Cristian Moyano-Fernández. *Rewilding and Ecological Justice: The Ethics and Politics of Wildlife Regeneration*. Routledge 2025. 204 pp. $142.50 USD (Hardcover 9781032830827); $41.24 USD (Paperback 9781032830810).

Cristian Moyano-Fernández's monograph is a timely and ambitious contribution to the growing discourse on ecological restoration. The book's central thesis—that rewilding must be understood as a matter of ecological justice—marks a significant shift from the technocratic and conservationist paradigms that have dominated environmental ethics. Moyano-Fernández draws on a rich tapestry of philosophical traditions, including the capabilities approach, distributive justice, welfare biology, and decolonial theory, to argue for a more inclusive and ethically grounded framework for wildlife regeneration. While the book is commendable for its interdisciplinary rigor and ethical sensitivity, this review offers a constructive critique from an Indigenous perspective—particularly one informed by Native American epistemologies and anti-colonial narratives. It argues that while Moyano-Fernández's justice-oriented rewilding is a step forward, it remains tethered to Western ontologies that risk perpetuating colonial dynamics under the guise of ecological restoration.

The book's "Introduction" refines rewilding as both a conservation strategy and a socio-political concept, and offers the book's central thesis: Rewilding must be evaluated through a justice-oriented lens, beyond ecological utility. Chapter 1, "Rewilding and Justice," explores the plural meanings of justice—distributive, procedural, and recognition-based—and applies them to wildlife regeneration. It advocates for a non-anthropocentric justice framework that includes nonhuman interests. Chapter 2, "Flourishing and Agency of Nonhuman Nature," applies Martha Nussbaum's capabilities approach to animals and ecosystems, arguing that justice demands enabling wild beings to flourish according to their nature. Chapter 3, "How to Prioritize Wildlife?," engages with welfare biology to assess suffering and well-being in rewilding projects. This chapter suggests ethical criteria for minimizing harm while promoting ecological integrity. Chapter 4, "The Limitations of our Responsibilities for Wildlife," discusses virtues like humility, care, and ecological responsibility. It frames rewilding as a moral practice that cultivates character and relational ethics. Chapter 5, "Recovering Wildlife with New Attitude," analyzes how rewilding intersects with Indigenous knowledge, cultural identity, and colonial histories. Chapter 6, "Identity, Food, and Wildlife," presents diverse rewilding initiatives from around the world. Chapter 7, "(De)colonial rewilding," calls for inclusive, decolonial approaches to ecological restoration. The "Conclusion" synthesizes previous chapters into a roadmap for just and inclusive rewilding practices.

I believe that the most significant contribution of the book lies on the ethical reframing of the notion of rewilding. By invoking the capabilities approach (Cf. Nussbaum 2006) and extending it to nonhuman animals, the volume challenges anthropocentric models of justice and opens space for multispecies flourishing. Its engagement with welfare biology and environmental virtue ethics further enriches this framework, offering a nuanced account of how moral concern can be extended beyond the human realm. In addition, the book's global orientation—drawing examples from

Europe, North America, and Latin America—demonstrates a commendable effort to situate rewilding within diverse socioecological contexts. Moyano-Fernández's engagement with decolonial studies, particularly his critique of Eurocentric conservation models, signals an awareness of the political stakes involved in ecological restoration. The author's philosophical dexterity, therefore, is evident throughout. His synthesis of distributive justice theories (i.e., Rawlsian and Senian models) with ecological concerns is both innovative and persuasive. The book's discussion of recognition and identity, especially in relation to species and ecosystems, adds a valuable layer to the justice discourse.

Nevertheless, despite its ethical ambitions, *Rewilding and Ecological Justice* remains grounded in Western ontological assumptions—namely, the separation of nature and culture, and the instrumentalization of land as a site for human intervention. Indigenous worldviews, such as those held by many Native American nations, do not conceive of land as a passive backdrop but as a living, sentient relative. The Lakota concept of *Mitákuye Oyás'in* ("all my relations"), for instance, exemplifies this relational ontology, where humans, animals, plants, and landscapes are kin—not stakeholders in a justice framework. By framing rewilding as a matter of justice then, Moyano-Fernández inadvertently reinforces a managerial stance toward nature, albeit a more ethical one. From an anti-colonial perspective, however, the goal is not to "rewild" but to "re-relate"—to restore reciprocal relationships with the land based on respect, ceremony, and responsibility. This aspect of relational ethic is absent from the book's otherwise comprehensive ethical analysis.

Furthermore, the book's reliance on justice as its central normative concept may obscure more culturally resonant frameworks such as responsibility, reciprocity, and stewardship. In many Indigenous traditions, justice is not a distributive principle but a relational one. For example, the Haudenosaunee Great Law of Peace emphasizes balance and harmony over rights and entitlements. The emphasis on capabilities and welfare, while progressive, risks imposing a liberal individualist framework onto ecosystems that are understood communally and spiritually. Although Moyano-Fernández engages with decolonial theory, I am afraid that his treatment of Indigenous perspectives is cursory. The book references some decolonial scholars, but it does not substantively engage with any Indigenous scholars like Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Robin Wall Kimmerer, or Kyle Whyte, whose work on Indigenous environmental ethics could have deepened the analysis. Without this engagement, the book's decolonial aspirations feel, at best, incomplete. In addition, embracing rewilding, even when ethically reframed, can reproduce colonial tropes of "pristine wilderness" and "untouched nature." These narratives have historically justified the displacement of Indigenous peoples from their lands in the name of conservation. Moyano-Fernández acknowledges this risk but does not fully reckon with its implications. A truly decolonial approach would question whether rewilding is the appropriate framework at all, or whether Indigenous land rematriation and sovereignty offer more just and effective paths to ecological regeneration. In other words, even though I appreciate Moyano-Fernández's efforts, this volume could have benefited from a deeper integration of Indigenous epistemologies and anti-colonial narratives. This would involve not just citing Indigenous thinkers but rethinking the foundational categories of the book—justice, agency, regeneration—from within Indigenous worldviews.

While the capabilities approach is valuable, it could be complemented or even supplanted by relational ethics altogether. Concepts like "kincentric ecology" (Salmon 2000) and "land-based ethics" offer alternative ways of understanding ecological justice that have deeper roots in Indigenous traditions. Also, the book could have been enriched by including case studies of Indigenous-led ecological restoration, such as the Yurok Tribe's salmon restoration efforts or the Blackfeet Nation's buffalo reintroduction, and not simply some scattered anectodical data. These examples illustrate how ecological justice can be pursued through Indigenous governance and cultural revitalization—not just ethical frameworks. Rather than prescribing a justice framework for rewilding, therefore, the book had the potential to invite dialogue between Western and Indigenous paradigms if it had incorporated the above suggestions. This would have fostered a more pluralistic and respectful approach to ecological ethics, one that acknowledges the limits of any single worldview.

Nonetheless, I do not want to obscure the merits of Cristian Moyano-Fernández's *Rewilding and Ecological Justice*. This monograph is a bold and thoughtful intervention in the field of environmental ethics. Its ethical reframing of rewilding is both necessary and overdue. However, from an Indigenous perspective, the book's justice-centered approach risks reproducing the very ontologies and power dynamics it seeks to challenge. By embracing relational ethics, Indigenous epistemologies, and land-based responsibilities, future work in this area could move beyond rewilding toward a more profound re-relating with the Earth. In the words of Robin Wall Kimmerer (2011: 258): "Restoration is not only a science, it is an act of reciprocity." Moyano-Fernández's book opens the door to this reciprocity—but it is up to us to walk through it with humility, respect, and a willingness to listen to the land and its original stewards.

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