declarative, and though the speakers were asked to expand them in the light of discussion, what we read might as well be what they brought with them on the plane. And since there are no commissioned responses, whatever dialogue and disagreement they may have given rise to has been lost sight of between Trento and Maryknoll.

We may, perhaps, bring away one general reflection on the difference between moral theology past and present. The discipline that developed out of the Council of Trent was supremely concerned with encouraging the individual believer to take responsibility for his or her own actions by practices of pastoral interrogation and self-questioning introspection. The contemporary Catholic address stands at the opposite pole from this moral interiority, wholly given to problems "out there" in the world beyond the church: racialism, HIV/AIDS, globalization, gender inequality. That these problems, which arise outside the sphere of the church's influence, have a deep impact on the church, is commonly recognized; so is the need for descriptive skills and concepts learned from secular sources, in order to assess them wisely. What those skills involve, and how theology can interact with them, is less easily specified. In this collection we encounter just one illuminating attempt to interrogate such a concept in the discussion of "gender" (Clague). Precise programs for action are also in shorter supply than general exhortations—one exception, again, is the instructive discussion of changes needed in HIV/AIDS care in African contexts (Ogola). But where matters of moral disagreement requiring concerted moral argument come into view, they are carefully sidestepped. Here, surely, the seventeenth century discipline, never afraid to fight its battles in the open, had the intellectual advantage.

Big events like the Trento conference have their own momentum and make their own impact upon those who attend them. Those who can only read the proceeds pick up, at best, distant echoes of discussions bouncing off the walls of sunlit courts in an Alpine summer. Perhaps in twenty years we may look back to the Trento conference and see important new developments for moral theology that were just emerging from their chrysalis. That is the privilege of retrospection. For the present the sympathetic observer may be forgiven for seeing only confusion.

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***Religion, Politics, and the Earth: The New Materialism*. By Clayton Crockett and Jeffrey W. Robbins. NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 181 pp. £51. ISBN: 978-1-137-26892-1 (hbk).**

This is—to put it mildly—an ambitious book. It is simultaneously a history of and a manifesto for the diverse fields of digital culture, religion, politics, art, ethics, energy, being, and logic; with a practical proposal for a radically new form of energy generation thrown in for good measure.

The book opens with a grim litany of impending crises: the ecological crisis (particularly climate change); the energy crisis (especially peak oil), and the financial crisis. Yet despite appearances this threefold crisis of global capitalism is not, the authors argue, a cause for despair but an opportunity for the transformation of both thought and action. This book attempts such a transformation, and "The New Materialism" is the name for its central project, which is both a development and a summation of recent work in continental philosophy. This New Materialism is related to (though not directly continuous with) recent projects of the same name; perhaps the most notable difference between the New Materialism of Crockett and Robbins and the New Materialism of van der Tuin, Dolphijn, Braidotti, Bennet *et al*. is the near total erasure both of women and of questions of gender in the former. Crockett and Robbins cite Derrida's critique of Schmitt's masculinism ("in vain would you look for a figure of a woman … and the slightest allusion to sexual difference")

and yet this same critique would apply with only minor caveats to the authors' own project. This citation of Derrida is the book's sole gesture toward engagement with feminist critique; and Catherine Malabou the only woman whose work is deemed worthy of engagement.

In place of their new materialist predecessors, Crockett and Robbins focus their discussions around the central claim that "energy is immanent Deleuzo-Hegelian spirit (or Spirit), and energy avoids the traditional dichotomy between spirit and matter, because everything is energy transformation" (xxi). Chapter 1 deals with digital culture. The authors affirm the Marxist axiom that the purpose of philosophical analysis is not simply to understand but to change the world; furthermore, they argue "thinking is action," such that new understandings of the world are inherently political (4). The rise of new forms of communication and media makes possible but does not guarantee a better political order; the struggle here is to ensure that these possibilities are put into service of an emancipatory politics instead of functioning as simply a new marketplace. Religion is the theme of Chapter 2. Placing themselves in the lineage of Feuerbach, Marx, Tillich, and Žižek, the authors argue that religion is humanity's attempt to explain itself to itself via the figure of God. What matters in religion is what it says about what it means to be human, and the human desires which are expressed in religious longing. And yet because religion is "universal at the level of human being" (xvi), the question is not whether it can or should be dispensed with but, as with digital culture, how it can be made a means of resistance to capitalism. The third chapter addresses politics, relying on a distinction between "the political and politics as such" and hence "between politics as a state-form and the political power that belongs to the people" (37). Every political system, the authors argue, relies on the cooperation of all of those who make up its subjects. All political power is in this sense democratic, and so a new materialist politics would entail "people taking the power that is already theirs" (53). Likewise, Chapter 4 argues that art must resist capitalist attempts to co-opt it in favor of subverting power; and Chapter 5 that ethics, currently dominated by the worship of money, must resist the urge to control and limit life in favor of Spinozist affirmation.

With Chapter 6 (co-authored with Kevin Mequet, an architect and independent researcher), the book takes a turn toward the scientific, arguing that "life is energy conversion" (87). Drawing on Mequet's research, the authors argue that, in order to save civilization from self-destruction, a radical shift in the way we understand energy is necessary, moving away from the current paradigm within which heat is central. Chapter 7 builds on this argument, drawing on Deleuze's claim that "the entire world is an egg" (107), putting forward a proposal for an athermal nuclear electricity generator based on the structure of the earth's magnetic fields. Whilst the authors concede that this particular proposal may turn out not to be the solution to the energy crisis, they maintain that such imaginative thinking is crucial to negotiate the coming crisis.

Chapter 8 returns to philosophy, dealing with the theme of being. Drawing on the work of the theoretical physicist Lee Smolin and the philosophical work of Catherine Malabou and Gilles Deleuze, Crockett and Robbins argue that just as the human brain is a system of self-emergent complexity, so too with being itself. Being is brain. The converse of this argument—that thought is material being—is explored in Chapter 9. Reason and emotion, logic and experience cannot be separated, and nor, as a consequence, can analytic and continental philosophy, or indeed the sciences and the humanities. Life and death, reason and unreason are inextricable from one another, and this inseparability is given form in the crucifixion of Jesus.

The book concludes by arguing that theology must attempt to think in synchrony with the earth, and to treat the earth not as substance but as subject. Moreover, it must be liberated from its exclusive allegiance to the event of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Yet it is hard to be convinced by this argument when the authors themselves fail to interrogate the overdetermination of both "religion" and "theology" by Christianity and, moreover, appeal to an idealized and abstracted notion of Christianity's core meaning which

bears little relation to Christianity as it materially exists in this world. As theology, this New Materialism is neither as new nor as materialist as it purports to be.

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***The Franciscan Moral Vision: Responding to God's Love*. Edited by Thomas A. Nairn. St. Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute Publications, 2013. 328 pp. $39.95. ISBN: 978-1-57659-208-3 (pbk).**

If diversity is a sign of vitality within a religious tradition, this volume represents good news indeed. *The Franciscan Moral Vision: Responding to God's Love* outlines a fresh perspective on Franciscan theology and the distinct features of this tradition as it engages the classical ethical questions in Christianity. It makes substantive thematic and methodological contributions to the field of moral theology. It also consolidates recent developments in Franciscan studies that make clear the potential of this tradition to contribute to contemporary socio-political thought.

This volume is the latest and most robust expression of the retrieval of the Franciscan intellectual tradition. The Second Vatican Council challenged Catholic orders to return to the origins of their specific religious communities. In response, Franciscans and associated scholars worked for decades to recover a more historically-grounded understanding of St. Francis. Over the past 15 years, moreover, their attention has extended to the broader tradition of Franciscan thought, its influence on church and society through history, and most importantly, the retrieval of its relevance for contemporary life. Most of this scholarship has appeared in the Romance languages. This is the first volume dedicated to Franciscan moral theology to appear in English.

Its five authors worked very closely over several years to synthesize a book that is integral and whole. Experts in different aspects of the Franciscan tradition, they wrote and rewrote their chapters in dialogue. The result is a book that reads like an extended conversation between good friends discerning how to apply a wisdom tradition to the needs of the world today. They jointly developed eleven key characteristics of the Franciscan moral vision and refer to these throughout the volume.

The authors articulate a vision of the moral life rooted in the experience and theological vision of St. Francis and the movement he inspired. They name this a moral vision because, as they argue, the Franciscan approach emphasizes the goodness of God and challenges human beings to a loving response. Rooted in its optimistic theological anthropology, the Franciscan tradition features holistic human development of the person as moral agent. Themes strong in the Franciscan theological tradition shape this moral vision: the generosity of God, the primacy of Christ, Trinitarian community, and moral goodness and beauty.

This production strategy, under the editorship of Nairn, resulted in a coherent volume, consisting of nine chapters clustered in three thematic sections. The first section presents the spiritual and intellectual foundations of the Franciscan moral vision, rooted in Francis and the early Franciscans. The second traces key, classic elements of this vision, expressed particularly by Bonaventure and Scotus, through themes such as moral artistry, God's generosity, and the role of conscience in decision making. The third evaluates the Franciscan vision and its potential to contribute to contemporary society.

The importance of society and social concerns in the Franciscan tradition means that this volume will be of interest to readers of political theology—but more as a source for understanding this tradition. Francis of Assisi's conversion and preaching were very public, and this has influenced Franciscan thought throughout history. The Franciscan moral vision has a strong social dimension, and the third section of this volume discusses contemporary