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**South Florida as Matrix for
Developing a Planetary Ethic:
A Call for Ethical Per/Versions
and Environmental Hospice**

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But per/version is just the name for another interpretation, more rooted in reality than these representations and parodies of people's lives.
(Althaus-Reid 2000)

Narratives of progress, decline, and recovery have been popular from within environmental ethical systems that are based upon conservation, preservation, and restoration (Merchant 2003).

These narratives, however, assume to a certain extent that humans, culture, and technology are not part of the rest of the natural world and that these anthropogenic

constructs are alone what need to be addressed ethically. The Copernican, Darwinian, and Einsteinian revolutions began challenging the special place for humans vis-à-vis the rest of life. Indeed, the concepts of preservation, conservation, and restoration were developed to address the lacunae in ethical thinking about the non-human world. However, as mentioned, these tropes still posited a separation between humans and nature. Now this separation is not the central issue. Global climate change alters everything. From where we now stand there is not a discernible difference between humans and other animals, natural and anthropogenic, culture and nature. This shift means that we also need a new way for thinking about ethics. In this article, I will argue for a planetary ethic as a per/version of environmental ethics. Such an ethic will be needed to address the yet

unknown changes in eco-social systems that will occur as a result of climate change.

As Marcella Althaus-Reid suggests in the epigraph, perversion is really just another version. Our moment-by-moment existence emerges out of biological and historical contexts but always provides possibilities for something new to come about in the mix. Rather than being bound by a fixed reality projected as natural laws, God-given, or “just the way things are,” as meaning-making creatures within an always evolving planetary community, we are given some wiggle room when we begin to ask the question: what ought we to do? In the context of this short article, I will ask the question: what ought we to do about global warming and its effect on the landscape of South Florida? Rather than look towards a transcendent ethic or principle that answers that question—by relying on what is Natural vs. what is Unnatural—as in the case with an ethic of conservation, preservation, or restoration, I suggest that an

answer must come from within the context of the bio-historical flows that make up South Florida. Such an ethic is what I articulate as a planetary ethic, and South Florida provides a perfect context from which to discuss the need for planetary ethics.

I need not rehearse here the evidence for global warming, a trope that I use now instead of the neutral sounding “climate change,” following the argument of Timothy Morton in his Introduction to *Hyperobjects* (Morton 2013), but rather I will begin this article by reading the bio-history of South Florida as an event. An event- or object-oriented understanding of reality takes phenomena and/or objects as a starting place and brings multi-perspectival reflection to bear on what creates those unique phenomena or objects. In this case, my phenomena will be South Florida and, even more specifically, the Everglades and Miami. The second section of this article will then look at the role of how one might interpret South Florida from these multiple

perspectives. In other words, we must take seriously the multiple versions and admit some amount of polydoxy (rather than orthodoxy) when thinking of what we ought to do about the future of Miami and the Everglades. As we shall see, Marjory Stoneman Douglas, the “Grand Dame of the Everglades,” provides a model for thinking with polydoxy rather than orthodoxy when it comes to thinking about eco-social problems together. The third and final section of this article will then begin hinting at answers to the question, “what ought we to do,” in the face of global warming in a South Floridian context. Such questions require that we admit to a certain amount of unknowing, or what might be called a viable agnosticism. In the end, this planetary ethic and response suggests that our “business as usual” approach to problems that affect our entire planet are rooted in some outdated ways of thinking that need to be per/verted to meet our contemporary realities. New versions, or other versions, of our history also mean that we will need

to mourn the death of current and older ways of becoming. Such deaths, as with human deaths, call for remembering, mourning, and imagining new possibilities for future becoming. Thus, the planetary ethic I articulate towards the end of this article will be focused on environmental hospice.¹ Again, the ability to mourn, to let go, to be open to something new emerging out of the death of “business as usual” depends upon, at least in part, favoring some amount of agnosticism about our future, rather than certainty in business as usual (on which conservation, preservation, and restoration rely). First, however, let us begin by delineating the habitat or context from which this reflection begins: the bio-historical flows that make up South Florida.

Multiperspectivalism: The Case of Miami and the Everglades

In *The Ecological Thought*, I coined the term *hyperobjects* to refer to things that are massively distributed in time and space relative to humans. A

hyperobject could be a black hole. A hyperobject could be the Lago Agrio oil field in Ecuador, or the Florida Everglades. A hyperobject could be the biosphere, or the Solar System. A hyperobject could be the sum total of all the nuclear materials on earth, or just the plutonium, or the uranium. A hyperobject could be the very long-lasting product of direct human manufacture, such as Styrofoam or plastic bags, or the sum of all the whirring machinery of capitalism. Hyperobjects, then, are 'hyper' in relation to some other entity, whether they are directly manufactured by humans or not. (Morton 2013)

The case of the phenomena of South Florida, and more specifically the Everglades, reveals just the type of multiperspectivalism one needs in a planetary (that is ecological) ethic. In other words, any phenomena are made up of

multiple organisms, flows of histories and biologies, species, chemicals, and events. Each of these nodes in the multiperspectival tapestry offer but one perspective on the ever-evolving phenomena that make up what, following Morton, we might call the "hyperobject" of the Everglades. Each story, then, provides us with some knowledge, value, and information, but none of them is from a space of removal that allows us to leap outside of our context and get a picture of the whole. An ethic of conservation, preservation, and restoration requires this managerial "bird's-eye" view that allows us to be outside of the environment and see the whole of it so that we can manage it. From a multiperspectival, and thus contextual approach, such removal or objectivity is not possible. Even if it were possible from the present context, the openness of all evolving systems means that the story would only be apropos for a present given slice of time and space. The recognition of multiple perspectives allows us to see how

our own knowledge, values, and subjectivities are influenced in relationships with all the other perspectives around us. In other words, it is through these multiple perspectives that we know our own perspective. As Gayatri Spivak notes, identity is constructed in and through difference and not in spite of it (Spivak 2003). In other words, beginning from a multiperspectival perspective means recognizing the ecology of relationships or how any given organism is formed in relationship to all other organisms with which it comes into contact. Every entity or organism then, including human ones, are formed in and through their relationships to their surroundings. Place any given organism or entity into another set of relations and it will change. Just how it will change is unpredictable as combinations of relationships always lead to unforeseen consequences. From within a multiperspectival context, we can't predict or control precisely or fully how our actions will change the future becoming of the planetary community. This is yet another

feature of "living in a time of hyperobjects" that challenges the logic of control and management found in environmental ethics of preservation, conservation, and restoration.

As eco-critic and theorist Timothy Morton suggests in the opening quote of this section, we live in a time of hyperobjects. What does this strange term mean? For Morton, with whom I agree, it means that the context of globalization and global warming means that we now realize we are parts of larger processes and entities. Through the unraveling of the narrative of mastery in the modern and industrial periods, we now begin to realize that our own human agency is not the only agency on the planet: there are chemical, biological, climatological, social, bacterial, geological, and other animal agencies all co-creating chaotic changes in planetary becoming. From our standpoint, it is as if we live in a world with four or five dimensions, but can only experience three of them (Morton 2013), which

according to some cosmologists may actually be the case (Randall 2005; Rubenstein 2008). To use another example from a popular university “common reading,” *Flatland*, it is as if we are dots on a line in a 3-dimensional world. We would only be able to experience anything crossing the line on which we live as another dot rather than, say, as sphere passing through the line on which we live (Abbott 1884). Though a metaphor, this really is the context in which we find ourselves in the 21st Century, and here I want to articulate a few of the planetary flows that make up the hyperobject of Miami and the Everglades, even though an objective bird’s-eye view of the hyperobject is impossible.

It’s hard to know where to begin to describe the bio-historical flows that make up Miami and the Everglades, since to start anywhere is to already be taken all the way back to the big bang of some 13.7 billion years ago. Perhaps, we could begin to tell the story from the more recent earth history of 4.5 billion years? Or,

maybe we start with Pangaea? The problem is that separating out where to begin is always just that, a false separation, a somewhat arbitrary starting point from which to begin telling a story. Given that most of these stories start with or lead up to *Homo sapiens*, and given that this narrative trick is at least partially responsible for the global warming we are currently experiencing, I begin here with a different organism, but one that is essential to the planetary context of South Florida: the Everglades.

The Everglades themselves represent a hyperobject formed out of multiple planetary flows. From the northern end of the river of grass that begins with the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee to the southern tip of the state ending with the mangroves, the object now known as the Everglades (a creation itself shot through with its own bio-history and tied to the history of conservation and preservation in the United States), is home to hundreds of species of plants and animals including over 300 species

of birds, the elusive and endangered Florida Panther, over 100 marsh species, orchids and other epiphytes, and an abundance of both alligators and crocodiles. This hyperobject is made up of six interconnected and distinct ecosystems including the saw-grass marshes, tropical hardwood hammock, pineland, cypress, mangrove, and Florida Bay. In a sense this unique hyperobject known as the Everglades acts like a flagellum as the mangroves work to claim land and “move” (or rather grow) the continent southward. It is also important habitat (and in some cases home) for pythons and people.

Though many consider people and pythons to be “invasive exotic” species, I argue that such nomenclature perpetuates the idea of human mastery over the rest of the natural world, and also the idea that ecosystems are somehow in stasis. In other words, humans are seen as foreign to an ecosystem, and other species that migrate or are introduced to an ecosystem and then thrive in that ecosystem

are seen as disturbing some pre-conceived equilibrium. Not only does this rhetoric match the rhetoric of “illegal aliens” in the United States (Coates 2007), it is also just not good science. Ecosystems are not in equilibrium but are, rather, open systems (like all other living systems that we know of) and are constantly changing through interactions. At the ecotonal edges of a given system, information is exchanged between two ecosystems that eventually lead to changes within each of the ecosystems. This is part of what it means to live on an evolving planet and within a planetary community. To add insult to injury, just as “illegal aliens” are brought to this country as a source of cheap labor so that “real Americans” can enjoy cheap food and other goods, so “invasive species” are often introduced by humans and then targeted for extermination (or scapegoated) by humans—as if exorcising the invasive species would bring about some sort of redemption and restore a paradisiacal equilibrium that never existed in the first

place. The history of the construction of the Everglades and South Florida is a battle between two competing narrative claims regarding such constructions.

On the one hand, we have the “drain the swamp” mentality of early white settlers (Grunwald 2007). This is the managerial idea that paradise happens through radical engineering of the land and ecosystems to make it habitable for a civilized world. Such rhetoric is the continuation of the logic of domination and colonization carried out in this country by European settlers. It is as if humans (certain humans) could create worlds “out of nothing” just as the God in whose image humans were created, created the Earth *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) (Bauman 2009). Of course claiming that “the swamp” was itself essentially nothing erases the histories of peoples, plants, and animals, erases the geological agencies at work in the creation of south Florida, and erases in fact all other agency than that of the European human.

The history of peoples in South Florida begins with Paleo-Indians over 15,000 years ago, who actually over time witnessed changes in the climate that brought about the hyperobject we now know as the Everglades. More recently were the two glades tribes of the Calusa and Tequesta, later termed “Seminoles” by Spaniards, and now recognized as the Miccosukee. This is but one people’s history in South Florida. The history of Spanish Florida especially associated with Ponce De Leon provides yet another place to begin. Indeed South Florida has multiple narratives that could begin a people’s history, and all these must be taken into account in the planetary telling of the history of peoples in south Florida. The point here is that the “drain the swamp” and engineer paradise mentality washes over all of this rich history as pre-historic or part of the barren wasteland, that is, as nothing.

On the other hand, we have the same managerial preservation and conservation mentalities of the environmentalists, which as in

other parts of the United States, also understand people as not part of (or invasive to) nature. The construction and managing of national parks often results in the removal of peoples and/or their placement upon reservations. Paradise, in this sense, is a return to nature without any human influence as if, again, humans are not part of the rest of the natural world (Spence 1999). Much of the contemporary environmental movement in the United States rests upon this line of thinking.

If both of these managerial perspectives rely upon an objective version of reality to which life can be returned to or made in the image of, then in a sense they are suggesting that there is only one (original or ideal) version of reality. To reach such an original or ideal version, it would require movement from one's present reality to a more objective space in order to experience this original/ideal perspective. This, I argue, is part of the problem with environmental ethics based upon preservation, conservation, and restoration: they

participate in the objective/colonizing mindset that argues for a single version of reality. Furthermore, they participate in the modern removal of humans and culture from the rest of the natural world. In order, then, to begin to hear multiple perspectives and to locate ourselves within multiperspectival contexts, we need to capitulate to multiple interpretations of a given context or phenomena. In other words, we need to embrace polydoxy, many per/versions, rather than orthodoxy or a single version.

Polydoxy or Multiple Stories: The Case of Marjory Stoneman Douglas

Precisely because the nature of reality in our globalized worlds is one of multiperspectivalism, we must also begin to realize that polydoxy and not orthodoxy is the key to understanding planetary histories, identities, truths, and meaning-making practices. One way we might be able to better understand such a reality is precisely by studying phenomena,

objects, and events such as Miami and the Everglades. By focusing on events, objects, and phenomena, we don't focus on a single individual or story, but rather the many tributaries that go into making up that event, object or phenomenon. Furthermore, rather than taking a disciplinary approach that reinforces the idea of strict boundaries between disciplines and thereby turf wars over a-contextual claims about one's own way of thinking, this approach is inherently polydox: there are many stories and ways one might begin to understand these phenomena. Courses such as "The City as Text" are helpful tools that foster this type of thinking.² One can bring chemical, ecological, biological, historical, social, philosophical, religious, geological, geographical, political, and other maps to the phenomena of the everglades and Miami. None of them is fully correct alone. In fact, these very maps don't make sense without reference to the others, and thus disciplinary boundaries are revealed as porous, evolving, and ecological. They

must open onto the context and contours of the phenomena, events, and objects they are analyzing. If not, they only mirror themselves and force the world into the image of their own disciplinary boundary.

From a polydox perspective, competing truth claims provide a richer texture of the contexts that we find ourselves in. In fact, the more perspectives and lenses one can hear and see through, the better. Attempts to create orthodoxy are always power-filled. Note this type of pluralism does not mean that there is no "right" or "wrong" from within a given context. As William Connolly suggests, "Pluralists are not relativists in the first instance because our image of culture encourages us to embrace certain things in this particular place, to be indifferent to some, to be wary of others, and to fight militantly against the continuation of yet others" (Connolly 2005). Rather, pluralism and polydoxy mean that what ought to be done emerges from the multiperspectival and

polydox contexts and thus that outcomes should be measured in terms of how they affect those (and other) contexts. Marjory Stoneman Douglas knew well the political and ethical efficacy of a focus on regionalism and context.

The Everglades have always offered an alternative to orthodox environmental narratives in the form of the "Grand Dame of the Everglades," Marjory Stoneman Douglas. Though Douglas is not placed on equal footing with the likes of John Muir, Rachel Carson, and Aldo Leopold, many would argue that she should be. In her approach to environmentalism, lies a per/version of environmental history in the United States that might suit our future needs much better than the narratives of conservation or preservation. In many ways, the story of Marjory Stoneman Douglas is also the story of the Everglades. She is actually older than Miami itself, and lived there most of her 108 years on the planet. Though she was not a biocentric or ecocentric type of thinker, Douglas was a proponent

of regionalism. She suggested that human thinking must adapt to the tropical environment of South Florida that she so loved. She wrote, "All we need, really, is a change from near frigid to a tropical attitude of mind" (Davis 2003). Though her regionalism was prominent, it was not a romantic version of regionalism. Earth was a home, but this home also included the urban world in relationship to other types of ecosystems. "Nature and humans were not distinct, [for Douglas], but part of one expansive, interconnected system. The urban environment, that of human species, was ecologically bound with the extra-urban environment, that of non-human species" (Davis 2003). Understanding humans and the urban ecologically, as part of nature, then, was central to Douglas's environmental ethic. Unlike other environmental thinkers of her era, she actually preferred the urban to the "wild." Furthermore, and though agnostic, her Quaker upbringing helped her to see environmental issues as

issues of social justice (Davis 2009).

As a result of these (at that time) peculiar constructions of humans and nature, urban and wild into a single ethic, Douglas often found herself on many different sides of debates surrounding the Everglades throughout her time in South Florida. She herself, then, was polydox in her interpretation about "what ought we to do" in terms of the Everglades. She was contextual rather than ideal in her accounts of human-earth, urban-wild relations. Sometimes she was in favor of interventions and at other times she was holding her ground against the likes of "Big Sugar." The point of this is that she articulated an understanding of humans in relationship with the rest of the natural world and the urban as a system in connection with the other ecosystems that make up the region of South Florida.

Douglas' understanding of humans as a part of the rest of the natural world is one example of the type of

planetary ethics that I think is necessary to address eco-social ills today. She practiced what Isabelle Stengers calls, "an ecology of practice" (Stengers 2011). Working with the philosophy of science, and more directly that of quantum physics, Stengers articulates an understanding of knowledge and value that is neither relative nor universal, but contextual. Similar to Douglas' version of regionalism, such a contextual approach is necessarily ecological: in fact, it is thinking turned ecological. Such an approach opens our knowledge onto evolving planetary communities rather than sealing us off into certain foundational and human truths. It helps us to understand how practices of various ways of thinking, being, and becoming emerge from certain contexts and return to shape those contexts: even scientific ways of knowing in this sense have an "ecology of practices" that relate the scientists to other organisms and ideas, which then create certain types of knowledge.

Karen Barad argues for this type of ecological thinking in *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, when she sides with Niels Bohr rather than Werner Heisenberg in the great debate over the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum physics. That is, it is not just that our knowledge is “uncertain” at the quantum level, implying that eventually the right knowledge will approximate the reality of the quantum world. Rather, it is that the world is at heart indeterminate: how we look at the world, set up experiments, and question reality help determine the possibilities of what we might see, record, and answer (Barad 2007). Far from being a fall into relativism, as in “anything goes” so that context does not matter, this is an acknowledgement of contextuality; even our own knowledge emerges from contexts and returns to affect those contexts. It is in this way that we are dealing with an “ecology of knowledge.” This sort of knowledge also requires an ecology of ethical responses. I’m not suggesting that Douglas was a

“post”-thinker in the ways that Stengers and Barad are. However, I am suggesting that her regionalism allowed for her to analyze which practices would lead to the best possible outcome for the ongoing relationship between Miami and the Everglades, which she saw to some degree as a single organism (or in Morton’s terms, a hyperobject).

How, then, do all of these per/versions of histories, these polydox interpretations, and these ecologies of practices help us to respond to global warming here in South Florida? Though with no attempt at final answers, I begin in the next and final section of this article to articulate a response based upon this planetary understanding of the context of South Florida.

Viable Agnosticism: A Call for an Ethic of Environmental Hospice

If part of the problem I have been articulating in this article is that extant environmental ethics of

conservation, preservation, and restoration rely on certainties that are just not possible, then part of the solution might be an ethics of unknowing (Vitek and Jackson 2008). The embrace of unknowing or uncertainty is not so unusual. In fact, many extant meaning-making practices are aware of the need for unknowing: from *neti-neti* in Hinduism, to negative traditions in Christian thought, to deconstructionism, trickster figures, and even notions of paradigm shifts in the philosophy of science. Mystical traditions of all kinds are also full of the absence of equality between our representations of the world in thought and language and the world as it is. Partly, I argue here, this is because there is no one way that the world is. To take it to a more existential level: my world is defined differently from yours and every "other's" out there. Part of realizing this is realizing the limitation of our own knowledge claims so that others may simply be. We exist within ecosystems, but these ecosystems are always evolving and changing: we have a

context (we are all on a planet, in a solar system, in this universe, we are animals, etc.), but this context is not for all times and all places. In other words, at the edges of our knowledge, even if that knowledge is the big bang cosmology of 13.7 billion years, there is mystery. What is beyond the universe is unknown: it could be a multiverse, it could be a god, it could be nothing (whatever nothing is), and it could be a turtle. We don't know. If one places a robust theism or a robust atheism at the edges of one's knowledge, this same person is effectively cutting him or herself off from the other and creating a theological or atheological feedback loop that supports his/her view of the world over and against all others. This is the "logic of domination" that has operated in religious, economic, cultural, and environmental forms of colonization for centuries (Bauman 2014). It is this type of colonization that is, in fact, I argue, destroying the world: trying to fit all perspectives into one's own (whether religious, scientific, or both) creates violence toward

the evolving objects, bodies, phenomena, and events of which we are a part. Heidegger knew this well and warned against making the world “standing reserve” for human ends/reason (Heidegger 1977). Likewise, Horkheimer and Adorno, Foucault, and many post-colonial thinkers understand well this type of conceptual narrative turned physical violence (Horkheimer and Adorno 2007; Foucault 1980). In light of this, the only viable, or livable, position in this multiperspectival, evolving planetary process is one that admits unknowing at the edges of one’s knowledge. Such a space of unknowing helps us to open onto others that make up our very own selves; it enables us to become ecological creatures. In this way, we begin to recognize our own embeddedness in hybrid and polydox meaning making practices. How might this unknowing and ecological way of understanding ourselves speak to the context of Miami and the Everglades in a time of global climate change?

When one looks at the geological and environmental history of South Florida, it is hard to miss the fact that much of South Florida is the result of human land creation: from campaigns to “drain the swamp,” to land fill that makes up much of Miami Beach, the transformation of South Florida into a habitat for so many people (and other animals) has been costly in terms of resources and technology. The amount of sand needed to maintain “the Beach” alone is costly, and as local sources pumped out from the ocean floor are exhausted, the beach is looking to foreign sources from which to import sand. This erosion is in part due to hurricanes, but largely due to the fact that many of these barrier islands are constructed and built out in the first place. Real estate mogul Carl Fisher (of Fisher Island fame) began dredging sands that would connect the various sand bars of what would become Miami Beach in 1913. Ever since that time, keeping Miami Beach above water has been an enormous task. Residents now on “the Beach” know just how much

the area floods during heavy rainstorms and high tides and how this problem is getting worse: to such an extent that politicians are now beginning to publically recognize the problem (Kaye 2013).

The “problem” is exacerbated by the fact that sea walls will do nothing to stave off rising waters in South Florida (not to mention the havoc such walls will wreak on wildlife such as nesting sea turtles). Much of the bedrock of South Florida is porous limestone that will do nothing to stop the rise of seawater even with the construction of sea walls. For these reasons and more, some claim that both the beaches and the Everglades will be essentially gone in another 100 years (Madigan 2013). Much of what we now know as the beach will be under water, and the Everglades ecosystem, which currently has the highest amount of government preservation funds in the United States (if not the world), will be inundated with salt water. The future of South Florida, it seems,

will be a per/version of its own history: more water, less people, less land mass.

Note, what I am not calling for here is an apocalyptic scenario in which we throw up our hands to the gods and admit defeat followed by retreat. Rather, what is called for here is some unknowing, deep listening to the many perspectives, and shifts away from triumphant narratives of mastery and progress that have constructed South Florida over the past century. Instead we need a per/version of South Florida’s history that gives voice to the other than human voices that have made it up. What I would argue for in the case of this transformation is a bit of environmental hospice. Such environmental hospice does not mean only endings, but new beginnings as well. Here, I want to address at least three areas of environmental hospice concern here in South Florida and suggest that rather than fund “preservation” and “conservation” projects (business as usual), we need to begin to funnel resources

toward hospice care for humans, other animals, and the landscapes of South Florida.

In terms of humans, our environmental hospice care must involve at least three steps: recognizing the collective guilt of our own implication in the process, accepting re-location and loss of place and cultural memories that go along with such relocations, and constructing memorials that help us remember our former places and the errors that led to the destruction of those places. In part, we might say, this is a per/version of the history of South Florida, which was once under water, or at least much more water-filled than it is now due to the technological innovations that make Miami a habitable place. The place, then, has undergone radical changes brought about by tectonic shifts, continental drift, and human innovation. In a sense, and from the perspective of the landscape, this is yet another change. For us humans though, our memory is embedded in these larger shifting cultures as a drop in the ocean.

Just as the last 10,000 years of recorded civilization pale in comparison, but not significance, to the 4.5 billion years of geo-evolution, so too the past of humans in the landscape of south Florida pales in comparison to the geological history of South Florida. On a scalar sense, this should not surprise us but we live life at a human scale and this must be the first mourning we come to terms with.

We are all implicated to varying degrees in the histories that have led to the contemporary problem of climate change, and we must recognize that guilt, accept it, and begin to work in constructive ways toward next steps. If we can't get over this collective guilt, we will play the blame game in terms of whose fault all of this is; all the while, the waters will reclaim South Florida and we will be eventually forced to hasty, apocalyptic remedies to immediate situations (think Hurricane Katrina). Admitting our own guilt and moving beyond to the work of reconstruction and renewal is key

to figuring out just and creative ways of moving most of the human population out of South Florida into new places. We are still in denial at this stage in the grieving game, and soon enough that will change to anger and grief. If we don't begin to address this now, we will not be able to react in any other way than that which immediate circumstances require. Our religious communities and our institutions of higher education should begin helping us to navigate these very human and very real losses. Part of the process of mitigating the sense of loss and grief will involve constructing new ways in which we can relocate and live together in more eco-social responsible ways. This work can be creative and exciting as we begin to rethink new ways of living with other planetary creatures on this common planet. Part of this process will also involve thinking about how we want to memorialize that which we will lose. As any historian, anthropologist, or archeologist well knows: messages from the past help us to remember who we are today. Grieving the

present, imagining the future, and remembering the past are the types of environmental hospice that human beings need at this juncture in our becoming.

Humans are not the only beings that will require hospice care. Even more than humans, animals and other life forms will also require our attention. In our memorializing, we ought to include the more than human world; in other words, these three components of environmental hospice are not completely separate. We will also have to determine (at some point) which species we might be able to relocate and which species will likely just die out. In the case of the former, how will we encourage the thriving of these species in different, but compatible ecosystems? How will the introduction of these species change the given locations, landscapes, etc.? In the case of the latter, we should at least make every effort to genetically catalog all of the species in the ecosystems that we are going to lose. A project

that is no stranger to the biblical story of Noah's Ark! It could be that some of these species might be reintroduced at some future date (not to mention the possible medical, energy, ecological and other planetary benefits of many of the plant species that are still yet unknown). This relocation, re-introduction, cataloging and memorializing will mean that we must prepare for many of our extant, well-known landscapes to change.

Perhaps one of the hardest facts about climate change and its certainty is that climates are going to shift and landscapes are going to change: not just as a result of the relocation of humans and other than human organisms, but due to the changes in temperature, rainfall, and other variables that will result from a changing climate. Those in South Florida and in some archipelagic and other situations can really begin to lead the way in re-imagining what our landscapes are going to look like given the rise in water and changing temperatures. We will indeed need

to mourn and memorialize the landscapes that are being lost so that future generations will not forget. However, part of this mourning process should also be a creative renewal of imagining what our co-created planetary worlds might look like. This re-imagining should include all perspectives possible: from flora, fauna and topography to urban landscapes, and agricultural, transportation, and communication technologies.

In the end, the work of environmental hospice will begin to help think humans back into the rest of the planetary community after years of trying to live as if we were exceptional. In an ironic twist, the final per/version of this process will be a re-cognition that we are emergent, evolutionary creatures and that even our technologies, tools, ideas, languages, religions, philosophies, and cultures are part of the planetary community (Deacon 2013).

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Endnotes

¹ I first came across the idea of environmental despair/hospice in a chapter by Joanna Macy entitled "Working Through Environmental Despair" (Macy 1995). More recently a conference paper by Nancy Menning rekindled my thinking about this topic (Menning 2014).

² Many Honors College curricula, for example, have a version of this type of interdisciplinary course. See eg: <http://nchchonors.org/past-annual-conferences/city-as-text/>.