

## RECENSIONS

contributions de cette partie sont toutefois très courtes et s'avèrent davantage des extraits de lectures que des analyses ou des interprétations.

L'effort d'internationalisation mené par les éditeurs de ce numéro thématique mérite ici d'être souligné. Nous pouvons toutefois déplorer que la seconde partie du numéro thématique nous annonce un regard sur les cinq continents, alors que nous n'y trouvons rien en ce qui concerne l'Inde et le Moyen-Orient, et très peu en ce qui concerne l'Océanie. Les contributions à ce numéro de *Concilium* concernent, dans l'ensemble, la relation établie entre le créateur et la création, explorée dans de multiples réalisations littéraires, tout en réservant une place centrale, par le biais de l'esthétique de la création littéraire, au corps dans sa relation à l'esprit. Ce numéro thématique conduit le lecteur à de plus amples questionnements à propos de la façon dont Dieu et la volonté divine se manifestent dans le monde et pour l'humanité, notamment dans des contextes de guerre, d'oppression ou de domination. Bien que certaines contributions des deuxième et troisième parties soient un peu trop courtes, elles demeurent d'intérêt et poussent le lecteur à vouloir en savoir davantage. Notons qu'une contribution à propos d'un poète canadien tel que Saint-Denys Garneau aurait trouvé une place pertinente à l'intérieur de ce recueil. Une référence à un auteur tel que le sud-africain John Maxwell Coetzee (notamment : *L'éducation de Jésus*, 2017) y aurait également mérité une place. Malgré ces petites absences, nous sommes à même de saluer cette ouverture de la théologie à la littérature.

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Thomas DE KONINCK, Jean-François de RAYMOND, **Beauté oblige. Écologie et dignité. Manifeste.** Avec la collaboration de Warwick VINCENT, Marcel BABIN, Rodolphe DE KONINCK, Caroline GRAVEL, Stéphanie GRIMARD, Jean-Philippe CURODEAU, suivi de la traduction anglaise par Kathleen Hulley et Donald Landes, **Beauty Obliges. Ecology and Dignity. Manifesto.** Québec, Presses de l'Université Laval (coll. « Kairos - Travaux communs »), 2018, 74 p.

Thomas De Koninck and Jean-François de Raymond's manifesto on ecology is as insightful as it is accessible. The text itself is brief — it is not quite thirty pages — and although the fluidity of the language allows for a very quick read, the ideas discussed by the authors (and supported by a myriad of collaborators and signatories) provide much food for thought. I was delighted to learn that the authors of this manifesto — which was originally written in French — were adamant about including its English translation, widening the reach of the wisdom spelled out in these pages. As a bilingual reader, I was happy to have both versions at my fingertips.

The manifesto opens with an invitation to the reader to seriously consider the gravitas of the environmental crisis. Out of the gate, the authors underline an important point here without stating it outright : if, indeed, we are *aware* (or *conscious*) of the “unprecedented deterioration of the state of our shared home” then why does there continue to be such sweeping indifference when it comes to acting on behalf of the planet ?

The authors cite unrestrained consumption, the widespread rise of climate skepticism, and blind confidence in the ostensibly salvific potential of technology as some of the marks of a “new ignorance” that is nothing short of “a criminal attitude toward humanity.” Indeed, shirking our collective responsibility to heal and protect the planet amounts, the authors claim, to “a crime against future generations.” Although I am not convinced that this ignorance is all that “new,” I fully agree that it breeds apathy and ultimately determines how we go about inhabiting the earth.

The manifesto appeals to the concept of dignity as a “new paradigm” for thinking about, motivating, and (re)orienting eco-action. Here, the concept is extended beyond the respect due to humanhood ; nature, too, is worthy and the dignity of nature is rooted in its many intricate relationships (human-human, human-nature, species-species, etc.) and systems. Interconnectedness and interdependence are hallmarks of the natural world ; the authors claim that this rendering of dignity “offers something like a horizon of convergence” and that it is the starting point for more unifying, integrative, creative, and nuanced approaches to healing and protecting the complex and conjoined systems of the planet.

Again, I am not so sure that this is really a “new” paradigm after all. Some of these ideas have been in circulation for decades. The reader will detect subtle links here to the teachings of deep ecologists, ecofeminists, and ecotheologians who have sought to reinterpret and extend familiar concepts (such as nature as “the new poor” or nature as “neighbour,” for instance) and who have long been negating atomistic, mechanistic, polarizing, and reductionistic worldviews that have separated humankind from nature and allowed for a destructive instrumentalization of the earth and its resources. In addition, the manifesto seems to echo a number of important themes raised in Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si*, including the earth as our common home, the call for solidarity, the vision of an integral ecology, the interconnectedness of all things, eco-responsibility as (an urgent) duty, the link between justice and ecology, and others. In the end, the use of dignity as a unifying principle is helpful, I think, as its wider application reminds that the word “common” in “Common Good” means something and that, ultimately, the health of human beings and the health of the planet are deeply and necessarily intertwined.

The question remains : are we called to heal and protect the natural world for its own sake or are we called to heal and protect the natural world because *humans* are going to suffer the consequences of our own destructive attitudes ? Does it matter if the impetus behind eco-action is anthropocentric ?

The manifesto proposes a number of important global strategies — “based on the solidarity between humans and nature” — that engage the political, social, and economic dimensions of the eco-crisis. The indispensable role of education is emphasized here to counter the “new ignorance,” to re-envision the natural world and our place in (not above) it, and to encourage serious and constructive measures to heal and protect.

Although the notion of beauty — *moral* beauty, in particular, which gives rise to collective responsibility — is the primary inspiration of the manifesto, I would have liked a more robust treatment of this than the brief paragraph found in the middle of the text. How the beauty of the natural order, the beauty of belonging, and the place of “wonder” (I think here of Prof. Lisa Sideris’ work on this concept) shape the way we think about, value, and relate to nature is a very important conversation that has not been had often enough. The dignity-beauty-ecology triad of this manifesto is what attracted me to it in the first place.

Above all, I applaud the authors, collaborators, and signatories for having invited us to come to terms with our own awareness of the eco-crisis and for having given us pause to judge whether our own motivations, commitments and actions genuinely match that awareness.

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