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In Search of the Human

The Work of the Dardenne Brothers

Stefanie Knauss (ed.)

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FOCUS OF THE ISSUE

This issue focuses on the work of the Belgian directors Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, and investigates a central concern in their films: What is the human being? What are the conditions that hinder or promote human flourishing? How can human beings exist in an industrialized, technicized society? How can they maintain their humanity under dehumanizing conditions? Three articles offer different perspectives on the Dardennes' search for the human, spanning their work from *LA PROMESSE* (*THE PROMISE*, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, BE/FR/LU/TN 1996) to *DEUX JOURS, UNE NUIT* (*TWO DAYS, ONE NIGHT*, Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, BE/FR/IT 2014): from a philosophical-theological perspective, Isabella Guanzini draws on Giles Deleuze's notion of "belief in the world" to discuss how the Dardennes contribute to its (re-)creation in a secular world. Walter Lesch's philosophical-ethical contribution explores the subtle, yet decisive influence of Emmanuel Levinas and his philosophy of the ethical claim of the other on Luc Dardenne in particular, and his own philosophical contributions in his writings and cinema. Stefanie Knauss introduces the perspectives of gender studies, feminist ethics and Christian ethics to ask how the interaction of individual freedom and social structures shapes the lives of men and women in the worlds of family and work.

OPEN SECTION

In the open section, Alyda Faber offers a reading of Frederick Wiseman's documentaries through the lens of the concept of parable as "unstory" and as a moment of disrupting logical, linear explanations of reality. Alexander D. Ornella's analysis of the BBC sitcom *REV.* (BBC2, UK 2010–2014) shows how masculinity is always a matter of negotiating between external expectations and self-image as well as between different forms of masculinity. And Sofia Sjö discusses the ways in which gender and religion interact in two Scandinavian films and explores how religious themes can open up alternative visions of masculinity and femininity.

Book and film reviews as well as two calls for papers for the upcoming issues complete the volume.

ISSUE EDITOR

Prof. Dr. Stefanie Knauss is Assistant Professor at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University. She studied theology and English language and literature at Freiburg University (Germany) and Manchester University (UK). She is now an Assistant Professor of Theology and Culture at Villanova University (USA). Her research focuses on theology and culture, body and religion, and gender/queer studies and theology. Recent publications: *More than a Provocation: Sexuality, Media and Theology* (Göttingen, 2014); *Commun(icat)ing Bodies: Body as a Medium in Religious Symbol Systems* (edited with Anna-K. Höpflinger and Alexander Ornella; Zurich/London, 2014/2015).

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