

Transrational Interpretations of Peace and its Contribution to Alternative Worldviews for a Sustainable, Ethical and Aesthetical Present

Egidio de Bustamante

UNESCO Chair of Philosophy for Peace Universitat Jaume I

Introduction

Climate Change and Global Warming. Pollution. Rainforests turning into deserts. Diwindling biodiversity. At least since 1972, man has realized the impact his actions were causing in the environment. 1972 was not only the year *The Limits to Growth* was first published, it was also the year when the United Nations gathered in Stockholm with many other global actors to discuss man's environmental impact and how to tackle the deriving issues. Fast forward to 2013: what has changed since then? Many environmental politics have been debated, many other conferences on the environment made, many research projects conducted and many policies adopted in the name of sustainability. Yet we still find ourselves unable to give an effective and lasting response to the problems that our own actions cause in the environment. This is the aim of the 2013 Societas Ethica Conference and what motivates this paper, as a philosophic response to the issue of sustainability. However, instead of focusing on normative ethical stances on the environmental issue, I would like to explore how cultural values and philosophical understandings embody, produce ways of leading life which are ethical towards the environment, without compromising one's freedom of choice and/or action. The reason for taking this approach is based in the foucauldian belief that norms very often represent more a disciplinarization by fear of punishment than a conscious manifestation of respect towards otherness. Freedom does not necessarily lead to a hobbesian state-of-nature, especially if one reckons the interconnectedness between him/herself and nature.

This paper makes a small contribution to the above-mentioned topic deriving from the area of Peace Studies, more specifically from transrational peaces, a framework proposed by Wolfgang Dietrich from Innsbruck University. With this approach, I argue that a concrete leap towards an ethical relation to the environment could take place by acknowledging what Dietrich calls the "energetic" and the "transrational". The energetic/transrational interpretations of peaces give renewed meaning and point to diverse cultural understandings which embody ethical and aesthetical resonance with the environment. The issue, however, is that these perspectives remain marginalized and have received little attention from academy so far. Because of this, I will briefly expose three of these perspectives on this paper (Ecofeminism, Deep Ecology and Sumak Kawsay). Then I will analyse how transrational interpretations of peace give renewed meaning and importance to them and how the Western world (as the world derived from European/Modern values and colonization) could benefit from these marginalized understandings of human relation with/in the world for a sustainable way of living. The persistence of the marginalization and even fragility these perspectives undergo seem to reside mostly in cultural barriers which make these diverse cultural practices

void of meaning or mere debatable alternatives to the West, due to its particular development (and place of power) and modern mindset. With the deconstruction and critique of this modern mindset, its limitations becomes clearer and open space for transrationality. This could then blur previously mentioned cultural barriers, posing not only a dialogue but a connection to other cultures which can finally provide transformative experiences when it comes to an eco-logical, ethical being which manifests sustainable actions from their values rather than from instituted norms.

Alternative Worldviews

There is a vast plethora of cultures in the world that could provide us with valuable lessons when it comes to a harmonious way of living with and in nature. Ethnographic research clearly gains a renewed importance when it comes to learn from perspectives which have not been engulfed in a globalized Western urban capitalist-consumerist culture nor strive for developing themselves into it. In this paper I would like to briefly describe three of these perspectives when it comes to the way we relate and deal with the environment and sustainability. After describing them, I would like to analyse in depth the origins of a Western/modern perspective and why it is hostile to such a harmonious and sustainable way of living and relating to nature. Afterwards, I also analyse how the transrational answer from Dietrich manages to transcend that and incorporate core tenets of these marginalized perspectives.

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism flourished in the seventies among the diversity of the feminist movements. It focused on fostering a society that, more than eradicating women's oppression, strove for being ecological, decentered, non-hierarchical and non-militarized, respecting the diversity of life and the environment. If traditional feminism originally proposed equal conditions for men and women in the market, outside of home - in the men's world, ecofeminism refrained from falling in such a trap by realizing the threats of such practices to the environment. The difference between traditional feminism and ecofeminism would be that in an ecofeminist view women would not have to abandon their households and conquer men's positions in the capitalist job market, but rather could amplify their household-care ethics to a world level.

Among the most notable ecofeminists is Vandana Shiva. Born in India as the daughter of a farmer and a forest conservationist who were strong supporters of Mohandas Gandhi, Shiva follows his message of being the change we want to see in the world. Because of her close relation to nature, she saw how modernizing policies and practices, especially in education, led to a disciplinarization¹ and along with that, the need for industrial progress and growth that leads to resource depletion. But Shiva believes that the biodiversity in India is deeply related to the cultural diversity and plurality of knowledges of her country. She is also one of the original Chipko tree-huggers.² Shiva (1997) argues that a male-dominated political world and patriarchal praxis in the context of a globalized economy is not sustainable and cannot offer any lasting solution to the issue of the environment. She contends that a new paradigm is fundamental to ensure our very existence. In her words:

In an ecological feminist perspective, diversity rather than sameness becomes the possibility for freedom. Striving is not to be competitive but to create space for yourself and for everyone else. To be strong is to know the boundary between protecting your autonomy and allowing other people to exercise theirs. In this sense, power is not power over others but the power to be yourself and allow others to be themselves (1997 p.1).

1 For more on this debate, see Ivan Illich's Deschooling Society.

2 <http://www.thegreeninterview.com/vandana-shiva-bio> last access November 2012.

Ecofeminism stresses the need of recognizing household work as something fundamental for life, denouncing the traditional capitalist and patriarchal systems that do not give value to such form of work. This capitalist patriarchal systems ignore a sustainable activity that is fundamental for maintenance of life, especially when exploitation of natural resources is leading to a huge crisis.

Ecofeminism then proposes a reintegration of humans and nature, sublating the dichotomy imposed since Cartesian thinking. This approach contends significant implications for one's life which affects the political realm, but also goes beyond it. Social relations and relations with the environment would not be disciplined through rule/hierarchy but through care. It sees in the historically discriminated and relegated domestic work of women the possibility of a new interpretation of the world as our house and family, bonding everything with motherly, feminine love. It contends that this reinterpretation has the power to uplift the contemporary dichotomy between economy and ecology, which in fact have the same Greek root *oikos*, which stands for the household, domestic, family – the origin of every economic activity.

Vandana Shiva, however, does recognize that she is accused of essentializing womanhood. Answering to that, she argues that ecofeminism “has never required it to be said that women are biologically closer to nature” (SHIVA, 1997, p.2) but rather that our unity with nature is true to everyone, whether men, women or children. Shiva mentions that “it is ecological blindness to assume that humans can so insulate themselves from the natural world and what brutality we subject it to, (...) to assault nature and live privileged situations for ourselves” (SHIVA, 1997, p.2).

Maria Mies is another prominent ecofeminist, who has also worked with Shiva. In the book she wrote with Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen (*The Subsistence Perspective*, 1999), they derive from the experience of women in their everyday countryside life, producing their most basic needs, the key for an economic change. With many stories of household and peasant work of women, they demonstrate that another relation to nature and to human beings is possible. They explain how patriarchy and financial capitalism (through globalization) turn money and its purchase power into the producers of life (p. 58), relegating both women's and peasants' work to a second category.

With this, Mies and Bennholdt-Thomsen reclaim the importance of the subsistent peasant work (for the peasants are the ones who work with nature to produce the food they need to maintain their life), differentiating it from agriculture or farming (which is agricultural work for profit-making). The difference is that peasantry represents diversified small farms and home gardens with little impact, while farming represent an industrial agriculture. They show that such a peasant life is not at all filled with deprivation, but rather with abundance, joy and caring for other living beings – animals, plants and the soil. According to the authors, the features that a subsistence perspective brings are: change in the sexual division of labour; production geared towards needs not wants; technology that should be used not to control nature but to cooperate with it - respecting its limits to regenerate life, respecting biodiversity; a new set of economical praxis with local markets and seasonal products for subsistence and never profit; and a change in the concept of need and sufficiency, with satisfaction of human needs and not accumulation of surpluses and reciprocal relations between rural and urban areas (p. 62-63).

Deep Ecology

Now very close to Ecofeminism is the approach of Deep Ecology. Deep Ecology was proposed by Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss³ as a reaction to “shallow” ecological

3 Article available at: http://www.ecology.ethz.ch/education/Readings_stuff/Naess_1973.pdf accessed in

initiatives like resource conservation and value assumption of soils for the sake of human beings only and not for nature itself. From that, Arne Næss came with the Eight-Point Platform of Deep Ecology, which provided the unifying principles of the deep ecology movement. The intention was to shift from an anthropocentric worldview to a biocentric egalitarianism in which a relational self lead to ecoconsciousness and ethics. The eight points are:

- 1- The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
- 2- Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
- 3- Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
- 4- The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantially smaller human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires a smaller human population.
- 5- Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
- 6- Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
- 7- The ideological change will be mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between bigness and greatness.
- 8- Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes.

(SESSIONS, 1995 p.68)

I am well aware that the Deep Ecology movement has started as a philosophical reaction to an aggressive human relation with nature. But I dare to call it a culture because these very clear insights provide a derivative code of conduct that produces a certain way a of living which is not necessarily normative but arise out of a realization of the interconnection of all living beings, going beyond traditional Cartesian rationality and Newtonian atomization. This way of living conforms a culture of sustainability and respect towards nature that breaks from its Western origins.

Buen Vivir

Lastly, I would like to explore a local alternative to the modern-Western mindset. In Ecuadorean Kichwa it is called *Sumak Kawsay* or, in Spanish, *Buen Vivir* (good living); in Bolivian Aymara it is called *Suma Qamaña* and in local Spanish could be translated *Vivir Bien* (living well). Both approaches are quite similar and, in Cecilia Bizerra (2009) words, they mean a

solid principle which means life in harmony and equilibrium between men and women, between different communities and, above all, between human beings and the natural environment of which they are part. In practice, this concept implies knowing how to live

in community with others while achieving a minimum degree of equality. It means eliminating prejudice and exploitation between people as well as respecting nature and preserving its equilibrium.⁴

This perspective was first presented in the World Social Forum in 2009 and commented in an article by Gustavo Esteva in the same year as an alternative to development.⁵ Since then, it has spreaded and gained particular force in the region, having been translated to Portuguese and also French. Movements in Latin America argue that it offers an uncolonized, local understanding of life that dearticulates institutions and instances of capitalist dominance and Westernization manifested through growth projects and industrial development. It allows for a debate of equals and does not essentialize those communities, giving value to their local traditions and culture.

But, above all, beyond being an appraised alternative to a global capitalist Westernizing project (which would still be thinking in reaction and negation of modernity - therefore limiting the Buen Vivir itself) the Buen Vivir centers in the indigenous populations their own “right” to define in which terms they want to lead their lives, terms which can provide a balance between the communities, the cultural heritage and the *Pachamama*. In fact, the *Consejo Indígena de Centro América (CICA)* contends that Buen Vivir is “*la expresión de una Vida Armónica en permanente construcción (...) en directa vinculación y equilibrio con la naturaleza*”.⁶ The Buen Vivir is founded by the indigenous cosmovisions of each community and their own forms of organization.⁷ Leonardo Boff contends that

El “buen vivir” apunta a una ética de lo suficiente para toda la comunidad, y no solamente para el individuo. El “buen vivir” supone una visión holística e integradora del ser humano, inmerso en la gran comunidad terrenal, que incluye además de al ser humano, al aire, el agua, los suelos, las montañas, los árboles y los animales; es estar en profunda comunión con la Pachamama (Tierra), con las energías del Universo, y con Dios. (BOFF, 2009, p.1).⁸

Cultural barriers and contexts

After this brief look on alternative cultures/ways of living which can promote a shift in human relations with the environment and embody ethics and sustainability, one starts asking: How does my culture differ to that? In the case of a Western, capitalist, eurocentric, urban and above all modern perspective it is also important to ask: how did we get so stranded from nature to the point of having these perspectives become something so radical or so alternative? This process seems so deep that sometimes it becomes even hard to understand these other perspectives.

In order to talk about the cultural barriers and mindsets which block a learning experience from different cultures and approaches, a first and important task is to ground and situate our own understandings of the world and context - our culture, ultimately - to highlight its limitations when it comes to understanding otherness and other mindsets/cultures, or even

4 Text available at <http://www.indybay.org/newsitems/2010/02/28/18639072.php> accessed in October 20th, 2011.

5 América Latina en Movimiento n°445, June 2009.

6 The expression of a Harmonious Life in permanent construction (...) in direct relation and balance with nature. Translation by Egidio de Bustamante. Available at <http://www.consejoindigena.org/BuenVivir.html> Last Access December 2012.

7 <http://www.consejoindigena.org/BuenVivir.html> Last Access December 2012.

8 The Buen Vivir points to an ethics of what's enough for the whole community, and not only for the individual. It entails a holistic and integrative vision of the human being, inmerse in the great earth community, that also includes beyond the human beings the air, the water, the lands, the mountains, the trees and the animals. It means being in deep communion with the Pachamama (Mother Earth), with the energies of the Universe, and with God. Translation by Egidio de Bustamante

look for alternatives to the model of thinking/living we have. Having said that, even though I come from Brazil, I must acknowledge that I come from an Eurocentric and Western cultural context. Plus, I am writing from Europe. Trying to break away from certain cultural undertakings is not an easy task. Such endeavour is carried out nowadays throughout academics from liberal arts, making Dietrich no exception. So, what are the implications of these cultural barriers for myself and for Dietrich? Both of us were educated/disciplined by the interpretation of all histories and cultures from an European (and modern/colonial) perspective. Having clarified that, more specifically on our concrete context, we both find ourselves in academia and, in terms of it, the overall contemporary academic and philosophic debate leads us to pass by the debate on “the Modern and Post-modern” in order to transcend it.

In his book "Interpretations of Peace in History and Culture (2012)", Dietrich analyses Modernity as a mindset spread out in the world via colonization and a persistent way to interpret things.⁹ The main argument of Dietrich is that Modernity is not so much a well defined epoch in time but rather a way to produce meaning to the world around us that could happen in any given time, given certain premises. Dietrich argues that the meanings this modern mindset comes to ascribe to the world (and consequentially to nature and the environment), can be best represented by and due to (but not exclusively) the works of Galileo Galilei, René Descartes and Isaac Newton, especially with the formation of Science. As this paper dwells on responses to the environment and sustainability, the work of Charles Darwin can be very well represented under this modern interpretation too.

The formation of modern Science, as proposed by Galilei, was a mathematical project concerned with matter and its quantifiable and objective properties, leaving everything related to subjectiveness behind. Isaac Newton's work founded an atomistic interpretation of the world in which the Universe would be made up of building blocks of substance, which then entered into relations defined by natural laws and determined by cause and effect (reactions). The consequence of this was that prediction could be made upon an accurate analysis of this linear chain of events. Galileo's and Newton's views fed each other and found in René Descartes much support when he advocated and deemed possible a rational/objective analysis of the universe, which for him functioned as a clockwork.

Parallel to this, Darwin's evolutionism came to an undisputed position in the natural sciences field. According to Darwin, all life would be a matter of survival of the fittest because of Natural Selection – the concept in which all beings evolve from the weakest to the strongest for their need to survive in an aggressive environment. This would be a bodily reaction to the aggressive environment that called for the best adaptation. Darwinism left no room for cooperation or solidarity among species as a ways to maintain their existence, or ethics, for that matter, only for struggle, aggressiveness.

These are some of the most important undertakings for the modern mindset. A modern mindset is characterized by a mechanistic (cause-effect, reactive) interpretation of events in the Universe, which is not only held as an absolute truth but can also be predicted, analysed, understood, reinforced and improved via Science. Modernity can be perceived then as the attempt for men to attain the universal laws via rationality and build from that. This mindset also made possible all those scientific advancements and the creation of industrial machinery which, culminating in the Industrial Revolution, sew the seed of progress, but also the seed of what nowadays brings us near the brink of environmental catastrophe. The hegemonic place of this scientific, objective mindset (especially coming from Descartes) also subjugates any other form of understanding the world – ecological or spiritual matters in particular. This mindset, that nowadays conforms a large part of the world and works as cultural delimitation,

9 Modern interpretations of peace are one of the 5 images or interpretations of peace proposed by Dietrich. The other images are: energetic, moral, postmodern and transrational peaces.

was enlarged/globalized via colonization, the process which spreaded of these modern/European beliefs.

Yet, in the very cradle of these values came the reaction to this absolute project. Out of the incredulity towards modernity's promises/premises of capacity to control the functioning of the world arose a skepticism that, without having an equally powerful counterproposal, tries to celebrate the multiplicity of ways to address existence and tries to safeguard them from universalizing and homogenizing modern trends. This makes Dietrich understand postmodernity as an intent to disempower the spread of Modern European values/mindset (that which Lyotard would refer to as "grand narrative") and at the same time an intent to open space to diverse sets of practices and beliefs that are never a final solution and remain open to review. This opens room for dialogue and curiosity towards otherness and also makes room for marginalized perspectives to manifest. The relation between postmodernism and decolonialism is clear.

Postmodern thought started paying attention not to the overarching modern system, which on its political side manifested in the Nation-State and the institutionalization of practices, but how life flourished underneath it. The well-written and polished discourses and international agreements, made by governments and high instances of this system in order to try to safeguard nature, were transformed into laws that made punishable those who did not follow them. But, what about those embodiments/practices that were actually harmonious with the environment without the need to be shaped into laws (beyond these sterile/aseptical and harsh approaches)? Instead of homogenizing groups of people into political citizens, postmodern thought tries to learn from plurality. It is in this sense that marginalized and alternative perspectives, which are sustainable and harmonious to nature, come into play. From this point on, it will become helpful to delineate what Dietrich calls the energetic and the transrational in order to give meaning and learn from alternatives coming from an energetic/transrational perspective.

Transcendence

Dietrich realized that the modern/cartesian mindset is based on an approach that ignores intersubjectivity, dichotomizing and prioritizing reason from body, feelings and emotions (ignoring an every other part of human the human experience except reason). To make matters worse, this view also imposes itself as absolute truth via science. So how did Europe start suppressing its energetic/contextual answers and sought instead for a grand truth? Dietrich searched for possible answers for how Europe first disconnected the mind from feelings and emotions. The Middle Ages were marked by the power and moral teachings of the Church that condemned any mundane feelings¹⁰. So it could not have been this moment. It had to come before that. He dived deep in European history and, hinted by Nietzsche's book *The Birth of Tragedy in the Spirit of Music*, found in Greek mythology energetic interpretations of the world and of life.

In *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* (NIETZSCHE, 2000) Dietrich found strong evidence of Nietzsche's rediscovery of energetic interpretations and Nietzsche's combat to his contemporary mentality. In the above-mentioned book, Nietzsche tried to understand how Greek tragedy came to influence culture not only in the period he lived but throughout history and towards the future. This is why the book also has the subtitle of *Hellenism and pessimism*. Nietzsche's discovery relied on the perception that, in Greek tragedy, the choir was so significant that it was in fact their dithyramb that had *the* main, generative role in the tragedy.

¹⁰ Ascetism took place as a phobic behavior to what was human, aiming at reproducing on Earth the image of heaven and God.

For Nietzsche, the choir and the dithyrambs produced, with their rhythms and *crescendos*, a powerful and strong force that was explored by the human/hero in question. The human/hero, who dealt with/manipulated/pondered upon this energy, was regarded as the manifestation of Apollon, giving form, aesthetic to the energy. Meanwhile, the chorus was regarded, in contrast, as the generative, fertile life impetus of Dionysian energy. This process could only be understood in relation to one another, only as an apparent contradiction that gave form to a whole (KOPPENSTEINER, 2009) – the relation of these elements reinforce their balance.

But once Christianity juxtaposed Apollon with Christ and Dionysus with Satan this created a cradle for the Christian phobic behaviour towards energetic interpretations throughout the Middle Ages and, later on in modernity, for the dismissal of everything non-rational/un-scientific. This is the root of Descartes *Cogito ergo sum* and the inherent exclusion of, for instance, *Sentio ergo sum*, the repression of the energetic nature of society, leading to a limited, harsh perception of life in general.

Such energetic interpretation of Greek mythology, however, can also be found in many other ancient cultures in different forms (and this already allows us to build bridges between cultures). In fact, Dietrich analyses that it is significantly present in variations of Taoism and Tantrism. The general aspect present in energetic interpretations is the sublation of human life and experience as central in the universe. Existence is relational and what we experience is part of a greater and complex whole which is interconnected, as energy only perpasses us. Trying to control/suppress our energy was brought up to modern belief mostly via Plato's legacy: the introduction of truth, prioritizing Apollon and the Christian demonization of Dyonisus – producing white man's disease or neurosis.

Dietrich considers that such a deconstruction of European mainstream thought since Greece and the recovery of what it left behind points us to to a realm where reason alone cannot be upheld, as there is no such true/rational way to grasp the cosmos – transcending modernity. This is the realm of the transrational. The transrational departs from postmodern critique and deconstruction of modernity, but understands its limitation as mere reaction to this hard modern way to interpret the world and henceforth reincorporates that which had been suppressed for more than 2000 years, being aware of the contextual relationality and not falling in the modern trap of becoming a *nouveau absolu*. Dietrich points that some of the areas of knowledge that transgressed the boundaries of modern science towards the transrational are System's Theory, Quantum Physics and Transpersonal Psychology. For brevity's sake, in this paper I shall briefly expose only his approach to Transpersonal Psychology.

Gustav Jung is considered the precursor of Transpersonal Psychology. However, understanding his approach requires us to review his relation with Freudian psychology, also for contextual reasons. It is possible to understand this relation and dissidence via Nietzsche's previously mentioned book. In Freud's approach, a direct relation can be made between Dyonisus and id, just like Apollon would relate to the ego. But for Freud those would be separate categories. Jung's argument was that the Freudian ego was in fact a mere consciousness, which is embedded in the collective unconscious (STEVENS, 2001). Just like in Nietzsche the hero and Apollon relate to the energetic Dyonisian principle, for Jung, this consciousness/individuation of the self would necessarily relate to a whole that transcends the self.

It was in this Jungian line of thought that the psychology of Abraham Maslow and Stanislav Grof could posit that a transpersonal experience is one that goes beyond one's biographical boundaries and transcend space and time. Transpersonal psychology poses then that every existence is interconnected and that Psyche cannot be separated from *Mitwelt*, even though people have sovereignty to re-design their path/fate. (DIETRICH,2012 p,250-251).

This is how transrationality goes ‘beyond the limits of [ego-] persona into its oscillation with its environment, the physiosphere, biosphere [and] noosphere (DIETRICH, 2012 p. 258).

Finally, the relational aspect of a transpersonal understanding rests then between the individual and his/her *Mitwelt*, gaining awareness that one is never self-sufficient and autonomous like Modernity deems. Fritjof Capra, for instance, calls for an urgent integration of Cartesian (modern) thinking into a broader ecological and transpersonal perspective for an affirmative mode of living in which the human action would be harmoniously embedded in the transcendental dimension of existence.¹¹

With such approaches, the derivative relations between humans, environment and sustainability already become easily graspable. After these insights, it becomes possible and interesting to produce an ethnography that tries to understand and analyse how some marginalized perspectives have either recovered or conserved understandings that embody energetic and transrational interpretations, making the bridge between an assumed insurmountable cultural barrier.

The Transrational Approach and Ecological Perspectives

When it comes to the way we perceive the environment and deal with sustainability in an ethical manner, how does the transrational interpretations of peace perceive these cultures/approaches? Which kind of actions does it invite us to adopt and which change does it entail in relation to the environment? How is it infused above all with ethics and aesthetics?

Both Deep ecology’s and Buen Vivir’s ecocentric value claims that humans are part of one huge system and that we do not have any special or particular privilege over any other form of life. Such biocentric egalitarianism resonates in those energetic interpretation of peace reclaimed by transrationality when it calls for integrating that which is beyond the illusion of an autonomous self. The interconnection in the circle of life can be reinterpreted as the flow of energy through everything - a natural process and what leads to peace and harmony. When institutions pose themselves between men and nature to organize the way men relate to other living beings, or when the *Mitwelt* simply becomes resources and humans become the privileged, superior being in a scale, this impedes our connection of to other beings because in this newly acquired logic they are objectified and inferiorized.

Mark Hathaway and Leonardo Boff, in their book *The Tao of Liberation* (2009), make some contentions about deep ecology and ecofeminism that resonate very well in Dietrich’s transrational approach. If deep ecology proposes an underlying connectivity of all things, be it in a physical, spiritual or psychic level in a great web of life, then “what is around us, is also within us” (HATHAWAY & BOFF, 2009, p.64). The universe is considered a great interdependent whole in which there is no distinction between humans and nature. As these authors put it, this revolutionizes consciousness and the perception of self, as we perceive something greater than ego, than the mere human as an individual, allowing biocentric equality to manifest subsequently and the appearance of ecopsychology. This is strongly present in Bateson’s systemic approach, which is one gate to transrationality, as the relational self connects with the ecological psyche (BATESON, 2002 and 1985). Such a fundamental element present in Deep Ecology and the Buen Vivir, seen from the lenses of transrationality, allows us to pose a sustainable relation to nature for the reconnaissance that we are nature therefore if we affect us, we ultimately affect ourselves. Human beings still take from the Earth what is necessary for his survival, but acknowledging that nature is entitled to respect and part of ourselves, our actions are guided by care and love – an ethics that arises from the

11 Indeed Fritjof Capra is key for understanding transrationality via quantum physics. Parallel and complementary to this, such discussion find support also in the systemic approach of Gregory Bateson (DIETRICH, p.243).

heart or the realization that we are in the end caring for our expanded selves. This is not dissimilar to the peasantry style claimed by Maria Mies in *The Subsistence Perspective* (1999), where she explains that it is never a matter of using nature to accumulate capital and cash-farming, because we feel and we understand that we belong to/in nature and also suffer if nature does, because we learn to love and live in communion with it.

Now ecofeminism ultimately leads to similar insights when it connects the patriarchy of the modern traditions of thought with its anthropocentric accusation, denouncing it as an andro-anthropocentric aggressive culture. Ecofeminism claims that both the masculine and the feminine are socially constructed and that those social constructions assign a role to each of them. The fact that those stereotypes are so ingrained in our mind by centuries of repetition does not allow us to assume they are natural. From the subjugation of women to the household affairs (the *oikos*), from the connection of the feminine elements of nurturing and care to nature (which are also present in men, in fact in every human being, no matter its sex/gender), comes the will to organize life in other principles which do not intend to look at nature and others in a dominant manner. In this sense, *oikonomia* no longer refers to economy as we understand it in modernity, even though the origins of "economics" came from "oikonomia". The *oikonomia*, or the household approach, imbued and marked with the feminine supportiveness and lovingness, provides a different way to relate to the world which can be sustainable and respectful and once again leads to subsistence and the possibility to connect with everything else. In this sense ecofeminism reinforces the claims of deep ecology and the practices of the *Buen Vivir* and the derivative ethics. From a transrational lens, ecofeminism could be perceived as a contemporary manifestation of those beliefs that celebrate nature and fertility – tending to an energetic interpretation of life and the cosmos.

When it comes to *Buen Vivir*, some Latin American intellectuals like Arturo Escobar regard it as an original form of thinking and living, which is different from what is deemed modern/colonial. The *Buen Vivir* is the expression of modes of living which once again stress a harmonious relation to nature and to our environment, in which the Earth is a “closely woven community of living beings” (HATHAWAY & BOFF, 2009, p.132) nurtured by the Pachamama. From this derives a praxis, which Hathaway and Boff would refer to as biorregionalist, wherein to live well means that the whole environment is in consonance with this wellness. I cannot be well if my surrounding, my community is not, so it highlights the importance of understanding the local and the wider ecosystem and the importance of diversity as to promote the symbiosis necessary to the stability of life. In the *Buen Vivir* one finds the transrational perspectives of ecology, spirituality and system all in an overlapping and interconnected manner. This comprises a holistic phenomena that encompasses both the microcosm of human relations and its relations to the macrocosm, which are inseparable.

Roughly speaking, transrational peace, as a combination of the twisted modern aspect of reason and rationality with the respect for diversity brought in by postmodernity, adds to that the millenia-old energetic interpretation. This can manifest via transpersonal, systemic, ecological or spiritual perspectives. The explanation for the use of the prefix *trans-* is that transrationality passes by rationality but understands that it is not an absolute and/or final, framing it. The consequences of it lead to abandon the rational modern metanarrative and open up for diversity, especially for those critiques that regain/reclaim the energetic aspect of peace. In this sense comes not only deep ecology but any other perspective that allows us to reconnect ourselves and experience peace. The energetic makes possible for humans to experience peace in the here and now instead of projecting it into a future where everybody would enjoy the same uniform lifestyle of a consumption society, which is neither sustainable nor feasible. This is the ultimate contribution that peace studies can make in terms of addressing the issue of an environmental crisis and generalized global crisis of modern values.

The transrational interpretation of peaces, perceiving an underlying unity of all existence, integrates human beings into nature and cosmos. From the understanding that everything relates to and affects everything, peace could be perceived as harmony. In this logic, human action should derive from a serenity that seeks to disturb universal harmony as little as possible, what for instance Taoists would call *wu wei*. This changes the steward-like approach to nature which represents the direct intent of humans to control the outcomes of their actions to integrate themselves with nature for it to flourish on its own, respectfully. Sublating the dichotomy between humans and nature towards the understanding of this unity allows for a whole new set of practices to become manifest. This gives meaning and possibility for Deep Ecology's biocentric equality and ultimately an ethics to the environment. The perception of the world as our house and part of us also validates Ecofeminist practices when they pose an ethics of care to nature, without hierachization. Lastly, it is consonant with the Andean native cosmology of the Sumak Kawsay, which perceives a brotherhood between humans and non-humans, all part of the pachamama or mother-earth.

It is true that the transrational approach of Dietrich could be "self sufficient" for the transformation of one self and his relation to the environment. Yet, it is my belief that it will get incredibly richer when confronted by the perspectives previously mentioned in this article, as a way to diversify our understandings of life and the world. If transrational peaces advocate a plurality of peaces, it also opens up for dialogue amongst them, leading always to new insights. It also presents a way out of postmodern nihilism, as it once again celebrates life with the unification of Dyonisus and Apollon, as reason is counter-balanced with feelings and life. Transrationality leads to consistent changes in our behaviour by the adoption of a different rationality if compared to the modern one, integrating that which is beyond reason, and ultimately leading to an ethics that is not a pre-given set of moral rules but which is connected to the appreciation of something bigger than one's self, introducing aesthetics as the appreciation of the senses and not only of reason.

Conclusion

In a context of multiple crisis, be it in terms of beliefs, economics, or the environment, the scientific system in which we were disciplined to think and act (in a fragmented manner) produces experts in certain areas but who seem unable to think holistically (or systemically, if you prefer). This myopia does not allow for taking uncolonized alternatives into consideration, and so far it did not seem to produce any encompassing answers for the ethical relation of/with the environment without compromising human freedom and its capacity to generate empathy. Yet changing directions and avoiding an environmental catastrophe have become urgent tasks.

The answer I offer to this question is by critically looking at how the modern/Western/colonial way of organizing and giving meaning to life, which base its actions on rationality and scientificity, have tried to deal with the environment: With an ever increasing impact and without respect to it. Along with that, I also cast a gaze upon how marginalized perspectives have managed to deal with it. In this sense, referring to the transrational interpretations of peaces (which signify different ways to engage with wisdom and nature), combining it with an open curiosity and respect towards marginalized perspectives prove to be of extreme help when it comes to a transformation of human relations with the environment. To see things holisticaly (or transrationally) implies seeing the developments of one's actions and beliefs and how it affects several layers and levels beyond and within this self, not just politically but systemically, ecologically and spiritually.

Looking through this transrational lenses, ethical stances refer to broader perspectives that are part of human existence, because if one deals with the ethical treat of nature but ignores the imbalance it generates towards the unethical relations between men and their freedom, it

becomes clear that the problem/conflict soon will re-manifest itself in a different form. A new embodiment of ethics which is not imposed could be achieved via an integration of human capacities that go beyond rationality, providing a reconnection with others and with the environment via sensibility and aesthetics. This seems to be effective in many marginalized perspectives which the Western world have not been able to understand, due to the particular development of its history, tied to modern thinking. But now is the time that we set ourselves free from these burdens and enlarge our human possibilities to reconnect with nature and avoid environmental disasters. This is key for a life in harmony.

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