gestalt*' can also refer to entire beings. 'The *Gestalt* of Jesus' can refer to 'the Gestalt which is Jesus'. This is the sense of '*Gestalt*' most frequently intended by von Balthasar. For example, *Seeing the Form*, the first volume of *The Glory of the Lord*, discusses seeing the *Gestalt* of Jesus as a concrete historical *Gestalt* of figure, rather than as a mere formal aspect or principle. And so some translators prefer the term 'figure' which allows this concreteness more than does 'form'. The main disadvantage of 'figure', however, is that its roots in the philosophical tradition on which von Balthasar's concept of *Gestalt* depends (Aristotle,

is the necessary means through which the glory of God and the depths of reality are made present to the human being, and, second, the manner in which the visible, sensory aspects of *species* and the invisible, supersensory aspects of *lumen* inextricably cohere as a unity-in-duality in Balthasar's aesthetic theory.

Perception (Wahr-nehmung)

If the glory of God is mediated to the human being through the form, then perceiving this form stands out as an absolutely essential task for Balthasar's theological aesthetics. Balthasar himself indicates that perception is central to his project: "A 'theological aesthetics'...has as its object primarily the perception of the divine self-manifestation."[389] And yet, this notion of perception is distinct from the status granted the category in much modern philosophy. Balthasar here evinces his resistance to a Kantian division of reality into a phenomenal realm that can be perceived and a noumenal realm that is wholly inaccessible to the senses.[390] Instead, Balthasar has in mind a more robust idea of what it means to "perceive." He writes, "One must possess a spiritual eye capable of perceiving (*wahrnehmen*) the forms of existence with awe. (What a word: 'Perception' [Wahr-nehmung]! And philosophy has twisted it to mean precisely the

---

Goethe) are not as deep. There is a second source of confusion in the translation of '*Gestalt*', as 'form'. In Goethe, *Gestalt* refers primarily to the outward, visible parts of a living being as these are united by an inner principle of unity. In Aristotle and Scholastic philosophy, on the other hand, form (especially substantial form) refers primarily to the inner principle of actuality which gives being and unity to material parts." Michael Waldstein, "An Introduction to von Balthasar's *The Glory of the Lord*," *Communio* 14 (1987), 12-33, 19.

[389] *GL* I, Foreword.

[390] For an extended engagement with Kant's thought, see *GL* V, 481-513.

opposite of what it says: 'the seeing of what is true'!)"[391] Balthasar echoes this reframing of perception later in *The Glory of the Lord*: "The all-encompassing act that contains within itself the hearing and the believing is a *perception* (*Wahrnehmung*), in the strong sense of a 'taking to oneself' (*nehmen*) of something true (*Wahres*) which is offering itself."[392] Balthasar, then, elevates the category of perception from its frequent position as a second-class epistemological faculty, and he places it instead at the very heart of the human being's engagement with reality.

Crucially, too, according to Balthasar's anthropology of "unity-in-duality," the human being is indivisibly united in body and soul, and therefore he or she is unavoidably a "percipient being." That is, Balthasar (in conversation with his modern interlocutors, as shown in chapter 3) develops an understanding of the human person as a "corporeal-psychic totality."[393] On this view, the human being is not "truly" a soul or a mind who happens to have a body that is ultimately extraneous; nor is he or she in essence a body who happens to have a "mind" as a mere byproduct of neurological processes.[394] Instead, according to Balthasar, the human being is fundamentally united in body and soul, and one consequence of this view is that the activities of thinking and perceiving (or, having "awareness") cannot be sharply divided into separate functions. Quoting Barth with approval, Balthasar writes, "It is 'certainly not only my body, but also my soul which has awareness, and it is certainly not only my soul but also my body

[391] *GL* I, 24.

[392] *GL* I, 120.

[393] *GL* I, 385.

[394] It should be said on this point that, although Barth is concerned with defending his notion of the human being against both "Platonic" and "materialist" extremes, Balthasar himself evinces interest in correcting only those anthropologies that err in an overly Platonic direction. See *GL* I, 380-389.

which thinks.'"[395] In other words, for Balthasar, the unity of the human means that neither thought nor perception can occur through only one of these aspects of the human person. There is thus no realm of "pure thought" on Balthasar's model. There no aspect of the human being—not even the soul in its innermost thought—that is not directed outward toward the body and, more generally, the world. For Balthasar, then, all thought involves a corporeal dimension, and, importantly for appreciating the argument Balthasar makes for valuing perception highly as an epistemological faculty, the human person in his or her most fundamental nature is percipient.

Balthasar hints at the specific sort of perception that his project will require in his theological aesthetics. He holds, "For this particular perception of truth, of course, a 'new light' is expressly required which illumines this particular form, a light which at the same time breaks forth from within the form itself. In this way, the 'new light' will at the same time make seeing the form possible and *be itself seen along with the form*."[396] Based on the foregoing analysis of Balthasar's understanding of *Gestalt*, we can see that this "new light" of which he speaks corresponds to the invisible splendor of the form; I will next demonstrate that it is precisely through the spiritual senses that this new light is seen.

The Spiritual Senses in Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics

Given the terms that Balthasar has set for his theological aesthetics, the significance of the spiritual senses should now be coming into view. We have seen that

[395] *GL* I, 386. *CD* III/2: 400.

[396] *GL* I, 120 (emphasis added).

the form, on Balthasar's model, consists of both sensory and supersensory dimensions, both visible and "invisible" aspects, and we have seen that the form must be perceived by the human being. Balthasar attempts to rehabilitate perception for theology, but mere sensory perception alone will not suffice for the task Balthasar has given himself. Balthasar holds that "eyes are needed that are able to perceive the spiritual form."[397] In order for the supersensory "splendor" of the form to be perceived, then, a notion of perception that exceeds the corporeal realm must be developed. It is precisely at this juncture that Balthasar makes his appeal to the doctrine of the spiritual senses. He writes, "We will do this by taking our lead from the concept of the 'spiritual senses'…these constitute the final word on the specificity of the subjective evidence with regard to the Christian object."[398] Balthasar describes the need for this model of the perceptual faculties of the human being as follows: "In Christianity God appears to man right in the midst of worldly reality. The centre of this act of encounter must, therefore, lie where the profane human senses, making possible the act of faith, become 'spiritual'."[399] Human perception, then, requires a transformation if the subjective conditions for the receipt of revelation are to be fulfilled. As Balthasar memorably captures this transition, "Our senses, together with images and thoughts, must…rise unto the Father in an unspeakable manner that is both sensory and suprasensory."[400] The spiritual senses, then, lie at the very center of the encounter between the human being and God in Balthasar's thought.

---

[397] *GL* I, 24.

[398] *GL* I, 365.

[399] *GL* I, 365.

[400] *GL* I, 425.

Importantly, however, just as was true for the relationship between the visible and invisible aspects of the form, so too in the relationship between the corporeal and spiritual senses does Balthasar insist on a fundamental unity between these two dimensions of human perception. That is, on Balthasar's anthropology of "corporeal-psychic totality," the spiritual senses are not disjuncted from the bodily senses. Instead, according to Balthasar's rearticulation of the doctrine, spiritual and corporeal sensation occur in one unified act. Balthasar succinctly puts this point as follows: "It is with both body and soul that the living human being experiences the world and, consequently, also God."[401] For Balthasar, then, spiritual and corporeal perception occur as one unified act of the whole human being, a move that sharply breaks with the initial articulation of the doctrine of the spiritual senses found in Origen, for whom the spiritual and bodily senses are deeply disjuncted from one another.

Conclusion

At the outset of this chapter I claimed that it is through the spiritual senses that one performs the epistemologically central task of seeing the form. We are now sufficiently familiar with the terms used in Balthasar's theological aesthetics for a more precise formulation of this idea: I have argued here that, whereas the corporeal senses perceive the material form, it is the spiritual senses that behold the splendor and luminosity of Being as it is revealed in the supersensory aspect of the form. Of course, it should immediately be said that Balthasar's theory of aesthetic form forbids a separation of the material from the invisible splendor that shines forth from it, and it should also be said that Balthasar's anthropology forbids a separation of the corporeal from the spiritual.

[401] *GL* I, 406.

In truth, then, both aspects of form are perceived in simultaneity by both the corporeal and the spiritual perceptual faculties in the human being. This formulation, however, is of service to us inasmuch as it allows us to put a finer point on the exact role of the spiritual senses in Balthasar's theological aesthetics.

Furthermore, this formulation enables us to see the *necessity* of a doctrine of the spiritual senses for the fulfillment of Balthasar's goals as he puts them forward in his theological aesthetics. Balthasar calls for perception of the form, and that form consists of both sensory and "supersensory" aspects (i.e., a material component and a "spiritual" dimension). Therefore, some account of the way in which this human perception exceeds the material realm is absolutely essential to the success of Balthasar's project. In other words, it is precisely because the form itself is possessed of both sensory and supersensory aspects that the *perception* of that form must be both sensory and supersensory. Balthasar's theological aesthetics thus requires a doctrine of the spiritual senses; without it, one cannot give a proper account of the reception of revelation in the human person. With this understanding of the crucial role of the spiritual senses now established, we explore in the next chapter the far-reaching implications of this claim for Balthasar's fundamental theology and his model of nature and grace.

Chapter 6

The Spiritual Senses in Balthasar's Fundamental Theology

In the last chapter, I argued for the necessity of the spiritual senses for the fulfillment of Balthasar's goals as he outlines them in his theological aesthetics. The position outlined there can be summarized succinctly as follows: if both the sensory and supersensory aspects of the *Gestalt* are to be perceived by the human being, then the human subject must be possessed of not only corporeal perceptual faculties, but also "spiritual senses." According to this interpretation, the spiritual senses function as the anthropological correlate to the "splendor" of the *Gestalt*, and they therefore emerge as a pivotal feature of Balthasar's understanding of the human person. What remains relatively unexplored, however, are the implications of this reading of the spiritual senses for Balthasar's fundamental theology. This chapter will demonstrate that the particular rendering Balthasar gives the doctrine of the spiritual senses importantly shapes his understanding of the fundamental theological task. Specifically, as the point of contact (*Anknüpfungspunkt*) between God and the human being, the spiritual senses function as the decisive arena in which faith is established. That is, it is precisely through the ability of the human being to perceive spiritually that faith finds its proper grounding.

A key question, however, arises here: namely, to what extent can the spiritual senses be regarded as an "ability" of the human being in the first place? Exactly how is it that one becomes able to perceive spiritually? Is it a natural capability inherent to human nature, or is it a supernatural capacity granted only by grace? If it is a natural capacity of the human being, then it would seem that the *gratuity* of grace has been compromised,

and that the power to perceive God has not been freely given by God *as grace*. If it is a supernatural grace, conversely, then one wonders how Balthasar avoids an extrinsicism by which the ability to perceive God comes from completely *outside of* the human being. Although Balthasar is not typically credited with conceptual clarity in regard to questions of nature and grace, in this chapter I will argue that these aspects of Balthasar's account of spiritual sensation rest on much more rigorously developed theoretical ground than is often thought to be the case. Specifically, Balthasar's appeal to "relationality" in his anthropology importantly shifts the terms of discussion for such issues, and in so doing sheds new light on a set of recurrent problems in Catholic thought.

The State of Scholarship on Balthasar's Fundamental Theology

Erhard Kunz offers a treatment of Balthasar's fundamental theology that can be taken in many respects as the standard reading on the topic.[402] Kunz observes that fundamental theology, for Balthasar, begins with the absolute beauty of the form of revelation (*Offenbarungsgestalt*), which cannot be deduced or anticipated by the human being, but rather must simply be perceived through the "light of faith" (*Glaubenslicht*).[403] Kunz thus notes the importance of the *object* of theology in Balthasar's thought, and he further emphasizes Balthasar's rejection of the notion that transcendental structures of the human being can be used to verify revelation.[404] Instead, the *Gestalt* brings its *own* inner

[402] Erhard Kunz, "Glaubwürdigkeit und Glaube (analysis fidei)," in *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie*, vol. 4, *Traktat Theologische Erkenntnislehre. Schlussteil Reflexion auf Fundamentaltheologie*, eds. W. Kern, H. J. Pottmeyer, and M. Seckler (Freiburg: Herder, 1988), 414-450. All translations my own.

[403] Kunz, "Glaubwürdigkeit und Glaube (analysis fidei)," 430.

[404] Kunz, "Glaubwürdigkeit und Glaube (analysis fidei)," 430.

necessity to the human being from without. The act of faith, then, is at its very core a response on the part of the human being to what he or she is shown in the *Gestalt*.

Kunz notes, however, that a key question then arises: "How does the miracle of the absolute love of God appear in the world, and how can it be verified as well-grounded (*begründet*)?"[405] Indeed, if there are no transcendental structures on the part of the human being that are operative in the act of faith, then how, exactly, can the *Gestalt* be recognized? In an attempt to respond to this crucial question, Kunz writes that, for Balthasar, "to see the *Gestalt* as such and to understand the depths communicated therein, a corresponding inner power of perception is required."[406] It is in response to this key claim that I will make two sets of comments below.

The Spiritual Senses as the Point of Contact between the Human Being and God

First, taking Kunz' analysis together with the argument made in the last chapter, we can see that the "inner power of perception" of which Kunz speaks can be formulated more precisely through Balthasar's use of the spiritual senses. That is, it is through the spiritual senses in particular that the depths of the form are perceived and the act of faith is properly grounded, thus demonstrating the clear significance of the doctrine for Balthasar's fundamental theology. I draw a distinction here between "inner perception" as Kunz describes it and "the spiritual senses," which I take to be a more exact term for this feature of Balthasar's thought. The difference between the two may seem subtle, but it is important to refer explicitly to the doctrine of the spiritual senses itself on this point

[405] Kunz, "Glaubwürdigkeit und Glaube (analysis fidei)," 430.

[406] Kunz, "Glaubwürdigkeit und Glaube (analysis fidei)," 431.

if one is to guarantee that the *perceptual* character of the encounter with the *Gestalt* is preserved. Talk of "inner perception" alone—without reference to the history out of which the idea arises—too easily collapses into a metaphorical interpretation that elides the distinction between "perceiving" and "understanding." In other words, using one's "inner power of perception" to see the depths of the *Gestalt* can easily be misinterpreted as simply *comprehending* the significance of the form of revelation.

The spiritual senses tradition, by contrast, makes clear that the idea of "spiritual sensation" should be understood as bearing an "analogical"—and not metaphorical—relationship to physical sensation. As observed in the introduction to this study, Poulain's treatment of the doctrine (on which Rahner heavily relies, and Balthasar adopts) explicitly notes that the language of spiritual sensation should not be understood as "mere metaphor," and that instead a strong resemblance obtains between the spiritual senses and their corporeal counterparts. What this means is that when Balthasar discusses perceiving the depths of the form, he is speaking of something super-sensual being *shown* to the human being in spite of its super-sensuality. Something is presented to the person that springs forth from the interior of the *Gestalt*. It exceeds the material realm, and yet the human being discerns its presence in much the same way that he or she perceives physical objects. Perceiving this "splendor" may ultimately *result* in understanding (i.e., one may be shown something that then causes one to believe), but that perception itself should be regarded as distinct from the understanding.

Moreover, to speak of an inner power of perception without immediately mentioning the *outer* power of perception that accompanies it in Balthasar's thought undermines the extent to which Balthasar conjoins the corporeal and spiritual senses in

his anthropology. In other words, for Balthasar, inner, spiritual perception never occurs without its outer, corporeal counterpart. It is certainly true, then, that one requires this inner perception to perceive the *Gestalt*, as Kunz claims, but one must immediately make clear that this inner perception is inevitably conjoined with the bodily senses. Kunz mentions the concrete aspects of the *Gestalt*, but he does so more to root the form in *history* (which is also a major concern of Balthasar's) than to emphasize that it is shown to the physical senses.

I emphasize this aspect of Balthasar's thought in order to accentuate a key aspect of his fundamental theology: namely, that the *Anknüpfungspunkt* between the human being and God involves a sensorium that perceives both the physical and the spiritual—*and even the spiritual is perceived*, as strange as it might seem. In the encounter with the *Gestalt*, then, something *more* than the physical is revealed to the senses, and yet it is nevertheless shown to the human being (1) through the physical world (2) as something to be apprehended by the spiritual senses. Such an emphasis makes the crucial point that the senses are the main avenue through which grace operates in the human being in Balthasar's thought, and, in fact, much more is shown through the senses (when they are regarded as both corporeal and spiritual) than would be possible without a doctrine of spiritual perception.

The Spiritual Senses, Nature, and Grace

The second issue to raise in response to Kunz' analysis of Balthasar's thought has to do with his claim that the "inner perception" corresponding to the depths of the Gestalt is a "power" (*Kraft*) in the human being. To put the idea in this way, of course, begs not

only the question of how this capacity differs from the transcendental structures Kunz has just told us Balthasar rejects; one also wonders whether this ability to perceive is a *natural* capability of the human being, or if it is instead a *supernatural* capacity granted by grace. Interpreting Balthasar on matters having to do with nature and grace is a notoriously difficult matter. The following passage from the first volume of *The Glory of the Lord* gives some indication of the challenge inherent to understanding his thought as it impacts the spiritual senses:

> The love which is infused in man by the Holy Spirit present within him bestows on man the sensorium with which to perceive God, bestows also the taste for God and, so to speak, an understanding for God's own taste…the new sensorium is infused into the natural sensorium and yet is not one with it: for all that it is bestowed upon man *as his own* (and increasingly so as he is the more unselved), it is equally his only as a gift.[407]

In light of this passage, should the ability to sense God be regarded as a "power" of the human being? Balthasar makes two claims that seem to be mutually exclusive: on the one hand, the sensorium is the human being's own. And yet, on the other hand, it also is his "only as a gift." It would appear that Balthasar revels in the paradoxical nature of his position without actually aiding his reader's understanding of the issues that are in play.

Giving an adequate response to this important question necessitates bringing together the insights from the third and fourth chapters of this study. Specifically, in chapter 3, we saw Balthasar's use of the "personalism" of Karl Barth and Gustav Siewerth, according to whom the human being is fundamentally constituted in the encounter with the *Thou*. That is, according to the anthropology Balthasar develops in conversation with Barth and Siewerth, the human being cannot be regarded as an individual, discrete entity that exists *prior to* relationship. Instead, the human being is always already in a concrete, corporeal encounter with an other.

[407] *GL* I, 249.

As we saw in chapter 4, too, Balthasar uses this anthropology to advance a highly creative rearticulation of the spiritual senses for his theological aesthetics. That is, Balthasar gives the spiritual senses a profoundly "personalist" dimension in his understanding that love for the other functions as the decisive arena in which spiritual sensibility is granted.

Another way to put this "personalist" dimension to Balthasar's anthropology is to say that his understanding of the human being is always at every point a "meta-anthropology."[408] That is, the human being only "finds" him or herself "outside" of him or herself. Put even more forcefully, as we saw in chapter 3, there simply *is* no human being prior to encounter with another. The single human being, as such, does not exist. The import of this aspect to Balthasar's thought cannot be overstated. What it means is that any question about "epistemological structures" of the human being cannot be treated in isolation from relation to the other. The most fundamental "unit," if we can put the point in such a manner, is not a "monad," but rather a "dyad"—not one, but always two in relation. As a result, asking questions about how the "knowing apparatus" of the human being inevitably involves asking questions about the nature of relationship with the *Thou*.

A critic of Balthasar's approach might be concerned at this juncture that his appeal to relationality serves only to blur issues that demand conceptual clarity. Indeed, if the Balthasarian response to any epistemological question is always, "We cannot ask such a question because it presupposes a single human being who exists outside of

[408] Balthasar uses this term in an interview with Angelo Scola: *Test Everything: Hold Fast to What Is Good* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 24-25. See also Martin Bieler, "Meta-anthropology and Christology: On the Philosophy of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 20 (Spring 1993): 129-46.

relationship," then one might suspect that a sleight of hand is occurring and important issues are being dodged. The key question then becomes: in exactly what way does Balthasar's understanding of interpersonal encounter actually lend one resources with which to understand better the structures of human knowing?

It is precisely with this question in mind that D. C. Schindler has recently undertaken a penetrating analysis of Balthasar's thought.[409] Schindler not only holds that Balthasar's anthropology is more philosophically rigorous than is often thought to be the case; he also claims that Balthasar's *oeuvre* lends one valuable resources with which to transcend the "identitarian" conception of truth bequeathed to contemporary persons by modern philosophy. The "identitarian" notion that Schindler resists regards truth as an *identity* between the knower and the known, the subject and the object, and in so doing obliterates the difference between subject and object.[410] Balthasar, by contrast, articulates an epistemology that preserves difference in the truth relation, according to Schindler's analysis.

The best starting point, perhaps, is Balthasar's well known account of the mother's smile. He uses this example (which he adopts from Siewerth) at a number of different points in his work, but his most detailed discussion of the topic occurs in his essay, "Movement toward God" (originally published in 1967). There he writes:

> The little child awakens to self-consciousness in his being-called by the love of his mother. The spirit's being raised up (*Emporkunft des Geistes*) to alert self-possession is an act of simple fullness, which can be broken up into diverse aspects and phases only *in abstractio*. It is not in the least possible to account for this event on the basis of the formal "structure" of the spirit: sensible "impressions" that bring into play an ordering, categorial constitution, which in its turn would be a function of a dynamic capacity to

[409] D. C. Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth: A Philosophical Investigation* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004).

[410] Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 1-2.

> affirm "Being in general" and to objectify the determinate and finite existing object present to consciousness.[411]

Balthasar here clearly positions his own account of self-awareness in opposition to a "transcendental" approach that concerns itself with the formal structure of the spirit and its categorial constitution. Such an approach, Balthasar avers, is inadequate in the attempt to account for the relationship between the mother and child. Schindler focuses on Balthasar's term, *Emporkunft des Geistes*, to offer the following summary of Balthasar's understanding of the birth of consciousness that occurs in this relationship: "The self comes *to* itself only by coming *out* of itself or, more concretely, only by going *to another*; indeed, by being raised up *by* the other, *to* the other."[412] The smile of the mother, then, functions as the stimulus that brings the child to self-awareness, and, crucially, such self-awareness cannot be achieved by remaining "within" the self, so to speak. Instead, consciousness itself is founded on an ecstatic movement *beyond* the self.

This particular aspect of Balthasar's thought has far-reaching implications, according to Schindler's reading: "The 'objectivity' of the object is not in the first place 'constituted', 'merely' theoretically through merely intellectual rays of intentionality, radiating outward from a static center of subjectivity; instead, the objectivity of the object is *given* to the subject in the subject's going out of itself, or, more accurately, being called outside of itself, to meet the object."[413] A "transcendental" approach to knowledge would lead to a model of truth in which *only* the subject is active, imposing its schema onto a passive object. Balthasar makes no secret of his resistance to this approach to

---

[411] Hans Urs von Balthasar, "Movement toward God," in *Explorations in Theology*, vol. 3: *Spiritus Creator* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 15. Translation in Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 112.

[412] Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 112.

[413] Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 112.

epistemology, but the alternative he gives is not often well understood. Numerous commentators on Balthasar's texts have erroneously presumed that he simply *inverts* the relationship described above such that the object is regarded as the active part of the relationship, and the subject is understood as purely passive. However, in the example of the mother's smile, one finds that subjectivity arises through a *combination* of activity and passivity (or "spontaneity" and "receptivity," to use Schindler's preferred terms). Schindler summarizes this aspect of Balthasar's thought as follows:

> Consciousness is constituted both from above (receptively) and from below (spontaneously). If it came *merely* from below, it would be a *closed* circle, a finished product, and therefore incapable of receiving. But if it were incapable of receiving, it would not be consciousness, insofar as consciousness is essentially *intentional*, that is, ordered to the other as other. At the same time, consciousness constituted simply from above would lack the *active* receptivity that characterizes genuine subjectivity and connects it with a free self. It is what distinguishes the receptivity of consciousness from that of putty.[414]

Consciousness, then, is given to the subject from *beyond* the subject. As such, it is a grace that befalls the subject from beyond its sphere of control. One cannot come to consciousness without this gift, yet one also cannot produce the gift. And yet, when this gift is received, it is integrated into the self as the subject transcends itself in responding to its call. The gift does not remain "outside," so to speak, but rather it becomes a part of the human being. In the next section of this chapter we will explore the implications of this understanding for Balthasar's doctrine of the spiritual senses.

Conclusion: The Spiritual Senses as Truly a Grace, Truly One's Own

With the above analysis of Balthasar's thought in place, we are finally in a position to understand better his seemingly paradoxical remarks concerning the sensorium with which the human being senses God. Specifically, I submit that we now

[414] Schindler, *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth*, 118.

have a way of understanding how this sensorium can be given as a real grace, yet integrated into the self in a non-extrinsic manner. That is, if we can say that the relationship between the human being and God bears some analogy with the relationship between the mother and child—despite the ever-greater differences between the two relationships in question—then we can regard Balthasar's position on this key topic as more coherent than may seem to be the case at first glance.

The sensorium that senses God is given as a gift, as Balthasar says explicitly, but what should also be understood is that the sensorium is given to a being who is always *in relation*. If one is in relation in the way Balthasar describes, then the very idea of something being "one's own" takes on an importantly different meaning. The spiritual senses are not one's own *at the cost of* their being somebody else's. One does not actively, spontaneously *use* them when one has ceased passively, receptively *receiving* them. As we saw above, spontaneity and receptivity are not competitive or mutually exclusive. Instead, the reception of the gift and the use of the gift are two parts of an integrated whole.

Spiritual perception, then, is not a power that we possess, if by "possess" we mean that the subject has ceased receiving them and is in such complete control of them that he or she can "cut them off," so to speak, from their source. The ability to perceive God remains in constant relationship with the God who grants such a capacity. It never stops being given as grace. However, if by "possess," we mean that the human being him or herself is *active* in the use of such an ability, then we can certainly say that the spiritual senses become the human being's *own* in that they are used in an active, spontaneous response to the grace that is granted to him or her. The human being is not putty. He or

she actively uses that which has been given. In a sense, this gift comes from outside the human being. However, on Balthasar's meta-anthropology, the human being has to go outside of him or herself in the first place if this gift is going to be met. In the self-transcending, ecstatic act of relation with God, then, the human being is raised up to be made capable of spiritually perceiving God. This brief account of a key dynamic between nature and grace thus offers us a way of conceiving this capacity without sacrificing understanding by blithe appeal to paradox. Importantly, too, it shows us that Balthasar's use of "relationality" does not need to obscure conceptual clarity, and in fact it points to the insights into Balthasar's thought that can be gleaned by this key aspect of his anthropology.

Conclusion

In this study I have advanced two basic claims about Hans Urs von Balthasar's engagement with the so-called "doctrine of the spiritual senses." In the first place, I have argued that Balthasar articulates a version of the spiritual senses that is importantly distinct from its patristic and scholastic instantiations. In the second place, I have claimed that the doctrine of the spiritual senses plays an indispensable epistemological role in Balthasar's theological aesthetics.

Regarding the first point, we have seen that Balthasar frequently reads the spiritual senses tradition in a manner that anticipates his own distinctive rendering of the doctrine. In chapters 1 and 2, I noted that Balthasar pushes interpretation of figures in the tradition toward the most positive regard for the body and corporeal sensation that he can credibly attribute to that exponent. We also observed Balthasar's attempts to locate Christ and the "upper world" as the object of the spiritual senses in his reading of Origen, Pseudo-Macarius, Augustine, and Bonaventure. Additionally, we noted Balthasar's lack of interest in those versions of the doctrine that advocate an "achievement-oriented" asceticism, and we saw a correlative emphasis on Ignatian notions of cultivating "indifference" as the only practice relevant to the spiritual senses. This focus, I argued, indicates Balthasar's resistance to readings of the doctrine that place it in the final stage of the life of faith (the "enoptic" for Origen, the "unitive" for Bonaventure). Instead Balthasar advocates, I claimed, a "second-stage" reading of the spiritual senses whereby they are granted prior to the so-called "mystical" experience of God. Whereas Balthasar made a compelling case for this point in his interpretation of Bonaventure, he did not do so in his reading of Origen, thereby displaying the version of Balthasar that patristic

scholars have come to expect—as one who imports his own theological concerns into the texts he examines.

Ultimately, however, I have suggested that Balthasar's primary interest lies not in repristinating the doctrine of the spiritual senses from its patristic and scholastic formulations. Instead, I argued in chapter 3 that Balthasar turns to Barth, Guardini, Siewerth, and Claudel in an effort at reworking the idea of spiritual perception in a modern idiom. Balthasar most clearly breaks from previous articulations of the spiritual senses when, drawing on the notion of the human being as a being-in-encounter, he integrates this interpersonal dimension into his doctrine of the spiritual senses. Additionally, we saw that all four modern figures articulate an anthropology of "unity-in-duality" that resists separating "spiritual" perception from its corporeal counterpart. All of these modern figures attempt to ground Christian life in the particularity of the senses. Although each of them reaches his conclusion by a different method, I argued that their collective efforts at unifying body and soul in the human being exerts a profound influence on Balthasar's own rearticulation of the doctrine.

With our understanding of influences on Balthasar on this theme in place, we were able to appreciate Balthasar's own distinctive rendering of the doctrine in his theological aesthetics. In chapter 4 I indicated a number of noteworthy features of Balthasar's highly-creative reformulation. First, we noted that Balthasar maps the spiritual senses onto a "personalist" anthropology according to which the encounter with the neighbor emerges as a key arena within which the spiritual senses are bestowed upon the human person. Second, we noted that Balthasar thoroughly conjoins spiritual and corporeal perception such that the two occur together in a single unified act. Spiritual

perception does not occur without its corporeal counterpart. Third, we saw that Balthasar emphatically contends that the object of the spiritual senses cannot be the "transcendent God," as he puts it. Instead, the spiritual senses have as their object the "form" of Christ, who is perceived in four distinct arenas: the world, the Church, liturgy, and the neighbor. Fourth, whereas the spiritual senses have frequently been interpreted as pertaining to a "mystical" encounter with God reserved for a few, we observed that Balthasar repositions the doctrine such that the spiritual senses are granted among the general gifts of grace. Fifth, adopting the death-and-resurrection pattern of Pseudo-Macarius' version of the spiritual senses, we noted Balthasar's idea that one is given one's spiritual senses after suffering with Christ in his passion, death, and resurrection. Sixth, and most importantly for Balthasar's overall goals in his theological aesthetics, we saw that he gives the spiritual senses an explicitly aesthetic dimension such that they are capable of apprehending and appreciating the splendor of the form.

In regard to the second basic claim advanced in this study, I argued in chapter 5 that it is through the spiritual senses that one performs the epistemologically central task of "seeing the form." More precisely, I argued that, whereas the corporeal senses perceive the material dimension of the form, it is the spiritual senses that behold the splendor of Christ as revealed in the supersensory aspect of the form. Of course, as we have seen, Balthasar's theory of aesthetic form forbids a separation of the material from the invisible splendor that shines forth from it. Additionally, as we noted in chapter 4, Balthasar's anthropology disallows a separation of the corporeal from the spiritual in general. Both aspects of form, then, are actually perceived in simultaneity by the corporeal and the spiritual perceptual faculties in the human being. This formulation,

however, is of service to us inasmuch as it allows us to describe more precisely the function of the spiritual senses in Balthasar's theological aesthetics.

Equipped with this precise formulation of the role of the spiritual senses, we were able to observe the necessity of the doctrine for Balthasar's project. Balthasar calls for perception of the form, and that form consists of both sensory and "supersensory" aspects. Therefore, some account of the way in which this human perception exceeds the material realm is absolutely essential to the success of Balthasar's project. In other words, it is precisely because the form itself is possessed of both sensory and supersensory aspects that the *perception* of that form must be both sensory and supersensory. Balthasar's theological aesthetics thus clamors for a doctrine of the spiritual senses. Without it, in fact, one cannot account for the reception of revelation in Balthasar's thought.

Noting this central role of the spiritual senses, however, did not resolve all ambiguities in Balthasar's use of the doctrine. Most pressing was the question of nature and grace. In chapter 6 we explored the extent to which the spiritual senses can be considered to be a power natural to the human being, and the degree to which they must be regarded as a grace from God. I argued that for Balthasar spiritual perception is not a power that we possess, if by "possess" one means that the subject has ceased receiving them and is in such complete control of them that he or she can "cut them off," so to speak, from their source. The ability to perceive God remains in constant relationship with the God who grants such a capacity. It never stops being given as grace. However, if by "possess," one means that the human being him or herself is active in the use of such an ability, then we can certainly say that the spiritual senses become the human

being's own. They are used in an active, spontaneous response to the grace that is granted to him or her. In a sense, this gift comes from outside the human being. However, on Balthasar's "personalist" anthropology, the human being is always and already in relation, perpetually going outside of him or herself at the most fundamental level of his or her being. It is in this self-transcending act of relation, then, that the human being is made capable of spiritually perceiving God, and this ability is given as his or her own.

A number of implications follow from the preceding analysis. First, and most obviously, Balthasar's account of the spiritual senses indicates that he does in fact focus on the features of the human that allow for knowledge of God more than is typically thought to be the case among commentators on his texts. Although one might stop short of terming the spiritual senses as "transcendental structures of cognition," they can rightly be regarded as the necessary anthropological correlate to the form of divine revelation, and they demonstrate a depth of anthropological considerations on Balthasar's part that some scholars may find surprising.

Second, a recurrent question in regard to the interpretation of Balthasar's theological aesthetics involves the exact manner in which his use of the language of sensation should be understood. One is often tempted to think of Balthasar's dizzying array of sensory terms as simply figurative in character. It is here that reference to the spiritual senses proves to be particularly helpful in advancing understandings of Balthasar's thought. Specifically, scholarship on the spiritual senses makes a point of claiming that the language of sensation is used in this tradition in a sense that is more

than merely metaphorical, as was noted in the introduction to this study. Augustin Poulain and Karl Rahner hold that descriptions of seeing, hearing, and touching God in this tradition are not "mere metaphors," but that these uses of sensory language bear a "strong resemblance" to corporeal sensation. Balthasar, then, as one who positions himself in this tradition, could also be said to use such language in a non-metaphorical sense. That is, when Balthasar writes of "seeing" the Christ-form or the light of Being that shines forth from the depths of reality, reference to the spiritual senses tradition cautions one from dismissing such language as merely figurative speech. Instead, in using sensory terms Balthasar does in fact describe an actual *perception* of the form of Christ as manifested in the world, Church, liturgy, and neighbor.

Third, what should startle us about Balthasar's use of the spiritual senses is that he is so committed to the unity of the human being that he claims that spiritual perception simply cannot occur without its corporeal counterpart. What this means is that there is no "inner vision" of God by the "eye of the mind." Instead, all perception of the divine occurs in the very midst of the world in which we live. We only perceive the splendor that is rooted in material, concrete form.

Finally, through Balthasar's appropriation of the spiritual senses tradition we observe a key feature of his understanding of how grace functions within the human being. Specifically, we see that the effects of grace are not confined to a strictly noetic realm. Grace does not elevate only the mind or the soul. Instead, when grace arrives, the *whole* human being is changed. Sensibility itself is altered, and suddenly one "is made capable of perceiving the forms of existence with awe."[415]

[415] *GL* I, 24.

Bibliography

Balthasar's Trilogy

Balthasar, Hans Urs von. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics*. 7 vols. Translated by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis, Andrew Louth, Brian McNeil, Oliver Davies, Francis McDonagh, John Saward, Martin Simon, and Rowan Williams. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982-1991. [*Herrlichkeit: Eine Theologische Ästhetik*. 3 vols. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1961-1969.]

Volume I: *Seeing the Form*. [I. *Schau der Gestalt*.]
Volume II: *Studies in Theological Style: Clerical Styles*. [II, 1. *Fächer der Stile: I. Klerikale Stile*.]
Volume III: *Studies in Theological Style: Lay Styles*. [II, 2. *Fächer der Stile: II. Laikale Stile*.]
Volume IV: *The Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity*. [III/1, 1. *Im Raum der Metaphysik: I. Altertum*.]
Volume V: *The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*. [III/1, 2. *Im Raum der Metaphysik: II. Neuzeit*.]
Volume VI: *Theology: The Old Covenant*. [III/2, 1. *Alter Bund*.]
Volume VII: *Theology: The New Covenant*. [III/2, 2. *Neuer Bund*.]

_____. *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*. 5 vols. Translated by Graham Harrison. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988-1998. [*Theodramatik*. 4 vols. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1973-1983.]

Volume I: *Prolegomena*. [I. *Prolegomena*.]
Volume II: *Dramatis Personae: Man in God*. [II, 1. *Die Personen des Spiels: Der Mensch in Gott*.]
Volume III: *Dramatis Personae: Persons in Christ*. [II, 2. *Die Personen des Spiels: Die Personen in Christus*.]
Volume IV: *The Action*. [III. *Die Handlung*.]
Volume V: *The Final Act*. [IV. *Das Endspiel*.]

_____. *Theo-Logic: Theological Logical Theory*. 3 vols. Translated by Adrian J. Walker. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000-2005. [*Theologik*. 3 vols. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985-1987.]

Volume I: *The Truth of the World*. [I. *Wahrheit der Welt*. Originally published as *Wahrheit*. Einsiedeln: Verlaganstalt Benziger, 1947.]
Volume II: *The Truth of God*. [II. *Wahrheit Gottes*.]
Volume III: *The Spirit of Truth*. [III. *Der Geist der Wahrheit*.]

_____. *Epilogue*. Translated by Edward T. Oakes. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004. [*Epilog*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1987.]

Other Works by Balthasar

_____. "Analogie und Dialektik." *Divus Thomas* 22 (1944): 171-216.

_____. *Apokalypse der Deustchen Seele: Studien zu einer Lehre von Letzten Haltungen*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag. 1937-1939.

_____. "Auch die Sünde: Zum Erosproblem bei Charles Morgan und Paul Claudel." *Stimmen der Zeit* 69 (1939): 222-237.

_____. *Aurelius Augustinus, das Antlitz der Kirche*. Einsiedeln-Köln: Benzinger, 1942.

_____. *Aurelius Augustinus, Psychologie und Mystik*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1960.

_____. *Aurelius Augustinus, über die Psalmen*. Leipzig: Hegner, 1936.

_____. *Bernanos: An Ecclesial Existence*. Translated by Erasmo Leiva-Merikakis. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996. [*Gelebte Kirche: Bernanos*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1988.]

_____. *Christian Meditation*. Translated by Mary Skerry. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989. [*Christlich Meditieren*. Freiburg: Herder, 1984.]

_____. *Cosmic Liturgy: The Universe According to Maximus the Confessor*. Translated by Brian E. Daley. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2003. [*Kosmische Liturgie: Hohe und Krise des Griechischen Weltbilds*. Freiburg: Herder, 1941; 2nd ed. *Kosmische Liturgie: Das Weltbild Maximus' des Bekenners*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1961.]

_____. *Explorations in Theology*. 4 vols. Translated by Brian McNeil, C.R.V. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989-1995. [*Skizzen zur Theologie*. 5 vols. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1960-1986.]

_____. "The Fathers, Scholastics, and Ourselves." *Communio: International Catholic Review* 24 (Summer 1997): 347-396. ["Patristik, Scholastik, und wir." *Theologie der Zeit* 3 (1939): 65-104.]

_____. "Geist und Feuer." *Herder Korrespondenz* 30 (1976): 75.

_____. *Die Gottesfrage der Heutigen Menschen*. Wien: Herold, 1956.

_____. "Die Hiera des Evagrius." *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 63 (1939): 86-106, 181-206.

_____. "Karl Barth und der Katholizismus." *Theologie der Zeit* 3 (1939): 126-132.

_____. "Kunst und Religion." *Volkswohl* 18 (1927): 354-365.

_____. *Love Alone: The Way of Revelation*. Translated by A. Dru. London: Sheed and Ward, 1968. [*Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1985.]

_____. "The Metaphysics and Mystical Theology of Evagrius," *Monastic Studies* 3 (1965): 183-195. ["Metaphysik und Mystik des Evagrius Pontikus," *Zeitschrift für Askese und Mystik* (1939): 31-47.]

_____. *My Work: In Retrospect*. Translated by Kelly Hamilton et al. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993. [*Mein Werk: Durchblicke*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1990.]

_____. "Le Mysterion d'Origène." In *Recherches de science religieuse* 26 (1936): 511-562 and 27 (1937): 38-64.

_____. *Mysterium Paschale: The Mystery of Easter*. Translated by Aidan Nichols, O.P. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1990. [*Mysterium Salutis Grundriss Heilsgeschichticher Dogmatik.* Bd. 1 (Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1965].

_____. "On the Tasks of Catholic Philosophy in Our Time." *Communio: International Catholic Review* 20 (Spring 1993): 147-187. [*Von den Aufgaben der Katholischen Philosophie in der Zeit*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1998.]

_____. *Origen, Spirit and Fire: A Thematic Anthology of His Writings*. Translated by Robert J. Daley. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1984. [*Origenes, Geist und Feuer: Ein Aufbau aus seinen Werken*. Salzburg: Otto Müller, 1938.]

_____. *Parole et Mystère Chez Origène*. Paris: Èditions du Cerf, 1957.

_____. "Persönlichkeit und Form." *Gloria Dei* 7 (1952): 1-15.

_____. *Prayer*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986. [*Das Betrachtende Gebet*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1959.]

_____. *Presence and Thought: An Essay on the Religious Philosophy of Gregory of Nyssa*. Translated by Mark Sebanc. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995. [*Présence et Pensée: Essai sur la Philosophie Religieuse de Grégorie de Nysse*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1942. "Présence et Pensée. La philosophie religieuse de Grégoire de Nysse." *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 29 (1939): 513-549.]

_____. "In Retrospect," in *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edited by John Riches. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986, 194-221. [*Rechenschaft 1965*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965].

_____. "A Résumé of My Thought." In *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*. Edited by David L. Schindler. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991, 1-6. [*Hans Urs von Balthasar: Gestalt und Werk*. Edited by Karl Lehmann and Walter Kasper. Köln: Communio, 1989.]

_____. *Romano Guardini: Reform aus dem Ursprung*. München: Kösel-Verlag, 1970.

_____. "Spirit and Fire: An Interview with Hans Urs von Balthasar." Translated by Nicholas Healy. *Communio* 32 (Fall 2005): 573-593. ["Geist und Feuer: Ein Gespräch mit Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Herder Korrespondenz* 30 (1976): 72-82.]

_____. *Test Everything: Hold Fast to What Is Good*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989. [*Prüfet Alles: Das Gute Behaltet*. Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 1986.]

_____. *A Theological Anthropology*. Translated by William Glen-Doepel. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1967. [*Das Ganze Im Fragment: Aspekte Der Geschichtstheologie*. Einsiedeln: Benziger, 1963.]

_____. *Theologie der drei Tage*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1990.

_____. "Theology and Aesthetic." Translated by Andrée Emery. *Communio* 8 (Spring 1981): 62-71.

_____. *The Theology of Henri de Lubac: An Overview*. Translated by J. Fessio, S.J., M. Waldstein, and S. Clements. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991.

_____. *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation*. Translated by Edward Oakes. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992. [*Karl Barth: Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1951.]

_____. "Der Unbekannte jenseits des Wortes." In *Interpretation der Welt: Romano Guardini zum 80. Geburtstag*. Edited by H. Kuhn. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 1965, 638-645.

_____. *Der Versiegelte Quelle: Auslegund des Hohen Liedes*. Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1939.

_____. "Vom Schauvermögen der Christen." In *Skizzen zur Theologie V: Homo creatus est*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1986, 52-60.

Other Primary Sources

Augustine of Hippo. *City of God*. Translated by John Healey. London: J. M. Dent and Co., 1967. [*De Civitate Dei*. In Bernardus Dombart and Alphonsus Kalb, eds. *Corpus Christanorum Series Latina*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1955. Vols. 47-48.]

_____. *Confessions*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991. [*Confessiones*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-1855. Vol. 32, 659-867.]

_____. *Expositions of the Psalms.* Translated by Maria Boulding, O.S.B. Edited by John E. Rotelle, O.S.A. WSA III/15-20. New York: New City Press, 2000-2004. [*Enarrationes in Psalmos*. In D. Eligius Dekkers, O.S.B., and Johannes Fraipont, eds. *Corpus Christanorum Series Latina*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1956. Vols. 38-40.]

_____. *Literal Meaning of Genesis*. Translated by John Hammond Taylor. *Ancient Christian Writers*. Vols. 41-42. New York: Newman Press, 1982. [*De Genesi ad Litteram*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-1855. Vol. 34, 173-484.]

_____. *Of True Religion*. Translated by Louis Mink. Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1959. [*De Vera Religione*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-1855. Vol. 34, 121-172.]

_____. *On Free Choice of the Will*. Translated by Thomas Williams. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993. [*De Libero Arbitrio*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-1855. Vol. 32, 1221-1310.]

_____. *Soliloquies*, and *Immortality of the Soul*. Translated by Gerard Watson. Warminster, England: Aris and Philips, 1990. [*Soliloquia*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-1855. Vol. 32, 868-903. *De Immortalitate Animae*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Latina.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1844-1855. Vol. 32, 1021-1034.]

_____. *Tractates on the Gospel of John*. 5 vols. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988-1995. [*In Iohannis Euangelium Tractatus*. In D. Rabouts Willems, O.S.B., ed. *Corpus Christanorum Series Latina*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1954. Vol. 36.]

Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics.* 13 vols. Edited by G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1936-1969. [*Kirchliche Dogmatik*. 13 vols. Munich: Kaiser, 1932; Zurich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1938-1965].

_____. *Epistle to the Romans*. 6th ed. Translated by Edwyn C. Hoskyns. London: Oxford University Press, 1933. [*Der Römerbrief*. Bern: G. A. Bäschlin, 1919.]

Bonaventure. *Breviloquium*. In *The Works of Bonaventure*. Translated by José de Vinck. Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1960. Vol. 2. [*Breviloquium*. In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 5, 199-291.]

_____. *Christ, the One Teacher of All*. In *What Manner of Man? Sermons on Christ*. Translated by Zachary Hayes. Chicago: Franciscan Herald, 1974, 21-55. [*Christus Unus Omnium Magister*. In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 5, 567-574.]

_____. *Collations on the Six Days*. In *The Works of Bonaventure*. Translated by José de Vinck. Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1970. Vol. 5. [*Collationes in Hexaemeron*. In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 5, 327-454.]

_____. *Commentaria in quatuor libros Sententiarum magistri Petri Lombardi*. In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quarracchi, 1882-1902. Vols. 1-4.

_____. *Commentarius in Librum Sapientiae*. In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 6, 107-235.

_____. *On Retracing the Arts to Theology*. In *The Works of Bonaventure*. Translated by José de Vinck. Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1966. Vol. 3, 13-32. [*De Reductione Artium ad Theologiam*. In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 5, 317-325.]

_____. *The Sunday Sermons of Bonaventure*. In *The Works of Bonaventure*. Translated by Timothy J. Johnson. Saint Bonaventure, New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2008. Vol. 12. [*Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 9.]

_____. *Soliloquy on the Four Spiritual Exercises*. In *The Works of Bonaventure*. Translated by José de Vinck. Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1966. Vol. 3, 35-129. [*Soliloquium de Quator Mentabilis Exercitiis*. In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 8, 28-67.]

_____. *The Soul's Journey into God*. In *Bonaventure*. Classics of Western Spirituality. Translated by Ewert Cousins. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1978, 51-116. [*Itinerarium Mentis in Deum*. In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 5, 293-316.]

_____. *The Tree of Life*. In *Bonaventure*. Classics of Western Spirituality. Translated by Ewert Cousins. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1978, 117-175. [In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 8, 68-87.]

_____. *The Triple Way*. In *Mystical Opuscula*. Translated by José de Vinck. Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1960. Vol. 1, 63-94. [*De Triplica Via*. In In *Opera Omnia*. Rome: Quaracchi, 1882-1902. Vol. 8, 3-27.]

Claudel, Paul. *Antlitz in Glorie und Vermischte Gedichte*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965.

_____. "Der Architekt." Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. *Hochland* 51 (1959): 217-223.

_____. *Art Poétique: Connaissance du temps, Traité de la co-naissance au monde et de soi-mème, Développement de l'église*. Societé DV Mercve, 1907.

_____. *Corona Benignitatis Anni Dei*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965.

_____. *Fünf große Oden*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Freiburg: Herder, 1939.

_____. *Gedichte*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Basel: Sammlung Klosterberg, 1940.

_____. *Gesammelte Werk*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Einsiedeln-Zürich-Köln: Benziger, 1963.

_____. *Der Gnadenkranz*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957.

_____. *Heiligenblätter*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965.

_____. *Der Kreuzweg*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Luzern: Josef Stocker, 1940.

_____. *Mariä Verkündigung*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Luzern: Josef Stocker, 1946.

_____. *Die Messe des Verbannten*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1981.

_____. "Paul Verlaine." Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. *Hochland* 51 (1959): 251-253.

_____. *Der seidene Schuh*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1939.

_____. "La Sensation du Divin." In *Présence et Prophétie*. Fribourg en Suisse : Éditions de la librairie de l'Université, 1942, 49-126.

_____. *Singspiel für drei Stimmen*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1965.

_____. *Strahlende Gesichter*. Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957.

_____. "Verse der Verbannung." Translated by Hans Urs von Balthasar. *Rundschau* 40 (1940): 406-413.

Diadochus of Photice. *One Hundred Practical Texts of Perception and Spiritual Discernment*. English and Greek Text. Translated by Janet Elaine Rutherford. Belfast: Institute of Byzantine Studies, 2000.

Evagrius of Pontus. *Chapters on Prayer*. In *Praktikos and Chapters on Prayer*. Translated by J. Bamberger. Kalamazoo, Mich: Cistercian Publications, 1981, 183-209. [*Ejusdem de Oratione*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 79, 1165-1200.]

_____. *On Thoughts*. In *Praktikos and Chapters on Prayer*. Translated by J. Bamberger. Kalamazoo, Mich: Cistercian Publications, 1981, 183-209. [*De Malignis Cogitationibus*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 79, 1200-1233.]

Gregory of Nyssa. *Commentary on The Song of Songs*. Translated by Casimir McCambley. Brookline, Mass.: Holy Cross, 1987. [*In Canticum Canticorum*. In H. Langerbeck, ed. *Gregorii Nysseni Opera*. Vol. 6. Leiden: Brill, 1986.]

_____. *On the Soul and Resurrection*. Translated by Catharine P. Roth. Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2002. [*De Anima et Resurrectione*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 46, 12-160.]

Guardini, Romano. *Die Sinne und die Religiöse Erkenntnis*. Würzburg: Werkbund Verlag, 1950.

_____. *The Spirit of the Liturgy*. Translated by Ada Lane. New York: Crossroad, 1998. [*Vom Geist der Liturgie*. Freiburg: Herder, 1921.]

Ignatius of Loyola. *The Spiritual Exercises and Selected Works*. Translated by George E. Ganss. *The Classics of Western Spirituality*. New York: Paulist Press, 1991. [*Ejercicios espirituales*. Candido de Dalmases, S.J., ed. Santander: Sal Terrae, 1987.]

Maximus the Confessor. *Ambiguorum Liber sive de variis difficilibus locis SS. Dionysii Areopatitae et Gregorii Theologi*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 91, 1031-1417.

_____. *Capita de Charitate*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 90, 959-1082.

_____. *Mystagogia*, In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 91, 658-721.

_____. *Quaestiones ad Thalassium de Scriptura Sacra*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 90, 244-785.

Origen. *Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Translation by Philip Schaff. *ANF* 9. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1959. [*Commentaria in Evangelium Joannis*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 14, 21-830.]

_____. *Contra Celsum*. Translated by Henry Chadwick. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1965. [*Contra Celsum*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 11, 641-1630.]

_____. *Homiliae in Ezechiel*. In W. A. Baehrens, ed. *Origenes Werke*. *Die Griechischen Chrislichen Schriftsteller*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1925. Vol. 8, 319-454.

_____. *Homilies on Jeremiah*. In *Homilies on Jeremiah, Homily on 1 Kings 28*. Translated by J. C. Smith. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998. [*In Jeremiam Homilia*. In W. A. Baehrens, ed. *Origenes Werke*. *Die Griechischen Chrislichen Schriftsteller*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1925. Vol. 8, 290-317.]

_____. *Homilies on Luke, Fragments on Luke*. Translated by J. T. Lienhard. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1996. [*In Lucam Homilia*. In W. A. Baehrens, ed. *Origenes Werke*. *Die Griechischen Chrislichen Schriftsteller*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1930. Vol. 9.]

_____. *In Psalmos*. In Jean-Baptiste Pitra, ed. *Analecta sacra spicilegio solesmensi parata*. Parisiis: A. Jouby et Roger, 1883. Vol. 3, 1-364.

_____. *On First Principles*. Translated by G. W. Butterworth. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1973. [*De Principiis*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 11, 115-414.]

_____. *Prayer, Exhortation to Martyrdom*. Translated by John Joseph O'Meara. Westminster: Newman Press, 1954. [*De Oratio*. In W. A. Baehrens, ed. *Origenes Werke*. *Die Griechischen Chrislichen Schriftsteller*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1899. Vol. 2, 295-403. *Exhortatio ad Martyrium*. In Jacques-Paul Migne. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 11, 561-636.]

_____. *The Song of Songs: Commentary and Homilies*. Translated by W. P. Lawson. Westminster: Newman Press, 1957. [*In Canticum Canticorum*. In W. A. Baehrens, ed. *Origenes Werke*. *Die Griechischen Chrislichen Schriftsteller*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1925. Vol. 8, 26-289.]

Plotinus. *Enneads*. 7 vols. Greek and English text. Translated by Arthur Hilary Armstrong. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966-1988.

Poulain, Augustin. *The Graces of Interior Prayer.* Translated by Leonora L. Yorke Smith. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., Ltd., 1912. [*Des Grâces D'Oraison.* Paris: V. Retaux, 1901.]

Pseudo-Macarius. *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*. Translated by George Maloney, S.J. New York: Paulist Press, 1992. [*Homilae Spirituales*. In Jacques-Paul Migne, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857-1866. Vol. 34, 450-820.]

Rahner, Karl. "The Doctrine of the 'Spiritual Senses' in the Middle Ages." In Karl Rahner. *Theological Investigations.* Vol. 16. *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology.* Translated by David Morland. New York: Crossroad, 1979, 104-134. [This article was compiled by Karl Neufeld from two separate essays by Rahner: "La doctrine des 'sens spirituels' au moyen-âge, en particulier chez S. Bonaventure." *Revue d'ascetique et de mystique* 14 (1933): 263-299. "Der Begriff der Ecstasis bei Bonaventura." *Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik* 9 (1934): 1-19.]

_____. "The 'Spiritual Senses' According to Origen." In Karl Rahner. *Theological Investigations.* Vol. 16. *Experience of the Spirit: Source of Theology*. Translated by David Morland. New York: Crossroad, 1979, 81-103. ["Le début d'une doctrine des cinq sens spirituals chez Origène." *Revue Ascétique et Mystique* 13 (1932): 113-145.]

Scaramelli, Giovanni Battista. *A Handbook of Mystical Theology: Being an Abridgment of* Il direttorio mistico. Translated by D. H. S. Nicholson. London: John M. Watkins, 1913. [*Il direttorio mistico, indirizzato a' direttori di quelle anime, che iddio conduce per la via della contemplazione*. Venezia: S. Occhi, 1754.]

Siewerth, Gustav. *Die Apriorität der Erkenntnis als Einheitsgrund der philosophischen Systematik des Thomas von Aquin*. Kallmunz-Regensburg: M. Lassleben, 1938.

_____. *Die Metaphysik der Erkenntnis nach Thomas von Aquin*. München-Berlin: R. Oldenbourg, 1933.

_____. *Metaphysik der Kindheit*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1957.

_____. *Das Schicksal der Metaphysik von Thomas zu Heidegger*. Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1959.

_____. *Die Sinne und das Wort*. Düsseldorf: Schwann Verlag, 1956.

_____. *Wort und Bild: Eine Ontologische Interpretation*. Düsseldorf: Schwann Verlag, 1952.

Select Secondary Sources

Albus, Michael. *Die Wahrheit ist Liebe: Zur Unterscheidung des Christlichen bei Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Freiburg im Breisgau, 1976.

Andres, F. *Die Stufen der Contemplatio in Bonaventure Itinerarium*. Münster, 1921.

Beauchemin, F. *Le savior au service de l'amour*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1935.

Bieler, Martin. "Meta-anthropology and Christology: On the Philosophy of Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Communio: International Catholic Review* 20 (Spring 1993): 129-146.

Bissen, J. M. *Les degrés de la contemplation*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1928-1930.

Block, Edward. "Hans Urs von Balthasar as Reader of *Le Soulier de Satin*." *Claudel Studies* 24 (1997): 35-44.

Bonnefoy, Jean-François. *Le Saint-Esprit et ses dons selon Saint Bonaventure*. Paris : J. Vrin, 1929.

Bonnici, John S. *Person to Person: Friendship and Love in the Life and Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. New York: Alba House, 1999.

Buckley, J. J. "Balthasar's Use of the Theology of Thomas Aquinas." *The Thomist* 57 (1995): 517-545.

Carton, Raoul. *L'experience mystique de l'illumination interieure chez Robert Bacon*. Paris: J. Vrin, 1924.

Casarella, Peter. "Experience as a Theological Category: Hans Urs von Balthasar on the Christian Encounter with God's Image." *Communio* 20 (Spring 1993): 118-128.

Chapp, Larry. *The God Who Speaks: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theology of Revelation*. San Francisco: Catholic Scholars Press, 1996.

Chia, Roland. *Revelation and Theology: The Knowledge of God in Balthasar and Barth.* Bern: Peter Lang, 1999.

_____. "Theological Aesthetics or Aesthetic Theology? Some Reflections on the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 49 (1996): 75-95.

Cirelli, Anthony Tyrus Gaines. Form and Freedom: Patristic Retrieval and the Liberating Encounter Between God and Man in the Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar. Doctoral dissertation, Catholic University of America, 2007.

Coakley, Sarah. "The Resurrection and the 'Spiritual Senses': On Wittgenstein, Epistemology, and the Risen Christ." In Sarah Coakley. *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy, and Gender*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, 130-152.

Corder, Stephen. *The Spiritual Senses in the Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*. Berkeley, Calif.: Jesuit School of Theology, 2003.

Corset, P. "Premières rencontres de la théologie catholique avec l'oeuvre de Barth (1922-1932): III Réception de la théologie de Barth," In *Karl Barth: Genèse et réception de sa théologie*. Genève: Labor et Fides, 1987, 151-190.

Daigler, Matthew A. "Heidegger and von Balthasar: A Lovers' Quarrel over Beauty and Divinity." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 69 (1995): 375-394.

Daley, Brian, S.J. "Balthasar's Reading of the Church Fathers." In *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 187-206.

Daniélou, Jean. *Platonism et Théologie Mystique: Essai sur la doctrine spirituelle de Saint Grégoire de Nysse*. Paris: Aubier, 1944.

Dickens, W. T. *Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics: A Model for Post-Critical Biblical Interpretation*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003.

Dillon, John M. "Aisthêsis Noêtê: A Doctrine of the Spiritual Senses in Origen and in Plotinus." In *Hellenica et Judaica*. Edited by A. Caquot, M. Hadas-Lebel, and J. Riaud. Leuven-Paris: Éditions Peeters, 1986, 443-455.

Disse, Jörg-P. "Liebe und Erkenntnis: Zur Geistesmetaphysik Hans Urs von Balthasars." *Müncher Theologische Zeitschrift* 54, no. 3 (1999): 215-227.

_____. *Metaphysik der Singularität: Eine Hinführung am Leitfaden der Philosophie Hans Urs von Balthasars*. Philosophische Theologie; Bd. 7. Wien, 1996.

Dobbins, Dunstan John. *Franciscan Mysticism*. New York: J. F. Wagner, 1927.

Dupré, Louis. "The Glory of the Lord: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetic." *Communio* 16 (Fall 1989): 384-412.

Endean, Philip, S.J. "The Ignatian Prayer of the Senses." *Heythrop Journal* 31 (1990): 391-418.

Engelhard, Markus. *Gotteserfahrung im Werk Hans Urs von Balthasars*. St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 1998.

Erp, Stephan van. *The Art of Theology: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics and the Foundations of Faith*. Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2004.

Fields, Stephen. "Balthasar and Rahner on the Spiritual Senses." *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 224-241.

Foley, Grover. "The Catholic Critics of Karl Barth, in Outline and Analysis." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 14 (1961): 136-155.

Franco, Francesco. *La passione dell'amore: L'ermeneutica cristiana di Balthasar e Origene*. Bologna: EDB Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 2005.

Gagliardi, Achille. *Commentarii seu Explanationes in Exercitia spiritualia Sancti Patris Ignatii de Loyola*. Edited by Constantinus van Aken. Bruges: Descle'e de Brouwer, 1882.

Gawronski, Raymond. "The Beauty of the Cross: The Theological Aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Logos* 5 (Summer 2002): 185-206.

_____. *Word and Silence: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Spiritual Encounter between East and West*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995.

Gilson, Etienne. *The Philosophy of St. Bonaventure*. Paterson, N.J.: St. Anthony Guild Press; Desclée Co., 1965.

Grünewald, Stanislaus. *Franziskanische Mystik*. Munich: Naturrechts Verlag, 1932.

_____. "Zur Mystik des hl. Bonaventura," *ZAM* 9 (1934): 124-142, 219-232.

Guerriero, Elio. "Von Balthasar e Origene." *Rivista Internazionale di Teologia e Cultura: Communio* 116 (1991): 123-134.

Gutwenger, Engelbert, and Hans Urs von Balthasar. "Begriff der Natur in der Theologie: Eine Diskussion zwischen Hans Urs von Balthasar, Zürich, und Engelbert Gutwenger, S.J., Innsbruck." *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 75 (1953): 452-464.

_____. "Natur und Übernatur: Gedanken zu Balthasars Werk über die Bartsche Theologie." *Zeitschrift für Katholische* 75 (1953): 82-97.

Hallensleben, Barbara, ed. *Letzte Haltungen: Hans Urs von Balthasars "Apokalypse der deutschen Seele" neu gelesen*. Fribourg: Academic Press, 2006.

Hamer, Jérôme, O.P. "Un programme de 'christologie conséquente': Le projet de Karl Barth." *NouvelleRevue Théologique* 84 (1962): 1009-1031.

Harl, Marguerite. "La 'bouche' et le 'coeur' de l'apôtre: Deux images bibliques du 'sens divin' de l'homme ('Proverbes' 2, 5) chez Origène." In *Forma Futuri: Studi in onore del Cardinale Michele Pellegrino*. Turin: Erasmo, 1975, 17-42.

Harrison, Victoria. "*Homo Orans*: Von Balthasar's Christocentric Philosophical Anthropology." *Heythrop Journal* 40 (1999): 280-300.

Hartmann, M. *Äesthetik als ein Grundbegriff fundamenteler Theologie: Eine Untersuchung zu Hans Urs von Balthasar*. St. Otillien: Dissertationen Theologische Reihe, Bd. 5, 1985.

Horn, Gabriel. "Le sens de l'esprit d'après Diadoque de Photice." *Revue d'Ascetique et Mystique* 8 (1927): 402-419.

Howsare, Rodney. *Hans Urs von Balthasar and Protestantism*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005.

Ide, Pascal. *Être et Mystère: La Philosophe de Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Brussels: Culture et Vérité, 1995.

Imle, F. *Das Geistliche Leben nach der Lehre des hl. Bonaventura*. Werl, 1939.

Kasper, Walter, ed. *Logik der Liebe und Herrlichkeit Gottes: Hans Urs von Balthasar im Gespräch*. Ostfildern: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 2006.

Kay, Jeffrey Ames. "Aesthetics and a posteriori Evidence in Balthasar's Theological Methodology." *Communio* 2 (Fall 1975): 289-299.

_____. *Theological Aesthetics: The Role of Aesthetics in the Theological Method of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Bern: Peter Lang Press, 1975.

Keefe, Donald J. "A Methodological Critique of von Balthasar's Theological Aesthetics." *Communio* 5 (1978): 23-43.

Koenig, H. *De inhabitatione Spiritus Sancti*. Mundelein: Apud Aedes Seminarii Sanctae Mariae ad Lacum, 1934.

Körner, Bernhard. "Fundamentaltheologie bei Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 109 (1987).

Kunz, Erhard. "Glaubwürdigkeit und Glaube (analysis fidei)." In *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie*, vol. 4, *Traktat Theologische Erkenntnislehre. Schlussteil Reflexion auf Fundamentaltheologie*. Edited by W. Kern, H. J. Pottmeyer, and M. Seckler. Freiburg: Herder, 1988, 414-450.

Kuschel, Karl-Josef. "Literature as Challenge to Catholic Theology in the 20th Century: Balthasar, Guardini, and the Tasks of Today." *Ethical Perspectives* 7 (2000): 257-268.

Van Laak, Werner. *Allversöhnung: Die Lehre von der Apokatastasis, ihre Grundlegung durch Origenes und ihre Bewertung in der gegenwärtigen Theologie bei Karl Barth und Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Sinzig: Sankt Meinrad Verlag, 1990.

Landsberg, P. L. "Les sens spirituels chez Saint Augustin." *Dieu vivant* 11 (1948): 83-105.

Lepers, Etienne. "L'Application des sens." *Christus* 21 (1980): 83-94.

Lochbrunner, Manfred. *Analogia Caritatis: Darstellung und Deutung der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasars*. Freiburg: Herder, 1981.

_____. "Guardini und Balthasar: Auf der Spurensuche einer Geistigen Wahlverwandtschaft." *Forum Katholische Theologie* 12 (1996): 229-246.

_____. "Gustav Siewerth im Spiegel von Hans Urs von Balthasar." In *Im Ringen um die Wahrheit Festschrift der Gustav-Siewerth-Akademie zum 70. Geburtstag ihrer Gründerin und Leiterin Prof. Dr. Alma von Stockhausen*. Edited by Remigius Bäumer, J. Hans Bernischke, and Tadeusz Guz. Weilheim-Bierbronnen: Gustav-Siewerth-Akademie, 1997, 257-272.

_____. *Hans Urs von Balthasar als Autor, Herausgeber, und Verleger: Fünf Studien zu seinen Sammlungen (1942-1967)*. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2002.

_____. *Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine Literatenfreunde: Neun Korrespondenzen* Würzburg: Echter, 2007.

_____. *Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine Philosophenfreunde Fünf Doppelporträts*. Würzburg: Echter Verlag, 2005.

_____. "Romano Guardini und Hans Urs von Balthasar: Integration von Theologie und Literatur." *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 34 (2005): 169-185.

Longpré, Ephrem, O.F.M. "Bonaventure." *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*. Paris, 1937. 1:1768-1843.

_____. "La théologie mystique de S. Bonaventure." *Archivum Franciscan Historicum* 14 (1921): 36-108.

Löser, Werner. "Die Exerzitien des Ignatius von Loyola: Ihre Bedeutung in der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasars." *Communio* 18 (1989): 333-351.

_____. "Hans Urs von Balthasar und seine ignatianischen und patristischen Quellen." *Geist und Leben* 79 (2006): 194-203.

_____. *Im Geiste des Origenes: Hans Urs von Balthasar als Interpret der Theologie der Kirchenväter*. Frankfurt am Main, 1976.

Louth, Andrew. *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981.

Lubac, Henri de. "A Witness of Christ in the Church: Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Communio* 2 (Fall 1975): 228-249.

Maréchal, Joseph. "Applications des Sens." In *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité Ascétique et Mystique*. Edited by Marcel Viller, S.J., Charles Baumgartner, and André Rayez. Paris: G. Beauchesne, 1937, 810-828.

_____. *Études sur la psychologie des mystiques*. Bruxelles: L'Édition Universelle, 1937.

_____. *Studies in the Psychology of the Mystics*. Albany: Magi, 1964.

McCormack, Bruce. *Karl Barth's Critically Realistic Dialectical Theology: Its Genesis and Development, 1909-1936*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

McCosker, Philip. "'Blessed Tension': Barth and Von Balthasar on the Music of Mozart." *The Way: A Review of Christian Spirituality Published by the British Jesuits* 44 (2005): 81-95.

McGinn, Bernard. *The Flowering of Mysticism*. New York: Crossroad, 1998.

_____. *The Foundations of Mysticism*. New York: Crossroad, 1991.

_____. *The Growth of Mysticism*. New York: Crossroad, 1994.

McGregor, Bede, O.P., and Thomas Norris, eds. *The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994.

McIntosh, Mark A. *Christology from Within: Spirituality and the Incarnation in Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996.

_____. *Mystical Theology: The Integrity of Spirituality and Theology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

Mongrain, Kevin. *The Systematic Thought of Hans Urs von Balthasar: An Irenaean Retrieval*. New York: Crossroad, 2002.

Moss, David, and Edward T. Oakes, S.J., eds. *The Cambridge Companion to Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Müller, Wolfgang W., ed. *Karl Barth—Hans Urs von Balthasar: Eine theologische Zwiesprache*. Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 2006.

Murillo, Ildefonso. "Im Dialog mit den Griechen: Balthasars Verständnis antiker Philosophie in 'Herrlichkeit.'" In *Hans Urs von Balthasar: Gestalt und Werk*. Edited by Karl Lehmann and Walter Kasper. Cologne, Germany: Verlag für Christliche Literatur, 1989.

Nautin, Pierre. *Origène: Sa vie et son oeuvre*. Paris: Beauchesne, 1977.

Nichols, Aidan, O.P. *No Bloodless Myth: A Guide Through Balthasar's Dramatics*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000.

_____. *Say It Is Pentecost: A Guide Through Balthasar's Logic*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001.

_____. "Thomism and the Nouvelle Théologie." *The Thomist* 64/1 (January 2000): 1-19.

_____. *The Word Has Been Abroad: A Guide Through Balthasar's Aesthetics*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1998.

Norris, Thomas. "The Symphonic Unity of His Theology: An Overview." In *The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edited by Bede McGregor, O.P., and Thomas Norris. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994.

Oakes, Edward T. *Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. New York: Continuum, 1994.

O'Donnell, John. *Hans Urs von Balthasar*. London: Continuum, 2000.

_____. "The Logic of Divine Glory." In *The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edited by Bede McGregor, O.P., and Thomas Norris. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994.

O'Donoghue, Noel. "Do We Get Beyond Plato?: A Critical Appreciation of the Theological Aesthetics." In *The Beauty of Christ: An Introduction to the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edited by Bede McGregor, O.P., and Thomas Norris. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994.

_____. "A Theology of Beauty." In *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edited by John Riches. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986, 1-10.

O'Donovan, Leo, S.J., "Two Sons of Ignatius: Drama and Dialectic," *Philosophy and Theology* 11 (1998): 105-125.

O'Hanlon, Gerard F., S. J. *The Immutability of God in the Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Olphe-Gaillard, M. "Les Sens Spirituels Dan L'Histoire de la Spiritualité." In *Nos Sens et Dieu*. Desclée de Brouwer, 1954.

O'Meara, Thomas F. "Of Art and Theology: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Systems." *Theological Studies* 42 (1981): 272-276.

O'Regan, Cyril. "Balthasar: Between Tübingen and Postmodernity." *Modern Theology* 14 (July 1998): 325-353.

_____. "Balthasar and Eckhart: Theological Principles and Catholicity." *The Thomist* 60/2 (April 1996): 203-239.

_____. "Newman and von Balthasar: The Christological Contexting of the Numinous." *Eglise et Théologie* 26 (1995): 165-202.

_____. "Von Balthasar and Thick Retrieval: Post-Chalcedonian Symphonic Theology." *Gregorianum* 77/2 (1996): 227-260.

Ouellet, Marc. "The Message of Balthasar's Theology to Modern Theology." *Communio: International Catholic Review* (Summer 1996): 270-299.

Peter, Karl. *Die Lehre von der Schönheit nach Bonaventura*. Werl: Dietrich Coelde Verlag, 1964.

Polanco, Juan. *Monumenta Ignatiana*, Ser. II (1955), 2: 300-303.

Potworowski, Christophe. "Christian Experience in Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Communio* 20 (1993): 107-117.

_____. "An Exploration of the Notion of Objectivity in Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Renascence: Essays on Value in Literature* 48 (Winter 1996): 137-151.

Price, Daniel. *Karl Barth's Anthropology in Light of Modern Thought*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002.

Rahner, Hugo. "Die Anwendung der Sinne in der Betrachtungsmethode des hl. Ignatius von Loyola." *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 79 (1957): 434-456.

Reifenberg, Peter, and Anton van Hoof, eds. *Gott für die Welt: Henri de Lubac, Gustav Siewerth und Hans Urs von Balthasar in ihren Grundanliegen*. Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 2001.

Rendina, Sergio. "La dottrina dei 'sensi spirituals' negli Esercizi Spirituals." *Servitium* 29-30 (1983): 55-72.

Riches, John. *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986.

Rickenmann, Agnell. "La dottrina d' Origene sui sensi spirituali e la sua ricezione in Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Rivista Teologica di Lugano* 6 (2001): 155-168.

Roberts, Louis. *The Theological Aesthetics of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1987.

Rosenmöller, Bernhard. *Religiöse Erkenntnis nach Bonaventura*. Münster: Aschendorff, 1925.

Sachs, John Randall, S. J. *Spirit and Life: The Pneumatology and Christian Spirituality of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Inaugural-Dissertation zur Erlangung der Doktorwürde. Eberhard-Karls-Universität zu Tübingen, 1984.

Saint-Pierre, Mario. *Beauté, bonté, vérité chez Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Quebec: Laval University Press, 1998.

Sara, Juan Manuel. "Knowledge, the Transcendentals, and Communion." *Communio: International Catholic Review* 28 (Fall 2001): 505-532.

Schrijver, Georges de. "Die Analogia Entis in der Theologie Hans Urs von Balthasars: Eine Genetisch-Historische Studie." *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor Filosofie en Theologie* 38 (1977): 241-281.

Sherwood, Dom Polycarp. "Survey of Recent Work on St. Maximus the Confessor." *Traditio* 20 (1964): 428-437.

Schindler, D. C. *Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Dramatic Structure of Truth*. New York: Fordham Press, 2004.

Schindler, David L., ed. *Hans Urs von Balthasar: His Life and Work*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991.

_____. "Modernity, Postmodernity, and the Problem of Atheism." *Communio: International Catholic Review* (Fall 1997): 563-579.

Scola, Angelo. *Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Theological Style*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1991.

_____. "Nature and Grace in Hans Urs von Balthasar." *Communio* 18 (Summer 1991): 207-226.

Seifert, Josef. "Person und Individuum: Über Hans Urs von Balthasars Philosophie der Person und die Philosophische Implikationen seiner Dreifaltigkeitstheologie." *Forum Katholische Theologie* 13 (1997): 81-105.

Servais, Jacques, S.J. "Au fondement d'une théologie de l'obéissance ignatienne: *Les Exercices spirituels* selon H. U. von Balthasar." *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 116 (1994) : 353-373.

_____. *Une theologie des "Exercices spirituels": Hans Urs von Balthasar, interprète de saint Ignace de Loyola*. Rome: Tipografia Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1992.

Spargo, Emma Jane Marie. *The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of Saint Bonaventure.* New York: Franciscan Institute, 1953.

Splett, Jörg. "Wahrheit in Herrlichkeit: Auf Balthasar Hören." *Theologie und Philosophie* 69 (1994): 411-421.

Striet, Magnus, and Jan-Heiner Tück, eds. *Die Kunst Gottes verstehen: Hans Urs von Balthasars theologische Provokationen*. Freiburg: Herder, 2005.

Tedoldi, Fabio Massimo. *La dottrina dei cinque sensi spirituali in San Bonaventura*. Rome: Pontificium Athenaeum Antonianum, 1999.

Verweyen, Hansjürgen. *Ontologische Vorraussetzungen des Glaubensaktes.* Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1969.

_____. *Gottes Letztes Wort: Grundriss der Fundamentaltheologie*. Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1991.

Waldstein, Michael. "An Introduction to von Balthasar's *The Glory of the Lord*." *Communio: International Catholic Review* (Spring 1987): 12-33.

Walsh, James. "Application of the Senses." *The Way Supplement* 27 (1976): 59-68.

Webster, John, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Barth*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Wiercinski, Andrzej. *Between Friends—A Bilingual Edition: The Hans Urs von Balthasar and Gustav Siewerth Correspondence, 1954-1963*. Konstanz: Verlag Gustav Siewerth-Gesellschaft, 2005.

Wigley, Stephen. *Karl Barth and Hans Urs von Balthasar: A Critical Engagement*. London: T&T Clark; Continuum, 2007.

_____. "The von Balthasar Thesis: A Re-examination of von Balthasar's Study of Barth in the Light of Bruce McCormack." *Scottish Journal of Theology* 53 (2003): 345-359.

Williams, Rowan. "Afterword: Making a Difference." In *Balthasar at the End of Modernity*. Edited by Lucy Gardner, David Moss, Ben Quash, and Graham Ward. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999.

_____. "Balthasar and Rahner." In *The Analogy of Beauty: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar*. Edited by John Riches. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986.

Wulf, Friedrich, S.J. "Die Bedeutung der schopferischen Phantasie fiir die Betrachtung nach Ignatius von Loyola." *GuL* 22 (1949): 461-467.

Yeago, David Stuart. "Literature in the Drama of Nature and Grace: Hans Urs von Balthasar's Paradigm for a Theology of Culture." *Renascence* 48 (Winter 1996): 95-109.

Zeitz, James V. "Przywara and von Balthasar on Analogy." *Thomist* 52 (Fall 1998): 473-498.