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SUMARIO

ARTÍCULOS

Carlos Gil Arbiol

El buen samaritano y la proximidad del herido: la aportación del naciente cristianismo a la búsqueda de la felicidad..... 1-23

Martín Carbajo Núñez, ofm

«*So that they might have life*» *The Later Rule of Saint Francis* 25-50

Susana Vilas Boas

Implementing an ecoculture: living beyond fear 51-65

Jaime Laurence Bonilla Morales

Humanismo como fraternidad universal en clave franciscana 67-86

Manuel Porcel Moreno

Jean-Luc Marion y la teología. La donación como alternativa al ser 87-115

Antonio Sánchez-Bayón

Ortodoxia versus Heterodoxia sobre la colonización del Oeste estadounidense por empresas religiosas e ideológicas..... 117-156

Antonio Martínez Macanás

La hermenéutica católica de Emmanuel Falque. La Escritura como texto del cuerpo. 157-175

Emilio-José Justo Domínguez

El concepto de libertad en el debate teológico actual..... 177-197

Mario Lorente Muñoz

Los pobres en la obra de Cipriano de Cartago..... 199-226

Jesús Alberto Valero-Matas y Pablo Coca Jiménez

Religion, Immigration and Integration in Castilla and Leon 227-246

Albert Cassanyes Roig

Donde habitan los canónigos: las residencias canónicas en Mallorca (siglos XIII a XV) 247-267

Yeshica Marianne Umaña Calderón

Obligatoriedad y Funciones de la Jurisprudencia del Tribunal de la Rota Romana. 269-292

NOTAS Y COMENTARIOS

Jon Mentxakatorre Odriozola

Sobre lo sagrado y la dimensión poético-antropológica del habla 293-303

Francesc Xavier Marín Torné et alia

Los lugares de culto como experiencia educativa (III): Fundamentación teológica. La Basílica de la Sagrada Familia de Barcelona, un ejemplo paradigmático..... 305-319

BIBLIOGRAFÍA..... 321-351

LIBROS RECIBIDOS 353-354

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IMPLEMENTING AN ECOCULTURE: LIVING BEYOND FEAR

IMPLANTAR UNA ECOCULTURA: VIVIR MÁS ALLÁ DEL MIEDO

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Abstract: In light of Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato Si'* I will defend the necessity and urgency of implementing an ecoculture in such a way that it is possible to live the present and look to the future beyond the fear of destruction.

The happy dream for the human family, as described in *Laudato Si'*, will mean breaking free from the chains of the paradigm of fear, where having takes precedence over being and, consequently, leads to the agony of the whole Creation in a spiral of survival, where the fullness of life has no place. Ecoculture will make possible a sobriety that is able, without despair or fatalism, to develop an action of compassion for Creation - a compassion in which the human being understands himself as an integral part of Creation, suffering with it whenever destruction is victorious. In an ecoculture, human beings reassume their original role in Creation, abandoning all ambitions and attempts at superiority, but rather seeking the common good of Creation, in which technical progress, policies, and social relations are allies in safeguarding the common home and never sacrificers of integral ecology.

Keywords: Ecology; Ecoculture; Eco-hope; Fear; Disposable life.

Resumen: A la luz de la Encíclica *Laudato Si'* del Papa Francisco defenderé la necesidad y la urgencia de implementar una ecocultura de tal manera que sea posible vivir el presente y mirar el futuro más allá del miedo a la destrucción.

El sueño feliz para la familia humana, tal como se describe en *Laudato Si'*, significará liberarse de las cadenas del paradigma del miedo, donde el tener prima sobre el ser y, en consecuencia, conduce a la agonía de toda la Creación en una espiral de supervivencia, donde la plenitud de la vida no tiene cabida. La ecocultura hará posible una sobriedad capaz de desarrollar, sin desesperación ni fatalismo, una acción de compasión por la Creación, una compasión en la que el ser humano se entienda a sí mismo como parte integrante de la Creación, sufriendo con ella siempre que la destrucción salga victoriosa. En una ecocultura, el ser humano reasume su papel original en la Creación, abandonando todas las ambiciones e intentos de superioridad, para buscar el bien común de la Creación, en el que el progreso técnico, las políticas y las relaciones sociales sean aliados en la salvaguarda de la casa común y nunca sacrificadores de la ecología integral.

Palabras clave: Ecología; Ecocultura; Eco-esperanza; Miedo; Vida desechable.

Introduction

When we speak of ecoculture we are led to think of a plurality of realities that refer to the self-sustainability of the earth. First of all, the basis for understanding ecoculture is “sustainable agriculture”, an agriculture that aims to reduce (if not eliminate) the use of artificial products that will somehow damage or corrupt the purity of the soil, and consequently of agricultural products. Besides this vision associated with the preservation of the land, there are other perspectives that refer ecoculture to the environmental domain, of the air/atmosphere, and of the elements used by humans (for example, in the construction of houses, in the materials used in everyday utensils, etc.). In both cases, ecoculture is presented as something external to the human being and intrinsically linked to safeguarding the planet. However, ecology and ecoculture cannot be reduced to this almost physicalist vision. On the contrary, there is a human dimension that has to be taken care of and to which a response is urgently needed so that the safeguarding of humanity in the human being can be assured. In a very particular way, authors like Rod Giblett have been developing this dimension of ecoculture through an ‘ecocultural’ reading of the Bible and literature.¹

The novelty of ecoculture, when thought of from a point of view intrinsic to the human, is that it makes it possible to look at reality not as a passive dimension, but in a co-relational and active dimension. In fact, if one thinks of ecoculture from a physical point of view (whether in the realm of agriculture or in the various areas of concern for the biosphere), the underlying idea seems to be that of a passive (natural) reality over which the human (external to that reality) acts with a view to safeguarding it.² On the contrary, by maintaining the natural dimension of the human being (the human as an integral part of nature), it becomes possible to open the spectrum of understanding about ecoculture from the intrinsically human reality. Moreover, in an inclusive view of the human being as part of nature, the risk of ecological destruction diminishes. In this case, it is no longer a matter of “not destroy-

¹ Cf. Rod Giblett. *Environmental Humanities and Theologies: Ecoculture, Literature and the Bible*. (London, New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2020).

² Cf. William Cronon. “Forward to the paperback edition”. In William Cronon (Ed.), *Uncommon ground: Rethinking the human place in nature* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., 1996), 19–22; Timothy Mitchell. “Can the mosquito speak?”. In Timothy Mitchell (Ed.), *Rule of experts: Egypt, techno-politics, modernity* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002), 19–53.

ing the planet”, but of not destroying oneself. As Frederick Elder already stated in 1970, it is to the extent that exclusivist views (which place the human being as being in a world apart) gain ground, that humans, without much discretion, manipulate nature as they please, even if this means the destruction of their own world and, consequently, threatens their existence.³ As Moltmann corroborates, in order to address the lack of wisdom with which human beings have managed their scientific and technological knowledge, “it is important for the way human beings understand themselves that they do not see themselves initially as subject against nature, and theologically as the image of God; but that they see themselves first of all as product of nature and – theologically too – as *imago mundi*.”⁴ If throughout history, often due to skewed understandings of the biblical accounts of Creation, many have come out in defence of the “conquest of nature”⁵; The consequence of this argument is not without its consequences, when it is noted that “too often throughout history, well-functioning ecosystems have been converted into deserts, bowls of dirt, and sewers.”⁶ To pose as if humanity were a subject before the world that it manipulates as if it were an object, is to pervert the natural sense of its own existence, leading to the reality of what we live in today: the incommensurability of getting to replace natural ecosystems with synthetic ones (see, for example, urban complexes or the creation of ‘agro-ecosystems’ on agricultural land).⁷ The situation becomes even more serious if we think that, many times, these mechanisms of artificializing the natural environment are done under the ecological argument and in order to preserve the environment and human development.⁸

³ Cf. Frederick Elder. *Crisis in Eden: A Religious Study of Man and Environment*. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1970).

⁴ Jürgen Moltmann. *God in Creation: A New Theology of Creation and the Spirit of God*. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985), 51.

⁵ Cf. Douglas J. Hall. *Imaging God: Dominion as Stewardship*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 163.

⁶ Loren Wilkinson. *Earthkeeping: Christian Stewardship of Natural Resources*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 15.

⁷ “Environmental degradation – the entropic death of the planet – is the result of the forms of knowledge through which humanity has constructed the world and destroyed it because of its pretension to unity, universality, generality and totality; by its objectification and objectification of the world”: Enrique Leff. “La complejidad ambiental,” *Revista Polis. Hacia la Transdisciplinarietà*, Vol. 6, Núm. 16., (Santiago de Chile, 2007): 1.

⁸ Cf. José Manuel Naredo. *Raíces económicas del deterioro ecológico y social. Más allá de los dogmas*. (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España Editores S.A., 2006).

Culture as a womb

In 2007, in the Aparecida Document, in reference to Francis of Assisi's Cantic of the Creatures, the then Commission for the drafting of the concluding document, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, warned about environmental problems, calling planet Earth "Mother".⁹ Later, the now Pope Francis, continued to address this issue at length, not only because it is urgent to care for "Our Mother Earth", but because the neglect and artificiality with which the environment has been treated reflects a dehumanization and artificialization of the human condition. The Pope continued to call the planet 'Mother', in a metaphor that seeks to lead human beings to a greater responsibility, but also to a greater love, for all Creation. With the same devotion and appreciation that one cares for and watches over the well-being of a mother, human beings are also called to love the planet they inhabit.¹⁰ Another metaphor is the one that appears in *Laudato Si'*, when "Our Mother Earth" is called "Common Home".¹¹ In a way, and without wanting to extrapolate the metaphorical sense of the terms, the reality of a world – said to be developed – whose mothers are placed in old people's homes and often abandoned there, seemed not to be the best analogy. By calling the planet "our common home", there would possibly be an intention, on the one hand, to warn that we are not alone on the planet and that all our actions have repercussions for others. On the other hand, an appeal to the awareness that if the house is destroyed, there will be no place to live.

Both metaphors seem to aim at a care for what is external to the human, starting from what is internal to him. It seems simple, but metaphorical language allows us to go further than the often long and formal speeches (although it is not always possible to explore all the depth hidden in the symbolism of the metaphor). This way of saying something, seeking to refer to the diversity of nature in a deeply familiar and human language, is not exclusive to theology. On the contrary, in ecological issues, many are those

⁹ Cf. Jorge Mario Bergoglio. "La Alegría de ser Discípulos Misioneros para Anunciar el Evangelio." *V Conferencia General del Episcopado Latinoamericano y del Caribe. Discípulos y Misioneros de Jesucristo para que nuestros pueblos en Él tengan vida "Yo soy el Camino, la Verdad y la Vida" (Jn 16,4)*. (Aparecida: CELAM, 2007), 125.

¹⁰ Cf. Papa Francesco (Jorge Mario Bergoglio). *Nostra Madre Terra. Una lettura cristiana della sfida dell'ambiente*. (Roma: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2019).

¹¹ Cf. *Encyclical Letter Laudato Si' of the Holy Father Francis on care for our Common Home*, Pope Francis. accessed on October 6, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

who speak of “Mother Nature”, seeking to appeal to the respect and ongoing care that every human being should have – a care that is a reflection of an intimate relationship and not a split between humans and non-humans.¹² On the other hand, some metaphors seek to reduce nature leading to the social reorganization of nature and society. These are mechanistic metaphors that clash with organic metaphors, more connected to interconnection and reciprocity. Today, there seems to be a desire to fix unavoidably the “metaphor of nature as a machine [knowing that this] is based on the assumption of separability and manipulability.”¹³

From my point of view, to think of a metaphor adjusted to our days, it is necessary to attend to the reality in which we live. For this, we must keep in mind that, more than talking about good ecological practices and safeguarding the planet, it is urgent to talk about culture and the way in which it has to transfigure, not only our behaviors (external to the human), but also what we are in ourselves and in relation to others (internal to the human). If I wanted to use a metaphor to better talk about culture, I would use the metaphor of the womb. On the one hand, in the womb new life is generated, in the womb life is nurtured and developed. On the other hand, there is also the possibility that the womb does not generate, that it is sterile, or even that the life that exists there is annihilated.

Today we live inside a womb that is becoming corrupted, that has suffered from countless incisions, and in which the artificial is sought more than the natural. Mechanical life’ overrides biological and even human life. In the development of this culture of destroying the natural and implementing the artificial, human beings are forging an artificial humanity, which brings with it a trail of destruction. To promote an ecoculture is to counteract this tendency and recognize that caring for ‘the womb’ is not something important to do in a given moment; rather, it is a humanizing and humanizing zeal that encompasses a way of being (doing), but also a way of being.

At this point it will be important to ask why there is so much destruction and disrespect for ‘Our Mother Earth’, for the ‘Common Home’ that we inhabit and are part of. At the same time, it is necessary to understand how the culture – the womb in which we move and on which we act – has been corrupted and damaged, looking for ways and means so that this culture can be

¹² Cf. Tema Milstein. “The performer metaphor: Mother Nature never gives us the same show twice.” *Environmental Communication: A Journal of Nature and Culture*, 9, 2, (2015): 1–22.

¹³ Mark Hathaway; Leonardo Boff. *The Tao of Liberation: Exploring the Ecology of Transformation*. (Maryknoll – New York: Orbis Books, 2009), 144.

healed from the many diseases it now suffers. What paradigm must become dominant for ecoculture to take hold in an unequivocal and lasting way?

Sobriety as an eco-cultural paradigm

Today we are witnessing a kind of social schizophrenia. On one hand, one lives in the frantic desire to follow a path of ‘development’ at any price; on the other hand, many postulate the incrementation and transition of new ways of living. In both cases, the ensuing decisions have impact and consequences for thousands of beings (human and non-human). The very survival of the planet seems to be threatened by these two extremes, and no voices are visible or audible that seek alternatives and aim at a development consistent with the principle of ecological balance. The ecological question is being discussed in various socio-political spheres, but there is no growth in eco-integrative arguments, policies, and ways of thinking. Rather, even in the field of ecological debates, we are witnessing, at times, radicalism against the safeguarding of nature (in favor of greater economic growth and greater ‘progress’); at other times, a radical break with any idea of progress, in favor of an ecology that stands for itself (even though this may cause misery and ruin). As Naredo states, it must be kept in mind that “the claim to move towards a more socially and ecologically balanced and stable world without questioning the current expansive trends of financial assets, monetary aggregates, and the commodification of life in general is something so naïve and uninformed as to border on stupidity.”¹⁴

The current paradigms do not respond to the ecological challenge and urgency. The hegemonic paradigms of abusive domination of the Earth and total disrespect for Life, seem to tend to advance (everything that can be done, is done. There is no questioning or second chances). Why should this happen when on a daily basis we already suffer the consequences of a technoscience that has no regard for the common good? Why are paradigms being developed that foster cultures that generate more death than life when, for example, every day we are faced with the consequences of global warming? The reason seems to be clear: there is no true alternative paradigm! Having to choose between scientific-technological progress and living according to an ecological matrix should never be in question. On the contrary, ecoculture can only

¹⁴ Naredo. *Raíces económicas...*, 106.

be rooted in human beings and societies to the extent that the awareness of “eco-bio-socio-technological interdependence” grows.¹⁵

Ecoculture entails both the ecological balance and the stability advocated by economic principles.¹⁶ This does not mean surrendering to inertia; rather, it means finding credible and lasting alternatives. Alternatives that can only be implemented under the banner of sobriety: sobriety in the analysis of reality, both from the ecological point of view and from the point of view of the development of civilizations. The awareness that it is necessary to maintain a sober look at reality will lead to the construction of a reflection that will produce new lifestyles and new ways of acting, capable of cementing an ecoculture that is not synonymous with financial ruin, nor with the destruction of the planet.¹⁷

To implement the mark of sobriety, for the affirmation of an ecocultural paradigm, is to accept rejecting the paradigms now in force. The risk of safeguarding something of the dominant paradigm is to continue to develop arguments that place economic development and sustainable development in radical opposition to each other. In the words of Boaventura de Sousa Santos, to think of integral development from an ecological perspective is to think of development without the concern for ‘growth’. Sustainability implies, precisely, the rejection of the unbridled desire for growth, since it presupposes and takes into account the regeneration and assimilation of ecosystems.¹⁸

In this line, many currents of thought have been developing in the light of more specific themes. These are new approaches to the ecological problematic that seek not only to respond to the urgency of the planet’s sustainability, but also to think this ecoculture starting from what the human being is. Thus, for example, the alternatives proposed by ecofeminism (whose sustainable development is thought of from the feminine, family and child reality), seek to think of the social economy from a solidarity logic and according to the bases of an “economy of care”.¹⁹ Other lines of thought, point

¹⁵ Salvador Paniker. *Ensayos Retroprogresivos*. (Barcelona: Kairós, 1987), 55.

¹⁶ Cf. Naredo. *Raíces económicas...*, 99.

¹⁷ Cf. Enrique Luengo-González, (coord.). *Las alternativas ciudadanas para otros mundos posibles: pensamiento y experiencias*, (Guadalajara: ITESO, 2014), 16.

¹⁸ Cf. Boaventura de Sousa Santos; César Rodríguez. “Introducción. Para ampliar El canon de la producción.” *Producir para vivir. Los caminos de la producción no capitalista*. Boaventura de Sousa Santos (coord). (México: Fondo de Cultura económica D.F., 2012), 41.

¹⁹ Cf. e.g. Vandana Shiva. *Staying Alive; women, ecology and development*. (London: Zed books, 1988); Vandana Shiva; Irene Dankelman. “Women Maintaining the Food Schain; a case study of India”. In: *Nord-Süd Aktuell*, 3 Quartal (1990): 373-375; Vandana Shiva; Irene Dankelman. “Women and Biological Diversity”. In: David Cooper a.o. (eds), *Growing*

to the need for a holistic paradigm, rooted in everyday life, where ethics is the basis for all development.²⁰ Many are the alternative proposals that, little by little, make ecological reflection advance and, consequently, foment the incrementation of the ecocultural paradigm. Note that, for example, it is in the light of these reflections that treaties such as the Latin American Pact for Ecological Action (1992) are celebrated.²¹ In these cases, it becomes evident that the concern goes far beyond the physical dimension of the planet. What is at issue is the desire to affirm a ‘community paradigm’ of the culture of life, aimed at living well and the common good.²²

Despite the obvious contribution of these currents, the focus on the ecological problematic often seems to be diverted from the principle of sobriety (in the previous examples, the reflection sometimes ends up being limited to the gender problematic or to the reality of a concrete community). When this happens, the implementation of the ecocultural paradigm is set back, even leading to the discrediting of its arguments. Sobriety opens doors to the creation of space for a healthy coexistence, common and open to solidarity. To reduce the ecological problem to specific aspects of it is to enter into the logic of growth and progressively abandon the principle of sustainable development. The common good, proper to ecoculture, does not presuppose an excess of having (having more money, having more rights, etc.); rather, it requires an “excess of being” (being human, being with others, etc.). Only by assuming a sober reflection and experience of all the aspects that are proper to humanity, is it possible to increase this ecoculture that does not remain stagnant in the face of the advances and challenges of technology and financial markets. Only in this way is it possible not to be subjected to the fear of “no growth” and, consequently, to the resignation of fatalism that the planet is hopelessly doomed to destruction.

Diversity, Genetic Resources and Local Food Security. (London. Intermediate Technology Publications, 1992): 44-52.

²⁰ Cf. Jörg Elbers. *Ciencia holística. Para el buen vivir: Una introducción*. Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA). Serie Transiciones, Lina Herrera y Polyp, (Quito: Manthra Editores, 2014).

²¹ Cf. Pacto de Acción Ecológica de América Latina. *Construyendo el Futuro. Tratados Alternativos de Río 92*, (Montevideo: Foro Internacional de ONGs y Movimientos Sociales. ComunArte, 1993).

²² Cf. Fernando Huanacuni. *Vivir Bien/Buen Vivir: Filosofía, políticas, estrategias y experiencias de los pueblos ancestrales*, 6th. Ed. (La Paz: Instituto Internacional de Integración, 2015).

Eco-hope: banishing fear – implementing a new culture

Prisoners of the notions of growth, progress, and development, social practices and human behavior enter into a binomial logic: either there is development (understood as synonymous with growth) or there is underdevelopment (contrary to the whole idea of progress). These two categories determine other ways of thinking, not only the ecological question, thought of in relation to the planet; but also the way human beings think of themselves, judge what is outside themselves, and create a lifestyle. The fear that living according to the principles of an integral ecology²³, will be confused with ‘underdevelopment’ leads to a narrowing of perspectives and a (conscious or unconscious) condemnation of life and the planet.

The sustainability of resources requires going beyond the subsistence and/or *sustainability of the human*. On the contrary, it is when the human becomes more human that it is possible to speak of a climate sustainability and an integral ecology whose development goes beyond ideas linked to the notion of progression and/or regression. It is no accident that Pope Francis speaks of the ecological urgency associated, not with simple changes in behavior, but, above all, with the vital need to unite the whole human family (cf. *Laudato Si'*, 13). In this case, we can ask ourselves if what prevents the change of the current paradigm and the criteria that guide our actions is, in fact, the fear of underdevelopment or if it is not, ultimately, the fear of being human, that is, the fear of a human unity capable of giving identity to – dignify – all of Creation.

Thinking about an ecoculture as a concrete and possible reality will always pass through a path of liberation from fear. It is not a matter of closing our eyes ‘to the dangers of the fall of the markets’, but of opening them to a greater justice. Indeed, “an integral ecological approach cannot be separated from the idea of sustainability, understood as a search for intergenerational justice (*Laudato Si'*, 159). That is to say, justice and the search for the common good are not only referred to the present time, but require a diachronic conception of justice.”²⁴ Thinking beyond immediacy is a hallmark of the

²³ Cf. Pope Francis’ idea of ‘integral ecology’ in the Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si’ of the Holy Father Francis on the Care of the Common House* (2015). Accessed on September 26, 2022, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

²⁴ Manuel López Casquete de Prado. “Ecología Integral: Ecología Y Desarrollo Humano Integral”. *Revista De Fomento Social*, n. 281 (March 2016): 165.

human being. Therefore, ecoculture is built by *building itself*; without the radical pretension of changing everything and everyone from one moment to the next, but with the security of going further than the fatalism with which we seem to be immersed.²⁵

Faced with the inevitability of the destruction of the planet, and of the human condition itself, it will be important, in my view, to respond soberly, with the ultimate goal not only of immediate (or short-medium term) expectations, but of a greater hope – for therein lies humanism, and particularly Christian humanism. In fact, linking hope to the implementation of a “human ecoculture”, where everything that exists is recognized in its identity, cannot be reconciled with a circumscribed vision of the catastrophic consequences of the planet’s destruction, or with utopias guided by inertia and/or the idyllic idea that behaviors and lifestyles can be changed in favor of ecology, without taking into account the integrality of what it means to be ‘a human being’.

The ecology of hope presupposes reconfiguring our gaze before the desire for success, the desire and to have and/or to be able. In biblical language, there is only one way to do this in a lasting way and go beyond the simple *sustainability of hope*. The human will have to relearn to love Creation – a Creation of which he is a part and from which he cannot exclude himself. The Scriptures affirm that “in love there is no fear” (1 Jn 4:18). This is a message that runs through the Biblical writings and makes it possible to look at ecoculture, not as a challenge or a desire, but as a possible reality. In fact, from a human point of view, there are no ‘lost causes’, no fatalisms when it comes to those you love. In the same way, love for all created beings will allow us to banish the fear of underdevelopment, the fear of financial ruin or civilizational regression. On the contrary, it will allow us to open paths to an ecological hope that is not pleased with the destructive scenario we see today; rather, it is capable of transfiguring it.

²⁵ Cf. Elaine Stratford. *Geographies, mobilities, and rhythms over the life-course: Adventures in the interval* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Carol Farbotko, “‘The global warming clock is ticking so see these places while you can’: Voyeuristic tourism and model environmental citizens on Tuvalu’s disappearing islands”, *Singapore Journal of Tropical Geography* 31 (2010): 224–238.

Ecoculture: a culture without ‘disposable life’

Fear appears as the great challenge and adversary of ecoculture. It becomes a blocker of all possibility of hope and, consequently, blurs the vision of the human being and of all created beings. To become aware of the ecological urgency and, consequently, of the implementation of an ecoculture, is to intrinsically and extrinsically assume that

the deterioration of the environment, not only natural but also social, worsens the quality of human life and of society in general, and this is a consequence of *the current development model and of the throwaway culture in people’s lives* (LS 43), a model marked by immediacy, very much in tune with *the intensification of the rhythms of life and work, which contrasts with the natural slowness of biological evolution* (LS 18).²⁶

Faced with the ecological wounds we face daily, the humanizing principle of love should make every human being a “field hospital”²⁷ for humans and non-humans. In the witness of this hospitality, the construction of an ecoculture would be forged, banishing all attempts to impose a perspective of life – called human – where life (human or otherwise) is understood as disposable. In ecoculture, there are no “first-class” and “second-class” beings; rather, a dynamism is created in which everything that goes against the *Common Home* (here understood as ecosystem but also as human house) has no place.

Today we are witnessing a proliferation of ecological attacks, despite the fact that, especially in the last few years, *ecological movements* in defence of the planet have been growing. In my view, this situation stems from a growing dehumanization of culture and human identity itself. By objectifying basic realities, making them ‘tradable’ or undervaluing them for the sake of greater economic growth (for example, the exploitation and extinction of natural resources in favor of greater mechanization and industrialization), the human being enters into what I call the “logic of the disposable”. From then on, the

²⁶ Ildefonso Camacho Laraña. “*Laudato Si*: El clamor de la Tierra y el clamor de los pobres. Una encíclica más que ecológica”. *Revista De Fomento Social*, n. 281 (Mach 2016): 67.

²⁷ Cf. *Discurso del Santo Padre Francisco a los Participantes en el Capítulo General de la Orden de Clérigos Regulares Teatinos*, (January 15, 2022), Pope Francis, accessed on September 3, 2022, <https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/es/speeches/2022/january/documents/20220115-teatini.html>.

very essence of human identity is “at a price” and can be sold and annihilated for a certain price. War is a clear example of a *de-ecology*. War is not only about the fertility of the earth, the quality of the air and the water, or even the survival of species. What is at stake is the survival/sustainability of the human as human. By this I do not mean to make a military criticism, but to alert to the extent of human destruction that is played out whenever a war develops. The direct actors are called upon to ‘emotionally disengage’ in order to continue fighting; but we cannot forget the indirect actors who ‘watch’ the war unfold. Today, more than ever, with technological advances, it is possible to fight – to annihilate the planet and annihilate other human beings – without touching the pain and suffering (without creating an enabling environment for a human/love relationship with nature). In the same way, it is possible, through the media, to maintain an everyday life (eating, talking, or having fun), even when war stories and images serve as a backdrop to it all.

The human becomes a pawn in the face of the horrors of war. The principles of vulnerability, empathy or compassion are alienated, making us believe that the human can continue to be human by dehumanizing himself. A process that is more or less conscious in adults, but that, nowadays, is done in a subliminal and unconscious way in the youngest. The latter grow up with reports of daily violence, play in front of a television set that shows the horrors of corpses piled up in ditches, or racist and discriminatory speeches. These young people will become more and more separated from their humanity, making an ecoculture impossible and, consequently, condemning the human essence to the fatalism of fear and an *à la carte* hope where only the *self* is taken into account. The ecocultural urgency is imposed precisely because of this human damage that has repercussions on everything that exists. Corrupting the human is, without a doubt, the principle of ecological corruption and destruction. Thus, the ecoculture that needs to be implemented urgently is the one that allows all of Creation to have life, and life in abundance (Jn 10:10).

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