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# Expression and Form: Principles of a Philosophical Aesthetics According to Hans Urs von Balthasar

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## Abstract

The purpose of the dissertation is to present a philosophical reading of Balthasar's teaching on the polarity of expression and form in beauty. ;Chapter I, "Expression," presents the concept of expression in the context of the aesthetic doctrine of Wahrheit. It confronts Balthasar's teaching about expression with an alternate view. On the basis of the clarification achieved in this confrontation, the chapter turns to some major texts from Herrlichkeit in which Balthasar unfolds the structure of expression. ;Chapter II, "Form," presents Balthasar's concept of form and develops it by a presentation of some historical sources. The results of the presentation are then summarized in an exposition of some of the main metaphors used by Balthasar to describe form. ;Chapter III, "Beauty," turns to Balthasar's thesis that beauty implies the polarity of expression and form. It gives an exposition of the central metaphor of light and compares Balthasar's teaching with that of Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Thomas, and St. Bonaventure. The chapter ends with an introduction to two major developments which converge in the doctrine of participation. ;Chapter IV, "The Expression of Free Interiority in Man," presents Balthasar's analysis of the aesthetic structure of man. The two main questions discussed are how free interiority can be preserved in expression, and whether free interiority necessarily gives rise to a conventional medium of expression. ;Chapter V, "The Expression of God in Creatures," turns to the summit of Balthasar's philosophical aesthetics. It presents his teaching on the apprehension of an absolute horizon of free love that lies in the awakening of the human spirit. This teaching is unfolded in a presentation of Balthasar's interpretation of the Thomistic doctrine of participation in existence. The chapter ends

by pointing to the center of Balthasar's philosophical aesthetics, developing especially his thesis that the center of the light which appears in beauty remains inchoative and open to a final revelation of God's glory. ;The "Theological Epilogue" of the dissertation presents Balthasar's teaching on the appearing of trinitarian love in the expressive form of Jesus. It describes, thus, the apex of the whole of his aesthetics

## Keywords

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