

Introduction to *Zeal* 1/1

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THE BIRTH OF A NEW ACADEMIC JOURNAL invites the question: Does the world really need another one?¹ In the case of *Zeal: A Journal for the Liberal Arts*, that question may best be answered by asking in turn: Does the world really need liberal arts education? *Zeal* is premised on the conviction that the answer to that question is an emphatic yes. At the same time, the liberal arts now live in an increasingly pre-professional world in which they are all too often denigrated and dismissed. (For example: What is the value of studying *that*?—with little to no attention to the concept of value at work in the question.) Against that background, *Zeal*'s mission is to inspire and foster scholarship that supports and advances the liberal arts—and to do so with vigor and zest.

This first issue of the journal represents what the editors intend for each issue. It features an interdisciplinary forum, an author-meets-critics book discussion, and several less conventional "Provocations & Occasions"—articles that, though worthy of a wide readership, are in one way or another misfits with standard disciplinary journals. See further www.kings.edu/zeal.

The theme of the forum, organized by associate editor Regan Lance Reitsma, is fitting for *Zeal*'s first issue: anti-natalism, or more fully the thesis that it would be better not to be. The forum's several contributors engage and interrogate that thesis from diverse philosophical and theological perspectives, and one does so in epistolary style. The journal's first author-meets-critics book discussion, organized by associate editor Jennifer McClinton-Temple, takes as its subject Jonathan Malesic's book *The End of Burnout: Why Work Drains Us and How to Build Better Lives* (University of California Press, 2022). The several critics assess Malesic's book from the perspectives of psychology, sociology, and theology. He responds, to begin with, by reflecting on the differences between going to college and doing a job—and on how the overvaluing of work leads us to fail to appreciate properly other human activities. Malesic was formerly a professor at King's College, *Zeal*'s institutional home, so his account of burnout may resonate with academics, among others.

Finally, the issue's "Provocations & Occasions" include a brief but extraordinarily ambitious and masterful discussion of the concept of

contemplation in ancient Greek, Jewish, and Christian cultures; a philosophical analysis, in the form of a diary entry, of the concept of handling in fútbol/soccer; and a reflection on the value of the liberal arts in the context of pre-professional education.

The editors welcome hearing from readers and invite contributions to the journal's project. Write zeal@kings.edu.

¹ It should be acknowledged that *Zeal* is not entirely new, but instead a re-christening and re-conception of *Expositions: Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities*, which was published by Villanova University from 2007 through 2020. *Exposition's* archives will be moved to *Zeal's* site.