

Traversals

Maurice Blondel and Erich Przywara at the Intersection of Phenomenology, Revelation, and Theological Metaphysics

by Jack Louis Pappas

This paper explores the contributions of two early 20th-century Catholic thinkers, Maurice Blondel and Erich Przywara, both of whom can be regarded as indirect forebears to recent French phenomenology's so-called 'theological turn.' Though much of recent French phenomenology has turned to the phenomenality of divine revelation or the discourses of revealed theology as a means of overcoming metaphysics, Blondel and Przywara each attempt to utilize phenomenological methods to demonstrate the exigency and validity of a religious metaphysics within the climate of modern philosophy. Nonetheless, despite these commonalities, Blondel and Przywara ultimately differ concerning their phenomenological approaches as well as their broader conceptions of the relationship between phenomenology, theological metaphysics, and divine revelation. By contrasting Blondel's assertion concerning the intrinsic desire of creaturely existence for the supernatural with Przywara's notion of God's absolute otherness and exteriority, this paper argues that Blondel's approach 'from below' better integrates phenomenology and theology in a model that avoids reducing revelation to a purely vertical imposition 'from above.' In doing so, this paper suggests that Blondel's approach can serve as a corrective to recent phenomenological considerations of revelation that have emphasized the discontinuity between God's self-manifestation and the horizon of ordinary experience.

1. Introduction: Toward a Phenomenological *Ressourcement*

Though it is now well-known that the last several decades of French phenomenology have been defined in large part by efforts to either broadly correlate phenomenological reflection with the discourses of Christian theology or – more minimally – to apply phenomenological methods to the domain of explicitly religious phenomena and experiences, there has been a surprising lack of engagement with the earlier encounters between Christian theology and phenomenology that unfolded at the turn of the 20th century.¹ Where treated, especially in recent historical studies, there has nevertheless been little constructive reflection

¹ Cf. Christina M. Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics*, New York 2013, 287–294. See also J. Aaron Simmons, "Continuing to Look for God in France: On the Relationship between Phenomenology and Theology", in: J. Aaron Simmons; Bruce Ellis Benson (eds.), *Words of Life: New Theological Turns in French Phenomenology*, New York 2010, 15–30. See also Dominique Janicaud, "The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology," trans. by Bernard G. Prusak, in: id. et al. (eds.), *Phenomenology and the "Theological Turn": The French Debate*, New York 2000, 16–87.

on how this period of dialogue might be resourced as a means for addressing contemporary debates over the relationship between phenomenology and theological discourse or critically contribute to recent interrogations of the phenomenality of divine revelation.² To this end, my paper aims to provide something of a modest intervention on these very questions by examining the work of two important, though frequently overlooked, figures who each may be regarded as indirect forebears of recent phenomenology's so-called 'theological turn': Maurice Blondel and Erich Przywara. Like their distant heirs in contemporary French thought, Blondel and Przywara both utilize phenomenological or phenomenologically approximate methods to affirm the possibility of supernatural revelation, and with it, the possibility of an authentic theological discourse that would surpass the critiques of traditional theology launched by modern philosophy's turn to the subject.

However, in sharp contrast with much of recent French phenomenology, above all as represented by Marion, Blondel and Przywara employ the phenomenological analysis to demonstrate the exigency and validity of a religious metaphysics rather than attempting to criticize or overcome it. That is, for Blondel and Przywara alike, phenomenology opens up the possibility of mediating between divine revelation and metaphysical reflection, instead of drawing these terms into opposition. According to Blondel, a strictly phenomenological interrogation of the dynamics of consciousness and volition inevitably anticipates fulfillment in supernatural revelation as its final terminus, even though this properly theological finality forever exceeds and cannot be deduced from mere philosophy. Likewise, from Przywara's perspective, the phenomenological reflection on finite Being reveals its non-subsistence and analogically points beyond itself toward the infinite transcendence of the absolute. And yet, as I will show, despite these similarities, Blondel and Przywara finally differ both concerning their particular approaches as well as their broader conceptions of the relationship between phenomenology, revelation, and theological metaphysics.

While Blondel's approach turns on a kind of transcendental analysis of the relationship between consciousness and action, Przywara's method emphasizes the priority of the given phenomenon as its point of departure. Blondel ultimately insists upon the intrinsic orientation of the intending subject toward the supernatural, where Przywara, instead, emphasizes the absolute alterity and exteriority of God to the domain of finite Being. By contrasting Blondel's approach to Przywara's, I will advance the tentative claim that the former's approach 'from below' better correlates phenomenology and theology in a way that resists subordinating ordinary experience to the excess of revelation, or else takes theology as a self-authenticating discourse that imposes itself in purely vertical terms 'from above.' Blondel's approach, I maintain, can serve as a corrective not only to Przywara's method but to similar tendencies present in the work of more contemporary phenomenologists who have likewise stressed a basic discontinuity between the supernatural order of faith and the horizon of our ordinary experience.

There are three components to my argument. First, I examine Blondel's phenomenology or 'method immanence' and his account of the human subject. In doing so, I demonstrate how Blondel at once demonstrates phenomenology's insufficiency for establishing either

² See especially: *Edward Baring*, *Converts to the Real: Catholicism and the Making of Continental Philosophy*, Cambridge, MA 2019 and *Christian Dupont*, *Phenomenology in French Philosophy: Early Encounters*, New York 2014.

the fact of revelation or a theological metaphysics by paradoxically grounding the exigency of both after the gratuity of God's actual self-disclosure. To this end, Blondel shows that the insufficiency of phenomenology is relative to the supernatural and related to its ultimate dependency on revelation as the final terminus of human reflection and action. Second, I then examine Przywara's phenomenological ontology and account of the analogy of Being as an insurmountable 'unity-in-polarity.' By explicating Przywara's analogical mode of phenomenology, I show how the tension between likeness and 'ever-greater dissimilarity' between God and creation allows Przywara to hold open the possibility of revelation without comprising its gratuity or identifying the supernatural too closely with an intrinsic capacity of our created nature. This account of Blondel and Przywara's respective phenomenological methods illustrates their similar emphases concerning the insufficiency of phenomenology and its exigent openness to the possibility of the supernatural as well as their shared commitment to a theological metaphysics grounded in the primacy of revelation. In the third and final section, however, I show how Przywara and Blondel finally diverge over their understanding of revelation and how their differences of theological emphasis shape their, ultimately opposed, accounts of the relationship between phenomenology and theology and their conflicting notions of divine phenomenality.

In addition, I argue that the so-called analogical character of Przywara's thought privileges God's otherness in such a way that it forecloses any genuine sense of mutuality between divine and human freedom or revelation and ordinary phenomenality. In contrast, Blondel's emphasis on the coincidence of humanity and divinity in Christ allows him to overcome these binaries and to unfold a thoroughgoing correlation between phenomenology and theology without undermining the autonomy of either discourse, such that he simultaneously affirms phenomenology's limits while also preserving the gratuity of revelation.

2. Blondel's Phenomenology of Immanence

Nearly a decade before Husserl's initial phenomenological breakthrough, Blondel's 1893 doctoral dissertation *l'Action* had already sought to reconcile volition and consciousness by undertaking a descriptive analysis of human action, unfolding via a 'method of immanence' that began from the most basic operations of the concrete subject.³ Blondel's proto-phenomenological approach, in contrast with Husserl's later and somewhat narrower ambitions, ultimately aims to interrogate the possibility of the supernatural from within the

³ Cf. *Maurice Blondel, l'Action*, Paris 1950. The translation used hereafter is that of Oliva Blanchette. Cf. *Blondel, Action: Essay on a Critique of Life and a Science of Practice* (1893), South Bend 1984. For further exposition of Blondel's philosophy and its influences see, *Michael A. Conway*, "A Positive Phenomenology: The Structure of Maurice Blondel's early philosophy", in: *Heythrop Journal* 47 (2006) 579–600; *Oliva Blanchette*, "Blondel's Original Philosophy of the Supernatural", in: *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia*, 49/3 (1993) 413–444; *John McQuarrie*, *Total Commitment: Maurice Blondel's L'Action*, Washington D.C. 1968; *Adam English*, *The Possibility of Christian Philosophy: Maurice Blondel at the Intersection of Theology and Philosophy*, London 2007, and *John McNeil*, *The Blondelian Synthesis*, Leiden 1968.

domain of philosophy.⁴ Blondel does not from the outset presuppose that the supernatural is somehow explicit or immediately self-evident to the structure of action, but that action unfolds from itself toward a terminus that exceeds it. For Blondel, all activity implicitly raises an inexhaustible question: “Yes or no, does human life make sense, and does man have a destiny?”⁵ By ascertaining the fundamental structure of action, Blondel attempts to demonstrate that human existence is unable to satisfy its aspirations for ultimate meaning and thus is innately oriented toward its self-transcendence, directed toward a supernatural order that alone fulfills the purposeful drive behind activity as such. Blondel proceeds by imposing a certain methodological reduction that allows the phenomenon of action to show itself from itself.⁶ In doing so, Blondel observes that the totality of action hinges on a disequilibrium between the “willed will” [*la volonté voulue*] and the “willing will” [*la volonté voulante*].⁷ This basic opposition, Blondel claims, constitutes the basic dilemma of human existence, which is always simultaneously fated toward action but also incapable of achieving the aim for which it acts.⁸

According to Blondel, action consists in the attempt of our willing capacity, or “willing will” to find satisfaction through imposing itself on a given object.⁹ Nonetheless, in every instance, the simple object of action, or the ‘willed will’ remains tragically inadequate to the dynamism of the ‘willing will,’ which cannot be exhausted by any finite object.¹⁰ Consequently, the will is compelled to impose itself on ever greater and comprehensive orders of objects for the sake of attaining a final equilibrium.¹¹ Blondel traces the dialectic between the dynamism of the ‘willing will’ and the ‘willed will’ in successive stages, beginning with immediate consciousness, and moving through individuality, family, society, and religion. At the level of consciousness, the subject first encounters itself relative to its embodied situation in the world, where it meets the resistance of given phenomena and is spontaneously drawn ‘outside’ itself in an intentionally directed movement.¹² Through this spontaneous upsurge of motive and motility, consciousness becomes entangled in deliberation and is equipped to take up divergent possibilities for fulfilling its capacity for voluntary acts.¹³ This exteriorized ‘expansion’ of action from reflective consciousness to acts, extends from the individual exertion of the ‘willing will’ to ‘willed will,’ is inevitably entangled to either act in consort or conflict with other subjects and gives rise to interpersonal and social existence, expressed both within the domain of family and, more generally, political life.¹⁴ By extension, these domains of ‘coaction’ are intrinsically linked to the question of morality,

⁴ For a comprehensive exploration the relationship between Blondel’s philosophy of action and Husserl’s phenomenology, see *Christian Dupont*, *Phenomenology in French Philosophy: Early Encounters*, New York 2014, 60–97.

⁵ Cf. *Blondel*, *l’Action* (see fn. 3), 3.

⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 10–15.

⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 105–108.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 111–119.

⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 51–54.

¹⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 121–125.

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 145–149.

¹² Cf. *ibid.*, 151–156.

¹³ Cf. *ibid.*, 197–206.

¹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 207–210.

which confronts individual consciousness with the problem of justifying the character of its shared or diverging aims relative to those of the totality of humanity in history.¹⁵

The status of willed activity's ultimate significance and adequacy vis-à-vis or inexhaustible drive toward further action, in Blondel's terms, gives rise to the domain of religious cult.¹⁶ Blondel summarizes,

“in spreading out and realizing itself, the will cannot find in its objective work all that it harbors in the sanctuary of its interior life [...] in order to be what he wants to be, what he is already in desire and intention, the subject presents from himself, under the form of a symbol or an idol, his own need for completion and perfection, he adores the incommunicable and inexhaustible life whose source he bears within himself.”¹⁷

Through the founding of a ritual, in other words, the subject fashions a means for deriving the meaning of its voluntary acts and drawing together all of its preceding modes of activity in an absolute act of worship or sacrifice that would conclusively satisfy the dynamism of ‘willing will.’ And yet, for Blondel, our effort to explicate the meaning of action and to fashion its final term for ourselves paradoxically serves only to nullify the infinite scope of our ‘willing will’ and attaches us to an arbitrarily willed fetish object or ‘superstition’ that can only leave us dissatisfied.¹⁸ In the end, as Blondel sees it, any religious ritual grounded on a finite object is doomed to fail, since our capacity for further volition remains unrestricted and open to further possibilities beyond what we have willed in a particular instance.¹⁹ To embrace the false terminus of action provided by rituals of superstition betrays our openness to the inexhaustible surplus of possibility that remains beyond our reach and, as such, conceals the fact that we are incapable of determining the final significance of action from the standpoint of our immanent horizon.²⁰

With each successive stage, consciousness thus becomes increasingly convinced by the illusory possibility of fulfilling the ‘willing will’ in a single exercise of the ‘willed will,’ until it is confronted with a supreme choice, a “fundamental option” [*option fondamentale*] to either accept its incapacity or to identify its destiny with the series of its achievements.²¹ To choose the latter, Blondel argues, yields only in superstition, which elevates a finite object to the status of an absolute, consigning the will to its disequilibrium and rendering it incapable of further action.²² This “death of action” [*mort de l'action*], as Blondel names it, throws the subject back upon itself so that “in adhering to objects whose insufficiency it has recognized [...] the will so to speak, objectivizes itself in itself and subjectivizes itself in them.”²³ Conversely, to admit the “one thing necessary” [*une chose nécessaire*] and submit

¹⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 210–217.

¹⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 234–240.

¹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 286.

¹⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 287 f.

¹⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 292–296.

²⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 296–299.

²¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 314–319.

²² Cf. *ibid.*, 288–292.

²³ Cf. *ibid.*, 334.

ourselves to the exigency of the supernatural heightens and maintains the *élan* of the 'willing will,' by affirming the absolute as the infinite ground and receding horizon of all action.²⁴ In the end, only the supernatural can correspond to the irrepressible desire of the 'willing will,' compelling the will to will itself in full recognition of the disproportion between its *élan* and its desired finality.²⁵ By embracing the supernatural as the 'one thing necessary,' in other words, action is paradoxically exposed in its insufficiency and redoubled, compelled to embrace further possibilities and ceaselessly referred beyond itself toward a horizon that exceeds its capacity for achievement.

By following this analytic 'method of immanence' to its end, Blondel demonstrates that modern subjectivity implicitly presupposes and anticipates supernatural transcendence.²⁶ The immanent dialectic of human action is incapable of reconciling the 'willing will' with the 'willed will,' so that even at the level of theoretical reflection, we find ourselves unable to exhaust the question of our final destiny, awaiting an answer from beyond our domain of possibilities.²⁷ For Blondel, the supernatural orientation of our natural *élan* indicates that every form of human philosophy remains incomplete and requires fulfillment by a revealed theology. This does not mean that somehow theology engulfs philosophy or vice-versa, but rather that the relationship between these discourses is reflective of the simultaneous distinction and paradoxical unity of the natural and supernatural orders. The properly human or 'natural' discourse of philosophy is autonomous and free, yet also integrally directed toward the hypothesis of a supernatural revelation which it implicitly presupposes in every act of questioning. As Blondel puts it, "*nonjatrix nisi libera: non libera nisi adjutrix philosophia*. The fullness of philosophy consists, not in a presumptuous self-sufficiency, but in the study of its powerlessness and of the means which are offered from elsewhere to supply its powerlessness."²⁸ That is, philosophy's authentic vocation lies in paving the way for the possibility of revelation without presupposing it as a given fact. While, in turn, theology proclaims how the reality of the supernatural meets, fulfills, and surpasses the vital demands of human existence.²⁹

If metaphysics, for Blondel, represents nothing less than a phenomenological reflection on the dynamics of action, then theological discourse, as opened and mediated by supernatural revelation, represents a 'metaphysics to the second power' or an *a posteriori* amplification and deepening of what is already made known within the domain of ordinary phenomenality. There is no rupture or inversion of the action's ascending anticipation of the supernatural, but rather a paradoxical descent of grace that completes the openness of our dynamism in a way that we would otherwise be incapable of achieving by our power. The insufficiency of the finite or natural order is such that it intrinsically refers beyond itself to an unknown supernature even as it is likewise the exigent medium through which the supernatural is made known and freely revealed. Blondel writes, "in a sense, everything is

²⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 319–324.

²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 350–357.

²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 358–362.

²⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 368–372.

²⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 361–362.

²⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 389–391.

supernatural and nothing is, because in every act, better in every phenomenon, there subsists in what is known, an irreducible mystery” in such a way that “those who are not content with any purely natural form of action are the ones who know how to be content with faith hold themselves to it.”³⁰ Briefly, there is a reciprocity and co-participation between nature and supernature where the ascending movement of phenomenology ‘from below’ is fulfilled by the descending movement of theology ‘from above,’ without reducing each related term to the latter or annulling their mutual and complementary freedom toward the other.

To reflect on ordinary experience means, therefore, to always be implicitly open to the possibility of theology, while theology in both form and content necessarily explicates and refigures that which is already prefigured in phenomenology. For Blondel, there is no ‘naked’ event of revelation that arrives upon us as an unconditioned phenomenon or imposes itself on us as wholly passive recipients. Rather, divine revelation is only in proportion to our capacity to receive it, arriving in such a way that it is genuinely mediated by our finite conditions of possibility.

3. Przywara’s Analogical Phenomenology

Przywara’s thought runs in the opposite direction of Blondel’s and proceeds via an analysis of finite Being’s disclosure, rather than starting from a transcendental analysis of intentionality and action. Developed throughout the first decades of the 20th century, and crystallizing in his 1932 magnum opus *Analogia Entis*,³¹ Przywara’s philosophy attempts to reconcile the scholastic doctrine of the ‘analogy of Being’ [*analogia entis*] with the standpoint of phenomenology.³² For Przywara, analogy gives formal expression to our primal sense of

³⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 361.

³¹ Cf. *Erich Przywara*, *Analogia Entis: Ur-Struktur und All-Rhythmus*, Einsiedeln 1932. The translation used hereafter is that of John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart: *Przywara, Analogia Entis: Original Structure and Universal Rhythm*, Grand Rapids 2014. For further accounts of Przywara’s thought see *Thomas O’Meara*, *Erich Przywara, SJ: His Theology and His World*, South Bend 2002; *John Betz*, “Erich Przywara and the Analogia Entis: A Genealogical Diagnosis and Metaphysical Critique of Modernity,” in: Baláz Mezei et al. (eds.), *Christian Wisdom Meets Modernity*, London 2016, 71–91; *John Betz*, “The *Analogia Entis* as a standard of Catholic Engagement: Erich Przywara’s Critique of Phenomenology and Dialectical Theology,” in: *Modern Theology* 35/1 (2019) 81–192; *Lexi Eikelboom*, *Rhythm: A Theological Category*, Oxford 2018; *Philip John Paul Gonzales*, *Reimagining the Analogia Entis: The Future of Erich Przywara’s Christian Vision*, Grand Rapids 2019.

³² In purely metaphysical terms, the doctrine of the *analogia entis* can be traced back perhaps even as early as the corpus of Plotinus (204–270) and remains a consistent but inchoate principle for numerous scholastic doctors of late antiquity and the Middle Ages, including for Aquinas himself. From an explicitly theological vantage, however, it is noteworthy that the *analogia entis* only emerges as a central principle for the commentary tradition following Thomas Cajetan OP, Cardinal-bishop of Palermo (1469–1534). Despite this, Przywara claims (in typical neo-scholastic fashion) that the *analogia entis* represents the perennial thought-form of Christian orthodoxy, even going as far as to explicitly identify the doctrine with the dogmatic pronouncement of the Fourth Lateran General Council (1215) against Joachim de Fiore (1135–1202). See, *Quartus Concilium Lateranense* (1214), DS 432: “*Quia inter creatorem et creaturam non potest tanta similitudo notari quin inter eos maior sit dissimilitudo notatanda*” – “for between Creator and creature no similitude can be noted, however great it may be, without nothing a greater dissimilitude.” For the intellectual genealogy behind Przywara’s construction of the *analogia entis* see Betz, “The

reality, our original intuition of the Being of beings that can be neither transcendently reduced nor speculatively resolved within a single metaphysical system.³³ This primordial disclosure of Being, according to Przywara, manifests a “unity-in-tension” [*Spannungseinheit*], a proportional likeness surpassed by ever-greater dissimilitude.³⁴ Contrary to either pure univocity or sheer equivocation, an analogical ontology avoids collapsing the relation between Being and beings into pure identity or sheer difference, allowing for a rhythmic oscillation or “dynamic polarity” [*dynamische Polarität*] without closure.³⁵ Though Przywara ultimately goes as far as to claim that the *analogia entis* represents the perennial form and content of an authentically Christian metaphysics, his initial expression of the doctrine is established independently from any presuppositions concerning supernatural revelation. Przywara’s explication of analogy unfolds via an analysis of the intentional correlation between real Being and consciousness, which he claims can be approached from one of two directions: beginning either from the phenomenon of Being and moving back to the act of consciousness, by way of a “meta-ontics” [*Meta-ontik*], or by moving from the intending act of consciousness to the givenness of the phenomenon, by way of a “meta-noetics” [*Meta-noetik*].³⁶ In either case, Przywara observes that each pole of the phenomenological correlation remains dependent upon the other, the act of consciousness and an intended phenomenon, just as a phenomenon necessarily corresponds to a conscious intention. This phenomenological unity-in-tension of consciousness and phenomenon, Przywara claims, is grounded in the anterior, pre-subjective ontological polarity between “essence” [*Sosein*] and “existence” [*Dasein*].³⁷ That is, the methodological oscillation between meta-ontics and meta-noetics is grounded in a *real* ontological fissure that exceeds and structures the phenomenological polarity of consciousness and phenomenon. Just as phenomenology cannot resolve the tension between intending subject and given object, pre-reflective experience is constituted by a rhythmic alternation between the stasis of ideal essences and the kinetic inconstancy of actual beings.³⁸ In every instance, our intuitive grasp of a phenomenon remains only partially fulfilled, so that even our most fulfilled intuitions are confronted by an interminable gap between the idealized essence and empirical existence of the phenomenon. The non-identical phenomenological correlation of essence and existence, Przywara claims, inevitably opens a broader and explicitly metaphysical problematic concerning the relationship of the ideal and the real.³⁹

For Przywara, the polarity of essence and existence can alternately be approached either from the standpoint of a ‘transcendental metaphysics’ or a ‘metaphysical transcendentalism’. The former approach names a speculative equivalent to a phenomenological meta-

Analogia Entis as a standard of Catholic Engagement” (see fn. 32), 85–93. See also, Julio Teran-Dutari, “Die Geschichte des Terminus ‘*Analogia Entis*’ und das Werk Erich Przywaras”, in: *Philosophisches Jahrbuch der Görres-Gesellschaft* 77 (1970) 163–179.

³³ Cf. Przywara, *Analogia Entis* (see fn. 32), 307–314.

³⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 124.

³⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 155 f.

³⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 119–124.

³⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 125.

³⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 125–127.

³⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 127–130.

ontics and describes the philosophical orientation of the classical period and the Middle Ages. Like phenomenological meta-ontics, transcendental metaphysics proceeds via an affirmation of the real, a ground and finality of beings in subsistent Being. Przywara writes, “[sc. transcendental metaphysics; J.L.P.] aims at a comprehension of Being [*esse*] in its unity [*unum*]; in this case, a pre-transcendental pure comprehension of Being which moves according to its intention, towards a comprehension of Being’s threefold radiance of truth [*verum*], goodness [*bonum*], and beauty [*pulchrum*] in unity [*bonum*].”⁴⁰ Conversely, a metaphysical transcendentalism, like a meta-noetics, prioritizes the question of possible knowledge over actual being and proceeds from the standpoint of the knowing subject. This approach, which has dominated since Kant, is grounded in our “formalizing intention” and operates “under the sovereign ideal of mathematical precision.”⁴¹ Once again, however, Przywara observes that neither pole can adequately reconcile essence and existence without somehow collapsing the distinction between them or annulling the relationship. On the one hand, a transcendental metaphysics perpetually risks a univocal identification of existence with essence, subordinating concrete temporality to an ideal unity. On the other hand, a metaphysical transcendentalism inevitably collapses into equivocation, denying the universality of Being while elevating the finitude of the subject.

This unresolved tension is further explicated by Przywara according to the polarity between *a priori* and *a posteriori* metaphysics.⁴² An *a priori* metaphysics privileges the ideal over the real and aims to validate our logical expressions and formal concepts by appealing to the constituting acts of a theoretical ego.⁴³ Alternately, *a posteriori* metaphysics attends to concrete reality, prioritizing the historical and culturally mediated horizons of thought and practice.⁴⁴ Like the previous polarities, Przywara claims that both the *a priori* and *a posteriori* metaphysical standpoints alternately risk dissolving the analogical tension between the related terms. In this case, either by reifying the *a priori* perspective in the direction of ahistorical abstraction, or by reifying the *a posteriori* perspective in the direction of sheer historicism and skepticism.⁴⁵ In sum, the polarities of meta-ontics and meta-noetics, transcendental metaphysics and metaphysical transcendentalism, *a priori* and *a posteriori* remain suspended, thus allowing the tensions between consciousness and phenomenon, essence and existence, knowing and Being, and truth and history to be preserved without resolution.⁴⁶ For Przywara, the undecidable oscillation between analogical terms indicates a fundamental truth of facticity: finite existence is ineluctably groundless and cannot gain a comprehensive measure of itself. Przywara pairs this factual claim with an explicitly theological assertion: to be created is to be immersed in “becoming” [*Werden*], existing as a “suspended middle” [*Schwebende Mitte*] temporally stretched between Being and nothingness, and incapable of attaining self-transparency.⁴⁷

⁴⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 130.

⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 129.

⁴² Cf. *ibid.*, 132.

⁴³ Cf. *ibid.*, 134–140.

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 140–141.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 150–154.

⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 155–157.

⁴⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 159–164.

In Przywara's account, the horizontal tensions of created Being are only finally made intelligible relative to a receding horizon of inexhaustible alterity that surpasses any mode of predication. This transcendent horizon does not simply fulfill or reconcile the immanent polarities of finite Being, but infinitely heightens them, subordinating them to an asymmetrical difference that is at once 'in-and-beyond' every analogical term.⁴⁸ Przywara ultimately identifies this radical otherness with the "ever-greater" God [*Deus semper maior*] of supernatural revelation, who is immanent to every creature even as he remains infinitely otherwise than his creation.⁴⁹ For Przywara, the vertical dimension of analogical polarity, which discloses the proportional likeness and greater dissimilarity between God and finite Being, is not accessible via any phenomenological or speculative method. The 'ever-greater' God can only be made known to those who have been graced with the eyes of faith.⁵⁰ To attempt to apprehend God by way of immanence can only result in idolatry, i.e., a false synthesis that reduces God to a necessary concept or explanatory principle. As such, Przywara insists that his analogical integration of phenomenology and metaphysics provides a natural theology only in a negative sense, dissolving the very pretense of an *a priori* philosophical foundation for revelation.⁵¹ Apart from the free self-revelation of a divine Creator 'in-and-beyond' creatures, finite Being can only appear as an incomprehensible contingency, an upsurge of possibility suspended in nothingness.⁵² Conversely, when bathed in the light of the gratuitously revealed and 'ever-greater' God, the dynamic polarity of analogy discloses an authentic relation between creature and Creator, an indissoluble unity relative to a still greater difference.⁵³ The rhythmic oscillation of immanence is only resolved in remaining suspended before a more encompassing transcendence which cannot be controlled or measured, retaining the "non-impossibility"⁵⁴ of God's disclosure.

By negating the prospect of a final comprehension of Being from the standpoint of immanence, Przywara argues that the irresolvable polarities of finite existence are referred beyond themselves to God's inexhaustible alterity.⁵⁵ From the vantage of faith, the incapacity of the creature is shown to be nothing other than an "obediential potency" [*potentia oboedientialis*], an original receptivity or lack whose fulfilment is obtained only through an extrinsic imposition of supernatural grace.⁵⁶ The groundlessness of the creature in its utmost negativity is at the same time what renders it available to God and constitutes its potentiality as a vessel for his self-bestowal.⁵⁷ The relationship of the supernatural to created nature is one "of bursting open" to the point of "hollowed out abandonment."⁵⁸ The passivity of the finite creature is elevated to the divine by suffering the counterblow of divine

⁴⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 164–168.

⁴⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 168–170.

⁵⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 174–176.

⁵¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 177.

⁵² Cf. *ibid.*, 182–185.

⁵³ Cf. *ibid.*, 189–191.

⁵⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, 277.

⁵⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 209–215.

⁵⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 224–229. For an extensive exploration of Przywara's extrinsicist commitments see Aaron Pidel, "Erich Przywara on Nature-Grace Extrinsicism: A Parallax View", in: *Modern Theology* 37/4 (2021) 865–887.

⁵⁷ Cf. *Przywara*, *Analogia Entis* (see fn. 32), 176.

⁵⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 177.

revelation, which asserts itself against our limited concepts and renders them subject to the sovereignty of divine freedom.⁵⁹ Though lacking any intrinsic orientation toward the supernatural, the non-subsistence and dependence of finite Being upon God constitutes a “vertical openness,”⁶⁰ a placement at God’s absolute disposal which he may (or may not) graciously fulfill.

4. Blondel and Przywara Contrasted: From Phenomenology to Revelation and Theological Metaphysics

While Blondel and Przywara each attempt to safeguard the transcendence of the supernatural and the gratuity of revelation – without denying a certain complementarity between phenomenology and theological metaphysics –, they sharply differ over their respective conceptions of the relationship between these discourses which might be said to be reflective of a more fundamental divergence between them, concerning the basic character of revelation itself. This divergence between Przywara and Blondel is best summarized as a conflict over the question of revelation’s continuity or discontinuity with the horizon of ordinary phenomenality, or what might be theologically restated as a conflict over the relationship between our created nature and the supernaturally elevated horizon of grace. To the extent that Przywara is prepared to affirm a kind of functional ‘natural theology,’ that would affirm the non-impossibility of revelation from the standpoint of finite existence, he nonetheless stresses that revelation’s actual phenomenality must remain wholly unanticipated and unconditioned by any *a priori* ontological or transcendental framework. Conversely, Blondel’s phenomenological approach instead attempts to establish a basic correlation between revelation and the immanent horizon of our ordinary or secular experience, allowing for a basic reciprocity between the intentionality of the human subject and the self-showing of the revealed phenomenon.

For Przywara, the domain of revelation must remain radically extrinsic to the horizon of secular phenomenality so that it can only be perceived according to the ‘counter-gaze’ of supernaturally elevated faith and thus retain its freedom and unique gratuity.⁶¹ In this respect, Przywara anticipates not only the thought of Jean-Luc Marion, but thinkers such as Jean-Yves Lacoste and even Michel Henry.⁶² To traverse the hiatus between his phenomenological ontology to a properly theological metaphysics, in Przywara’s view, requires our expropriation by the radically unconditioned event of God’s personal revelation.⁶³ That is, revelation can only be perceived by those who have been graced with the requisite eyes to

⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 234–237.

⁶⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 268 f.

⁶¹ Cf. *Pidel*, “Erich Przywara on Nature-Grace Extrinsicism” (see fn. 56), 880–882.

⁶² Though Henry is markedly different from Marion in his overall phenomenological approach and account of revelation, his account similarly hinges on a sharp distinction between ordinary phenomenality and the self-manifestation proper to revelation. Likewise, a similar logic can be said to underpin the phenomenology of Lacoste, which turns on a basic opposition between secular phenomenality and the ‘non-experience’ of liturgical existence; cf. *Gschwandtner*, *Postmodern Apologetics* (see fn. 1), 139–142, 166–168.

⁶³ Cf. *Przywara*, *Analogia Entis* (see fn. 32), 170–172.

behold the redemptive event of God's self-gift and made capable of accepting this event in gratitude and obedience. However, in contrast to more recent thinkers, Przywara resists drawing too sharp an opposition between the phenomenality of revelation and the natural horizon of creaturely Being or the self-showing of ordinary phenomena, respectively. Rather, Przywara attempts to maintain the asymmetrical 'unity-in-tension' of analogy so that the event of God's self-disclosure can be said to preserve and even radicalize the polarity between likeness and 'ever-greater dissimilarity' as first evinced at the level of phenomenological ontology.⁶⁴ According to Przywara, in other words, revelation is fundamentally analogical, bestowed in such a way that every mediating likeness between God and creation serves to illustrate "not only how God's personal revelation is formally beyond all creaturely forms [...] but how the form of its uniqueness is the uniqueness of God himself."⁶⁵ Consequently, revelation is manifested both 'in-and-beyond' the strictures of our finitude, so that it paradoxically comes to appearance in a way that shatters the limits of our concepts, even as it also points beyond itself to the reality of God's freedom and sovereign glory.⁶⁶

Ultimately, Przywara identifies revelation with God's self-gift in the incarnate and crucified Christ, who recapitulates the numerous polarities of creaturely Being within himself by assuming our finite existence, while transfiguring it into the unique expression of God's 'ever-greater' otherness and boundless incomprehensibility.⁶⁷ Anticipating, in a way, Marion's account of the icon, and extending the Pauline identification of Christ as the "visible image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15), Przywara understands God's self-revelation through the incarnation to be a wholly self-authenticating phenomenon that grounds the conditions of its possibility for appearing.⁶⁸ As such, Christ is at once wholly disanalogous with all other phenomena and yet also the revelatory middle-point who reinscribes the whole domain of phenomenality relative to the event of his manifestation.⁶⁹ Drawing on the work of his younger contemporary Hans Urs von Balthasar, Przywara understands Christ as the "concrete analogy of Being" which makes visible God's radical proximity to creation precisely by disclosing the absolute scope of his hiddenness and distance from all other modes of appearing.⁷⁰ As Przywara summarizes in his 1956 essay, *Metaphysics, Religion, Analogy*:

"[T]here is no revelation in which experience of the 'ever greater' dissimilarity within 'every similarity', however great, would not be what is ultimate and highest. For this reason it holds true that God can be seen, heard, and touched solely in and as the incarnate Christ [...] in

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, 179–182.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 190 f.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 189 f.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 182–185.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 216–218. See also Janicaud, "The Theological Turn of French Phenomenology" (see fn. 1), 51–56.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 266 f.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 267–269. See also *ibid.*, 351 f.

whose humanity there is nothing visible, audible scrutable or tangible that would immediately suggest divinity.”⁷¹

In Christ, we are shown the limits of our createdness in a manner that positively reveals God’s exteriority and limitlessness, allowing him to draw near out of his alterity and freedom rather than despite it.

By reconstituting the rhythm of analogy in a new mode, God’s self-revelation in Christ becomes the sole measure for any authentic theological discourse or metaphysics since it alone upholds the exigent asymmetry of similarity-in-difference that allows God to unconditionally bestow himself without entirely negating the finite potency of the creature for receiving him.⁷² This theological unity-in-polarity, as constituted and normed by Christ, is contrasted by Przywara with two opposing dangers that alternately arise from either too closely identifying the creature with God or from absolutizing God’s otherness in opposition to creation.⁷³ The former danger, for Przywara, is synonymous with any mode of religious or metaphysical “pantheism,” which reduces revelation to an immanent postulate of our reason and entirely identifies God with the horizon of finite Being and abstract conceptual systems.⁷⁴ Conversely, Przywara is no less critical of what he calls “theopanism,” or the distortion of analogy into a dialectical antithesis whereby God and creation are conceived in mutual exclusion.⁷⁵ From this standpoint, revelation can only be understood as a sheer negation of all creaturely phenomenality, an event that is wholly impossible from the side of creation and unfolds entirely from the side of God.⁷⁶ This “theopanism” account allows God to appear only to the detriment of the creature, an affirmation of God as “all” and creation as “nothing,” which perfectly mirrors the totalizing impulse of “pantheism.”⁷⁷ Over and against both, Przywara claims that the concrete analogy between God and creation established in Christ, allows the vertical phenomenon of revelation ‘from above’ to perfect and transform our finite openness ‘from below,’ so that our participation in divinity becomes concomitant with the embrace of our passive availability and fragile nearness before God’s absolute distance.⁷⁸

Blondel’s account of revelation resonates with Przywara’s to the extent that its center and final coherence is found in the supernatural event of Christ’s incarnation. Where Blondel differs from Przywara, however, is made clear in his account of the relationship between Christ’s divinity and his assumed humanity, which he takes up to ground his reciprocal account of revelation’s phenomenality and the dynamism of the intending subject. In contrast to Przywara, who takes Christ to be the definitive manifestation of God’s proximity to

⁷¹ Cf. Przywara, “Metaphysik, Religion, Analogie”, in: *Archivo di Filosofia* (1956). The translation cited here is that of John R. Betz and David Bentley Hart as appended to their translation of *Analogia Entis*; Cf. Przywara, “Metaphysics, Religion, Analogy” in: *Analogia Entis* (see fn. 32), 409–429, here 424.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 299–302.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 218 f.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 219 f.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 220 f.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 221 f.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 222 f.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 223 f.

and final noncoincidence with created Being, Blondel refuses to maintain any abstract separation between nature and supernature as a phenomenological or theological *a priori*.⁷⁹ By tracing the movement of action through the dynamic interplay between the 'willing will' and the 'willed will,' Blondel shows retroactively that revelation is always already implicit in the structure of intentionality itself, operative in such a way that our 'natural' activity is underwritten by the co-presence of the supernatural as its hidden presupposition and final destiny.⁸⁰ Blondel's phenomenology, which attains its climax in the 'immanent' discovery of its insufficiency, reveals that finite thought and action can only find fulfillment in supernatural faith as mediated by the redeeming self-gift of a divine mediator. And yet, this mediating self-gift is not something extrinsically imposed upon our willed activity but arrives via the assumption of our created dynamism so that the movement of our will is drawn beyond itself and embraced in full cooperation or better communion with the divine.⁸¹ Said otherwise, in Christ, our humanity is mediated to itself and shown to have been joined to a God who has eternally bound himself to creation and graciously elevated it to the status of divinity.

Though the immanent movement of volition exposes our dependence on a mediating action that comprises the whole of finite Being and knowing, Christ's self-showing finally makes explicit the gracious presence of God that has been at work in our very nature from the outset.⁸² For Blondel, the phenomenality of revelation is necessarily consistent with the thrust of our intentionality so that it arrives as the consummation of our transcendence rather than as a radical break or rupture that inverts our *a priori* horizon.⁸³ The supernatural is offered to us within the constraints of apparently secular experience, preparing the way for explicit revelation as the fulfilment of our innate capacities in the same manner that a final cause grounds and inwardly sustains the movement of an efficient cause toward its terminus.⁸⁴ Moreover, Blondel indicates that humanity and divinity must be understood as co-determining insofar as Christ's incarnation reveals our nature as having been created and assumed by God for the purpose of its orientation toward deification as its final destiny.⁸⁵ Indeed, in Christ, God submits to the limits of our finitude and offers himself as the ultimate object of our willed activity and does so without abandoning his status as the preeminent 'subject' who creates and sustains all things for the sake of uniting them to himself.⁸⁶ Christ reveals the humanization of God and the deification of humanity to coincide in a single act so that God cannot be apart from his assumed humanity, just as human existence cannot be abstracted from its supernatural origin and end.⁸⁷

As Blondel observes, "it is impossible for the supernatural order to be without the natural order, for which it is necessary, and impossible for it not to be, since the natural order in

⁷⁹ Cf. Blondel, *l'Action* (see fn. 3), 421–424.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 373–375.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 376–379.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 379 f.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 380–382.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 384 f.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 382 f.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 383 f.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 384 f.

its entirety guarantees it in requiring it.”⁸⁸ On the one hand, God creates the human subject for himself and so endows it with an aptitude for grace that opens it up beyond its finite limits. On the other hand, this same self-exceeding desire for God can be said to determine the very character of the revelation that it receives, since its object also shares and takes up this desire as its medium of self-giving.⁸⁹ To speak of finite freedom’s self-enactment is always, if only implicitly, to speak of a freedom which has always already been assumed by God and inwardly constituted as the apex of infinite or divine freedom’s self-expression.⁹⁰ As both fully divine and fully human, the totality of our existence shares in a reciprocal communication of idioms where each related term becomes the passive medium of the other’s active *élan*.⁹¹ The self-revelation of God through Christ’s ‘descent’ is reversible with the self-disclosure of the human subject through action, so that both phenomena are integrated ‘without confusion’ or ‘separation’ in continuity with the doctrine of Chalcedon.⁹² The autonomy of finite freedom does not contradict the infinite but is the privileged site through which it is made manifest in the world.⁹³ Contrary to any suggestion of an irreducible polarity of difference, therefore, Blondel completely integrates the autonomy and dynamism of the creature with God’s uncreated freedom, suggesting an immediate and personal self-communication of God that is so intrinsic to our very createdness that we are graced with the capacity to freely receive and actively become partakers of his divinity.⁹⁴

Inevitably, from the perspective of our creaturely limits, God’s submission to the horizon of finite phenomenality seems to indicate that God is determined by our intentional acts. The condescension of the infinite to the finite via the incarnation results in human nature becoming “capable of producing and creating in some way the One from whom it has everything, as if at and one and the same time the donor wanted to have everything from the [recipient] [...]”⁹⁵ so that Blondel finally identifies the human being as a “God-bearer” [θεοτοκοί]. Although from the side of the infinite, it is we who are constituted through God’s self-donation, we reversibly determine God himself and participate in a “a mutual generation of the two wills living in us,” at once “divine and human.”⁹⁶ The whole of action and its dialectical movement, in the end, is shown to be the ongoing self-revelation of the union between God and humanity embodied in the person of Christ, a perfect union of Creator and creature manifested in the reciprocity between two wills, two natures, and two activities.⁹⁷ The form and the content of Blondel’s theological metaphysics, or ‘metaphysics

⁸⁸ Ibid., 422.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 388.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 392–394.

⁹¹ Ibid., 402–405.

⁹² See, Σύνοδος τῆς Χαλκηδόνος (451), DS 148: “[...] Υἱὸν, Κύριον μονογενῆ, ἐν δύο φύσεσιν ἀσυγχύτως, ἀτρέπτως, ἀδιαίρετως, ἀχωρίστως γνωριζόμενον· οὐδαμοῦ τῆς τῶν φύσεων διαφορᾶς ἀνηρημένης διὰ τὴν ἔνωσιν, σφριζομένης δὲ μᾶλλον τῆς ιδιότητος ἐκατέρας φύσεως καὶ εἰς ἓν πρόσωπον καὶ μίαν ὑπόστασιν”— “the same Christ, Son, Lord, only-begotten, acknowledged in two natures which undergo no confusion, no change, no division, no separation; at no point was the difference between the natures taken away through the union, but rather the property of both natures is preserved and comes together into a single person and a single subsistent being.”

⁹³ Cf. Blondel, *l’Action* (see fn. 3), 405–407.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 407 f.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 386.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 385 f.

⁹⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 386 f.

to the second power,' is not determined according to an abstract assumption concerning God's absolute distance from creation but is undertaken always in light of the hypostatic unity and intertwining of humanity and divinity revealed in Christ as Word made flesh.⁹⁸

5. Conclusion: Making a Decision Between the Hidden or Incarnate God

Przywara's rejection of transcendental philosophy and his affirmation of the absolute alterity of an 'ever-greater God' reflect his underlying conviction in the regulative and normative function of analogy as the basic key for understanding the immanent structures of finite Being and its relationship to God and the phenomenality of God's self-revelation. This presupposition of a disproportional relationship between likeness and dissimilitude, in other words, governs Przywara's account of God's self-manifestation in Christ, which he regards as an absolute amplification and heightening of analogical distance as much as its traversal. From this vantage, and notwithstanding his absolute concern for safeguarding the unconditioned character of divine revelation, Przywara ironically ends up absolutizing the form and structure of his pre-'theological' ontology so that God's self-gift becomes governed by its limits. Through Christ, in Przywara's view, God confirms and redoubles the alterity and hiddenness that differentiates him from his creation. The event of God's disclosure serves simply to demonstrate our total availability before the supernatural and the unconditioned capacity for God to interrupt and bestow himself despite our creaturely limits. As Jean-Luc Marion will later put it in his account of the phenomenality of revelation: "this does not indicate that God would then have to disappear as concept [...] but that the unthinkable enters the field of our thought only by rendering itself unthinkable there by excess, that is by criticizing our thought."⁹⁹ This rather 'extrinsicist' orientation of Przywara's thought reflects a belief that any theology must be self-authenticating to be genuinely gratuitous, and articulated in response to a revelation that interrupts or resists the limits of the intending subject's horizon.

Contrary to Przywara's method, and those of later phenomenologists that similarly emphasize the counter-subjective excess of revelation, Blondel's instead opens the possibility for a different approach that establishes a more fundamental reciprocity between phenomenology and revealed theology without collapsing their distinct methods or aims. This approach takes its point of departure from the non-competitive difference-in-unity of God and humanity revealed in Christ's incarnation. From Blondel's vantage, the possibility of revelation is not simply a liminal or extreme possibility that phenomenology accesses via a kind of supernatural state of exception but is rather a possibility that unfolds amid and from within the movement of intentionality and our finite transcendence. Though revelation cannot simply be 'read off' the horizon of ordinary experience such that it is reduced to a given object, the intentional thrust of consciousness is nonetheless taken to be always

⁹⁸ Ibid., 387 f.

⁹⁹ Cf. Jean-Luc Marion, *Dieu sans l'être, Hors-texte*, Paris 1982. The translation cited here is that Thomas A. Carlson; cf. Marion, *God Without Being*, Chicago 1972, 46.

already (if only implicitly) oriented to the supernatural as the aim of our varied adumbrations of judgment and our volitional acts. Without overstepping the limits of phenomenology, that is, Blondel affirms a basic continuity between immanence and transcendence as well as between nature and grace so that the latter term elevates the former without destroying it. This correlation between Blondel's phenomenological metaphysics of action and his theological 'metaphysics to the second power' preserves the integrity of both terms by affirming a non-competitive relationship between them, allowing our ordinary horizon to become thoroughly intertwined with the horizon of God's own self-disclosure.

Dieser Beitrag beleuchtet die Beiträge zweier Denker des frühen zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts, Maurice Blondel und Erich Przywara, die beide als indirekte Vorläufer der sogenannten 'theologischen Wende' der neueren französischen Phänomenologie betrachtet werden können. Obwohl sich ein Großteil dieser der Phänomenalität der göttlichen Offenbarung und ihrer Diskursivierung als Mittel zur Überwindung der Metaphysik zugewandt hat, versuchen Blondel und Przywara jeweils, mit phänomenologischen Methoden die Notwendigkeit und Gültigkeit einer religiösen Metaphysik im Umfeld der modernen Philosophie aufzuzeigen. Trotz dieser Gemeinsamkeiten unterscheiden sich Blondel und Przywara letztlich sowohl in ihren phänomenologischen Ansätzen als auch in ihren umfassenderen Auffassungen über die Beziehung zwischen Phänomenologie und theologischer Metaphysik. Durch die Gegenüberstellung von Blondels Behauptung über das der kreatürlichen Existenz innewohnende Verlangen nach dem Übernatürlichen und Przywaras Vorstellung von Gottes absoluter Andersartigkeit und Exteriorität wird in diesem Aufsatz dafür argumentiert, dass Blondels Ansatz 'von unten' Phänomenologie und Theologie besser in ein Modell integriert, das eine Reduzierung der Offenbarung auf eine rein vertikale Auferlegung 'von oben' vermeidet. Dabei wird vorgeschlagen, dass Blondels Ansatz als Korrektiv für neuere phänomenologische Überlegungen zur Offenbarung dienen kann, die die Diskontinuität zwischen der Selbstmanifestation Gottes und dem Horizont der gewöhnlichen Erfahrung betont haben.