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IN RELATION TO ECOLOGICAL PHILOSOPHY AND OTHER CRUCIAL ISSUES OF OUR GLOBAL ERA

## ANTILLES PARK

The Eco-organization of the Caribbean Islands

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**ABSTRACT:** Evocative of Hesiod's "Islands of the Blest," ANTILLES PARK is a therapeutic response to the colonial greed that ever since Columbus, and through the present date, sickens the planetary Man of the North as well as the victims of exclusion in the South.

The islands of the Caribbean emerge as a veritable center of a New World through a shift of paradigm, displacing the "I-conquer a prize-at-hand" totality of abject meaning in Post-Columbian Modernity, to open a *topos* of hypercomplex mental maps of a new ecological labyrinth; transmodern experiences that will recuperate natural goodness and propitiate its fulfillment in the human presence.

"If Death triumphed over the (human) species,  
Nature would say: Just what I needed for my  
ecosystem."  
--Gregory Bateson. *Mind and Nature* (1979).

Ethnocide and ecocide, racism and unequal exchange were the *fleurs du mal* the Columbian event yielded in the Caribbean and the constitutive elements of European Modernity as well. The richness arriving in Europe was, nevertheless, stained by slave blood.

And so sprouted in America, Spain, France, England, Portugal, Holland, and Denmark, by means of the enslavement of tens of millions of Africans during this first period of globalization, of which, and for the last five hundred years, its hegemony radiates out of the North Atlantic (TROUILLOT, 2003). During this period, the Columbian "I-conquer a prize-at-hand" severed Occidental consciousness to a

schizophrenically pathological level, that is, one that impedes comprehension of life's proper meaning. Occident was converted into a sick civilization, a long-suffering "bad conscience." A voracious and catastrophic development has been the consequence, at a planetary level, sublimely understood as "progress," but manifestly a chronic addiction to economic growth and exponential population explosion, so lethal and excessive as to typify *homo sapiens* among the species in danger of extinction.

Rousseau's Social Contract made us come out of the natural state to model society; but this left mankind rooted solely to its own history "relinquishing the world aside, an enormous collection of things reduced to the statute of passive objects to be appropriated" (SERRES, [1990] 2003), human subjects enjoying all rights, objects of none, which arranged for their destruction.

World unbalance is a reflex, perhaps, a product of planetary man's mental disorder, who is therefore compelled to return to his origins to learn anew how to be in accord with a higher layer of lucidity and other logical referents. We must now relinquish Modernity and embrace the new ecological paradigm that may allow us to redefine man and nature; and to redefine the man-nature relationship (*poiesis* or production), and man-man relations (ethics).

Contrary to Modernity, ecology is inclusive, for each individual is a vital element within the system. Thus, farewell to representative democracy, for it blocks citizens' participation and impedes the development of distributive economy and genuine social justice.

The Caribbean islands conform to the Atlantic's most important insular ecosystem, and its good-natured magic beauty has made it recognizable as one of the most desirable touristic destinations on the world market. Its high economic productivity, nevertheless, enlarges the coffers of corporations that greedily exploit the natural resources of public domain that nourish this market—the beaches.

The Dominican Republic and Republic of Haiti integrate the island of Hispaniola, which up until Columbus's arrival was the archipelago's motherland. Five hundred years

later, more than 80% of its original flora and fauna had disappeared; similar to the rest of the islands, for they also suffered the consequences of the colonial plantation system—deforestation first, then exploitation by means of forced labor, and finally abandoned with no consideration for the environmental degradation caused.

To talk today about restitution of historic injustices in the Caribbean Islands is senseless, at least in as much as the ethnocide is concerned, for the damage has no remedy. But ecocide, racism, and unequal exchange remain patent as idiosyncratic factors and are singled out, therefore, to be unlearned in founding the new paradigm.

This sea of islands that make up the Caribbean, crucible of histories that up to this day remain scattered due to the most advanced versions of sedative consumerism in the neocolonial system, need to come together by means of a new thread of Ariadne that allows them to reach into the core of historical sickness and neutralize its effects, clearing the way toward the outlet of Modernity's labyrinth. The cohesion of the islands will never result through a mere political strategy agreed upon by the governments of the island-states to constitute a confederation, for it would then remain at the mercy of the same logic of domination of the world-system. Neither can it limit itself to an economic integration that simply translates into a publicity pact to augment a participatory share in the tourism world market, for then it would follow the same rules of major possible profit that currently exist.

What needs to happen, instead, is to promote the opening of a *topos* for the support of an ecological revolution, one that emanates from the insular world of the Caribbean and that projects universal value. Thus our concrete proposal consists of the creation of the **ANTILLES PARK**, the very first global destination for eco-therapeutic tourism, a destination that is an apprenticeship for a distinctly different kind of living, one that reconciles human beings and other beings, and that reconciles human beings with nature, overcoming subject-object, Heaven-Earth, and man-woman, among other dualisms, the same dualisms that have fragmented, isolated, divided, and sickened Consciousness.<sup>(1)</sup>

The feasibility principle for the **ANTILLES PARK** is sustained by a bioregional integrating logic, the creative force for a proper whole-world narrative that specifies the set of permitted strategies and the set of preferences among results in order to achieve Nash equilibrium as per Game Theory, through international treaties.

Although not all Caribbean islands are island-states, the process of their decolonization during the last century shows balance to be a minimal remnant. The political condition of these islands is no obstacle for the eco-systemic organization of **ANTILLES PARK**. Organization implies, instead of politics, the involvement of the state ostensive of said islands (the Virgins, the Frenchs, the Netherlanders, the Venezuelians, Colombians, etc.).

Eco-organization as a model of future governance brings to the agenda the contribution of each agent--the administrative tutorship of public good in the Caribbean Islands, a government teaching co-administration by a net of 1492 institutional partners originating from transnational civil society, whose "know-how," human capital, and resources make each of them viable for the structure of the organization and, therefore, vital to the operation of **ANTILLES PARK**.

Understood as a foundational happening, creating **ANTILLES PARK** supposes a domicile, a capital city, which, in our proposal, is to be located in the MACASIA VALLEY, which is appropriately located at the only point where the Dominican-Haitian borderline is interrupted, dragged along by the confluence of the Artibonito River, which gathers together the waters of the Central mountain range, and the Macasia River, which gathers together the waters of the Neyba Sierra mountains. These waters from Dominican territory flow into the *Lac du Peligre* in Haitian territory, to irrigate and fertilize the *Département du Nord*. The MACASIA VALLEY is neither historically nor politically important; therefore, it is an appropriate for new beginnings, a place to found a startling new concept, a co-cybernetic bi-national city that, in and of itself, is an essay of universal subsidy and would once and for all resolve the migratory problem that exists between both countries, affecting more than two million persons.

Such context, alongside the reintegration of Cuba into the Caribbean community, would justify the opening of a United Nations University campus in MACASIA, to act as the “brain” of **ANTILLES PARK**, interweaving a net of universities that, together with the 1492 institutional partners, operate in accordance with the United Nations Volunteer System to erect a model city with point technology. It will be a universal bulwark to overcome the eco-crisis, and its first challenge will be to convert the *Lac du Peligre* into an aquaculture center with such a wing-span that its productivity not only provides nutriments to both nations, but to the entire archipelago, and will even to mitigate famines in Africa and elsewhere around the world.

**ANTILLES PARK** is conceived in accordance with Lyotard’s formula as an “*oikos* of thought,” a refuge “not subject to the systemic control of destructive orders.”<sup>(2)</sup> Carefully planned and created for its universal role, **ANTILLES PARK** emerges as the principal entry of a universal subsidy, a total or partial co-donation of the island-states’ public debt, to be reinvested in nature through an ANTILLES FUND, mending in whatever ways it may be possible both the ancient and modern ecocides.

The concept “ecology of mind” was coined by the British ethnographer Gregory Bateson as the “science of interrelations between ideas, and the relation between ideas and habitats, showing how dynamic interactions of ideas shape up and give meaning to the world.”<sup>(3)</sup> Ecology is not understood, first of all, as “defense of nature.” Rather, Bateson emphasizes the interrelation of organisms and environments as a system of exchange and feedback, pointing in direction of self-corrective homeostasis.

This eco-logic, in terms of structures and systems, is concerned with perpetual change and dynamic equilibrium of systems, which translates into a future promise of an infinite “becoming,” where each configuration is only the temporary order originating in the disorder of a chaotic cosmos—this calls for both hope and precaution.

The **ANTILLES PARK** propitiates the invention of what Felix Guattari denominates as new “existential territories” by means of etico-political articulation among the three ecological registries: environment, social relations, and human

subjectivity. These are the constituents of a radical ecology platform that this author calls ecosophy.<sup>(4)</sup>

The Federico C. Álvarez Foundation, sponsor of our proposal, has provided 200 acres (850,000m<sup>2</sup>) of land next to a national park, on a virgin beach in Samaná, Dominican Republic, which is more than adequate for the construction of a prototype of new generation resorts.

The concept design of this prototype, denominated ECOGENESIS, translates its construction as a “Brands Fair” of all the elements needed to develop an infrastructure where each manufacturer (enlisted in the 1492 roster) exhibits its point technology product, and the same for services. This “**ecoplayground**” offers a new product to the world market: **eco-game** and operates as a research and development center for the genetics of joy.

Samaná, in the words of Antillean patrician Ramón Emeterio BETANCES, is “**the most beautiful place in the world.**” Puerto del Valle, where the prototype is proposed to be built, was baptized by Columbus on January 12, 1493, as “Sacred Port.” It was there where the aboriginal **ciguayos** had their main settlement. A few of them were taken by Columbus on returning to Spain after his first voyage; some of them returned to Samaná on the second voyage, loaded with news. It was at that moment when the encounter of the two cultures was consummated.

Five centuries have gone by since the Columbian event in which the following practices took root: ethnocide, ecocide, racism, and unequal exchange. This paper actualizes those initial moments. Or at least it brings us closer to the origins—in the sense that Salvador Paniker could learn from Edgar Morin—critically since Marx, and RETROPROGRESSIVELY now, wherein we float counter-historically in the turmoil and descry, albeit at a distance, the place and time when we should flourish.

The Caribbean islands embody 1492: a combination of human meanness and glory, conspiring together. It happened on Christmas of 1492 with the shipwreck of the *Santa Maria*, forcing Columbus to leave behind his men and to board another’s ship.

That terrible night, Columbus discovered, by means of the warm reception and solidarity of the natives, and that of *Cacique* Guacanagarix in particular, the natural goodness of the aborigines. Columbus coveted that goodness. He would allow no one to be Taíno, meaning “good men”; he obliged everyone to be Indians—as a guarantee of the successful accomplishment of his trip to the Indies.

Therein the false-reality was sealed that would issue the death certificate of the aboriginal world, but also the birth certificate of Caribbean destiny. Overwhelmed by his own disgrace, the Admiral did not notice, in the sparkling eyes of the aborigines, the reflex of a pristine and divine empathy taking place as phenomenon in their playful coming and going and in their joyful and loving care. Their selfless love, their agape, went unnoticed because of the Admiral’s bitterness.

Just as Columbus would later have the opportunity in Panama to discover the Pacific Ocean, but refused to do it, he also lost the opportunity to experience the agape being offered to him. Columbus’s flagship was wrecked upon a reef that Christmas, but the real loss was the paradigm of eco-joy that could have been.

The ANTILLES PARK proposes—summons you—to the launching of the gene of joy, to be disseminated through the world market of tourism, and that of the clinic as “eco-therapeutic product” served in futuristic eco-playgrounds on the beaches of the blest. Such adaptation guarantees the sustainability of this anthropological jump that implies a major paradigm shift.

On July 20, 2015, Cuba and the United States will open their respective embassies. Obama tells Fidel: “We want the final verdict to ‘History will absolve me’.” And we say: “We want the verdict to our founding fathers: Luperón and Betances, Toussaint L’Overture, Máximo Gómez and Martí; Hostos and Henriquez Ureña, and that of all Antillean martyrs as well.” We want the Justice of Time told by Heraclitus that enables us to play a different and hyper-complex game from a standpoint of a more elevated and concrete lucidity.... We want an Antilles Park that is motherland of justice!

## NOTES

(1) "Modern Western humanity, as a result, is essentially schizophrenic". Zimmerman, Michael E. Quantum Theory, Intrinsic Value, and Panentheism. In: Oelschlaeger, Max (ed.) *Postmodern Environmental Ethics*. SUNY. 1995, p.291.

(2) Lyotard, J.F. "Oikos" en: *Political Writings*. Bill Readings y Kevin Paul Geiman (eds.) University of Minnesota Press. 1993. Cited by Conley, Verena Andermatt. *Ecopolitics. The Environment in Poststructuralist Thought*. Routledge. 1997, p.5).

(3) Bateson, Gregory. *Mind and Nature. A Necessary Unity*. E. P. Dutton. 1979.

(4) Guattari, Félix. *Las tres ecologías*. Pre-Textos. 1996, p.8.

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El Valle Port (Photo: Alvarez Foundation)



El Valle Beach (Photo: Alvarez Foundation)