

The volume opens with a reference to Pope Benedict XVI's call to look at the council documents afresh. One cannot help but wonder how this volume's effort to encourage dialogue on Vatican II might have developed had this project been more influenced by Pope Francis.

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The Anatomy of Misremembering: Von Balthasar's Response to Philosophical Modernity, vol. 1, *Hegel*. By Cyril O'Regan. New York: Crossroad, 2014. xvii + 678 pages. \$40.95 (paper).
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With this first installment of a planned two-volume project explicating Balthasar's struggle against post-Enlightenment amnesia, O'Regan continues his argument against the theological *wirkungsgeschichte* of Hegel and German Idealism. In *The Heterodox Hegel* (1994) and *Gnostic Return in Modernity* (2001), O'Regan claimed Hegel's philosophy marked the reemergence of a gnostic narrative that orthodox Christianity has fought throughout its history. O'Regan's latest tome champions Balthasar against Hegel, the preeminent exemplar of the gnostic return. In his preface and introduction, O'Regan characterizes this agon as one between the triumphalism of Enlightenment-sanctioned forgetting and the memory preserved by Christian tradition. With his retrievals of the past, Hegel appears to oppose Enlightenment amnesia, but his philosophies of history are seductive monuments of encyclopedic misremembering that Balthasar's apocalyptic theology exposes as counterfeit.

In part 1, "The Specter of Hegel and the Haunting of Ancient Discourses," O'Regan demonstrates how Balthasar counters Hegel's attack on the alethic capabilities of artistic symbolism and literary narratives. Apocalyptic interruption of the totalizing discourses of German Idealism and Romanticism preserves space for the biblical narrative in which Jesus rather than Hegel's *Geist* is the uncircumscribable reality. In modernity this resistance mirrors the earlier heresiological battle Irenaeus waged against genealogies of Valentinian gnostics, aiming to transplant Christianity into foreign narratives. While Balthasar provides a path through this gnostic miasma, O'Regan thinks Balthasar's historical descriptions need further genealogical determination to increase their explanatory scope.

Part 2, "Gloriously Awry: Hegel's Epic Deviation," charges Hegel with promoting a metaphysics that destroys analogy and consequently justifies life without prayer. Hegel follows the Enlightenment in equating knowledge

and salvation in an epical framework obliterating meaningful differences. By contrast, Balthasar emphasizes how saints illustrate that salvation is a function not of knowledge but of obedient acceptance of personal God-given missions erupting into history from outside it. In part 3, "Of Fathers and Sons," O'Regan weaves a counter-Hegelian family tree. Here Franz Staudenmaier's battle against Hegelianism in the nineteenth century repeats Irenaeus' against the gnostics in the second century, and foreshadows Balthasar's own against Hegel in the twentieth. O'Regan searches for theologians whose Christologies and Trinitarian theologies he judges to have fallen captive to Hegel's spell. His spotlight falls on Moltmann, for Hegel's influence on Moltmann leads the latter into snares despite claims to Christocentricity. Moltmann's anthropology unacceptably ingests Hegelian influences in his preference for autonomy rather than heteronomy.

The fourth part, "Eidetic Apocalyptic and Its Contemporary Rivals," features O'Regan's description of Balthasar's apocalyptic discourse. O'Regan proclaims this species of apocalypse Irenaean based on its ability to circumscribe rival speculative worldviews. A detailed intra-Catholic comparison of the apocalyptic theologies of Metz and Balthasar is by itself worth the price of this book. Metz judges that both Moltmann and Balthasar produce kenotic theologies of the Trinity subjecting the cross and God to logical frameworks. Yet O'Regan values Balthasar's eidetic appeal to Revelation and its theme of judgment more than Metz's functional grounding in the prophetic books and Mark. O'Regan appreciates Metz's warning against aestheticizing forms of apocalypse, which follows Benjamin's less conceptually determined apocalyptic, and judges Metz's theology worthy of integration into Balthasar's project. Metz's social-scientific and foundational apocalyptic thereby complements Balthasar's Christocentric literary and categorical version of the same.

In his resistance to modernity O'Regan displays remarkable philosophical breadth and a knowledge of Hegel few can match. His interpretations of Balthasar's works are convincing, copiously documented, and sensitive to the proportionate influence various thinkers had on the trilogy. O'Regan's concern to position Balthasar against Hegel does unto Balthasar what Balthasar himself did to many classic figures throughout his oeuvre. O'Regan offers a balanced articulation of kataphatic and apophatic emphases in Balthasar's writing; getting this right is key to understanding how Balthasar counters the Hegelian drive toward abstraction. Those convinced by Lindbeck's postliberalism will likely agree that O'Regan's call to interpret or be interpreted is the most pressing contemporary theological task.

Others, however, might have pause. Balthasar structured his trilogy as a deliberate response to Hegel, but O'Regan's claim that confronting gnosticism in its various guises constitutes the *sine qua non* of contemporary theology

should be a hard sell. Following Kevin Mongrain, O'Regan elevates Irenaeus as a hermeneutical guide unlocking insight into Balthasar's theological goals. Irenaeus' role in articulating a canon for Christianity helped defeat the gnostic challenge, but was also concurrent with the rapid decline of the prophetic office in the churches and consequent narrowing of the Christian understanding of revelation. The witness of Irenaeus' contemporaries Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria provides a model of engagement with philosophy and Greek understandings of the logos less amenable to, and more irenic than, the dichotomies in *Against Heresies*. These voices need to be integrated into a theological hermeneutic alongside that of Irenaeus and others defending canonicity. O'Regan's claim that the Enlightenment and its consequences are nihilistic (113) reflects what is episodically a zero-sum articulation of the church-world relationship. His attempt to provide genealogical enhancement for Balthasar appeals to the category of tradition far more than Balthasar himself did; this underweights the Goethean influence that enabled Balthasar to read tradition in a manner that was Christocentric and yet simultaneously more open-ended than today's postliberal readings.

This book is recommended for faculty, graduate students, and librarians specializing in Balthasar or the relationship between Hegel and Christianity. The second volume of *The Anatomy of Misremembering* will be devoted to Balthasar's engagement with Heidegger; I predict it will be as expansive and well argued as its predecessor.

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