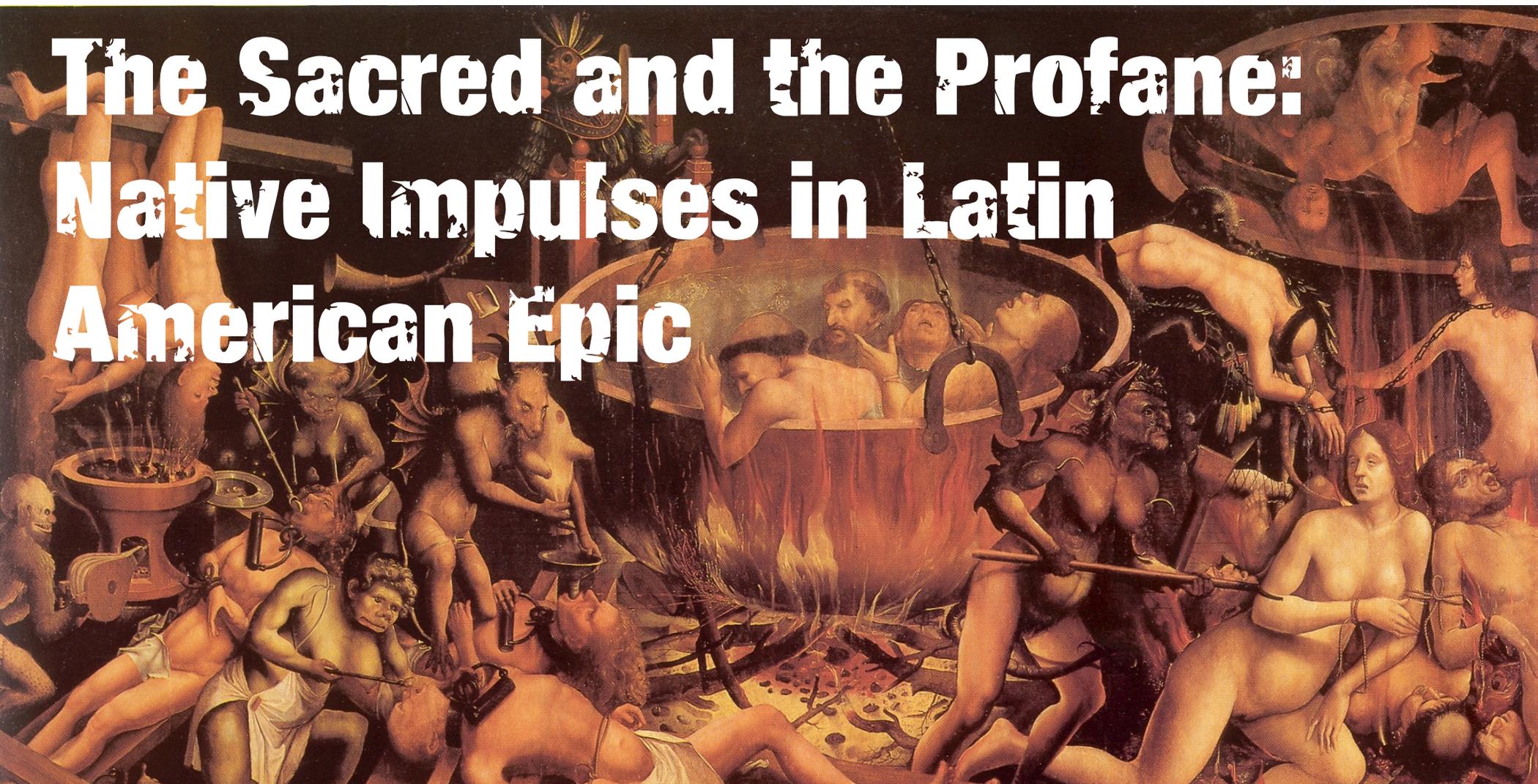


# The Sacred and the Profane: Native Impulses in Latin American Epic



a lecture by **Leopoldo M. Bernucci** professor, uc davis

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## The Sacred and The Profane: Native Impulses in Latin American Epic

This paper examines the development of the epic genre in Latin America and its three main objects of literary representation: the Indian, Nature, and the Catholic Church. It also highlights discursive strategies, whereby conventional Spanish and Portuguese epic heroes are displaced or eclipsed by native or religious icons. This radical transformation of a traditional epic model occurs under the aegis of Counter-Reformation, when the sacred and the profane compete, seeking to establish a representational hegemony within the genre.

**Leopoldo M. Bernucci** is The Russell F. and Jean H. Fiddymont Chair in Latin American Studies in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UC Davis. He earned his Ph.D. degree, specializing in Spanish language and Latin American literature, from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor in 1986. He has taught at various institutions, including Yale University, the University of Colorado-Boulder, the University of São Paulo (Brazil), and the University of Texas at Austin. He is author, co-author, and editor of numerous essays and the following scholarly books on colonial, 19th- and 20th-century Spanish American and Brazilian literature and culture: *Historia de un malentendido* (on Mario Vargas Llosa's *La guerra del fin del mundo*, 1989), *A imitação dos sentidos* (1995), *Hispanic America, Brazil, and the Caribbean: Comparative Approaches* (1998), *Os sertões* (annotated edition), *Discurso, Ciência e Controvérsia em Euclides da Cunha* (2008), and *Poesia Reunida de Euclides da Cunha* (2009). He is presently working on the novel *La vorágine* by the Colombian writer José Eustasio Rivera, and its connections with a corpus of Brazilian ethnographic and fictional texts. Prof. Bernucci is the founder and director of the Luso-Brazilian Studies section in Department of Spanish and Portuguese at UC Davis.