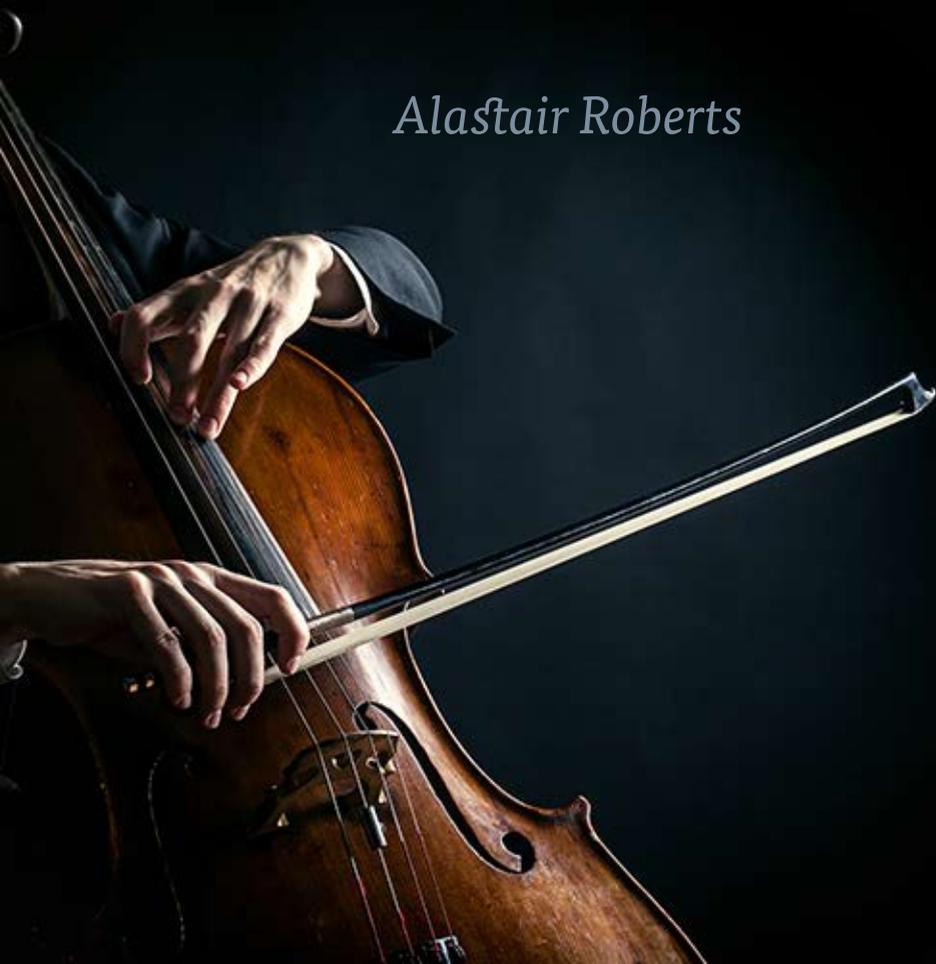


A Musical Case
for
Typological Realism

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THE FORGOTTEN FRAME: ATTENDING TO CONCEPTUAL METAPHOR

Metaphor exerts a surprisingly powerful influence within our thinking. Although it is easily dismissed as little more than a figure of speech, when we attend more closely to the ways in which we use it, metaphor's importance swiftly becomes more apparent. Although many of our metaphors have become quite invisible to us through habitual use, they nonetheless form our thinking in significant ways.

George Lakoff and Mark Johnson observe that our “metaphors and metonymies are not random but instead form coherent systems in terms of which we conceptualize our experience.”¹ We habitually grasp reality by mapping one domain of reality onto another and drawing analogies between the two.

For instance, we tend to understand people's theorizing and argumentation in terms of *buildings*—this idea is *foundational* to my understanding; I *demolished* his case; I *buttressed* my argument with some further case studies; I *constructed* a defence for the position; the *structural weakness* of his theory can be seen at this point; his argument *collapsed* under cross-examination; the evidence does not *support* your case; that notion is *architectonic* for their system of thought, etc., etc. The use of any one of these particular metaphors can evoke the larger

¹ George Lakoff & Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 41.

system behind them and to which they all belong. In such a manner, they can shape our understanding of and actions in relation to the realities to which they refer.

Conceptual metaphors can bring certain dimensions of reality into focus, yet they may also distort, occlude, or weaken our sense of others. Not all conceptual metaphors are equally helpful. Some conceptual metaphors are profoundly illuminating—for instance, the Church as *living temple* or as *body*.

A good example of a powerful conceptual metaphor is that of life as *vapour* in the book of Ecclesiastes. Vapour shrouds and veils, making it difficult to see the reality of things. It is inscrutable. It can't be grasped or controlled. It slips through our fingers and eludes our attempts at mastery. It is ephemeral and passes away into nothing, leaving no trace of its presence behind. It is radically insubstantial and cannot provide any bedrock of security against change.

Other metaphors, however, can cast much of the reality that they seek to describe into shadow and distort our perception of what we think that we see. Metaphors such as that of *war*, for instance, have an undeniable political appeal and, consequently, our leaders often speak of “wars” on poverty, drugs, terrorism, obesity, waste, etc. Such metaphors frame difficult problems in terms that are familiar to us, relieving some of the sense of threat associated with them. The “war” metaphor is typically adopted because it implies an immediate and serious threat to our well-being as a society, the need to make the matter in question a top priority, and the probability that addressing the problem will demand costly commitment and sacrifices of us. Yet bringing the domain of war into correspondence with other domains of reality can prove treacherous, as such a powerful metaphor can easily burst the

narrow banks of our intended usage, affecting our perceptions in unhelpful ways and misguiding our actions.

The concept of war, for instance, encourages us to think in terms of external enemies to be defeated and of good and bad guys. While the “enemy” may initially be little more than the reified problem, it seldom takes long for problems so conceived to become associated with particular parties, who start to be regarded as enemies too.

If, for instance, instead of employing the metaphor of war when speaking about these problems, we employed something like a fabric metaphor when speaking about problems such as poverty—the *frayed edges of society*, recovering the *stitches we once dropped*, the *unravelling of communities*, the *knotty tangles of social problems*, belonging to *close knit families*, crucial *threads in the fabric of society*—we might think and act rather differently. Such a metaphor (merely one of many possible alternatives) teaches us to think of our problems less in terms of opposition to an external enemy and more in terms of our interconnectedness and the importance of maintaining the integrity of society’s relationships. It alerts us to the delicate character of social problems and of the need for patience, care, and measured action in addressing them, lest “tangles” become knots or “dropped stitches” lead to unravelling. Unfortunately, although the conceptual metaphor of society as fabric is a very helpful one, enabling us to conceive of action in relation to social problems in more appropriate ways, it is far less effective at exciting people to action and galvanizing them together than the conceptual metaphor of war.

Given the significance of conceptual metaphors for our thinking and action, we must choose and employ them with care. Most of us are unaccustomed to devoting thought to our conceptual metaphors. Our

conceptual metaphors are far more akin to lenses through which we perceive our reality than they are to particular images or representations of the reality itself. As a result, they can go unnoticed, even though their effect upon our vision may be pervasive. Viewing reality through a well prescribed conceptual metaphor can be like putting on your 3D glasses at the cinema—that which was formerly fuzzy and unclear suddenly jumps out at you with an arresting clarity.

Thinking Theologically Through Music

Considering the importance of conceptual metaphors for our thinking, the relative paucity of theological attention devoted to them may be surprising. There are rare and signal exceptions to this neglect, however. The theologian and musician Jeremy Begbie is one thinker who has much to offer the Church in this area.

Begbie takes the statement of Jacques Attali as a starting point for his project: “Music is more than an object of study: it is a way of perceiving the world. My intention is . . . not only to theorise *about* music, but to theorise *through* music.”² Begbie’s theological project is an attempt to propound the potential of music as a conceptual metaphor for theological reflection, demonstrating that much Christian truth will come into crisper focus when viewed through such a lens.

In particular, Begbie highlights the value of music for thinking about *time*. As human beings we find ourselves in a world shaped by many temporal patterns operating concurrently—the movement of the planets in their courses, the starting and ending of planetary

² Cited in Jeremy Begbie, *Theology, Music and Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000),

epochs, the waxing and waning of empires, the creaturely movement from birth until death, spring, summer, autumn, and winter, weekday work and Sabbath rest, evening and morning, waking and sleeping, breath and heartbeat. The heavens, the earth, human societies, individual creatures, and our very bodies are deeply temporal—profoundly *musical*—realities.

Much as we find ourselves within a world of interwoven temporal patterns, Begbie observes: “Within a piece of music there is usually a *multiplicity of temporal continua, operating concurrently*. . . . [W]e can find different kinds of temporal succession, which intersect, interpenetrate and enhance one another as the music unfolds.”³

Drawing upon the work of the musicologist Victor Zuckerkandl, Begbie suggests a number of different dimensions to music’s temporality (his focus is upon the Western tonal tradition). He begins by observing the importance of tension and resolution: music’s movement from equilibrium, to the establishment of a sense of incompleteness, and, finally, to closure and rest. This is teleological in character and typically excites a sense of anticipation in the hearer.

The first dimension of music’s temporality Begbie focuses upon is the interaction between rhythm and metre. “Metre is a patterned succession of beats; rhythm refers to the variegated pattern of durations given in a succession of tones.”⁴ Rhythm “rides” the waves of metre and “reveals the shape of the waves” in the process. The waves of metre have their own pattern of tension and resolution and can in turn be part of higher wave patterns, all levels exhibiting movements away

³ *Theology, Music and Time*, 35.

⁴ *Theology, Music and Time*, 40-41.

from and back towards resolution. As a result, a piece of music can achieve closure on certain levels, while straining forward to something more on others. The time of music is not the mechanical beat of a metronome, but the living movement of the wave.

The second dimension of music's temporality that Begbie attends to is "melody in the dynamic field of key." The dynamic character of a melody is not only found in its relationship to metre, but also in the relationships that different tones have to each other within the context of a particular key. It is essential to recognise that a melody is not just a "succession of separate tones" against some static background, but a motion of interrelated tones within a dynamic field. One note "reaches towards" another, which in turn "attracts" the first. A melody is not merely an *illusion* of motion, like that which might be created by some aural equivalent to a zoetrope. The continuous motion of music is found in the field of key within which various tones are related. Begbie observes that this claim is supported by the importance of silence within music: silence needn't *interrupt* music because in hearing music we are always "between the tones, on the way from tone to tone; our hearing does not remain with the tone, it reaches through it and beyond it."⁵

⁵ Zuckerkandl, cited in *Theology, Music and Time*, 49.

THE FULLNESS OF TIME: MUSIC AND THE BEAUTY OF TEMPORALITY

As we attend to these and other aspects of music's temporality, Begbie suggests, we will find means by which to resist some of our habitual modern ways of conceptualizing time, most especially our tendency to conceive of time as if it were a homogeneous set of technologically quantifiable units laid out on a time-line in linear succession—a quasi-spatial way of thinking about time. Begbie's resistance to such one-dimensional linearity does not entail opposition to *directionality*, but the advocacy of richer conceptions of what directionality looks like.

Although some have suggested an opposition between supposedly biblical "linear" concepts of time and "cyclical" concepts of time in paganism, Begbie's work suggests that there are better ways of conceiving of time in a truly directional and teleological fashion, which are not straightforwardly "linear." The intuition that time is directional and not merely cyclical is a profoundly biblical one, yet directionality need not entail linearity.

Music's patterns of tension and resolution can instruct us in the art of patience that is essential for the Christian task of living between the times, of holding onto the promise until its fulfilment. Begbie here returns to his point about tension and resolution operating on many levels within music: resolution on one level can increase tension and expectation on another. "However strong closure may be any one level,

there will always be levels in relation to which closure generates an increase in tension, giving rise to a stronger reaching out for resolution."⁶ This holds for promise and fulfilment too: "A fulfilment—a 'downbeat' or closing process—resolves something of the tension generated by the initial promise, and of the tension created by previous fulfilments. But each fulfilment also gives rise to a further tension demanding completion, a tension not only of the same power at the same level (the next wave), but of greater and accumulating power at upper levels. In this way, hope is intensified, re-charged, a more potent 'reaching out' engendered."⁷

These "musical" patterns of tension and resolution, of promise and fulfilment, involve a heightening of hope and a fleshing out and escalation of the promises. The incompleteness of resolution is essential to the process of biblical meaning and the generation of Christian hope, once again in a manner analogous to music and its effect on its listeners: "Over and over again in tonal music we have closures which are positioned in the metric matrix in such a way that they 'stretch forward' for further resolution. This lends the piece an incomplete character, an 'opening out.' We are given a tension which is not fully resolved, or which is only dissipated in the silence which follows the piece. The music is projected beyond the final cadence into the ensuing silence. Promise 'breaks out' of sound."⁸

Prefiguration is a central biblical dynamic that music can serve to illuminate. As Begbie observes, much as the "musical present is charged with its future," "many of the partial fulfillments of earlier

⁶ *Theology, Music and Time*, 107. Emphasis original.

⁷ *Theology, Music and Time*, 107-108.

⁸ *Theology, Music and Time*, 126.

prophecy are regarded not simply as incomplete fulfillments of earlier implications but as foretastes of the end to come.”⁹ He gives examples of pieces of music that prefigure their own endings early on, and where such prefigurations initiate new processes.

Begbie suggests that doing theology with music as our conceptual metaphor can help us better to understand such biblical phenomena as the relationship between imminence and delay in the context of the Parousia. An overdependence upon linear and quantitative conceptions of time, in contrast to musical and qualitative ones, makes it difficult for us to grasp how imminence and delay can go together. Reflecting upon history through a musical lens can help us to “do justice to the experience of living within a dynamic directional field, a field in which things and events are intrinsically interrelated by virtue of sharing in waves of tension and fulfilment, in which anticipatory fulfillments generate wider and more intense hopes for the final fulfilment, and in which imminence and delay *can* therefore go together.”¹⁰ For instance, AD 70 and the final end of all things need not be played off against each other, but can be seen to have a ‘musical’ relationship to each other, AD 70 being an anticipatory statement of the dreadful and majestic concluding cadence upon which the curtain of history will fall.

In arguing this, Begbie doesn’t merely substitute qualitative for quantitative understandings of time: there are dangers in the other direction here too, when qualitative time overwhelms quantitative time. Music *takes time*, and although past, present, and future might come to

⁹ *Theology, Music and Time*, 111.

¹⁰ *Theology, Music and Time*, 120-121.

be interwoven, they do not thereby collapse into each other. The quality of our time may have changed decisively following the advent of our Saviour, placing us within the shadow of an inaugurated eschaton, but we must still patiently await the consummation of all things.

Music and Transience

Conceiving of time in our culturally habitual ways makes it difficult for us to think well about transience—“temporal closeness and distance are seen as quantitative or quasi-spatial apartness.”¹¹ Transience is an essential aspect of music, which depends on “the coming into being and dying of tones.” Where our typical ways of thinking about time suggest a tragic and deficient absence of solidity and substantiality—“change and decay in all around I see”—music, in its distinctive insubstantiality, reveals the potential fruitfulness of transience, the beauty and goodness of finitude. Time and transience are integral to what we are as creatures and are neither a “necessary evil” nor a “neutral backcloth.”¹² Finitude is a good thing and should not be confused with actual evil.

Music’s revelation of the potential goodness and beauty of transience and finitude can offer helpful new ways of conceiving of creation. Using the conceptual metaphors of music and song to think of creation can alert us to such things as the radical contingency of the world and its creatures, its complete dependence upon the continuing creative work of Spirit and Word of God, the delight of the Creator, and the call-

¹¹ *Theology, Music and Time*, 61.

¹² *Theology, Music and Time*, 94.

ing of the creation to participate in this music in the echoing forth of joyful praise.

This brings into focus elements of creation that are less clear when we think of creation as if it were the construction of solid objects that endure through the homogeneous medium of time, or are subjected to its cruel ravages. Time is not just something that happens to us, but is integral to what we are. Thinking in such a manner teaches us to remember and appreciate our own finitude and to value and reflect more closely upon the changing seasons of our lives. Silence, the face over which the spirit of music hovers, reminds us of our enduring relationship to nothingness, as those who have been brought forth from it by God's creative voice.

IN GOD’S GOOD TIME: TYPOLOGY AND THE ORCHESTRATION OF HISTORY

Thinking about time in terms of music also helps us to appreciate its *unity* and inner relations. Henri Bergson observes our cultural habit of dividing time into discrete moments, and conceiving of these as if akin to objects in a spatial succession.¹³ Against such a notion, Bergson argues for the significance of time as *duration*, illustrating his point with a reference to music:

“Could we not say that, if these notes succeed one another, we still perceive them as if they were inside one another and their ensemble were like a living being whose parts, though distinct, interpenetrate through the very effect of their solidarity? The proof is that we break the rhythm by holding one note of the melody too long. It is not its exaggerated length as such that will avert us to our mistake, but rather the qualitative change brought to the musical phrase as a whole. One could thus conceive succession without distinction as a musical penetration, a solidarity, an intimate organization of elements of which each would be representative of the whole, indistinguishable from it, and would not isolate itself from the whole except for abstract thought.”¹⁴

¹³ Suzanne Guerlac, *Thinking in Time: An Introduction to Henri Bergson* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), 62.

¹⁴ Cited in *Thinking in Time*, 66.

It is essential to the character of the melody that its notes are not all played simultaneously.¹⁵ Its identity as a coherent temporal object depends upon the separation of its notes from each other and its extension in time, no less than our perception of a tree depends upon its extension in space, so that its component parts are not compressed into a single point of concentrated being. The melody is experienced as coherent and unified.

In explaining Merleau-Ponty's account of time, Komarine Romdenh-Romluc compares our experience of temporal objects such as a melody to our perception of three-dimensional objects.¹⁶ We always perceive three dimensional objects from a particular perspective, never from all perspectives simultaneously. From any given location, aspects and parts of the three-dimensional objects that we perceive will be hidden from us. However, we do not only perceive "a collection of flat, two-dimensional surfaces," but spatially extended objects.

Romdenh-Romluc writes: "It follows that their experiences must present them with the parts of things that are hidden from their gaze. The horizons of perception present them with the hidden parts of things, but they do so *implicitly*. Thus, when I look down on the table, I *explicitly* perceive the table top, whilst *implicitly* perceiving the legs, the surface underneath the table, the ground beneath it, and so on. The horizons present what is currently absent from the subject's gaze. The fact that this is presented *implicitly* allows the subject to experience it *as* currently absent."¹⁷

¹⁵ Komarine Romdenh-Romluc, *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Merleau-Ponty and Phenomenology of Perception* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 230.

¹⁶ *Guidebook to Merleau-Ponty*, 229-233, 247-248.

¹⁷ *Guidebook to Merleau-Ponty*, 229.

Our perception of time is similar in character. Like the “horizons” of our spatial experience, our temporal experience has “retentions” and “protentions”—“retentions of previous experiences” and “anticipations of future experiences”—as integral dimensions of the structure of present experience.¹⁸ These are not the same as what we generally think of as memories or anticipations, which involve acts of recall or projection. Rather, retentions and protentions are perceptions of the *absence* of the past and future in the present, much as our perception of the table leg that is hidden from our vision. Our protentions and retentions are implicit presentations of what has been experienced and what will be experienced—it is to this that Zuckerkandl refers when speaking about the fact that in listening to music we are always “between the tones.” The future and the past, though absent from this present moment, are also “present” through their traces, our protentions and retentions.

Music and Typology

The unity and the interwoven and overlapping temporalities of time conceived musically challenge many of our culturally prevailing ways of understanding time, and also open up new possibilities to us. When we cease thinking of time purely in quantitative terms and as successive discrete moments, our sense of connection between events in time can become considerably stronger.

Such a change in our conceptualization of time can greatly deepen our appreciation of biblical typology, for it is in typology that the musicality of divine revelation comes to the fore. Here the metaphor of mu-

¹⁸ *Guidebook to Merleau-Ponty*, 232.

sic also has advantages over popular literary metaphors (e.g. script and drama), for which time is a less profoundly constitutive dimension.

In typology, we encounter time in a pronounced form, time that exhibits a musical quality, with many intra-temporal and inter-temporal relations and modes of succession. The time of God's historical action is a rich, full, and *orchestrated* time, not the mere quantifiable moments of a hollow time marked out by the ticking of the clock.

The manner in which we conceive of typology is a matter with far-reaching effects. Our contemporary understanding of time invites us to think of typology in a spatializing manner. For one such understanding, typology involves holding up two events next to each other—a foreshadowing type and a fulfilling antitype—and observing the parallels and the contrasts, largely abstracting them from the medium of time, save for their relative order in the succession of events in the scriptural witness. This approach is not without a measure of truth: the full and decisive statement of typological motifs in Christ does establish a pattern of promise and fulfilment—of type and antitype—with lesser statements of those same motifs.

However, such juxtapositions of types and antitypes can establish an unhelpful binary division within Scripture, an opposition between “shadow” and “reality,” the former frequently conceived of as a bare sign pointing away from itself and lacking a true part in the latter. This opposition also tends to have the effect of depreciating the Old Testament witness, denying Israel genuine participation in the spiritual real-

ity, and dulling our sense of the typological relations that exist *within* the two testaments, rather than solely *between* them.¹⁹

An alternative approach, popular in the context of some biblical scholarship, relates events together in terms of their exhibition of synchronic literary kinship as “type-scenes,” for instance. There is, of course, much to be gained from such an approach. Thinking in terms of type-scenes is a powerful means of attuning ourselves to both the salient commonalities and differences between events that reveal their significance. Nevertheless, one of the weaknesses of such an approach can be seen in its frequent abstraction of events from time in order to hold them alongside each other for literary comparison. Like a musical motif, however, biblical typology needs to be understood diachronically—in terms of its development over time—as themes and patterns emerge, are expanded, reshaped, inverted, escalated, and brought to full and mature expression. Overreliance on synchronic literary analysis can blind us to this.

Music’s revelation of time’s potential to be a realm of unity and coherence affords us new ways of conceiving typology. Rather than abstracting typology from time or opposing type to some antitypical reality, typology can be understood in terms of God’s rich orchestration of covenant history and his developing witness to it. The process of revelation *takes time*, because it is musical in character, because time is integral to its manner of meaning-making (synchronic type-antitype models of typology raise the question of why the advent of the reality had to tarry so long for supposedly hollow signs). The meaning that is

¹⁹ Noah as a new Adam, Israel as undergoing the experience of Moses, Elisha as a new Joshua, Peter and Paul as persons whose experience follows the pattern of Christ’s, etc., etc.

made through revelation is to be understood typologically or figurally, as we follow the unfolding development of the movements of God's great redemptive symphony.

Finally, just as a piece of music can manifest both unity and coherence over time, so God's revelation is unified historically. Biblical typology is more than the study of ancient literary art, or of ways in which Israel's history, persons, and institutions can signify something else beyond and apart from themselves. It is attention to the beauty and order of the flow of God's composition of history, to the movement from the gentlest intimations of promise to the most deafening chords of fulfilment, from the first rising of tension to the decisive moments of resolution. It involves a sense of a musical unity of promise and fulfilment that undermines any sharp opposition between type and anti-type.

The "reality" is present and active throughout: at first in an understated, concealed, and chiefly anticipatory manner, but later powerfully and openly. Israel's history, for instance, bears incarnational meaning: Israel is, as it were, the symbolic and societal womb in which, over hundreds of years of divine revelation and moulding, the Messiah is formed, until he emerges to do his decisive work.

Typological Realism and Participation

The understanding I have delineated here could be termed "typological realism." Typological realism is the claim that typology is neither mere literary art, nor mere redemptive historical signpost, but a revelation of the actual unity, proximity, and interrelatedness of temporal realities that may appear far removed when regarded solely from time's quantitative aspect.

In *A Secular Age*, Charles Taylor discusses the manner in which our form of time-consciousness shifted in modernity.²⁰ Premodern time, Taylor claims, was not just the steady ticking of an impersonal clock—the “homogeneous, empty time” of modernity. Taylor remarks upon the way in which “higher times” could “gather, assemble, reorder, and punctuate” ordinary time. He observes that “events which were far apart in profane time could nevertheless be closely linked,” presenting the ‘prefiguring-fulfilling’ relation in which Old and New Testament events were placed as an example of this higher time.

He writes: “Good Friday 1998 is closer in a way to the original day of the Crucifixion than mid-summer’s day 1997. Once events are situated in relation to more than one kind of time, the issue of time-placing becomes quite transformed.”²¹

The effect of the loss of such time-consciousness upon a faith that has once had a form of typological realism at its heart is immense. The decay of a sense of the permeability of events and persons to each other—through the medium of time—will make it difficult for us to grasp the typology inherent in the Scripture and the sacraments.

Bergson and Merleau-Ponty’s accounts of duration and coherence through time offer us a way to resist regarding typology as only formal analogies between discrete events, persons, or objects in time, a conclusion to which our spatialization of time tempts us. Instead, we are trained to perceive a living unity through it.

It is noteworthy that Bergson turns to participatory language in the context of his musical analogy. The notes are “as if they were inside

²⁰ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 54.

²¹ *A Secular Age*, 54.

one another and their ensemble were like a living being whose parts, though distinct, interpenetrate through the very effect of their solidarity.”²² We could “conceive succession without distinction as a musical penetration, a solidarity, an intimate organization of elements of which each would be representative of the whole, indistinguishable from it, and would not isolate itself from the whole except for abstract thought.”²³ The language that Bergson employs here is revealing, as it captures the profoundly participatory character of the present when time is so conceived.

Recovering such an understanding of time is an important step on the road to recovering a scriptural understanding of typological realism. The past and the future are not realms of discrete moments sealed off from the present, but horizons of our present experience. While the past may be *explicitly* absent, it exercises a profoundly powerful *implicit* presence. Our present is shot through with the traces of the absent past. The literary form of typology, with its echoes, allusions, motifs, and patterns, its subtle yet potent textual dance of presence and absence, is a very natural medium for conveying the character of temporal relations, with which it is remarkably homologous. In moving to this understanding of time, one which is apt for participation, we open up the possibility of presenting the primary participatory relations envisaged in the Christian faith in a more temporal manner. In many respects our participation in Christ might be better understood within a more temporal framework. Christ is the forerunner, the pioneer, the one who has been perfected, the Man who has attained to humanity’s

²² Cited in *Thinking in Time*, 66.

²³ *Thinking in Time*, 66A.

full and mature stature, the firstfruits of the resurrection, the firstborn from the dead, the one who leads the way into God's future. His achievement, as a once-for-all act in the past, comes to us from the past, yet also draws us into his future.

ALL THINGS MADE NEW: GOD'S REDEMPTION OF TIME IN CHRIST

Time as a realm of participation can be difficult for us imaginatively to grasp. While music is a profoundly *temporal* art, exploring the medium of time like no other, most of our temporal experience seems decidedly unmusical in character, disjointed and unorchestrated. The form in which we naturally discover time is seldom very musical; rather, time must be rendered musical. Yet any temporal form of participation seems to depend upon such an establishment of musicality.

The Scriptures could be read as a straightforward revelation of orchestrated history. However, it might be more apt to view them as a presentation of the manner in which God has created music within and out of human dissonance and discordance. The unmusical character of immature time and the chaotic cacophony of fallen time are overcome by God's orchestration, which forms a new temporal unity, as throughout history times that would have been alienated are caught up in the majesty of a single mighty symphony.

The concept of *recapitulation* is illuminating here. Christ enters into the dissonance of human temporalities, into the discordance of flawed and incomplete presentations of humanity's theme, and performs that theme in full himself, finally bringing to full and resounding realization a glory what had previously only been most weakly gestured at. In light of Christ's recapitulation we see how that which went

before fell short, but also how it anticipated and participated in the full reality that was to come.

Music is the glorified form of temporal action and speech. It transfigures and elevates our temporal activities. Figural or typological reading of Scripture attends to the *musicality* of God's historical activity, to the ways in which the realm of human action has been taken into the divine symphony. This glorification and healing of human time transfigures: its characters and scenes come to bear and display a greater majesty, participating in and manifesting a beauty and a reality higher than themselves.

The musicality and, hence, the higher unity of time is established through the work of the Holy Spirit. Typology is where we follow the coherent unfolding of the symphony of the Spirit throughout history—the symphony of which Christ is the unifying theme. As an antidote to our overdependence on quasi-spatial and quasi-substantial models for union with Christ, the typological realism I am advocating suggests that our union with Christ should be regarded as existing in large measure within the orchestrated time of the Spirit.

We are united to Christ as he has come into our dissonant and discordant time, healing and transfiguring it through his action, and as the Spirit works this glorious music of Christ into and out of our lives. We are caught up within the Song of the Word, a song once intimated in the softest of broken whispers, then clearly and definitively expressed by its unaccompanied Author, now swelling through the Spirit's inclusion of new voices under his lead, until one day all creation will resound with it.

Music and the Eucharist

Begbie comments upon the peculiar place given to repetition in music, a place far more prominent than in most other art forms. He suggests that repetition's significance in music arises in large part from the fact that "each repeated component of music will have a different dynamic quality because *each occurs in relation to a different configuration of metrical tensions and resolutions.*"²⁴

Begbie suggests that the notion of musical repetition is illuminating of the meaning and functioning of the Eucharist: "[E]very eucharistic celebration can be seen as a repeated opportunity for time-laden creatures to be incorporated into a temporal environment, established in Christ, in which past, present and future coinhere, in such a way that our identities can be healed, recast and reformed."²⁵

This practice both "stabilises and destabilises." In each celebration we are once again recalled to Christ's death, opened up to his past, but also to the future in which that past's promise is realized: we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Much as in the case of Passover meal, a memorial of a past deliverance anticipates future salvation and each repetition re-establishes us within musical cycles of memory and hope. It repeatedly stabilizes us by restoring us to Christ's decisive, once-for-all, action in the past, and destabilizes us by exposing us to the fecundity of the future that this action opened. It ties together founding action with the anticipation of final judgment.

As N. T. Wright expresses it thus, "Held secure between past and future—God's past, God's future—we go forward on our journey

²⁴ *Theology, Music and Time*, 161. Emphasis original.

²⁵ *Theology, Music and Time*, 166.

strengthened and given hope.”²⁶ And, elsewhere, “at every celebration of the Jesus-meal . . . *God’s past catches up with us again, and God’s future comes to meet us once more.*”²⁷

The regular practice of the Eucharist is like the rhythm of the Church’s heartbeat, constantly returning and restoring us to the time of Christ (similar things could be said about baptism, wherein we are baptized into the past events of Christ’s death and burial and sealed with the promise of future resurrection, incorporating our bodies into the temporal achievement of Christ). The ritual of the Eucharist itself is also charged with profound scriptural themes that evoke the “higher time” of God’s redemption.

It echoes the new Passover, it is the manna in our wilderness and the wine of our promised rest, it is a celebration of creation, of the bread that strengthens our hearts and the wine that makes them glad, it is the new leavened bread of the Pentecostal Church and the wine of the Spirit that fills her, it is our foretaste of the Wedding Supper of the Lamb, it memorializes our Lord’s death and follows the institution of the Last Supper, it recalls the joyous resurrection meals, it is a retrospective on the labours of the past week, and a commissioning and sending forth into those of the week to come.

While it is constantly repeated, no two celebrations of the Eucharist should be the same. Each Eucharist finds its place “in relation to the unique configuration of tensions and resolutions to which it relates in the metrical hierarchy.”²⁸ Not only is each Eucharist related to the

²⁶ N.T. Wright, *The Meal Jesus Gave Us: Understanding Holy Communion* (London: Hodder & Stoughton), 58.

²⁷ *The Meal Jesus Gave Us*, 47. Emphasis original.

²⁸ *Theology, Music and Time*, 169.

‘over-arching wave’ of Christ’s death and resurrection, but it will also be related to the lower waves of our juncture in history, the Church’s year, the stage of a particular church’s development, and the seasons of our individual lives. Improvisation within our celebration can underline this fact, as in our repetition we accent certain features of the rite’s meaning that most impinge upon our particular and unique time.

Music and Body

In addition to its intense temporal character, music constricts our bodies. Mark Johnson investigates the question of music’s “meaning,” concluding that “music is meaningful because it can present the flow of human experience, feeling, and thinking in concrete, embodied forms—and this is meaning in its deepest sense.”²⁹ Music “appeals to our felt sense of life.”³⁰

Johnson writes: “We are moved by it, and we are moved because music orders our experience using tone quality, pitch, meter, rhythm, and other processes that we feel in our bodies. We are moved bodily and emotionally and qualitatively. The experience of sitting quietly in a chair and listening to music is almost unnatural, for our *bodies* want to move with the music. That is why music and dance are so closely and happily intertwined. Music captures us, carries us along on a sensuous, rhythmic tonal adventure, and then deposits us, changed, in a different place from where we started.”³¹

²⁹ Mark Johnson, *The Meaning of the Body: Aesthetics of Human Understanding* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 236

³⁰ *Meaning of the Body*, 236.

³¹ *Meaning of the Body*, 236-237.

In music, time comes alive for us and we are caught up into its movement. The significance of music's capacity to establish patterns of movement into which we are drawn is of immense consequence. There is a deep connection between music and "body coordination," both that of the individual and that of the social body. Music can provide a template for initiating consecutive and coordinated action, bringing together disorganized parts into a whole. This is true for social groups: music serves both a bonding and a coordinating purpose.³²

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy speaks of the power of song to bind us together: "[I]n singing, we are less remote from other minds than in other forms of communication. Here, the whole notion of different minds is subdued in favor of stressing the unanimity. The "inner" life of man is not a privilege of private individuals. Any group in the world has this inner sanctuary. Even big nations have their privacy where they sing."³³

Oliver Sacks remarks on the related phenomenon of coordination of action: "The almost irresistible power of rhythm is evident in many other contexts: in marching, it serves both to entrain and coordinate movement and to whip up a collective and perhaps martial excitement. . . . We see it with work songs of every sort—rhythmic songs that probably arose with the beginnings of agriculture, when tilling the soil, hoeing, and threshing all required the combined and synchronized efforts of a group of people. Rhythm and its entrainment of movement (and often emotion), its power to 'move' people, in both senses of the word, may well have had a crucial cultural and economic function in human

³² See David Huron, 'Is Music an Evolutionary Adaptation?' *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 930:53ff. for a fascinating exploration of the bonding purpose of music.

³³ Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Speech and Reality* (Norwich, VT: Argo Books, 1970), 125.

evolution, bringing people together, producing a sense of collectivity and community.”³⁴

The power of music to coordinate is also true for the individual: music can temporarily restore “kinetic melody” to those who have lost it, as in some cases of Parkinson’s Disease.³⁵ Music can also elevate the powers of memory, rhythm assisting us to remember and to recite.³⁶ Embedded in musical sequences, we can perform processes that we could not perform without it.

By this point, I trust that the value of the musical quality of ritual will be more apparent. Ritual coordinates many bodies into unified action. It carries us along in its patterns, capturing our embodied imaginations, minds, and emotions through its music and movement. It binds us together in song. It assists our memories with its rhythms. It coordinates us with its choreography of bodies—standing, kneeling, turning, etc.

Christian liturgy is the place in which we encounter the musicality of the divine drama in an especially elevated form,³⁷ and it is where we are most powerfully incorporated into its music. Liturgy has music at its heart, coordinating us, capturing our bodies and imaginations, binding us together as one, so that together we might be raised up into God’s music.

³⁴ Oliver Sacks, *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain* (London: Picador, 2008), 267-268.

³⁵ *Musicophilia*, 270ff.

³⁶ *Musicophilia*, 256-260.

³⁷ Sung readings, for instance, are one way of manifesting the musical quality of God’s deeds in history.

A Surpassing Beauty

The historical type maintains not merely *particularity*, but also *distance*. Not only having the unspecific distance of a generic temporal alterity, types are held at *specific* distances from each other, their distances measured in various ways (in ‘clock time’, in their significant variations, in their relative positions in the metrical hierarchies of salvation, etc.). The degree to which distance is constitutive of the value of typological relations is more markedly apparent when we attend to them as robustly temporal. Like the pregnant silence between notes, the temporal intervals between redemptive historical types need not be signs of absence or bare hiatuses that secure difference, but can be realms of profound tension, anticipation, or remembrance.

The categories appropriate to such a temporally arriving reality are those of memory and hope, but also desire and beauty. The correspondence of beauty with difference and distance is explored by David Bentley Hart: “Beauty is the true form of distance. Beauty inhabits, belongs to, and possesses distance, but more than that, it gives distance. . . . If indeed ‘metaphysics’ names that species of discourse that strives to deny difference and overcome distance, then a proper understanding of beauty’s place in theology may show how Christian thought eludes metaphysical ambitions, without sacrificing (as a prevalent philosophical prejudice often presumes one must) the language of analogy, reconciliation, or truth.”³⁸

For Hart, this distance and difference is related to time, which is perceived to possess a musical character. Central to music is the crea-

³⁸ David Bentley Hart, *The Beauty of the Infinite: The Aesthetics of Christian Truth* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003), 18.

tion and celebration of the beauty of distance and difference in time: “The harmony of the kingdom is not the proper arrangement of essences, but a choral placing and yielding of voices... The motion of reconciliation in the Spirit, which is the motion that makes time beautiful, occurs within time; this, at least, is the assurance given by Christian eschatology: that the particular is always included within the terms of reconciliation, that reconciliation is not an *Aufhebung*, a tragic forsaking of the particular instance, but a *symphonia*. The beauty of time is its openness to the novelty of peace, which can redeem every moment, ‘carry back’ all discord into the complications of God’s harmony.”³⁹

The typology of God’s work in history—including the enactment of the “music” of this within word and sacrament—is one of the principal ways in which this redemptive end is achieved and manifested. Music is, I have argued, a peculiarly potent conceptual metaphor by which to understand this. The study of biblical typology is the study of time transfigured, caught up within the glorious music of the Spirit’s orchestration.

Far from being mere literary art or mere pedagogical technique, typology constitutes and displays the actual unity and interwoven character of God’s time and the Son who is the unifying Theme in whom it all consists. The musical character of typology is operative in the sacraments, which place us together within and pattern our lives according to this music, in our bodies as in our hearts. The discordance and dissonance of our broken and fallen time is healed and we are caught up within the divine song, as the Father sings forth his Son on the breath of his Spirit.

³⁹ *The Beauty of the Infinite*, 401-402.