

contribute to some of the weaknesses Cahalan describes in each position. Bevans also responded to being identified within the radical postmodern group by distancing himself from their most radical claims, while also confirming the need for theologies to emerge from particular contexts and cultures, as opposed to universal systems.

Issues raised by participants include identifying additional Catholic theorists in practical theology that fit the three categories; the use of missiology to develop a common theoretical language for dialogue among practical theology's specializations; reconceiving theology for ministry beyond the clerical paradigm; developing "denser" descriptions of practicality; recognizing the theological content of popular expressions in "nonchurch" language; and developing appropriate theoretical theological bases for academic ministerial programs.

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HANS URS VON BALTHASAR SOCIETY

Topic: Gnostic Return in Modernity
Convener: David L. Schindler, John Paul II Institute
Presenter: Cyril O'Regan, University of Notre Dame

Professor O'Regan explored and developed hints by Balthasar (in his great trilogy of *Herrlichkeit*, *Theodramatik*, and *Theologik*) that Hegel's discourse and the traditions of philosophical and theological discourse dependent on him might represent a privileged site for the return of Gnosticism in the modern period and thus call for the kind of extensive engagement and vehement resistance that marked Irenaeus's response to Valentinianism of the second century. The paper had three main movements. The first movement laid out Balthasar's resistance to Hegel's general authority, but with specific reference to the ways in which he rebuts

Hegel's teleological reading of the history of philosophy and his triumphalistic understanding of its relationship to art and religion. The second and largely complementary movement focused on Balthasar in the more combative posture of placing Hegel's own thought in lines of discourse presumed to be blighted, lines such as apocalyptic, Neoplatonism, and Gnosticism. The third and final movement explored the issues of the status of Balthasar's countergenealogies in which Hegel is hoisted on his own petard.

The paper's first movement essentially centered on Balthasar's discussion of Hegel's famous 'death of art' thesis prominently placed at the beginning of *Theodramatik*. It was argued that rebuttal of this thesis not only is the key to understanding the first volume focused on dramatic theory, but also in significant

part the subsequent volumes that are more substantively theological. The two specific aspects of the 'death of art' thesis, namely, all art dissolves into pure subjectivism in the modern period, and art is in any event made obsolete by the kairos of Christianity are vigorously rebutted by Balthasar. In proving that literary history makes a liar of Hegel, and that the real agenda of the view that Christianity supplants art is that philosophy may legitimately supplant Christianity, Balthasar is able to convict Hegel of equally incurable apriorism and opportunism. Refuting Hegel's 'death of art' thesis has the purpose of freeing up art in general, drama in particular, for a positive relationship with theology that Hegel makes impossible in principle. Such a relationship Balthasar understands to be necessary for the health of Christianity and theology.

The second movement detailed Balthasar's aggressive counterattack on Hegel, in which Hegel's discourse is plotted as a culmination of various lines of discourse that bear a problematic relation to the mainline Christian tradition, for example, Neoplatonic discourses of various stripes (e.g. Proclus, Eckhart, Bruno), apocalyptic or apocalypticist discourse (e.g. Joachim de Fiore), and finally the discourse of Gnosticism. In making these assignments, Balthasar depends on traditions of interpretation available from the nineteenth century on. For example, the Neoplatonism connection was made by German Catholic thinkers of the nineteenth century such as Franz von Baader and Franz Anton Staudenmaier, the apocalyptic association by Staudenmaier, and the Gnosticism connection again by Staudenmaier, but before him by F. Ch. Baur. In making these attributions, as well as his substantive case against Hegel especially in *Theodramatik* and *Theologik*, Balthasar wishes to imply constitutive deficits in Hegel's discourse and that of theological successors such as Moltmann. Each of these discourses throughout the history of Christianity has had deleterious effects on biblically normed theological construction. While Neoplatonism in general is accorded significant respect by Balthasar, the tendency towards immanence in the discourse can wreak havoc with Christianity as it undermines the *analogia entis* and compromises obediential forms of Christian life. Again, while apocalyptic discourse provides opportunities for Christian discourse, in the form represented by the line that commences with Joachim and continues past Hegel into Bloch and Moltmann, it represents an eminent danger to Christianity. It can promote the cult of vision; it most definitely tends to de-emphasize the centrality of Christ and correspondingly exaggerate the free-standing activity of the Spirit, while confounding the order of history with the history of God. Finally, as operative in Hegel, his modern precursors as well as successors, a Gnostic modality of thought will tend to substitute *gnosis* for *pistis*, conceive of the incarnation only as a cipher, and totally revise Christian narrative and each of its individual episodes, trinity, creation, incarnation, redemption, sanctification, and eschaton.

The third movement addressed the issue of the status of the various countergenealogies that reach their apogee in Hegel, and decided that by and large that they were more nearly forensic and rhetorical than theoretical in deployment. That is, they were used to undermine a powerful modern discourse

by providing its pedigree or pedigrees. Since validity in rhetoric use of countergenealogical categories is determined by success, Balthasar's use was determined to be valid. Moreover, rhetorical use has the advantage of flexibility. Specifically, rhetorically deployed, each of these categories admit of being used in general outside of any discussion of the dangers of Hegelian style discourse in theology. The paper concluded by attempting to imagine how Balthasar's forensics could be brought up to theoretical code as it applied specifically to the Hegelian line of discourse. This involved touching on two huge issues: (i) how one can talk about any modern discourse in terms of earlier discourses; and (ii) theoretically how to explain the dominance of Gnosticism in these discourses—thus Gnostic return—without explaining away the presence of the discourses of apocalyptic and Neoplatonism.

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SPIRITUALITY

Topic: Spirituality and Critique of Culture
 Convener: Mary Frohlich, Catholic Theological Union
 Moderator: Diana L. Villegas, Acton, MA
 Presenters: Michael Warren, St. John's University, NY
 Lee F. Cormie, St. Michael's College, Toronto

In his presentation, "Spirituality and Wealth: The Burdens of Silence," Michael Warren examined the way in which implicit and explicit cultural values regarding money shape Christian spirituality. Based on the work of Aloysius Pieris, Warren points out the key distinction between wealth and mammon. Mammon is the disordered claim on values, priorities and ways of being that wealth of any kind makes on a person. Mammon is distinct from actual possessions; it is a sensibility shaping attitudes and action. As such, mammon is often silent, unconscious, and unnamed. For example, a person or group could take pride in the "possession" of poverty; in this case, poverty as source of pride may distort Gospel values regarding dying to self for the good of the other. Mammon is contrasted to Jesus' values, whose option for the poor was radical.

Warren relates the foregoing analysis to Pierre Bourdieu's social critique. Bourdieu elaborates on the manner in which attitudes, values and choices are often shaped by forces that are not named or known by the actors themselves. Cultural assumptions and patterns of behavior silently become part of unexamined preferences and values. Warren argues that Christian theology and catechesis, through silence on matters related to wealth, are at least implicitly assenting to cultural values that are not congruent with Jesus's teaching. This