



« Prendre soin de la nature et des hommes »

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Abstract: Taking care of nature and people ? An original response to new vulnerabilities, care is also an originary reply that holds and maintains that existence is essentially relational. Whether “care” refers to concrete practices or to new ways of paying attention to the vulnerabilities arising from our social and economic crisis, it has a higher aim than these necessary socio-political demands. Today, two different interpretations of care find themselves in opposition, when it is in fact necessary to coordinate them. Sometimes care is seen as part of a liberating movement denouncing unjust socio-economic situations and calling for a redesign and transformation of the social practices that cause vulnerability (the revolutionary discourse), and sometimes as a part of a humanist movement which supports and assists people or realities made vulnerable in concrete situations (the discourse of reform). Far from opposing these two discourses, our hypothesis is that care is an originary ethical disposition, realising an anthropology of relationality and vulnerability, understood not negatively but positively, as an openness to relations. This openness thus calls into question the socio-political institutions which both give it shape and inform it. It questions the interpretive framework of the cultures in which it gets spelled out and unfolds. Such “care” invites us to think that our social and environmental crisis is as much a crisis of relations as a crisis of limits. In this sense, care takes on a wider meaning than the more restricted one present today in the so-called “ethics of care”.

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