

# *Hermeneutics in an Age of Alternative Facts, Fake News, and Climate Change Denial: A Review of Clingerman, F., Treanor, B., Drenthen, M., and Utsler, D. (Eds.) Interpreting Nature: The emerging field of environmental hermeneutics.*

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## **Introduction**

The first sentence in this edited collection is an attention grabber. It is difficult to say whether the editors knew of the line's relevance to current political and cultural discourse when the book was being written. The book predates Trumpism and the 2016 U.S election. The Introduction begins, "Friedrich Nietzsche famously stated: 'There are no facts, only interpretations.'" The editors are quick to qualify the assertion and avoid another Nietzschean moral sand trap into which the German philosopher had a penchant for falling. They wisely re-phrase Nietzsche with the observation with which most reasonable people can agree (including Nietzsche we hope); *no facts go uninterpreted*. All facts are understood and have meaning in relation to context to other facts, and to human understanding itself. Hermeneutics, "the art and science of interpretation" is built on the ground of confrontation and mediation, and nowhere is this contestation being played out more dramatically than in the realm of the human relationship to the environment. It is difficult to know if the editors and the contributors to this book were prescient and understood how crucial hermeneutics, in this case the *environmental* hermeneutics they are proposing, may become in providing a space to reflect on the human mediation of the meaning of environment, and assisting us "in understanding the practical implications of our encounters with the world." (p. 2) This book arrived at a crucial juncture in time and continues to provide a rare confluence of philosophical scholarship and practical import.

The editors go to some lengths in their introduction to flesh out what they mean by *environmental* hermeneutics. In addition to a brief Augustinian, Schleiermachean origins story, the authors firmly plant contemporary hermeneutics within traditional written text interpretation with roots reaching outward "toward the recognition of the inevitable interpretation of our historical, factual existence itself" (p. 2). By moving hermeneutics into the practical realm of everyday experience, the authors are proposing bringing the full force of the art and science of interpretation to not only written texts, but also to thinking itself. Hermeneutics, we are reminded, is not simply concerned with techniques to discern a single meaning, or with an interpretation that can be deemed the correct one. And ever more importantly is the understanding that hermeneutics is anathema to the overlaying of meaning on any subject,

making *any* interpretation possible and therefore valid. The authors point to Robert Mugerauer's definition of hermeneutics as a matter of "finding the valid criteria for polysemy within a fluid variety of possibilities" (p. 3). It is in this view that the critical element inherent in hermeneutics emerges to reveal the crucial understanding that not all interpretations are equal, that more than one valid interpretation is possible, and "interpretation is a structurally open project that never comes to final closure" (p. 3). It is the theme of opening all possible worlds, of embracing difference, overlapping possibilities and approaches that serves as an important tool to contest the calcification and anti-intellectualism of entrenched positions predicated on ideological suppositions bolstered by unthinking tribalism that characterizes much of public and political discourse today. The discourse and thinking related to our relationship with the Earth and how we can safeguard the very survival of our species and the others with whom we share this planet has recently become a virulent minefield into which the injection of new thinking and approaches are badly needed.

### **The Need for New Thinking**

In many respects, it is perfectly reasonable to say that humanity's cognitive and material relationship with the larger living world is dysfunctional. Empirical evidence points to an ever-approaching collision course with the natural laws governing ecosystem and planetary dynamics. Given this looming catastrophe human beings have the intelligence, capacity, and many argue the technological know-how to seriously curtail the worst effects of the environmental and social upheaval that is inevitable. Despite this, the world community in denial of the best efforts of the minority raising the alarm has chosen to ignore, or actively rebuff, certain evidence and advocate for business as usual. The editors and contributors to *Interpreting Nature: The Emerging Field of Environmental Hermeneutics* do not explicitly address the stark prospects before us and choose instead to couch the need for environmental hermeneutics in a tepid academic language of: providing a "rationale and framework for interpretive activity," providing "accounts of the approach of various disciplines to environments," and providing a "philosophical stance which understands how our ... hermeneutical consciousness informs our relationship with environments." To be fair, the authors do assert environmental hermeneutics offers a "fresh way of looking at traditional problems of environmental philosophy and environmental ethics..." (p. 4-5). They also point out social constructionist notions of nature are a counterweight to reified, essentialist views of nature, and they call out the misguided thinking that ignores the reality of a living Earth that exists outside human determinations of meaning. Despite this, I could not help thinking the "conflict of interpretations" which the authors rightly point to as existing in our intersubjective encounters with the material, emotional, and intellectual world are rather bloodless, and more fitting for the graduate seminar table than the vital life and death discussions happening around board room and kitchen tables the world over. In some ways it is almost as if the authors do not see the radical nature of their own philosophy.

Hermeneutics has much to offer the conundrum in which humanity finds itself. Perception is core to the problem. We do not perceive anything just as it is. All experience is cast through filters, cognitive, social, sensory, and otherwise, through which we interpret our lifeworld. Two people from different social, educational, family, and economic backgrounds will likely interpret identical information, facts, opinions, and observations in disparate ways. Thus, it is

reasonable to say that people belonging to groups or communities of similar backgrounds are likely to create their own ‘realities.’ What is becoming readily more apparent today is that this social construction of reality can also function as the “social construction of mass delusion” (Rees, qtd. in Washington, 2015, p. xv). Each social reality or construct is a creation of the human mind represented by language and reinforced, solidified, and set down as fact or conventional wisdom. This is especially important for hermeneutics that is inclusive of a living environment, the social-cultural environment, built environments and is concerned with the whole of experience in the world. Again, the authors, in my view, understate and perhaps miss the potential of the dialogical nature of hermeneutics to inform how we think about our relationship with environment. Instead, they pose an anticipated question of critics, ‘How can environmental hermeneutics be dialogic if we can’t have verbal communication with natural entities that do not possess language?’ Thankfully, they respond to their question and rule out this contrived impediment by reminding us “humans provide the ‘language of nature’” (p. 8) through descriptions and interpretations that are “shared within the human community. Thus, what started as an environmental hermeneutics in truth becomes a dialogue within culture about nature.” (p. 8). The authors recognize the anthropocentric bias of this statement and deftly address it by acknowledging the capacity for the natural, living landscape for language, and that language does not always refer to *human* language. They avoid going down the ontological rabbit hole of the nature/culture divide by wisely sidestepping it and the arguments that have tied philosophers in knots for decades. Clingerman et al. state, “Acknowledging the conflict of these different interpretations, however, leads us to see that there is a complex interweaving of all beings that really isn’t well explained or understood when reduced to simple binaries.” (p.9)

Suffice to say the authors are ready to move beyond a dialogic focused on the claim that since *all* knowledge is socially constructed, there can be no objective reality. The dubiety and danger of the postmodern view when applied to concrete entities and biosystem processes that exist independent of the human mind cannot be overstated. It is heartening to read the authors make a stand for interpretation and application to be taken together as a unified process. They write,

We think environmental hermeneutics, if it is to mean anything, should matter! This is where environmental hermeneutics has a close affinity with eco-phenomenology. Environmental hermeneuticists and eco-phenomenologists contend that philosophy can and must motivate for concrete change, in defiance of certain aspects of modern day ‘greenspeak’ that suggest we can have our cake and eat it too, and leaving the future of the environment to “green” consumption. (p. 9)

This makes the case ever more urgent. The contribution of environmental hermeneutics is a pressing matter – interpreting a vision for living with respect and restraint in a sustainable manner on a finite planet. Despite the doctrines, myths, ideologies, and paradigms that promote limitless growth and consumption and a business-as-usual approach, we depend on ‘real’ ecosystems governed by biophysical properties that act independent of us. Environmental hermeneutics can play an important role in casting off *magical thinking* the result of the twin cultural myths of infinite technological progress and perpetual economic growth and

consumption. Hermeneutics is especially well suited to helping free ourselves from deeply entrenched but erroneous beliefs to clear a space for us to begin to construct a more adaptive worldview. The editors point to the contributions of Gadamer and especially Paul Ricoeur with his work on such themes as narrative, identity and selfhood, the conflict of interpretations, and memory to provide powerful hermeneutic tools “with which to construct an interpretive matrix for environmental philosophizing” (p. 12). And I would add tools to discredit magical thinking, deniers, and purveyors of alternative facts to nudge society toward a transition to a more sustainable way of being in the world, while we still have the time to do so.

## **Part 1: Interpretation and the Task of Thinking Environmentally**

The editors sub-divide the book into four parts. Part 1: Interpretation and the Task of Thinking Environmentally; Part 2: Situating the Self; Part 3: Narrativity and Image, and Part 4: Environment, Place, and the Experience of Time. To give the reader an overview of the themes and contributions associated with the parts, I will briefly review a chapter that is illustrative of each section.

John van Buren’s chapter “Environmental Hermeneutics Deep in the Forest” represents a strong opening for Part 1 and builds on the ideas put forward in the Introduction. The author frames his chapter using Ricoeur’s “conflict of interpretations” and he applies the concept to the fraught world of forests, forestry management, and land claims. The forest is a rich subject to demonstrate that human sense-making of the environment is both interpretive and narrative. Van Buren outlines the many interpretations of a forest. It may be a religious sanctuary, so much timber or wood fiber, or a place for leisure hiking and camping. It may reflect narrative and sacred interpretations as in the First Nations experiences of the ‘land’. The narrative may also contain tropes of conquest in search of resources or a frontier narrative of conquering the unruly wildness in pursuit of order and progress. Human actors may interpret their self-understanding or identity to see themselves as loggers, hunters, hikers, biologists, foresters, protectors, and the list goes on. Van Buren reminds us hermeneutics originally was only concerned with *written* texts, but with Paul Ricoeur,

it becomes the study of any and all ensembles of signs... oral discourse, electronic media, art, human action... to this list of texts we can add cultural and built environments as well as “pristine nature,” since all of these things mean or signify something to perceivers and users and are thus signifiers, signs, physical carriers of meaning. (p. 19)

The chapter sets out to ask ambitiously, “How can critical environmental hermeneutics provide a method for fulfilling the task of conflict mediation and resolution as it relates specifically to forests?”

To address the question, van Buren makes use of Ricoeur’s three-step hermeneutic arc. The three elements are 1) the biophysical environment (referent), 2) its meaning or sense, and 3) the text, the carrier of meaning references. (p.20) The biophysical environment is the concrete referent in the lifeworld of direct experience; in this case, a particular forest, woodland, wetland, or specific issue (i.e. clearcutting) related to such ecosystems. The author explains that the study then “arcs back” to the interpretive sense or meaning of the forest analyzed descriptively,

critically, and in an interdisciplinary manner, by drawing from philosophy, other humanities, and the social sciences. In addition to these disciplines, says van Buren, the natural sciences can also contribute understanding not only of the biophysical forest, but also of human behavior. The author recognizes the strong phenomenological task to which this analysis depends, although he seems reticent to explore in any depth what phenomenology brings to hermeneutic descriptions of lived meaning. Despite this, it is important to recognize the author emphasizes the phenomenological by saying hermeneutic analysis should not remain at the level of meaning but

rather should arc all the way back to the level of the referent, to the interpretive application...of meaning back to the concrete lifeworld. It should ultimately issue in the projection of possible worlds that can be lived in real life by real people. (p.20)

The hermeneutic ethos of the dialogical, the interdisciplinary conversation toward the Gadamerian fusion of horizons is evident throughout the book. Van Buren celebrates the big tent cast by hermeneutics in which the perspectives, expertise, and experiences of those belonging to the natural and social sciences, the humanities, the professions, communities, and First Nations can determine, through dialogue, “the biophysical truth of interpretations of forests and other environments” (p.30). It is all very hopeful. The author is willing to draw some parameters around ‘interpretive truth’ and anchors that truth to a biophysical criterion that stipulates that interpretations must be “fitting” to the bioregion, that they must fit with the biophysical world to which they refer. “Truth here means interpretive fittingness and adequacy,” writes van Buren (p.29). An interpretation may be creative and go beyond what is biophysically present, yet it should be *adequate* to the biophysical reality. Van Buren makes use of the classical definition of truth *adequatio intellectus et res*, “the adequation (correspondence) of intellect and thing” (p.29). He attempts to find a middle way between the realist’s simple correspondence of mind to the biophysical and the idealist’s anything goes biophysical correspondence to the mind, with a third way for the definition of truth as the interpretive fittingness or adequacy of mind to the biophysical. The author writes, “Truth means creative correspondence, interpretive adequacy, even though a viewpoint has to fit the biophysical world, it still mediates and interprets this physical world in terms of the realm of cultural sense or meaning.” (p. 29)

In other words, an interpretation of a forest, says van Buren, from the viewpoint of a person suffering paranoia, as a place of malevolent trees plotting against human society is obviously a misfit from a biophysical “criterion,” though it may be perfectly appropriate from an artistic, poetic, or surrealist one. His point is that regarding the settling of conflicts between divergent interpretations some are more right or more fitting than others. The author says, “Conflicting interpretations all reveal some aspect of the forest and are therefore true to some degree (i.e. fit to some degree) but some reveal more than others about the biophysical forest (i.e. they fit better).

I was struck by van Buren’s conclusion and his call for “radical heterogeneity and localism in environmental narrative” (p. 35). The metaphor of dialogue, of listening carefully to the other, of mediation and resolution that is at the center of hermeneutics provides a path to rational debate by “different environmental knowledges, values, and stakeholder groups...” (p.

35). While this is powerful in its inclusivity, I cannot be sure if the author's words mean we can find space for the voice of the forest itself. Is it possible the forest and the trees can account for 'different knowledges,' entities, or beings, as in Heidegger's "house of being?" Can the forest, the trees that give it form, be considered as having something worthwhile to contribute? Van Buren does not speak to this possibility. Research in the natural sciences has expanded our biophysical knowledge of the forest and the trees contained therein. The recent book by the German forester Peter Wollebhen (2016) titled *The Hidden Life of Trees: How They Feel, How They Communicate* opens other hermeneutic possibilities through emerging empirical evidence that trees are intelligent, networked entities with highly evolved abilities. Trees emit ultrasonic vibrations detected as a crackling of roots in times of scarcity of water. Scientists from three Swiss institutions listened carefully to the trunks of trees, "They registered a soft murmur... Above all, at night. At this time of day most of the water is stored in the trunk, the leaves take a break... the water is held almost completely immobile... nothing flows" (pp. 58 – 59). So where are the murmuring noises coming from asks Wohlleben. We do not know the answer definitively. It is a mystery. But I feel hopeful that environmental hermeneutics is radical enough (and by radical I evoke the originary meaning, to go to the roots) to include a space in which we can become attentive to a world that increasingly we are only beginning to recognize as intelligent, dynamic and capable of communication in languages we have yet to really listen for and understand.

## Part 2: Situating the Self

The chapters in this section focus on the formation of selfhood and identity with reference to environment. Each chapter moves forward from the premise that the hermeneutical task is recursive in that all interpretation includes self-interpretation. Using Gadamer and Ricoeur, the section explores self-interpretation relative to the environment or the *environmental self*. David Utsler's chapter "Environmental Hermeneutics and Environmental/Eco-psychology: Explorations in Environmental Identity" is a hopeful read, especially for those in education interested in shifting attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors for a more environmentally sustainable future. Utsler draws on Ricoeur's work on identity and selfhood to demonstrate an environmental identity is formed in dialogue with an environment. This dialogue is multidimensional and is subject to many 'detours.' Ricoeur's concept of selfhood (one's self is oneself "as another, not as an isolated autonomous subject" (p. 128)) forms the basis of Utsler's thesis. The author carefully delimits the self by replying to the declaration "I am" with the questions, 'But who is doing the declaring?' 'Who speaks?' These are the essential questions for Ricoeur. The answer depends on the *detours*: where a person is from, the race, religion (or lack thereof), the family, the friends, the occupations, the leisure activities, the social groups, and the list extends on. According to Utsler, "What the path of detours reveals is that one is identified in a complex of relations to and through the other ... by way of contrast and comparison, of other people, other places, and other things" (p. 129).

The central question then arises, "Can the natural environment be counted among the detours of reflective analysis by which we identify ourselves?" Utsler posits that indeed natural environments can be among the detours and uses Ricoeur's dialectic between sameness (*idem*)

and selfhood (ipse) to explain not only how this is so, but the practical import to, and potential for, education. Identity can be understood as forming and developing in dialogue with an environment. I am myself and not another. Even over the passage of time, through growth and development, and many detours, I am the same *person*, identified as me. However, in contrast to this quality of sameness (it's still me) is *ipseity* or selfhood, that counts for the dynamic, transformations brought about by the detours that profoundly shape the personality, or who I understand myself *now* to be. And this is the important crux of the thesis; sameness and selfhood, as Ricoeur defines them, imply that a person can *change*. The identity that develops out of the detours can reshape the self in ways that bridge the human/nature and inner/outer splits that separate us from the natural world. There is a great deal of work to do in educating people of the deep interconnections that speak to our human existence and our survival as being dependent on a network of relations. There is real urgency in countering denial and downright delusion and magical thinking when it comes to our relationship with the ecosystems on which we depend. Utsler, via Ricoeur, points to the fundamental overarching goal to which we must all aspire, of “not being able to think of oneself without the other of nature” (p. 132).

The chapter also refers to the power of tradition, culture, myth, story, and art to influence identity. The idea of language and voice as it pertains to the environment is briefly touched on using Gadamer's notion of many languages, “a language of art, but also of a language of nature – in short, of any language that things have” (Gadamer in Utsler, p. 132). Gadamer extends the idea of language from human language to the way any being communicates. Understanding ourselves as nature opens a space to listen, to observe, to bring our senses to bear on understanding how nature communicates. The chapter moves to a discussion of the differences and synergies between environmental psychology and ecopsychology in the treatment of identity and nature. While important distinctions are outlined, and the strengths of both disciplines together have a great deal to say about the dynamic of environmental identity, it is the brief discussion of ‘language’ and nature about which I was hoping to read more.

### **Part 3: Narrative and Image**

Part 3 of the book does take up the topic of language, albeit from a different angle than introduced in van Buren's chapter. Brian Treanor's contribution “Narrative and Nature: Appreciating and Understanding the Nonhuman World” explores the possibility of shifting values, beliefs, and attitudes toward a more sustainable, eco-centric ethos through language, specifically narrative as presented in print, media and film. As do many of the other contributors Treanor draws on Ricoeur, but also Martha Nussbaum among others to make the case for “the important role in self-cultivation, therefore, the cultivation of virtue” (p. 187) that narrative can play. Treanor takes the reader through some fairly familiar territory in the defense of narrative and the transformative power of language. He wades into the perennial “two cultures” debate made famous by C.P. Snow. However, he frames the debate around our interpretation of nature. Science, according to Treanor, provides one “interpretation of nature” and perhaps one that is “definitive” as argued by Rolston. However, Treanor rightly questions whether science provides “our most basic or fundamental interpretation of nature in terms of eliciting concern or interest in it” (p. 191). Few children receive their introduction to nature via the microscope, and it is quite

common for all scientists to be drawn to their fascination for the natural world through narrative and works of the imagination (Chawla, 1994).

Interestingly, the current cultural obsession with the role of fake news and alternative facts in forming public opinion makes fitting Treanor's turn to the limits of empirical evidence and scientific facts to sway people's beliefs and behaviours. Depending on evidence, facts, scientific information to influence people Treanor calls the "cognitive approach to truth." (p. 194) He describes the phenomenon of "backfire" and the unsettling finding by researchers at the University of Michigan who discovered when misinformed people are exposed to corrected facts it made little difference to their views. "In fact, they often became more strongly set in the beliefs" (p. 194). Treanor demonstrates that the cognitive approach is not useful on its own. Inundating people with more facts and information about climate change for instance is unlikely to have much effect on people's fundamental beliefs. "But a person's worldview," writes Treanor, "like her personal identity is fundamentally narrative" (p. 196). The way to influence beliefs and attitudes and to change deeply held assumptions is through narrative, as "we are essentially narrative beings, and as far as we know, the only narrative beings" (p. 196).

Treanor makes a good case for the power of narrative, but the argument only takes one so far. Just as science and empiricism can play an important role in the cultivation of an "informed imagination" (p. 190) and keep in check fanciful "naïve and vicious anthropomorphism" (p. 197), so too does hermeneutics often require a phenomenological sensitivity to lived experience to escape Marcel's "spirit of abstraction," (p. 192) the same warranted criticism that Treanor levels at empiricism. Phenomenology allows us to say that narrative is powerful and potentially can shift our being, our identity and worldview, but as I have written elsewhere, phenomenology allows us to understand *how* this is so. The transactive space between the reader and text is an *experiencing*, an embodied integration into the text. Phenomenology deepens the "art and science" of interpreting the power of narrative by describing the "lived-through" experience and the richness of the space between a reader and a text as it emerges in the moment. (Howard, 2010) Treanor, like most of the contributors to the book, speaks to the need to interpret human intentions, behaviours, and experiences, as they relate to environmental identity, but tends to gloss over the need to fully describe those experiences in the first place.

#### **Part 4: Environments, Place, and the Experience of Time**

The final section of the book takes up some of the structures of meaning - the existentials by which lived experience can be described and interpreted. However, in this case the existentials are interpreted more than described. Forrest Clingerman ambitiously takes up time, space, and body with clear implications for lived relations in his chapter *Memory, Imagination, and Hermeneutics of Place*. Promisingly, for a phenomenologist, the chapter is set up to "argue that a hermeneutics of place, among others, presents an interpretive structure through which to understand time's depth in place" (p. 246). What follows are evocatively written lived experience descriptions that attempt to capture the depth of the temporality of the self in place. For example, Clingerman writes,

Sounds and movements echo differently in the evening insofar as the sounds of the day have dissipated. The bombast of creaking floorboards resounds in ways unheard during the day. Meanwhile, the household is filled with objects that do not seem inert: They seem to finish their day's work, and only then gradually begin their slumber. . . . At dawn there is a transition to yet another state. Each morning we become ourselves again, albeit groggy with the change of surroundings from the night before. (p. 246)

Clingerman begins his chapter with a fine example of writing that provides a closeness to the experience, yet also creates a distance so that the existential structure of the embeddedness of self in time and place becomes the object of our reflective awareness. The real power of hermeneutics is the interpretative capacity to find meaning in the everyday experience. Therefore, it is difficult to separate the phenomenological task inherent in the project. The author shifts away from the lived experience descriptions and again demonstrates how Ricoeur's work on selfhood and identity (*ipse* and *idem*) reveals a narrative self that is also informed by places and environment. The observations echo those taken up in earlier chapters and the author often references his co-contributors' work. Perhaps this is the result of being placed at the end of a collection of essays that surveys an *emerging* field. There is the sense that much of what can be said at this point has been said.

However, Clingerman's insights on memory and imagination are compelling. He describes the distinction between the *place of time* and the *time of place*. Time of place is fluid; slight variations in the time of day are marked subtly and pre-reflectively as we are embedded in a place and time. He refers to his description of the end and the beginning of a day to show we are always already "*in the lived temporality of space and time, and will continue to be so*" (emphasis in original, p. 255). This *alreadyness* Clingerman connects to memory and imagination. Weaving the past as a relational structure built on memory creates self-identity. Similarly, he argues we are "rooted in place the site of our imagination, the locale of who and what we seek to be. The work of the imagination reconfigures place on the foundation of memory" (p. 255). Using a meditation by St. Augustine on the complexity of being embedded in time, the author connects past, present and future. The past is no longer, yet it remains within us, and importantly within nonhuman others too, and therefore can be read as a text revealed through traces of the passage of time and experience. So too, the future is yet to come yet we can expect it, envision it – imagine it. "Instead of being locked in mere presentness", writes Clingerman, "memory and imagination are pivotal elements in stretching out time, of allowing us to live in time's duration" (p. 257).

The author points the reader toward the importance of paying close attention to the traces of the physical, to the embodiment of time, and the way memory has a presence within our understanding of place and of nature itself. This he relates to the cultivation of an imagination with the capacity to see new ways, alternatives to what is here and now. Living in a world that requires a different way of being calls for seeing otherwise, to try on new traditions, and alternative worldviews.

## Conclusion

This book is an important contribution at a time when we need enlightened ways to support a shift in how human beings relate to the Earth on which we wholly and completely depend. Modernism and consumerism have failed to deliver on a better world. Despite advancements in technology, and standards of living for many, we are grappling with the fall out of broken societies, and the breaking of the ecosystems on which civilization depends. Despite ample evidence of this, many live in denial, firmly committed to a status quo predicated on infinite consumption on a finite planet. This book makes a significant contribution by bringing the promise of hermeneutical thinking to Thomas Berry's 'The Great Work' which "as we move into a new millennium, is to carry out a transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the Earth in a mutually beneficial manner" (1999, p. 3) The pursuit of an interpretation of a new grand narrative, an eco-centric vision to repair the Earth and ourselves, provides meaning, support, and hope at a time when we need another way to think, and *be*, as we embark on a more sustainable way to inhabit our world. There can be no more important hermeneutic task than this.

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