South American Environmental Philosophy: Ancestral Amerindian Roots and Emergent Academic Branches

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At the beginning of the twenty-first century, South America hosts the world's greatest diversity of plants and most animal groups, as well as a variety of environmental movements, involving urban and rural communities. South American academic philosophy, however, has given little consideration to this rich biocultural context. To nourish an emergent regional environmental philosophy three main sources can be identified. First, a variety of ancient and contemporary ecological worldviews and practices offer a rich biocultural array of South American environmental thought that can be disclosed and valued through the work of cultural anthropology, liberation philosophy, liberation pedagogy, liberation theology, ecofeminism, and biocultural conservation. Second, some recent academic environmental philosophy research and teaching teams have been formed in South American universities with the support of the interdisciplinary United Nations Environmental Programme or based on the individual interests of some scattered scholars. Third, social movements have increasingly demanded the incorporation of environmental values into regional policies and the decision-making processes. These three sources can foster intercultural, international, and transdisciplinary dialogues to further develop a South American environmental philosophy grounded in its precious biocultural diversity.

INTRODUCTION

The cultural and biogeographic identity of South America is marked by the presence of the Andes Cordillera, which crosses the continent from north to south. Soared over by the emblematic Andean Condor, this mountain range influences both (1) the symbolic-linguistic realm of the worldviews associated with environmental philosophies, and (2) the biophysical realm of the heterogeneous mosaic

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of ecosystems in this continent.[1] According to the worldview of the pre-Incan civilization of Tiahuanaco, in ancestral times *Viracocha* (one of the most important deities for this primordial South American culture) emerged from Lake Titicaca in the heights of the Andes and created the sun with his radiant light, the rain and water with his tears, as well as the heavens, the stars, the humans and the other living beings that inhabited the region.[2] According to contemporary environmental sciences, the Andean backbone hosts the highest mountain peaks in the Americas and gives origin to an assemblage of vast and contrasting ecoregions that include the extensive Puna and Paramo in the high Andean Altiplano, the world's largest tropical forests in the Amazonian basin, the world's largest wetlands in the Pantanal, the widespread grasslands, savannas, and dry forests in the Gran Chaco, the world's driest habitat in the Atacama desert, and the most extensive area of Southern Hemisphere temperate and sub-Antarctic forests and fjords in the archipelagoes of southwestern South America.[3] At the beginning of the twenyt-first century, these ecoregions host the world's greatest diversity of plants and most animal groups, and are still inhabited by endemic cultures with their languages and worldviews.[4]

The richness and value of the intricate South American reservoir of biological and cultural diversity, however, is not appropriately acknowledged by global society today. The rhetoric of modernization and economic growth, which governs globalization with increasing power, omits and marginalizes the majority of human and other-than-human beings: it displaces them from their native habitats,

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[1] The distinction of these two interwoven realms, the symbolic-linguistic and the biophysical, is essential to the conceptual framework of biocultural ethics, under which this essay has been organized (I elaborate the concept of *biocultural ethics* in Ricardo Rozzi "Biocultural Ethics: The Vital Links between the Inhabitants, their Habits and Regional Habitats," *Environmental Ethics* 34 [2012]: 27–50). Under this biocultural perspective, the term philosophy abandons its disciplinary character, which currently prevails in academia. Instead, I emphasize the plural character of philosophy, understood as ways of thinking and living in diverse ecological and cultural contexts. This interpretation of philosophy concurs with the conceptual framework developed by Raul Fornet-Betancourt for a Latin American intercultural philosophy (for a concise presentation of his basic concepts, see Raul Fornet-Betancourt *Hacia una Filosofía Intercultural Latinoamericana* (Toward an Intercultural Latin American Philosophy) (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 1994).

[2] Rodolfo Kusch analyzes the role that *Viracocha* has played in bringing order onto an originally chaotic world, transforming it into more inhabitable. *Viracocha* is also the source of the biophysical world. In the *Quichua* Andean language, the name *Viracocha* is transcribed today as *Wairacocha*, which means *waira* (wind) and *cocha* (lake, sea), or as *Ticci Vira Cocha Pachayachachic*, which means the source of the four essential elements: fire, earth, water, and air. See Rodolfo Kusch, *América Profunda* (Deep America) (Buenos Aires: Hachette, 1962). An iconic figure of *Viracocha,* surrounded by forty-eight winged figures, of which thirty-two have human faces and 16 of condor faces, sculpted in stone 2200 years ago is found on Tiahuanaco's Sun Gate.

[3] See David M. Olson and collaborators, "Terrestrial ecoregions of the world: A new map of life on Earth," *BioScience* 51 (2001): 933–38; Mark D. Spalding and collaborators, "Marine Ecoregions of the World: A Bioregionalization of Coastal and Shelf Areas," *BioScience* 57 (2007): 573–83; Robin Abell and collaborators, "Freshwater Ecoregions of the World: A New Map of Biogeographic Units for Freshwater Biodiversity Conservation," *BioScience* 58 (2008): 403–14.

[4] See Sergio Guevara and Javier Laborde, "The Landscape Approach: Designing New Reserves for Protection of Biological and Cultural Diversity in Latin America," *Environmental Ethics* 30 , no. 3, (2008): 251–62.

and excludes them from the main discourses and laws. This exclusion leads to the oppression and/or extermination of the diversity of living beings, languages, and cultures that cohabit in South America.[5] To amend this trend, it is indispensable to conceptualize a biocultural ethics that acknowledges the existence and dignity of the co-habitants that are currently marginalized, and incorporate this ethics into development policies and the culture of global society. A higher recognition of the value of this great, but delicate, South American biocultural diversity would benefit not only living beings inhabiting the Neotropical region, but it would also contribute to a planetary, environmental and social, sustainability. South American ecosystems play a critical role in the regulation of climate and conservation of biodiversity at the world level. At the same time, in the ecosystems of South America, a plethora of past and current cultures has developed environmental worldviews and sustainable ecological practices, which are adapted to heterogeneous environmental conditions. The value of these worldviews and practices, ancestral and contemporaries, for a South American, as well as global, environmental ethic and philosophy has only recently begun to be considered by philosophers and other academics.[6] The central purpose of this essay, and of this special issue of *Environmental Ethics*, is to foment an intercultural dialogue that contributes to gain awareness about the coexistence of diverse life forms, humans and other-than-humans, and to recover our capacity to communicate and cohabit in this biocultural diversity. This communication is not only rational or verbal but it requires to also involving corporality, affection, and the experience of co-habitation in everyday life.[7]

The initial scenario described for South America illustrates the biocultural nature that characterizes the landscapes of the Latin American region, where I identify three main sources that nourish a regional environmental philosophy.

The first source comes from the *biocultural roots of South American environmental thought*, embedded in the ancient worldviews of Amerindian people and more recently also in the cultures of Afro-American, traditional peasant, contemporary coastal and rural communities, as well as in the diverse urban and semi-urban

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[5] For the concept of marginalization and oppression of the majority of human beings during the current era of globalization, see Enrique Dussel, *Ética de la Liberación: En la Edad de la Globalización y de la Exclusión* (*Liberation Ethics: In the Era of Globalization and Exclusion*) (Trotta: Madrid, 2011).

[6] I present a more extensive analysis of the interrelationships between Amerindian worldviews and environmental ethics in "Éticas ambientales latinoamericanas: raíces y ramas" in Richard Primack, Ricardo Rozzi, Peter Feinsinger, Rodolfo Dirzo, and Francisca Massardo, *Fundamentos de Conservación Biológica: Perspectivas Latinoamericanas* (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001), pp. 311–62.

[7] The biocultural perspective of this essay shares central concepts with intercultural philosophy; however, biocultural ethics extends the moral community beyond the boundaries of the human species. The worldviews of contemporary ecological sciences and of Amerindian cultures support the concept of a community of life, which can be also considered as a moral one on the basis of the notions of kinship, based on evolutionary genealogies shared by humans and other living beings, and of co-inhabitation, embedded in the recurrent ecological and cultural interrelationships among human and other-than-human beings. See Rozzi, "Biocultural Ethics," pp. 27–50. For the concept of intercultural dialogue, see Fornet Betancourt, "Supuestos filosóficos del diálogo intercultural," *Utopia y Praxis Latinoamericana* 5 (1998): 51–64.

communities, which today concentrate most of the population in our region.[8] The diversity of forms of ecological knowledge and practices rooted in Amerindian, colonial, and post-colonial languages and cultural habits—which, in turn, are embedded in ancestral native habitats and contemporary anthropogenic habitats—should be carefully considered by environmental philosophers interested in the conservation and wellbeing of biological and cultural diversity. The consideration of biocultural diversity represents, in my view, a task that needs to be further developed by contemporary environmental philosophy. Since the 1960s, I identify at least three lineages of South American thought that have increasingly contributed to the study and valuation of our rich bio-cultural diversity: (a) anthropological, historical, political, and cultural studies, and critical thinking situated on specific socio-ecological contexts, (b) liberation philosophy, liberation pedagogy, liberation theology, including its ecofeminist school of thought, and (c) more recently by ethnobiological studies (including ethno-medicine) and biocultural conservation approaches.

The second source that nourishes a regional environmental philosophy corresponds to the recent incorporation of interdisciplinary and international environmental thinking into Latin American academia. Since the 1970s, I identify two areas of work that have progressively sparked the integration of environmental thought into the regional academia: (1) the United Nations Environmental Programme that focused on sustainable development and interdisciplinary environmental education, and (2) the individual interest of some scattered Ibero-American scholars. Among the latter, some have initiated a discussion and/or have translated into Spanish the work developed by Anglo-Saxon environmental philosophers in Australia, Europe, and the United States, thereby introducing deep ecology, social ecology, ecocentric ethics, and animal liberation into the environmental thought of our region.

A third source of environmental philosophy in South America is represented by recent social movements that are catalyzing the incorporation of environmental values into regional policies, cultural expressions, and citizen organizations.

These three main sources of South American environmental philosophy, each with its ramifications, define the structure of this essay.

BIOCULTURAL ROOTS OF SOUTH AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL THOUGHT

In mid twentieth century, some Latin American anthropologists and philosophers, such as Miguel Leon-Portilla in Mexico and Rodolfo Kusch in Argentina, forged pioneer studies that interrelated the biophysical reality of Meso- and South-

[8] For a characterization of the socio-cultural diversity in Latin America from a de-colonial perspective, see Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2005). For an analysis of the socio-ecological causes and consequences of the rapid shift from a prevailing rural population to a prevailing urban population in South America, see Rozzi, "Biocultural Ethics," pp. 27–50.

American landscapes with the symbolic-linguistic reality of Amerindian cultures. These studies examine the intricate links between both realms of reality embedded in their fractured, dynamic, historical courses. Starting with his book *America Profunda* (*Deep America*),[9] the work developed by Kusch offers an approach that incorporates ways of understanding and inhabiting the landscapes rooted in particular biocultural and historical, pre- and post-colonial, contexts that have a great potential relevance for a Latin American environmental philosophy.[10] This rooting in specific socio-ecological contexts challenges a prevailing approach in our academia, which discusses philosophical schools and concepts developed in Europe, "as if" such concepts and philosophies have a universal validity that is not altered by the South American biocultural heterogeneity. While working at the University of Salta, researching the Incan legacies in the peasant communities of Bolivia and northeast Argentina, Kusch initiated a comparative ethno-philosophy that contextualizes such "unalterable" universal notions, thereby enabling a better understanding of the diversity of local forms of knowledge and environmental thought. Regarding Amerindian ecological worldviews and practices, it is also essential to consider the deep prehistoric time, and the long-term co-evolutionary processes among human populations and other biological species in the ecosystems of the Neotropical region, which have been taking place for about 50,000 years. Recent research at archeological sites like Pedra Furada in the northeast of Brazil or Monteverde in southern Chile provided evidence of early American settlements, which could have started in South America.[11] These archeological findings have questioned the prevailing hypothesis of a primeval human colonization of the New World that would have begun from the Bering Strait to the south; a hypothesis that projects a colonial vision that privileges the Northern Hemisphere.

The recent discoveries of early human settlements in South America also highlight the brevity of the period of European conquest initiated in 1492: these 500 years represent less than one percent of the human ecological-evolutionary history in our continent. The recent studies about the centers of origin of Amerindian populations and their long co-evolutionary history of biocultural practices, languages and forms of knowledge, endorse the criticism that Kusch made earlier (in the middle of the twentieth century) to the intellectual elites and the middle classes of Argentina (and

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[9] Kusch, *América Profunda*. For a contemporary anthropological, philosophical interpretation of Kusch's work, see Hugo Romero Bedregal, "Geocultura de Tarapacá: poiesis, autopoeisis y decisiones culturales," *Revista Ciencias Sociales* 16 (2006): 16–37.

[10] In this special issue, Daniel E. Gutiérrez also points out the value that Kusch's work might have for forging an Argentinean environmental philosophy. See his essay "Environmental Thought in Argentina: A Panoramic View," in this issue of *Environmental Ethics* 34 (2012): 399–410.

[11] See Charles Mann, *1491: New Revelations of the Americas Before Columbus* (New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 2005), pp. 232–34. Guaciara M. dos Santos, Michael Bird, Fabio Parenti, Keith Fifield, Niède Guidon, and Paul Hausladen, "A Revised Chronology of the Lowest Occupation Layer of Pedra Furada Rock Shelter, Piauí, Brazil: The Pleistocene Peopling of the Americas," *Quaternary Science Reviews* 22 (2003): 2303–10.

South America, in general) who "most often saw the Amerindian, taking from their roots, as nauseating."[12] Kusch not only criticized such colonialist judgments, but offered a *geocultural* perspective that considered both the cultures and territories. The absence of this integration can justify the continued expropriation of territories and cultural oppression, which constitutes a social and ecological injustice that leads to the extinction of cultivated plants (such as the hundreds of varieties of potato, chili, and many other plant species), of biocultural landscapes (such as the forest islands or *apête* created by the Kayapo people in the Amazonian region), and of cultural practices (such as exchanges of seeds among women of Quechua communities inhabiting the Andean slopes) that often form an integral part of the ecosystem dynamic in the Neotropics.

Much of the ancestral ecological practices are alive among Amerindian people that inhabit Latin America today. In the decade of the 1960s, the perspective of Kusch contrasted with the fact that forms of indigenous thought and life remained overlooked, including the negation of academic philosophy (dominated by a analytical-positivist supremacy). Counteracting this tendency, in "Geocultura y el Hombre Americano" (Geoculture and the American Man), he introduced the term *geoculture* through which the South American geography ceases to be seen through a colonist perspective, as a virgin territory to be conquered and used, and begins, instead, to be understood as a territory where the cultural meanings are rooted.[13] Kusch's conceptual framework and methodological approach can contribute to rediscovering how our spatially and temporarily heterogeneous cultural habits are interwoven with the heterogeneous native, rural, and urban habitats of South America.[14]

The Latin American Modernity/Coloniality Research Program: Implications for Environmental Philosophy

The perspectives of Kusch provide one of the sources of inspiration for another Argentinean thinker, Walter Mignolo, who in the 1990s developed the notions of

[12] Kusch, *América Profunda*, p. 21.

[13] Kusch, *Geocultura y el Hombre Americano* (Fernando García Cambeiro: Buenos Aires, 1976). For Kusch, the American continent is a place where an extended colonial Western culture coexists with the Amerindian, that is, with those ancestral memories, lifestyles, and thought patterns of Amerindian cultures that had survived the colonial and postcolonial (or neocolonial) periods. The conflictive encounters between pre-Columbian peoples of the Andes and the Old World Europeans established a dialectical relationship between two notions of *estar aquí* ("to be here" and "to be at"—that expresses the essence of what remains of the Amerindian cultures) and *ser alguien* ("to be someone"—that defines the attitudes of the European merchants). Consequently, the "New World" environments began to be subjected to the prevailing colonial attitude of "possession of objects," rather than to the customary Amerindian one of "participation and interaction with organisms."

[14] With a Kuschian perspective, I have analyzed the encounter between European colonizers and the Yahgan Fuegian people in Cape Horn at the southern end of the Americas. See Ricardo Rozzi, Ximena Arango, Francisca Massardo, Christopher Anderson, Kurt Heidinger, and Kelli Moses. "Field Environmental Philosophy and Biocultural Conservation: The Omora Ethnobotanical Park Educational Program" in *Environmental Ethics* 30 (2008): 325-336.

border (boundary) thinking and epistemologies, and pluri-topical hermeneutics. To critically examine the one-dimensionality established by the paradigm of conquest of the people and American nature, Mignolo has adopted key concepts from Enrique Dussel, who has led the liberation philosophy school of thought. Dussel, an influential Argentinean-Mexican philosopher, seeks to overcome Eurocentrism and modernity, not simply by denying them, but also "thinking from the perspective of the excluded other;" i.e., the impoverished communities of peasants, the colonized communities of indigenous people, the marginal communities of workers and urban citizens.[15] In his latest work, Mignolo has gone beyond the purely social domain, extending it to the domain of life. His proposal of a *paradigm other* seeks to construct spaces of hope not only for human life, but also for all life forms.[16] This extension of Mignolo's *paradigm other* is particularly pertinent for a regional environmental ethics because both the Amerindian cultures and the ecosystems, including their biodiversity, have been insensibly oppressed by the process of European conquest, intensified more recently by the neoliberal globalization of the market.

At Duke University, Mignolo has developed his project through the *Latin American Modernity/Coloniality Research Program*. He notes that the phrase of Huntington "the West and the rest" expresses a model that should be overcome, and this overcoming will occur when "the rest" emerge from, and in, its diversity.[17] More than to reproduce Western universal and abstract concepts, the alternative approach proposed by Mignolo constitutes a type of border thought that addresses the colonialism of Western epistemologies from the perspective of epistemological forces that have been relegated to subordinate forms of traditional, folklore, religious, or emotional knowledge. Mignolo emphasizes the necessity of permitting expression of pluri-versal epistemologies, histories, and local communities that inhabit, today, the borders or margins of globalization.[18] This approach not only contributes to harmonious coexistence with diverse Amerindian people, but also with all those groups whose histories are marked by colonialism and "have lived or learned in their bodies the trauma, the unconscious lack of respect."[19] Mignolo proposes that "boundary thinking is one of the possible ways toward a critical cosmopolitism and a utopian horizon that helps us to construct a world where many worlds can fit."[20] This critical optic opens a promising road for Latin American environmental ethics that could include all forms of life in a pluri-versal conception that considers in an integrated way the people, the ecosystems and all the beings with whom we co-inhabit in the New World.

At the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, another researcher associated

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[15] See Enrique Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity*: *Apel, Ricoeur, Rorty, Taylor and the Philosophy of Liberation*. Translated and edited by Eduardo Mendieta (New York: Humanity Books, 1996), p. 14.

[16] Walter Mignolo, *Historias Locales/Diseños Globales* (Madrid: Ediciones Akal, 2003), p. 19.

[17] Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

[18] Ibid.

[19] Mignolo, *Historias Locales/Diseños Globales*, p. 20.

[20] Ibid., p. 58.

with the Latin American Modernity/Coloniality Research Program, Arturo Escobar, has elaborated a geopolitical perspective. Based on his work with Afro-American communities on the coast of the Pacific Ocean of his country of origin, Colombia, Escobar has addressed problems of globalization and culture, gender, environment, and territory. As Colombian environmental philosopher Patricia Noguera remarks in her essay included in this special issue of Environmental Ethics, Escobar has found in the Afro-American communities of tropical Colombia, solid elements for an ecological sustainability through the reinterpretation of anthropological practices related to mythical and symbolic traditions that take place in the contexts of specific ecosystems.[21] These regional biocultural realities are, however, being increasingly threatened by violence, poverty, and degradation of habitats in Latin America. Escobar opened his landmark book "La Invención del Tercer Mundo" (The Invention of the Third World, 1996) by noting that "just a quick look at the biophysical, economic, and cultural landscapes of the Third World gives us an account that the Project of Development is in crisis."[22] Escobar makes an appealing call to inaugurate a *post-development era*. This call is especially relevant for a Latin American environmental ethics, because under the current model of development the original state of biocultural diversity and social wellbeing is being replaced by an accelerated process of biocultural homogenization and socio-ecological degradation.[23]

Liberation Theology and Environmental Philosophy

Complementing the perspective of Escobar, Leonardo Boff affirms that "today, in reality, it is not so much the development model that is in a state of crisis, but [more deeply] the model of society that dominates the world."[24] Boff is a Brazilian liberation theologian who represents a major figure in Latin American thought due to his original Christian Franciscan concepts, and to his arduous work dedicated to the broad communication of environmental problems and proposals to solve them.[25] In his landmark book *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm*, Boff proposes a holistic, eco-social approach to environmental ethics, affirming that "the new

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[21] See Patricia Noguera, "Augusto Angel-Maya and Environmental Philosophy in Colombia," this issue of *Environmental Ethics* 34 (2012): 361–70.

[22] Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 5.

[23] The process of biocultural homogenization entails simultaneous and interdigitated losses of native biological and cultural diversity at local, regional, and global scales. This process leads to the disruption of the interrelationships between cultures and their land, and results in the massive replacement of native biota and cultures by cosmopolitan species, languages, and cultures. See Ricardo Rozzi "Biocultural Ethics," pp. 27–50.

[24] Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation: A New Paradigm* (New York: Orbis Books, 1995), p. 24.

[25] For example, Leonardo Boff had a leading role in the writing and in the divulgation of the Earth Charter, which is a declaration of fundamental ethical principles for building a just, sustainable and peaceful global society in the 21st century. The Earth Charter involved a decade-long (1995-2005),

model of society has to aim at a reconstruction of the social fabric, starting from the multiform potentiality of humankind and society."[26] In this influential text on contemporary Latin American environmental thought, he distinguishes the following seven essential "pathways" or practices of ecology to articulate his holistic eco-theological proposal.

(1) The *Eco-technology Path* proposes that the technology that made the Earth bleed should also help to heal it. Economy should be reoriented toward the management of goods that are finite and necessary for human well-being.

(2) The *Eco-politics Path* affirms that human desire is structurally infinite, however should be confined by solidarity. Solidarity leads one to renounce things for the sake of the other, promoting a governance and management of the common good. Boff evokes the eco-regional approach of Chico Mendes, the inspirational Brazilian rubber tapper and conservationist, and contrasts it with the socially and ecologically insensitive approach of economic mega-projects.[27]

(3) The *Social-ecology Path* affirms the need to transform the instrumental and mechanistic view that allows a few men and women, institutions, nations, and corporations to exploit without limits other persons, animals, plants, minerals and all the beings that in this process lose their autonomy and intrinsic value, and are being reduced to mere means to the ends of the market. To counteract this trend, Boff proposes that it is essential to recover the original meaning of economy: "the administration of the fair and modest means necessary for life and well-being. Rational application of scant income is the central activity of most households in the Third World. . . . [In this alternative] model of society . . . , not only work but leisure, not only efficiency but gratuitousness, not only productivity but the absurd, playful dimension must be encouraged. Imagination, fantasy, utopia, dreams, emotions, symbolism, poetry, and religion have to be valued as much as production, organization, functionality, and rationality."[28]

(4) The *Eco-ethics Path*, where ethics means the "unlimited responsibility for everything that exists and lives. . . . The supreme good is to be found in earthly and cosmic integrity. That does not amount merely to the common good of humanity, but includes the welfare of nature."[29]

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worldwide, cross cultural dialogue on common goals and shared values, and the document has been further enhanced by its endorsement by over 4,500 organizations, including governments and international organizations. See http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content.

[26] Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 27–28.

[27] Ibid., pp. 22–23. It is noteworthy that as a tribute to invaluable work for conservation by Francisco Alves "Chico" Mendes Filho, who in 1985 coined and implemented the concept extractive reserves as way to defend the Amazonian forests and the rights of sustainable use practices by Rubber Tapper communities, in 2007 the Brazilian the Ministry of Environment created the Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity Conservation, which today manages federally protected areas. Amos Nascimento and James Griffiths discuss in their co-authored essay included in this issue of *Environmental Ethics,* pp. 389–97, the role played by Brazilian leaders such as Chico Mendes. See also Tony Gross, ed., *Fight for the Forest—Chico Mendes in His Own Words* (London: Latin America Bureau, 1989).

[28] Leonardo Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 19 and 28.

[29] Ibid., pp. 29–30.

(5) The *Mental Ecology Path,* where the diversity of beings inhabits not only in nature but also within ourselves, as images, symbols, and values. The waters, plants, animals inhabit inside ourselves as archetypes and figures filled with emotions. This understanding should help us to counteract the modern fabrication of a collective subjectivity that generates the one-dimensional man.[30] The overcoming of this one-dimensionality should help us to reintegrate the forces of reason with the multiple forces of universe that become present in ourselves, our impulses, visions, intuitions, dreams, and creativity.

(6) The *Cosmic Mysticism Path*, where spirituality and mysticism originate from the sacramental, symbolic, and affective reason that captures the gratuitousness and the sense of communion among all beings.

(7) The *Eco-theology Path*, which is based on a Christian-Franciscan panentheism rooted in tenderness as the main attitude in the encounter with other beings. This Christian praxis generates a cordial knowledge (cordial = from the heart) which does not distance ourselves from the diverse realities, but instead it makes possible to establish a communion and friendship with them, as it was done by St. Francis for whom the moon and the sun, the water and the fire, the birds and the herbs are our sisters and brothers which share with us the same divine genealogy.[31]

Starting from the initial impulse to favor the expression of the multiple potentialities of individuals and the diverse cultures and social groups, the ethical turn toward an ecological ethics arises in Boff from the demand of "listening" to the other, to nature. In a recent interview, Boff affirms that "not only the poor cry; also the lands cry, the waters cry, nature cries. Hence, we need an *eco-theology of liberation*."[32] In this attitude of listening among human and other-than-human beings "the decisive element in ethics is not what we want or what we seek to impose by force (thus creating various different moral standards), but what the same reality states and demands that everyone should heed and be tune with it. . . . Human beings live ethically when they decide to stop placing themselves above all others, and decide instead to stand together with others."[33]

To develop an ecological ethics, Boff proposes a material and mystical reconnection with the interior and exterior nature of each human being and society. A reconnection with the earth as a whole, *a dignitas terrae*, has to go through an interior psychological, spiritual ecology, and through a re-enchantment with nature. For this re-enchantment to reemerge "the new alliance that humankind ought to make with nature must come above all from the heart. . . . When reconciled with ourselves (mental ecology), we can, without coercion, live with our own fellow humans (social ecology), and also with all the other beings (environmental ecology)."[34] The experience of the spirit is open to everyone and the reconnection with

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[30] Boff alludes to Herbert Marcuse's concept, and homonymous book *One-Dimensional Man: Studies in Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society* (Beacon Press: Boston, Massachusetts, 1964).

[31] Ibid., pp. 52–54.

[32] Unpublished interview with Leonardo Boff from 2008 by Ricardo Rozzi.

[33] Boff, *Ecology and Liberation*, pp. 29–31.

[34] Ibid., pp. 77–78.

our interior life recovers the unity with the exterior reality within which we are embedded. However,

> Modern civilization tends to occupy individual's attention with a flood of imperious messages and demands. Or else unrelenting yet mundane needs so assault a person that he or she cannot find the center. Injustice in personal and social relations is a sure barrier to the disclosure or emergence of the center. Unjust processes are doubly inhumane. They force the oppressor to block fine impulses to deny that the other is like him or her, and even to dehumanize the self (to lose his or her own center). Only thus can anyone objectify and violate the integrity of the other. Oppression is indeed a process of dehumanization (which blocks any illumination which may shine forth from the center), for the victim turns the violence, suffered into negation in all aspects of life, at table, at home, in school, and in the very core of human dignity.[35]

From this perspective of liberation theology, Boff calls for broadening the spectrum of environmental ethics toward an environmental justice that includes poor and marginalized people: the oppressed human beings side-by-side with the oppressed other-than-human beings. In *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, he situates the liberation theology concerns of social and political liberation within broader ecological frameworks: "without a minimum of social justice it is impossible to make ecological justice fully effective. The one involves the other."[36] From Boff's ecotheology of liberation, we can conclude that in order to achieve ecological justice it is necessary to overcome both anthropocentrism and ethnocentrism (more specifically, Eurocentrism). In addition, for his holistic approach, Boff demands to embrace the masculine and feminine, a position that echoes the philosophy of leading South American ecofeminists and liberation theologians, Ivone Gebara (Brazil) and Gladys Parentelli (Uruguay-Venezuela).

Based on their work with women who inhabit areas with high levels of poverty in urban poor areas, Parentelli and Gebara have inaugurated a Latin American theology from the "optic" of women.[37] Both women as much as the poor are oppressed, hence poverty is not a gender-neutral category. Gebara deconstructs the accusation against the poor as agents of environmental degradation by pointing out:

> We know that most of the waste is not produced by the poor. They are not the owners of polluting industries, of nuclear power plants, or of the military headquarters at which wars are planned; neither are they the principal consumers of canned and packaged goods. However, the poor are the first to be hurt by the various kinds of wastes that are produced. It is true that the poor do generate a small amount of garbage, and it ends up all around them; but it is virtually impossible for them to change the rules created

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[35] Ibid., p. 169.

[36] Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor* (New York: Orbis Books, 1997), p. 45.

[37] See Gladys Parentelli, "Latin America's Poor Women," in Rosemary Radford Ruether, ed., *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, and Religion* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1996), pp. 29–38, and Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 1999).

> by others, a game that requires material wealth to live in places far from garbage one produces.[38]

Gebara, Parentelli, and other Latin American ecofemenist thinkers and activists have directed their attention to the everyday life of women living in marginal neighborhoods. Moreover, this displacement of the poors is frequently associated to the destruction of their habitats. During the last three decades, ecofeminists have created centers, networks and periodical publications that explore the relationship between the oppression of women, indigenous people, and nature in Latin America.

Biocultural Conservation and Environmental Philosophy

Ecofeminist analyses tend to agree with perspectives and studies of biological and cultural conservation in Latin America which demonstrate that the most severe social impacts associated to environmental degradation affect indigenous, peasant and marginalized poor communities. The biocultural conservation perspective disagrees with the generalized point of view that affirms that poverty is one of the main causes of environmental degradation in the Southern Hemisphere.[39] In contrast, it emphasizes that the marginal and poor communities (in monetary terms) are not the principal agents but the main victims of environmental degradation. To better understand this biocultural conservation perspective, let us consider an example from the Peruvian Andes.[40] Confronted with the expropriation of land

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[38] Gebara, *Longing for Running Water*, p. 3.

[39] The interpretation of poverty as a main cause of environmental degradation is still prevailing. However, many scholars and international organizations, including the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), have offered alternative evidence and approaches. In 1987, WCED in its landmark Burndtland Report stated that "there has been a growing realization in national governments and multilateral institutions that it is impossible to separate economic development issues from environment issues; many forms of development erode the environmental resources upon which they must be based, and environmental degradation can undermine economic development. Poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental problems. It is therefore futile to attempt to deal with environmental problems without a broader perspective that encompasses the factors underlying world poverty and international inequality," p. 117. The Brundtland Report addressed in depth the disparities in income and ecological impact among countries, and documented that the countries with lower or middle income economies have eighty-three percent of the world population, but only twenty-one percent of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Conversely, the countries that are high-income oil exporters or have industrial market economies are inhabited by seventeen percent of the world population and accumulate seventy-nine percent of the world's GDP. The inequalities in income distribution are extreme in Latin American countries. For example, in Brazil, the wealthiest country of the region, the richest fifth of the population concentrates sixty-eight percent of the country's GDP, while the poorest fifth shares only two percent of the national GDP. See Werner Baer and William Maloney, "Neoliberalism and Income Distribution in Latin America," *World Development* 25 (1997): 311–27.

[40] Baseline information for this example is found in *Fundamentos de Conservación Biológica: Perspectivas Latinoamericanas* and in Alejandro Argumedo and Michel Pimbert, *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge against Biopiracy in the Andes* (London: International Institute for Environment and Development, 2006). See also Karl S. Zimmerer, "Geographies of Seed Networks for Food Plants

and the resulting territorial displacement motivated mostly by the development of mining projects or of new agricultural practices that include the extensive use of genetically modified varieties of potato, *Quichwa* or Quechua communities have repeatedly denounced the resulting marginalization of women who traditionally were responsible for the selection, storing, sowing, and harvesting of seeds and tubers of potatoes and other plants. The combined effect of exclusion of access to their native habitats and of marginalization of women has threatened alimentary sovereignty of peasant and indigenous communities whose health depends upon the exchange of edible vegetables from different agroecological zones. The interrelationships between the mosaic of Andean habitats and Quechua alimentary habits are particularly delicate: (1) the high Andean agricultural zones (*Puna*) provide tubers rich in carbohydrates (oca, isano, and potato), (2) the intermediate altitude agricultural zones (*andenes* in the sub-Andean terrace cultivation system) provide grains rich in essential aminoacids (such as quinoa and corn), and (3) the low-land zones (*Yungas* and Amazonian rain forests) provide coca leaves and fruits rich in vitamins. Healthy markets of bartering run by women from different altitudinal zones are interrupted by the territorial displacements of local communities caused by mining and other development projects, and by the substitutions of native varieties of plants by commercial and genetically modified varieties. This ecosocial disruption provokes:

(a) Losses of autonomy and capacity of self-determination of indigenous communities, derived from the destruction and/or denial of access to their ancestral habitats and territories, which are the condition of possibility for the continuity of their material and spiritual subsistence.

(b) Degradation of local economies and the relations of reciprocity among the diverse human communities, and between these communities and the regional ecosystems.

(c) Degradation of regional biological diversity; for example, of the more than 2,000 varieties of potatoes that have been traditionally cultivated in the high Andean slopes.

(d) Losses of traditional ecological and cultural knowledge and practices; for example, the disappearance of local markets where women offer and exchange a wide variety of foods, provoking an alimentary insecurity which conveys malnutrition, dependency, losses of autonomy and dignity.

(e) Immigration of Quechua women and their families toward marginal neighborhoods in cities where most frequently end up living in conditions of extreme poverty.

(Potato, Ulluco) and Approaches to Agrobiodiversity Conservation in the Andean Countries," *Society and Natural Resources: An International Journal* 16 (2003): 583-601, and Karen Sue Rolph and Marco Felipé Obregón Lázaro, "Quechua Oqrakashqa: The Effects of Mining Consortia and Globalization on Local Quechua Communities in the Peruvian Andes," *Program on Human Rights, Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies, Stanford University* (2012) Working Paper 012, http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/23774/Rolph-Lazaro_012.pdf.

The former case illustrates the importance of conserving both the traditional habits and the regional habitats that have sustained the well-being of human and other-than-human communities of life in the Andean Cordillera. For this reason, I have proposed a *biocultural ethics* that aims to recover an integral understanding of the interrelationships among the cultural habits and the habitats where these habits take place.[41] I say recover, because although these links have been largely ignored by modern dominant ethics that are centered in human habits, early Western philosophy, as well as ancestral Amerindian ecological worldviews and contemporary ecological sciences, provide foundations that support the integration of the habits of the inhabitants and the habitats where these habits are practiced.

An essential feature of the environmental philosophy approaches discussed in this first section of this essay is the focus on specific communities, their biocultural landscapes, including the ecosystems, and the historical, socio-political, cultural settings. The attention to the daily life of human people and other living beings contributes to discovering, on the one hand, the inexhaustible biocultural diversity embedded in the spatial and temporal heterogeneity of the Latin American region. On the other hand, it also discloses how today these diverse human and other-than-human forms of life are threatened by development projects that are insensitive to their existence. The Catalan ecological economist Joan Martinez Alier, who has developed the conservation perspective called *environmentalism of the poor*, stresses that in Latin America conservation is far from the caricature that considers environmentalism as a luxury. On the contrary, the commitment and action in favor of conservation often springs from those communities who depend directly on the natural resources to live.[42]

Movements of resistance and recurrent appeals to conservation made by local communities aim to maintain sustainable ecological practices rooted in regional biological and cultural diversity. To better understand the interrelationships between biological and cultural diversity, the Mexican ecologist Victor Toledo, founder and editor of the journal *Etnoecologica,* has stimulated the study of the relationships between Amerindian cultures and nature.[43] Toledo has emphasized the necessity of developing hybrid disciplines that integrate the cultural, social, and ecological dimensions that seek to

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[41] See Ricardo Rozzi, "Biocultural Ethics," pp. 27–50.

[42] Joan Martinez-Alier, *Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2002).

[43] In Latin America, as in other regions of the world, ethnoecology has been essential to disclose the richness of Amerindian worldviews and the value of traditional ecological practices, as shown by the interdisciplinary work of Colombian anthropologists Astrid Ulloa Cubillos, Claudia Campos, and Heidi Rubio (see their co-authored book on management of fauna by rural communities, *Manejo de fauna con comunidades rurales* (Bogotá, Colombia: Ediciones Fundación Natura, 2001, or their chapter on the Embera indigenous communities "Manejo local por los Embera del Chocó colombiano" in Primack et al., *Fundamentos de Conservación Biológica,* pp. 599–601. The field of ethnoecology has involved many fruitful collaborations between Latin American and international researchers. Indeed, the International Society of Ethnobiology was founded in Belem Brazil during the First International Congress of Ethnobiology in 1988. It involved an active collaboration between Brazilian, Latin American, and international researchers under the leadership Darrell Posey. In the 1990s, Victor Toledo's collaboration with U.S. ethnobotanist Janis Alcorn was essential to establish the journal Etnoecologica and to promote

promote the communication and mutual respect between different socio-cultural actors.[44] In my co-authored textbook, *Foundations of Conservation Biology: Latin American Perspectives,* we have extensively documented how the perspectives of members of diverse indigenous, peasant, and fisherman communities agree with those of ecologists and other researchers regarding the fact that the levels of autonomy and social wellbeing are higher in areas where the ecosystems and the biodiversity have been protected. [45] To enhance the understanding of this "win-win relationship" between the well-being of humans and of biotic communities and their ecosystems, and to better understand the value of their expression of local life histories, I have integrated ecological sciences and environmental ethics into a practice that I have called *field environmental philosophy.*[46] In this practice, philosophers participate in long-term transdisciplinary projects of biocultural conservation. Through this in situ experience that involves "face to face" encounters with co-inhabitants, human and other-than-human, their habits and habitats, "biocultural diversity ceases to be a mere concept, and begins to be an experience of cohabitation with diverse living beings and life histories that regularly remain outside of areas considered in formal education and decision making."[47] The field environmental philosophy methodological approach has allowed the incorporation of biocultural diversity into regional development policies, territorial planning, formal and non-formal education programs, including ecotourism. Complementarily, with this methodological approach, in the late 1990s the Omora Ethnobotanical Park was established in Puerto Williams, capital of the Chilean Antarctic Province, at the southern tip of South America. Then, in 2005 the UNESCO Cape Horn Biosphere Reserve was created and the International Sub-Antarctic Biocultural Conservation Program was founded to integrate philosophical theory and practice into long-term transdisciplinary collaborations.[48] This academic program

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a conservation approach which attempts "to stabilize the traditional conservation ethics wherever it still exists, and improve the modern conservation ethic." See Janis Alcorn, "Indigenous people and conservation, *Conservation Biology* 7 (1993): 424–26.

[44] See Víctor Toledo and Alicia Castillo, "La ecología en Latinoamérica: ocho tesis para una ciencia pertinente en una región de crisis," *Interciencia* 24 (1999): 157–68, and Víctor Toledo, *Ecología, Espiritualidad y Conocimiento: De la Sociedad del Riesgo a la Sociedad Sustentable* (Mexico City: PNUMA, 2003).

[45] See Primack et al., *Fundamentos de Conservación Biológica.*

[46] See Ricardo Rozzi and collaborators, "Field Environmental Philosophy and Biocultural Conservation at the Omora Ethnobotanical Park: Methodological Approaches to Broaden the Ways of Integrating the Social Component ("S") in Long-Term Socio-Ecological Research (LTSER) Sites," *Revista Chilena de Historia Natural* 83 (2010): 27–68.

[47] Ricardo Rozzi et al., "Field Environmental Philosophy and Biocultural Conservation," *Environmental Ethics* 30 (2008): 335.

[48] See www.chile.unt.edu. The International Sub-Antarctic Biocultural Conservation Program is coordinated by the University of Magallanes, the Institute of Ecology and Biodiversity, and the Omora Foundation in Chile, and by the University of North Texas and the Center for Environmental Philosophy in the USA. Ricardo Rozzi, Francisca Massardo, Christopher Anderson, Kurt Heidinger, and John Silander, "Ten Principles for Biocultural Conservation at the Southern Tip of the Americas: The Approach of the Omora Ethnobotanical Park," Ecology & Society 11(2006): http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol11/iss1/art43/

of research, education and conservation focused on the sub-Antarctic ecoregion of southwestern South America, investigates and proposes sustainable practices rooted in the heterogeneous relationships between particular habitats and habits (ancient and contemporary), which allows also to examine at regional and planetary scales the complex eco-social problems associated with global environmental change.[49]

INCORPORATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY INTO LATIN AMERICAN ACADEMIA

In the integration of environmental thinking into Latin American academia that began in the 1970s, it is possible to distinguish two main sources of origin: i) the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) that supported interdisciplinary academic programs on environmental education, basic and applied research, and ii) the individual interest of some scholars who perceived the need of environmental ethics to address fast expanding environmental problems in the region. Both sources provided the initial impulse for the incipient, but growing presence that environmental philosophy is currently having in South, and Latin, American academia.

United Nations Environmental Programs and Latin American Environmental Philosophy

At the beginning of the 1970s the United Nations launched two important programs that promoted the inclusion of the environmental thought into Latin American Academia. First, in 1970, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) created the Man and Biosphere (MaB) Program, which integrates social and ecological dimensions into conservation. MaB's model contrasted with prevailing preservationists approaches to conservation that excluded human populations from protected areas. Second, in 1972, during the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment that took place in Stockholm, the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) was founded. UNEP immediately proposed to establish "an international program on interdisciplinary environmental formal and informal education."[50]

In 1977, UNESCO and UNEP organized the International Conference on Environmental Education (Tbilisi, Russia), where they called each continent to establish a regional network on environmental thought and education. As Colombian philosopher María Luisa Eschenhagen points out in her essay, included in this issue of *Environmental Ethics,* the only one that succeeded was the Latin American and

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[49] See Ricardo Rozzi, Juan Armesto, Julio Gutiérrez, Francisca Massardo, Gene Likens, Christopher Anderson, Alexandria Poole , Kelli Moses, Eugene Hargrove, Andres Mansilla, James Kennedy, Mary Willson, Kurt Jax, Clive Jones, J. Baird Callicott, and Mary Kalin, "Integrating ecology and environmental ethics: Earth stewardship in the southern end of the Americas," *BioScience* 62 (2012): 226–36.

[50] PNUMA/UNESCO, *Universidad y Medio Ambiente en América Latina y El Caribe* (Bogotá, Colombia: ICFES, 1985).

Caribbean network. The successful establishment of this network consolidated in 1985 at the University and Environment Conference celebrated at the "Universidad Nacional de Colombia," was, in great measure, the result of a decade of work that started with the creation of the International Center in Environmental Sciences ("Centro Internacional en Ciencias Ambientales," CIFCA), a joint project of UNEP and the Government of Spain to promote the environmental education in Spanish speaking countries in 1975.[51] Between 1975 and 1977, influential seminars about interdisciplinary methodologies of education oriented toward solutions to environmental problems faced by local communities were held in Montevideo (Uruguay), Chosica (Peru) y Bogota (Colombia). These seminars provided an effective preparation for the participation of Latin Americans in the International Conference of Tbilisi (1977).

The former examples illustrate the intensive activity supported by UNEP, UNESCO and other agencies to incorporate the environmental dimensions in the research and academic programs of Latin American and Caribbean universities between 1972 and 1985. This first phase culminated with the "University and Environment" Conference in 1985, in which three central concepts (adapted from the Tbisili Report, 1977) shaped this incorporation of environmental thought into Latin American academia:

> (1) The environment includes not only biotic-physical elements, but also socio-cutural ones;
>
> (2) Environmental problems are associated with models of human development;
>
> (3) Therefore, it is recommended that universities develop an interdisciplinary education that addresses social, ecological, and cultural dimensions through a close collaboration of different academic units that enable integrated analyses of the interrelations among nature, technology and society.[52]

The "University and Environment" Conference triggered the creation of the Institute on Environmental Studies ("Instituto de Estudios Ambientales," IDEA) at the National University of Colombia (Universidad Nacional de Colombia), and the Institute of Environmental Studies for Development ("Instituto de Estudios Ambientales para el Desarrollo," IDEADE) at the Pontifical Javeriana University ("Pontificia Universidad Javeriana") in Bogota, Colombia.[53] IDEADE focused on the topic of economic growth and sustainability (ecodevelopment). In contrast, IDEA gave origin to the Environmental Thought ("Pensamiento Ambiental") working group in 1987, which has actively researched the relationships between environmental ethics, epistemology, and politics, questioning the technocratic character

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[51] Isaías Tobasura, *Ambientalismos y Ambientalistas: El Ambientalismo Criollo a Finales del Siglo XX* (Manizales, Colombia: Universidad de Caldas, 2006).

[52] PNUMA/UNESCO, *Universidad y Medio Ambiente en América Latina*.

[53] Tobasura, *Ambientalismos y Ambientalistas*.

that currently prevails in public administration and environmental sciences.[54] The first director of IDEA was the Colombian philosopher Augusto Angel-Maya who, together with Mexican environmental economist and thinker Enrique Leff, inaugurated a UNEP publishing Series on Environmental Thought, which today represents an essential bibliographic corpus to understand current Latin American environmental philosophy.[55]

Enrique Leff has made an important contribution to the genesis of a Latin American environmental philosophy. On one hand, as an editor, he has contributed to articulating and communicating the work developed by researchers of diverse disciplines that integrate political, social, economic, epistemological and ecological dimensions in Latin America.[56] On the other hand, as a thinker, Leff emphasized that the crisis of civilization actually has its roots in modern epistemologies that have come to be progressively one-dimensional; today, the global society finds itself trapped inside a rationality that is anthropocentric, instrumental and each day more narrowly economic. To overcome this trap, Leff invites to having a more open dialogue among different forms of knowledge.[57] This dialogue of knowledges reaches beyond prevailing academic philosophy, confined to Western schools of thoughts, and offers a viable path to recuperate a broader and more integral environmental rationality.

Augusto Angel-Maya also stood out for having formed an influential school of environmental thought in Colombia, as documented by Patricia Noguera,[58] and for criticizing scientific and technological focus of mainstream approaches to global environmental change. With a philosophical and poetic outlook, he looked backward to ancient, traditional forms of conceiving and inhabiting the world, and asserted that in order to heal the relationship between society and nature, we need to free ourselves from the modern rationalist tradition that separates humans from nature due to its abstractions of numbers and ideas that have lost all connection with the physical world. Angel-Maya categorically affirmed that "Platonism has drowned Western philosophy."[59] For liberation from Platonic transcendentalism, he brought the attention back to the Ionian pre-Socratic philosophers who never abandoned their attention toward the complex, multidimensional, immanent reality in which we are embedded. This inspiring Colombian philosopher invited contemporary

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[54] The current director of this group, Patricia Noguera, emphasizes that Latin American environmental philosophy needs to be closer to life, to the Epicurean notion of *Ataraxia* (the title of one of Angel-Maya's final books), "to the enjoyment of life in life, than to the notion of sustainable development," Patricia Noguera and Ricardo Rozzi, "A Tribute to Carlos Augusto Angel-Maya," *Environmental Ethics* 33 (2011): 3.

[55] See http://atencionprimaria.wordpress.com/2008/02/19/pnuma-biblioteca-virtual.

[56] See Enrique Leff, *Ética, Vida, Sustentabilidad* (Bogotá: IDEA-PNUMA, 2002).

[57] See Maria Luisa Eschenhagen, "Approaches to Enrique Leff's Environmental Thought," this issue of *Environmental Ethics* 34 (2012): 319–326.

[58] See Patricia Noguera, "Augusto Angel-Maya and environmental philosophy in Colombia," this issue of *Environmental Ethics* 34 (2012): 361–370.

[59] Augusto Ángel Maya, *El Retorno de Ícaro* (Bogotá, Colombia: CEDADES, 2002).

environmental philosophers to redirect their attention toward immanent reality, a reality that should be researched through interdisciplinary approaches, and team work.

Influences of International Environmental Philosophy on Latin American Academia

As an academic sub-discipline, environmental ethics began during the early 1970s, mainly in US, British, and Australian universities.[60] Since the 1990s, a growing (but still small) number of Ibero American scholars have begun to translate, research, and discuss Anglo-Saxon environmental philosophers. The philosophers Nicolás Sosa and José María García Gómez-Heras of the University of Salamanca in Spain, and Teresa Kwiatkowska and Margarita Valdés of the Metropolitan Autonomous University of Mexico and the National Autonomous University of Mexico, respectively, edited environmental ethics texts that were very significant because they reached wider academic and non-academic audiences. These books introduced into Latin American environmental thought, the positions and value taxonomies of current Anglo-Saxon philosophical schools, such as deep ecology, animal liberation, social ecology and ecocentric ethics.[61]

Deep ecology, especially in the thought of Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, has been researched and discussed under the lead of two Argentinean philosophers, Alicia Bugallo and Andrea Speranza.[62] Both authors highlight that Naess integrates theoretical work and activism: "the environmental movement should be *ecosophical* rather than ecological. Ecosophy . . . contains both rules and statements about priority values."[63] Coherent with the activist approach of deep ecology, Alicia Bugallo has participated in transdiciplinary projects of biological conservation in the Yungas and other areas of Argentina, and has written about environmental ethics for the general public.[64]

The concepts of animal liberation and animal rights proposed by philosophers

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[60] J. Baird Callicott and Fernando J. R. da Rocha, *Earth Summit Ethics: Toward a Reconstructive Postmodern Environmental Philosophy on the Atlantic Rim* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

[61] Nicolás Sosa, *Ética Ecológica* (Madrid : Libertarias, 1990); José María García Gómez-Heras, *Ética del Medio Ambiente: Problema, Perspectivas, Historia* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1997); Teresa Kwiatkowska and Jorge Issa, eds., *Los Caminos de la Ética Ambiental: Una Antología de Textos Contemporáneos* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, 1998); Teresa Kwiatkowska, and Ricardo López Wilchis, eds., *Ingeniería Genética y Ambiental: Problemas Filosóficos y Sociales de la Biotecnología* (Mexico City: Plaza y Valdés, 2000); Margarita Valdes, *Naturaleza y Valor: Una Aproximación a la Ética Ambiental* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2004).

[62] See Andrea Speranza, *Ecología Profunda y Autorrealización: Introducción a la Filosofía Ecológica de Arne Naess* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Biblos, 2006).

[63] Alicia Bugallo, "Arne Naess: una filosofía ambiental práctica, entre la ciencia y la sabiduría," *Ambiente y Desarrollo* 23 (2007): 109.

[64] See, for example, Alicia Bugallo, *De Dioses, Pensadores y Ecologistas* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editor Latinoamericano, 1995).

Peter Singer (Australian) and Tom Reagan (U.S.), respectively, have been translated and analyzed by the Mexican Philosopher Alejandro Herrera Ibáñez of the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). Herrera not only has written and taught these themes in classrooms, but also has participated actively in the animal defense movement and the founding of the Mexican Association for Animal Rights ("Asociación Mexicana por los Derechos de los Animales," AMEDEA) created en 1996.[65] AMEDEA covers a wide variety of themes and during the last years has emphasized a campaign against bullfighting that advocates its eradication. Another Mexican philosopher, Leonora Esquivel, who founded, together with the Chilean journalist Francisco Vásquez, *Anima Naturalis Internacional*,[66] has driven campaigns against bullfighting and animal protection in Spain and Venezuela. The themes of animal liberation and animal rights have experienced a recent development in Brazil, through the creation of the journal *Revista Brasiliera de Direito Animal (Brazilian Journal of Animal Rights)* in 2006. One of its editors, philosopher Sonia Felipe of the Federal University of Santa Catarina has centered attention on the integration between the themes of animal rights and vegetarianism.

Social ecology, especially the work of U.S. philosopher Murray Bookchin, was introduced at the end of the 1980s by the Uruguayan thinker Eduardo Gudynas who created the Latin American Center of Social Ecology ("Centro Latinoamericano de Ecología Social," CLAES) in Montevideo. In the book *The Practice for Life*, Gudynas and the Uruguayan philosopher Graciela Evia argued that environmental systems cannot be studied isolated from human systems, therefore there should be no social practice that is different from an environmental practice.[67] CLAES conducts an intensive applied work in environmental policies and protected areas, while collaborating with the Franciscan Multiversity of Latin America ("Multiversidad Franciscana de América Latina," MFAL) dedicated to popular education. In the MFAL the Uruguayan philosopher José Luis Rebellato performed an intense work to transform education and recuperate its ethical-political dimension in order to articulate the popular powers for an integral democracy, and through an effective deconstruction of the philosophical assumptions of neoliberalism, elaborate a critical-emancipated theory and ethics of life.[68] The purely mercantile relationship that neoliberalism established with life, also has been radically criticized by the Chilean-German philosopher and economist Franz Hinkelammert, who judges the neoliberal market as "a great steamroller that eliminates all life that is in its path, passing over human life and nature."[69] Based in San José, Costa Rica, since 1973, Hinkelammert is one of the founders of the Department of Ecumenical Research

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[65] See http://www.amedea.org.mx/historia.html.

[66] See http://www.animanaturalis.com.

[67] Eduardo Gudynas and Graciela Hevia, *La Praxis por la Vida*, *Introducción a las metodologías de la Ecología Social* (Montevideo, Uruguay: CIPFE, NORDAN y CLAES, 1991).

[68] See José Luis Rebellato, *La Encrucijada de la Ética: Neoliberalismo, Conflicto Norte-Sur, Liberación* (Montevideo, Uruguay: Nordan, 1995).

[69] Franz Hinkelammert, ed., *El Huracán de la Globalización* (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 1999).

("Departamento de Investigaciones Ecuménicas," DEI), a nonprofit civili organization created in 1977. Through his editorial and education work with grassroots community leaders, the DEI has generated a relevant space for Latin American ethics with a social emphasis, which has also opened opportunities for environmental ethics. In this task, theologian Roy May, associated with the DEI, has linked social ecology with liberation theology. In 2002, at the beginning of his inspiring text Ethics and Environment, May emphasized with an ecosocial perspective that: "if we are to have a relevant and liberating environmental ethic that supports life, it cannot be only an ethic from the mountain; it also has to be from the dump."[70]

The ecocentric ethic has been promoted in Latin America by Teresa Kwiatkowska and Ricardo Rozzi, who have been coordinators of the International Society of Environmental Ethics for Central and South America, respectively, since 1998. Kwiatkowska has stimulated the integration of environmental ethics into various themes, such as restoration ecology, ecosystem integrity and genetic engineering, and introduced in Latin America leading North American philosophers, such as Laura Westra and Andrew Light.[71] She has combined intensive work in education programs in Mexico with active participation in international programs of the United Nations. In Chile, Rozzi has introduced the work of North American ecocentric philosophers, especially J. Baird Callicott, Eugene Hargrove, and Max Oelschlaeger, through a series of articles initiated in the 1990s in the journal *Environment and Development* ("Ambiente y Desarrollo").[72] In 2007, to promote a dialogue between South American and Anglo-Saxon environmental philosophers, Rozzi started a series of essays about South American environmental philosophy written by philosophers of different Latin American Countries, that were published in in English and Spanish, in the quarterly *Newsletter of the International Society of Environmental Ethics*, which were the starting point for the articles in this issue of *Environmental Ethics*.[73]

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS, ART, AND LATIN AMERICAN ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

A characterization of Latin American environmental philosophy would be incomplete without referring to the role played by social movements and the arts. The writer and environmental lawyer of the Center of the Colombian Environmental Legal Assistance with headquarters in Cali, José María Borrero, has developed a critical evaluation of the participation of the communities, the type of dialogue, and the respect for differences, with a special emphasis on urban environments. In his

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[70] Roy May, *Ética y Medio Ambiente* (San José, Costa Rica: DEI, 2002) pp. 15–16.

[71] See Kwiatkowska and López Wilchis, eds., *Ingeniería Genética y Ambiental: Problemas Filosóficos y Sociales de la Biotecnología* (México, D.F.: Plaza y Valdés, 2000).

[72] See http://www.cipma.cl/Revista_ayd.asp.

[73] See http://www.cep.unt.edu/iseepapers/introduccion.pdf.

book Abolitionist Imagination, he states that in the collective imaginary (mindset) "political participation represents each day more, a trap." [74] Borrero illustrates this distrust with a graffiti found in the streets of Cali in Colombia that conjugates the verb "to participate" in the following manner[75]:

Yo participo	*I participate*
Tú participas	*You participate*
Él participa	*He participates*
Ella participa	*She participates*
Nosotros (as) participamos	*We participate*
Vosotros (as) participáis	*You (plural) participate*
Ellos deciden.	*They decide.*

Borrero criticizes the idea that democracy is a rhetoric that has been transformed into mere mechanisms for election and legitimization of governments. Today, democracy is reduced to the competition between groups of elites, and citizens are treated as consumers of a political market. Borrero denounces the idea that the precarious political culture and the participatory tradition in citizen life in Latin America is also repeatedly discouraged by "the administrative corruption, clientelism, chieftaincy and the lack of political and judicial security."[76]

Enrique Leff also has criticized this scenario of citizen skepticism and distortion of the mechanisms for political participation, emphasizing that the new ecological order arises fundamentally out of the social movements that gain a growing force against the weakening of the nation state bureaucracy. In his introduction to *Environmental Justice: Construction and Defense of New Cultural Environmental Rights and Collectives in Latin America*, Leff notes that "the new social movements are tilling a new path toward sustainability . . . based on the recognition of human rights, including the struggles of peasant communities and indigenous people, who claiming new cultural rights, that actualize their traditional uses and customs, and their ancestral lifestyles."[77]

This vision is expressed by the World Social Forum (WSF) slogan: "Another world is possible." Since its start in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in 2001, the WSF has stressed that many worlds co-exist. The WSF brings together entities and movements of civil society of all the countries of the world, "but does not intend to be an instance of representation of the world civil society."[78] It stimulates an alternative constructive

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[74] José María Borrero, *Imaginación Abolicionista* (Cali, Colombia: PNUMA/CELA, 2002), p. 129.

[75] Ibid, p. 130.

[76] Ibid., p. 131.

[77] Enrique Leff, ed., *Justicia Ambiental: Construcción y Defensa de los Nuevos Derechos Ambientales Culturales y Colectivos en América Latina* (Mexico City: PNUMA/UNAM: 2001), pp. 8–9.

[78] See http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/index.php?cd_language=4 .

process growing from the knowledge of rural and indigenous communities, and other subordinated groups that express and generate forms of emerging environmental thought that favors of the establishment of harmonious relationships of cohabitation with the diversity of human and other-than-human beings. This approach of the WSF is akin to the Manifesto of Life: An Ethic for Sustainabilty (*Manifiesto por la Vida: Una Ética para la Sustentabilidad* of 2002) signed during the Thirteenth Forum of Environmental Ministers of Latin America and the Caribbean organized by UNEP in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in October 2001, and ratified by Latin American environmental thinkers at the Environmental Ethics and Sustainable Development Symposium of Bogota in 2002, which affirms that

> The ethic for the construction of a sustainable society leads to a process of emancipation that recognizes, as taught by Paulo Freire, while no one liberates himself by his own efforts alone, neither is he liberated by others; human beings only liberate themselves in communion. Of this way it is possible to overcome the "progressive" perspective that pretends to save the other (the indigenous, the marginalized, the poor) but instead causes the other to cease being oneself and is integrated into a universal ideal, the global market, or national State; forcing one to abandon his being, his traditions, his lifestyles to convert into being "modern" and "developed." [79]

This manifesto is coherent with the proposals of philosophers, theologians, scientists, and artists that have participated in the WSF efforts to promote the participation and the dialogues among multiple forms of knowledge. This perspective is inserted, in turn, in the cultural traditions of Latin Americans, including muralists, painters, sculptors, as well as musicians and writers, who have called attention to the worldviews and practices of Amerindians, as well as peasant and fisherman communities, and their processes of historical changes in their relationships with the environment. For example, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Guatemalan writer, Miguel Angel Asturias denounced how the process of destruction of the native habitats wounded the deep link between the Maya people and the corn, between their culture and its land. After having translated the *Popol Vuh,* Asturias was inspired by this pre-Columbian narrative to write the novel, Men of Corn ("Hombres de Maíz") in which Mayan he connects the Mayan beliefs with the modern events that were taking place in Guatemala. In Chile, at the middle of the twentieth century, the poet Pablo Neruda criticized in his General Song ("Canto General") the historical process started by the Spanish conquistadores, and invited to establish new, more sensible forms of relationships with the rich biocultural nature of the New World.

CONCLUDING REMARK

A genuinely Latin America environmental ethic cannot be conceived as a normative body elaborated by experts. Today, this ethic sprouts with increasing strength

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[79] In Jorge Reichman, *Ética Ecológica* (Madrid: Nordan, 2004) p. 41.

nourished by the collective work of environmental philosophers together with artists, fishermen, indigenous communities, farmers, anthropologists, ecologists, government authorities and diverse members of society, who are collectively forging ethical guides, rooted in multiple modes—actual or potential—of cohabiting with the diverse beings in the ecological and cultural landscapes of each region of Latin America and the planet.