

outstrips clinical ability to cure the disease; recognizing and responding to the possibility of discrimination arising out of genetic screening of targeted populations; and marketplace issues, particularly the profits that multinational pharmaceutical companies are inline to gain. A lively discussion followed.

REGINA WOLFE

*Saint John's University
Collegeville, Minnesota*

+ + +

KARL RAHNER SOCIETY

- Topic: Karl Rahner and Religious Language
 Convener: Melvin E. Michalski, Saint Francis Seminary, Milwaukee
 Moderator: Craig A Baron, Duquesne University
 Presenters: Stephen Fields, Georgetown University
 Terrance Klein, St. John's University
 Ann R. Riggs, Rivier College

The presenters' ten-minute summaries of their papers, which had been made available in advance on the Society's web page (<www.theo.mu.edu/krs/>) provided for a lively discussion among 17 participants. The papers will be published in volume 15 of the Marquette University Journal, *Philosophy & Theology*.

Stephen Fields addressed the topic: "Rahner and the Symbolism of Language." For Fields, Rahner's metaphysics of language shows that language itself is intrinsically realsymbolic. By *Realsymbol* Fields means that all beings qua beings, as well as Being itself, are symbolic. Being is by its very nature expressive; it posits itself and thereby expresses itself. Just as the human person is realsymbolic, "because the soul emanates itself in and through the body, so language is realsymbolic, because it emanates itself in and through the signs, sounds, and characters that incarnate it." For Fields, Hegel's logic of unity-in-difference, that Rahner adapts in fashioning the realsymbol, is the crux of Rahner's genius as a metaphysician. Fields also stressed that in mediating Thomas Aquinas through Kant to Heidegger, Rahner advanced the philosophical potential of their thought.

Terrance Klein, addressing the topic: "Symbol and Religious Language," alleged that one must look at Pierre Rousselot, Joseph Marechal and Henri Bergson to understand Rahner. The key insight of Transcendental Thomism, according to Klein, is "not to concentrate upon the affirmations which our concepts might produce about God, but rather the recognition that language itself, the ability to grasp even the provisional essence in a known object, is only possible because that object reveals itself against an infinite horizon. In this

sense, God appears not as that which is forged by language, but rather as the forge upon which language itself is produced."

For Klein, the human person, naturally disposed to revelation, comes to God through language. Comparing Karl Rahner and Ludwig Wittgenstein, Klein pointed out that for Wittgenstein the real does not lie beyond language but only comes to expression within language. The real is the linguistic. For Rahner, similarly, meaning lies latent within the world. Ultimately according to Rahner, the essential self-expression of the Logos is the Incarnation. Thus meaning bears a human face.

Ann R. Riggs, in her presentation: "Rahner and Wittgenstein: An Attempt at Conversation," focused on Wittgenstein's observations on grammar since "Grammar tells what kind of object any thing is." Riggs sees parallels between Wittgenstein's sense of grammar and Rahner's transcendental horizon. She sees advantages to understanding the horizon in terms of a defining grammar for Christian discourse and behavior. One advantage is that grammatical considerations provide a way of highlighting the role of historical processes in personal and institutional identity.

The following conversation engaged the presenters in a discussion of the nature of thought and spiritual matter. Sandra Schneiders reflected on the nature of Christ's bodily resurrection and Christ's unique interactive presence with Christian believers. Leo O'Donovan pointed out that Jesus' "going away" and his "coming to you" are distinct yet ontologically simultaneous.

Justin Kelly offered that "The word is embodied thought not the embodiment of thought." Following up on this, Fields pointed out the importance of the concept of *excessus*. This involves two acts of negation: first, the mind perceives a universal element in the raw datum of sensuous intuition and, second, in order to recognize a universal in the sensuous datum, the mind must be detached from the universal. The mind negates the universal by contrasting it with a higher order of Being.

The annual Karl Rahner Society Breakfast Meeting was attended by 34 people. Craig A. Baron made a short presentation on the topic: "The Linguistic Other in Transcendental Thomism." Baron emphasized that a connection can be made between postmodern concerns and Rahner's concerns. Baron argued that Rahner recognized that language is central to human experience. Baron then asked if it is true, as some suggest, that Rahner is *passe*. In discussion with Baron, KRS members responded that Rahner did not marginalize the significance of the social dimensions of religion, he affirmed pluralism and diversity, made room for popular religiosity, and appreciated historicity. Is Rahner *passe*? On the contrary, Rahnerian perspectives need to be retrieved.

In the business portion of the meeting, Ann R. Riggs was elected to the steering committee of the KRS and Howard Ebert was selected as moderator of the Society to succeed Melvin Michalski. For next year's CTSA convention it was decided that the Rahner Session will focus on Miguel H. Diaz's book, *On Being Human*, U.S. Hispanic and Rahnerian Perspectives, Orbis, 2001.

As is our custom, the meeting ended with a few Rahner anecdotes.

MELVIN E. MICHALSKI

St. Francis Seminary

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

+ + +

BLACK CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

- Topic: Contemporary Black/Womanist and Hispanic/Latino/a Theologies
in America: A Dialogue—Session I
Covener: Jamie T. Phelps, Loyola University Chicago
Presenter: Stephanie Mitchell, University of Detroit
Respondent: Orlando Espin, University of San Diego

"Tangle Roots—African Diaspora and Mestizaje"

Stephanie Mitchell initiated her presentation by recalling a racial incident with which most people of color resonated, a commonplace act of human degradation manifested by a white female colleague who patted her on the head as a gesture of congratulations. The Latina in the room nonverbally shared her shock and anger by a moment of eye contact.

Mitchell noted that Hispanic and African Americans share a common or parallel history. Colonialism was linked with nationalism, racism, classism in the construction of social systems. The inequities originating in these diverse social processes became structurally imbedded in the social and ecclesial institutions of American societies of North and South America.

Today, both Hispanics and African Americans are subjected to the threats posed in our contemporary situation. Both of our peoples are threatened by cultural annihilation as we march toward increase continent wide "Americanization" and the co-modification of culture. Both are threatened by the appropriation of their languages in a way which exploits them for the benefit of others. Language has become a barrier to the recognition of our common situation.

Ecclesially, both groups have been proactive in creating parallel structures to provide resources for the Roman Catholic Church's mission and ministry within our respective communities. Both groups have developed and disseminated national pastoral plans. Both groups have established institutes for cultural learning: the Mexican American Cultural Center (MAC) and the Institute for Black Catholic Studies of Xavier University of New Orleans (IBCS) Both groups have developed a series of documents through the United States Catholic Conference to aid in the development of inculturated liturgies, religious education, and ministerial programs.

Our cultural confluence in an African past and histories of conquests provide a basis for commonality as we explore our contemporary mutual experience as "marginal outsiders" in the church. Our common contemporary experience of