BALTHASAR AND ANXIETY

T&T CLARK THEOLOGY

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Published by T&T Clark

A Continuum imprint

The Tower Building
11 York Road
London SE1 7NX

80 Maiden Lane
Suite 704
New York NY 10038

www.continuumbooks.com

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-10: HB: 0–567–03407–0
ISBN-13: HB: 978–0–567–03407–6

Typeset by RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk
Printed and bound in Great Britain by the MPG Books Group

For while we are still in this tent, we sigh with anxiety.
(2 Corinthains 5.4)

Fear is already God's daughter, redeemed on the night of Good Friday.
(Georges Bernanos)

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Dedicated to

My Grandmother

Antoinette Lillian Janda
(1910–2005)

Requiescat in pace

and to

Those who are anxious
yet cling to the words of our crucified and risen Lord,

In this world you will have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world. (John 16.33)

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Preface and Acknowledgements

I was first introduced to the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar back in 1992 as a philosophy undergraduate at the University of Notre Dame. Then Fr. Robert Morlino (now Bishop of Madison, Wisconsin), had given a Lenten mission to the students of Alumni Hall where I lived. After the mission I was invited out to dinner with him and the priest, Fr. John Conley, CSC, who had hosted him. During the meal, Fr. Morlino spoke about the richness of Balthasar's theology and handed me a little book entitled, *Does Jesus Know Us, Do We Know Him?* The reading of this text began my study of this great theologian. My interest in Balthasar was encouraged after I entered Mount Angel Seminary by Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB and then Fr. Rino Fisichella (now auxiliary bishop of Rome and Rector of the Pontifical Lateran University) who was guest lecturing at the seminary that semester. I continued my studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and wrote my licentiate thesis on Balthasar under the direction of Fisichella. After ordination and assignments as a parish priest and faculty member at Mount Angel Seminary, I went back to the Gregorian to study for the doctorate. My experience in the parish impressed upon me the need for theologians to be writing about suffering; I also wanted to continue my abiding interest in Balthasar's theology. Fr. Jacques Servais, SJ agreed to direct the thesis and suggested that I write on the theme of anxiety. I was surprised to find out in the preliminary research that very little had been written on this topic within Catholic theology. It seemed opportune to write on such an important topic. I am very grateful to all those in my life who have helped me to appreciate Balthasar's theology.

I also wish to thank Archbishop John Vlazny, for sending me to obtain the doctorate, and to Abbot Nathan Zodrow, OSB of Mount Angel Abbey for helping to finance the studies. A special debt of gratitude is owed to my dear Family who first brought me to the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and his Church. Special thanks to my brother, James, for helping to proofread the manuscript and who has now begun his own theological studies for the priesthood at the Gregorian.

Since this work is intended to extend beyond the realm of theology to engage the other sciences which treat anxiety, I am thankful to those scholars and experts who gave invaluable feedback on various aspects of this thesis: Lynne Bissonnette, MD, PhD, Fr. Donath Hercsik, SJ, Rodney Howsare, PhD, Aaron Kheriaty, MD, and Stephen Loughlin, PhD. I am grateful to my brother priests of the Casa Santa Maria, Rome for their priestly example and fraternity, and to the members of the Casa Balthasar for the access to their library,

for stimulating discussions and even occasional musical *divertimento*. Finally a special note of thanks is given to Monsignor Gerard O'Connor, SLD for his friendship, his patient suffering in proofreading the initial drafts, and for his encouragement, sometimes with a cricket bat, to keep working.

Abbreviations

Below is a list of abbreviations used in this work. Full titles and information are provided in the bibliography. Whenever possible, I have referred to published English translations of texts from Hans Urs von Balthasar. For other authors, I have referred to extant translations or made my own.

1. The Works of Hans Urs von Balthasar

AA	*Der antirömische Affekt*
B	*Gelebte Kirche. Bernanos*
BG	*Das Betrachtende Gebet*
CA	*Der Christ und die Angst*
Cœur	*Au Cœur du mystère rédempteur*
CS	*Christlicher Stand*
EB	*Erster Blick auf Adrienne von Speyr*
HI-VII	*Herrlichkeit, vols. 1–7*
HW	*Das Herz der Welt*
K	*Klarstellungen*
KB	*Karl Barth. Darstellung und Deutung seiner Theologie*
KL	*Kosmische Liturgie*
Kw	*Kreuzweg*
PI	*Pneuma und Institution*
RS	*Nochmals. Reinhold Schneider*
SC	*Spiritus Creator*
SV	*Sponsa Verbi*
SwG	*Schwestern im Geist*
TDI-V	*Theodramatik, vols. 1–5*
TDT	*Theologie der drei Tage*
TG	*Theologie der Geschichte*
TLI-III	*Theologik, vols. 1–3*
UA	*Unser Auftrag*
VC	*Verbum Caro*
WdK	*Wenn ihr nicht werdet wie dieses Kind*
ZSW	*Zu Seinem Werk*

2. Other Abbreviations

a(a).	article(s)
AAS	*Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Romae (1909)
BDAG	W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament another Early Christian Literature*, rev. and ed. by F. Danker,

	based on Walter Bauer's *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der frühchristlichen Literatur*, sixth edition, ed. K. Aland and B. Aland, with V. Reichmann and on previous English editions by W. Arndt, F. Gingrich and F. Danker, Chicago 1957, 2000[3]
c.	*circa*
CCC	*Catechism of the Catholic Church*
Cf.	Confer
Dr(s).	Doctor(s)
DS	H. Denziger and A. Schönmetzer (eds), *Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum*, Freiburg 1937[23]
DSM-IV-TR	*Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition, text revision
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
ed.	editor(s)
EDNT	H. Balz and G. Schneider (eds), *Exegetisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (vol. 2; Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 1978–1980); English trans., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* (vol. 2; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990)
Eng.	English translation
et al.	*et alii*, and others
etc.	*et cetera*
f(f).	following page(s)
i.e.	*id est*, that is
Ital.	Italian translation
LW	*Luther's Works*
n.	note/number
nn.	numbers
orig.	original
p(p).	page(s)
q(q).	question(s)
rev.	revised
RSV	Revised Standard Version
sol.	solution
St(s).	Saint(s)
STh	*Summa Theologica*
trans.	translation, translator
WA	*Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*

Introduction: A Tale of Two Gardens

The contemporary situation of western civilization is marked by a profound anxiety. Several factors have converged to create and intensify this anxiety. These factors include the rise of atheism, the speed of technological advance, the annihilation of hope in human progress, especially with the devastation of the two World Wars and the loss of hope in human reason in post-modern philosophy. We can also think of the unexpected, tragic and continued threats of natural disasters, terrorism (whose very name indicates its intention to spread anxiety), nuclear disaster now in the form of a 'dirty bomb' and the continued social and political destruction of core institutions like the nuclear family which are so necessary to instill in people a sense of security. In the United States, for example, anxiety is second only to drug abuse as the most common mental health problem affecting approximately 25 per cent of the population.[1] Historians observe that at the end of an age, as the dominant civilization declines, the level of anxiety felt in that people increases. As in the waning days of the Roman Empire, the twenty-first century in the West is also aptly termed an 'age of anxiety'.[2]

The etymological roots of anxiety convey, first and foremost, the sense of a *constriction* in the throat or heart.[3] Perhaps the greatest attention given to this universal human phenomenon in recent decades is, from what might be termed in a broad sense, the psychological sciences, which would include psychiatry, psychoanalysis and psychology. In order to obtain a grasp of the phenomenon under consideration for this study where we explore Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology of anxiety, we first briefly present psychiatry's description of the phenomenon. This brief treatment is done in the manner of

1. Anxiety is a factor in drug abuse, and also plays a role in many other mental illnesses (cf. A. Sims, *Symptoms in the Mind: An Introduction to Descriptive Psychopathology* [London: Saunders Ltd., 2003], p. 335).

2. Cf. E.R. Dodds, *Pagan and Christian in an Age of Anxiety: some Aspects of Religious Experience from Marcus Aurelius to Constantine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963).

3. Cf. J. Ritter (ed.), *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* (vol. 1; Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe, 1971), p. 310. The root word in Greek is ἄγχειν and in Latin *angor* meaning 'to choke', or 'to throttle' and 'to feel oppressiveness or apprehension'. The Latin word *angustiae* means 'narrowness, crampedness or tightness', and *angere* meaning 'choking in the throat', or 'an oppressiveness in the heart' (H.J. Sandkühler [ed.], *Europäische Enyzklopädie zu Philosophie und Wissenschaften* [Hamburg: F. Meiner, 1990], pp. 134–35). The term is related to anguish, fear (*timor, Furcht*), and terror (*Schreck*).

'descriptive psychopathology' which seeks to avoid theoretical explanations for psychological events.[4]

The Phenomenon of Anxiety According to Psychiatry

In general

Anxiety can be described in general as 'a diffuse, unpleasant, vague sense of apprehension, often accompanied by autonomic symptoms such as headache, perspiration, palpitations, tightness in the chest, mild stomach discomfort and restlessness, indicated by an inability to sit or stand still for long'.[5] The characteristic feeling of anxiety is constriction, and the person may feel 'restless, uncertain, vulnerable, trapped, breathless, choked. As well as feeling frightened and worried, hypochondriacal ideas and even feelings of guilt are often prominent'.[6]

Many, but not all, in psychiatry make a distinction between 'anxiety' and 'fear' with fear being the response to an identifiable danger while anxiety is the response to an unidentifiable threat.[7] In such an understanding, fear is

4. Cf. Sims, *Symptoms in the Mind*, 3. It is admitted from the beginning that constructing such a phenomenological sketch is difficult because of the wide variance within psychiatry on basic definitions and first principles. A primary reason for this variance is historical. Psychoanalytic schools of thought, rooted in Freud's approach, tend to focus on a person's early developmental history and current unconscious conflicts rather than precisely describing the phenomena themselves. Another significant tradition, exemplified by E. Kraepelin and the 'Heidelberg school', pays very careful attention to the phenomena as they appear to the therapist and experienced by the patient. The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, so influential in psychiatry in the United States, reflects these two traditions. The *DSM-II* took a more psychoanalytic, psychodynamic approach, while the *DSM-III* and current *DSM-IV* took a more Kraepelinian approach. This second approach provides operational definitions based on clusters of symptoms, while trying to remain 'theory neutral' about the origins of these symptoms, or the reasons why symptoms tend to cluster in these specific ways. The following description attempts to follow in the line more of the second tradition while recognizing that even supposedly neutral scientific observations are influenced by theory. I am grateful to Aaron Kheriaty, MD (psychiatry) and Lynne Bissonette-Pitre, MD, PhD (psychiatry and neurophysiology) for their invaluable assistance on the psychiatric portions of this study.

5. B. Sadock and V. Sadock (eds), *Kaplan and Sadock's Synopsis of Psychiatry* (Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2002), p. 591.

6. Sims, *Symptoms in the Mind*, pp. 329–330. Cf. A. Colman (ed.), *A Dictionary of Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 46; R. Corsini (ed.), *The Dictionary of Psychology* (Philadelphia: Taylor & Francis, 1999), p. 58.

7. Cf. Sadock and Sadock (eds), *Kaplan and Sadock's Synopsis*, pp. 591–92; A. Kazdin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (vol. 1; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 209. Freud indicates this fundamental nuance: 'I shall avoid going more closely into the question of whether our linguistic usage means the same thing or something clearly different by "*Angst*", "*Furcht*" and "*Schreck*". I will only say that I think "*Angst*" relates to the state and disregards the object, while "*Furcht*" draws attention precisely to the object. It seems that "*Schreck*", on the other hand, does have a special sense; it lays emphasis, that is, on the

sometimes classified as a form of anxiety. Others do not draw a strong distinction between fear and anxiety, and hold that anxiety can have both a definite and indefinite object. It seems the distinction here is primarily in the cognitive symptoms.

Anxiety, moreover, can be experienced in varying degrees or intensity.[8] It can manifest itself in what therapists call a low level: a generalized, constant low-grade worry with uneasy feelings, self-doubts and may be accompanied by irritable bowel or mild nausea. It can intensify to a medium state of a constant high-grade worry with all the characteristics of the first degree but intensified. Finally the anxiety can become so intense that it mounts into a panic attack which can suddenly appear and is so horribly intense that a person may think he is about to die, and would prefer to die rather than to ever experience another one.[9] A person experiencing an anxiety attack often feels like they are having a heart attack or suffocating to death, that death is imminent, and often precipitates a visit to the emergency room of a hospital.

Anxiety is also classified in psychiatry as normal and abnormal (or disordered). Most individuals have some anxiety in response to danger (normal), whereas some people have so much anxiety that it is considered a disorder (abnormal). Anxiety as a mental disorder is 'the most prevalent psychiatric condition in the United States and in most other populations studied'.[10] Anxiety disorders include Panic Attack Disorder, Agoraphobia, Specific Phobia, Social Phobia, Obsessive–Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Anxiety disorder due to a general medical condition.[11] Psychiatry describes the phenomenon of anxiety in terms of three often inseparable clusters of symptoms: physiological, cognitive and behavioural.

Physiological symptoms

Physiological symptoms, also called somatic and autonomic symptoms, describe how the human body experiences anxiety. Anxiety creates a physiological response in the body to the perceived threat. It triggers an alert in the

effect produced by a danger which is not met by any preparedness for anxiety. We might say, therefore, that a person protects himself from fright by anxiety' (S. Freud, *The Complete Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* [trans. J. Strachey; New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1966], p. 395).

8. There is debate in psychiatry as to whether the intensity of anxiety should be classified categorically, that is, as qualitatively different types of anxiety, or dimensionally, that is, as differing only in degree or intensity. The latter view understands anxiety as existing on a continuum, rather than as distinct states with no sharply defined lines between various 'types' of anxiety.

9. Cf. American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV-TR* (Washington D.C.: American Psychiatric Association, 2000), p. 395.

10. Sadock and Sadock (eds), *Kaplan and Sadock's Comprehensive Textbook of Psychiatry* (vol. 1; Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2000), p. 1441.

11. Cf. *DSM-IV-TR*, pp. 393–444.

brain which then turns on the autonomic nervous system.[12] The autonomic nervous system sends out impulses to activate the organs of the body so that the individual experiences a readiness for self-preservation by fighting or fleeing which involves brain processes, neurochemical changes, hormonal release and changes in blood pressure and circulation. Common physiological, and objectively measurable, symptoms include heart palpitations, difficulty in breathing, hyperventilation, dry mouth, sweating, trembling or shaking, nausea, abdominal churning, cold skin, chest pain, dizziness, numbness or tingling, chills or hot flashes, diarrhoea, flatulence, difficulty in swallowing, muscle soreness, weak knees, overactive bladder, dilation of the pupils of the eyes and fatigue.[13] Such somatic phenomena may be isolated or coincide with others. During a panic attack, four or more of these can occur simultaneously. In short, anxiety has a universal impact on the body affecting every organ in the body to some degree.[14]

Cognitive symptoms

Anxiety is also experienced as a phenomenon in the mind. The mental symptoms include anxious anticipation and inner (psychic) terror which can manifest in anxious thoughts: 'Something terrible is going to happen'; 'I cannot handle this'; 'This situation is too much for me'; 'Perhaps I have done something that has inadvertently caused calamity'; 'I am a terrible failure'; 'I want to run away from here'; or 'I want to jump out of my body'. The thoughts can range 'from excessive concern about a specific event such as dying in a plane crash or being contaminated by germs, or about a myriad of everyday events such as family matters, personal finances or personal health'.[15] These anxious cognitions appear as recurring, intrusive and unwanted, and can include a sudden flashback to a traumatic event as in PTSD, a fearful or catastrophic thought connected with a particular object or event as in a Specific Phobia, or recurrent and hard to eliminate thoughts, images or impulses, as in OCD.[16] Anxious cognitions can also be focused on God and can take the form of 'Will I be acceptable?'; 'Am I able to please him even with my weakness, failures and sinfulness?'; 'Will I ever be able to achieve what is being asked of me?'

12. There are two schools of thought in psychiatry on whether the biological triggers the psychological or vice versa. Cf. Sadock and Sadock (eds), *Kaplan and Sadock's Synopsis*, p. 594.

13. Cf. Kazdin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 212; R. Gregory (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to the Mind* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 30.

14. Cf. Gregory (ed.), *The Oxford Companion*, p. 30. The biological sciences have contributed greatly to elucidate the physiological mechanisms underlying the somatic symptoms of anxiety, for example, in the role of various neurotransmitters (such as norepinephrine, serotonin, and GABA) play, or the neuroanatomical changes in the limbic system and cerebral cortex due to new techniques of functional brain imaging such as SPECT and PET scans, that mediate the somatic symptoms of anxiety.

15. Kazdin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, p. 212.

16. Ibid., 212.

and, during times of spiritual darkness, 'Will he ever return to me again with consolation?'. Anxious cognitions can be conscious thoughts or unconscious dreams which are called 'anxiety nightmares' which have themes of humiliation, failure or danger and usually take place towards the end of sleep.[17] Psychic symptoms also include irritability, difficulty in concentrating, insomnia and inability to relax.[18] As in the physiological symptoms, the cognitive symptoms can be triggered by the occurrence of a specific event, which can appear spontaneously or be constant.

Listening to the views concerning the genesis of anxiety can help paint a clearer picture of the content of anxious cognitions. Melanie Klein locates it in the fear of death, Rollo May holds that it is caused by the fear of losing essential values, while H. S. Sullivan contends that the cognitions are focused on disapproval in relationships beginning with the foundational relationship of mother and her infant.[19] Existentialist theorists would say that the content of anxious thoughts is comprised of the fear of being alone or being nothing.[20] Aaron Beck, a major theorist and developer of 'cognitive-behavioral' therapy, locates the origin of anxiety in automatic negative thoughts associated with danger, risk, uncontrollability and incapacity.[21] Some locate a cause of disordered anxiety in parents not being consistent or on target in their responses to the infant's or child's signals for help, and classify it as Insecure Attachment Disorder.[22] This may become so ingrained in the child's brain that he will feel insecure and experience anxiety in all subsequent significant relationships. David Barlow suggests that early experiences of helplessness and lack of control produce 'psychological vulnerability' predisposing a person to feel anxious even without an identifiable stressor.[23]

The human brain also learns from its own interior experiences. If, for example, one is anxious about giving a speech, one's brain will be traumatized by the current anxiety and will automatically remember to trigger an anxiety reaction if in the future one is about to give another speech. Some hold that anxious cognitions have their source in some unconscious conflict usually rooted in some unresolved or traumatic event in childhood. Traumatic

17. Cf. Corsini (ed.), *Dictionary of Psychology*, p. 58.

18. Sims, *Symptoms in the Mind*, p. 331.

19. Corsini (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology* (vol. 1; New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2nd ed, 1994), p. 92.

20. Cf. Gregory (ed.), *The Oxford Companion*, p. 31.

21. Cf. A.T. Beck and G. Emery, *Anxiety Disorders and Phobias: A Cognitive Perspective* (New York: Basic Books, 1991).

22. Cf. M. Ainsworth, *Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation* (Mahwah: Erlbaum, 1978); J. Bowlby, *A Secure Base: Parent-Child Attachment and Healthy Human Development* (New York: Basic Books, 1990); S. Greenspan, *Building Healthy Minds: The Six Experiences That Create Intelligence and Emotional Growth in Babies and Young Children* (Cambridge: Da Capo Press, 2000) and D. Siegel, *The Developing Mind: Toward a Neurobiology of Interpersonal Experience* (New York: Guilford, 1999).

23. Cf. D.H. Barlow, 'The Nature of Anxiety: Anxiety, Depression, and Emotional Disorders', in R.M. Rapee and Barlow (eds), *Chronic anxiety: Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Mixed Anxiety-Depression* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991), pp. 1–28.

experiences in childhood (e.g., death of parents, fires, terrorism, abuse, etc.) or later in life (e.g., abuse, abortion, etc.) may become ingrained in both the central and peripheral autonomic nervous system as anxiety with PTSD.

Behavioural symptoms

The phenomenon of anxiety also has a behavioural component. When experiencing anxiety, a person acts in response to the perceived danger in order to avoid the anticipated pain. The most common behaviour in anxiety is *avoidance* in which the individual avoids situations, events or places in which he feels anxious. Behavioural avoidance can take the special form of rituals or compulsions, which are 'repetitive, specific acts designed to prevent or undo the effects of certain stimuli, events, or situations'.[24] Though the behaviour may be effective in avoiding the pain, it also prevents one from exploring further the dangerous situation. Some examples of behaviour avoidance are repetitive washing or cleaning behaviours, procrastination and indecisiveness.

A Perennial Yet Uniquely Modern Theme

Long before the advent of psychiatry and other psychological sciences, the problem of anxiety occupied the thinking of such diverse figures as Aristotle, the Stoics, St. Augustine (354–430), St. John Chrysostom (c. 347–407), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), St. Thomas More (1478–1535), Martin Luther (1483–1546), Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855), Frederick Nietzsche (1844–1900), Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), Martin Heidegger (1889–1976) and Jean-Paul Sartre (1905–1980).

Anxiety was initially classified by Aristotle and the Stoic philosophers as a *passio animae*, that is, a movement of the sensitive appetite of the soul away from the perceived danger. The traditional definition is that anxiety or fear is the apprehension of a threatening future evil from which escape might be possible. This type of suffering, intensified and given a unique quality by the ability to reason, is also closely related to the fundamental philosophical act of wonder (*admiratio*).[25] *Admiratio*, regarded as a positive emotion, is an outward movement of the soul towards the object to be known while fear (*timor*) is the recoil from an object that appears to be threatening. *Admiratio* is indeed an estrangement from what is known but differs from anxiety since *admiratio* pushes *towards* the future to know the existing thing, while anxiety *shrinks* from it to avoid the coming evil. Aquinas classifies wonder as a type of fear since the one who experiences it, shrinks from forming a judgment concerning

24. Kazdin (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, p. 212. Although ritual compulsions can have an obvious relationship to anxiety-provoking obsessions, they can also appear totally unrelated to the obsessions.

25. St. Thomas Aquinas classifies *admiratio* as a type of *timor* (fear). Cf. *STh*. I–II, q. 41, a. 4.

the event or thing which causes him to wonder because he fears to fall short of the truth of the matter. Anxiety in the modern sense does not arise in ancient and medieval thought because of its restriction to the senses and sense appetite as a *passio animae*.

It took an age in which the confidence of being was profoundly shaken to shift anxiety from a *passio animae* to what Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905–1988) terms a 'fundamental situation' (*Grundbefindlichkeit*) of the human mind.[26] As confidence in metaphysics eroded in the post-Enlightenment period, *admiratio* was thought more in terms of anxiety by such thinkers as Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre. Instead of emphasizing reason's movement of trust they instead place the emphasis on reason's movement of flight. For Kierkegaard anxiety comes from man's realization of his own contingency. The perceived threat is not so much a beast coming to devour or a calamity like losing one's job, but rather anxiety comes from the very act of thinking: the threat of one's finitude and contingency stretched out over the abyss of infinite possibility. For Heidegger, anxiety arises less from the possibilities inherent in finite freedom vis-à-vis God, as the possibility for one to become one's authentic self in all its unique individuality. Anxiety for Heidegger shakes man out of his tendency to bury himself in a less demanding and more superficial mode of existence that ultimately is not truly his own. Anxiety is a necessary part of the process of having one's 'inauthentic' self disintegrate and opened up to the possibility of who he should be. Sartre, heavily influenced by Heidegger, views anxiety as arising from the responsibility of human freedom. Though the responsibility of embracing this freedom without God is burdensome and causes anguish, it is the apex of human existence. In Sartre's view, other people become a source of anxiety because the 'other' is a direct obstacle to one's own ability to remain absolutely free and actualize oneself. Relationships, therefore, become an arena of suspicion, anxiety and panic. Since the shift from *passio animae* to a *Grundbefindlichkeit*, anxiety as a theme has taken on a uniquely modern hue in which its objectless and existential qualities are emphasized. This modern sense of anxiety is the focus of the present study.

A Timely Theme

The responses to anxiety in the twentieth century have come primarily from the psychological sciences, philosophy and Lutheran theology.[27] Many of the theological responses have focused on defending the Christian faith from the

26. *CA*, 73; Eng., 123. H. U. von Balthasar's term, *Grundbefindlichkeit*, could also be rendered a 'fundamental *condition*' of the human mind.

27. Most notable among the Lutheran theologians are P. Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970) and *Systematic Theology* (vol. 1; Chicago: University of Chicago, 1973); J. Moltmann, *The Crucified God* (trans. R.A. Wilson and J. Bowden; London: SCM Press, 1974) and *Theology of Hope* (trans. J.W. Leitch; New York: Harper & Row, 1967); and W. Pannenberg, *Systematic Theology* (trans. G.W. Bromiley; vol. 1; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991).

charges of Nietzsche and Freud that Christianity was a religion of anxiety. Although the reality of this suffering has not escaped the attention of the Magisterium,[28] Catholic theologians unfortunately have left this theme largely untouched.[29] With the contemporary situation of the West profoundly marked by anxiety, and the recent silence in Catholic theology on the subject, it is a timely theme for reflection by the Catholic theologian who has the responsibility to speak to the 'other' a reason to believe the saving message of Jesus Christ (1Pt. 3.15).[30]

28. The magisterial usage of the term and the treatment of the theme of anxiety is applied in several ways. The terms *angustia* (a narrow place or disposition, a short time, distress) and the related word *inquietudo* (unrest, disquiet, stormy) appear in several places, most prominently in Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*. Anxiety describes the Pope's concern for the well being of all the faithful (Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi, AAS* 68 [1976], n. 5) and for the world (John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris, AAS* 55 (1963), n. 117; John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia, AAS* 72 (1980), n. 12). The terms are applied to man most frequently to describe his distress about his current situation and the world's future (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes, AAS* 58 [1966], n. 4; John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, AAS* 80 (1988), n. 27), especially in the face of evil (John-Paul II, *Salvifici Doloris, AAS* 76 [1984], nn. 9–10), from rapid scientific and technical progress without meaning (John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio, AAS* 74 [1982], n. 30), from man's awareness of his freedom and responsibility for the world being created and its ensuing problems (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 12, 56; John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens, AAS* 73 [1981], n. 9), from the nuclear threat (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, nn. 77, 81), and from living one's vocation (Pius XI, *Casti Connubii, AAS* 22 [1930], n. 90). Anxiety is something from which the Church prays to the Father to be delivered (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* [Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, rev. edn, 2000] n. 2854). It arises in the struggle with faith's obscurity, and can be a threat to faith when anxiety nourishes doubt (*CCC*, n. 2088). It is a mitigating factor in determining culpability in the moral life (John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae, AAS* 87 [1995], nn. 11, 18). The term *angustia* can also mean 'narrow' and so the term is used at least once in the sense of being narrow minded (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 75).

29. One is hard pressed to find a systematic treatment of anxiety among Catholic theologians in the twentieth century. Among conceptual Thomists such as R. Garrigou-Lagrange and G. Journet, one finds the theme only indirectly in their spiritual or moral writings. Cf. Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature: A Thomistic Solution of Certain Agnostic Antinomies* (trans. B. Rose, OSB; vol. 2; London: B. Herder, 1936); Journet, *The Meaning of Evil* (trans. M. Barry; London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1963). K. Rahner wrote only one short essay on the topic toward the very end of his life. Cf. Rahner, 'Anxiety and Christian Trust in Theological Perspective' in *Theological Investigations*, vol. XXIII: *Final Writings* (trans. J. Donceel and H. Riley; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1992), pp. 3–15. No entry for the theme appears in R. Latourelle and R. Fisichella (eds), *Dizionario di teologia fondamentale* (Assisi: Cittadella, 1990), or in the hefty theological encyclopedia, G. Barbaglio (ed.), *Teologia* (Milano: Edizioni San Paolo, 2002). The contemporary manuals for fundamental theology give passing mention: D. Cassarini, *Elementi di teologia fondamentale* (Assisi: Cittadella, 2003); H. Fries, *Fundamental Theology* (trans. R. Daly; Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1996), and S. Pie-Ninot, *La teologia fondamentale* (Biblioteca di Teologia contemporanea, p.121; Brescia: Queriniana, 2002).

30. I agree with Latourelle that 'these crisis factors (in twentieth-century man) which give rise to protest, rebellion, frustration, restlessness and anxiety, can become points of insertion or stepping-stones for the Gospel and be an unexpected "opportunity" for encounter and dialogue with Christ' (Latourelle, *Man and His Problems in the Light of Jesus Christ* [trans. M. J. O'Connell; New York: Alba House, 1983] pp. 8–9).

The Purpose of the Present Study

The Christian faith claims that anxiety is not only important to God, but that he took this suffering upon himself and thereby redeemed and changed it. One of the most poignant accounts of divine concern for anxiety is St. Thomas More's *De tristitia Christi* which More wrote in his latter days in the Tower while experiencing his own anxiety in the face of probable torture and possible capitulation and apostasy. More's most striking insight is that the Lord Jesus' agony in Gethsemane was so important to the Lord that he went to great lengths after the Resurrection to recount the events that transpired on the Mount of Olives to those who were not present or who were asleep at the time.[31] He wanted to ensure that his apostles knew in detail what happened to him in Gethsemane. Jesus' suffering in anxiety and ultimate victory over it as man in the Garden of Gethsemane makes it possible, in More's view, for man to conquer his in Christ.

As the title of this study suggests, this present work offers a Catholic theological response to the problem of anxiety from the point of view of Hans Urs von Balthasar. The title also suggests that Catholic theology, as represented in Balthasar's work, has something original and profound to contribute on the topic of anxiety. The theme of anxiety became important for Balthasar from his friendship with Albert Béguin (1901–1957), through whom Balthasar became acquainted with the work of Georges Bernanos (1888–1948) and Gertrude von Le Fort (1876–1971),[32] and from the anxious states he observed in Adrienne von Speyr's (1902–1967) mystical experiences of anxiety, who otherwise was a naturally anxiety-free woman.[33]

Balthasar's Methodology in Der Christ und die Angst

The origin of anxiety as a theme in the work of Hans Urs von Balthasar arose in the early 1950s at a time when, during the fervour of Freudian psychoanalysis and existential philosophy, much was being written on the topic. Balthasar saw in the writing of the time, however, a lack of a truly theological treatment of the theme. This lack of a theological perspective among contemporary interpretations of anxiety originates, in his view, in Søren Kierkegaard, although his overall evaluation of Kierkegaard on the theme of anxiety is quite positive. On the one hand, he was the first among Christians, in Balthasar's view, to respond to the rising 'cosmic anxiety of the modern,

31. Cf. T. More, *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, vol. XIV: *De Tristitia Christi* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 189. I am grateful to Prof. Seymour House, PhD., for showing me More's insight into Christ's agony in the Garden.

32. Cf. *UA*, pp. 97–98; Eng., pp. 101–2, 161. Balthasar eventually received Béguin into the Church around the same time as A. von Speyr, and von Speyr served as his godmother. Béguin for his part served as von Speyr's confirmation sponsor. Cf. *EB*, p. 27; E. Guerriero, *Hans Urs von Balthasar* (Novocento teologo, 18; Brescia: Morcelliana, 2006) 161n.

33. Guerriero, *Balthasar*, pp. 153–54.

secular era',[34] and convinced subsequent philosophers that the theme should be given a central place in philosophical and religious reflection. On the other hand, as much as Kierkegaard sought to offer a Christian interpretation of anxiety, he, according to Balthasar, never surpassed the philosophical and psychological perspectives he sought to address. As a result, our author observes that the decades after Kierkegaard were characterized by a 'two-fold secularization' in which the focus of reflection was either philosophical or psychological. Theologians, for their part, remained silent on the theme offering no serious theology of anxiety to engage the philosophical and psychological interpretations, even after the growing tide of anxiety, with its phenomena and various interpretations, washed into the lives of Christians and into the Church. The first among Catholic thinkers to respond to the flurry of writing by psychoanalysis and existential philosophy were, in Balthasar's view, the poets rather than the theologians. Thus our author intends to offer in *Der Christ und die Angst* an explicitly theological treatment of the theme in conversation with the major figures and ideas already in circulation from psychology, philosophy and literature.

In order to offer a serious theological treatment of anxiety which also engages the interpretations offered by psychology, philosophy and literature, Balthasar adopts a particular methodology in *Der Christ und die Angst*. He fixes Divine Revelation as his point of departure and constant point of reference. The Word of God, in his view, is the ultimate authority and measure of anxiety. By taking this point of departure, he seeks to avoid Kierkegaard's problem of remaining within the psychological and philosophical perspective while nevertheless building upon the Danish philosopher's insights and developing them more along the lines of dogmatic theology. By taking this point of departure, furthermore, he intends to avoid a 'false decadence' which wallows in the anxiety it wishes to address, and a 'false escapism' which stands aloof from the problem. He seeks rather to bring the power of Divine Revelation to bear on the contemporary situation of human anxiety.

Balthasar's work is divided into three major parts. The first part is devoted to an investigation of anxiety in Divine Revelation, specifically Sacred Scripture,[35] and constitutes the logical centre of the work. He gleans a selection of passages from Sacred Scripture and attempts to give them a rational ordering so that an outline of an interpretation can appear. Balthasar shows in an original way, through the course of the chapter, how anxiety is profoundly transformed between the Old and New Testaments by Christ's redemption.

He then constructs his theological interpretation of anxiety in the second part of the book. He presents the complex and interrelated phenomena of anxiety as described in Sacred Scripture from which he develops three laws or rules with which the theologian must interpret anxiety. Balthasar's theological interpretation of anxiety in this section engages Martin Luther, and

34. *CA*, p. 7; Eng., p. 31.

35. In his estimation Sacred Tradition has contributed little to the theme. Cf. *CA*, p. 11; Eng., p. 37.

Kierkegaard to a certain extent, on the nature of the Christian's anxiety as well as the Catholic literary figures who portray it: Georges Bernanos, Gertrude von Le Fort, Paul Claudel (1868–1955) and Reinhold Schneider (1903–1958). Balthasar's interpretation manifests the great divide between the Catholic and Protestant interpretations of anxiety. Throughout the course of the first two chapters, he sketches in outline form the biblical, Christological, soteriological and Trinitarian dimensions of anxiety.

In the third chapter, Balthasar takes the discussion of anxiety to its essence in which he brings the discoveries of the biblical and theological investigation to bear on the philosophical discussion. This line of thinking reveals not only his methodological intention of truly connecting the theological with the psycho-philosophical without losing the theological, but also his apologetic intention to connect his theology of anxiety with his contemporaries. The figures he engages in the final part of the book are primarily St. Thomas Aquinas and Kierkegaard on the way anxiety is produced from the operation of human rationality. Balthasar's theological conversation integrates the ontological conversation about the origin of anxiety in original sin and Christ's redemption of it. In the final pages of the work, Balthasar indicates that his theology of anxiety, as expressed in *Der Christ und die Angst*, required further development in its ecclesial dimension, and outlines in a brief manner some aspects of such a development.[36]

Balthasar's theology of anxiety as presented in *Der Christ und die Angst* suggests five ways of analyzing anxiety: the biblical, the phenomenological, the anthropological (comprised of the psychological and philosophical), the theological and the ecclesial. However, in *Der Christ und die Angst* the phenomenological seems underdeveloped and the ecclesial is only briefly sketched.

Balthasar's theological treatment of anxiety in this work also brings to the surface some of the major protagonists on anxiety: Aquinas, Luther, Kierkegaard, Freud and Bernanos, with Kierkegaard given pride of place. Freud is briefly mentioned by name in the text, yet Balthasar refers to his ideas at different points, most especially when referring to the contemporary situation. These six have greater presence of thought in Balthasar's interpretation over some of the other figures mentioned such as Léon Bloy (1846–1917), Paul Claudel, Heidegger, Le Fort and Reinhold Schneider. Also the discreet presence of Nietzsche, Henri de Lubac (1896–1991) and Karl Rahner (1904–1984) can be detected. Jean-Paul Sartre is not mentioned by name, though the final chapter of the text could be viewed as an attempt to connect with his thought. The fact that Balthasar's theology of anxiety engages several figures outside of theology reveals a typical style for our author – he thinks and writes in conversation with other intellectual systems.

Balthasar achieves in this little text a serious theology of anxiety, perhaps one of the only serious Catholic theologies of anxiety from the twentieth

36. Balthasar admits, 'On all these pages there has been much talk about the Christian but little about *the Church*. "The Church and anxiety" could be the central theme for a new treatise' (*CA*, pp. 91–2; Eng., p. 149). (Italics Balthasar's)

century. His theology of anxiety takes Divine Revelation as its point of departure and constant point of reference, and engages the contemporary psychological, philosophical and literary currents concerning anxiety. He succeeds in building upon Kierkegaard's insights while avoiding the insufficiencies of his treatment.

The Methodology of the Present Study, its Scope and Limits

The present study is a systematic presentation, analysis and development of Balthasar's original theology of anxiety. His initial theology of anxiety suggests certain lines of possible development. A first line of development is indicated by Balthasar himself in the need for further reflection on the ecclesial dimension of anxiety.

A second aspect of development appears when one considers that he wrote this text early in his writing career. Balthasar authored most of his other works, including his celebrated trilogy, after *Der Christ und die Angst*. He delineates and develops in these subsequent works his theological anthropology, Trinitarian theology, Christology, soteriology and ecclesiology. The theology of anxiety expressed in *Der Christ und die Angst* could benefit from the ideas expressed in these later works.

A third line of development can be found in Balthasar's phenomenology of anxiety. Our author's primary intention in *Der Christ und die Angst* is to offer his interpretation and devotes scant attention to the phenomenon itself. A more ample phenomenology, developed in light of his other writings, could assist his theology of anxiety to connect with the psychological, philosophical and literary treatments which share a similar view of the phenomenon.

A fourth line of development appears when one considers the explosion of writing about anxiety from the psychological sciences in recent decades. Although Balthasar alludes to Freud in the text, most of his attention is devoted to Kierkegaard's ideas. His emphasis thus falls more on the philosophical than the psychiatric side of anxiety's interpretation. A systematic presentation and analysis of his theology of anxiety could develop Balthasar's conversation with these psychological sciences which dominate current discussions about anxiety.

Balthasar's initial theology of anxiety could be developed further by a comparison with another Catholic theology of anxiety. Our author's theology of anxiety in *Der Christ und die Angst* does not explicitly engage other interpretations of anxiety within Catholic theology. He addresses the psycho-philosophical concerns of his time, yet a comparison with another Catholic theology of anxiety can help to clarify and to develop aspects of Balthasar's interpretation as well as help to show its significance in the Catholic theological tradition.

Finally, the biblical dimension of Balthasar's initial theology of anxiety could be developed. He mentions that Sacred Scripture is the primary font of Divine Revelation on this theme, and the Sacred Page is full of passages on

fear.[37] Our author, however, bases his treatment of anxiety in Sacred Scripture almost exclusively on *Job*, the Wisdom literature and selected New Testament passages. Moreover, he does not offer an exegesis of Jesus' anxiety in *Der Christ und die Angst*, but presents it later in *Theologie der drei Tage*. It is understandable that Balthasar does not intend to give a comprehensive treatment of Sacred Scripture in such a short work, but rather to glean passages relevant to his purposes in *Der Christ und die Angst*.[38]

The present study intends to develop his theology of anxiety along these lines through a systematic approach. First, this study attempts to offer a more detailed picture of his grasp of the phenomenon of anxiety. Second, it seeks to develop the conversation between Balthasar's theology of anxiety and psychiatry. Third, this study endeavours to develop Balthasar's briefly sketched ideas in *Der Christ und die Angst* within the wider context of the whole of his theology. Fourth, this study places his theology of anxiety in conversation with another theology of anxiety in the Catholic theological tradition in order to clarify his interpretation and show its significance in the theological tradition. Fifth, this study endeavours to construct in an initial way the ecclesial dimension of his theology of anxiety. The development of the biblical dimension of his initial theology of anxiety is not taken up directly in this study. Balthasar's theology of anxiety keeps Sacred Scripture as its centre and norm, and thus the biblical dimension of his theology of anxiety is incorporated within the phenomenological and theological analyses as their foundation.

In order to present, analyse and develop Balthasar's initial theology of anxiety, the present study employs a thematic methodology based upon four types of analysis identified in *Der Christ und die Angst* (phenomenological, anthropological, theological and ecclesial) rather than replicate exactly Balthasar's method in that text. This four-fold thematic methodology is used so that the wider context of Balthasar's whole theological project can be more easily incorporated, and that the underdeveloped phenomenological and ecclesial dimensions of his theology of anxiety can be logically incorporated with the

37. One example is B. Costacurta's study on fear in the Old Testament. Her study lists twenty pages of scriptural citations on fear in the Old Testament with more than half existing outside Job and the Wisdom literature. Cf. Costacurta, *La Vita Minacciata: Il tema della paura nella Bibbia Ebraica* (Analecta Biblica, 119; Roma: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana, 1997), pp. 322–42.

38. On this point I would slightly modify Francesc Torralba-Roselló's suggestion that Balthasar offers 'una anàlisi exhaustiva' of the Old and New Testaments in *Der Christ und die Angst*. Balthasar's final analysis may exhaustively account for Sacred Scripture's view of anxiety, but the passages from Sacred Scripture upon which he builds his analysis are far from exhaustive. However, I do agree with Torralba-Roselló that Balthasar's use of Sacred Scripture on the theme of anxiety is much more exhaustive and ordered than S. Kierkegaard's in his *Concept of Anxiety*, although Kierkegaard also takes the Bible as his point of reference. Cf. Torralba-Roselló, 'Teologia de l'angoixa: Kierkegaard i Urs von Balthasar', in J. Busquets and M. Martinell (eds), *Fe i teologia en la história: Estudios en honor del Prof. Dr. Evangelista Vilanova* (Barcelona: Publicacions Abadía Montserrat SA, 1997), pp. 449–56 (452n).

anthropological and theological dimensions. These four analyses constitute the four parts of this study which progresses from the phenomenological to the anthropological to the theological and finally to the ecclesial in which the anthropological is inserted into the theological. The entire study is framed by the two Gardens wherein transpire the most significant events concerning anxiety in Balthasar's theology: the Garden of Eden and the Garden of Gethsemane.

The order of this four-fold analysis also follows the logic of approaching anxiety as an illness in its symptoms, its root cause, its cure and its treatment. Anxiety is not simply a theoretical idea, but a real suffering for many people who desire to make sense of it and to have it relieved or transformed. This thematic progression places the four analyses in intrinsic connection with each other, and also follows Balthasar's own methodology in *Der Christ und die Angst* in which he argues that the anthropological analysis needed to be taken into a theological analysis. Each analysis, by being placed in this order, is thus shaped by a particular focus. The phenomenological analysis shows Balthasar's grasp of the symptoms of anxiety. His anthropological analysis searches for the origins of anxiety within the human person in which the philosophical and psychological investigations are led into his theological anthropology. The theological analysis reveals how Jesus Christ redeemed and changed the objective nature of anxiety. Finally the ecclesial analysis shows how human anxiety is transformed by its insertion into Christ's redemption of anxiety. It is admitted that a systematic treatment of a theme in the theology of Balthasar it difficult due to the breadth of his writing and the complexity of his style and vocabulary. I suggest, however, that the aforementioned methodology harmonizes with Balthasar's method in *Der Christ und die Angst*, offers a more systematic presentation of Balthasar's theology of anxiety and renders the dense text of *Der Christ und die Angst* more accessible to the reader.

Phenomenological analysis: East of Eden

The first part of the thesis begins East of Eden by constructing a more complete description of Balthasar's *phenomenology* of anxiety in both the human condition and in Jesus Christ. Chapter 1 presents the phenomenon of human anxiety in his own life, in the life of Adrienne von Speyr – whose anxiety originally brought the theme to Balthasar's attention – and in the people about whom he writes. Chapter 2 describes the phenomenon of anxiety in Jesus Christ in Balthasar's reading of the biblical accounts in both the Synoptic Gospels and in the Gospel of John. By presenting Balthasar's phenomenology of anxiety, I seek to demonstrate that he grasps the phenomenon of anxiety in a way that resonates with the description offered by contemporary psychiatry. This grasp, in turn, helps his theology of anxiety to connect more deeply with the philosophical and psychiatric approaches.