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Erich Przywara on Nature-Grace Extrinsicism: A Parallax View

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Abstract

This article argues that Erich Przywara's analogical understanding of the nature-grace relationship, though sometimes thought to align with the anti-extrinsicist positions of Blondel, de Lubac, and Balthasar, differs from these by virtue of its "parallax" view. The standard bearers of the *nouvelle théologie* hold that Aquinas teaches a natural desire for the beatific vision and deny, more generally, the utility of the concept of pure nature for safeguarding the gratuity of the supernatural. Przywara, by contrast, holds that Aquinas, like the Christian tradition more broadly, alternates between theoretical lines of sight, with the result that the capacity for the beatific vision appears to lie, by turns, both *in* and *beyond* human nature. This apparent difference of position is what this article calls the "parallax" effect. According to Przywara, one attains the least inadequate view of nature and grace by entering the "rhythm" of mutual correction between various perspectives. Though he refines his articulation of this rhythm across the course of his career, Przywara consistently upholds the concept of pure nature as a legitimate theological *Konstruktionsprinzip* and salutary corrective to "intrinsicist" accents.

The complete picture of nature and grace thus lies in the interplay of the various ecclesially approved theological traditions.

“Suspendium elegit anima mea—Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum* 7, 6.”

Introduction

Tolerance among theologians for what one might call supernatural “extrinsicism” has waned and waxed considerably over the last hundred and twenty years. The French Catholic philosopher Maurice Blondel is widely credited with having introduced the neologism, at least in its pejorative sense.¹ By “extrinsicism” Blondel meant any abstract ideology according to which “the natural order and the supernatural order can . . . only be spoken of like material entities juxtaposed or superimposed,”² or by which the faith’s “credibility is without relation to its desirability [*appétibilité*].”³ Prompted to study Thomas more deeply by neo-Thomist criticisms of his “method of immanence,” Blondel discovered the Angelic Doctor’s affirmation of a natural desire for the beatific vision, taking it as evidence of their shared anti-extrinsicist sensibility.⁴ The Jesuit Henri de Lubac would later develop Blondel’s seminal insight in *Surnaturel* (1946). Though chiefly concerned with retrieving the authentic Augustinian tradition on nature and grace,⁵ the book became best known for its claims about the Thomistic tradition. Most controversially, *Surnaturel* claimed that scholasticism since the Baroque period, by denying that Thomas taught a natural desire for the beatific vision, had distorted Thomas in an extrinsicist direction.⁶ De Lubac’s position itself underwent various phases of reception. Hotly contested before Vatican II, it gained a sort of serene ascendancy after the council, and then began to lose ground again at the turn of the twenty-first century, when Lawrence Feingold argued with great thoroughness that an uninterrupted majority of Thomistic commentators understood natural desire to terminate in a lesser, connatural end.⁷ Feingold’s intervention in many ways reinvigorated the debate, provoking an ongoing series of reactions,⁸ counterreactions,⁹ and mediating positions.¹⁰ The literature is simply too vast to survey.

Though the *Surnaturel* debate has drawn numerous talented theologians into its orbit, one rather prescient voice has yet to gain a fair hearing, namely, that of the Jesuit philosopher and theologian Erich Przywara (1889-1972). I call Przywara “prescient” because his thematic treatments of nature-grace “extrinsicism,” though they predate the publication of *Surnaturel*, anticipate to some extent the ebb and flow of the debate. They imply, in other words, that a comprehensive view of nature and grace lies in the rhythmic interplay of “intrinsicist” and “extrinsicist” sensibilities. Przywara’s voice has yet to gain a fair hearing, I would add, because many Anglophone philosophers and theologians, to the extent they know Przywara’s thought on nature and grace at all, still receive it secondhand through Hans Urs von Balthasar’s *Theology of Karl Barth* (1951). Its chapter on the “Concept of Nature in Catholic Theology” positions both Przywara and de Lubac as allies in the campaign against “pure-nature” thinking, and thus as evidence of Catholic theology’s growing openness to Barth’s concrete, existential dialectic of creation and covenant.¹¹ By yoking de Lubac and Przywara so closely, Balthasar has perhaps created the false impression that he, Przywara, Blondel, and de Lubac would all agree on a common litmus test for extrinsicism—namely, the use of *natura pura* as a theological *Konstruktionsprinzip*—and would all oppose it to the same degree.¹²

In reality, Przywara offers a distinctive take on the concerns of the *Surnaturel* controversy. He situates the perennial tension between “intrinsicism” and “extrinsicism,” especially as it plays out in Aquinas’ writings, within the metaphysical rhythm that he calls the *analogia entis*. In so doing, Przywara does not seek to inaugurate another speculative school on the nature-grace question, a “Przywara” alternative, for example, to the Augustinian, Thomist, Scotist and Suarezian traditions. He seeks instead to explain why the final Catholic position must reside in the mutually correcting exchange between such traditions, and why the exquisite balance of the Thomistic school makes it liable to divergent interpretations.

To adopt a scientific metaphor, one could say that Przywara insists that a truly “catholic” (in both the confessional and etymological sense) judgment on whether human nature naturally desires supernatural fulfillment requires adjusting for “parallax.” Parallax, the shift in the apparent position of an object when viewed along different lines of sight, can be illustrated with familiar examples. It explains, for example, why the needle on a speedometer indicates different speeds to the driver and passenger of a car. Seen from different angles, the needle undergoes a “parallax” shift relative to the hatch marks on the speedometer dial. Our stereoptic vision likewise creates a parallax effect in our perceptual field, one whose magnitude varies according to distance between objects. This is why one loses depth perception when one loses an eye. Przywara encourages us, as we shall see, to take something like parallax into account when locating the seat of certain human capacities, such as the desire for the beatific vision.

With a view to resituating the question of nature-grace extrinsicism in Przywara’s analogical frame, this article will begin by introducing the *analogia entis* as “creaturely metaphysics” and proceed to Przywara’s “rhythmic” understanding of nature and grace. Since Przywara’s articulation of this rhythm itself develops over time—beginning as a historical rhythm, shifting to a cross-rhythm, and ending as a ternary rhythm—each successive stage will receive a separate treatment. Regardless of the stage, however, Przywara strongly implies that one finds the whole truth of the nature-grace relationship not in the purity of a single theoretical perspective but distributed among mutually corrective points of view.

Analogia Entis as “Creaturely Metaphysics”

Perhaps the most efficient path to the *analogia entis* as “creaturely metaphysics,” that is, as the ontological structure and rhythm informing the whole creaturely domain, passes through the idea of proportion.¹³ That is to say, creatures have a mode of being *proportionate* to the Creator. In its first imposition, ἀναλογία designates a “mathematical proportion,”¹⁴ i.e., a meaningful and irreducible proportion between two quantities, e.g., 1:2, 3:4. This kind of mathematical analogy proves fairly straightforward provided one is comparing finite quantities. But mathematical analogy breaks down as soon one introduces an infinite quantity. The proportion 1:∞ reduces to zero, for instance, while the ratio ∞:1 swells to infinity. In either case, the result is no longer a ratio of two irreducible numbers, but the “monism” of a single undefined term.

It is here at the limit case of infinity that one can locate the difference between mathematical analogy and what Przywara calls the *analogia entis*. For whereas mathematics cannot support a meaningful ratio between the finite and infinite, the Christian doctrine of creation presupposes it as its *articulus stantis et cadentis*. If comparison between finite creature and infinite Creator yielded either an ontological zero or an ontological infinity, creaturely actions would prove either empty theater or idolatrous titanism. The only possible world in which creaturely activity remains both subordinate to God’s activity and yet meaningful in its own right is one where creatures enjoy an act of being proportionate to their Creator. The fact of creation, in other words, implies a third kind of relationship between the infinite and the finite, neither pure identity nor pure contradiction nor some statistical average between them, but an “analogical” relationship irreducible to any other.

After years of progressive intellectual refinement, Przywara “discovered” what he considered the classic ecclesial formulation of the *analogia entis* in the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215).¹⁵ Lateran IV teaches, against the coarse social trinitarianism of Joachim of Fiore, that “one cannot note any similarity between creator and creature, however great, without being compelled to observe an ever greater dissimilarity between them.”¹⁶ The analogy of being thus understood represents a purely formal “dynamic comparative.”¹⁷ It does not constitute a law external to God, as if somehow constraining him to establish this or that saving economy, but expresses the fact that in any possible world, God remains by nature greater than his creatures, however supernaturally elevated they may become.¹⁸

Not content simply to assert analogy as a formal principle, Przywara also seeks to elaborate its characteristic marks. Understanding Przywara's parallax view of the nature-grace relationship requires us to look more carefully at the "cross-structural" and "rhythmic" aspects of his creaturely metaphysics. It is to these that we now turn.

Analogia Entis as Cross-Structure

The descriptor "cross-structure" represents an attempt to synthesize in a single image three different aspects of the *analogia entis*: the vertical, the horizontal, and their interdependence.¹⁹ The vertical aspect refers simply to the relationship of similarity-in-greater-dissimilarity obtaining between Creator and creature, the relationship governing Lateran IV's condemnation of Joachim of Fiore. But Przywara uses other conceptualities to express this relationship as well. Key for present purposes is the "in-beyond" (*in-über*) polarity, a spatial rendering of the similarity-dissimilarity tension.²⁰ God is *in* each creature, sustaining its proper act of being; yet God is simultaneously *beyond* each creature, occupying an ineffably higher plane. Indeed, for Przywara, God's "in-ness" and "beyond-ness" are directly rather than inversely proportional. The more in-finite God is, the less creatures' proper existence can pose an impermeable limit, or *finis*, to his presence and operation.²¹ Przywara finds this paradoxical *in-über* model in the Christian tradition's profoundest metaphysicians of creation: in Augustine, for whom God is both "inside every creature" (*interior omni re*) and "outside every creature" (*exterior omni re*);²² and in Dionysius the Areopagite, for whom God is in being as its cause and yet "not-being as beyond all being."²³

In addition to rehabilitating a venerable and, indeed, scarcely avoidable form of Neo-Platonic discourse, Przywara's *in-über* conceptuality proves elastic enough to accommodate a second, horizontal aspect of analogy. The semantic range of the German preposition *über* includes not only vertical difference ("above") but also horizontal difference ("beyond"), making it suitable for evoking intracreaturely polarities. By such horizontal *in-über* relationships, Przywara means not just any two dimensions or components of creation but those that prove both intelligibly interdependent and mutually irreducible. He takes as paradigmatic the Thomist model of the relationship between creaturely essence ("whatness") and existence ("thatness"), commonly called the doctrine of the "real distinction."²⁴ As the name suggests, the "real distinction" means that the essence and existence of mutable creatures remain so "really distinct" from each other as to be mutually delimiting. Essence limits the infinity of indeterminate existence into distinct natures (angels, animals, minerals, etc.); existence limits the infinity of eternal essence into *hic-et-nunc* actuality.²⁵ Though essence and existence constitute distinct principles, they nevertheless remain inseparable and mutually conditioning. No bona fide creature can constitute pure "thatness" devoid of "whatness," nor vice-versa. Przywara often evokes this horizontal interpenetration of really distinct created principles through the *in-über* idiom as well: "essence in-and-beyond existence."²⁶ What goes for essence and existence goes, *mutatis mutandis*, for numerous other intracreaturely polarities: form-matter, act-potency, one-many,²⁷ body-soul, man-woman, individual-community.²⁸

Combining the vertical and horizontal axes of the *analogia entis* yields a kind of mutually conditioning "cross-structure." Przywara implies that the vertical similarity-in-difference between Creator and creature depends on the horizontal tension, described above, between essence and existence. "[I]n the very thing in which they agree, i.e., in being, they are abyssally divided. God's being is by nature pure Being, the creature's being is by nature being-stretched-between-essence-and-existence [*Sosein-Dasein-gespanntes-Sein*]."²⁹ That is to say, Creator and creature "agree," or are similar, in being because both exhibit the perfections of essence and existence. Both represent a "whatness" and a "thatness." They nevertheless remain "abyssally divided," or dissimilar, in being because God possesses essence and existence in a unity-of-identity, whereas creatures possess them only in a unity-of-tension. Were the horizontal interval between creaturely essence and existence to collapse, in other words, so would the vertical interval between Creator and creature. Transposing the

analogical formula of Lateran IV into the Thomist conceptuality of the “real distinction” allows Przywara to underscore the interdependence of the vertical and horizontal beams of the *analogia entis*.

Analogia Entis as Rhythm

As Przywara sees things, the vertical and horizontal axes of the cross-structure provide more than a static frame; they also represent channels of energetic exchange. However irreducible the polarities of the *analogia entis* may be, they ceaselessly interpenetrate. It is this pulsating alternation that Przywara calls “rhythm.” Przywara certainly intends the musical connotations of the term, going so far as to liken the “rhythm” of the *analogia entis* to the contrapuntal movement of Bach’s fugues.³⁰ But he always evokes rhythm in a cosmic sense, as patterned movement, much as the ancients spoke of the music of spheres: “[A]nalogy is rhythm—just as, according to Pythagoras, the cosmos vibrates with a ‘resonant rhythm.’”³¹ This vibration has an amplitude both vertical and horizontal. Addressing the question of whether creation’s absolute ground lies beyond or in the cosmos, for instance, Przywara observes that these

are questions concerning the innermost rhythmic beat between God (as the absolute) and the created (as what is grounded, directed, and determined by this absolute), in that they are concerned with the innermost beat of becoming (between essence and existence) in the creature . . . [T]hese questions point to the special sense of “God in the creature.” This is the *positivum* that itself, in the extreme forms of metaphysics, was made into a false absolute: in that it was transformed from a relation of “in” to one of “as”: “God as creature or, as the case may be, “the creature as God.”³²

Przywara’s point is that fallen humanity can avoid idolatrously absolutizing created values—here, the *positiva* of essence and existence—only by seeing them as the pulse of an ever greater God *in* creation. Only when profiled against the horizon of the truly infinite do creaturely *positiva* appear as mutually delimiting *relativa*, which therefore “resonate” at the creaturely frequency of “self-maintenance amid self-evolution.”³³

Closely related to this sense of rhythm as alternating movement is rhythm as “accent.” Przywara explains that thought too has its alternating movements, proceeding either in an *a priori* fashion from the essential to the existential, or in an *a posteriori* fashion from the existential to the essential.³⁴ Genuinely creaturely thought will accept the need to sway to and fro, to move along both vectors in a pattern of *exitus and reditus*.³⁵ Nevertheless, however much finite minds may seek to integrate both vectors, they will inevitably privilege one point of departure over another. This gives their thought a certain rhythmic “accent.” Comparing Plato’s epistemology of ideal forms (εἶδος) with Aristotle’s epistemology of forms embedded in sensible matter (μορφή), Przywara observes,

Μορφή understood as the intrinsically real “shapeliness of things,” signifies an “actualized essence” or, as we prefer to say, “essence in existence”; εἶδος, on the other hand, signifies the intrinsically ideal “idea of things,” the “essence as what guides actualization” or, as we prefer to say, “essence beyond existence.” The problem of the reciprocal relation between morphological and eidetic metaphysics thus brings us back to the “in-and-beyond,” which is the oscillating unity of the two. But then—with ultimate logical consistency—induction, understood as the realogical *in fieri* of μορφή (“thither towards form”), and deduction, understood as the ideative *in fieri* of εἶδος (“hither from the idea”), are the shifting accents of this “in-and-beyond”: induction as the rhythm of the in towards the beyond (in → beyond); deduction as the rhythm of the beyond towards the in (in → beyond).³⁶

All this is to say that Plato does not entirely neglect existence, nor does Aristotle entirely neglect essence. Yet each stresses a different pole. Plato departs deductively from the essential pole while incorporating the existential; Aristotle departs inductively from the existential pole while incorporating essential. Przywara will sometimes also call these rhythmic accents “prevailing aspects” (*Prävalenzaspekten*),³⁷ or simply “types.”³⁸ It is

Przywara's commitment to honoring both rhythmic accents in any perennial tension that this article is calling his "parallax" view.

In his late work *Mensch*, Przywara would seek to synthesize the cross-structural and rhythmic dimensions of *analogia entis* under a single image, describing the analogy of being as the "'coordinate-cross' of these [vertical and horizontal] rhythm-vectors" (*Koordinaten-Kreuz' dieser Rhythmus-Richtungen*).³⁹ The shape of the "cross" recalls the intersection of vertical and horizontal polarities. The adjective "coordinate" evokes the possibility of plotting particular "types" along the perpendicular axes, as if on a Cartesian coordinate system. Much as psychological inventories classify personalities according to habitual preference—e.g., introverted-extroverted, intuitive-sensate, etc.—so also the *analogia entis* can serve as a grid for classifying intellectual and religious traditions according to their rhythmic accent. And much as these inventories can distinguish harmful deviancies from harmless personality differences, so the *analogia entis* can distinguish idolatrous absolutisms from legitimate differences of emphasis within the Christian sphere. The *analogia entis* thus serves Przywara, in John Betz's apt phrase, as a "standard for Catholic engagement" with the various intellectual, cultural and spiritual movements of his day.⁴⁰

The comparison of the *analogia entis* to a personality inventory recalls, of course, one of the more enduring objections to Przywara's thought. Just as any psychological instrument risks strapping the unique individual to the Procrustean bed of a rigid typology, so the *analogia entis* risks becoming, in the words of L. Puntel, "a grandiose aprioristic construction that is imposed on the history of thought as an external-formal schema overlooking its deeper contexts."⁴¹ There is no doubt some justice to this remark, especially when Przywara compares historically remote thinkers. Before giving full credit to this severe assessment, however, one does well to consider a couple of mitigating factors. First, the *analogia entis* remains *a posteriori* in a decisive sense: the fact of creation represents the premise rather than the conclusion of its argumentation. Second, the rhythmic dimension of the *analogia entis* excludes the possibility of a view from nowhere. Lexi Eikelboom, to my mind, rightly grasps the epistemic humility implied in Przywara's theological method: "Rather than attempt to articulate doctrines as discreet, circumscribable objects, he approaches doctrine rhythmically, articulating it as a process of rhythmically moving between perspectives because one can never see the whole from a single position."⁴² This is nowhere more true, as we shall see below, than in Przywara's treatment of nature-grace "extrinsicism" within Catholic theology.

The Analogy of Nature and Grace

Przywara contributes most creatively to the question of supernatural "extrinsicism" by situating it within the frame of the *analogia entis*, concluding that the comprehensive view on nature and grace lies in the oscillating rhythm of "grace in-and-beyond nature." With a view to fleshing out this schematic position, however, this article will consider three successively emerging dimensions of Przywara's "parallax" model: nature and grace as historical rhythm, as cross-rhythm, and as ternary rhythm.

Historical Rhythms

Przywara debuts his parallax approach to the problem of nature and grace in his early and programmatic work *Religionsbegründung: Max Scheler – J.H. Newman* (1923), which gives the problem a historical cast. In the midst of exonerating both Max Scheler and John Henry Newman from charges of "naturalizing" grace, Przywara observes,

The history of dogma knows two ways of formulating [*Formulierungsweise*] the relationship between nature and supernature: one that, beginning with Greek fathers, culminates in Augustine, only to remain static, so to speak, in high scholasticism; and a second that has its point of departure in scholasticism

itself, but reaches a certain conclusion only in the Jansenist controversy, as it comes down to us in Germany, for example, in the writings of Scheeben.⁴³

Leaving to one side Przywara's interpretation of Scheeben,⁴⁴ we do well to enter more deeply into these two formulations and their exemplars.

Przywara calls the first formulation "historical" because it tends to emphasize that "factually existing human nature belongs solely and exclusively to the supernatural order of sanctifying grace, and therefore calls every possession of supernatural gifts something 'natural' and every lack of them of a lack in 'nature.'" Przywara gives the examples of Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo, whose neo-Platonic frameworks lead them to conceive the being and activity of nature almost exclusively as a function of "participation in true Being." The result is that any "turning away from this participation comes to be seen as a defect in nature itself, just as Cyril of Alexandria construes it for original sin in itself and Augustine for original sin's ethical ramifications."⁴⁵ In the historical formulation of nature, then, grace comes dangerously close to entering into the definition of integral human nature.

The "systematic" formulation, by contrast, takes its conceptual bearings from the "Aristotelian system" of a "morality arising purely out of natural faculties."⁴⁶ Accentuating the self-standing integrity of nature, this view tendentially "overlooks the fact that 'nature' and 'supernature' are in historically given nature bound in a positive (not a naturally necessitated [*nicht wesensnotwendigen*]) unity, and contemplates the two abstract entities only in their opposition and mutual underivability."⁴⁷ When scholastically formed theologians began to read Augustine's "historical nature" through the lens of "systematic nature," the logical conclusions were those of Baius, i.e., "that God cannot create a 'nature' without supernatural elevation, and . . . that 'grace' is so essential a property of nature that no moral act can occur without it."⁴⁸ The unfreedom of both God and humanity implied by the Baianist position led to its condemnation.⁴⁹ Distilling either the "historical" or "systematic" perspective to chemical purity, then, tends to blur the distinction between Creator and creature.

Yet avoiding the extremes of "intrinsicism" and "extrinsicism" is not as simple as just splitting the difference. As the human eye cannot help polarizing its perceptual field into figure and ground, so the human mind, Przywara implies, cannot help organizing its intellectual field into foreground and background elements. Every attempt to render the Christian mystery of grace through a controlling idea such as "participation" or "final causality" is, in the words of David Tracy, a "journey of intensification into particularity."⁵⁰ It requires the adoption of a definite but partial perspective. According to Przywara, from the (patristic) line of thinking drawing chiefly on the metaphysics of "participation," grace appears to lie "in" (historical) nature. From the (late scholastic) line of thinking originating primarily from "final causality," grace appears almost by definition to lie "beyond" (systematic) nature. One can think of this apparent difference in the location of grace as a kind of theological "parallax effect." To maintain Catholic balance, then, every speculative theology must account for parallax, maintaining the element it foregrounds while accepting rival formulations as presumed "background."⁵¹

Though Przywara holds that theoretical perspectives enjoy no more than relative adequacy, he nevertheless admits that some eras and thinkers balance these perspectives better than others. In "Natur und Übernatur" (1923), an essay contemporary with *Religionsbegründung*, Przywara observes that high scholasticism, lying between the patristic period and the Baianist controversy, "still manifests in principle the givens of the one and only factually existing supernatural order and does not yet fully complete the sharp division between the essential properties [*wesenhaften Eigenschaften*] of nature in itself and supernature in itself."⁵² High scholasticism is, consequently, uniquely situated to exercise a kind of stereoptic vision.

As evidence of the still incomplete division, "Natur und Übernatur" points to Aquinas' squinting analysis of the "essential object" (*wesensnotwendige Objekt*) of theological charity. Here Przywara presupposes his reader's

familiarity with certain features of Aquinas' teaching on the theological virtues. According to the *Summa Theologiae*, the theological virtues differ from the moral and intellectual virtues because they are supernaturally infused by God and have God as their proper object.⁵³ Moreover, the theological virtues direct us to God not under every possible description but specifically as an end "surpassing the knowledge of our reason."⁵⁴ Przywara argues in a footnote full of unelaborated references that Aquinas, despite this tidy compartmentalization, does not always maintain his own distinctions with perfect consistency. Such consistency proves especially elusive as soon as one tries to determine "on which moment within the real object (in this supernatural order) [Aquinas] makes the nature of love depend."

Then we find that the [object] . . . for love is God as man's "friend" by virtue of his rational nature (e.g., ST II-II 23, 1 ad 1; Quaest. disp. de car., a. 10 corp; a. 7 corp; ST II-II 25, 3 corp et passim), insofar as God is thereby in a special way his "final end" (Quaest. disp. de car., a. 8 ad 16; ST II-II 24, 1 ad 3; Quaest. disp. de car., a. 10 ad 3 et passim). But with respect to a "love above all things," he says (ST I 60, 5) that a love of God "plus et principalius quam seipsum" (corp.) and "propter ipsum Deum" (ad 2) belongs to the "inclinatio naturalis," since the moment of the "bonum beatificum" (that is, God as in the beatific vision) first establishes supernatural charity.⁵⁵

Despite the formidable density of the prose, attention to a couple of the more representative citations suffices to clarify Przywara's intentions. At times, Przywara means to say, Aquinas writes as if the capacity for beatifying friendship with God were intrinsic to human nature *qua* rational: "Since only an intellectual nature is born to have the good of eternal beatitude, only an intellectual nature is lovable on the basis of charity."⁵⁶ At other times Aquinas writes as if the same capacity were first introduced by charity, and thus extrinsic to rational nature considered in itself: "God, insofar as he is the universal good, from whom every natural good depends, is loved by everything with natural love. So far as he is the good which of its very nature beatifies all with supernatural beatitude, he is loved with the love of charity."⁵⁷ Aquinas, Przywara implies, oscillates between "historical" and "systemic" lines of sight, generating a kind of parallax effect. The orientation to eternal beatitude consequently appears sometimes within (historical) nature, sometimes beyond (systematic) nature.

As if to demonstrate how seriously he takes the systematic standpoint, Przywara proceeds in the same essay to speculate about how hope and love would be experienced "in a hypothetical, purely natural order of salvation" (*in einer möglichen, rein natürlichen Heilsordnung*). Natural hope, accordingly, would constitute a "yearning for a fully blessed togetherness with God," but this "desired and awaited blessedness of togetherness with Him is only the end- and peak-state [*der Ziel- und Höchstzustand*] within the limits that divide the creature from 'inaccessible light.'" Natural love, for its part, would be a "blessed unity of the creature with its Creator, a friendship-unity of the rational nature that is naturally related to God." Przywara indulges in such speculations in an attempt to evoke, in an approximate way,⁵⁸ the difference grace makes.

Przywara's early reflections strongly imply two things. First, the desire for the beatific vision will seem to lie *in* nature viewed under a "historical" angle but *beyond* nature viewed under a systematic angle. Second, theologizing from both angles is legitimate, even if the systematic line of sight yields a connatural end that falls short of the beatific vision.⁵⁹

Nature and Grace as Cross-Rhythm

For the reader interested in understanding how Przywara develops his parallax model of nature and grace, the next essential stop is his formidable classic *Analogia Entis: Prinzip* (1932).⁶⁰ The book advances Przywara's thought in several ways. First, it provides many more concrete references to support its interpretation of Aquinas, albeit in the form of evocative phrases. Second, it supplements "Natur und Übernatur" by shifting the focus from charity to obediential potency. Third, it develops *Religionsbegründung* by recasting the opposition between "historical" and "systematic" nature into an opposition between ascending and descending vectors of

the analogical “cross-rhythm.” In keeping with this recasting, Przywara emphasizes not so much the contrasting accents of early and later thinkers as the shared, cross-rhythmic sensibility of creation’s greatest metaphysicians. Przywara unveils these modifications in the culminating section of *Analogia Entis* §6, “The Grounding of Analogy as *Analogia Entis* in the Principle of Non-Contradiction.” But in order to appreciate the apex of the argument, it is necessary to start a little closer to the base.

Przywara lays the groundwork for his treatment of obediential potency in *Analogia Entis* by analyzing Aristotle’s account of the principle of non-contradiction. As Przywara reads Aristotle, the principle of non-contradiction represents not a deductive principle, i.e., a premise generating necessary conclusions, but a formal principle, a rhythmic middle between the extremes of pure potency and pure act. On the one hand, the state of a creature at any moment, by virtue of its inescapable contingency, represents the actualization of just one possibility out of infinitely many. Creaturely actuality (ἐνέργεια) thus remains ever mutable and provisional, facing “back” toward the chaotic indeterminacy of pure possibility (δύναμις).⁶¹ On the other hand, this same actuality, when situated within the broader frame of Aristotelian teleology, simultaneously appears oriented “forward” toward fulfilling a predetermined “end,” and this to such a degree that Aristotle does not hesitate to call actuality a kind of “having an end in itself” (ἐν-τελ-έχεια).⁶² “[T]he rhythm of analogy,” Przywara concludes, “is grounded in the ‘middle’ (understood as the back-and-forth of ἐνέργεια between δύναμις and ἐντελέχεια).”⁶³ Creaturely potential is a Janus-faced concept, facing both “forward” and “back.”

This horizontal rhythm of the creature, lacking any absolute point within itself, becomes transparent to a vertical rhythm. Even the pagan Aristotle, Przywara notes, concludes that the very suspendedness of the intracreaturely analogy points beyond itself to an “unmoved mover” (κινουῦν ἀκίνητον), a being uniting the mobility of potentiality and the eternity of actuality in a transcendent mode.⁶⁴ The unmoved mover therefore stands vertically in-and-beyond the cosmos of generation and corruption, “in” as causing its movement (κινουῦν), “beyond” as independent of its movement (ἀκίνητον). The Aristotelian analysis of the principle of non-contradiction in terms of permanence and change thus culminates in an ascending vertical analogy, a kind of “participatory being-related-above-and-beyond.”⁶⁵ Christian metaphysics, informed by the doctrine of sovereign creation *ex nihilo*, will later add to Aristotle’s ascending analogy an “analogy as the self-imparting-relation-from-above.”⁶⁶ The analogy of being resulting from this Christianized Aristotelianism thus comprises a unity of movement between a descending vector of “indwelling transcendence” and an ascending vector of “transcending immanence.”⁶⁷ The *analogia entis* turns out to resemble a kind of cosmic convection current between Creator and creature.

To this ontic cross-rhythm of act and potency there corresponds in turn a noetic rhythm. Here Przywara presupposes the scholastic doctrine of the convertibility of being and truth, holding that to affirm a creature’s existence (“is”) is simultaneously to affirm its intelligibility (“is valid”). Thought tracks the convection current of creaturely being, with its oscillating movement between potency and act and its moment-by-moment dependence on Pure Act:

To be sure, the result of the unity of the back-and-forth proper to the intra-creaturely analogy (back to δύναμις, forth to ἐντελέχεια) is the one above-and-beyond, wherein is comprised that particular “back” proper to the analogy between God and creature (the “back” to God of the creaturely, which ontically and noetically originates from God). It is a unity, however, not an identity, and thus expresses its components in this unity. The “back” of the intra-creaturely analogy (from ἐνέργεια to δύναμις) distinctly indicates the negative contingency of the “is (valid).” This intra-creaturely “back” is thus, in a special way, the site of the manifestation of the “forward” of the relation between God and creature (the “indwelling transcendence” of which we earlier spoke): the “is (valid)” as the sign of the *Deus interior omni re*. Conversely, the “forward” of the intra-creaturely analogy (from ἐνέργεια to ἐντελέχεια) distinctly expresses the negative mutability (*semper fieri*) of the “is (valid).” Within this constant “self-

transcending” of the surpassing of every attained stage of being (truth, etc.) by another, however, we immediately hear the distinctive rhythm of the “back” of the relation between God and creature (the “transcending immanence” of which we earlier spoke).**68**

Focusing on the creature’s tendency to fall “back” into indeterminacy (ἐνέργεια → δύναμις), the mind perceives a sign of God’s movement “forward” into creation. Focusing on the creature’s tendency to strive “forward” to ever new perfections (ἐνέργεια → ἐντελέχεια), however, the mind perceives a sign of God’s drawing creation “back” into himself. In the back and forth of the creaturely actuality, in other words, one hears an echo of the divine *exitus* and *reditus*.

The finite human mind, being unable to do equal justice to both vectors of this unity of movement, must inevitably opt for one or another rhythmic accent when developing a natural theology. The rhythmic accent on potential as endless provisionality (ἐνέργεια → δύναμις), on the one hand, foregrounds the creature’s negative incapacity for God, its origin *ex nihilo*, and thus God as “indwelling transcendence.” The rhythmic accent on potential as end-directedness (ἐνέργεια → ἐντελέχεια), on the other hand, foregrounds the creature’s positive capacity for God, its active striving for the divine *telos*, and thus God as “transcending immanence.” It is with this ascending perspective that Przywara associates the Augustinian natural theology of the “restless heart” (*cor inquietum*),**69** the leitmotif of de Lubac’s and Blondel’s theologies of nature and grace.

In embracing both vectors, Aquinas stretches the idea of potentiality to such paradoxical tautness that it becomes, to Przywara’s thinking, almost an “equivocal term.”**70** Formally, it signifies the “‘how’ of possibility as such,” understood negatively as the “capacity to be created by God,” and thus what the neo-scholastics call the sphere *externa possibilitas*. Indeed, there is a sense in which Aquinas would say that this latter potentiality does not lie “in” the creature at all, but strictly in the divine will.**71** Insofar as even angels depend for their existence entirely on an external Creator, they would seem to have no more inherent potential for existence than a mollusk.**72** Yet, “materially” (*inhaltlich*), Thomist potentiality also implies a “‘what’ that is possible,” understood positively as a creaturely essence with its proper range of perfections, and thus what the neo-scholastics call the sphere of *interna possibilitas*.**73** Though God creates angels *ex nihilo* no less than mollusks, for instance, he establishes them in corporeally incomposite natures, leaving them, unlike mollusks, no internal possibility of corruption.**74** Especially in angels, then, “Potentiality thus oscillates between a potentiality toward the ‘possibility of non-being’ . . . and a potentiality towards the ‘impossibility of non-being.’”**75** Thomas offers a comprehensive view of potentiality, Przywara implies, by circling his subject, describing it by turns according to the *via positiva* and the *via negativa*, the ascending angle and descending angle, the *in* of *interna possibilitas* and the *über* of *externa possibilitas*.**76**

Unsurprisingly, Przywara holds that the same fluid *in-über* rhythm characterizes Aquinas’ treatment of creaturely capacity for grace, or obediential potency. Since his remarks bring us to the center of his thought on nature-grace extrinsicism, they merit citation *in extenso*:**77**

This coinherence of “beyond nature” and “in nature” is expressed in the full character of the *potentia oboedientialis*. On the one hand, the “beyond nature” is not “against nature,” because (understanding potentiality in a more negative sense) everything creaturely is more profoundly subject to the Creator than it is related—one thing to another—to itself: *inest cuilibet rei creatae naturalis subjectio ad Creatorem, multo magis quam corporibus inferioribus ad corpora coelestia*.**78** On the other hand, however, it is not simply a (more negative) “sub-jection” (*subjectio*) but precisely a (positive) “directedness towards . . .” or “readiness . . .” (*habilitas sive aptitudo ad bonum gratiae*)**79** “in the mode of a receptive capacity” (*sicut potentiae susceptivae*), which as a “natural good” (*bonum naturale*) “belongs to the spiritual nature as such” (*naturam rationalem consequitur in quantum huiusmodi*).**80** Thus, the most incisive characteristic of the creaturely “is (valid)” is that its most extreme

negative potentiality (that of the *potentia oboedientialis*) is at the same time the boldest of positive potentialities—a positive potentiality so bold as to journey into the nature of God himself. It is an “insufficiency from one’s own ground” (*naturae propriae principia non sufficient*) that is nevertheless a “capacity for . . .” (*capax summi boni per visionem et fruitionem*).⁸¹ It is a positive display of an orientation towards the supernatural⁸² that is a negative display of an “incapacity from one’s own power.”⁸³

Reading this text mosaic with an eye to the fuller context of its citations (included here in the footnotes), one can begin to decipher Przywara’s thought. The resolution to Aquinas’ apparently inconsistent position on the naturalness of desire for supernatural fulfillment, accordingly, lies not in a more sophisticated taxonomy of desire, a closer parsing of *desiderium*, *inclinatio*, *aptitudo*, *potentia susceptiva*, etc. It lies rather in admitting that creaturely potential for supernatural elevation, in whatever categories it finds expression, hovers irreducibly and simultaneously in-and-beyond nature. If a creature’s potential even vis-à-vis its fellow creatures proves so Janus-faced as to resist the intellect’s unifying gaze, can one expect a less ambivalent formulation of its potential vis-à-vis its Creator and Redeemer?

In light of this “squinting” perspective on the *desiderium naturae*, it is hardly surprising to find Przywara giving only qualified praise to Blondel’s construal of Aquinas on nature and grace. In “Sein im Scheitern – Sein im Aufgang” (1932), a review essay nearly contemporary to *Analogia Entis*, Przywara chronicles an intellectual sea change, a movement from the idolatrously essentializing philosophy of German idealism to the idolatrously existentializing philosophies of Karl Jaspers, Martin Heidegger, and National Socialism.⁸⁴ Blondel’s recently published “Le problème de la philosophie catholique” (1932) appears in this same essay as a corrective to these trends, as a Christian existentialism that “stands eye to eye with German existential philosophy and theology as their immanently conquering fulfillment.”⁸⁵ Przywara also observes that Blondel’s approach to Christian philosophy reprimates an “Augustinian beyond-ness [*Über-hinaus*] of truth in thinking.”⁸⁶ “This *in-über* between human-thought and God-truth,” he continues, “has its apex in the way that a ‘longing in nature’ (*desiderium naturale*) corresponds to the supernatural vision of God (pp. 122, 160, 170), but not only in such a way that it is by nature neither attainable nor demandable (pp. 24 f. 37, 48 f.), but also in such a way that a ‘vocation’ to it can be known only through revelation.”⁸⁷ Insofar as Blondel’s thought preserves a genuine *in-über* reminiscent of Augustine’s epistemology, Przywara commends it.

At the same time, Przywara hints that Blondel’s thought captures only one accent of the “cross-rhythm” of nature and grace. As was shown above, *Analogia Entis* associates the natural theology of the *cor inquietum* with the ascending vector of “transcending immanence.” Sensing the partiality of its viewpoint, Przywara does not personally endorse Blondel’s claim to have recovered the only genuine Thomistic doctrine of the *desiderium naturale*. He notes only that “Blondel thereby presents himself as [*sich erachtet als*] the genuine renewer of the ‘*dynamisme*’ of the third book of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa contra Gentiles*.”⁸⁸ Elsewhere, in fact, he adds that Blondel’s Christian philosophy, despite its value for countering idolatrous existentialisms from within, itself lists perilously toward excessive intrinsicism: “The dangerous temptation of this philosophy is its point of departure in ‘interiority’ [*im ‘Innern*’]. For redemption takes place as the enfleshment of the spiritual word [*Geistwortes*], and thus in an undeniable opposition precisely to spiritualism.” In context, Przywara seems to mean that Blondel, in construing his doctrine of natural desire so as to protect the inner experience of grace’s *appétibilité*, risks reducing the concrete supernatural order to an unsurprising completion of the human spirit’s inner dynamism. By “spiritualizing” nature he risks “naturalizing” grace—the very danger that de Lubac ascribes to “extrinsicism.”⁸⁹

Happily, Przywara also discerns a more salutary trajectory in Blondel’s thinking on nature and grace. He notes that the French philosopher’s formulations have increasingly assumed the form of a “concrete dialectic,” according to which “the last word becomes ever and again the mystery of the middle between impossible

extremes.”⁹⁰ As Blondel himself says on the relationship between nature and supernature, “*Nous oscillons entre deux extrêmes sans pouvoir nous fixer au juste point.*”⁹¹ By further embracing this concrete dialectic, Przywara concludes, Blondel’s thought will become even more transparent to what Augustine and Aquinas considered theology’s last word: “the ‘night’ of the ‘unknown God.’”⁹²

In the final analysis, then, Przywara’s “cross-rhythmic” model of nature and grace opposes the idea that the balance of “intrinsicism” and “extrinsicism” can be definitively struck. To return to the parallax analogy, one cannot not locate the *desiderium naturae* exclusively in nature or beyond nature any more than one can locate Orion exclusively in the northwestern or southwestern sky. In each case, the reckoning depends on the hemisphere of the beholder.

Ternary Rhythm

Though Przywara continues to esteem “parallactic” style as a mark of genuinely creaturely thought in later essays, he varies the theme in significant respects. In certain essays of the early 1940s, Przywara begins to describe the concrete saving order as a rhythm not of two but of three distinctive accents: Augustinian, Alexandrian, and scholastic. Though this ternary rhythm of the early 1940s allows Przywara to incorporate the paschal mystery more deeply into his theology of nature and grace, it does not fundamentally alter his reading of Aquinas on the *desiderium naturale*. Because Balthasar draws more heavily on the writings of this period to imply agreement between Przywara and de Lubac, however, it will be helpful here to compare briefly Przywara’s later position to Balthasar’s construal of it and to de Lubac’s own attitude.

Both the innovation of a ternary rhythm and the stability of Przywara’s interpretation of Aquinas appear in “Der Grundsatz ‘*Gratia non destruit sed supponit et perfecit naturam*’” (1942), Przywara’s last *ex professo* treatment of Aquinas on the relationship between nature and grace.⁹³ In contrast to the earlier “Natur und Übernatur,” where Przywara contrasted patristic-historical and baroque-systematic perspectives, “Grundsatz” now distinguishes Augustinian, Alexandrian, and scholastic accents. The Augustinian perspective, which for Przywara also best preserves the New Testament idiom, identifies nature so closely with fallen nature that “nature (world) and reason appear over and against [grace] almost exclusively as what must be overcome.”⁹⁴ The Alexandrian school, by contrast, considers nature almost exclusively from the perspective of supernatural elevation, with the result that “nature, world, time . . . appear somehow as the here-and-now of supernature, of a supernature that has virtually become just nature.”⁹⁵ Taken together, they form the two inseparable moments of the paschal-mystery pattern, the death that leads to life, the cross suffused with glory. Despite the obvious difference between them, the Augustinian and Alexandrian rhythmic accents share one thing in common. Both tend to construe nature as passive or negative vis-à-vis grace, whether as a featureless presupposition for deification (as in the Alexandrian view) or an unruly obstacle to deification (as in the Augustinian view).

Though scholastic thinking retains these patristic perspectives as its presupposed “background,”⁹⁶ it reverses the slope of normative influence between nature and grace. Nature is now seen as what grace merely “perfects,” that is, as the “mode of the receiver” actively determining how grace is received.⁹⁷ In keeping with this positively active *élan*, scholasticism does not hesitate to transpose even the loftiest supernatural mysteries into the “natural categories” of substance, accident, and the like.⁹⁸ As an illustration of this prevalent (but not exclusive) emphasis on nature as governing principle, Przywara refers to Aquinas’ attempt to inscribe the mystery of beatitude within the metaphysical category of natural desire:

With respect to the [scholastic] relationship between faith and reason . . . its sharpest expression is the much debated teaching of St. Thomas (in the *Summa contra gentiles*) concerning the natural desire [*Naturstreben*] for the vision of God, which appears to belong to the innermost nature of the created spirit. The whole attitude of faith and perfection of faith in this vision appears, then, as the inner perfection of rational nature. With this line of thought extended [*Nach dieser Seite hin*], the principle

would thus culminate in the most extreme enclosure of the revealed order in natural metaphysical categories, in the most extreme translation of mystery of faith into a completely comprehensible, somewhat rationalized mystery.⁹⁹

Here again, Przywara ostensibly associates something like Blondel's interpretation of Aquinas on the *desiderium naturae*, later championed by de Lubac, with an extreme accent on immanence, one bordering on pantheist rationalism.

In reality, of course, Przywara's position remains nuanced. The sequence of thought makes it clear that the scholastic rhythm will "culminate" in such an immanentism only if unchecked by countervailing rhythms. Przywara soon adds, in fact, that one cannot always identify Thomist nature with the "pure nature" of the Baianist and Jansenist controversies, "for otherwise one runs into difficulties precisely with the interpretation of the natural desire [*Naturstreben*] for the vision of God."¹⁰⁰ Przywara once again avails himself of the hypothesis of pure nature, using the concept to define the sightline according to which a "natural" desire for supernatural fulfillment has its relative validity. Once scholasticism hit upon the principle of positively active nature, Przywara suggests, it needed limit concepts such as pure nature and purely connatural beatitude to chasten this principle's self-inflationary tendencies. The more modest aims ascribed to *natura pura* serve to recall that any nature desiring the beatific vision is already "contaminated" by the more passive and historically inflected potentiality of the Augustinian and Alexandrian inheritance.

Perhaps because Przywara gives greater prominence to the Augustinian accent in these writings from the early 1940s, Balthasar leans heavily on them in *The Theology of Karl Barth*. Besides being more recent, these later writings better serve certain ends of his book. When Przywara legitimates the Augustinian focus on fallen human nature as an accent, he seems to make room for Barth's concrete dialectic of sin and redemption. And when Przywara acknowledges the need for the scholastic accent to be corrected by the Augustinian and Alexandrian rhythms, he often sounds like a precursor to the de Lubac of *Surnaturel*. By citing selectively from the alternating "perspectives" of these later essays, Balthasar can make Przywara sound very much like either Barth or de Lubac. In reality, however, complete agreement proves more elusive.¹⁰¹

To see how Balthasar cites selectively to harmonize Przywara with de Lubac, one may consult the chapter in *The Theology of Karl Barth* entitled "The Concept of Nature in Catholic Theology." There Balthasar refers to Przywara's "Scope of Analogy as Fundamental Catholic Form" (1940), an essay nearly contemporary to "Grundsatz" that likewise features the ternary rhythm of nature and grace. He takes from Przywara the following conclusion: "For 'nature' and 'reason' are only exalted and redeemed nature and reason in the concrete supernatural order. All other versions of nature and reason are lifeless abstractions."¹⁰² Inserted into the course of Balthasar's anti-extrinsicist argument, the words appear to deny the utility of any concept of human nature considered in precision from the effects of original sin and supernatural elevation. The passage assumes a different aspect, however, when contextualized by the words that precede it:

Thus, scholastic theology is genuine theology in that it represents the ripening of the theology of the Greek fathers and Augustine. To treat *natura* and *ratio* as "sole and exclusive," however, would lead directly to the "natural theology" of the Enlightenment and of rationalism, which is to say, to a pantheism of "pure nature" and "pure reason."¹⁰³

It is worth noting that Przywara, when rejecting "pure nature" as a "lifeless abstraction," has just clarified that he means the "pure nature" of Enlightenment rationalism. He rejects a nature *separated* from the supernatural *in fact*, in other words, not a nature *distinguished* from the supernatural *in thought*. Indeed, to maintain some minimal sense of nature's embeddedness within the "concrete supernatural order," it seems in Przywara's eyes enough for theology to recall that pure nature is just that, an abstraction.

Przywara's measured appreciation for pure nature *qua* abstraction, and thus for the Baroque scholastic sensibility more broadly, differentiates his "parallax" model of nature and grace from de Lubac's "paradox" model. On the one hand, Przywara can recognize de Lubac's position as a legitimate rhythmic accent within his own "cross-rhythm," an example of a theology taking the "transcending immanence" of the *cor inquietum* as its point of departure. From this perspective, he could agree with his Jesuit confrère that the desire for the beatific appears so constitutive of human nature as to make purely natural beatitude practically a contradiction in terms, at best a "kind of anxious joy."¹⁰⁴ On the other hand, Przywara's comments in "Grundsatz" suggest that *natura pura* has a corrective role to play vis-à-vis theologies of "transcending immanence." The concept helps safeguard the gratuity and alterity of the supernatural order. But de Lubac, even as late as *The Mystery of the Supernatural* (1965), cannot bring himself to agree: "The absence of any perceptible link between that hypothetical nature and our concrete humanity in regard to the point at issue makes the hypothesis an unusable one."¹⁰⁵ In those who would ascribe to pure nature a merely "conditional" desire to see God, moreover, de Lubac sees only an "impatient desire to eliminate every paradox from the human situation and arrive at a positive and clearly understandable result."¹⁰⁶ From Przywara's perspective, however, de Lubac's appeal to the "paradox" of natural but inefficacious desire does not go far enough in the direction of embracing unmasterable tensions. It acknowledges tensions *internal* to the ascending perspective, but not the mutually corrective tension *between* ascending and descending perspectives. This leads de Lubac ultimately to see in the hypothesis of *natura pura* only liabilities, whereas Przywara can recognize its utility in keeping "intrinsicist" accents from turning downright Pelagian. It would not have surprised Przywara to learn how de Lubac later lamented that his positions had been distorted in a secularizing direction.¹⁰⁷

Those familiar with Przywara's later intellectual development might object that this does not yet represent his mature thought. At this point, he still favors the scholastic tendency to place active nature ever so slightly in the foreground, presenting any emphasis on the "positive difference" between creature and Creator as a special sign of reverence for the Creator's "ever greater dissimilarity."¹⁰⁸ In the wake of World War II, however, Przywara's sympathies will gravitate toward a synthesis of Alexandrian and Augustinian rhythms, and thus towards a style of theology in which Christ's paschal mystery occupies the foreground.¹⁰⁹ But this change does not necessarily imply a revalorization of Blondel, Balthasar, and de Lubac, whose thought Przywara still regards as falling within the broad ambit of scholasticism. It signals rather a pivot away from those theological problems, such as the naturalness of desire for supernatural beatitude, to which only the scholastic method gives rise. For present purposes, then, it suffices simply to note that Przywara's last word on the subject remains similar to his first word.

Conclusion

At the end of this detailed exploration of Przywara's "parallax" model of nature and grace, two aspects of his thought stand out. The first is its durability, and the second is its ecclesial breadth.

The fact that Przywara discerns theological controversy by profiling it against the broadest possible horizon, i.e., the structure and rhythm of the *analogia entis*, gives his thought a durable quality. Applying this method to the precursors of the *Surnaturel* controversy, Przywara arrived at many of the conclusions that have become commonplace in its long denouement: that Thomist nature is more historically inflected than its sixteenth-century counterpart;¹¹⁰ that Aquinas' sprawling corpus contains two contrary sets of texts, not easily reconciled;¹¹¹ that Thomas does not correlate natural desire with a consistent formal object.¹¹² Even more recent (and more promising) attempts to render Aquinas consistent by parsing his vocabulary of desire often seem to restate Przywara's parallax view in different words. With a view to showing that the teaching of *Summa contra Gentiles* on the *desiderium naturale* does not threaten grace's gratuity, for instance, Jacob Wood distinguishes between appetite and desire: "Rather than rooting our primary orientation toward the vision of

God in active desire, [Thomas] appeals to a passive appetite.”¹¹³ If the proposed distinction withstands critical scrutiny, then it certainly improves upon Przywara by rendering the Angelic Doctor’s terminology more consistent. In the final analysis, however, it still identifies something like the *in-über* model as Aquinas’ last word on human potential for God: obediential potency as rhythmic middle between active capacity (desire) and passive incapacity (appetite).

Przywara perhaps invested less in saving Aquinas from the appearance of lexical slippage because he had a different evaluation of such inconsistencies. He esteemed Aquinas’ thought most of all for its aporetic quality. Accordingly, he saw the “parallactic” use of concepts such as *potentia* as signs not of carelessness but of a reverent depth perception. The *longue durée* of the *Surnaturel* debate, as well as the ever-shifting consensus on its winner, perhaps suggests that an appeal to a rhythmic middle will prove the last word on the matter.

Turning to the matter of ecclesial breadth, one does well to note the capaciousness of Przywara’s “parallax” model. Przywara can affirm the relative validity of the rhythmic accent favored by Blondel, de Lubac, and Balthasar, but he can also affirm the relative validity of the Baroque scholastic accent that they reject. As a general rule, Przywara resists spinning decline narratives that would denigrate any ecclesially tolerated school, let alone the scholastic tradition associated with his own Jesuit order. The difference between these more typical *nouveaux théologiens* and Przywara perhaps finds its most concrete illustration in their divergent reactions to Karl Eschweiler’s *Die zwei Wege der neueren Theologie* (1926), a German precursor to de Lubac’s *Surnaturel*.¹¹⁴ Balthasar approvingly cites the book’s observation that the great scholastic thinkers were more like Augustine in seeing the “realm of natural knowledge gained by reason, not as a sealed-off monadic globe, but as a component of an overarching whole.”¹¹⁵ De Lubac endorses Eschweiler’s claim that the Jesuits Francisco Suárez and Luis de Molina are responsible for the tendency to see “human nature ‘as a closed and self-sufficient whole,” protesting only that the Dominican Cajetan came earlier and was no less guilty.¹¹⁶ Przywara’s review of the book, however, sounds a different note. He opts to remind Eschweiler that the mystery of nature and grace resists the unifying gaze of any single perspective:

What holds for the simple Catholic Christian, namely, that he really believe so much in a supercreaturally God and not in the absolutization of “a” creature, that he not exalt his personal piety into the only one possible, but know himself to be a “star among stars,” indeed, bathed [*überflutet*] in the variegated fullness of others’ light—that holds equally and above all for the Catholic theologian: he is a Catholic theologian to the extent that he not put his theology or the theology of his school on a level with the Church, but be able, in awe and reverence, to see the tensive fullness [*Spannungsfülle*] of ways beyond his own “one” way [. . .] the “ever greater Church” beyond the fullness of theological schools and orientations.¹¹⁷

Far from presenting the ascendance of “systematic” nature as a sign of theological decadence, or as the abandonment of the only legitimate vantage point, Przywara takes it as yet another relatively valid perspective, one illuminating new facets of an unfathomable mystery. Przywara’s assessment of Eschweiler’s position would seem to apply *mutatis mutandis* to the anti-extrinsicism of de Lubac, Blondel, and Balthasar.

And though Przywara never uses the image of parallax himself, his astronomical metaphor, whereby each theological school would represent a “star among stars,” comes very close. Astronomy is, after all, one of the disciplines that makes most routine use of parallax. Different astronomers monitor the same heavenly bodies from different standpoints and, by comparing their variant observations, calculate the celestial object’s true position. Przywara’s astral imagery implies that a truly ecclesial theology will do the same, incorporating rather than excluding the light shed by complementary rivals. The analogy limps, of course, in one important respect. Whereas calculations based on astronomical parallax aim at the more precise measurement of a finite distance,

Przywara's theological parallax aims to disclose a mysterious depth beyond all measurement. It ends not in cognitive mastery but in aporetic adoration of the *Deus semper maior*.

Notes

- 1 The phrase first appears in his "Histoire et Dogme" (1904). See Maurice Blondel, *Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma*, trans. Alexander Dru and Illtyd Trethowan (London: Harvill, 1964), 226-31. I am grateful Vincent Strand, SJ, Henry Shea, SJ, and my anonymous reviewers for helping me improve earlier versions of this article.
- 2 Testis [=Blondel], *Catholicisme sociale et Monophorisme*, (Paris: Bloud & Cie., 1910), 239-40; cited in Peter Bernardi, SJ, *Maurice Blondel, Social Catholicism, and Action Française: The Clash over the Church's Role in Society during the Modernist Era* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2009), 167.
- 3 Bernard de Sailly [=Blondel], *Comment réaliser l'apologétique intégrale?* (Paris, Bloud & Gay, 1913; cited in Bernardi, *Maurice Blondel*, 56.
- 4 See "Le problème de la philosophie catholique," *Cahiers de la nouvelle journée* 20 (1932), 25-26, 31 n 2, 122, 146. Commenting on Blondel's 1912 lectures on Aquinas and Descartes, where Blondel contrasts Aquinas's natural desire to see God with Descartes' "*philosophie séparée*," Michael Conway observes, "Blondel is one of the first to highlight the centrality of the beatific vision in the discussion of the relationship between the natural and supernatural orders." "A Thomistic Turn? Maurice Blondel's Reading of St. Thomas," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 84, no. 1 (2008): 87-122, here 118 n 112.
- 5 For *Surnaturel* as an attempt to renarrate the Augustinian tradition against the background of French Jansenism, see David Grumett, "De Lubac, Grace, and the Pure Nature Debate," *Modern Theology* 31, no. 1 (January 2015): 123-46, esp. 132-37.
- 6 Henri de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Études historiques* (Paris: Aubier, 1946), 433-34, 437.
- 7 Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters*, second edition (Naples, FL: Ave Maria University Press, 2010), 429. First edition: *The Natural Desire to See God according to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Rome: Apollinare Studi, 2001).
- 8 Nicholas J. Healy, "Henri de Lubac on Nature and Grace: A Note on Some Recent Contributions to the Debate," *Communio* 35 (Winter 2008): 535-64; Georges Chantraine, S.J., "The Supernatural: Discernment of Catholic Thought according to Henri de Lubac," in *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomist Thought*, ed. Serge-Thomas Bonino, OP, trans. Robert Williams and Matthew Levering (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2009), 21-40; John Milbank, *The Suspended Middle: Henri de Lubac and the Renewed Split in Modern Theology*, second edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2014).
- 9 See especially: Steven A. Long, *Natura Pura: On the Recovery of Nature in the Doctrine of Grace* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010); Brendan Mulcahy, OP, *Aquinas' Notion of Pure Nature and the Christian Integralism of Henri de Lubac: Not Everything is Grace*, American University Studies, Series VII: Theology and Religion 314 (New York: Peter Lang, 2011).
- 10 David Braine, "The Debate Between Henri de Lubac and His Critics," *Nova et Vetera* 6, no. 3 (2008): 543-90. Edward Oakes, SJ, proposes Matthias Scheeben as "reconciler" between two divergent receptions of Aquinas in *A Theology of Grace in Six Controversies* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2016), 33f. Most recently Jacob Wood has argued that de Lubac was right to find in Thomas a "natural desire for a supernatural end," whereas the Baroque commentators were right to find in him a nature altogether "passive with respect to grace." See Jacob W. Wood, *To Stir a Restless Heart: Thomas Aquinas and Henri de Lubac on Nature, Grace, and the Desire for God*, Thomistic Ressourcement 14 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of American Press, 2019), 358.

- 11 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Theology of Karl Barth: Exposition and Interpretation* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1992), 267-325.
- 12 Philip Gonzales, for instance, interprets Przywara's treatment of *potentia oboedientialis* as an attempt to refute the "rationalism of the two-tiered neo-Scholastic understanding of nature/grace and the doctrine of the *natura pura*," adding, "For Przywara, as with Blondel, de Lubac, and Balthasar, man's condition is transnatural (i.e., no construct of *natura pura*) and thereby historical." Philip John Paul Gonzales, *Reimagining the Analogia entis: The Future of Erich Przywara's Christian Vision* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 184, 189.
- 13 My use of the language of "proportion" should not be taken to imply that Przywara's *analogia entis* favors what Cajetan calls the "*analogia proportionalitatis*" to the exclusion of the "*analogia attributionis*." It attempts instead to evoke the proportional similarity underlying all forms of analogy.
- 14 LSJ, s.v., "ἀναλογία, ἡ." Hermann Fränkel argues that Heraclitus's Fragment 79—Ἄνῆρ νήπιος ἤκουσε πρὸς δαίμονος, ὄκωσπερ παῖς πρὸς ἀνδρός—had already transposed algebraic analogy into a qualitative relationship between the human and the divine. See "Eine Heraklitische Denkform," in *Wege und Formen frühgriechischen Denkens*, ed. F. Tietze (München: Beck 1953), 253-83, esp. 258-60.
- 15 Bernhard Gertz's still-valuable study identifies Przywara's earliest reference to the Lateran formula as his two-part essay, "Die religiöse Krisis in der Gegenwart und der Katholizismus," *Das Neue Reich* 8, no. 32 (May 15, 1926): 657-58; 8, no. 34 (May 29, 1926): 702-04, here 704. See Bernhard Gertz, *Glaubenswelt als Analogie. Die theologische Analogie-Lehre Erich Przywaras und ihr Ort in der Auseinandersetzung um die analogia fidei* (Düsseldorf, Patmos Verlag, 1969), 238 n 218.
- 16 Peter Hünemann, Helmut Hoping, Robert L. Fastiggi, Anne Englund Nash, and Heinrich Denzinger. *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals* (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2012), 806. Hereafter: DH 806.
- 17 *Mensch: Typologische Anthropologie* (Nürnberg: Glock und Lutz, 1959), 74.
- 18 Clarifying this formal quality, Przywara describes the *analogia entis* as the "ultimate, all-determining structure of any possible revelation and theology." "Dialektische Theologie," *Stimmen der Zeit* 137 (1940): 132.
- 19 I owe this term to Bernhard Gertz's short but incisive article, "Kreuz-Struktur: Zur theologischen Methode Erich Przywaras," *Theologie und Philosophie* 45 (1970): 555-61.
- 20 See for instance "Gott in uns oder Gott über uns, Immanenz und Transzendenz im heutigen Geistesleben," *Stimmen der Zeit* 53 (August 1923): 343-62. Reprinted as "Gott in uns und Gott über uns," in *Ringen der Gegenwart*, 2 vols. (Augsburg: Dr. Benno-Filser Verlag, 1929), 2:543-78.
- 21 "[C]reaturely potentiality does not, of itself, place limits on God, but rather receives its limits from God." *Analogia Entis: Metaphysics: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, ed. and trans. John Betz and David Bentley Hart (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013), 222. Hereafter: AE 222.
- 22 *De Genesi ad litteram* VIII, 26. Latin text cited according to *Corpus Augustinianum Gissense* (CAG), electronic edition, ed. Cornelius Mayer. Hereafter: *Gn. litt.* VIII, 26 (CAG).
- 23 Przywara (*Mensch*, 75) cites Dionysius' description of God in *The Divine Names*, 1, 1: αἴτιον μὲν τοῦ εἶναι πᾶσιν, αὐτὸ δὲ μὴ ὄν ὡς πάσης οὐσίας ἐπέκεινα. B. R. Suchla, ed., *Corpus Dionysiacum*, vol. 1: *Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita. De divinis nominibus*, Patristische Texte und Studien 33 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), 107-231, here 109.
- 24 On the reciprocal causality of existence and essence, according to which existence actuates the essential potency and essence limits the existential act, see Fr. Joseph Owens's comments on the "real distinction" in *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Houston, TX: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1985), 103-06. On the novelty of Thomas's way of composing essence and existence, see Étienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955), 379.

- 25 Describing how the Thomist doctrine of the “real distinction” differentiates every finite creature from the infinite God, Przywara observes, “Thus in both elaborations [*Fassungen*] (whose inner relationship to each other represents Aquinas’s final aporia) lies the ultimate, primordial tragedy of the creature (be it in the sense of being circumscribed [*Eingegrenztseins*] of *esse existentiae*, be it in the sense of the being-limited-to-time [*in-die-Zeit-Eingegrenztseins*] of the eternal actuality of the *essentiae*.” Erich Przywara, “Thomas von Aquin,” in *Ringten der Gegenwart*, 2:906-29, here 927. Originally published as “Thomas von Aquin als Problematiker: Ein Versuch,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 109 (June 1925): 188-99.
- 26 AE 124, et *passim*.
- 27 See, for example, Przywara’s expansions on the real distinction in “Thomas von Aquin,” 924-27.
- 28 Przywara develops the latter three anthropological polarities systematically in the form of a commentary on St. Ignatius Loyola’s “Principle and Foundation” in *Deus semper maior: Theologie der Exerzitien*, second edition, 2 vols. (Wien: Herold, 1964), 1:49-68. The three volumes of the first edition were published with Herder (1938-1940).
- 29 Przywara, “Thomas von Aquin,” 928.
- 30 AE 314.
- 31 AE 314.
- 32 AE 158.
- 33 Przywara, *Polarity*, 55. He says elsewhere, “The extremes of a purely *a priori* and a purely *a posteriori* metaphysics succumb either to an ‘absolute unity’ (Parmenides’ immobile ideative being of essence) or to an ‘absolute movement’ (Heraclitus’s utterly mobile being of existence). In the first case, the creaturely solidifies (into an eternity of essence: in the systematic rigidity of a pure apriorism); in the second case, it flows away (into the *apeiron* of existence: in the ‘*in infinitum*’ of purely *a posteriori* experience). In the ‘in-and-beyond,’ by contrast, unity and movement are bound together in a suspended middle that oscillates back and forth.” AE 159.
- 34 AE 159.
- 35 Przywara praises Edith Stein, for instance, for replacing the phenomenological *Wesensschau* of direct intuition with the Aristotelian-Thomistic understanding of cognition as “a true circling of knowledge around things” (*ein wahres Kreisen der Erkenntnis um die Dinge*). “Neue Philosophie,” in *Ringten der Gegenwart*, 1:286-333, here 293. The chapter represents an amalgamation of several articles published in *Stimmen der Zeit* in 1925. One should keep Przywara’s praise for Stein’s pendular epistemology in mind when evaluating Philip Gonzales’s starkly oppositional reading of Stein and Przywara, according to which Przywara rejects “foundationalism” while Stein clings to the “cogito-centered philosophical project.” See Gonzales, *Reimagining the Analogia Entis*, 105; cf. 52f.
- 36 AE 139.
- 37 Przywara, “Neue Philosophie,” 293.
- 38 To my knowledge, Przywara gives his earliest exposition of this typological approach to philosophy in *Gottgeheimnis der Welt* (1923), republished in *Schriften* 2:125-244, here 159–61.
- 39 Erich Przywara, *Mensch: Typologische Anthropologie* (Nürnberg, Glock und Lutz, 1959), 73.
- 40 John R. Betz, “The *Analogia Entis* as a Standard of Catholic Engagement: Erich Przywara’s Critique of Phenomenology and Dialectical Theology,” *Modern Theology* 35, no. 1 (January 2019): 81–102.
- 41 L. Bruno Puntel, *Analogie und Geschichtlichkeit I: Philosophiegeschichtlich-kritischer Versuch über das Grundproblem der Metaphysik* (Freiburg: Herder, 1969), 533.
- 42 Lexi Eikelboom, *Rhythm: A Theological Category* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 169-70.
- 43 Przywara, *Religionsbegründung*, 204.
- 44 Przywara may be alluding to Scheeben’s deployment of the “two-storey” picture of nature and grace so detested by the *nouvelle théologie*: “[I]n the creature we discern two kingdoms, as it were two worlds, which are erected one on top of the other [*übereinander aufgebaut*], one visible and the other invisible,

one natural and the other supernatural.” Matthias Joseph Scheeben, *Die Mysterien des Christentums. Wesen, Bedeutung und Zusammenhang deserselben nach der in ihrem übernatürlichen Charakter gegebenen Perspektive dargestellt*, second edition, ed. J. Höfer (Freiburg: Herder, 1951), 202; cited in Aidan Nichols, OP, *Romance and System: The Theological Synthesis of Matthias Joseph Scheeben* (Denver, CO: Augustine Institute, 2010), 289. In his mature writings, however, Scheeben will likewise attempt to reconcile tensions in Catholic teaching on nature and grace by appealing to a distinction between abstract and historical points of departure. See paragraphs 581-82 of his *Handbuch der Katholischen Dogmatik*, vol. V/1, *Erlösungslehre*, ed. Karl Feckes, *Gesammelte Schriften VI/1* (Freiburg: Herder, 1954), 400-01.

45 Przywara, *Religionsbegründung*, 204. Przywara notes how Augustine sometimes describes actions unassisted by grace not only as unmeritorious but as morally corrupt: “donavi hominibus bene facere, sed ex me, inquit, non ex se; ex se enim mali sunt.” *En. Ps.* 52, 6 (CAG); cited in *Religionsbegründung*, 205. Though Przywara does not provide an equivalent citation for Cyril, he might have had in mind his *Commentary on John*, where Cyril describes the *imago Dei* in humanity as the seal of the Holy Spirit, and the Spirit’s flight after the Fall, consequently, as a grave wounding of human reason: ἀπανίσταται δὲ τὸ Πνεῦμα παντελῶς, καὶ πίπτει πρὸς τὴν ἐσχάτην ἀλογίαν ὁ λογικὸς, καὶ αὐτὸν ἀγνοήσας τὸν κτίσαντα. Cyril of Alexandria, *In D. Joannis Evangelium*, in *Sancti Patris Nostri Cyrilli Archiepiscopi Aleixandrini*, vol. 3-5, ed. P. E. Pusey (Bruxelles: Culture of Civilisation, 1965), 2.1 (Pusey 1:183.16-18). For a broader exposition see, David R. Maxwell, “Sin in Cyril of Alexandria’s *Commentary on John*,” *Concordia* 31, no. 4 (October 2005): 376-83.

46 Przywara, *Religionsbegründung*, 206.

47 *Ibid.*, 207.

48 *Ibid.*, 205.

49 For the condemned Baianist propositions cited by Przywara, see DH 1955, 1926, 1928.

50 David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 125, 249.

51 Przywara, *Religionsbegründung*, 207.

52 Przywara, “Natur und Übernatur,” in *Schriften* 2:27-45, here 30-31 n 1. The same essay appeared twice earlier as: “Einheit von Natur und Übernatur,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 105 (1923): 428-40; “Natur und Übernatur,” in *Ringel der Gegenwart* I:419-42.

53 ST I-II 62.1. I use the Latin text and English translation of the *Summa* published online at “Logic Museum,” <http://www.logicmuseum.com/authors/aquinas/summa/>.

54 ST I-II 62.2.

55 All references in this paragraph taken from Przywara, “Natur und Übernatur,” 30-31 n 1.

56 “[C]um sola intellectualis natura sit nata habere bonum beatitudinis aeternae, sola intellectualis natura est ex caritate diligibilis, Quaest. Disp. de Caritate a. 10 corp. Text of *Quaestio Disputata de Caritate* and all other treatises besides the *Summa Theologiae* come from “Corpus Thomisticum,” <https://www.corpusthomicum.org/qdw2.html>. Translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

57 “Deus, secundum quod est universale bonum, a quo dependet omne bonum naturale, diligitur naturali dilectione ab unoquoque. In quantum vero est bonum beatificans naturaliter omnes supernaturali beatitudine, sic diligitur dilectione caritatis.” ST I 60.5 ad 4. English translation slightly modified.

58 Just three years later, Przywara will accentuate the approximate nature of all such reconstructions, declaring that nature and grace are not experienced as “stages in a rigid sequence” (*Stufengang in einem Nacheinander*). See Przywara, *Religionsphilosophie der katholischen Theologie* (1926), republished in *Schriften*, vol. 2, *Religionsphilosophische Schriften* (Einsiedeln: Johannes Verlag, 1962), 375-511, here 448 (= *Polarity: A German Catholic’s Interpretation of Religion*, trans. A. C. Bouquet [London: Oxford University Press, 1935], 80). Hereafter: *Polarity* 448/80.

59 All citations in this paragraph drawn from “Natur und Übernatur,” 37-38.

60 AE 119-314. In *Religionsphilosophie der katholischen Theologie* (1926), Przywara will recast the historical and systematic sightlines respectively as Augustinian and Thomist *analogia-entis* types, but seldom provides concrete references to support his interpretation. See Przywara, *Polarity*, 481-510/116-39.

61 Przywara points to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* XI, 6, 1063b, ln. 29.

62 Przywara points to *Metaphysics* IX, 8, 1050a, ln. 9.

63 AE 209.

64 AE 211. See *Met.* IV, 8, 1012b, 31.

65 AE 213. Italics original

66 AE 214. Italics original.

67 AE 216.

68 AE 217.

69 *Conf.* I, 1. See AE 217.

70 AE 220.

71 If the “how” of existence lay within the creature, Aquinas argues, its potential would become a kind of “eternal matter” (*materia aeterna*): “[N]on sequitur quod Deum posse creare aliquid, idem sit quod aliquid posse creari ab eo: alias, antequam creatura esset, nihil creare potuisset, nisi creaturae potentia praeexisteret; quod est ponere materiam aeternam. Unde, quamvis potentia creaturae non sit ad hoc quod sint infinita actu, non ex hoc removetur quin Deus possit infinita actu facere.” *De Veritate* q. 2, a. 10, ad 2 in contr.; cited in AE 220.

72 Przywara points to the dependent clause of Aquinas’ answer to whether God can return even created spirits to nothingness: “[L]icet creaturae incorruptibiles ex Dei voluntate dependeant, quae potest eis esse praebere et non praebere . . .” *De Potentia*, q. 5, a. 3, ad 12; cited in AE 225.

73 AE 220.

74 Przywara points to the independent clause of Aquinas’ answer to whether God can return even created spirits to nothingness: “. . . [C]onsequuntur tamen ex divina voluntate absolutam necessitatem essendi, in quantum in tali natura causantur, in qua non sit possibilitas ad non esse; talia enim sunt cuncta creata, qualia Deus esse ea voluit, ut Hilarius dicit in libro de synodis.” *De Potentia*, q. 5, a. 3, ad 12; cited in AE 225.

75 AE 225.

76 For Przywara’s interpretation of Aquinas on the potentiality of spiritual creatures, see AE 224-25.

77 The paragraph that follows is found in AE 228. I have reproduced Przywara’s references, though not the enumeration of the footnotes internal to *Analogia Entis*. Where the references are fragmentary or vague, I have provided context and specificity in the footnotes.

78 *De Malo* q. 5, a. 5, ad 4. “There is a natural subjection to the Creator in any created thing far greater than the lower bodies’ [natural subjection] to the celestial bodies.” My translation.

79 *De Malo* q. 2, a. 11, ad 16. “[I]n potentia includitur etiamabilitas sive aptitudo ad bonum gratiae; quae quidemabilitas diminuitur, ut dictum est, licet ipsa potentia non minuatur.”

80 *De Malo* q. 2, a. 12, corp. “Manifestum est autem quodabilitas naturae rationalis ad gratiam est sicut potentiae susceptivae, et quod talisabilitas naturam rationalem consequitur in quantum huiusmodi.” The phrase *bonum naturale* does not appear in this section.

81 *De Malo* q. 5, a. 1., corp. “Creatura ergo rationalis in hoc praeeminet omni creaturae, quod capax est summi boni per divinam visionem et fruitionem, licet ad hoc consequendum naturae propriae principia non sufficient, sed ad hoc indigeat auxilio divinae gratiae.”

82 *De Veritate* q. 8, a. 1, corp.; *Summa contra gentiles*, III, 50. The first citation implies a positive orientation of the created spirit for the beatific vision by comparing it to the body’s orientation toward the soul: “[U]nio corporis ad animam rationalem est quoddam exemplum beatiae unionis rationalis spiritus ad

Deum.” The latter citation refers to Aquinas’ series of arguments for the fact that the angels’ natural desire for God does not rest in a natural knowledge of God: “Non potest autem esse quod in tali [naturali] Dei cognitione quiescat naturale desiderium substantiae separatae.”

- 83 *De Veritate* q. 8, a. 3, corp.; *Summa contra gentiles* III, 52, 53. The first citation refers to Aquinas’ argument that pure nature needs a further supernatural disposition before it is perfectible by the divine essence for the enjoyment of the beatific vision: “Unde oportet et in intellectu esse aliquam dispositionem per quam efficiatur perfectibile tali forma quae est essentia divina, quod est aliquod intelligibile lumen. Quod quidem lumen si fuerit naturale, ex naturalibus puris intellectus Deum per essentiam videre poterit. Sed quod sit naturale est impossibile.” The latter citations do the same. *SCG* III, 52, n. 4, considering the divine-human synergy of the beatific vision, relates the human intellect to the divine substance as passive matter to active form: “forma enim est principium agendi, materia vero principium patiendi.” *SCG* III, 53, n. 3 adds that the unaided created intellect is not even receptive to this vision: “Nihil est susceptivum formae sublimioris nisi per aliquam dispositionem ad illius capacitatem elevetur.”
- 84 Przywara, “Sein im Scheitern—Sein im Aufgang,” *Stimmen der Zeit* 123 (1932): 152-61, here 152-53. Regarding National Socialism, Przywara says, “National Socialism derives a metaphysics and religion of the chthonic [völkischen] man from nature and blood. But it is significant that both Psychoanalysis and National Socialism have much rather unsealed the abyss. Demons race over the earth” (ibid., 152). Such comments—made long before the Catholic “sobering” of 1933—should be kept in mind when evaluating claims that Przywara harbored Nazi sympathies.
- 85 Przywara, “Sein im Scheitern,” 158.
- 86 Ibid., 159.
- 87 Przywara, “Sein im Scheitern,” 160. The parenthetical page numbers refer to Maurice Blondel, “Le problème de la philosophie catholique,” *Cahiers de la nouvelle Journée* 20 (1932): 5-177.
- 88 Przywara, “Sein im Scheitern,” 160. Italics mine.
- 89 Henri de Lubac, SJ, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder & Herder and Crossroad, 1998), 37. All other citations in this paragraph are taken from: Przywara, “Sein im Scheitern,” 160. For Przywara’s early reservations about the intrinsicism of Blondel’s “Immanenzapologetik,” see also *Christentum: Ein Aufbau*, vol. 4: *Newmans Wesen und Werk*, edited by Erich Przywara (Freiburg im Breisgau, Herder, 1922), 68.
- 90 Przywara, “Sein im Scheitern,” 160.
- 91 Blondel, “Problème,” 25; cited in “Sein im Scheitern,” 160.
- 92 Przywara, “Sein im Scheitern,” 161.
- 93 Przywara, “Der Grundsatz ‘Gratia non destruit sed supponit et perfecit naturam’: Eine ideengeschichtliche Interpretation,” *Scholastik* 17 (1942): 178-86.
- 94 Ibid., 178.
- 95 Ibid., 179.
- 96 Ibid., 179.
- 97 “Quidquid recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur.” *ST* I q. 75, a. 5. My example, not Przywara’s.
- 98 Przywara, “Grundsatz,” 180.
- 99 Ibid., 180-81.
- 100 Ibid., 182.
- 101 I agree with Peter Casarella’s observation, “Balthasar highlights the aspects of Przywara’s account of creation that accord best with the spirit of de Lubac, who in many ways is the true hero of the book on Barth.” See Peter Casarella. “Hans Urs von Balthasar, Erich Przywara’s *Analogia Entis*, and the Problem of the Catholic *Denkform*” in *The Analogy of Being: Invention of the Antichrist or Wisdom of God?*, ed. Thomas Joseph White, OP (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 192-206, here 201.

- 102 Przywara, "Scope of Analogy," 374; cited in Balthasar, *Theology of Karl Barth*, 324.
- 103 Przywara, "Scope of Analogy," 373.
- 104 Henri de Lubac, *Mystery of the Supernatural*, 199.
- 105 Ibid., 49.
- 106 Ibid., 180.
- 107 See de Lubac's wariness of an "eschatological kingdom" reconceived as the "culmination of our 'earthly expectations,' as their supreme fulfilment and consummation," in Henri de Lubac, *Brief Catechesis on Nature and Grace*, trans. Br. Richard Arnandez, FSC (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1980), 225.
- 108 "[A]n 'ecclesial theology of analogy' is especially compatible with scholastic theology, insofar as the latter is most definitely not an intuitive Gnosis but rather—true to its name—a discipline proper to the order of the school: for it is in this spirit that the order of the positive difference between God and creature is preserved—the difference, namely, between God's complete sovereignty and the creature's active 'exercises.' And, in this sense, Thomas Aquinas (as opposed to any systematic 'Thomism') is the special 'theologian of the church.'" Przywara, "The Scope of Analogy as Fundamental Catholic Form" in *Analogia Entis* 348-99, here 395-96. Originally published as: "Die Reichweite der Analogie als katholischer Grundform," *Scholastik* 15 (1940): 339-63, 508-32. For similarly laudatory remarks on Aquinas as the "exemplary Catholic philosopher and theologian," see "Grundsatz," 186.
- 109 For Przywara's later and deliberate adoption of an "apocalyptic-ressourcement" style, see Aaron Pidel, SJ, *Church of the Ever Greater: The Ecclesiology of Erich Przywara, SJ* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2020), 150-55.
- 110 Jean-Pierre Torrell, OP, "Nature and Grace in Thomas Aquinas," in *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomist Thought*, 155-88, here 169
- 111 See the citations in Edward Oakes, SJ, *A Theology of Grace in Six Controversies*, 31-32.
- 112 "The solution to this exegetical aporia is to be sought not in a difference in the formal object of this desire (beatitude *in communi* or beatitude *in se*), but in the two possible meanings of the concept of desire." Henry Donneaud, O.P., "Surnaturel through the Fine-Tooth Comb of Traditional Thomism," in *Surnaturel: A Controversy at the Heart of Twentieth-Century Thomist Thought*, 41-57, here 55.
- 113 Wood, *To Stir a Restless Heart*, 245.
- 114 Karl Eschweiler, *Die zwei Wege der neuen Theologie: Georg Hermes – Matthias Joseph Scheeben. Eine kritische Untersuchung des Problems der theologischen Erkenntnis* (Augsburg, Benno Filser, 1926).
- 115 Ibid., 272; cited in Balthasar, *Theology of Karl Barth*, 268
- 116 Henri de Lubac, *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, 145, 145 n 27.
- 117 Przywara, "Neue Theologie," in *Ringens der Gegenwart*, 669-725, here 714-15. This essay was originally published in two parts as "Neue Theologie? Das Problem protestantischer Theologie," *Stimmen der Zeit* 111 (August 1926): 348-60; "Neue Theologie? Das Problem katholischer Theologie," *Stimmen der Zeit* 111 (September 1926): 428-43.