1290

UNIVERSIDADE Đ
COIMBRA

Maria Isabel de Sousa

From Urban Dystopia to a Better Ecology in the Americas

HARRY HARRISON’S *MAKE ROOM! MAKE ROOM!*, IGNACIO DE LOYOLA BRANDÃO’S *NÃO VERÁS PAÍS NENHUM*, AND HOMERO ARIDJIS’S *LA LEYENDA DE LOS SOLES*

Tese no âmbito do Doutoramento em Línguas Modernas: Culturas, Literaturas, Tradução - área de Culturas e Literaturas orientada pelas Professoras Doutoras Isabel Caldeira e Maria José Canelo e apresentada ao Departamento de Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra.

fevereiro de 2021

Faculdade de Letras

From Urban Dystopia to a Better Ecology in the Americas

Harry Harrison's *Make Room! Make Room!*, Ignacio de Loyola Brandão's *Não verás país nenhum*, and Homero Aridjis's *La leyenda de los soles*

Maria Isabel de Sousa

Dissertação de Doutoramento em Línguas Modernas: Culturas, Literaturas, Tradução - área de Culturas e Literaturas orientada pelas Professoras Doutoras Isabel Caldeira e Maria José Canelo apresentada ao Departamento de Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas da Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra

fevereiro de 2021

1 2 9 0

UNIVERSIDADE DE
COIMBRA

Acknowledgements

This dissertation would not have seen the light of day without the extensive comments, insightful suggestions, and meticulous revising provided by my advisors, Isabel Caldeira and Maria José Canelo. Words fail me, indeed, to show my gratitude for their patience, the guidance of my research, and the invaluable feedback on my work. Their vast knowledge and experience often demonstrated through the abundant questions posed along the revising process helped to organize my thoughts and deeply contributed to expand my vision and the scope of this study.

I am also grateful to Professor Reinaldo Silva at University of Aveiro and Professor Isabel Fernandes Alves at University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro for both believed in my potential and encouraged me over the years.

I must recognize that, without all these generous, incredible contributions and the support of my family, this study would not have been possible.

Abstract

Dystopian narratives and all literature that engage with environmental issues may have an astounding impact on the readers. By drawing their attention to undreamed-of scenarios, they open up new lines of thought and may encourage different ways of living on the Earth. In this comparative study I demonstrate that the ecological concerns which permeate Harry Harrison’s *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966), Loyola Bandão’s *Não verás país nenhum* (1981), and Homero Aridjis’s *La leyenda de los soles* (1993) may prompt more discussion on the themes they address and show the urgent need to find alternative sustainable lifestyles in the Anthropocene. Even though these novels’ represenitions of horrifying distorted scenarios may cause strong feelings of uneasiness on the readers and environmental apocalypticism stands out, they provide a unique resource to explore, reconsider, redirect, and recreate humans’ relation to the nonhuman world. I therefore want to contribute to their deeper understanding and bring to the fore these authors’ angles, since they unquestionably contribute to perceive that environmental problems are entangled with social, economic, and political issues. Grounded in the theoretical framework of ecocriticism and the environmental humanities, I illustrate that by melding literary and scientific discourses, dystopian narratives may move the readers in many more ways than science alone.

***Keywords**: Dystopian Narratives, Undreamed-of Scenarios, Harry Harrison, Loyola Brandão, Homero Aridjis, Sustainable Lifestyles, Anthropocene, Environmental Apocalypticism, Ecocriticism, Environmental Humanities.*

Resumo

As narrativas distópicas e toda a literatura que se envolve com questões ambientais podem ter um impacto surpreendente nos leitores. Ao chamar a sua atenção para cenários inimagináveis, elas abrem novas linhas de pensamento e podem incentivar a adoção de maneiras diferentes de viver na Terra. Neste estudo comparativo, demonstro que as preocupações ecológicas que permeiam *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966), de Harry Harrison*,* *Não verás país nenhum* (1981), de Loyola Bandão, e *La leyenda de los soles* (1993), de Homero Aridjis, podem gerar mais discussões sobre os temas abordados e mostrar a necessidade urgente de encontrar estilos de vida alternativos sustentáveis, no Antropoceno. Embora as representações distópicas de cenários distorcidos e horripilantes nestes romances possam causar fortes sentimentos de inquietação nos leitores, resultantes de um tom ambiental apocalíptico, elas fornecem um recurso ímpar para explorar, reconsiderar, redirecionar e recriar a relação dos seres humanos com o mundo não humano. Pretendo, assim, contribuir para uma compreensão mais profunda e trazer à tona as perspetivas destes autores, pois contribuem inquestionavelmente para perceber que os problemas ambientais estão enredados em questões sociais, económicas e políticas. Fundamentada no referencial teórico da ecocrítica e das humanidades ambientais, ilustro que, ao mesclar discursos literários e científicos, as narrativas distópicas podem sensibilizar os leitores de muitas outras maneiras além da ciência.

Palavras-chave: *Narrativas Distópicas, Cenários Inimagináveis, Harry Harrison, Loyola Brandão, Homero Aridjis, Estilos de Vida Sustentáveis, Antropoceno, Apocalipticismo Ambiental, Ecocrítica, Humanidades Ambientais.*

Table of contents

Acknowledgements I

Abstract II

Resumo III

Table of contents V

Introduction 1

Chapter 1 – Science Fiction and Ecology 6

- 1.1 A Snapshot of SF in the Americas 6
- 1.2 Ecology in the Twenty-First Century 16
- 1.3 Utopian and Dystopian Narratives 22
- 1.4 The Meaning of “Nature” 42
  - 1.4.1 Europeans’ Fascination with “Nature” and the “New World” 47
  - 1.4.2 The Myth of Nature in the Invented Americas 62
- 1.5 Colonialism, Christianity, and Capitalism 65

Chapter 2 - Ecocriticism in the Anthropocene 75

- 2.1 Ecocriticism’s Scope and Aims 75
- 2.2 The Anthropocene: Humans’ Impact on the Planet 89
- 2.3 Ecocriticism in Latin America 98
- 2.4 Urban Ecocriticism 117
- 2.5 Rethinking Environmental Apocalypticism 141
- 2.6 The Challenges of the Environmental Humanities 151

Chapter 3: The Novels: *Make Room! Make Room!, Não verás país nenhum*, and *La leyenda de los soles*......164

3.1 Historical, Social, Political, Environmental Contexts, Genre, and Narrative Style .. 164
3.2 Endangered Fauna and Flora...... 178
3.3 Global Warming and Climate Change 203
3.4 Air and Water Pollution...... 214
3.5 Overpopulation and Riots over Food and Water 225
  3.5.1 Capitalism, Overconsumption, and Consumerism...... 233

Conclusion 240

BIBLIOGRAPHY 246

Primary Sources 246

Secondary Sources......248

Introduction

First and foremost, it is important to elucidate that this dissertation started being elaborated within the American Studies PhD program, a fact that undoubtedly determined the theme's choice. As several changes in the Faculty of Humanities (FLUC) occurred, the mentioned program was integrated in the PhD program in Modern Languages: Cultures, Literatures, and Translation and thus I am presenting in this doctoral program the study I had already started.

The classes of Professors Isabel Caldeira and Maria José Canelo on American literature and American culture respectively, along with the seminars during the first two years of the PhD program sparked even more my interest in Inter-American literature, culture, and history. Indeed, it was in the late eighties – the time when environmental issues started being discussed in Portugal –, that my interest in the topic was fueled. So, while studying Herbert Bolton's endeavor to provide an overall historiography of the Americas, José Martí's rejection of European and U.S. cultural values alongside with other theorists' stances, the idea of researching and offering an environmental picture of the American continent through the interpretation of literary representations emerged. And being environmental problems one of the major concerns and challenges which humanity has to grapple with in the twenty-first century, following the track of my M.A. investigation,[1] I embraced this study to prompt more reflection on them.

---

[1] "Environmental Concerns in Melville's *Moby-Dick* and Thoreau's *Walden*" (2013).

Being aware of the U.S. history to maintain its hemispheric hegemony, my decision to address different points of view within the Americas was a way to contribute to a decentering of this hegemony and display an environmental panorama in comparative perspective. I have therefore chosen authors from different countries, narratives in different languages. Sometimes reading may seem a little awkward with the confluence of three languages, but I deliberately cite some excerpts in Portuguese and Spanish in order to give equal visibility to the groups which have been marginalized by the linguistic hegemony associated to the power of the U.S. in the Americas. All in all, I highlight these tales' potential to inspire different ecological attitudes and actions, which certainly lead to a better ecology in the Americas and on a planetary scale, a reason why they can be a "catalyst of hope" (2013, 17), to use Karliana Sakas's words.

There is increasing evidence of humans' devastating effects on the planet Earth, a reality that requires more active influence and intervention in people's relationship with the physical environment. Thus, ecological concerns have made me look at literature to see how environmental problems and their impact on human and nonhuman life are represented in literary works. Strange as it may sound, science fiction (SF) has astoundingly revealed itself to be an invaluable resource to explore, discuss, and shed more light on ecological issues. Bearing in mind that SF has its own way to think, perceive, and sense the world, to question ways of life, make thought experiments, and envision possible answers to problems faced and created by humanity, this genre helped me bring into discussion ecological thought and environmental concerns in the Americas.

The ecocritical analysis of *Make Room! Make Room!*, *La leyenda de los soles* and *Não verás país nenhum* is central to this study, nonetheless, I find that a theoretical foundation is crucial to support their reading, so the first two chapters of this dissertation serve this purpose.

Bearing in mind that the interrelation between SF and ecology is at the heart of the ecocritical reading, in chapter 1 – "Science Fiction and Ecology" –, I cast an eye on the origin and meaning of the term ecology, and elucidate that works of SF do not limit their focus to the influence of technology and science on people and society, as is the case of the novels at hand. In order to better realize the implications of the conquest and depredation of nature as well as the exploitation of natural resources, I also discuss the concept of "nature," examine its historical roots, expand on Europeans' fascination with nature in the New World, and the myth of nature in the invented Americas. Colonialism, Christianity, and capitalism are also addressed as they shaped the different cultures in which the narratives I analyze were written. On the whole, the discussion and reflection on ecology and SF aim to demonstrate that SF, more specifically dystopian narratives can be powerful means to bring environmental issues to the fore.

In chapter 2, "Ecocriticism in the Anthropocene," I outline the emergence and development of ecocriticism recalling that literary scholars had been developing ecologically informed criticism before William Rueckert's coinage of the term in 1978. I focus on ecocritics' all-encompassing role and underline that it involves more than Cheryll Glotfelty put forward, "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (1996, xviii). Ecocritics' concerns have grown due to the widespread increase of environmental problems in the

Anthropocene – an epoch I briefly address to highlight that humankind is a global geological force and human activity is largely responsible for drastic environmental changes. By bringing to the forefront the voices of Latin American writers such as Andrés Bello, Gregorio Gutiérrez, and Pablo Neruda, among others, I demonstrate that they paid attention to the nonhuman world and depicted human relationship with nature in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, that is, before the emergence of ecocriticism. These stances contribute to a better understanding of "nature" and the environmental deterioration resulting from U.S. imperialist and capitalist policies, aspects tackled by Aridjis and Loyola Brandão in their novels. Moreover, considering the setting of the futuristic megalopolises of the novels under analysis, I approach urban ecocriticism. Concomitantly discussing "environmental racism" and "slow violence," I call attention to the unequal distribution of environmental costs which aggravate socio-economic injustices. And since *Make Room! Make Room!*, *Não verás país nenhum*, and *La leyenda de los soles* unfold against a backdrop of environmental catastrophism, I reflect on whether apocalyptic texts contribute to raise the readers' ecological consciousness, or, on the contrary, make them evade environmental problems. Finally, I briefly dwell on the overarching field of the environmental humanities, their challenges and great potential to help humankind live on a threatened and vulnerable planet.

The main goal of chapter 3 – "The Novels *Make Room! Make Room!*, *Não verás país nenhum and La leyenda de los soles"* – is to offer a thorough ecocritical analysis of Harry Harrison's *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966), Ignacio de Loyola Brandão's *Não verás país nenhum* (1981), and Homero Aridjis's *La leyenda de los soles* (1993), adding also some insights about its sequel, *¿En quién piensas cuando haces el amor?* (1995). I demonstrate that the dystopian novels in this study, published between 1966 and 1995, reflect to a great extent the environmental, political, economic, social, and cultural dimensions and developments of urban life. All of them portray imagined futuristic cities fractured by environmental degradation, violence, criminality, and the inability of governments to tackle these problems; however, I am particularly interested in exploring how Harrison's, Loyola Brandão's and Aridjis's extrapolative apocalyptic texts mirror their ecological concerns pertaining to the 1960s in the U.S., the 1980s, in Brazil, and the 1990s, in Mexico, respectively, in order to contribute to a more comprehensive overview of this topic in the Americas. In other words, I will illuminate how the novels are at their core a reflection of the contexts during which they were written, while working further on those contexts by providing imaginative representations about life in futuristic megalopolises.

Yet, despite the thematic commonalities found across the novels, I must highlight that while Harrison's main focus is on overpopulation and the need for birthrate control, Loyola Brandão and Aridjis place emphasis on a wider range of environmental problems, not only because those same problems have been aggravated since the 1960s but also because they are fully aware of the surreptitious, adverse influence of U.S. power on Latin American countries. Part of their goal is to question and criticize that power.

Through these authors' literary lenses I compare, interrogate, discuss, and reflect on the different ways they problematize and render threatened representations of fauna and flora, global warming, air, and water pollution, in a future that is just a few decades ahead of the moment the texts were written. Overpopulation and how it prompts riots over food and water, urban places where most world population lives and is affected by corruption and violence will deserve the same critical attention. By criticizing the Western notion of progress and its model of development, both Loyola Brandão and Aridjis bring to the fore some of the rotten consequences of capitalism: overconsumption of resources and consumerist values imposed on a limited planet.

All in all, I will bring to light some of the most pressing environmental concerns in the Americas in the aforementioned decades and, to do so, I will extract the common and also the disparate threads that run mainly through the above mentioned narratives. By exploring the environmental problems rendered in *Make Room! Make Room!*, in *Não verás país nenhum*, and in *La leyenda de los soles* throughout different sections, I shall demonstrate that the grim warnings and scenarios provided by their authors are worth considering in face of today's ongoing depredation of the natural world and greater scarcity of natural resources.

Chapter 1 – Science Fiction and Ecology

1.1 A Snapshot of SF in the Americas

To begin with, it may seem at first sight that the clarification of the term "science fiction" would be absolutely unnecessary, yet I must underscore its importance since some doubts may spring up when trying to categorize the novels I have selected for this study, *Make Room! Make Room!*, *La leyenda de los soles,* and *Não verás país nenhum*. The *Oxford Dictionary of English* definition of SF helps right from the start to undo some embedded ideas: "[f]iction based on imagined future scientific or technological advances and major social or environmental changes, frequently portraying space or time travel and life on other planets" (2010). There should be no doubt, then, that SF also covers texts which depict social and environmental changes based on an imagined future. But while critic and novelist Adam Roberts asserts that “science fiction as a genre or division of literature distinguishes its fictional worlds to one degree or another from the world in which we actually live: a fiction of the imagination rather than observed reality, a fantastic literature” (2002, 1), academic López-Lozano notes that, one of its subgenres – dystopias –, are “negative representations of imagined future societies”[2] (2008, 17). The difference between the fictionalized world and the reader’s world is thus an essential distinctive feature of science-fictional texts and not necessarily the influence of science and technology manifested in literature, as it is commonly believed. Roberts’s definition is relevant inasmuch as it bears some resemblance with that presented by influential critic Darko Suvin in 1972, and confirmed in 2014: according to Suvin, science fiction is “a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment” (2014). Analysing the notion of “cognitive estrangement” is fundamental to fully grasp Suvin’s standpoint. On the one hand, “cognition” is the capacity to understand the imagined possibilities created, while “estrangement” relates to what is recognized as different and that distances one from the familiar and everyday experience. Suvin uses Bertolt Brecht’s concept of “Verfremdungseffekt” to further explain what estrangement means, “[a] representation which estranges is one which allows us to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar" (1972, 374). Moreover, Suvin still adds that SF texts may be based on a strange newness, a *novum*, the Latin for "new" or "new thing."

---

[2] I shall expand on dystopian and utopian narratives in another subsection of this chapter.

Considering the given definitions, I claim that Harrison, Aridjis, and Loyola Brandão use strategies of "cognitive estrangement" and a *novum* in their futuristic dystopias to comment upon the effects of the dramatic environmental changes and all the disastrous consequences they bring on to humanity and the planet Earth. Through their extrapolations we are, I dare say, forced to rethink about our daily life, while they make us leap into unimagined, deep, gloomy thoughts about our relationship with the human and nonhuman worlds, as we shall see in chapter 3 of this dissertation. As Gerry Canavan and Kim Robinson state: "[t]he alienated view-from-outside offered by cognitive estrangement allows us to examine ourselves and our institutions in new (and rarely flattering) light; SF distances us from the contemporary world-system only to return us to it, as aliens, so that we can see it with fresh eyes" (2014, xi).

Regarding the time represented, whereas some critics advocate SF is a depiction of the present, others say it depicts the past, while still others claim it envisions future possibilities and situations. In 1972, Suvin recognized that SF concentrates on possible futures, the present, and the past, a take that embraces all time spans. Indeed, I assume that SF more often than not mirrors, comments, and casts a critical eye on the historical moment in which the texts are written. That is to say, we can assume that SF texts do not reproduce the world as it is but offer a representation; they have a proper way to move us beyond reality, to talk about it and in this way make us see the world, and our own world in particular, with fresh new eyes.

Since the differences between U.S. and Latin American SF have not been sufficiently discussed in scholarship, I will very briefly address some aspects. Firstly, one should bear in mind that there are disparate standpoints regarding the genre's emergence in the Americas. On the one hand, academics working with Latin American SF such as Yolanda Molina-Gavilán[3] (2007, 5), Rachel Ferreira (2008, 355; 2011, 1), and Elizabeth Ginway (2012, 1) contend that the genre has a long history and tradition, having its roots in the eighteenth and/or nineteenth century, as I shall discuss further ahead. On the other hand, Roberts points out its European and Anglo-American genesis when he writes that Brian Aldiss traces its origins to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*; Thomas Disch to Edgar A. Poe; Patrick Parrinder to H. G. Wells and Jules Verne; and Samuel Delany to Hugo Gernsback (2006, xv). These perspectives undoubtedly show that we find more than subtle nuances when we immerse ourselves in the study of the SF genre. Fully aware of the controversy that my standpoint may engender and of the fact that this genre has a strong tradition in Mexico and Brazil, as I will expound ahead, I contend that in the Americas what we now call SF began in the U.S., in 1926, when its "father," writer, editor, and critic Hugo Gernsback founded *Amazing Stories*, the first magazine exclusively devoted to SF.[4]

---

[3] Andrea Bell, Miguel Ángel Fernández-Delgado, M. Elizabeth Ginway, Luis Pestarini, and Juan Carlos Toledano Redondo.

[4] In an editorial from 1929, Gernsback himself claimed he had invented the term "science fiction" (Roberts 2002, 68), despite believing he was just attributing a name to a body of existing texts which had not been labelled as SF yet. This is the case of Edgar A. Poe's stories which include SF or SF-like elements: "Shadow - A Parable" (1835), "The Man That Was Used Up" (1839), and "The Mask of the Red Death: A Fantasy" (1842) (Clute 64-78).

However, discussing SF without mentioning Jules Verne and H. G. Wells would mean overlooking their crucial influence on the genre.[5] These authors are often called the "fathers of SF," nonetheless, I must highlight Poe's influence on their writings. This relevant aspect, as well as Gernsback's formal baptism of the genre, to use Ferreira's terms (2011, 1), from my point of view have prevailed over the Latin American long tradition in the field. John Campbell, founder and editor of the American magazine *Astounding Science Fiction* (1930), was another strong influence on the development of the genre.

SF has gone through different periods. According to Roberts, between the late 1930s and early 1960s[6] – the Golden Age –, the body of texts was based on science and the extrapolation of science into the future (2002, 31). SF magazines, which had a cheap format known as "Pulp" – hence the name Pulp SF –, helped the genre to grow and develop. It experienced a boom in the U.S. and the general public's interest in SF texts also increased. Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein are featured among the most influential writers. Asimov's short stories, particularly the collection *I, Robot* (1950), where he presents his seminal Three Laws of Robotics, is known worldwide. Around the 1960s, SF stories stopped being published in magazines, SF writers reacted against the conventions of traditional SF, and new novels emerged. Roberts observes that the New Wave – 1960s-1970s – is "often taken to be a deliberate attempt to elevate the literary and stylistic quality of SF"

---

[5] Verne's famous stories *Voyage au centre de la terre* (1863), *De la terre à la lune* (1865), *Vingt milles lieues sous les mers* (1870), *Le tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (1872) and Wells's *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897) and *The First Man on the Moon* (1901) were a success and are now classics of SF.

[6] These dates vary according to sources. Roberts himself mentions slightly different dates in *Science Fiction* (2002) and *The History of Science Fiction* (2006).

(2006, 231), therefore, the texts that were written thereon were marked by experiments in form, style and aesthetics.[7] In the following decades, SF writers started exploring political, social, and environmental changes, the Cold War, scientific developments such as computers, the Internet, and artificial intelligence, among other topics.

In Elizabeth Ginway and Andrew Brown's view, the study of Latin American SF has been characterized by various contradictions over the years (2012, 1), which is not far from the truth. In my opinion, both Rachel Ferreira's works illustrate these authors' standpoint: whereas in her 2008 essay, "Back to the Future," Ferreira asserts it is not possible to talk of self-sustaining national or continental SF traditions in Latin America in the nineteenth century (2008, 356), in *The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction* (2011), she states that Latin Americans could point to Northern Hemisphere antecedents for their SF and claim that established pedigree as their own, and she presents a chronology covering Latin American SF published between 1775 and 1920 (2011, 225-230). In addition, she presents three key moments in Latin American SF production: the late nineteenth century, featuring landmark works that established the genre throughout Latin America; the 1950s and 1960s, seen as a type of Golden Age for publishers and fans; and the year 2000, a time of growth and recognition. Ferreira further explains that "[i]n Latin America, the majority of science fiction production falls into either the national consolidation cluster (c. 1870-1920; the (first) golden age (c. 1959-1974), or the second wave (mid to late 1980s . . . [to] today)" (2008, 359). Thus, on one side, Ferreira states that Latin Americans claim SF's ancestry, but, on the other, by employing the same terms and the same SF production periods as in the U.S., she demonstrates subjugation to the latter's cultural domination.

---

[7] Heinlein´s *Stranger in a Strange Land* (1961), Frank Herbert's *Dune* (1965), Ursula Le Guin's *The Left Hand of Darkness* (1969), and Octavia Butler's *Kindred* (1979) are among the most popular authors and works of that time.

Ginway and Brown do not mention Gernsback's coinage of the term as a watershed. In their opinion, SF has enjoyed a long tradition, dating at least from the nineteenth century (2012, 1). Yolanda Molina-Gavilán et al. (a cluster of five scholars), even go back to the eighteenth century and mention a 1775 short story by Mexican writer Manuel Antonio de Rivas,[8] where he envisions a trip to the moon. These authors' panorama, in "Chronology of Latin American Science Fiction, 1775-2005" (2007), provides a helpful insight into SF production in several Latin American countries and underlines that SF is often intertwined with other speculative forms in Latin America (369), as is the case of *La leyenda de los soles.*

Speculative forms refer to speculative fiction, a rather fuzzy term given that it has three meanings: a subgenre of SF which approaches human rather than technological problems; a genre distinct and opposite to SF which only deals with possible futures; and an all-encompassing category for all genres which deviate from imitating reality of everyday experience. In this last sense, it includes fantasy, SF, horror, gothic, dystopia, ghost stories, magic realism, and many more (Oziewicz 2017). According to Molina-Gavilán et al., the Mexican SF tradition has a long, if rather uneven, two-hundred-year history that can be divided into five distinct periods, a fact that ends up interrogating the U.S. characterization of the genre, as I have expounded before.[9] In order to shorten the description of Mexican SF history, it suffices to mention the third (1940-1964) and the fourth (1964-1983) periods and stress the wide range of initiatives taking place nowadays, for instance, the National Science Fiction Short Story Contest. Also Federico González's three-volume anthology, *Más allá de lo imaginado* (1991-1994), including forty-two authors, shows how the field is vibrant in Mexico today. There is, however, a striking aspect that I cannot help emphasizing: the second period (1900-1939), characterized by a clear interest in improving the literary quality of the genre corresponds to the New Wave in the U.S., when the Northern counterparts shared similar concerns. In fact, this makes me ponder whether it is correct to bring the imperial angle to the forefront first, as I have done.

---

[8] Strange as it may seem, the short story's title is: "Sizigias y cuadraturas lunares ajustadas al meridiano de Mérida de Yucatán por un anctítona o habitador de la luna, y dirigidas al bachiller don Ambrosio de Echeverría, entonador de kyries funerales en la parroquia del Jesús de dicha ciudad, y al presente profesor de logarítmica en el pueblo de Mama de la península de Yucatán, para el año del Señor de 1775".

By mid-nineteenth century, Brazilian writers also started writing SF about imaginary stories and voyages in the future influenced by Verne and Flammarion. A sample of that period is Joaquim Felício dos Santos's *Páginas da história do Brasil, escritas no ano 2000* (1868-1872), satirical *feuilletons*[10] set in the future. While in the first half of the century, SF writers approached controversial themes such as eugenics or the social and agrarian reforms, in the late 1950s and early 1960s their texts focused on robots, space travel, alien contact, and nuclear war (which was in line with concerns manifested in other countries). In the following two decades, SF texts can be divided into narratives of the fantastic and dystopian novels, hence *Não verás país nenhum* was in tune with its time. In 1985, after the end of the dictatorship in Brazil, the new generation of SF writers started writing in different speculative forms. As Ferreira states, Latin American SF has a strong propensity to form hybrids with neighboring genres and magical realism and the fantastic are its most common alternative genre labels (2011, 8).

---

[9] Briefly, in the first period, which spans more than a century (1775-1900), there are landmark works such as the one mentioned above by Rivas and "Mexico en el año 1970", published in 1844, under the pseudonym Fósforos Cerillos. It can be seen as a groundbreaking dystopia set in 1970 in which the author imagined that Mexico turned into a powerful country where hot-air balloons were the main means of transport and large screens showing moving pictures anticipated cinema.

[10] These were texts published in the republican newspaper *O Jequintinhonha*.

Molina-Gavilán et al. and Ferreira underscore that it is incorrect to assume that Latin American SF equates to the literary fantastic and magical realism, yet they do not define these genres. According to the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, the terms “fantastic” and “fantasy” mean the same. A fantasy text is a self-coherent narrative and “[w]hen set in this world, it tells a story which is impossible in the world as we perceive it; when set in an otherworld, that otherworld will be impossible, though stories set there may be possible in its terms” (Clute 1997). An iconic writer of this genre is Argentinian Jorge Luis Borges whose short stories, “La biblioteca de Babel” (1941), “El jardín de senderos que se bifurcan” (1941), and “El Aleph” (1949) focus on fantastic themes. Another Argentinian central figure is fantastic short-story author and fiction writer Adolfo Bioy Casares: his novel *La invención de Morel* (1940) is widely known.

In chapter 3, I shall illustrate that in *Não verás país nenhum* and in *La leyenda de los soles* SF and fantasy are intertwined. Nonetheless, for academic Thomas Stauder (1993), the second novel is categorized as fantastic literature or magical realism – a fact that shows how borders between speculative forms are blurred and genres are oftentimes intermingled. In the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* it is stated that in magic or magical realism the regions of the real may be illuminated with dream imagery, juxtapositions, and dislocations in time and space, for example (Clute 1997). Gabriel García Márquez and Isabel Allende are known for their magical realistic novels, namely *Cien años de soledad* (1967) and *La casa de los espíritus* (1982) respectively. In my view, differentiating these genres contributes to better understand the complexity of Latin American literature and culture, an effort that cannot be downplayed since discussing SF in the Americas is an extremely challenging, complex path.

Different geographies, histories, political systems, languages, unequal modernities, and "intricate interdependencies" – Janice Radway's term to identify the complex relations between the U.S. and the rest of the Americas (1998, 10) –, have obviously influenced writers' attitudes, themes, and the way they think and represent the world. In the case at hand, the existing differences in the SF genre illustrate perfectly well the fact that authors from the U.S., Mexico, and Brazil have disparaties but also commonalities. That is, Harrison, Loyola Brandão, and Aridjis share the same continent, use the SF genre to express their ecological concerns, and address common topics. Notwithstanding, as I shall explore in chapter 3, in the 30-year timescale within which the novels *Make Room! Make Room!*, *Não verás país nenhum*, and *La leyenda de los soles* were written environmental degradation increased, hence it is no wonder that these authors' ecological perspectives and representations are different.

Besides, it is the intermeshing of these tales with their countries' contexts that produce different outcomes. Before proceeding, though, it is important to organize one's thinking about ecology and I will leave the concept of "nature" to be scrutinized ahead, since I believe that all environmental problems have their origin in the way humans have "seen" nature and the natural world throughout history.

1.2 Ecology in the Twenty-First Century

Bearing in mind that the interrelation between SF and ecology is at the heart of the ecocritical reading of the novels *Make Room! Make Room!*, *Não verás país nenhum*, and *La leyenda de los soles*, I shall cast an eye on the origin and meaning of the term ecology. Strange as it may seem, some theorists and critics talk about ecologies, therefore I shall also briefly take this concept into account further ahead.

Curiously enough, Laura Walls (2009) traces the roots of ecology back to the nineteenth century, when German naturalist and explorer Alexander von Humboldt skillfully interwove the aesthetic representation of nature and scientific discourse in his writings. In Walls's view, Humboldt brought into being a discourse, a way of speaking about nature that took into account natural, social, spiritual, scientific, and aesthetic elements. That is, before ecology could be a science it was a discourse, and it was Humboldt's discourse (Walls 11). The holistic understanding of nature and the recognition of the various interconnected global forces that form a single whole named Cosmos pervade *Views of Nature*[11] (1808) and *Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the World* (1845-1865). While, in the first book Humboldt draws the reader's attention to the enjoyment that may arise from the contemplation of nature, and affirms that it can be "heightened by an insight into the connection of the occult forces" (*Views*, x), in the second, when considering the study of physical phenomena he writes that "we find its noblest and most important result to be a knowledge of the chain of connection, by which all natural forces are linked together . . . and it is the perception of these relations that exalts our views and ennobles our enjoyments" (*Cosmos*, 23).

---

[11] The original titles *Ansichten der Natur* and *Kosmos: Entwurf einer Physischen Weltbeschreibung* are seldom used by Humboldt's critics. I therefore follow their path and use the English versions.

Likewise, it is also significant that in *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World* (2015), biographer and historian Andrea Wulf explores how Humboldt revolutionized the way we see the natural world and influenced ecologists, environmentalists, and nature writers (7). Both Walls and Wulf's angles contrast with Mary Louise Pratt's Humboldtian reinvention of South America[12] as she notes that Humboldt was working within the romantic era (2008, 121), sought to reinvent popular imaginings of America (117) and reinvented America as nature, in the same way that other Europeans (Columbus, Vespucci, Raleigh, and others) had invented it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Pratt 2008, 123). Therefore, Walls contends that, for Pratt, Humboldt is "one more 'imperial eye,' handmaiden to colonial domination" (2009, 19) and claims it is necessary to regain his perspective as he is forgotten in the U.S. today (ix), an amnesia she relates to American exceptionalism (x). All in all, there is little doubt that knowledge evolved with the contribution of Humboldt's legacy. Not only did he transform the way Latin Americans and Europeans perceived the New World shortly before the end of the colonial period, but he also exerted a strong influence on thinkers, scientists, and artists alike: Thomas Jefferson, Johann W. Goethe, Henry D. Thoreau, Charles

---

[12] Here I employ South America just as Pratt does when she refers to Latin America.

Darwin, and Ernst Haeckel are but a few examples. Given his overarching understanding of the universe and his legacy, I shall return to him on several occasions throughout this study.

Thus, in 1866, when German naturalist and biologist Ernst Haeckel coined the term *Ökologie*, in his *Generelle Morphologie* it did not come out of the blue. Inspired by Humboldt and other trailblazers such as Linnaeus, Thoreau, Gilbert White and Charles Darwin, as Donald Worster mentioned (1994, 193), Haeckel conceived ecology as the web that linked organisms and their surrounding environment. *Ökologie* comes from the Greek *oikos* "household, dwelling place, habitation" plus -*logia*, the "study of," and has the same etymological root as *Ökonomie* – *oikos* plus *nomos*, meaning "managing".[13] From environmental expert Anna Bramwell's perspective, the resonances of the new term *Ökologie* go beyond biology as it carries overtones of the Greek word *oikonomia*, which originally meant a "soundly organized working household," an organized, self-sufficient unit that avoided waste, disorder, conserved its resources, and was the basis of a viable state (1989, 41). Donald Worster also contends that the study of ecology was in its origins imbued with a political, economic, and Christian view of nature and that the Earth was perceived as a world that had somehow to be managed for maximum output (1994, 37). Therefore, some texts refer to ecology as "the economy of nature," as is the case of Worster's title *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (1994). The connection between ecology and economy, however, is not just about sharing a common etymological root. The emergence of ecology in the mid-nineteenth century did not happen by accident: the Zeitgeist stemming from imperialism, colonization, global exploitation and exploration, rapid industrial growth and environmental loss prompted diverse responses and concerns. Naturalists, artists, and scholars such as Thoreau and George P. Marsh soon realized the detrimental effects of natural resources' overuse and registered their findings, which continue to be extremely important to consider. Yet, I contend that humans' accumulation of knowledge in this field has not been translated into better care for the planet; in effect, economy has been venerated above everything else and it has become the governments' first priority worldwide, instead of a sound management of the Earth's resources.

---

[13] The origin of these words is covered in more detail in the *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

As it happens with most concepts, there are multiple definitions of "ecology" and we can find so many elaborations of the term that one hardly grasps its various meanings, from moral ecology, political ecology, human ecology, ecology of the language, environmental ecology, to ecology of knowledges. Felix Guattari's formulation of environmental ecology is worth considering inasmuch as it is linked to social and mental spheres and gives rise to the new concept of ecosophy. Guattari acknowledges that there is "an articulation between the three ecological registers (the environment, social relations, and human subjectivity)" (2000, 28) and, as regards environmental ecology, he observes that "[n]atural equilibriums will be increasingly reliant upon human intervention" and that "a time will come when vast programs will need to be set up in order to regulate the relationship between oxygen, ozone and carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere" (66). Although this reality seems to fit more into a science-fictional text than to any other genre, in my view it would not be far from the truth to say that we are already living at the time Guattari predicted three decades ago, in *Les trois écologies* (1989), where he criticized capitalism as well as its mode of production, and developed the concept of ecosophy as a way to escape the major crises of our era (2000, 68). Guattari's articulation of mental ecology, social ecology and environmental ecology brings me to sociologist Boaventura de Sousa Santos's theory of the ecology of knowledges precisely because of its social and political perspective: it brings to the fore many other knowledges which the dominant Eurocentric scientific system has undervalued in its praise of technology over nature. In *Epistemologias do Sul* (2014), Santos points out the need for a pluricultural rather than monocultural knowledge (46), as well as the need to intersect knowledges (47). It is indeed important to rescue other worldviews, indigenous peoples' millennial experiences and knowledges, other ways of understanding and seeing nature in order to redefine the conceptualizations created in the North which resulted from a history of imperialism, colonialism, and patriarchy. In *The End of the Cognitive Empire* (2018) Boaventura Sousa Santos notes that "[t]he objective of the epistemologies of the South is to allow the oppressed social groups to represent the world as their own and in their own terms" (1) and to identify and value knowledges which may stem from lived experiences and do not fit into the dominant epistemologies (2). The author discusses and rescues knowledges born in the struggles of those who suffered and suffer oppression, discrimination, poverty, and injustice. But, as I see it, as the oppressed struggle against capitalist forces, dictatorial regimes, and dominant ideologies, they simultaneously fight in defense of better and more balanced societies where natural resources are more sustainably consumed.

Finally, I will still draw attention to academic Scott DeVries's notion of ecology given that it suggests different associations. For him, then, ecology has acquired a dual meaning, i.e. "the set of relations in an ecosystem between flora, fauna, land, and other elements of the biosphere" and "efforts undertaken to protect or conserve the conditions in which those relations occur" (2013, 5). In sum, the notion of ecology involves, first, that there is a system in which all species are interrelated and interdependent and, second, that it is wrong to damage it. It entails a moral imperative, appeals to a sense of engagement, attention, and solidarity with nature, a stand aligned with Guattari's holistic concept of ecosophy and also with scientist and environmentalist James Lovelock's 1979 elaboration of what came to be known as the Gaia Theory (2000, 144). Lovelock's original Gaia hypothesis – life itself regulated or made the Earth fit and comfortable for itself – has evolved. He later expanded it as the whole Earth system – made up of all life, air, oceans, and surface rocks – that regulated the Earth's chemistry and climate (2009, 170). In his view, the Earth itself will be capable of preserving its own existence and it will be able to resist adverse change, as he puts it, "the Earth can proceed without us" (2009, 185). It is crucial, therefore, to consider Lovelock's as well as Guattari's and DeVries's overarching ecological perspectives, as they help us to see the Earth as a complex integrated system. Since this system is seriously jeopardized, it demands global approaches and interdisciplinary responses. It is my belief that in the endless quest for social and environmental solutions, literature, more precisely, utopian and dystopian narratives can unquestionably play a vital role as authors make the reader reflect upon his/her relationship to the environment, as I shall discuss next.

1.3 Utopian and Dystopian Narratives

Utopian and dystopian texts have been with us for centuries and have captivated large audiences because, besides being a source of entertainment, they address political, social, environmental, and cultural issues. Both genres[14] criticize and explore their authors' contemporary society and portray it in an ideal or nightmarish manner. In the sixteenth century, while the colonization of the Americas started, Sir Thomas More imagined the utopia it could become. Through the description of the island of Utopia, situated somewhere off the coast of South America – an imaginary communal state organized to avoid the extreme inequality existing in England at the time –, More envisioned a perfect social and political system. By using satire, he criticized 1516 England, its political and social worlds and forced readers to think and question their society. In other words, he challenged the readers to see the depicted place and society as considerably better than the one in which they lived.

When More wrote *Utopia* (1516), it gave rise to a literary genre with this name, although there were works prior to this date that can be called utopias as well (Sargent 2016). Some critics and scholars argue that *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (c.2150 - 1400 BCE) or *The Odyssey* (800 BCE) are SF utopias, nevertheless, More's *Utopia* is recognized as the first European text of this kind. Other critics refer to *Utopia* as a literary eutopia, or positive utopia, which, according to Lyman Sargent, is "[a] non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably better than the society in which that reader lived" (2010, 6). I agree that More's *Utopia* is a eutopia, i.e., it is a portrayal of an ideal place. The positive utopias that came into being since then, for example, Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1627) could not help having in mind More's eutopian social and political comments. In the twentieth century, however, the positive utopia was overshadowed by the rising popularity of the negative utopia or dystopia, as I will show ahead.

---

[14] Utopias and dystopias are not unanimously considered two literary genres, but Edward James (219) and Darko Suvin (1979, 37) consider utopias a literary genre. Also for Tom Moylan and Raffaella Boccolini dystopias are a genre (2).

Before proceeding, I will clarify not only the concepts of utopia and dystopia but also other adjacent categories since they will enable a better understanding of the textual mechanics and ecological insights that permeate *Make Room! Make Room!, La leyenda de los soles,* and *Não verás país nenhum*. This analysis will ultimately lead to relevant conclusions regarding ecological concerns in the Americas. As I will show ahead, dystopia is inextricably connected to utopia and critics usually confront one idea with the other when they define them. For this clarification, I chose to discuss some of the foremost utopian and dystopian scholars' views, namely those defended by Tom Moylan (2000), Lyman T. Sargent (2001), Darko Suvin (2003), Miguel López-Lozano (2008), and Adam Roberts (2009). Other critics' ideas are also valuable to illuminate dystopian literature, therefore M. Keith Booker (1994), David W. Sisk (1997), and Edward James (2003) will also deserve my attention. However, it is important to emphasize that apart from López-Lozano, who casts his look at Mexican/U.S. Chicano dystopian narrative fictions, these critics' main focus is U.S. literature.

Regarding utopia, Roberts observes that "the name 'utopia' parses a double meaning (in Greek *eu-topia* means 'good place' and *ou-topia* means 'no-place' – a place both ideal and fictional)" (2009, 10). Whereas Roberts adds that More inaugurated this subgenre of speculative fiction in which a traveler describes visiting a distant island upon which society is ordered in a more perfect way than in our world (2009, 10), Darko Suvin defines utopia as the creation of a particular community where sociopolitical institutions, norms, and relationships between people are organized in a way different from that of the author's community (2003, 189). From López-Lozano's standpoint, More's description of an ideally perfect society shows the aspirations, dreams, and fantasies of Old Europe. It projects far beyond its limited visions and narrow margins the desire to build a better, ideal society that would not be attained anywhere else. As López-Lozano remarks, "[t]he discovery of the Americas afforded Europe a space upon which to project images of its own myths and dreams in a domain outside the confines of the Old World" (2008, 6).[15] In his view, the evolution of literary utopias is linked to the search for a vision of the world beyond the European imagination of the late sixteenth century. Hence, it is not an overstatement to say that the English version of *Utopia* (1557) and the concomitant genre have challenged literature in an unequivocal way, and influenced and permeated Western thought, catching the attention of writers, artists, philosophers, and scholars.

---

[15] Here it is interesting to recall that before landing in the American continent, Columbus himself had utopian dreams: of a land and places totally different from the ones he knew. See Washburn 14-18.

Returning to Roberts and Suvin, they complement each other and Roberts's definition brings to mind Ernest Callenbach's *Ecotopia* (1975), a novel that popularized and coined this particular term for the ecological utopia. Other ecotopian narratives have emerged, namely Daniel Fischer's *Anthropolis – A Tale of Two Cities* (1992), which follows the spirit of Callenbach's *Ecotopia*. In these two narratives, both protagonists, journalist Will Weston and Professor John Jones, travel and live in a fictional community whose members attempt to live in harmony and at peace with themselves, with others, and with the surrounding environment. Fischer's comments on education, politics, health, economics, urban design, freedom, safety, and social problems are certainly more compelling than those made by his predecessor. Also sharper is Fischer's attention to environmental issues, a fact that does not occur at random but mirrors perfectly well how they have gained more importance over the decades. Consequently, he urges readers to rethink social and ecological problems in a more overtly manner, although Callenbach also draws the readers' attention to a more sustainable life: "what matters most is the aspiration to live in a balance with nature, 'walk lightly on the land,' treat the earth as a mother" (2009, 32). On the one hand, through constant comparison and contrast with the protagonists' previous society, the readers easily conclude that these perfect "good places" are really "no places" that point out the flaws of the societies in which they live. On the other, as Bill Devall and George Sessions state, "[c]reating ecotopian futures has practical value. They make us see the distance between what ought to be and how our technocratic-industrial society is" (1985, 162). Although Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars* trilogy is constructed differently and revolves around the discovery and exploration of Mars starting in

2026 – *Red Mars* (1992), the terraforming of the planet to make it habitable, *Green Mars* (1993), and the settlement *Blue Mars* (1993) –, it is an ecological utopia whose huge success at the time of its publication is worth evoking.

Nevertheless, in SF historian Edward James's view, some critics of utopia argue that utopias qualify as dystopias because individuals end up being oppressed due to the tyranny of the perfect system, while others assume that the authors produce a ridiculous, laughable, impractical prototype for a future society rather than a sarcastic critique of contemporary society (2003, 220). Despite the various standpoints, what is really at issue is the importance of clarifying the concept of utopia since it is a helpful means to better perceive the notion of dystopia.

Although E. M. Forster's *The Machine Stops* (1909) is generally considered the founding text of the genre, only in the 1930s and 1940s did dystopian fiction consolidate as a literary form. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) heavily contributed to this development. Indeed, I believe it is worth highlighting that with this study I also expect to demonstrate that dystopian literature is not only a useful means to criticize social, cultural, ecological, and political issues but also that it deserves more serious critical attention. As M. Keith Booker argues, many critics consider dystopian fiction as a pop culture genre in the same category as SF, a dismissal that can be attributed to an elitist rejection of popular culture (1994, 173). In order to support dystopian fiction, Booker mentions Andreas Huyssen, who advocates that the distinction between high art and popular culture makes little sense in postmodernism (1994, 174). What Keith Booker and other critics emphasize is the importance of considering dystopian fiction as a distinctive genre, as he observes, "it is also important to recognize that this genre participates in the major literary currents of the twentieth century. Many dystopian fictions can thus be ranked among important examples of phenomena like modernism and postmodernism" (1994, 174). However, countless dystopian works had come into being long before. David W. Sisk, for instance, points out that dystopia begins in the mid-to-late-eighteenth century, when the early promise of the Industrial Revolution that technological progress would improve social conditions led to impersonalized mechanization and exploitation (1997, 6-7). Tom Moylan also notes that the dystopia came up as a literary form in the early 1900s, as capital entered a new period with the beginning of monopolized production and as the modern imperialist state extended its internal and external influences (2000, xi).

Regardless of its outset, what is more important to highlight, however, is how these extrapolative, usually pessimistic texts depict humankind's concerns and aim to help the readers make sense of the world they live in. Doomy and gloomy views generally permeate dystopian novels. This is not the case of Octavia Butler, though. I may venture to say that, probably because she is an African American woman, her books are deeply perceptive and she offers a new angle, given that her dystopian texts disclose an evasion of pessimistic trends. Her four dystopian novels *Kindred* (1979), *Wild Seed* (1980)*, Parable of the Sower* (1993), and *Parable of the Talents* (1998), are epitomes of a smart combination of dystopia and utopia; despite the frightening atmosphere depicted, there is always a ray, a seed of hope at the end which distinguishes her narratives from other dystopian works. In fact, there is little doubt that from the outset, dystopian writers, no matter if in an optimist or pessimist vein criticize modern society and its flaws, while always envisioning a better world. But the tendency to see and write about the effects of industrial production, the gradual alienation of humans from the natural world, and the dark side of capitalism gained momentum during the twentieth century, as Moylan affirms:

> Dystopian narrative is largely the product of the terrors of the twentieth century. A hundred years of exploitation, repression, state violence, war, genocide, disease, famine, ecocide, depression, debt, and the steady depletion of humanity through the buying and selling of everyday life provided more than enough fertile ground for this fictive underside of the utopian imagination. (2000, xi)

Sisk and Moylan thus illustrate that dystopian texts come into being as a response to humankind's perception that technological progress was not simultaneously accompanied by the betterment of social conditions, well-being, and social justice. López-Lozano, in turn, states that "[l]iterary dystopias are negative representations of imagined future societies where the abuse of technology, authoritarianism, dehumanization, and the uncertainty of earth's future have created the conditions for the end of humanity as we know it" (2008, 17). He sees that the belief in the benefits of technology for the satisfaction of human needs has unexpected consequences, as the two World Wars have demonstrated. This author still notes that, by the end of the twentieth century, owing to the pernicious effects of technology and mechanization, a new literary genre eventually emerged – the industrial dystopia (2008, 17). Yet, while the given definition seems to follow Sisk and Moylan's trends, López-Lozano adds that "Latin American and U.S. Latino authors also employ apocalyptic motifs to highlight the homogenizing effects of globalization and concomitant marginalization of difference" (2008, 2). And he adds:

> Because Latin America's official history legitimizes projects of development that erase indigenous peoples, women and nature from the discourse of modernity, presenting them as merely the backdrop of efforts toward progress, contemporary writers excavate the past in order to revisit some of the discourses that generate this marginalization. (2)

This is a relevant remark considering that Aridjis's text criticizes Western notions of modernity and development, and "excavates the past" to talk about the encounter with the indigenous peoples, which led to their exclusion as the Other and, ultimately, to their demise. The conquered peoples were silenced, erased, and those who managed to survive were subordinated to colonial rule and could not participate in the creation of the modern societies. The destruction of their knowledges and cultures, or, epistemicide, as Boaventura Sousa Santos puts it, should not be ignored, therefore, it will deserve more attention when I analyze the dystopian texts in chapter 3.

Since its emergence, throughout the twentieth century until today SF has undergone ebbs and flows directly related to the social, economic, and historical moments in which the works are written. For instance, after World War II, SF writers worried more about social, ethical, and political issues; therefore, they intended to warn humanity of the terrible sociopolitical tendencies that might arise from the instability generated by the Cold War. This dystopian trend was followed in the 1960s and 1970s by a revival of utopia in a new form – critical utopia. Samuel R. Delany, Marge Piercy, Ursula Le Guin, and Ernest Callenbach are examples of SF writers who criticize the dominant ideology but whose texts are not circumscribed to better places and societies alone. Alongside critical utopias there are obviously dystopian novels and other works which include certain dystopian passages, such as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), which, although it employs some strategies of the genre, is not a literary work. This famous book's first chapter, "A Fable for Tomorrow," starts as follows: "[t]here was once a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings" (2002, 1) and adds, some lines ahead, "[t]hen a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change . . . the cattle and sheep died. Everywhere was a shadow of death" (2). Here, Carson lyrically evokes a community in which all elements of the natural world live in harmony, but suddenly, due to chemical poisoning, spring is disturbed. Not only have birds disappeared but other species were also affected. And Carson ends this short chapter by saying, "[t]his town does not actually exist, but it might easily have a thousand counterparts in America or elsewhere in the world . . . A grim specter has crept upon us almost unnoticed, and this imagined tragedy may easily become a stark reality we all shall know" (3). By choosing an apocalyptic scenario to instill fear, Carson raises deeper understanding about the effects of the widespread use of long-lasting agricultural chemicals and compels the readers to rethink their relationship with the natural world. Thus, a critique associated with practice and agency underlies both critical utopia and dystopia, as will be highlighted later in this study.

In the 1960s, however, population growth became yet another great concern and emerged as an imminent danger accompanied by a particular type of discourse. It is therefore in the midst of a demographic explosion that Harrison's

Make Room! Make Room! (1966) and Paul and Anne Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968)[16] make sense. But if, on the one hand, novels and short stories tackling overpopulation and overcrowded cities proliferated in the 1960s and 1970s, on the other, they came along with a considerable body of scientific works which addressed the topic, examined its consequences, and posed innumerous questions. At the time, however, as Ursula K. Heise puts it, "the two types of approach were not completely separate" (2008, 72), a fact that shows to what extent the rapid growth of human beings provoked deep worries in different fields. By reading, for example, the long list of bibliographical suggestions at the end of *Make Room! Make Room!*, – which includes Fairfield Osborn's *Our Plundered Planet* (1948), William Vogt's *Road to Survival* (1948), and Thomas Malthus et al., *On Population: Three Essays* (1960) –, we see Harrison's need to substantiate his dystopian narrative on concrete data, which also reveals a particular characteristic of the SF genre that draws imaginatively on scientific knowledge. But it is important to bear in mind Heise's observation that novelists and short story writers tended to set their overpopulation scenarios in Western cities and to examine the fate of individuals and communities under conditions of extreme crowding – as the novels under study exemplify –, while scientists and demographers were mainly concerned with what persistent population growth implied for humankind's relationship to its planetary environment and explored the ecological and social consequences of population growth (2008, 72). Even before Harrison's *Make Room! Make Room!,* novels such as Brian Aldiss's *Earthworks* (1965), Anthony Burgess's *The Wanting Seed* (1962), or the short story by J. G. Ballard's "The Concentration City" (1960), and the short stories collected in *Billenium* (1962) are but a couple of examples showing the pertinence of population explosion as a literary topic. The titles speak for themselves: their authors see human beings as destroyers of the natural world and population growth as a menace.

---

[16] Although Paul Ehrlich wrote *The Population Bomb* with his wife Anne Ehrlich, most critics forget this co-authorship. Thus, they will be referred to as the authors of the book, as I do not think it fair to credit it solely to Paul Ehrlich.

Yet, in the 1960s probably no other work had as much impact and was as controversial as Paul Ehrlich and Anne Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968), which they themselves acknowledge to have been both praised and vilified. Political analyst Abid U. Jan, for instance, contends that the book succeeded in scaring people with its forecasts of death, destruction, and starvation. He adds that, despite the predictions of dwindling and expensive natural resources, huge amounts of waste and environmental destruction, the opposite has happened in order to support the thesis that "[w]hites are shrinking into a minority" (Jan 2003) and population growth is rapidly declining. Ursula Heise, in turn, asserts that the beginning of the first chapter of *The Population Bomb* is an anecdote:

> The streets seemed alive with people. People eating, people washing, people sleeping. People visiting, arguing, and screaming. . . . People defecating and urinating. People clinging to buses. People herding animals. People, people, people, people. . . . All three of us were, frankly, frightened. It seemed that anything could happen – but, of course, nothing did. (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1988, 1)

For Heise, most details that give the scene emotional force have little to do with population pressure. Besides, she also interrogates whether the imminent threat from the masses of humans depicted in Ehrlich's outcry "[p]eople, people, people, people" is a true experience of overpopulation, or rather the sense of suffocation that may stem from being in the middle of overcrowded cities, even if the countries are not considered overpopulated (Heise 2008, 73). In 2009, the Ehrlichs however admitted that the prologue’s statement, “[t]he battle to feed all of humanity is over. In the 1970s and 1980s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now” (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 1988, xi) proved to be troublesome. The Ehrlichs recognized they had underestimated the impact of the green revolution, but did not obliterate around 300 million people who died of hunger and hunger related diseases between 1968 and 2009 (Ehrlich and Ehrlich 2009, 67).

According to academic Andreu Domingo, the publication of *The Population Bomb* signaled the popularization of a new literary subgenre, demodystopia. And this literary work, together with *Make Room! Make Room!*, is inspired by the debate between developmentalists and Malthusians, that is, between those who defend that, if malnutrition exists, it results from maldistribution, and those who believe that population will grow at an exponential rate and will rapidly exceed its ability to produce enough resources to support itself. Hence, these works reflect on how to intervene in population growth (Domingo 2014, 1) and present “situations in which the population and demographic trends constitute the most imminent danger for governability and the future of humanity itself” (Domingo 2014, 2). Both SF works/demodystopias have demographic growth as a central theme and Paul Ehrlich, cofounder of the organization Zero Population Growth, even advocates an aggressive family planning to bring down fertility rates until the ideal of zero growth is reached. The concern ultimately led to the foundation of the Club of Rome in the same year, 1968, which published the report *The Limits to Growth* (1972), pointing out the unsustainability of population growth. Writers, scientists, biologists, environmentalists, among others were highly influenced by the Ehrlichs' text, for instance Dan Brown's best seller *Inferno* (2013), and also Gore Vidal, David Attenborough, and Commander Cousteau, to name but a few.

It is still relevant to point out that Thomas Malthus had already approached the dangers of population explosion at the end of the eighteenth century. In his 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population,* he pointed out that the human population tended to grow geometrically, while the available resources to support it tended to grow arithmetically: "[t]aking the population of the world at any number, a thousand millions, for instance, the human species would increase in the ratio of – 1, 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128, 256, 512, etc. and subsistence as – 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, etc." (Malthus 1798, 8). In face of this, the inevitable outgrowth of world population when compared to food supply would lead to disaster. The improvements brought about by both the industrial revolution and agriculture have certainly helped to avert the disaster foreshadowed by Malthus. But these changes have also contributed to a dramatic increase in the world population, a matter upon which it is important to reflect and discuss – the extent to which the Earth will be able to sustain indefinite population growth. It is estimated that by 2100 the world population will increase to 10.9 billion, therefore the pertinence of the matter should not concern only ecologists, intellectuals, writers, and scientists. I furthermore support Domingo's take when he states that particular declarations made by some prominent people sound rather alarming, for instance, broadcaster and naturalist David Attenborough's description of humans as "a plague on Earth," or even offensive Japanese Finance Minister's statement in 2013, that old people should "hurry up and die" (2014, 2-3). The fact that according to the United Nations, population growth has in effect slowed or even stopped at the end of the twentieth century in Japan, North America, and Europe, may have had an impact on the themes focused by literary dystopias. Instead of addressing the effects of demography, writers started to bring to the forefront the fear of the consequences of climate change and of loss of control over technology. As a result, plagues, droughts, floods, and genetic manipulation became the central SF issues at the turn of the century (2014, 3).

As literary depictions of life on a hotter Earth, Harrison's, Loyola Brandão's and Aridjis's novels help the readers not only to ponder how human actions may contribute to climate change but also to shape their understanding of this global problem. Moreover, as I will further examine in chapter 3, these authors' dystopian visions can be seen as harbingers of what may happen regarding the effects of climate change. Indeed, their narratives are but extrapolations about important scientific findings. Today, the environmental humanities propose to conjoin knowledge from different areas to find alternatives to help humans see the nonhuman world as having the same rights as themselves, a subject I shall discuss in chapter 2, so I do find the incursion into scientific data absolutely necessary. I underscore nevertheless that, despite the general agreement within the scientific and academic community respecting this matter, there are also abundant dissonant voices who are fully convinced that global warming is one of humans' best orchestrated hoaxes in history: "[o]clima é o que é e pronto" (Felício 2012, 16).

Before proceeding, however, I underscore that I will use the terms global warming and climate change interchangeably as they are usually employed, but I am conscious that they do not mean exactly the same. While "global warming" refers to the increase in average global temperature because of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the burning of fossil fuels and the changes in land use, “climate change” involves long term changes on the whole planet’s climate and includes wind patterns, rain, and snow fall distribution, among other changes. When, in 2003, American conservative Frank Luntz said that global warming should be abandoned in favor of climate change (Burkeman 2003), the phrase “global warming” was substituted almost overnight. However, it is worth remembering that the term “climate change” emerged very early on in scientific discourse. A thorough reflection on both terms also brings to mind different ideas: while global warming suggests melting ice caps, floods, droughts, storms, avalanches, extreme weather, i.e., all kinds of environmental catastrophes, and has emotional pictures attached to it, climate change does not involve concrete aspects, a reason why it may be argued that the shift from global warming to climate change is a cunning rhetorical strategy to prevent people from seeing how serious the environmental crisis is.

Although it is commonly believed that global warming has been acknowledged and studied since the 1970s, efforts to store and organize global temperatures started in the 1870s, a century earlier. Murray Mitchell shows that global temperatures have increased steadily from the 1880s until about 1940, the start of a period of cooling. It is also relevant that before the beginning of the twentieth century, in 1896, a Swedish scientist, Svante Arrhenius, calculated that a doubling of atmospheric carbon dioxide would raise global temperatures, despite estimating that it would take thousands of years of fossil fuel burning to do it (Peterson 2008, 1328). Scientific debates and uncertainty about the effects of greenhouse gases continued for several decades and, in 1938, Guy Stewart Callendar put together weather statistics and confirmed that the numbers showed global warming (Weart 2008, 2). He added the astounding discovery that the emission of millions of tons of carbon dioxide caused by the burning of fossil fuels was the reason for climate change, yet, for him, global warming was a good thing for humanity as it helped crops to grow more abundantly (2). In the prolific 1950s groundbreaking works were produced: David Keeling developed technology to measure CO_2 levels with precision (Kolbert 2006, 161) and Gilbert Plass asserted that the Earth's temperature was rising as a result of carbon dioxide discharged from the burning of tons of coal and oil (qtd. by Fleming 2010). Also Frank Capra's film *The Unchained Goddess* (1958), which deals with the risks of man-made climate change was shown on U.S. TV and later in U.S. classrooms. Frank Baxter, one of the characters says, "[e]ven now, man may be unwittingly changing the world's climate through the waste product of the civilization. Due to our releases in factories and automobiles every year of more six billion tons of carbon dioxide . . . our atmosphere seems to be getting warmer" (*The Unchained* 00:02:20-40); were it not for the improbability expressed by the verb "may" and the adverb "unwittingly," the statement could be expressed by any twenty-first century climate scientist who upholds global warming. Environmental scientist Dana Nuccitelli's words summarize what these findings provoke, "one can't help but be struck by how well these scientists understood the mechanisms of Earth's climate change 50 years ago" (2015). Later, in the 1970s, despite the fact that most climate scientists believed in an impending ice age, in the film *Soylent Green* (1973), based on *Make Room! Make Room!,* Richard Fleischer, the director, went against the grain. The character Sol goes a step further than he does in the novel and asks "[h]ow can anyone survive in a climate like this? A heat wave all year long. The greenhouse effect. Everything is burning up".

Thus, for all that has been said, it is obvious that the U.S. has been the world's main contributor to deepen knowledge regarding global warming and climate change but at the same time it has produced a high number of the so-called global warming skeptics. This leads me to wonder whether Harrison did not hold some insights about this complex matter given the way he projected a rise in temperature at a time when the Earth's temperature was more or less stable (according to scientific studies, between 1947 and 1976 there was a global cooling, a reason why people feared a new ice age). Environmental scientist Jonathan Cowie observes that Harrison did proper background research for his novel, as evinced by the academic bibliography at the end of the novel's first edition, in 1966.[17] This was actually a rarity for SF novels and *Make Room! Make Room!* has a sound environmental basis, as defended by Cowie (2015). However, until the 1980s, environmental knowledge and its findings were not debated as they are today. Loyola Brandão validates this standpoint since he himself states that, for four years before writing *Não verás país nenhum* (1981), he read all about climate, the ozone layer hole, ecology, but not about global warming because nobody talked about it. A year later he referred that *Não verás país nenhum* was the first book about global warming, affirming that it anticipated several themes that would be debated later, for instance, global warming and droughts, and that he just intensified them, making up stories predicated on observation and readings. As far as Aridjis is concerned, he projects and criticizes the anthropogenic climate change in a more acute manner, in *La leyenda de los soles* (1993), following the global academic trend of the 1990s.

---

[17] This section was withdrawn in later editions.

While dystopian narratives are the main target of this analysis, it is important to add that a dystopian sensibility may also show in comic books, graphic novels, and mainly in films. The filmic adaptations of popular dystopian novels have been very successful as they tackle pertinent themes, forcing audiences to reflect on the meaning of human life and/or human relation to technology, for instance.[18] Dystopian worlds can also be seen in television series, as for example *The Prisoner* (1967-8) and *Dark Angel* (2000-2) (Murphy 477). There can be little doubt that despite its dark tone, dystopia has a mix of utopianism and is a useful means to criticize crucial political, social, and environmental issues. Graham Murphy affirms that "it is too early to predict the resilience of the dystopia in the twenty-first century or whether a new dystopian form awaits over the horizon" (2009, 477), suggesting the extent to which this subgenre is healthy and thriving.

As I mentioned earlier, in the 1960s and 1970s SF authors were engaged in critical utopias and demodystopias. By the end of the 1980s, however, writers such as Robinson, Butler, Le Guin, and Piercy, among others, transformed dystopias into critical dystopias. Instead of the inherent pessimism that characterizes the genre, critical dystopias maintain a utopian impulse, as I pointed out when I mentioned Butler's novels. Lyman Sargent attests to this change when he describes a critical dystopia as "[a] non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as worse than contemporary society but that normally includes at least one eutopian enclave or holds out hope that the dystopia can be overcome and replaced with a eutopia" (qtd. by Moylan and Baccolini 2003, 7). In critical dystopias there is thus space for pessimism; nightmarish visions of future societies mix with optimism as the open and/or ambiguous endings of these texts allow for both characters and readers to envision an escape from the depicted pessimistic world. The subjects who do not conform to the hegemonic ideology resist till the end and refuse to be subjugated by the dominant rules, as Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini put it: "by rejecting the traditional subjugation of the individual at the end of the novel, the critical dystopia opens a space of contestation and opposition for those collective 'ex-centric' subjects whose class, gender, race, sexuality, and other positions are not empowered by hegemonic rule" (2003, 7). It is evident, then, that these fictions give voice to marginalized people, the dispossessed or the excluded, who are not recognized by the mainstream culture and dominant ideology and need therefore to fight to defend their subjectivity.

---

[18] This is the case of *Metropolis* (Lang 1927), *The Matrix* (Wachowski brothers 1999), *Blade Runner* (Scott 1982), *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (Anderson 1956, Radford 1984), *Soylent Green* (Fleischer 1973, based on *Make Room! Make Room!*), *The Hunger Games* series (Ross 2012, Lawrence 2013, 2014, 2015) and the *Divergent* series (Burger 2014, Schwentke 2015, 2016), to name but a few.

In contrast to other utopian, eutopian, and ecotopian narratives in which there is a visitor or protagonist's journey to a utopian society, in the dystopian narrative the reader and the protagonist suddenly find themselves in the midst of the dystopia. As Moylan and Baccolini point out, the dystopian text normally begins within a terrible different world and, although there is no dislocation to get to another place, the element of textual estrangement is manifest through a character who questions the dystopian society (2003, 5). The authors add that, "[s]ince the text opens in *media res* within the nightmarish society, cognitive estrangement is at first forestalled by the immediacy and normality of the location" and also note that "a counter narrative develops as the dystopian citizen moves from apparent contentment into an experience of alienation and resistance” (Moylan and Baccolini 2003, 5). As it will be seen in chapter 3, throughout the narratives under study the protagonists will gradually change and move from an illusory well-being into an experience of alienation and resistance, as the situation in the dystopian society gets from bad to worse. They will question the *status quo* and a sense of discontent will increase as they feel more and more alienated and disconnected from the world they live in.

A final note on the subgenres of SF to mention that critical dystopias resist genre purity, blurring the borders between this genre and others; these texts are in fact hybrid, borrowing aspects from other genres. Some critics call attention to the permeable borders that exist between them, the constant effort SF writers make to keep up with the general trends of the social and political contexts which generate them. As stated earlier, the subgenres discussed here never got stale and, particularly during the twentieth century, have evolved steadily. It is the case of the “flawed utopia” that, according to Sargent, “refers to works that present what appears to be a good society until the reader learns of some flaw that raises questions about the basis for its claim to be a good society” and “tends to invade territory already occupied by the dystopia, the anti-utopia, and the critical utopia and dystopia” (2003, 225). On the one hand, Sargent shows the existing interrelatedness between subgenres; on the other, he points out how subgenres evolve grounded in existing ones and the constant transformations that occur within SF.

The endless exploration of imaginative ways to make sense of the world, to narrate apocalyptic situations which stimulate critical thinking and engender ways of survival are some of the reasons to pay close attention to dystopian narratives. Moylan and Baccolini's assertion that "[w]e need to pass through the critical dystopia to move toward a horizon of hope" (2003, 239) is particularly relevant: without facing up to the harshest scenarios humans do not actually commit themselves to change, to be able to live in harmony with themselves and with the nonhuman world.

1.4 The Meaning of "Nature"

Nature takes on different meanings within different cultural, social, and political contexts. It cannot be doubted that Western knowledge has developed its own concept of "nature" which has prevailed over other forms of thought, namely those of indigenous peoples and has also definitively marked the way of thinking, exploring, and exploiting "nature" in the Americas as in other regions of the world that were colonized by European powers. Therefore, what is at issue in this differentiation is not just theoretical differences but what those distinctions entail in practice, as academics Antoine Acker, Olaf Kaltmeier, and Anne Tittor affirm: nature and environments are not only constructed in theories and knowledge, they are also produced materially, exploited, transformed, and appropriated (2016, 11).

Bearing in mind that an ecocritical reading of texts involves reflection on concepts such as "nature" and "natural world," and in the American context these take on a particular meaning, it is better to shed more light on them. In general terms, it seems that hardly anyone has any question about the meaning of the term "nature" for it is commonly believed that "nature" is related to a natural space. But here a difficult question pertaining to the “natural” arises, which, in my view, firstly derives from the complexity of the very meaning of nature and, secondly, from the fact that humankind has gradually started to live so far apart from nature to the point of wondering if it really exists or if it is a socially constructed concept.

Despite the whole range of definitions of the word “nature,” I will draw particular attention to the concepts proposed by academics Maureen McNeil, Raymond Williams, and Timothy Clark. In order to show how difficult it is to clarify the term, McNeil asserts that for Raymond Williams nature is “‘perhaps the most complex word in the [English] language’ and that there is an ‘extraordinary amount of human history’ . . . embedded in this term” (2005, 235). McNeil adds that since the sixteenth century the term “nature” has also designated the material world, that is, all matter that exists in the world without the intervention of human agency or activity (236). This notion has indeed prevailed over the years, which takes this author to state that since the twentieth century there has been a general sense in the Western world that there are few areas and less physical world which are untouched by human intervention and industry (238). But whereas for McNeil nature refers to the material world without human interference, for Williams it contemplates three areas of meaning, and I will highlight the third: “the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings” (2015, 164-165). Hence, Williams goes a step further and offers an all-encompassing notion of nature in which the inclusion of humans is hypothetical, a stand that is becoming less controversial given that today many academics, scholars, environmentalists, and thinkers are increasingly taking for granted that humans are a part of nature. To my mind, it is still worth considering Timothy Clark's view, a specialist in the environmental humanities and deconstruction and what he terms "[t]he natures of nature" (2011, 6).

Clark starts by affirming that the term "nature" has several incompatible meanings whose interrelation can enact some distinctive environmental quandaries and points out three different senses. In its broadest significance, "*nature* is the sum total of the structures, substances and causal powers that are the universe. In this sense, evidently, humanity is part of nature, could never be anything else and even a radioactive waste dump is as 'natural' as a snowdrop or a waterfall" (2011, 6). The fact that a radioactive waste dump is as 'natural' as a waterfall is actually an uncommon, incomprehensible stance, but given its relevance I will expand on this matter in chapter 2. Clark's second sense of "nature" is the one usually at stake in environmental politics: "the non-human world, the non-artificial, considered as an object of human contemplation, exploitation, wonder or terror. In this sense culture and nature are opposed" (2011, 7). This is in fact an all-encompassing stance that has led to the objectification of everything that is not human for humans' own benefit. Clark's conception of nature as "the non-artificial," "object of human contemplation" and "wonder" and, at the same time, conjoining "connotations of the untouched, the pure, the sacral" (2011, 7) brings to mind the Romantics' understanding of nature – a vehicle for humans' health and self-consciousness. But besides being an object of human contemplation, Clark's second sense may also refer to the spectacularization of nature according to which it can be considered as a place for entertaining people, for instance, as public and private parks, as I will discuss later in this study. His contention that "[b]eing other than or superior to nature . . . forms a definitive part of many modern conceptions of human identity, and of the enlightenment project of the 'conquest of nature'" (2011, 7) lies at the root of its exploitation not only in the modern era but from the early days of human civilization.

There is indeed a significant difference between McNeil's and Clark's definitions which may stem from these authors' disparate areas of knowledge: sociology and the environmental humanities, respectively. It is also interesting to see, in my view, how their opinions differ from the ones shared by some well-known writers. This is the case of Henry D. Thoreau's view of man as part and parcel of nature: "I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself" (1986, 174), Rachel Carson's assertion that "[m]an is a part of nature, and his war against nature is inevitably a war against himself" (qtd. by Quaratiello 2004, 113), and Homero Aridjis's opinion that "we must reflect on the denaturalized life that threatens to be ours, for we are an organic part of the natural world" (2008, xii). It is certainly of paramount importance to take these authors' angles into account since the disruption of the planetary ecosystem has arisen from the established dichotomy between the human and the nonhuman worlds. This is in effect conveyed in Clark's second sense of *nature* in which culture and nature (equated to the non-human world) are opposed. For Williams, "[a]ny full history of the uses of 'nature' would be a large part of the history of human thought" (2015, 166), and he explains how the word "nature" has carried many of the major variations of human thought over a long period of time. In other words, Williams expands on the personification of nature as the goddess, the minister, the monarch, the lawyer, the source of original innocence, and/or the selective breeder (2015, 166-169).

Interestingly, the link between this history of the uses of "nature" and the history of human thought, brings to mind Maria Irene Ramalho's contention that "there is a sense in which the cultural history of the United States can be understood as the history of the constitution of 'America' itself as 'nature'" (1994, 2). In "American Exceptionalism and the Naturalization of 'America,'" Maria Irene Ramalho claims that a certain appropriation of the eighteenth century conception of nature played a role in the development of American exceptionalism grounded in Emerson's essay "Nature" (1836). In her view, Emerson's text does not talk about nature but about culture, "one quite undistinguishable from the other," that is, the title "Nature" could be replaced by, in this case, the myth of "America" and America could be translated and envisioned as nature. As she states, Emerson

> elaborates on the entity he calls 'nature' and whose immediate main characteristic is totalizing comprehensiveness, harmony, and availability . . . The eight subtitles of the essay (*Nature, Commodity, Beauty, Language, Discipline, Idealism, Spirit,* and *Prospects*) indeed suggest that Emerson is talking not at all about nature, but about culture, one quite indistinguishable from the other. (1994, 10)

In this study, Maria Irene Ramalho refutes political scientist George Kateb's ideas about individualism and democratic culture grounded in the Emersonian transcendentalist vision of the individual. To her mind, Emerson conceives every subject as a self-sufficient and autonomous individual who is able to create his own world, to establish a privileged relationship with nature, and ultimately to fulfil himself. There is no space to establish relations among individuals, the relation between individuals and nature is sufficient, hence the naturalization of individuals, and eventually of America. As Ramalho writes, "the Emersonian discourse accomplishes the naturalization of the whole nation, thus neutralizing everything that might jeopardize the fulfillment of its founding natural utopia" (1994, 12). And she concludes that Kateb appropriates Emersonian individualism to defend that it fulfils the American egalitarian utopia which is at the very heart of American democracy. Although a thorough analysis and a political reading of Emerson's "Nature" is not within the scope of this study, in my view it is relevant to reflect on the way that the privileged relationship with nature advocated by Emerson in the nineteenth century may be recuperated to reaffirm U.S. democracy. Yet, worthy of a special note is the fact that Emerson's presentation of the nation translated into nature, or "Nature's Nation" to use the phrase coined by Perry Miller, shows not only the appropriation of nature as a means of naturalization of the nation but also how nature has contributed to forge a unique cultural identity. In other words, it is the process of discursive appropriation of nature as the vehicle for the naturalization of the nation that is at issue here.

Along the same lines, or how nature can be made to mean different things at different times, it is important to recall how the idea of nature filled the European imaginary before the invention of the Americas.

1.4.1 Europeans' Fascination with "Nature" and the "New World"

It might be argued that one of the main reasons which spurred the Europeans' search for new lands was commercial interest. In fact, prior to 1492, while Europe was emerging from the Middle Ages and the nations were trying to surmount the breakdown of feudalism, Europeans' zest for expansionism, for a better and more affluent life elsewhere is hard to refute. Nevertheless, I shall expound on the way Europeans were captivated by nature's lure in the 'New World' in order to better grasp the detrimental effects that followed the "invention" of the Americas.

Acker, Kaltmeier and Tittor observe that the invention of the Americas following the European conquests was based upon imaginaries of nature. For them, the idealization of the potential of soil and subsoil, the idea of frontier and physical proximity with the "wild," the perception of great distances and vast spaces constituted social imaginaries of nature in the colonial situation (2016, 6). First of all, I claim that the word "invention" is a much more appropriate term than "discovery" which is commonly accepted, as in Kenneth Brodey's assertion that: "Christopher Columbus is probably the most famous explorer in world history. He is famous for having 'discovered America'. Almost everybody knows this" (1996, 3), or in J. Milnor Dorey's remark in his article titled "The Discovery of America," which also insists on the idea of discovery, that the explorers in search of a route to India could not have dreamt of finding "a truly virgin continent with vast resources waiting to be tapped" (1972, 17). In opposition, Edmundo O'Gorman, in *La invención de América* (1958), tries to reconstruct the history not of the "descubrimiento de América" but of the idea that "América había sido descubierta" (2006, 10). The Mexican writer, historian, and philosopher's description of facts in the voice of an Other brings to the forefront a different narrative from that of the hegemonic North. In other words, it makes it clear that America has been an invention of history that has been misunderstood in the Western world for centuries. As O'Gorman puts it, if one realizes that America was not "algo definitivamente hecho desde siempre" (2006, 53) but was invented by European thinkers who conceived the meaning of the continent, the event that is interpreted as Columbus's discovery of unknown oceanic regions would take a completely different meaning, as would the long series of events that followed it. From his perspective, all the facts that we now know as the exploration, the conquest and the colonization of America, the establishment of structurally diverse and complex colonial regimes, the gradual formation of nationalities, the movements supporting political independence, that is, Pan-American history would take on a new and surprising significance (2006, 53).

Yet, according to Mexican philosopher, Enrique Dussel, O'Gorman presents a Eurocentric thesis, the "invención de América" meant that América was not able to "*actualizar* en sí misma esa forma del devenir humano y por eso [...] América fue inventada a imagen y semejanza de Europa" (1994, 31). Dussel offers a different angle claiming that the discovery of America, its conquest meant land seizures, destruction of cultures, broken alliances and treaties, and endless tortures (1995, 13). In his view, the indigenous peoples were not discovered but "covered" given that their otherness, knowledge, myths, and culture were not respected; in effect, these aspects were eliminated so that a distinct outlook could be imposed on them. Moreover, Dussel brings to the fore less well-known historical facts, namely the significance of Amerigo Vespucci's arrival in Brazil (1994, 33): this Italian navigator's acknowledgement that the land where he arrived was not a part of Asia but "la 'Antipoda' de Europa en el Sur, 'una Cuarta Parte de la Tierra,'" the New World or "el *Mundus Novus*" (1994, 34), meant awareness of the existence of a new continent, a fact that definitely changed the world.

Thus, even though the undifferentiated use of the words "discovery" and "invention" may seem of little significance, it assumes a great importance given that the option for "discovery" was an ideological choice. Imperialism and colonialism, theory and practice together, constructed a European epistemology and Western discourse was taken for granted as the universal truth. For this reason I cannot help stressing O'Gorman's arguments presented six decades ago and Dussels's more recent angle. It is important to bear in mind, however, that despite the search for verifiable facts, history also comprises fictional narratives either in Europe or in the Americas.

Retrieving the aforementioned European imaginaries of nature, it is important to see how the notion of Eden, paradise, the pristine myth, and the virgin land emerged because even before Columbus's arrival in the Americas these imaginary landscapes pervaded European minds. As Europe was ravaged by bloody wars, famines, and deadly diseases at the onset of the Black Death, in 1346, people living in Europe felt the need to imagine mythical refuges and sought new lands offering better living conditions. They were not only eager to find new physical space but also political and religious freedom, knowledge as a way to overcome the obscurantism in which they were immersed, and, eventually, reinvent nature and human freedom in a new land, free from the chains of the European past. As Maria Irene Ramalho puts it, "[t]he vast, seemingly virgin land of an immense, seemingly unexplored continent appeared to offer itself to the voyagers as one more chance for the recreation of full human existence upon the earth" (1994, 2).

Columbus was no exception; he also felt the urge to pursue this dream, as historian Richard H. Grove states: "[t]he New World had a strong attraction for Renaissance man, and 'discovery', whether in the limited North American sense or in a more global one, gave an opportunity to locate Gardens of Eden, Arcadias, Elysian Fields and Golden Ages in a geographical reality" (1995, 32). And he further adds that "it was the very strength of Columbus's obstinate conviction that an Indian Eden, or earthly paradise, could be found beyond the Atlantic that gave the explorer the motivation he needed to carry doggedly on westwards" (Grove, 32). Imbued with the strength and conviction that an Indian Eden could be found, Columbus headed westwards and his journal accounts of the first voyage depict the reality he had conceived beforehand. As it is evinced in his description of the Bahamian islands where he first landed, they were "islas muy verdes y fértiles, y de aires muy dulces (Colón 1892, 32). Also the excerpt written to the Spanish Catholic Monarchs, Fernando de Aragón and Isabel de Castilla, show how he was utterly enchanted by the beauty of the islands he encountered: "[c]rean vuestras Altezas que es esta tiela [sic] major é más fértil, y temperada, y llana, y buena que haya en el mundo" (Colón 1892, 37).

As Christine Cloud observes, Columbus's words to describe the lands that he and his men first came upon when they disembarked, evoked the Garden of Eden for the trees were all splendid and magical and the flora and fauna were majestic in their beauty. And if the landscape constituted Paradise, the peoples that inhabited it functioned as the personifications of what humans used to be before their cataclysmic fall from grace (64). Cloud's standpoint is relevant in that it shows how Columbus's descriptions help to contruct Europeans' vision of America as Eden/Paradise. As she further remarks: "the journal of the initial voyage in reality *creates*, rather than describes, the lands with which its author first came into contact. It does so through the use of powerful textual images carefully selected for the purpose of reinventing the natural world in which Columbus accidentally found himself" (2013, 64). In my view, Columbus made a conscious choice for "powerful textual images" to reinvent the natural world. It is not by chance that the description of the lands he first encountered brings to mind biblical descriptions of Eden; he certainly intended to meet the Spanish Catholic Monarchs' aspirations for land and power, as he also wanted to raise Europeans' interest for the unknown and lure them with the possibility of renewal and rebirth in different, pristine lands. His comment on the beauty of the people he met – "todos desnudos como su madre los parió . . . muy bien hechos, fermosos cuerpos, y muy buenas caras" (Colón 1892, 24) – continues to reverberate the biblical paradise. Likewise, three centuries later, Alexander von Humboldt, known as "'the *second* Columbus,' the scientific discoverer of America" (Walls 2009, 13), would employ similar biblical language to describe South American landscape: "the cool evening air, the clarity of the stars, and 'the balmy fragrance of flowers, wafted to him by the land breeze – all led him to suppose . . . that he was approaching the Garden of Eden, the sacred abode of our first parents'" (qtd. by Walls 2009, 16).

Needless to say, what is at stake is not only the paradisiacal land, the Garden of Eden Columbus offers Europe but also the long term consequences brought about by his "achievement": colonialism, the movement of people, foods, animals, and diseases across the globe, started and shaped the social, economic, and cultural development of both sides of the Atlantic. In brief, after Columbus, the Spanish, the Portuguese, the French, the Dutch, and the English gradually discovered and exploited the vast natural resources of the New World. But Cloud puts it more blatantly: "[t]his biblical vision of the American natural world ironically led to its destructive exploitation, as it inspired the idea of unending fertility, which later morphed into the romantic anthropocentric notion that these were lands that could be exploited indefinitely, so plenty was their bounty" (2013, 63). The fact that "the biblical vision of the American natural world" led to its destructive exploitation is of paramount importance, nonetheless, I shall discuss it in the next section.

Also related to the European imaginary associated with the Americas, Frederick Jackson Turner's essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," presented at the meeting of the American Historical Association at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, in 1893, is one of the foundational texts of American identity which brings to mind "[t]he illusion of emptiness and virginity" conceived by the Europeans regarding New World nature. Interestingly enough, while approaching the westward expansion and how it allowed both immigrants and farmers to increase their dominion over inanimate nature (1921, 7) and get the virgin soil of the frontier at nominal prices (22), Turner did not erase the existence of primitive societies, since he pointed out that the pioneers met Indians armed with guns (13). For him, the frontier meant the land that lied at the "hither edge of free land" (3); it was "sharply distinguished from the European frontier – a fortified boundary line" (3) – and the frontier experience made American people's character and American culture develop in unique ways. In other words, Turner constructed American uniqueness grounded in the influence and significance of the contact with land at the frontier. Yet, his remark that "[t]he competition of the unexhausted, cheap, and easily tilled prairie lands compelled the farmer either to go west and continue the exhaustion of the soil on a new frontier, or to adopt intensive culture"(22) caught my attention, for he saw the exhaustion of the soil by the agricultural practices of frontier farmers. I would say that, to a certain extent, his main focus was the relationship between humans and nature because it was the relationship there, in that specific space that allowed Europeans to become Americans. The construction of American character was not certainly limited to the relationship with nature, it also involved other social dynamics of the border, but it also involved that one too. Obviously Turner's "frontier thesis" cannot be encapsulated in this simple manner, nonetheless, what I want to underscore is the fact that the U.S. historian's representation of the land was Eurocentric and there were other ways of conceiving the land and expansion. Namely that of the buffalo hunter, the Indian fighter, entrepreneur, and actor Buffalo Bill's Wild West show, which on the whole embodied many of the tensions Americans felt about the frontier.[19]

After the American Civil War, stories and novels depicting frontier life were not uncommon, but Cody's show was different and had specific characteristics: it integrated wild animals and all sorts of characters from the frontier and unraveled the violent history of the American West and frontier towards "civilization." I contend that both Turner and Cody's versions of the frontier are important; if, on the one hand, an essay written by an historian is a reliable account of the facts, on the other, Cody's performance, that is, Buffalo Bill's Wild West show helped to create the myth of the American West. They told different stories which exemplify perfectly well the disparate narratives of the conquest of the Americas as historian Richard White writes: Turner's history was one of free land and the creation of a unique American identity, while Cody's Wild West told of violent conquest, of grabbing the continent from the American Indian peoples who occupied the land (1994, 9). Also the author's standpoint that "[a]lthough fictional, Buffalo Bill's story claimed to represent a history, for like Turner, Buffalo Bill worked with real historical events and real historical figures" (9) is worth underscoring.

---

[19] According to several authors and critics, Buffalo Bill or William F. Buffalo Bill Cody (1846-1917) was a celebrity. One only needs to look closely at the number of monographs written about him. For example, U.S. historian Louis S. Warren points out his creative genius and says he was a world celebrity in *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show* (2005).

The violence of conquest, absent as it was from mainstream narratives such as Turner's, was however easily perceived and denounced at the margins of the Americas. The opening lines in Nicaraguan poet Rúben Darío's 1892 poem, "A Colón"[20] are witness to that:

> ¡Desgraciado Almirante! Tu pobre América,
> tu india virgen y hermosa de sangre cálida,
> la perla de tus sueños, es una histérica
> de convulsivos nervios y frente pálida.
> . . .
> Un desastroso espirítu posee tu tierra:
> donde la tribu unida blandió sus mazas,
> hoy se enciende entre hermanos perpetua guerra,
> se hieren y destrozan las mismas razas. (1-8)

To my mind, the personification of "pobre América" as an "india virgen y hermosa," or "the beautiful girl" who existed before the discovery and became a lamentable figure, "histérica" "de convulsivos nervios y frente pálida," four hundred years later, as well as the depiction of Latin Americans as "la tribu unida" before colonization and in 1892 at "perpetua guerra", render the violence of the conquest. On the whole, these two stanzas are a *bona fide* illustration of the poem's message. Darío deplores, criticizes and even diabolizes Columbus and the other conquerors for the violence, pain and destruction of the "india virgen" and "las mismas razas." In other words, America as it was fantasized by Columbus, is a lost dream, since the conquest and "perpetua guerra" led to the terrible consequences known to Darío's day. Basically, Darío brings to light the magnitude of the imperial Spanish presence in Latin America mainly regarding the effects it had on the indigenous peoples.[21]

---

[20] This poem was read in Madrid in 1892, when Darío went to Spain as Nicaraguan delegate for the commemoration of the fourth centenary of the "discovery" of America.

Backtracking to the concept of "india virgen," it is worth reflecting upon it for its controversial value. It is generally believed that indigenous peoples lived in harmony with nature, yet this does not mean that there were no environmental modifications, a tremendous impact on the landscape in the circa 15,000 years of their presence in the hemisphere prior to the arrival of Columbus, in 1492, an aspect noted by geographer William M. Denevan and which I will address ahead. Despite the fact that indigenous peoples' relationship to the natural world and their view of nature are oftentimes fantasized, they cannot be understated as that would mean to obliterate their history, culture, and even their own existence. In other words, one must realize that the indigenous peoples shared a worldview, lifestyle, and culture in many instances incomprehensible to the Europeans.

Since indigenous peoples considered themselves as a part of rather than apart from the natural world, it is worth underscoring their outlook on nature and their relationship towards it. As mentioned in multiple sources, there is little doubt that the indigenous peoples' spirit was imbued with a sense of reverence for and worship of the place they lived in, as well as of the world as they saw it. They sensed the interconnectedness between things, animals, and plants and for them “[t]he land was there to be shared by all people. They worshipped the earth that provided them with food, clothing and shelter” (Orenstein 1986), an attitude that largely contributed to degrade them and led some to consider them savages, seeing their way of life as being primitive and uncivilized (Orenstein 1986). Thoreau was very likely influenced by these peoples’ culture as he mentions that “[t]he necessaries of life for man in this climate may, accurately enough, be distributed under the several heads of Food, Shelter, Clothing, and Fuel” (1983, 54), which shows to what extent the great philosopher of U.S. transcendentalism advocated a simpler life for people in a nation that had hardly started to notice and experience the terrible effects of “progress,” at the dawn of industrialization.

---

[21] Within the scope of this work, the names indigenous peoples, Amerindians, Native Americans, and/or Indians refer to the native peoples of the Americas and will be used interchangeably, in some instances according to the text and author quoted.

Returning to the relationship between the indigenous peoples and the natural world, most colonizers could not effectively comprehend their sense of land sharing. Besides, they also failed to realize that most of those peoples could not understand the white man’s concept of private ownership of land. For the indigenous peoples, the land was there to be shared, all the community worked the land not to use it up but because they depended upon it for survival. Consequently, the land could not be the personal property of any man and many tribes looked on the Earth as the mother of all life. Ted Perry, the film script writer who attempted to recreate Shawnee leader Tecumseh’s 1810 speech "Sell a Country? Why Not Sell the Air" for a 1970 movie puts it in the following way: “[h]ow can you buy [the land,] . . . or [we] sell the sky . . . ? This idea is strange to us … If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can we buy them?" (Gardner 2002, 34).

Thus, many tribes considered the Earth like a mother and venerated, respected, and took care of "her" to the point that "[i]n the Spring the Indians of Taos Pueblo still remove the shoes from their horses and wear only soft-soled shoes themselves, for the earth is pregnant and they must tread lightly on her body" (Josephy 1992, 646). At first sight, this attitude seems inconceivable for our Western worldview, however, it clearly contrasts with the exploitative and ravaging attitude of white settlers and still more with today's capitalist belief in the disposability of everything and everyone. In her ancestors' vein, and to support this standpoint, Native American author Marilou Awiakta writes: "[a]ll around us we see life 'dying back' – in nature, in our families, in society. Homo sapiens are literally killing their own seed and the seed of other life forms as well. One cause of this suicidal violence is greed. And that greed feeds us on the philosophy that Earth is not our Mother, but an 'it' that can be used and consumed" (1993, 185). Awiakta's critique of man's greed, the commodification of all things, the commodification of Earth, the Earth seen as "it" instead of "her," or "Mother," as Awiakta puts it, is extremely relevant since this idea is at the heart of human disrespect for "Mother Earth." The author further observes that "[t]his philosophy even extends to the 'conquest' of outer space. History shows that when the people in power call Earth 'it,' they consider all connected with her to be its, too – objects to be dominated, controlled, consumed, forgotten. Vanished. They are – we are – expendable" (1993, 185). Indeed, it is precisely this reification of the Earth that has led to its massive pillage and is really putting all lifeforms at risk. I claim that we need to recover these threads of thought, they are crucial stabilizers to reinvent and rethink our concept of nature and our place in the world. Had more attention been paid to more sustainable ways of life and lifestyles closer to the ones advocated by the indigenous peoples, the pace and level of the devastation of the planet would have been different.

As mentioned earlier, the Americas were not empty, neither was the land free and sparsely populated, as it is commonly believed. Whereas *Collier's Encyclopedia* presents a figure somewhere between 15,000,00 and 20,000,00 inhabitants (Josephy 1992, 643), Denevan mentions between 40-100 million Indians in the western hemisphere. Anyway, the author adds that a population between 40-80 million is “sufficient to dispel any notion of ‘empty lands’” (1992, 370). To support his point, Denevan offers evidence that the hemisphere had been transformed. The Indian imprint on landscapes was evident, as he states: “American flora, fauna, and landscape were slowly Europeanized after 1492, but before that they had already been Indianized” (1992, 381). What is worth highlighting though, is Denevan's take which almost seems to underestimate the Indians' genocide, when he asserts that “[t]he Indian landscape of 1492 had largely vanished by the mid-eighteenth century, not through a European superimposition, but because of the demise of the native population. The landscape of 1750 was more ‘pristine’ (less humanized) than that of 1492” (1992, 370). In my view, despite evidence, this assumption can be controversial, as it may dismiss other sources that impart different knowledge. Historian John Bakeless, for instance, observes that some parts of the huge continent were wholly empty, even where powerful tribes controlled the forests, the land seemed empty to invaders who went from “settled Europe,” to use his own words (1989, 13). Obviously the phrase “the land seemed empty” does not go unnoticed, but he further writes that no human eye had ever seen those unspoiled landscapes (1989, 19). Yet, I accept Denevan’s stand when he says that “[t]he Indian impact was neither benign nor localized and ephemeral, nor were resources always used in a sound ideological way” (1992, 370). To put it briefly, Denevan demonstrates that in the ca. 15,000 years prior to the arrival of Columbus, the Indian populations of the Americas had altered the tropical forests through clearing and burning, practiced intensive agriculture, built roads, causeways, and trails – “there are more than 1,600 Km of causeways in the Lianos de Mojos” (1992, 377) –, and large cities such as Tenochtitlan, and Quito and many others with more than 50,000 people.

Charles C. Mann also partakes Denevan’s view. His *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus* brings to the forefront groundbreaking information regarding this matter. After a thorough study of about thirty years, anthropologists and archaeologists revealed that before Columbus’s landing there were probably more people living in the Americas than in Europe and certain cities had far more population than any contemporary European city. Thus, the preconceived idea that North and South Americas comprised vast lands with a small number of nomads, almost an untouched Eden, collapses. All these aspects are crucial for my argument regarding the urban environments of the novels under analysis, as I will show. Notwithstanding the fact that Denevan stresses that “[t]he pristine image of 1492 seems to be a myth . . . an image more applicable to 1750” (1992, 381), his argument brings to light relevant aspects that have been overshadowed by other scholars and critics, probably because there has been an interest in keeping the pristine and wilderness myths throughout history for opposed ideological reasons.

It is important to call to mind here that this impulse to value and respect the wilderness or the natural world originates not only in Thoreau, who states that “in wildness is the preservation of the World,” (“Walking” 192) and “we need the tonic of wildness” (1986, 365), but also in the indigenous peoples, writers, and thinkers. Confronted with the frequent usurpations of their land rights, indigenous people fiercely fought to keep them. They still strive against white dominion and dispossession and, following their ancestors’ track, they try to keep a harmonious relationship with the land, a cultural aspect utterly important to them.

Regarding the concept of “wilderness,” I vindicate indigenous peoples’ claim even more than Thoreau’s, in terms of what Peter Hay has defined as “Eurocentric arrogance.” That is to say, “the notion of pristine space untouched by human hand denies the very humanness of the tribal peoples who invariably dwelt therein, and often still do” (2002, 19) unquestionably erases from the map millions of indigenous people who inhabited the Americas before the arrival of the Europeans, as mentioned earlier. It is known that colonialism caused indigenous peoples’ demise, yet I do consider important to further explore the relation between their oppression and extermination and the ensuing environmental destruction which are related to the dawn of capitalism in the Americas.

1.4.2 The Myth of Nature in the Invented Americas

One of the most important threads to be explored throughout this study is a critical outlook on inter-American ecological concerns as represented in dystopian texts. In order to get a broader view of the environmental issues displayed in the novels which will be analyzed in chapter 3, it will be helpful to pay close attention to the way the idea of an Edenic America and its concomitant myth of nature were constructed, as well as the consequences these creations have had along the history of the Americas. Also, besides discussing these notions, I contend that addressing the invention of America – as a colonized territory – will impart significant knowledge to better realize the developments taking place in the Americas since then.

In reaction against a colonial approach to the Americas, an understanding of the continent that was marked by a European perspective, alongside the growing sense of U.S. hegemony in the hemisphere, Latin American writer José Martí was one of the first to imagine alternatives to the exportation of the U.S. model south of the border. He found in transnationalism one such alternative as evinced in his 1891 essay, "Our America," which advocated a transnational Latin America and helped me to take a leap to a Pan-American vision. Martí argued against the imposition of European and U.S. cultural values, influence, and knowledge and urged Latin Americans to be united, strong and create their own knowledge and identity. Only then would they think by themselves, know themselves better, and be able to establish unique, appropriate governments. As he claimed, "[k]nowing is what counts. To know one's country and govern it with that knowledge is the only way to free it from tyranny . . . Our Greece must take priority over the Greece which is not ours." (1977, 88). Back then, no other voice admonished Latin Americans for the menacing dangers coming from U.S. imperialism – and, I would say, capitalism –, as Martí did for he was fully aware of the power of "the giant with seven-league boots" (1977, 85), a stand buttressed by Isabel Caldeira, who claims that Martí questioned a rising and aggressive U.S. imperial power, which threatened the cultural and political integrity of the Americas (2012, 174). For him, then, racial and cultural diversity meant an enormous potential for the region's political, social, and economic development, therefore, in the face of U.S. growing expansionism he encouraged Latin Americans' self-determination. Unfortunately, however, his set of ideas did not prevail. In Boaventura Sousa Santos's view, in the twentieth century, the European American century prevailed over the *Nuestra America* American century. As he explains, it was not easy to live in the monster's entrails: *Nuestra America* had to fight not only against the imperial incursions of its northern neighbor but also against the local elites allied with U.S. interests. In addition, *Nuestra America* underwent a process of Balkanization, that is, while it fragmented, the union of European America became more effective (Santos 2001, 205-206). I conclude then that, had Martí achieved his goals, he would have contributed to shape a different Pan-American history and the world history. Martí's close attention to the transnational element, his ability to make cross-cultural connections and to bring to light the opposition between *Nuestra America* and the U.S. meant a new approach to the Americas.

To my mind, Martí pinpoints a relevant aspect within the scope of the comparative concerns of my study as his ideals are still worth considering when addressing the unbalance between North and South in the Americas. Latin Americans have had to fight against U.S. capitalism and neocolonialism, two root causes of environmental problems in the Americas which Brazilian Loyola Brandão and Mexican Aridjis address in their novels.

Also historian Herbert E. Bolton's endeavor to provide an overall historiography of the Americas is related to my overarching critical perspective in this study. In his essay, "The Epic of Greater America" (1932), Bolton proposed a comparative reading of the Americas. He held that no nation grew closed in itself, that it was impossible to study U.S. history in isolation and showed the importance of conceiving interconnections between the Americas. When he stated that the Americas had developed side by side and that ever since independence there had been a fundamental Western Hemispheric solidarity (472), he intended to stress their interrelated histories and cultures and a Pan-American unity. In this way, Bolton helps me to think about the Americas in relation rather than in isolation and to have a holistic view of the continent.

All in all, I think these are good reasons to mention Martí's and Bolton's influential texts: they offer a "de-centered vision of 'America,' i.e., a vision of an America not centered in the U.S." (Ickstadt 21). But while Martí helps me to push the U.S. imperial position aside by showing that useful knowledge is not just produced there but also in Central and Latin American countries, Bolton's comparative reading of the Americas reminds me of the importance of looking at texts comparatively. Both help me to look over the horizon of one country and one continent, both have an unquestionable value as they prompt me to consider marginalized forms of thought and knowledge which are fundamental in the study of and solutions for environmental problems today.

Finally, I cannot help evoking how Humboldt's *Cosmos* (1845-1865) contributes to my comprehensive view of nature in the Americas. Effectively he wrote his five-volume *Cosmos*[22] after the voyage to South America, although his horizon was much wider than any region, country, or even that continent. Humboldt saw the cosmos as – "the assemblage of all things with which space is filled, from the remotest nebula to the climatic distribution of those delicate tissues of vegetable matter . . . covering over the surface of our rocks" (1858, 68) –, a "harmoniously ordered whole" (1858, 24), or the universe. It is also my contention that, more often than not, it is hard to circumscribe environmental problems for, as Raúl de la Rosa puts it, "ecological degradation has planetary proportions" (qtd. in DeVries 2013, 20).

My study of literary representations of environmental problems pertaining to different countries in the Americas intends to simultaneously provide an overarching picture of the American continent, and I dare say of the planet Earth.

1.5 Colonialism, Christianity, and Capitalism

There is no doubt that colonialism, Christianity, and capitalism have fashioned the history of the Americas. For me, condensing the way they are intertwined in a short section is a complex and challenging task but I cannot help tackling them: firstly, because they shaped the different cultures in which the narratives I analyze were written; and secondly, because the writers I analyze overtly or covertly address them. I want to emphasize the fact that the history of the British and the Iberian colonialism and capitalism are entangled right from the outset, an idea corroborated by Boaventura Sousa Santos, who asserts that since the fifteenth century capitalism is not conceivable without colonialism, nor colonialism without capitalism (2008, 25).

---

[22] Humboldt was writing the fifth volume by the time of his death.

Backtracking to the early history of the Americas, when Columbus landed in the Bahamas's islands and baptized them in 1492 – a way to appropriate them as if they were totally uninhabited, for he himself made it clear that the Indians called the place Guanahani – triggered modern history and the Europeans' exploitation of the new lands and their wealth. For academic Jason Moore, Columbus was really interested in the New World's potential riches and so 1492 corresponds to the year zero of modern power, genocide, and capital accumulation. So strong was his desire for gold that he mentioned the term some seventy times in the diary of his first voyage (2017, 181). It is therefore not surprising that he proposed a vast project of colonization and enslavement presided over by himself in his 1493 letter to the Spanish monarchs (Pratt 2008, 124).

It may be argued that Columbus is a product of the fifteenth century being seen through a present-day perspective, but what is really crucial to underscore here is the fact that the European conquests (the Spanish was followed by the Portuguese, and the British, among others) and the colonization of the Americas meant the genocide of millions of indigenous people, the subjugation and exploitation of those who managed to survive, the appropriation of their lands, and the extraction of resources. The conquest and colonization of the Americas have definitely traced the history of the Western world as we know it today and, according to Aníbal Quijano and Immanuel Wallerstein, established the modern world-system, in other words, "[t]here could not have been a capitalist world-economy without the Americas" (1992, 549). Yet, the way it occurred under the British or the Spanish Crowns was different. Whereas the Iberian "conquistadors" started the colonization of America by the end of the fifteenth century, in the early stages of the world market, of capitalism, and modernity (1992, 553), the British settled in the northern parts of America in the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the capitalist forces were already underway. Then, while the Spanish Crown transplanted to its American colonies the system of *encomienda*, a governmental grant that consisted of entrusting Indian groups to *conquistadores*, the British organized themselves as a society of Europeans on American soil and, at first, tended to consider Native American societies as "nations" (1992, 552). Since the Iberians assumed they were in America to care for the "Indians" physically and spiritually, to indoctrinate them in the Christian faith, to conquer land and take advantage of the natural resources, there was not a total separation between the colonizers and the colonized. But willing to maintain seigniorial privileges instead of protecting the "Indians," the Iberians enslaved, exploited, and extorted gold and all kinds of goods from them.

From Meyer Weinberg's perspective, in the U.S., before the arrival of the Europeans economic power did not exist and Native American chiefs shared crop surpluses with those in need (2003, 8). Indian America was a communal society based on sharing and kinship,[23] but it was converted into a plunder society by non-Natives (2003, 25). Whereas in the U.S., from 1600 to 1790, the commercial production of tobacco by enslaved and semi-enslaved workers favored the emergence of a semi-capitalist economy (2003, 1) in Latin America, economic development was different. When the Iberians arrived, they found civilizations in Mesoamerica[24] and in the Andes not only with an impressive accumulation of physical capital – roads, raised fields, irrigation works, and state storehouses (Salvucci 2014, 404) – but also with agricultural methods which allowed for surplus and markets. Yet, Latin America had no market economies based on supply, demand, and the possession of private property (Salvucci 2014, 405). Over the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, the magnitude of the indigenous populations' decline caused by diseases and the violence of the conquest meant labor scarcity, whereas the rent-seeking institution of *repartimientos*[25] and *haciendas,* in the South, or plantations, in the North, did not favor the emergence of competitive market economies (Salvucci 2014, 424). Consequently, as writer and journalist Eduardo Galeano observes, Latin American colonial economy was from the outset at the service of capitalism developing elsewhere (1997, 30). The main goal of colonial Spanish capitalism, which was primitive and essentially commercial (Salvucci 2014, 425), was the exploitation of raw materials for the international markets. These are the main reasons, in my opinion, that prevented capitalism from flourishing in Latin America. Besides, I cannot help mentioning that in

---

[23] It is important to remember that Native Americans' lifestyle is oftentimes fantasized. One should not forget that there were disputes and wars between tribes.

[24] This is an area that extends approximately from central Mexico to Honduras and Nicaragua in which diverse pre-Columbian civilizations flourished. *Collins English Dictionary*, accessible at www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/mesoamerica. Accessed 22 Jan. 2020.

[25] *Repartimiento* is a supply of forced labor (as for use in agriculture, in mining, or in construction) imposed on indigenous inhabitants (Salvucci 407).

Salvucci and Weinberg's views, African and Indian slavery played a major role in the development of colonial history in the double-continent and had an overwhelming influence on the economy of the U.S. and on some Latin American countries such as Brazil, Mexico, and Peru. How else could resources such as gold, silver, zinc, copper, oil, and other raw materials be extracted in such large quantities in the Americas? I do not find a better way to express the Europeans' deliberate pillage than the personification Eduardo Galeano employs: Latin America is "la región de las venas abiertas" (2004, 16). This is, undeniably, the best image to depict the plunder and usurpation of indigenous peoples' wealth under the guise of the propagation of the Christian faith and the teaching of the Spanish and Portuguese languages. The extraction of resources, the exploitation of indigenous peoples' labor and the stealing of their lands in the Americas served, in sum, not only to fuel Western economic and political interests but also to pave the way to capitalism. Indeed, when Karl Marx asserted that "[t]he discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the aboriginal population . . . signalized the rosy dawn of the era of capitalist production" (2007, 823), he referred to the U.S., but no doubt this applied to the double-continent.

Scholars and critics Weinberg and Salvucci, for instance, oftentimes do not highlight the fact that religion is entangled with capitalism's earliest origins in the U.S. and with Latin America's role as producer of raw materials. However, religion also influenced the history of the Americas, given that the European settlers' religious beliefs underlaid and helped to forge their distinct paths, as Quijano and Wallerstein remark and I want to emphasize. I mean, Catholicism and

Protestantism exerted influence on the patterns of development of the Spanish and the Portuguese empires and the British Empire, respectively. When the British arrived in the northern parts of America and constituted themselves as European societies outside Europe, Puritanism influenced their social, economic, political, and moral life in what was to become the U.S. The fact that Puritans believed that hard work was the way to salvation and interpreted success as a sign of God's blessing, as well as their equation of work to religious devotion made them embrace a strong work ethic that certainly contributed to the development of the country. Conversely, the Catholic faith did not foster people's cultural, social, and economic progress in Latin American countries. As Walter Mignolo explains in *The Idea of Latin America* (2006), distinct empires generated the differences between Latin America and the U.S., that is, Latin America was marked by the South of Europe identified with backward Catholicism as Maria José Canelo confirms (2012, 99). It must be remembered, however, that development and economic progress took place at the expense of the exploitation of both humans and nature, a situation that persists worldwide.

There is no doubt that the European settlers' Christian faith influenced the way they treated the indigenous peoples and their relation to the land in the Americas. Yet, it may be argued that the violence that permeated the Europeans' invasion of indigenous peoples' lands may have had deep roots in the Bible. For instance, the following biblical passage may be seen as an exhortation to humans to dominate, control, and subjugate all forms of life: "Deus criou o ser humano à sua imagem, criou-o à imagem de Deus; Ele os criou homem e mulher . . . Deus disse-lhes: 'Crescei e multiplicai-vos, enchei e dominai a terra. Dominai sobre os peixes do mar, sobre as aves dos céus e sobre todos os animais que se movem na terra.’” (Bíblia. Génesis 1: 27:28). Gerald T. Gardner corroborates this stand remarking that numerous scholars, theologians, and writers find current Western religions actually antienvironmental (2002, 36) as is the case with historian Lynn White Jr. In fact, in his 1967 paper “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,” White considers Christianity the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen (1205) and affirms that the increasing disruption of the global environment cannot be understood apart from attitudes towards nature deeply grounded in Christian dogma (1207). But Gardner simultaneously notes that in other scholars and writers’ views, excessive levels of materialism and consumerism in Western countries are the main causes of environmental problems[26] and gives the example of scientist and ecologist William Ophuls who claims that “[t]he sickness of the earth reflects the sickness in the soul of modern industrial man, whose whole life is given over to gain, to the disease of endless getting and spending” (qtd. by Gardner 2002, 37). Although Ophuls’s opinion may be controversial (then supporters of capitalism do not see consumerism negatively), to my mind, it shows how he associates the destruction of the Earth to the irresponsibility and selfishness of human beings. Nonetheless, what is really important to stress is the fact that from the outset Christian beliefs and attitudes towards the natural world and the racialized Other have not been exempt from flaws. It is just worth recalling one of the reasons presented especially for Latin American colonization: evangelization. Being a

---

[26] I shall return to this issue in chapter 2.

Catholic priest himself,[27] Bartolomé de las Casas describes the most cruel, inhuman, and barbarous torture of the Indians:

> And the Christians, with their horses and swords and pikes began to carry out massacres and strange cruelties against them. They attacked the towns and spared neither the children nor the aged nor pregnant women in childbed, not only stabbing them and dismembering them but cutting them to pieces as if dealing with sheep in the slaughter house. (1974, 43)

On no account can I ignore the cruelty of the massacre rendered here; yet I wonder whether the insatiable human greed for conquering new land, in other words, accumulating capital, rather than the Christian faith,[28] do not underlie the causes which have prompted the current environmental problems.

I contend that the early phase of capitalism in the Americas established the conditions for today's voracious form of capitalism. In its endless pursuit for capital accumulation it has, instead, accumulated more misery, more social inequalities, more environmental destruction all around the world. Up to a certain point it could be said that humanity has reached the limit in various domains, such as scientific knowledge and technological breakthroughs, yet in this "progress" there is a downside – human and nonhuman forms of life are under serious threat. From the perspective of author and critic Chris Hedges, "[t]his moment in history marks the end of a long, sad tale of greed and murder by white races" (2019, 48) and is a product result of colonialism, as he states that "Europeans and Americans have spent five centuries conquering, plundering, exploiting, and polluting the earth in the name of human progress . . . They stole and hoarded the planet's wealth and resources" (2019, 48). I share Hedges's opinion to a certain extent, given that one cannot ignore the amplitude of environmental problems created in other countries such as China and India, for instance. But I refute his assertion that even when we are on the verge of extinction "we lack intelligence and imagination to break free from our evolutionary past" (2019, 49). I would say there is rather a lack of political will and determination. Besides, on the one hand, there have been, mainly in the last decades, countless prominent voices (Wangari Maathai, Al Gore, Barack Obama, Leonardo DiCaprio, Bill Gates, Pope Francis, António Guterres, and Greta Thunberg, to name but a few) who are fully committed to bring the environmental crisis to the fore, which, in other words, means a critique of unbridled capitalism. On the other, Ecuadorian economist Alberto Acosta, for instance, proposes a degrowth paradigm,[29] buttressed by Richard Smith (2013, 137), who puts forth the idea for a radical bottom-up economic democracy, an ecosocialist civilization as an alternative to this global economic system (126). Along similar lines, French economist Jacques Attali's suggestion of hyperdemocracy (2008)[30] or social critic

---

[27] From my perspective, las Casas is not an exception. One need only think of other catholic priests such as Miguel Hidalgo and José María Morelos who were executed and shot, respectively, because they tried to help the Indians to fight for their freedom and rigths in Mexico (Galeano 2004, 67).

[28] At this point, I think it is interesting to observe that Eastern religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucionism – generally considered pro-environmental –, have not averted the big exploitation of natural resources and the subsequent environmental degradation in India and China. However, unlike some Christians, who might have arrogated the right to dominate nature as following God's mandate, Hinduism holds that humans are a part of nature, while Taoism maintains that all beings are of equal importance. Gardner refers that Buddhism and Taoism stress the equality of different forms of life and emphasize the intrinsic values and importance of nonhuman life forms (48). Nonetheless, despite endorsing pro-environmental beliefs and attitudes, Eastern religions have been unable to create more environmentally friendly societies.

---

[29] I shall expand more on the term "degrowth" in chapter 2.

[30] For Attali, hyperdemocracy is a superior form of humanity's organization: the current economic system will be replaced by a global market with no states, i.e., a hyperempire that will bring about violence, extreme imbalances of wealth, and a planetary conflict. After the hyperempire and the hyperconflict, new values will emerge and will balance democracy and the market on a global scale giving rise to a planetary hyperdemocracy (164).

James Kunstler's view that the U.S. industrialized society has come to an end which will force U.S. people to live in small, localized, agrarian communities,[31] are but a few examples that humans do not lack intelligence or imagination.

Although Donald Trump and climate deniers lie about global warming, today the palpable evidence that climate change is causing floods, droughts, wildfires, diseases, and famines at an ever accelerating pace is undeniable. From Richard Smith's view, humankind may be fast approaching the precipice of ecological collapse and this is the most critical moment in human history (2013, 150). Therefore, he strongly condemns capitalism's essential characteristic – economic growth –, which tends to be any governments' overriding priority and everything it entails: over-consumption and pollution. In this regard, ecosocialist activist Ian Angus stresses that a fundamental feature of capitalism is creating waste (2016, 115) and mentions a basic contradiction in the capitalist system as pointed out by István Mészáros: "it cannot separate 'advance' from destruction, nor 'progress' from waste" (qtd. in Angus 126). Academic Del Weston's contention that we are at a crossroads in human history, a time when we have to decide between capitalism and the planet (2014, 195) is, to my mind, an unquestionable truth that politicians, corporate leaders, economists, bureaucrats, and pundits continue to dissimulate or ignore. One needs only look at world summits when leaders of various countries always prioritize economic growth. Under present-day financialized capitalism, as Smith contends, no government or corporation can oppose growth, hence every capitalist government in the world "is putting pedal to the metal to accelerate growth" (2013, 127) and here is the crux of the world's problem. I wonder whether, as Hedges affirms, "the ruling elites grasp that the twin forces of deindustrialization and climate change make the future precarious" (2019, 33). And I also question: are the lives and suffering of millions of environmental refugees worthless and invisible?

---

[31] In *The Long Emergency* (2005), the author contends that communities will have to rebuild from the bottom up (257) and will have to reorganize physically, socially, and economically (261).

All in all, I am convinced that my discussion and reflection on ecology and SF, more specifically, utopian and/or dystopian narratives evince that these can be powerful means to bring environmental issues to the fore. As I shall deepen and demonstrate in chapter 3, stories can interact with the reader and with society not only when they are written but also later, as is the case of the narratives under analysis. I claim that by investigating and tackling the myth and meaning of nature, Europeans' fascination with it, colonialism, Christianity, and capitalism in the Americas I am gathering a relevant context to be able to highlight and prompt more discussion on some of the most pressing environmental issues of the twentieth-first century, which Harry Harrison, Loyola Brandão and Homero Aridjis imagined and foreshadowed in their writings. Their tales are related to our present, or even more importantly, make us reflect on how the past has led us to this present.

Chapter 2 - Ecocriticism in the Anthropocene

2.1 Ecocriticism's Scope and Aims

When it comes to present an appropriate and satisfactory definition of ecocriticism I am assailed by doubts whether there is any which encompasses every aspect nowadays associated with ecocriticism. In effect, my feeling of uncertainty regarding this notion is shared by several theorists in the field, being therefore relevant to underscore right from the start that so far there has never been a consensus regarding its definition. For this reason, before attempting to shed light on the concept, I find it crucial to highlight Serpil Opperman's standpoint when referring to the set of essays devoted to ecocriticism included in the 1999 issue of *New Literary History*: "[w]hat stands out in these essays is the idea that, despite all the attempts to define ecocriticism from a number of ecological perspectives, there is no guiding strategy of interpretation, and no monolithic theory to support it" (2006, 105). Also prominent critics Lawrence Buell, Ursula Heise, and Karen Thornber attest ecocriticim's comprehensiveness when they state that it comprises "an eclectic, pluriform, and cross-disciplinary initiative that aims to explore the environmental dimensions of literature . . . in a spirit of environmental concern not limited to any one method or commitment" (2011, 418). Their stand that ecocriticism focuses on the exploration of the environmental dimensions of literature is pertinent given the fuzziness of some critics' definitions such as that put forward by David Mazel (2001), which I will discuss ahead. It is therefore fundamental to grasp the extremely broad scope of this field of literary and cultural analysis.

Only in 1978 did William Rueckert coin the term ecocriticism, when he wrote the essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism." In this essay he not only predicted the need to interrelate literature and the sciences, "[w]e need to make some connections between literature and the sun, between teaching literature and the health of the biosphere" (Glotfelty and Fromm 1996, 109), but also prefigured the connection of literature with ecology. Oppermann states that Rueckert “anticipated the conceptual problem of bringing literature and ecology together” (2006, 106). Almost two decades later, two now seminal works were published: *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996), edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, a collection of ecocritical essays by prominent scholars, and literary critic Lawrence Buell’s *The Environmental Imagination* (1995). While Buell regrets the fact that since Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), literary specialists have seemed to be little interested in environmental representation and underscores the need to “[i]nvestigate literature’s capacity for articulating the nonhuman environment” (1995, 10), Glotfelty outlines the development of the literary ecological discourse and offers examples of ecological approaches to literature. For her, “ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” and compares it to other forms of criticism: “[j]ust as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies” (Glotfelty xviii). Glotfelty’s definition, straightforward as it is – the association between literature and the physical environment having as its main emphasis an earth-centered approach –, continues to be a reference of the utmost importance in the field of ecocriticism.

In my view, one should reflect on the widely used term “ecocriticism” along with Lawrence Buell’s preference for the term “environmental criticism.” In his perspective, the concept “ecocriticism” still invokes a group of “intellectually shallow nature worshippers” while the term “environmental” – “approximates better than ‘eco’ the hybridity of the subject at issue – all ‘environments’ in practice involving fusions of ‘natural’ and ‘constructed’ elements – as well as the movement’s increasingly heterogeneous foci” and “‘environmental criticism’ somewhat better captures the interdisciplinary mix of literature-and-environment studies” (Buell 2006, viii). Nonetheless, Buell is aware that the term “ecocriticism” is more generally used. That may be why he finds it necessary to justify his choice and add that the environmental turn in literary studies had to do more with the issues addressed than with the methods. Buell also stresses the “narrowness of the ‘eco,’” since it connotes the “natural rather than the built environment, and still more specifically the field of ecology” (2006, 12). By using the terms “movement” and a “project in motion” to designate ecocriticism, he certainly aims to show that environmental criticism is not monolithic and is always shifting (Buell 2006, viii-ix). However, it is also worth considering Glotfelty’s choice regarding the term “ecocriticism,” also known as ecopoetics, green cultural studies, and environmental literary criticism. She contends that some scholars prefer the term ecocriticism as it is short and practical. Also, they prefer “eco” to “enviro-” due to the existing parallel between ecocriticism and the science of ecology – ecocriticism studies the relationship between human culture and the physical environment in the same way that ecology studies relationships between organisms and their environment. Glotfelty still argues that “enviro-” implies anthropocentrism and dualism, since humans are at the center of the environment (1996, xx).

To retrieve the definition of ecocriticism – among the myriad perspectives from William Howarth (1996, 78), to Glen Love (2003, 38), Greg Garrard (2004, 5), Oppermann (2006, 105), or Lawrence Buell, Heise and Thornber (2011, 418) –, David Mazel's simple take that ecocriticism is "the study of literature as if the environment mattered" (2001, 1) caught my attention as it may be inferred that (because of the employment of the conjunction "as if"), the environment may not matter, but rather that the core of an ecocritical reading of a text is the environmental concern, as George Perkins Marsh's readings will help me to exemplify ahead. Mazel's statement that "ecocriticism seems less a singular approach or method than a constellation of approaches having little more in common than a shared concern with the environment" (2) brings to my mind Oppermann's view that "[t]he only discernible pattern among ecocritical definitions is their focus on the importance of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (105). According to Oppermann, most definitions do not reveal a turn towards a field-defining theoretical method and the fact that ecocriticism is not a theory, but an attitude, "places it on shaky grounds" (108); therefore, what stands out in Oppermann's article "Theorizing Ecocriticism: Toward a Postmodern Ecocritical Practice" is her concern to build a field-defining ecocritical postmodern theory to help build an ecocritical analysis of literary texts. Consequently, it is not enough to study the relationship between literature and the physical environment as it was advocated by Glotfelty, to analyze how literary representations suggest the interrelation between humans and the environment, but rather to provide "a dialogic interaction of texts and contexts" and to consider that a "dialogic construction of human/nature interactions . . . also conjoin literary and scientific discourses" (2006, 118), as Oppermann suggests, and I shall try to bear in mind in chapter 3.

Despite the general belief that ecocriticism is relatively a new field of inquiry that began in the late 1980s and early 1990s in the U.S., both Glotfelty and Mazel go further back in European and American history to retrieve authors and works which can be considered harbingers of modern ecocriticism. In the introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader*, Glotfelty claims that before the 1970s, several literary and cultural scholars developed ecologically informed criticism and theory in isolation. There was, therefore, not a clear notion of the work being done by others in the same field, a reason why individual studies appeared in different places under a variety of subject headings, for instance, nature in literature, regionalism, pastoralism, and human ecology (Glotfelty xvi-xvii). In this respect, Mazel goes further back in history and asserts that "the environment has mattered to Americans, in many of the same ways it matters today, for more than a century" (2001 1). He also points out that nature writing is even older, more than two centuries old, giving the example of Gilbert White's *A Natural History of Selbourne* (1789), an English nature-oriented nonfiction book.

From England, nature writing extended to the U.S. and Ralph W. Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau, and Margaret Fuller, to mention just a few, promoted and made this genre vibrant since their work celebrates nature, the wilderness and the life force. Emerson's essay "Nature" (1836), discussed in chapter 1, certainly comes to mind, and Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) as well. As I expounded in my MA dissertation, Thoreau was a visionary who had a profound insight that Americans were trying to subdue nature to serve economic interests, calling attention to the harmful consequences of such control and manipulation. He felt the changes provoked by industrialization in the world around him, the unstoppable and destructive force of industrial progress, new means of communication, and technological innovation, and vehemently alerted his contemporaries to the dangers these changes entailed, as he stated, "[m]en think that it is essential that the Nation have [sic] commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether *they* do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain" (Thoreau 1986, 136).

Just ten years after *Walden* was released Marsh published *Man and Nature* (1864), which, according to Mazel, is the first book to sustain the scope and seriousness of human degradation of the natural environment and may be considered an early kind of ecocriticism. He explains that in order to demonstrate long-term ecological change, Marsh combined nature observation with the reading of a variety of historical and classical texts by authors such as Alexander von Humboldt and Henry D. Thoreau. Given Marsh's concerns, he read his "primary texts as *if nature mattered*," which made him one of the first U.S. ecocritics and environmentalists (Mazel 8-10). For me, this example helps us to grasp Mazel's definition of ecocriticism better since it illustrates that at the heart of ecocritical readings lies a careful attention to the natural world. Before the 1970s, however, other important works emerged, such as Norman Foerster's study *Nature in American Literature* (1923) and Perry Miller's "Nature and the National Ego" (1956), which showed the crucial role nature had played in U.S. literature and its contribution to forge an American distinctiveness. As Mazel expounds, Foerster acknowledged the experience of the frontier and the related experience of nature in the New World as distinguishable traces of U.S. literature (6) and Perry Miller associated the presence of the wilderness to the construction of a singular identity distinguished from Europe (314). But it is important to remember here that St. John de Crèvecoeur's essay, "What is an American?,"[32] was the first influential text that defined what Americans and colonial American society were. He showed the sharp contrast between the decadent European life and the promises and opportunities of the new land. The negative depiction of Europe and its people and of America as an innocent, bountiful land was striking: men who were as "useless plants" in Europe (1904, 52), flourished in America "by the power of transplantation" (1904, 53). St. John de Crèvecoeur's argument that the American was a "transplanted" European and that the American soil was what changed him deeply elucidated what made Americans different from people in Europe, i.e., answered the famous question of the mentioned essay's title. Nevertheless, according to Lawrence Buell, Heise and Thornber, the first significant ecocritical study is U.S. scientist and literary critic Joseph Meeker's *The Comedy of Survival* (1974), (Buell 2011, 418). In this seminal work, Meeker blends literary criticism and ecology, at a time when public concern for environmental issues and ecological consciousness was on the rise.

Meeker suggests that comedy and tragedy are two of the major modes literature has to represent the humans' adaptation to the environment and their physical survival. He expands on comedy and tragedy having in mind on one side, the comic mode does not attempt to change nature but helps humans to integrate and live in harmony with it: "[c]omedy is careless of morality, goodness, truth, beauty, heroism, and all such abstract values men say they live by. Its only concern is to affirm man's capacity for survival . . . Comedy is a celebration, a ritual renewal of biological welfare . . . in spite of any reasons there may be for feeling metaphysical despair" (qtd. by Glotfelty 159). Tragedy, on the other side, results from a Western anthropocentric view of life, which has promoted a disastrous relationship with nature and its exploitation: "[t]he assumption of human superiority to the processes of nature has justified human exploitation of nature without regard for the consequences . . . Humanistic individualism has encouraged people to ignore the multiple dependencies necessary to the sustenance of life" (Meeker 63). In short, because Meeker intermingles environmental-literary inquiry with ecology, his study is often referred to as having stimulated academic ecocritical practice. The crucial question he poses, "does literature contribute more to our survival than it does to our extinction?" (3-4), corroborates this view.

---

[32] St. John de Crèvecoeur or Michel Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur was born in France to aristocratic parents. He migrated to New York where he became a farmer, a naturalized American citizen and changed his name to James Hector St. John. In 1782, he published a set of twelve essays on American life in epistolary form – *Letters from an American Farmer* and "What is an American?" (Letter III), is the most famous of these letters, according to the National Humanities Center, accessible at americainclass.org/sources/makingrevolution/independence/text6/crevecoeuramerican.pdf. Accessed 12 Aug. 2020.

In the relatively "short" history of ecocriticism, its aims have expanded, that is, ecocritics have taken on an all-encompassing role accompanying the widespread increase and awareness of environmental problems. Among their major concerns are the ways nature is or is not represented in literature, the values that may be associated and conveyed through those representations and how they shape humans' perception and handling of the nonhuman world. Despite the disparate ecocritics' foci of interest, I shall try to abbreviate them to avoid wandering through a vast area whose borders are not clearly delineated.

After defining ecocriticism, Glotfelty affirms that ecocritics ask questions such as: "How do the metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind's relationship to the natural world?" (xix). In other words, Glotfelty proposes not only that ecocritics reflect on how human culture affects and is affected by the physical world, but also, to my mind, that they broaden people's horizons and make them acknowledge the fact that literature reflects cultural values and beliefs, but, in turn, it can also shape cultural values. In a long list that includes fourteen questions, Glotfelty also asks: "[w]hat bearing might the science of ecology have on literary studies? How is science itself open to literary analysis?" (xix). These questions show ecocriticism's need to engage with and integrate data from science, that is, the fundamental dialogue between sciences and humanities, which makes the whole enterprise of ecocriticism difficult. Presumably, it is not without meaning that a decade later Oppermann also poses fourteen questions to expand the ecocritical practice beyond its current limits (104), and once again I will only highlight the four most important ones for my study:

> How is the text ordered to challenge the reader to confront difficulties and questions concerning the environmental problems today? Does nature hold an ontological primacy in the narrative, or is it an absent presence? Does the use of fragmentation, discontinuity, play, and other devices of postmodern fictions suggest any ontological alienation from the natural world? Does the environment have a passive subject position? (121-122)

Since Oppermann considers that ecocriticism is still an attitude which needs "its own solid systematic theoretical ground" (108), she refers that these questions "can be useful in generating a theoretically legitimate postmodern ecocritical analysis as well as help orient ecocritical practice towards postmodern fictions" (121), interrogations that I will take up later.

Around the same time, Robert Kern's essay, "Ecocriticism: What Is it Good For?" (2000) attempts to demonstrate how "reading against the grain," as he puts it, can dismantle a "whole range of anthropocentric attitudes and assumptions" (18), while Glen Love's *Practical Ecocriticism* (2003) suggests ecocriticism's pragmatic usefulness. Indeed, both authors underline ecocriticism's usefulness: whereas Glen Love affirms that pragmatic awareness undergirds the field (16), Kern mentions that ecocriticism becomes useful when it recovers the environmental character of texts (11). Kern takes into account ecocriticism's appeal, as he notes:

> what ecocriticism calls for, then, is a fundamental shift from one context of reading to another – more specifically, a movement from the human to the environmental, or at least from the exclusively human to the biocentric or ecocentric, which is to say a humanism (since we cannot evade our human status or identity) informed by an awareness of the 'more-than-human.' (18)

In the same vein, Glen Love postulates that one function of ecocriticism is revisiting the canon, as he states that "[a]nimal presences bring to mind the depiction of animals in past literature, which in turn reminds us of another important function of ecocriticism – to reexamine and reinterpret the depictions of nature in the canonical works of the past" (2003, 34) and adds that *Moby-Dick* provides a promising opportunity to rethink a classic (34). His ecological, but simultaneously demanding and new reading of Melville's masterpiece brings to the forefront not only the author's insight that nature has an inherent value and power beyond human control, but also his rejection of a "self-centered anthropocentric view of humans in favor of an earth-centered one," as I suggested in my 2013 study

(Sousa 12). Also relevant is Melville's condemnation of the exploitative whale industry which decimated the species almost to extinction in the nineteenth century, at a time when issues such as endangered species, animal rights or sustainable development had not seen the light of day. In my view, to better perceive Melville's intuitive and profound sensitivity toward the nonhuman world, the following passage suffices:

> It was a terrific, most pitiable, and maddening sight. The whale was now going head out, and sending his spout before him in a continual tormented jet; while his one poor fin beat his side in an agony of fright. Now to this hand, now to that, he yawed in his faltering flight, and still at every billow that he broke, he spasmodically sank in the sea. (*Moby-Dick* 2003, 388)

Through the lens of these distinct voices, I hope to have ultimately shown that ecocritics seek to read texts in order to extract meaning and practical knowledge that will help humans to revise their opinions and attitudes and criticize the world in which we live.

As the degradation of the natural world has become more evident, a consequence of the ever increasing greed to exploit every bit of land and natural resources, ecocritics have addressed problems of environmental (in)justice and "other-than-dominant cultures and multicultural literatures," to use Joni Adamson's words (2001, 26). Contemporary Native American writers, for instance, as Adamson refers, give voice to their silenced and disempowered nations. Ecocritics, along with other-than-dominant writers, underscore the role of literature to change the minds and lives of individuals and groups toward the natural world, thus contributing to promote ecological awareness and ecological literacy. They point out ways to reconsider the nonhuman world and see the intrinsic value of other species and humans as equal members of the community. Heise goes a step further and talks about eco-cosmopolitanism, "an attempt to envision individuals and groups as part of planetary 'imagined communities' of both human and nonhuman kinds" (2008, 61). Only by recognizing that a fundamental shift in human behavior is possible can we hope that humankind perceives the crucial importance of caring for the nonhuman world.

When critics such as Vathana Fenn assert that "ecocritics lay emphasis on the preservation of landscape in order to save the human race" (2015, 118), they pose an anthropocentric perspective, since they do not value the nonhuman world for its own sake. It would not be far from the truth to say that without the ecocritics' lenses, the ethical and ecological problems addressed in many texts would not be explored, that is, would be downplayed or even totally ignored. It can be said that the ecocritics' commitment to explore and value the role of literary texts, which put the nonhuman world instead of humans as protagonists, is a means to highlight how humans relate to the physical environment and to call attention to the nonhuman world. They unquestionably bring to the fore the profound ecological implications this shift in focus entails for the future of humanity and of the planet Earth.

In 1989, when Glen Love delivered his speech at the annual meeting of the Western Literature Association and pointed out that "the most important function of literature today is to redirect human consciousness to a full consideration of its place in a threatened natural world" (1990, 213), he certainly did not have in mind only American literature. Glen Love's appeal to writers to raise the readers' interest for a sound relationship with nature is also a pleading to critics, as both parts have this challenge in hands. But after all, "[w]hat does literature know?" (Felski 2008, 54) – by answering this question, Felski highlights how literary works are sources of knowledge which allow readers "to apprehend truths previously unseen" and adds that they "call up new forms of consciousness, other ways of seeing" (79), direct their attention to the material world, expanding, enlarging, and reordering their sense of the ways things are (83). For her, knowledge refers to "what literature discloses about the world beyond the self, to what it reveals about people and things, mores and manners, symbolic meanings and social stratification" (83). In this way, literary works disclose themselves as a source of knowledge, one of the reasons for their reading. In *Uses of Literature* (2008), Felski expounds how reading entails a logic of *recognition*, *enchantment*, *knowledge*, and *shock*, what she calls modes of textual engagement (14), that is, literary texts have the potential to guide to self-interpretation and self-understanding (83), to transport to a state of delightful sell-forgetting when readers "are sucked in, swept up, spirited away," feel themselves "enfolded in a blissful embrace" (55). Enchantment is the opposite of shock inasmuch readers are confronted with what is deeply disturbing or shocking.

In spite of agreeing with Felski's perspective that we are now immune to the shock and that we inhabit a world of frenetic change and frantic rhythms (107), I contend that the reading of *Make Room! Make Room!*, *Não verás país nenhum*, and *La leyenda de los soles* may still instill a sense of fear, it can disturb and (dis/re)orient the reader because, to a certain extent the fictional environmental problems these narratives depict are looming on the horizon. In a nutshell, Felski emphasizes the way a text can "bite back" (7) in the process of reading and interpretation.

I consider that ecocritics may function as intermediaries between texts and readers, helping the latter rethink what it really means to be human among other species. The fact that basic natural systems will collapse if we do not change our mindset is obviously a matter of concern for scientists, biologists, writers, and ecocritics, that is, it pertains to both sciences and humanities. And I agree with Timothy Clark that ecocriticism calls for real change:

> The programme of ecocriticism itself has been the consolidation of this emergent culture, a metamorphosis in the way 'we' think, understand and read. A crude sort of species-identity has long been implicit in environmental criticism, with its admonitions that 'we' must change drastically the way 'we' think, otherwise basic natural systems will collapse. (2015, 17)

2.2 The Anthropocene: Humans' Impact on the Planet

Considering that the texts I analyze represent environmental problems such as biodiversity loss, pollution, and climate change, which are occurring at an unprecedented rate, and ecocriticism helps to make meaning of what is happening, it is important to address the concept of the Anthropocene – the epoch we are living now. Introduced in 2002 by Paul Crutzen (23), the term was rapidly embraced by the humanities adopting a different meaning beyond the geological one, as Clark notes, "[i]ts force is mainly as a loose shorthand term for all the new contexts and demands – cultural, ethical, aesthetic, philosophical and political – of environmental issues that are truly planetary in scale” (2015, 2).

According to Will Steffen, Paul Crutzen and John McNeill (2007), the Earth has left its natural geological era – the Holocene – and the Anthropocene began at the onset of industrialization, around 1800 (614). At the time, these authors suggested three stages in the Anthropocene: The Industrial Era (ca. 1800-1945), The Great Acceleration (1945-ca.2015), and Stewards of the Earth System (ca. 2015-?). They claimed that it was the recognition that human activities affected the structure and the functioning of the Earth system as a whole that marked the beginning of the third stage of the Anthropocene (618). However, while Steffen, Crutzen, and McNeill delineated in 2007 the stages dates, in "The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives" (2011), together with Jacques Grinevald they used more comprehensive designations for the three periods: the beginning of the Anthropocene, the Great Acceleration, and the Anthropocene in the twenty-first century (Steffen et al. 847-853). To my mind, the naming of the third stage (Stewards of the Earth System) in 2007 aimed to call our attention to the fact that humans are actually guardians and not destroyers of the Earth and the designation’s changes of the periods demonstrate how sciences are on shaky grounds in face of the current accelerated transformation of the planet Earth.

After World War II, during the Great Acceleration, profound changes took place: the world’s population doubled in just fifty years, people living in urban areas grew (over half of the human population lives in urban areas now), ecosystems were extensively changed, the Earth started to face its sixth great extinction with the rapid loss of species and the increasing use of fossil fuels, among other unprecedented changes. Steffen, Crutzen, and McNeill claim that the Great Acceleration occurred in an intellectual, cultural, political, and legal context, in which the growing impacts upon the Earth counted little in political and economic policies (618). I would rather say that political and economic policies did indeed prompt cultural changes and all of them together have led to the core ecological transformations of the Earth. Indeed, numerous authors stress the great changes that have occurred in the state and functioning of the Earth system after World War II.

Countless books and articles expose the devastating effects of the permanent search for economic expansion on the global environment, yet there are disparate stands as regards the main driver of the current environmental crisis. Philosopher and cultural theorist Slavoj Žižek for one contends that the current crisis "has no intrinsic connection to the logics of capitalist, nationalist, or socialist identities" (2011, 331). For Žižek, the conditions of life are more related to the way different lifeforms connect to one another. He sees species' extinction and the real threat that exists when the conditions that sustain human existence are destabilized independently of the political regime/ideology in place. Žižek therefore claims that, "the whole crisis cannot be reduced to a story of capitalism" (332).

By contrast, academics Raj Patel and Jason Moore argue that it is not right and fair to say that humans alone are responsible for this scale and massive destruction of the Earth – but rather capitalism inasmuch as the cheapness of "things," or elements which are not consumer goods or objects undergird it. In their view, previous human civilizations altered their environments along history, but not with the speed and scale of destruction of the last decades, because none "were guided and governed by the strategy of cheap nature" (2018, 71). Predicated on the thesis that the modern world has been made through seven cheap elements or "things" – nature, money, work, care, food, energy, and lives – (16), Patel and Moore argue that the story of these things illustrates how capitalism expanded (18). Hence, it is not just humans being humans, it is not just natural human behavior but rather a "specific interaction between humans and the biological and physical world that has brought us to this point" (18). These authors therefore think that it makes more sense to use the term Capitalocene instead of capitalism to talk about the way humans have appropriated, altered, and discarded the natural world. For them, the term means to take capitalism seriously and understand it not just as an economic system but "a way of organizing the relations between humans and the rest of nature" (16).[33]

In chapter 1, I discussed how capitalism, in its endless pursuit of profit has to stimulate economic production so that the economy can grow. Concomitantly it relies on consumer culture to stimulate new desires in people, even when their basic needs are already met, like the case of sugar. As it is known, this capitalist logic has developed and spread across the world with mass production and consumerism.

---

[33] I find interesting to point out the production of sugar, one of the first capitalist products. Patel and Moore state that "it was an experiment on an early Portuguese colonial outpost that many of the features of the modern world were first convened" (25), and then they expand on the vital role Madeira played in the cultivation and distribution of the product. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, "the denuded forest," to use their words, served to grow sugarcane exclusively and at the expense of labor exploitation, particularly of North African slaves and indigenous people from the Canary Islands. The sugar produced there served to "feed" the residences of European sovereigns and, basically, "Europe's wealthy ate the sugar, and sugar ate the island" (29). Later, capitalism reinvented itself on the island, wine production replaced sugar and, more recently, tourism came in.

Even though most critics agree that levels and patterns of consumption are degrading the Earth's ecosystems, pushing the Earth to ecological unsustainability and changing human values, others minimize or ignore their effects. For instance, while discussing overpopulation, I pointed out Abid Jan's stance, since he seems a dissonant voice who believes the planet Earth can sustain 40 billion people. But over the decades, humankind has gradually become aware that it cannot grow indefinitely in numbers, otherwise resources will be scarce. And as population growth has begun to slow down, humanity's impact on the planet has become more and more scrutinized and compelling. In Fred Pearce's view, "rising consumption is a much bigger threat to the planet" (2010, 203), that is, comparing the damage caused by rising population and rising consumption, the latter "represents a greater peril" than population growth (204). Pearce contends that consumption is responsible for almost all of our ecological footprint in the last three decades, an unsurprising aspect given that world economies and political agendas constantly refer development and growth, and the latter always involves more consumption. In this regard, also environmental historian Donald Worster states that "our home planet is ecologically shrinking because of our growing technology, population and consumption" (2016, 221). Yet, one should never forget that this is only prevalent in the West or First World.

In chapter 1, I shed some light on the pertinence of population explosion as a literary topic with reference to Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) and Paul Ehrlich's and Ann Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968). I also underlined that novels and short stories tackling overpopulation and overcrowded cities came along with a considerable body of scientific works addressing the same topics. Curiously enough, this substantiates Scott Slovic and Paul Slovic's view that it is vital to complement quantitative discourse with stories and images (2015, 9), mainly in the twenty-first century, when people are flooded with data. This is an utterly important aspect given that when discussing environmental and social phenomena, statistics, facts, and numbers do not touch people's hearts. Therefore, a balance is needed: "quantification," as these authors state, "cries out for words" and for the discourse of emotion (5) that may open up possibilities for the role of literature in raising people's awareness.

Regarding overpopulation, I resort to the question posed by both authors: "[w]ithout numbers, how could we evaluate what's happening in the world and know how to react?" (Slovic and Slovic 1). To what extent is it important to compare and consider the world population figures before and after 1800, when it started increasing exponentially? Or to know that the world population of 10 million in the year 10,000 BC, as archaeologists estimate, had risen to 7, 7 billion people until 2019? In the Americas, Denevan estimates that the hemisphere might have had 100 million indigenous people, when today's population surpasses 1 billion (1992, 370) and it is still soaring. The world's population global trend upward also reflects the reality of Northern America, Latin America and the Caribbean and, obviously, of the U. S., Mexico, and Brazil. There is little doubt then that human beings are a burden to the Earth and whether we like it or not this reality still requires more careful pondering, responsibility, and a different outlook. I cannot therefore help exploring "the unspoken driver of environmental destruction" (2010, xv), as Pearce puts it, stressing that, in his view, "consumption is the greater peril" (204), although this practice has to do with habits and lifestyles and not just with the number of people that inhabit the planet.

After World War II, when the U.S. wanted to stimulate the economy previously oriented to the war, consumption was seen as something good and hardly anyone could foretell the far-reaching consequences of a consumer culture. By reading economist Victor Lebow's 1955 paper, "Price competition in 1955," one understands how the U.S. society has been cunningly manipulated and succumbed to such culture. Lebow's opinion in 1955 that, "[o]ur enormously productive economy demands that we make consumption our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual satisfactions, our ego satisfactions, in consumption" (3) has materialized. As the government started to promote consumption as a means for development, people also started to equate consumption with well-being and happiness, the way Lebow had encouraged. The correlation between consumption and well-being brings me to historian David M. Potter's argument that economic abundance shaped an American distinctive character. It suffices to highlight that in *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character* (1958), Potter stressed that a single factor, "the unusual plenty of available goods or other usable wealth," or "economic abundance" exercised an "important influence upon the life and attitudes of the American people" (xix).

Notwithstanding, the fact that the U.S. can be considered the cradle of consumption, very early on writers and other prominent citizens raised their voices against this hidden allure. Little did Henry D. Thoreau's wake-up call through his experiment on the shores of Walden Pond, in the nineteenth century, or President Jimmy Carter's warning of consumerism, one century later, achieve, though: "too many of us now tend to worship self-indulgence and consumption. Human identity is no longer defined by what one does, but by what one owns. But we've discovered that owning things and consuming does not satisfy our longing for meaning" (Carter 1979). In the U.S., despite President Carter's "preaching" and other voices of scientists, artists, and writers, for example, consumption continued to increase, since capitalism required it for endless economic growth, undergirded by business, powerful institutions (including the state), the media, and education. The idea that the economic and political systems in the U.S. have promoted consumer values and patterns both internally and externally is corroborated by Donald Worster, who notes that "the chief goal animating modern life, first in Europe and the Americas and now globally has been to achieve infinite growth in money and possessions" (2016, 223). While he poses the question of "what will happen to that quest for endless growth?" (223), most critics underscore that such unlimited growth is not viable, and that it does not make any sense to think that the main purpose of human existence is to accumulate wealth. Therefore, instead of growth, we should promote degrowth, as I will elucidate ahead.

In the U.S., the materialistic values and overconsumption patterns that pervade society have led to inconceivable, unprecedented levels of ecological impact: while the average U.S. citizen has an ecological footprint of 23.2 acres, each person in India or in Africa has less than 2.5 acres (Pearce 203), and whereas the average individual uses 88 kilograms of resources daily, the average European, for instance, uses 43 kilograms today, says Erik Assadourian, who adds that "if everyone lived like Americans, Earth could sustain only 1.4 billion people" (2010, 6). I believe these figures speak for themselves. In addition, in the U.S. overconsumption is also related to the financial market and it must not be forgotten that much consumption is on credit.

As exposed in the preceding section, there is no doubt today that the environmental reality is powerfully linked to human impact on the planet, and given the

U.S. contribution to global environmental deterioration one would expect it would take the lead in the presentation of solutions to the ecological problems it has spurred worldwide. Yet, the astounding fact is that the alternative to the U.S. model of development, which has been spread throughout the world, comes from the periphery or the so-called Third World. As an example, the philosophy of *Buen Vivir* emerged in Ecuador and Bolivia, two Latin American countries considered "undeveloped," as I shall illuminate in the next section. I believe this may be an appropriate answer to Worster's question posed before (2016, 223), as the quest for endless growth shows humans that their lives are shallow if their ultimate goal in life is the possession of material goods. This is a standpoint shared by Annie Leonard, who asserts that, "[a]fter a certain point, economic growth (more money and more Stuff [sic]) ceases to make us happier" (2010, xxi).

On the whole, examining ecocriticism in the Anthropocene involves, as I have shown, reflecting and discussing the reasons that have led humans to separate themselves from nature and cause such a great impact on the planet. Particularly relevant for my study, though, is examining how literature and ecocriticism contribute to shed a critical light on the Anthropocene. Clark argues that "[t]he Anthropocene brings to an unavoidable point of stress the question of the nature of Nature and of the human. It represents, for the first time, the demand made upon a species consciously to consider its impact as a totality upon the whole planet, the advent of a kind of new reflexivity as a species" (2015, 16). Therefore, for me, the dynamic role played by literature and ecocriticism in the whole debate, and their contribution to raise a new consciousness in humankind deserve serious attention.

2.3 Ecocriticism in Latin America

When considering the title of this chapter, “Ecocriticism in the Anthropocene,” it may be argued that it makes little sense to approach ecocriticism separately in the U.S. and in Latin America. However, I shall demonstrate that, in order to have a broader and deeper insight into ecocriticism in the Americas, it will be more appropriate to make comparisons between the Anglo-European and Latin American ecocritical scholarship, since there are more than subtle nuances that must be foregrounded.[34]

As I pointed out in the previous section, prior to the emergence of ecocriticism in the late 1980s, there were numerous writers from England to the U.S. who celebrated and represented nature in their narratives. I want to hightlight that, in Latin America some writers also paid attention to the nonhuman world and depicted the relationship between humans and nature in their works in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hence, despite the fact that most of the recent scholarship theorizing the development of ecocriticism has positioned Europe and the U.S. as the epistemological centers, as Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George

---

[34] It is crucial to clarify that, for the purpose of this study, I shall consider *Encyclopedia Britannica*’s definition of Latin America as comprising the entire continent of South America, Mexico, Central America and the islands of the Caribbean whose inhabitants speak a Romance language, instead of Beatriz Rivera-Barnes’s position that “‘Latin America’ includes any country or area that was once a colony of Spain (including the southern United States)” (2009, 1), which excludes countries like Brazil. My choice is based on the fact that Latin America, colonized by both the Spaniards and the Portuguese (French Guiana is a territorial collectivity of France, Suriname was a Dutch colony, and Guyana has a Dutch and British colonial past) since the fifteenth century, shares an experience and history that has more commonalities than differences, thus it would make little sense not to consider Brazil. There is indeed diversity among the various regions and territories, for instance, the question of language difference – Spanish and Portuguese – still plays an important role in keeping these countries apart. Nonetheless, it is worth recalling that three centuries of Iberian colonialism and the struggles for independence have contributed to somehow forge some similarities in identities and heritages, and much more so regarding the connection to nature/land, ecological concerns, and ecocriticism.

Handley state (2011, 8), by following some thinkers' and scholars' footpaths, I shall bring to the forefront some authors whose texts display an environmental imagination before ecocriticism's development in Latin America.

While Laura Barbas-Rhoden asserts that "Latin American ecocriticism is still in its incipient stages" (2011, 7), Heike Scharm contends that "la afirmación de que la ecocrítica origine en el ámbito norteamericano o europeo, y que en el ámbito latinoamericano no se haya desarrolhado todavía, o solo de forma esporádica, y escasa, es debatible" (2017, 46). Scharm recognizes that specific ecocritical readings in Latin America are relatively scarce when compared to the U.S. and Europe (32). In her view, academia has given little attention to Latin American intellectual diversity (38), but I think she disregards the fact that Anglo-Saxon criticism has much more visibility than any other not only because of the language or language in itself but also the geographical position of the U.S. and Britain, as I shall emphasize at the end of this section. She gives the example of Mexican economist and environmental sociologist, Enrique Leff, one of the most well-known Latin American ecological thinkers, who is not widely quoted in discussions and ecocritical studies. In an innovative manner, Leff equates the environmental crisis to a knowledge crisis, which demands an epistemological shift. As he observes, "[c]omo crisis del conocimiento, la crisis ambiental apunta hacia una nueva comprensión del mundo, de las relaciones sociedad-naturaleza, que induce cambios en el orden cultural y social, cambios cognitivos y éticos" (2011, 27). Thus, the environmental crisis entails the formation of new human beings, a new conception of the world because its root cause is the very understanding of life and the conditions of life on the planet. The crisis compels humans to modify their ways of thinking, their ways of acting, their behaviors, attitudes, and relationships not only with nature but also with others and with the world. It demands new ethics, new values, it is about learning to be in the world, what Leff calls “una nueva racionalidad ambiental” that replaces the “racionalidad de la modernidad” (40), which was based on the concept of unlimited progress, exploitation of natural resources, and depredation of nature.

As mentioned in chapter 1, the U.S. was conceived as nature’s nation. In Latin America “nature is nation” as is substantiated by Rivera-Barnes who asserts that: “given Latin America’s natural resources, nature is economy, nature is nation, and the political is ecological” (147); therefore what is at stake is human relation to land. This has been recognized by several scholars and intellectuals, such as Barbas-Rhoden, who asserts that “questions of land use dominate the history of Latin America” (9), and Mark Anderson and Zélia Bora, who remark that “[d]ue to the legacy of colonialism . . . land has historically occupied a central position in Latin American sociopolitical discourse” (2016, xi). So, we are now in a better position to grasp how the natural world and human relation to land have played a major role in literature, as well as in cultural, social, and political discourses in Latin America.

Quijano and Wallerstein’s reflection on the differences between Iberian and British colonizations of the Americas sheds light on the existing disparity between Anglo and Iberian heritages as far as the human-nature relationship is concerned. No doubt, Iberian and British colonizations meant disparate policies in the Americas, as I explained in chapter 1. The Iberian colonial powers defined a structure of production and a relationship to the land different from the ones implemented in the British colonies. While the former were in the Americas to conquer land, take advantage of the natural resources, and built societies of European and Native Americans which did not articulate a political unity when colonization came to an end, the latter, in a first stage, participated with raw materials in the process of industrialization of the mother country, and later, in the nineteenth century, developed as a capitalist force.

I expounded before that different modes of colonization produced different outcomes. Nevertheless, I must emphasize that regardless of territorial origin and the level of development, in both Northern and Southern America, indigenous peoples were subjugated, enslaved, exploited, even exterminated, as is the case of the Aztecs, a matter to which I will return in chapter 3. The encroachment upon nature and the exploitation of natural resources occurred in a similar way in the North and the South, but as industrialization and the world-system progressed in the Americas, and Latin America was relegated to a peripheral role, nature in the South became more equated to economy and value, since the economy was still mostly based on agriculture and mining. Almost everything was extracted from the land, from agricultural products to oil, lumber, minerals, among other materials, not only for internal needs but also, after the colonial cycle, to feed the imperialist, capitalist needs of Britain and the U.S.

For Latin American governments and bourgeoisies (in its Marxist sense), extractivism is not dissociated from their own political interests and matters of economic development. Jennifer French reinforces the importance of nature in Latin America when she writes that "the foundational discourses of Spanish America are for good reason dominated by a rhetoric of nature: nature was to be the economic basis of the new republics, in the eyes of both European capitalists and the creole elites who shaped their post-independence development" (2005, 13).[35] French claims that Britain maintained a scarcely perceptible empire in Latin America that contrasted with "the blatant jingoism of U.S. imperialism" (16), she connects to neo-colonialism. That is, from the immediate post-independence period till the 1920s, when the U.S. became the dominant power in the Americas, Latin America was economically subordinated to Britain, its republics functioned as Britain's colonies, although they maintained the appearance of having autonomy (6). French criticizes not only British neo-colonialism but also internal colonialism that since colonial domination protected the creole elites' privileges which allowed the exploitation of people and natural resources. Consequently, it seems plausible to assert that Latin American literature, in general, is deeply grounded in the condemnation of abusive extraction and exploitation of natural resources, along with the sense of an irretrievable loss of paradisiacal landscapes and cultures which have been destroyed, first by colonizers and then by British capitalists, the countries' creole elites, and the U.S.

In Latin America, the most popular voice regarding ecocriticism still during colonial times is that of a foreigner, Alexander von Humboldt, as I have already mentioned in Chapter 1. He explored Central and South America from 1799 to 1804 and his contribution was indeed crucial as one of his best-known book, *Views of*

---

[35] In *Nature, Neo-Colonialism and the Spanish American Regional Writers*, French explores how early twentieth-century Spanish-American regional writers represent Great Britain's dominion over Latin America. In her literary analysis of the regionalist texts of Horacio Quiroga (stories written in the jungle of Misiones between 1906 -1914), Benito Lynch (*El inglés de los güesos*, 1924) and José E. Rivera (*La vorágine*, 1924), she argues that theirs are responses to the economic, social, and cultural changes caused by Britain's economic supremacy in Latin America.

Nature (1808), demonstrates. In this work he conjoins scientific rigor with aesthetic beauty. To use Mary Louise Pratt's words, "[a]s the titles of his writings suggest, Alexander von Humboldt reinvented South America first and foremost as nature" (2008, 118), combining arts and sciences in innovative pieces of nature writing. Nevertheless, still more important than the depiction of awesome imageries of the "superabundant tropical forests," "snow-capped mountains," and "vast interior plains," to use Pratt's terms (123), is Humboldt's influence in forging a modern ecological vision.

The way Laura Walls unearths Humboldt's vast engagement with the exploration, and epistemological construction of Latin American nature and landscape is difficult to be exceeded by any other contemporary voice. Humboldt's discourse on nature was what we call today an environmental discourse ahead of his time; he was a true precursor of ecology who was fully aware of Barry Commoner's perception of nature as a "self-enclosed system of energy exchanges: Everything is connected to everything else" (qtd. in Chris Williams 2010, 208). Walls consequently affirms that Humboldt "was the first to warn the world about the link between deforestation, catastrophic environmental change, and depopulation; his work on climate change marks the beginning of awareness of global warming" (2009, ix). Humboldt observed the devastation caused by humans and associated the cutting of forests to climate change, attributing the fall in water levels in Mexico's Lake Valencia to the deforestation caused by the Spaniards (Walls 9). Despite the fact that Humboldt's gaze falls on a landscape that is still harmonious and little populated according to today's patterns, his writings display how he envisioned the interconnectedness between humans and nature and his claim that none of them can be understood separately.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century, and despite belonging to a field other than literature, the ten expeditions undertaken between 1850-1859 by La Comisión Corográfica in New Granada (present-day Colombia, Panama, Ecuador, and Venezuela) also demonstrated interest in broadening the knowledge about the natural world and the landscape at the time. Their objective was to study the region's potential regarding agricultural products for exportation, to explore the unknown territory, to map it out and determine the differences between the regions in order to find common elements to forge a national identity. The maps, illustrations, and other significant information helped to create a body of culture very important at the time, as they added evidence to the narratives produced in nineteenth century Latin America.

Looking now at literature, a local perspective finds expression in Venezuelan writer Andrés Bello, who is probably one of the first poets who speaks very highly of the Latin American landscape. His poem "Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida," published in London, in 1826, depicts the flora of the continent at a time when the landscape and the historical realities of South America were practically ignored in European literary and cultural circles. As referred in *La Enciclopedia Biográfica en Línea*, "todo en la *Silva* de Andrés Bello conduce a la exaltación de esta realidad que tan insensibles había dejado a los poetas de siglos pasados." The publication of Bello's poem represents thus a watershed in Latin American literature since it no longer searches inspiring motives in Europe but finds them instead in the vast universe of the American continent. For this reason Adrian Taylor Kane claims that

Bello calls "for cultural independence through agrarianism in 'Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida'" (2010, 1). In effect, this is a good reminder of Emerson's essay, "The American Scholar" (1837), only a decade later, which also calls for U.S. independence pertaining to culture, advocating a literature of their own, original and free from European influence. Bello's immersion in the vast universe of American landscape is undoubtedly paving the way to a particular Latin American expression that will have influence on future forms of literary expression. Curiously enough, the call made by both authors is similar: Emerson, the father of American Transcendentalism and the most influential philosopher of his time in the U.S., vindicated in his 1836 essay "Nature" an original literature that looked at and valued a distinguishing feature of the U.S., that is, the enormous wealth that constitutes their natural world, as Isabel Alves puts it: "a vastidão, a beleza, a variedade de habitats, as matérias primas, a acessibilidade, e, sobretudo, o esparso povoamento humano" (2015, 620). Bello, in turn, forged Latin American culture grounded in agriculture – on the real and the metaphorical level then it has to do with the physical, moral, psychological, and political landscape (Rivera-Barnes 2009, 65).

Another nineteenth century prominent voice is Colombian poet Gregorio Gutiérrez González. His poem "Memoria sobre el cultivo del maíz en Antioquia" (1866) is worth considering given the pertinence of its theme and the way it imparts human dominion over the land. Broadly speaking, this poem is divided into four sections and the first one describes the way the jungle is cleared and how it is properly prepared for corn cultivation, as the following verses partly illustrate:

> Cansan los ecos de la selva augusta.
> Anchas astillas y cortezas leves

Rápidamente por el aire cruzan;
A cada golpe el árbol se estremece,
. . .
Sus ramas enlazadas se apañuscan;
Y silbando al caer, cortando el viento,
Despedazado por los aires zumba.

Here, the dense forest characterized as "augusta" with the trees being mercilessly cut down by the axe stands out. The personification "el árbol se estremece," conveys the fear, the incapacity to react against man's power when it is cut down and torn apart / "despedazado." This poem brings to our memory similar images of forest clearing in the westward expansion in the U.S. as rendered in Western films such as *How the West Was Won* (1962).[36] The clearing of the land through voracious fires to make room for planting the corn is depicted in the poem's second section:

De las llamas el trueno redoblado.
Y nubes sobre nubes se amontonan
Y se elevan, el cielo encapotando
. . .
Aves y fieras asustadas huyen;
Pero encuentran el fuego a todos lados,
El fuego, que se avanza lentamente.
Estrechando su círculo incendiario.

After describing simple methods for watering the crops and presenting helpful hints to frighten animals that damage the grain, the poet also represents the harvest of fruits and how the workers should be fed. In effect, González's poem may at first sight seem a very simple rendering of corn cultivation, which is not accidental given the importance this cereal has in the Latin Americans' dietary habits, culture, and economy. But when read from an ecocritical perspective, there are significant aspects in the poem that cannot be ignored, namely the voracious fires that devastate the forest, increase air pollution and endanger the species' habitats, as well as the monoculture, which has been recognized as one of the agricultural problems affecting various regions. However, I still regard the cultivation of corn as a metaphor for the core of the indigenous populations' cultures. When the Spaniards arrived in the New World, corn played the same role for Native Americans as wheat did for the peoples of Europe, in both cases, they were basic and indispensable ingredients for making bread. Interestingly, while wheat is associated with the bread used to hold God's name in remembrance in the Judeo-Christian tradition, González's "la memoria del maiz" aims to preserve the memory of Native Americans' food and traditions. From the expounded, it may be argued that González was an attentive observer of nature, who depicted not only the landscape's beauty, the balance in the indigenous' ways of life and subsistence in contrast with the violence of the devastation of land and forest. To me, this reading of Gonzalez's poem substantiates Jonathan Tittler's standpoint that "ecocritical analyses are not always available on the surface . . . They deconstruct texts and arrive at conclusions not necessarily intended by a given author" (2010, 19). Tittler's remark that "[i]f necessary, ecological criticism attempts to go beyond an author's conscious intentions, for writers do not necessarily share our values where the priority of the relation between nature and culture is concerned" (19) is relevant as there are ecocritical readings of texts whose authors did not intend to prioritize humans' relation to the nonhuman world.

---

[36] A depiction of life and death on the western plains, the white man's greed, and the Indians' suffering.

Published about a century later, the poems in *Canto General* (1950), by Chilean poet Pablo Neruda show not only his political convictions, the struggle against exploitation and oppression of peole and nature in Latin America but also national pride. It is no wonder that by comparing some of his poems with Bello's and González's, Neruda shows a more clear environmental awareness, for he notices and presages the consequences of deforestation and exploitation of natural resources. For instance, in "Los Abogados del Dólar," the poet says:

> Cuando llegan de Nueva York
> las avanzadas imperiales,
> ingenieros, calculadores,
> agrimensores, expertos,
> y miden tierra conquistada,
> estaño, petróleo, bananas,
> nitrato, cobre manganeso,
> azúcar, hierro, caucho, tierra (355)

The U.S. exploration of Latin American mining, oil, and fruit is after all the continuation of the pillage and plunder perpetrated by European settlers, as Neruda puts it in the poem "Los Explotadores": "[a]sí fue devorada, / negada, sometida, arañada, robada, / joven América, tu vida." (Neruda 352). In her book *Reading and Writing the Latin American Landscape* (2009), Beatriz Rivera-Barnes presents Neruda as one of the writers who denounces the plundering and exploitation of Latin America's natural resources that started in the fifteenth century and continued post-independence and stands at the root of present-day environmental degradation (146).

It is undeniable that Bello's, González's, and Neruda's literary voices reveal an acute awareness of the natural world around them. Bearing in mind Neruda's analyzed poems, I dare say that Eduardo Galeano's *Las venas abiertas de América Latina* (1971) addresses similar ideas for it tells about the plunder of Latin American abundant natural resources. Galeano himself asserts that he writes to raise awareness about exploitation and unfair distribution of resources (1997, n. p.). To my mind, the following passage suffices to understand the author's standpoint:

> [d]esde el descubrimiento hasta nuestros días, todo se ha trasmutado siempre en capital europeo o, más tarde, norteamericano, y como tal se ha acumulado y se acumula en los lejanos centros de poder. Todo: la tierra, sus frutos y sus profundidades ricas en minerales, los hombres y su capacidad de trabajo y de consumo, los recursos naturales y los recursos humanos. (2004, 16)

Galeano is undoubtedly more concerned with the pillage of natural resources, the utilitarian use of nature, and social injustice rather than with changes in Latin American landscape or an endangered natural world. Nonetheless, by denouncing the voracious extraction of natural resources Galeano draws attention (even if indirectly) to the harm that was being done to the natural world and his criticism shows that ecological matters are inextricably linked to political, economic, and social domains.

Although three decades separate Galeano's and French's texts, both place emphasis on the British colonialist presence in Latin America which was followed by U.S. imperialism and capitalism. These systems bear the responsibility for the region's "underdevelopment" and the great imbalance between North America and Latin America. By feeding its northern neighbor's gluttony, Latin America has helped to elevate U.S. imperialism and build one of the most anti-environmental countries on Earth.

In the 1980s, Latin American writers accompany the growing environmental problems, for instance, José Rutilio Quezada's *Dolor de patria* (1983), in San Salvador; Ernesto Cardenal's *Vuelos de Victoria* (1984), in Nicaragua; Elizabeth Burgos's *Me lhamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (1985), in Guatemala; Loyola Brandão's *Não verás país nenhum* (1981), in Brazil; Carlos Fuentes' *Cristobál Nonato* (1987), in Mexico, and Luís Sepúlveda's *El Viejo que leía novelas de amor* (1989), in Chile, to name but a few. Each one, in his/her own way, pays attention to the most pressing ecological issues and relates them to social and political factors.

Among these works, I will draw particular attention to Cardenal's poem "Nueva ecología" which combines ecological and revolutionary discourses, advocating change. As a poet, clergyman, and militant of the Sandinist Front, Cardenal, from Nicaragua, is one of the best known Latin American voices and he manages to convey his social, religious, and political beliefs calling for the peasants' agency, as Victoria Famin remarks, "[e]sta voz se alza para llamar a los campesinos a la lucha; no solamente por medio de las armas sino también a través de la poesía" (2017, 85). In a provocative and engaged manner, Cardenal condemns Anastasio Somoza's regime which is directly held responsible for Nicaraguan ecological degradation:

> Los somocistas también destruían los lagos, ríos, y montañas.
> Desviaban el curso de los ríos para sus fincas.
> . . .
> y los desechos químicos capitalistas

caían en el Ochomogo y los pescados andaban como borrachos.
. . .
El Río Chiquito de León, alimentado de manantiales
de cloacas, desechos de fábricas de jabón y curtiembres,
. . .
Eso nos dejó el somocismo. (1996, 223)

Through a harsh critique of the human and environmental damages caused by Somoza's dictatorship, Cardenal envisions political, social, and environmental changes and the reestablishment of a harmonious nation only attainable through a new regime:

Recuperaremos los bosques, ríos, lagunas.
Vamos a descontaminar el lago de Managua.
La liberación no sólo la ansiaban los humanos.
Toda la ecología gemía. La revolución
es también de lagos, ríos, árboles, animales. (1990, 118)

To me, the personification "[t]oda la ecología gemía" is striking and evinces both nature and humans' suffering when they are mistreated, depredated, and subjugated to dictatorial regimes. Nevertheless, after the depiction of a polluted, contaminated landscape, Cardenal ends the poem in an optimistic tone, a ray of hope: the revolution will bring land and human liberation after all. He does not have solely the Nicaraguans in mind but the whole humankind and nature itself, wishing that there is a conjoined effort to liberate humans and nature from oppression and exploitation.

From my perspective, since "Nueva ecología" advocates ecological and political changes, it epitomizes perfectly well Scott DeVries's concept of political ecology (2013), which unequivocally underlies Cardenal's poem. Whereas Paul Robbins notes that the term "political ecology" is "a generous one that embraces a range of definitions" (2012, 14) – some point out political economy, others political institutions, while still others environmental change (14) –, DeVries observes that "the political ecologies of Spanish American literature . . . take ideological positions . . . to challenge the many troubling aspects of development and modernization as they have been applied in Latin America" (2013, 11-12). As Jorge Marcone also underscores, "[i]n order to reveal the 'environmental thinking' in Latin American literature, we must read it with the help of notions such as political ecology, sustainability, and environmental complexity" (2007, 13). To sum up, in Latin America, political ecology challenges people to get more proactively involved in political and environmental solutions and to bolster human and nature rights. Also the environmental activism defended by indigenous peoples' movements must be highlighted. As activist Sou Mi stated, many of the environmental activists' murders occurred in Latin America because those fighters took on governments, big corporations, large landowners, and imperialist interests (2019).

In the 1990s, different literary works were published in Latin America, focusing on the unharmonious and distant relationship between humans and the natural world. And here I cannot help highlighting Mexican poet and essayist Octavio Paz's ecological thought, as shown in this passage of a 1991 article: "[i]t can be said, without exaggeration, that the main theme of the last days of this century is not the political organization or reorganization of our societies, but the urgent question: how are we to ensure the survival of humanity? In the face of this reality, what can the function of poetry be?" (157). The same preoccupation with the depredation of nature had already been shown when Paz delivered his Nobel Lecture "In Search of the Present" (1990): "we have inflicted what may be irreparable damage on the natural environment and our own species is endangered" (19).

Octavio Paz, Enrique Leff, and Homero Aridjis are but three well-known thinkers who pay close attention to human relationship with nature, examine and debate the magnitude of Mexico's environmental problems. In Brazil, Leonardo Boff, for example, holds a vast literary production in this field, as demonstrated by *Ecologia: grito da terra – grito dos pobres* (1995). As the title suggests, Boff establishes a parallel between land exploitation and people exploitation and manages to articulate the cry of the Earth with the cry of the oppressed: "[a] terra também grita. A lógica que explora as classes e submete os povos aos interesses de uns poucos países ricos e poderosos é a mesma que depreda a Terra e espolia suas riquezas, sem solidariedade para com o restante da humanidade e para com as gerações futuras" (1995, 11). Boff's recognition that the Earth is sick and that the ecological and social crises stem from the vested interests of a few wealthy, powerful countries is no novelty. Inspiring, though, is the way he envisions a way out, that is, through a coalition of forces around values and principles, the deepening of the human ethical dimension and the conception of the Earth and humanity as a whole, a global project. *Saber cuidar: ética do humano, compaixão pela Terra* (1999) is another of his reflections on the modern world, namely the role of governments and societies in the face of the environmental crisis. Despite the fact that Boff's religious principles made him a *persona non grata* to the

Vatican,[37] he is undeniably an important voice who denounces the great inequalities and injustices in the Americas, always underlining the ethical responsibility as an alternative to the current model of progress.

The ecological concerns and writings of the above mentioned Latin American intellectuals have undoubtedly bolstered ecocriticism. This is shown through a number of anthologies published in the twentieth century, such as Beatriz Rivera-Barnes & Jerry Hoeg's *Reading and Writing the Latin American Landscape* (2009), Adrian Taylor Kane's edition of *The Natural World in Latin American Literatures* (2010), Carmen Flys-Junquera et al. *Ecocríticas: literatura y medio ambiente* (2010), and Mark Anderson and Zélia M. Bora's *Ecological Crisis and Cultural Representations in Latin America* (2016). Numerous writers and scholars[38] have also published books and articles with ecocritical approaches, for instance, Jorge Marcone's *Jungle Fever: The Ecology of Disillusion in Spanish American Literature: Lecture* (2007), Laura Barbas-Rhoden's *Ecological Imaginations in Latin American Fiction* (2011), and Roberto Forns-Broggi's *Nudos como estrellas: ABC de la imaginación ecológica en nuestras Américas* (2012), among others I will address ahead.

I believe this exposition evinces how these texts represent the relationship between humans and the natural world, the poor and most vulnerable, the interdependence among all beings, human beings as part of the Earth, the great need for change and for a new life paradigm. To my mind, this shows to what extent Latin American literature, cultural production, and ecocritical readings can be envisioned and understood as a complex tapestry of interwoven patches or nations knitted with a strong thread that unites the different pieces together, that is, the special bond that connects people to the land. And this distinctiveness consists of strong and spiritual bonds which link Latin Americans to the land, despite the fact that I cannot ignore that certain communities in the U.S. have developed common struggles with their counterparts in Latin America regarding land preservation. Barbas-Rhoden in her study of ecology in Latin American literature (2011) corroborates my opinion as she states: "it is essential that ecocritics read Latin American texts with difference in mind. The Americas are a vast territory of myriad ecosystems . . . indigenous groups are numerous throughout the Americas . . . Difference and diversity are essential in ecological terms as well as in cultural terms" (8).

---

[37] A Brazilian theologian, academic, and writer Leonardo Boff served as a Franciscan friar from 1964 until 1992. His 1981 *Igreja: carisma e poder* generated controversy for criticizing the clerical hierarchy and espousing Liberation Theology (Teología de la liberación), which has a long tradition in Latin America. His conflicts with the Vatican made him abandon priesthood but not his fight for the poor.

[38] Curiously enough, the vast majority of the mentioned academics in this paragraph teach Romance languages, mainly Spanish, at U.S. universities and not all of them were born in Latin American countries.

It is therefore no wonder that the proposal for "A carta da terra" has emerged in Rio de Janeiro (1992), that the 2008 Ecuadorean Constitution recognizes that nature and living things have rights (Article 71), and that The Universal Declaration of the Rights of Mother Earth was adopted as law in Bolivia, in 2010. In the same vein, Ecuadorean ecologist and activist Esperanza Martínez compiled *La naturaleza con derechos: de la filosofía à la política* (2011) and another Ecuadorean, economist Alberto Acosta, wrote *El Buen Vivir: sumak kawsay, una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos* (2013).[39]

---

[39] I used a 2016 Brazilian translation instead of the Spanish version.

The proposal of *Buen Vivir*, which gained constitutional status in both Bolivia and Ecuador replaces the anthropocentric vision of our modern culture with a biocentric one and places emphasis on the preservation and respect for nature. The concept of *Buen Vivir* has an overarching reach, involving a different worldview, claiming that human beings are not the only ones who have rights, that the well-being of the community is above that of the individual, and supporting degrowth and a slowdown of consumption in opposition to the existing models of capitalist development and progress. As Acosta expounds, this is one of the possible ways for humans to live in harmony with themselves, among others in the community and with nature (2016, 166). As I mentioned before, in examining the contemporary political, social, economic, and environmental challenges posed by capitalism it is indeed striking that a strong response has arisen in Latin America. Among the reasons behind it are certainly Latin Americans' awareness of the inequalities and destruction brought about by capitalism, and since they are also victims of the system they want to trace a different path from their northern neighbors. In addition, it is also worth remembering that several indigenous cultures were not subject to genocide as happened in the U.S. Consequently, I believe we are now in a better position to understand why it is important to consider the "epistemologies of the South" defended by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, which I addressed in chapter 1.

On the whole, I must highlight two aspects: firstly, the literary representations which depict human relation to land and the attention given to the physical world have a long history in Latin America and, secondly, ecocriticism is an expanding field in the region. Therefore, when Elizabeth DeLoughrey and George Handley remark that "[a]t American ecocritical conferences and in recent publications, we see an increasing tendency to naturalize a dominant American origin for ecological thought" (2011, 14), it should not be forgotten that ecological thought has deep roots in Latin America and the reasons why the scholarly work in ecocriticism in the U.S. has gained more visibility. No doubt some of the problems at the root of the disparity have to do with power issues, linguistic hegemony, and accredited types of knowledge, as mentioned above.

2.4 Urban Ecocriticism

My choice for approaching urban ecocriticism after dealing with the previous topics is justified by my contention that urban spaces deserve a particular reflection given their specific scope. To my mind, it is really important to uncover and rethink the place of humans and nature in modern urban societies, an issue that I shall deepen in my analysis of *Make Room! Make Room!*, *La leyenda de los soles*, and *Não verás país nenhum,* in chapter 3. Growing numbers of people are currently living in an urbanized world, a completely new phenomenon, as Christopher Schliephake notes, referring to the twenty-first century as "the first truly urban century in the history of humankind" (2015a, 205).

In view of this, some of my main objectives in this section are to promote an ecocritical reflection on urban issues, ponder to what extent it makes sense to perpetuate the binary opposition between the city and the countryside, or between culture and nature, as well as the meaning of urban ecosystems. The urban area is the location par excellence where manifold environmental problems, conflicts, injustices, and destruction converge. Therefore, it is the site that originated concepts such as environmental and social injustice, slow violence, environmentalism of the poor, and the risk society, which deserve to be addressed. Finally, and following Ursula Heise, I shall discuss how bioregionalism and eco-cosmopolitanism engender a sense of place and a sense of planet, that is, a planetary consciousness that I find particularly fitting to describe the experience of twenty-first century human beings, what she calls an "environmental world citizenship" (2008, 59).

It may seem at first sight that most of the aforementioned issues have already been tackled, nevertheless, I shall demonstrate that they posit new challenges as population growth and urbanization continue to rise worldwide. Despite having started during the second stage of the Anthropocene – The Great Acceleration (1945-2000) –, when the world population doubled to over six billion and urban population in particular increased, with over three billion people living in urban areas in just half a century (Steffen et al., 2011, 849), relatively little attention was given to environmental problems during this period (Steffen et al., 2011, 850). Michael Bennett and David Teague have a different viewpoint, though. Both stated in 1999 that the essays in the collection they edited, *The Nature of Cities: Ecocriticism and Urban Environments*, provided the parameters for an urban ecocriticism (9). In his article of 2001 Bennett also noted that there was a growing body of cultural criticism engaged with urban ecology (31) and proposed the designation "social ecocriticism" to the ecological criticism that incorporated urban environments (32). Christopher Schliephake, in turn, asserts that although ecocriticism "has evolved into a burgeoning field of literary and cultural studies, urbanity has, to a large extent, been missing from its main subject matters or was treated only marginally in its theoretical underpinnings" (2015b, xiii). This is therefore an issue that needs to be studied more thoroughly.

In contrast to the relatively scarce urban ecocriticism, writings which approach the cityscape are abundant. Lawrence Buell observes that "Charles Dickens was the first major creative writer in the English language to explore the full repertoire of modern urban 'problems'" (2001, 131) and gives the examples of *Bleak House* (1853), *Hard Times* (1854), and *Little Dorrit* (1857). In the twenty and twenty-first centuries, James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), Paul Auster's *In the Country of Last Things* (1987), Mike Davis's *City of Quartz* (1990), Paul Virilio's *City of Panic* (2005), and Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* (2009) are but a few examples of writings which address the city and touch upon problems such as the feelings of vulnerability, fear, and terror which are faced by most characters. Not all of them are literature, though. For example, *City of Quartz* is a work of social criticism about life in a tough Los Angeles. By depicting the existing disparity of wealth, the exploitation by whites of people of color, the ruling elite's oppression of the poor, traffic, and pollution, Davis shows how capitalism has expressed itself in one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the U.S. *City of Panic*, in turn, is a study on globalization and the ways phobia and terror define modern metropolises. However, what is at issue here and I want to underline is the fact that throughout the centuries more attention had been given to the countryside and its landscapes than to the cityscape. Hence my attention, reflection, and discussion of the megalopolises' spaces in the novels I have selected for perusal.

It is important to bear in mind that literary texts explore and represent urban environmental concerns and problems and draw attention to aspects that could otherwise go unnoticed. For instance, if there is still the presence of nature in the megalopolises or if the governments care about the physical environment. As I have shown in chapter 1, one of the reasons which has led to the instrumentalization and commodification of nature was the dichotomy between culture and nature, but although it may sometimes be difficult to envision, in the cityscape both categories are inextricably enmeshed. Hard as it may be to think of nature in thousands of overcrowded sites in the megalopolises throughout the world, the concept of "urbanature," proposed by Ashton Nichols, will help us to see beyond the dichotomy between culture and nature. He suggests that "nature and urban life are not as distinct as human beings have long supposed" (2011, xiii). "Urbanature" thus implies that all humans and nonhumans, as well as all inanimate and animate objects are interrelated and interdependent in a complex way. Nichols also claims that, "human beings are not *out of* nature when they stand in the streets of Manhattan any more than they are *in* nature when they stand above tree-line in Montana" (xiii) and equally contends that "[u]rban culture and wild nature come to much the same thing: urbanature" (xiv), a perspective that will make us reconsider, rethink, and readapt to a new or different idea of nature. In fact, Nichols shares one of the ideas contained in Timothy Clark's definition of nature (2011), already presented in chapter 1, namely that even a waterfall is as natural as a radioactive waste dump, an important aspect to which I shall return a little bit ahead.

Lawrence Buell, in turn, also states that "South Boston is just as natural (and wild) as Walden Pond" (2001, 7). However, Buell's position is different from Nichols's since his rejection of the nature-culture distinction is grounded in the fact that the environmental crisis threatens all places alike, either urban, rural, suburban, or wild. They are all interrelated and none is exempt from the effects of global warming and the greenhouse effect, for instance. For this reason, Buell puts "'green' and 'brown' landscapes, the landscapes of exurbia and industrialization, in conversation with one other" (7). Commenting on the fact that ecocriticism has predominantly concentrated on genres like "nature writing, pastoral poetry, and wilderness romance" and on the "natural" environment (8), the author argues that "[l]iterature and environment studies must reckon more fully with the interdependence between urban and outback landscapes" (8). Buell's reflection on the nature-culture distinction is indeed understandable bearing in mind that, in the twenty-first century, one must ponder to what extent it is possible to ignore the interconnectedness between urban and outback, city and country.

Coming from a different field, geographers David Harvey and Bruce Braun argue that "there is nothing *unnatural* about New York City" (1996, 186) and see that particular city as a "created ecosystem." For them, human beings, like all organisms, form an ecosystem and are always transforming and trying to adapt to it. They contend that it makes no sense having ecological thinkers affirming that in "an ecological world everything is related to everything else" and then exclude urbanization from their horizon. Assuming that urbanization is one of the most significant processes of environmental modification, Harvey and Braun assert that "[t]he created environments of an urbanizing world, their qualities and particular difficulties . . . have to move to the center of our attention" (186), instead of the contemporary preoccupation with wilderness and the preservation of scenic landscapes.

Nichols, Buell, Harvey, Braun, and also Roger Keil, who states that “[n]ature is not something ‘green’ outside the city’” (1995, 282), offer perspectives which help us to transform and broaden our image and concept of both cities and nature. I assume that it sounds somewhat extraordinary when Nichols affirms that “[h]uman hands make a house, and that house is no less natural than the materials that fashioned it, or the human hands that shaped it” (xviii). It is easy, in fact, to grasp his take that a bird makes a nest and that the nest is as natural as the bird herself; nevertheless, seeing in both examples (the house and the nest) representations of nature would take a great leap. I claim that to fully grasp Nichols’s stand, we need to keep in mind his advocacy of “a more inclusive idea of ‘urbanatural roosting’”, a perspective that moves beyond the word “nature” as it has been used since the Enlightenment, as well as beyond the nature-culture divide (xvii). For the author, “to roost” is to make a temporary home, it is to know a place so well that you locate your home there, and you use that local knowledge for your own benefit and the benefit of the people around you. His take that birds roost without harming the resources and that human beings need to learn from birds to start roosting carefully on the Earth is worth considering.

Another good example of urbanatural roosting, showing that urban culture and wild nature conjoin and make up the same thing, is Nichols's description of Alexander Fleming working in his laboratory in London, and coming upon a fungus in his window: he operated in both wild nature and human culture and the result was penicillin. Thus, the fungus, the natural object that landed on a cultural product resulted in penicillin, a natural product of human culture that would change humankind’s life forever (xxii). To my mind, Nichols’ neologism “urbanature,” the idea that “all human and nonhuman lives, as well as all animate and inanimate objects around those lives, are linked in a complex web of interdependent interrelatedness” (xiii) encapsulates a most crucial insight: human culture never isolates human beings from wild nature (xv). This perspective is revolutionary, for it challenges our thinking and makes us see differently the interplay between human beings and the nonhuman world in urban places.

Taking into account the diverse perspectives presented, I claim that they help us to conceptualize and re-imagine nature in urban spaces in an innovative way. According to Harvey, it is wrong “to speak of the impact of society on the ecosystem as if these are two separate systems in interaction with each other” (186). In his view, it makes little sense to depict the world around us in terms of “society” and “environment,” that is, the separation of humans from nature. Harvey sees the intricacies of city spaces and urban environments where diverse materials, human, and nonhuman beings constantly interact, affect and are affected. To better illustrate this interdependent relationship, it is worthwhile to consider, for instance, the fact that toxins, radiation, chemicals, and other substances produced by humans take on an agency of their own and permeate the urban atmosphere and ecosystems (Schliephake 2015b, xxix). Since some matters are not passive, they can contaminate their surroundings jeopardizing all elements within ecosystems. This was the case of the Bhopal disaster in India, in 1984, where a chemical leak in the American firm Union Carbide Corporation caused around 20.000 deaths, and thousands of survivors suffered serious consequences, such as respiratory problems and blindness. Urban ecosystems are, thus, open, permeable, in constant transformation and their agents interact both at local and global levels.

This permanent interaction between the local and the global brings to mind the need to internalize notions such as “sense of place and sense of planet,” the title and working concepts of Heise’s book of 2008. Thinking about air and water pollution, they cannot be confined to a place, they work within larger global networks, as Mitchell Thomashow notes, “[t]here is no such thing as a local environmental problem because all such problems form part of a network of global processes and issues” (2001, 7). This is especially true with regard to pollution, not to mention the fact that the high number of deaths it causes often goes unnoticed. Thus, according to Damian Carrington, current *Guardian* environment editor, global pollution kills nine million people a year, threatens survival of human societies and the deaths caused by it triple those caused by AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis combined (2017). The range of diseases connected to air pollution is actually alarming: from respiratory diseases such as asthma and chronic bronchitis to allergy, lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, reproductive problems, reduction of children’s intelligence (about other illnesses, scientists are still finding out the relation, namely diabetes, dementia, and kidney diseases), as well as those caused by water pollution: gastroenteritis, cholera, diarrhea, to name just a few. Not only are these diseases but also the huge numbers of hospitalizations, school absences, and workdays lost worth mentioning. In fact, to address the evolution and aggravation of environmental problems, more specifically, air and water pollution, represents a double-edged sword, since there seems to be significant progress and setbacks too.

Therefore, it makes sense to discuss and rethink how pollution has brought about the demise of millions of people and the harmful effects on human and nonhuman lives. It is known that environmental problems worsened during the Great Acceleration, but they received little attention, as Steffen et al. remark. When local stresses of air pollution, the fouling of waterways or the acid rain occurred in the wealthy countries of Europe, North America, and Japan, they were reduced, but the emerging global environmental problems were largely ignored; for instance, the CO2 emissions' implications did not receive attention until the 1990s (Steffen et al., 2011, 850-852). This is extremely relevant given that they continue to exist at exacerbated levels in countries such as Pakistan, Qatar, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and megacities worldwide currently engulfed by extreme high levels of pollution. Consequently, bearing in mind that these environmental problems are more serious not only in Mexico City but also in countries other than those in the Americas, I ground my study in the importance and strong conviction that "[p]ollution is one of the great existential challenges of the [human-dominated] Anthropocene era," as the authors of the Commission on Pollution and Health asserted in 2017 ("Medical").

But still trying to expand on the interpenetration of the local and the global, it is suitable to reflect on the common sense of the binary opposition of city and countryside. Is there still a distinct separation between rural and urban areas? Despite much interest in maintaining the pastoral scenes and ideas rendered in literature and the visual arts, mainly in the centuries prior to the Industrial Revolution, the fact is that rural areas have not stopped being continually transformed and destroyed by urbanization, not only in the Americas but throughout the world. On the one hand, if one considers Raymond Williams's and Nichols's standpoints, it makes little sense to talk about the rural and the urban areas separately; but, on the other hand, one cannot ignore that these areas have had disparate features and representations, as romantic stereotypes generally associated with the country and the city show. As Raymond Williams reminds us, "powerful feelings have gathered and have been generalized . . . the country has gathered the idea of a natural life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue . . . the city has gathered the idea of an achieved center: of learning, communication, light" (1973, 1). These contrasting representations, in his view, date from classical times.

But depictions of the city are obviously varied, for instance, whereas French philosopher Voltaire sees London's virtues, industry, and urban pleasure as a synonym for civilization, according to Raymond Williams, British economist Adam Smith sees the city as expanding the industry of the country (1973, 144). These eighteenth-century views of the city undoubtedly contrast with London's East End in the nineteenth century, when it developed massively and became a center for factories, warehouses, docks, slums, and immigrants, who packed the district and lived in dire poverty. Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City* (1973) tackles the social and economic history of urban and rural England and sheds light on its influence on the expansion and development of cities in industrialized nations. Also, by observing the growth of London he predicts urban growth, as he states: "[b]y the middle of the nineteenth century the urban population of England exceeded the rural population: the first time in human history that this had ever been so, anywhere" (1973, 217). But while in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there were attempts to restrain the growth of London (1973, 145), such steps seem inconceivable to the other end of the world today, a time when the three megalopolises Mumbai, Shanghai, and Tokyo "harbor almost three times as many people as all the urban centers at the beginning of the 20th century combined" (Schliephake 2015b, 2).

Another important argument to bring to the forefront is the fact that the growth of cities is inextricably linked to the development of a capitalist economy which began in England, evolved in the U.S. and then spread across the world, as I have already expounded. According to Raymond Williams, capitalism determined the world as we know it today:

> capitalism, as a mode of production, is the basic process of most of what we know as the history of country and city. Its abstracted economic drives, its fundamental priorities in social relations, its criteria of growth and of profit and loss, have over several centuries altered our country and created our kinds of city. In its final forms of imperialism it has altered our world. (1973, 302)

In sum, capitalism, generated by the conditions opened up by colonialism, disrupted country and city life. And despite the fact that humans, mainly city dwellers, still yearn for an escape to the countryside, the separation between city and country is a tenuous one, since the materials that flow between these two spaces go unnoticed for a lot of people. Maria Kaika, for example, observes that droughts revealed the disruption of “the continuous flow of natural elements (water, electricity, gas, etc.) from the countryside into the city and finally into the modern home” (2005, 4). Besides, what used to be perceived as a compartmentalized world “consisting of neatly and tightly sealed, autonomous ‘space envelopes’ (the home, the city, and nature) was, in fact, a messy socio-spacial continuum” (4). Kaika’s vision of electricity as a natural element may be controversial, but her term “socio-spacial continuum” involves understanding the city and nature as interrelated and interdependent entities with no boundaries.

Indeed, besides the natural elements already mentioned, money, goods, and materials such as waste, chemicals, sewage flow between city and countryside, along complex networks of transportation and communication, result in huge environmental impact on ecosystems.

Water is a good example of an element that circulates uninterruptedly between the city and the countryside and determines the living conditions of urban populations. This basic resource, if not carefully managed, jeopardizes the natural equilibrium as well as the survival of urban populations. Danilo Anton's standpoint that "São Paulo is facing a difficult environmental future unless careful management of its water resources and appropriate environmental policies are implemented" (1993, 66) is applied to other Latin American cities, for instance, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Lima, and Cochabamba, as the author discusses in detail. More striking is, however, Mexico City, founded in the valley of Mexico, a region with several fresh water lakes, others with brackish water, and where the Aztecs developed the city of Tenochtitlán. The Spanish conquest destroyed the Aztec city and Mexico City emerged in its place, but, with the rapid urbanization, some lakes were gone and others were drained (Anton 106). The problems are getting worse and worse and that is the reason why Anton states that "[t]he valley's environment has reached its limit, and the megacity is no longer sustainable" (108).

Connected with the importance of water and the risks of its manipulation it is worth considering the development of the American West, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when rivers were dammed to irrigate the arid lands. Water development brought about the foundation of farms, cities, different forms of so-called economic development, but alongside came ecological damage and environmental racism, since the indigenous populations were deprived of the waters that were diverted from their lands to feed the big cities to the West, a theme Donald Worster scrutinizes in *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity and the Growth of the American West* (1985). Another paradigmatic example of systemic racism and environmental injustice was the recent Flint water crisis (2014-2016), which began when the city's water supply was switched from Detroit to the Flint River for financial reasons. Due to insufficient water treatment, residents were exposed to high levels of lead and bacteria in the drinking water, therefore, they were instructed to boil it before its use. Water quality was so bad that at the General Motors' plant it caused corrosion on newly machined engine parts. As a result, a federal state of emergency was declared and the situation was investigated. A report revealed that the responsibility was placed on the state and also that Flint's poor and African American population had been more affected than white residents (Ray 2019), which confirms that people who have low socioeconomic conditions are more prone to environmental and health hazards.

In effect, I cannot help associating water with sewage systems, waste disposal, or power plants and their geographical location. These factors have a more direct impact on urban neighborhoods and places where poor communities and ethnic minorities usually live. Even when not living in slums, the dwellings of these vulnerable groups are more prone to "natural" disasters and more exposed to risks, as occurred when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, in 2005, or, more recently, when hurricanes Florence and Michael, Montecito mudslides, Maryland flooding, and California Wildfires left devastation in their wake, in 2018. These episodes bring to mind Rob Nixon's concept of "slow violence," "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space" (2011, 2), noting also that "it is those people lacking resources who are the principal casualties of slow violence" (4). I underline thus that the two concepts contained in the title of Nixon's book, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (2011), are interconnected and this interconnection turns out most enlightening. His innovative concept of "slow violence," its relative invisibility and calamitous effects, which can be dispersed or delayed for years or decades or centuries, cannot be dissociated from the "environmentalism of the poor." There is little doubt that poor communities are the main victims of invisible slow violence, of the inequalities created by political decisions that cause and increase social injustice, which is directly related to environmental injustice and racism. The two examples provided by Nixon illustrate how impoverished populations struggle against the indecent, disproportionate use of ecological goods and evils: the movement of the "seringueiros," linked to Chico Mendes in Brazil, in the 1980s, and the group of peasants in the Himalayas who used the strategy of tree hugging to prevent loggers to fell trees on which they depended for their livelihood, in 1973 (135-136). Nixon's concern about the representational challenges that slow violence poses is also relevant. He calls attention to the importance of "how to devise arresting stories, images and symbols adequate to the pervasive but elusive violence of delayed effects" (3). By thinking of examples such as climate change, toxic drift, acidifying oceans, deforestation, and other unfolding environmental catastrophes (2), he touches my core concern in this study, that is, to explore how Harrison, Loyola Brandão and Aridjis have captured these matters and how they have turned their ecological worries into stories dramatic enough to raise the reader's consciousness.

Still related to slow violence and the environmentalism of the poor, Robert Bullard affirms that communities are not created equal – some have become the dumping grounds for garbage and hazardous waste (2005, 4-5), so Peter Wenz advocates that "the issues of social justice and environmental protection must be addressed together" (1988, 2). Ulrich Beck, in turn, addresses the same issues and uses the term "risk society" to expand on the intricate relationship between political decisions and environmental risks and explains that "[e]nvironmental problems are *not* problems of our surroundings, but in their origins and through their consequences are thoroughly *social* problems, *problems of people*, their history, their living conditions, their relation to the world and reality, their social, cultural and political situations" (1992, 81). In other words, environmental problems are directly related to the way societies are organized, both are interconnected and permeated by political ideologies and measures, which is to say, environmental problems result from human options. Therefore, Beck points out that "[a]t the end of the twentieth century nature is society and society is also 'nature'" (81).

Since in practice the unequal distribution of ecological costs remains unaddressed, it is imperative to discuss the environmentalism of the poor and "environmental racism" as they call attention to the way certain fringes of society are marginalized and doubly penalized. No doubt, "environmental racism" is widespread both in the Americas and worldwide, yet it may be argued that it is more paradoxal in certain countries, for instance, in the U.S. Across this rich, powerful country policies discriminate against low income groups, mainly people of color and indigenous groups and make them live near sewage plants, landfills, hazardous waste, heavily polluted areas whose contaminated land, air, and water lead to diseases such as cancer and asthma, as shown in the film *Erin Brockovich* (2000). Regarding this, the groundbreaking collection *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics and Pedagogy* (2002) explores among many other issues, environmental justice, the relationship of American Indian literature and the environment from the standpoint of race, class, and gender.

New York City, São Paulo, and Mexico City, the setting of the novels I analyze present disparate realities as far as air and water pollution are concerned and the problems the Latin American megacities face are actually complex. This does not however mean that the U.S., being a more developed country, has managed to tackle these environmental problems more successfully. Although the U.S. curricula include environmental education modules from kindergarten until the 12th grade, it seems that it is not so efficacious and it is said that it has been a waste of money (Blumstein and Saylan 2007). Indeed, it has been shown that after finishing school people do not take environmental protection seriously as, for instance, over the past three decades, car size has increased while smaller vehicles, which consume less fuel, have dropped to the lowest point. As regards recycling, it is not known whether it really works in a practical and sustainable way (Blumstein and Saylan 2007),[40] which is also the case in any country in the world. Kathleen Culliton, for example, states that New York ranks amongst the most polluted cities in the U.S., according to a study of U.S. Environmental Protection

---

[40] This information is from 2007, but the situation has not improved. The Every Child Succeeds Act (2015) does not make environmental education mandatory. Hence, it is up to each state to decide whether to implement environmental education in elementary and secondary public schools (Downey).

Agency. The city had more than 200 days in 2018 when air quality was unhealthy for children, the elderly, and the sick (2020). I assume that the situation of New York can be extrapolated to other big cities across the country, despite the autonomy of states to rule in these matters.

Nonetheless, to say that the U.S. has disregarded environmental issues is to oversimplify a complex matter. During the nineteenth century we witness an encroachment upon nature, natural resources being rapidly ravaged, a situation that continues to this day, but it is also crucial to recall that in 1958 the first National Conference on air pollution was held in Washington, D.C., to assess the effects of air pollution and the first steps pertaining to environmental policies were taken.

While there were various killer smog events in London and thousands of people died, there were three reported major smog incidents in New York City (1953, 1963, and 1966) causing far fewer deaths notwithstanding, given that the U.S. Congress had started to implement legislation to combat air and water pollution. It is equally relevant to remember that some U.S. Presidents, such as Harry Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, and more recently, Barack Obama paid attention to environmental matters. The efforts do not go without contradictions, though. On the one hand, in his 1949 Inaugural Address Truman stated that with the cooperation of business, agriculture, private capital, and labor in the U.S., other nations could increase the industrial activity and raise their standards of living,[41] a developmental paradigm that has almost become a kind of global mandate, according to Ecuadorian economist and former minister of energy and mining, Alberto Acosta (2016, 44-45), a position whose consequences I have pointed out when I discussed capitalism. On the other hand, when in the following year the newspaper *The Berkshire Eagle* (1950) wrote that President Truman called on government and industry to join forces in a battle against smog, and that the President emphasized the danger to crops, property and human life from the contamination of the air ("Mr. Truman" 20), the President's priority, i.e., economic growth or environmental concerns, remains unclear.

---

[41] I cannot help noting that the President also stated that all countries, including the U.S., would greatly benefit from a constructive program for the better use of the world's human and natural resources, as if the U.S. government were actually concerned about a fairer distribution of natural resources worldwide.

In the 1960s and 1970s, important legislation concerning air and water pollution control was enacted.[42] The immediate nationwide reaction to *Silent Spring* (1962) cannot be forgotten as it represented a turning point in U.S. environmental history and contributed to the banning of DDT for agricultural use in the 1970s (Ploutz 2012, 244). In my opinion, Tom Lehrer's 1965 song "Pollution" renders the U.S. situation at the time given that it drew attention to the risks of unbreathable air and the undrinkable water. As Lehrer sang, any foreigner visiting a U.S. city would find it very pretty, but he should neither drink its water nor breathe its air: the water was like running crud and pollution had got smog, sewage, and mud (Lehrer 0:31-0:46). In 1987, The Plastic Pollution Research and Control Act, forbidding ocean dumping of plastic materials, passed Congress and, in the following year an International treaty banned all ocean dumping of wastes (Ploutz 2012, 281). Today the problems of air and water pollution need to be discussed and cannot be minimized, especially at a time when the U.S. President, Donald

---

[42] Although it is beyond the scope of this work to present detailed information on government measures pertaining to pollution, I must provide some data because the problem was too serious at the time. In order to control air pollution, the Clean Air Act of 1963 was passed. It was amended in 1965 and replaced by the Air Quality Act (The Clean Air Act) with the objective of helping states to set air quality standards. In 1970, The Clean Air Act created national standards and strong enforcement mechanisms for the first time in the U.S. history. Similarly, the control of water pollution has a long history in the U.S.: in 1948, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act – the first major U.S. law to address water pollution – was passed and, as public awareness and concern for controlling water pollution increased, in 1972, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act or the Clean Water Act (CWA), Coastal Zone Management Act, and the Ocean Dumping Act were passed (Kovarik).

Trump, discards responsibilities, does not endeavor to find ways of protecting the environment, bearing in mind his decision to withdraw the U.S. from the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement.

The ineffectiveness of the governments is not obviously only a U.S. problem. Also in this field, Brazilians and Mexicans alike complain about incompetence, namely, the lack of transparency and misrepresentation of the provided data concerning air and water pollution. For instance, Santa Gertrudes, a small town that lies west of São Paulo, is Brazil's most polluted city,[43] yet its secretary for public works, Paulo Fernando Mello, says the residents must get used to the region's air because the city depends on the ceramic factories. He also knows that paving the road would reduce the amount of dust in about 50% but has not acted accordingly (Rosa 2018). The ineptitude of this town's secretary ends up raising many doubts about the veracity of the study carried out by researchers on the air quality in the São Paulo Metropolitan Region, in which they contend that city dwellers are now breathing cleaner air than in the 1980s. They claim that the amount of pollutants released into the atmosphere has decreased due to the combined effect of mixing ethanol with gasoline and the increase in the number of flex-fuel cars (Freire 2017). This data can however be effectively misrepresented given that the number of inhabitants in São Paulo and the number of vehicles are on the rise, as well as economic growth and its attendant effects.

---

[43] The city has been considered the most polluted city in Brazil for 10 years, surpassing Cubatão, once known as the Death Valley, due to atmospheric pollution caused by heavy industries. This stems from the fact that the municipality is the largest ceramic producer in the Americas. This issue was mentioned at the AESabesp/Fenasan 2019 Technical Meeting in September, accessible at www.aesabesp.org.br/2019/09/18/paineis-debatem-ods-poluentes-ambientais-biogas-e-qualidade-do-ar-no-estado-de-sao-paulo/. Accessed 19 Nov. 2019.

In fact, there is a parallel between the situation of Brazil and that of Mexico. As Andrés González points out, most denizens of Mexico City do not believe in the government when it says that Mexico City's air quality has improved considerably; according to Mexico City's System of Atmospheric Monitoring, there was an improvement in the air quality given that in 2016 there had been seventeen days with clean air in the capital and, in 2017 there were twenty-four days. Thus, González's striking title "Mexico City Cleaned Up Its Act [sic] but Mexicans Don't Believe It" and its subtitle "I Know the air is bad because my head hurts and my eyes water" (2018) show the two opposing views on this matter. In order to explain this inconsistency, the author resorts to a study by the International Development Research Center which says that more than 60% of Mexico City residents doubt the government's information. Related to this, a study provided by the University of California, Berkeley states that, decades ago, Mexico City's air pollution was so poor birds would fall out of the sky – dead. Locals in turn said that living there was like smoking two packs of cigarettes a day (Davis 2017), an opinion corroborated by González, who asserts that, in 1992, the city "earned the dubious honor of taking the top spot on the list of most polluted cities in the world" (2018). The fact that Mexicans check air quality reports in the way people in other countries check the weather forecast is also significant because it shows that after all these days the pollutant emission levels is in the inhabitants' minds every day a matter of concern to all.

It is believed that the problem of water pollution in the three megacities and across the world is not as serious as air pollution, at least statistics about victims of water pollution[44] are not common. As with other environmental problems, it is difficult to have conclusive data on water pollution due to the contradictory information presented by different studies. For example, whereas Mitch Tobin states that in the 2017 Chapman University Survey, water pollution, air pollution, and climate change were in Americans' list of top fears (2017), [45] Russell McLendon refers that U.S. tap water is some of the cleanest on Earth, although he also mentions that millions of inhabitants still drink dangerous tap water without even knowing it (2018). According to the survey mentioned above, pollution of rivers, oceans and lakes and pollution of drinking water figure near the top ten fears of U.S. people. It still adds that the sharp increases in environmental fears is likely due to concerns about policy changes in Washington, given the different path the Trump Administration has pursued.

Mexico City and São Paulo contrast with New York City regarding drinking water supply and water pollution. In my view, the daily struggle of the marginalized communities epitomize Rob Nixon's concepts of "slow violence" and "environmentalism of the poor": around 20% of Mexico City residents do not have piped water, depend on drinking water delivered by water trucks called "pipas," many poor women cannot even work outside the home to spend all night waiting for the trucks, although some of the poor pay even higher prices for water than wealthy residents. In São Paulo the situation has not reached that tipping point, yet. But, in a country where the abundance of water is a source of national pride, to use Simon Romero's words, São Paulo's 2015 drought almost emptied the main reservoirs of the city, forcing some residents to flee for other regions and others to buy water from trucks as happens in Mexico City (2015), where the situation is much more complex because water shortage may be considered chronic. As a consequence, in this city people need to drill deeper and deeper to find water, weakening the clay lake beds on which the city lies and causing subsidence (the gradual sinking of ground), the reason why buildings now undulate in areas that were flat in the past.

---

[44] González, for example, mentions that air pollution kills more than six million people in the world every year (2018).

[45] The author certainly refers to the U.S. people and not the people from other regions in the Americas.

When talking about pollution it must be recalled that most pollution deaths occur predominantly within poorer communities, as happens in Santa Gertrudes, Brazil's most polluted city. Ana Beatriz Rosa, staff writer of *Huffpost Brasil*, states that air pollution severely affects the poor as well as children and the elderly (2018) which is also true for other environmental problems, hence Nixon's definition of "environmentalism of the poor." As Beatriz Rosa observes, while individuals can filter water or swap out their soil if it is contaminated, they can do nothing regarding the air, as obviously people cannot live without breathing. To me, this seems crystal clear to everyone. Nonetheless, around fifty thousand Brazilians die from air quality-related illnesses every year (Rosa 2018).

Thus, bringing to the forefront discourses that tackle the manifold environmental issues and injustices contributes to make the invisible visible. On the one hand, discussing whether the country and the city can be seen as distinct spaces and reading about the new meanings attached to urban landscapes (as I have done before the incursion into the novels' megalopolises), helps to reconceive nature and change our perception of human-built environments, leading to a better understanding of contemporary life and human responsibility. On the other hand, by criticizing political decisions that endanger urban ecosystems, as well as by showing their flaws, ecocritics seek to envision a healthier urban life. In the twenty-first century, when humankind has become "an urban species," to use Schliephake's phrase (2015a, 35), it is vital to tackle the notions of bioregionalism and eco-cosmopolitanism in the sense that Ursula Heise uses them. Their combination may seem a paradox, yet the linkage between the local and the global is fundamental.

Bioregionalism emerged during the 1970s as part of the environmental movement and it was the bioregionalists' purpose "to address matters of pressing environmental concern through a politics derived from a local sense of place, an approach they felt would effectively complement efforts focused at the national and international levels" (Lynch, Glotfelty, and Armbruster 2012, 2). Dissatisfied with traditional environmentalism's tendency to focus on environmental crises, bioregionalists attempted to create communities that could live sustainable lifestyles primarily embedded in the local and suggested that human identity takes into account one's residence in a larger community of natural beings – the local bioregion. Ideas such as "local food systems," "green cities," "ecological awareness," and "grassroots activism," among others, have been adopted worldwide in part due to their efforts. In my view, when James Howard Kunstler proposes bottom-up communities in *The Long Emergency* (2005), as I discussed in chapter 1, he is in line with bioregionalists' ideals. So these ideas deserve attention in that they are in opposition to the urban life in the megalopolises, as I shall discuss in chapter 3.

Nevertheless, Heise argues that the increasing connections around the globe require “new forms of culture that are no longer anchored in place” (2008, 10), and to develop an ecological awareness and an environmental ethics it is crucial to envisage a sense of planet rather than a sense of place (2008, 55). In her view, it is necessary to shift U.S. environmentalist discourse and ecocriticism to understand “how both local cultural and ecological systems are imbricated in global ones” (2008, 59). And whereas Heise sees eco-cosmopolitanism as “an attempt to envision individuals and groups as part of planetary ‘imagined communities’ of both human and nonhuman kinds” (61), as discussed earlier in this chapter, Schliephake asserts (2015) that in urban terms eco-cosmopolitanism means to recognize the interconnections of the global ecology of world cities and their local contexts and implications. It also calls for the need of local citizens of the cities of the world to become world citizens, recognizing how their regional urban ecology and environment are intertwined with global forces, and demanding new forms of responsibility that encompass both their immediate surroundings and the whole planet (2015b, 10). Thus, according to Heise (2008) and Schliephake (2015b), as individuals develop an eco-cosmopolitan sense they become true world citizens since they understand what the connectedness of local and global environmental contexts entails. Developing a sense of place and a sense of planet implies, therefore, new forms of responsibility toward the place and the whole planet, that is, a new environmental ethics.

As demonstrated in this chapter, ecocriticism accompanies and explores the great environmental changes and challenges in literature. It shifts its focus according to the pressing concerns of the time and contributes to forge ecological knowledge. The exploration of ecocriticism in Latin America and in the U.S. in the Anthropocene and the way it may shed light on urbanization and its dangerous impacts demonstrates to what extent this field of literay analysis is all-encompassing and increasingly important.

2.5 Rethinking Environmental Apocalypticism

Throughout history no other period has offered such a wide range of apocalyptic renderings as from the mid-twentieth century onwards. On the one hand, the experience of the Holocaust and the Cold War inspired apocalyptic stories which narrated chaos, massive destruction, and reflected the gloomy atmosphere of those times. On the other, along with the deterioration of the environment, climate change, and the attendant increasing number of natural disasters, environmental novels have proliferated, as political science professor Craig Rimmerman states: "[o]ver the past twenty years, the doomsday, apocalyptic perspective has characterized much of the environmental literature" (1998, 283). In general, apocalyptic and post-apocalyptic narratives, films, video games, and television shows compel the reader and the public to imagine totally different worlds from the one in which they live and make them interrogate whether humans really control the order of things on this planet. In Lawrence Buell's view, as ecocatastrophe becomes an increasingly greater possibility, the occasions for ecoapocalyptic expression will also suffuse theater, painting, sculpture, and dance in unprecedentedly powerful, disquieting ways. And he wonders if our imagination can really prevent an ecocatastrophe in the way our fears of nuclear holocaust have prevented it so far (1995, 308).

Indeed, the cruel specter of impending ecological disasters that will lead to the demise of the world gained momentum at the turn of the second millennium. For instance, if we pay attention to some alarmist voices such as U.S. scientist and biology professor Guy McPherson's on climate change (2019), it seems that humans are actually on the brink of extinction. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that apocalyptic thinking and narration have permeated human history. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, they originate mainly in the Bible and even go back to the time prior to its writing. Greg Garrard asserts that "it seems likely that the distinctive construction of apocalyptic narratives that inflects much environmentalism today began around 1200 BCE, in the thought of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster, or Zarathustra" (2012, 93). According to Garrard, the prophet transmitted a "sense of urgency about the demise of the world" to Jewish, Christian, and secular models of history (93). In other words, people have lived and died in fear and hope of an imminent apocalypse. In fact, by reading one of the earliest narratives of Jewish apocalypse, *The Book of Daniel* (chapters 7-12) and *The Book of Revelation*, also known as *Apocalypse of John*, the reader can feel that catastrophic events are imminent. Here it is important to bear in mind that the word "apocalypse" has a double meaning: "destruction and/or end of the world," which has been universal and part of the Western literary tradition since the writing of this book, and "disclosure or revelation," given that it stems from the Greek term *apokaliptein*. *The Book of Revelation* is thus about John's account of the future, which he received in his vision of God, the grand judgement when Christ will triumph over the forces of evil and the world will be recreated for the redeemed. Before the Second Coming of Jesus and the universal judgement, the seven bowls of God's wrath will be poured out on the Earth leading to the final Battle of Armageddon and the worst earthquake in history (*Revelation* 16:1-21). In the same vein, when tracing the historical and scriptural origins of the myth of the apocalypse, academic Lois Zamora argues that the concept of "apocalypse" is eschatological in nature and is concerned with final things, with the end of the present age and with the age to follow (1989, 10). In other words, for her, apocalypse is a synonym for both disaster/cataclysm/chaos and revelation/a millennial order and the potential antithesis to the undeniable abuses of human history (10). As she observes, apocalyptic vision began to inspire a significant body of imaginative literature in the Middle Ages and has continued to do so abundantly (1).

From my point of view, and as I shall illustrate in this section, apocalyptic literature does not have a negative impact on human lives and natural environments only. According to Rimmerman, the doomsday, apocalyptic perspective provides a grim analysis of the future and gives rise to negative critical responses from both Right and Left critics (1998, 288-289). Although it is undeniable that a gloomy atmosphere is ubiquitous in apocalyptic texts, and sometimes the harshest realities that can be envisioned are evoked, these facts allow the reader to think about present environmental, social, political, cultural, and economic problems in a different, critical, and inspiring way.

Since *Make Room! Make Room!*, *La leyenda de los soles,* and *Não verás país nenhum*, the three novels I chose to analyse, unfold against the backdrop of environmental catastrophism and are manifestly apocalyptic, I must cast a brief glance at apocalyptic literature and environmental apocalypticism. As will be seen ahead, environmental apocalyptic texts aim to show readers that human acts serve as stimulus and precipitate the collapse of civilization. I see their relevance and cannot help considering Garrard's stance that apocalyptic rhetoric seems to be a necessary component of environmental discourse. In his view, apocalyptic rhetoric can galvanize activists, convert the undecided, influence government and commercial policy (2012, 104), which are abundant reasons not to minimize the role of these texts. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring,* besides illustrating these aspects also raises the reader's ecological awareness, therefore, I will underline and discuss its extreme importance. Moreover, I will draw attention to other relevant works which incorporate doomsday modes of thought and expression.

I may venture to say that the authors of apocalyptic texts are oftentimes focused on reflecting upon some contemporary issues and sharing their expectations regarding the future of humanity rather than on instilling fear, discomfort and pessimism in the reader. Nevertheless, Lejla Kucukalic asserts that "some critics see these 'eco-doom' fictional accounts as overtly alarmist" (2013, 16). I contend that the discourse of environmental apocalypticism, by envisioning a gloomy future ahead, makes humans rethink their relationship with the environment, and offer new and challenging thought experiments. The authors of apocalyptic texts imagine dramatic events which reshape the lives of human beings and put an end to the world as we know it, and some really have an uncanny ability to predict the future. Whereas some occasionally may try to predict future events, others have an acute sensitivity, sharpness, and knowledge that often allow them to anticipate facts, in this case environmental matters and problems, long before most people do. Paul and Ann Ehrlich's *The Population Bomb* (1968) helps to illustrate my viewpoint: while some critics point out their failure when they state that "[i]n the 1970s and 1980s hundreds of millions of people will starve to death in spite of any crash programs embarked upon now" (xi), their assertion that "Americans must also change their way of living so as to minimize their impact on the world's resources and environment" (xii) proves to be right. This warning should therefore not be discarded, neither should their appeal "to take action to reverse the deterioration of our environment before our planet is permanently ruined" (xii).

As I shall argue in the next chapter, Harrison's, Loyola Brandão's and Aridjis's dystopian narratives depict futuristic apocalyptic nightmares. Yet, the fact that these authors wrote in past decades – the sixties, the eighties, and the nineties, respectively – does not deprive them of up-to-dateness. Major environmental and social problems addressed in their novels prevail and have even become much more serious. That is, some matters and events which seemed unlikely decades ago or were considered SF have materialized or are now very close to reality, a good reason not to discard experimental fictional ideas. How can the importance of *Make Room! Make Room!*, *La leyenda de los soles,* and *Não verás país nenhum* be dismissed if they still reflect some of our most predominant environmental and social concerns nowadays? Problematizing overpopulation, reflecting on the fragility of human beings when confronted with the evidence of environmental and social degradation, and life in agonizing megalopolises ends up being a depiction of a gloomy present. But, more than that, these apocalyptic narratives can be an alert, they can guide human choices, and they can show the need for people to rethink their actions and their lifestyle in order to avert an alienated or meaningless life in a threatened and chaotic world. For Buell, the most dangerous threat to our global environment is not the threat itself but our perception of it, the fact that most people do not accept the fact that the crisis is extremely serious (1995, 285). Therefore, his assertion that "[a]pocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal" (285) strongly conveys his belief in the power of environmental apocalypticism to transform people's understanding and perception of the current environmental crisis.

Owing to the increasing number of environmental catastrophes, environmental apocalyptic texts have abounded in recent decades. And despite the fact that apocalypticism pervades American literature from its beginning, environmental apocalypticism has emerged with Rachel Carson's groundbreaking book *Silent Spring* (1962). For Buell, Carson inaugurates "the literature of ecological apocalypse" (1995, 285). Much before Carson, however, Thomas Malthus's *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) had depicted apocalyptic ideas, which makes it, in Garrard's view, "[t]he most influential forerunner to the modern environmental apocalypse" (93). Also George Marsh's *Man and Nature* (1864) sounds like a warning, as he acknowledges that "man is everywhere a disturbing agent. Wherever he plants his foot, the harmonies of nature are turned to discords" (36); Marsh also observes that nature "avenges herself upon the intruder, by letting loose upon her defaced provinces destructive energies hitherto kept in check by organic forces destined to be his best auxiliaries, but which he has unwisely dispersed and driven from the field of action" (42). An impending catastrophe awaits humans to the point of extinction, as Marsh affirms: “the earth is fast becoming an unfit home for its noblest inhabitant” (43), and all the crimes committed against it may lead to the extinction of the species. Thus, the *Essay on the Principle of Population* and *Man and Nature* are but two examples that predate *Silent Spring*, although they failed to make an impact on the general public. Shortly after World War II, Fairfield Osborne’s *Our Plundered Planet* (1948) and William Vogt’s *Road to Survival* (1948) likewise addressed environmental matters, more precisely the increasing exhaustion of resources. In Frederick Buell’s view, both works addressed human depletion of soil, forests, and supplies of freshwater. According to their authors, the seriousness of the situation was humankind’s largest challenge (2003, 164), hence my decision to situate the novels I will be analyzing in a genealogy that includes these texts.

To my mind, however, *Silent Spring*’s socially engaged message is a good paradigm of the substantial contribution that apocalyptic narratives can offer. Published in the post-war period, when science and technology gained traction or, as Carson herself asserts, an era of specialists, when each one saw his own problem and was unaware or intolerant of the larger frame into which it fitted (2002, 13), it planted seeds of doubt among the scientific community and was one of the most controversial books of the decade. Among the various voices that criticize Carson’s book I merely point out R. J. Ellis, who asserts that Carson’s engagement with political power is limited, her narrative arraigns authoritarianism, and control is equated with tyranny (1990, 115), as it is evinced in the following questions:

> Who has made the decision that sets in motion these chains of poisonings, this ever-widening wave of death that spreads out, like ripples when a

> pebble is dropped into a still pond? . . . Who has decided – who has the right to decide – for the countless legions of people who were not consulted . . . ? The decision is that of the authoritarian temporarily entrusted with power. (*Silent Spring* 127)

While we can consider these interrogations as an example of Carson's indictment of authorities who, in her mind, should be made accountable for their decisions, Ellis claims that the rising environmental awareness in the 1960s was accompanied by a sense of urgency that did not enable ecological discourses to coherently analyze political power. And the sense of urgency generated a sense of distress that made Carson follow conventional representations of political power distributions (1990, 120). Ellis's standpoint showcases, therefore, the well-known fact that Carson's advocacy is sometimes misunderstood, mainly by those who prioritize capital. I claim that there is little doubt that Carson firmly contests human control over nature and the hidden long-term costs of human actions.

It is worth remembering that before writing *Silent Spring* (1962), Carson had explored the ocean life in the sea trilogy, *Under the Sea Wind* (1941), *The Sea around Us* (1951), and *The Edge of the Sea* (1955), and "was not a naïf awakening belatedly at mid-life to the problem of environmental degradation," as Lawrence Buell remarks (1995, 292). The first chapter of *Silent Spring*, "A Fable for Tomorrow," is the best evidence that the author was already a passionate and experienced writer who could very likely discern the impact of the powerful metaphor with which she started the book. By beginning with an idyllic scenario of "a town in the heart of America where all life seemed to live in harmony with its surroundings" (1), which is destroyed by a "strange blight" by "some evil spell" that caused the death of chicken, cattle, and sheep, adding that "[t]the people had done it themselves" (3), Carson envisions and depicts one of the gloomiest futures the U.S. had ever imagined for itself. Some scholars such as Lawrence Buell argue that she uses images related to World War II, thus, in the mythical landscape of *Silent Spring* we find the following expressions: "[t]his industry is a child of the Second World War" (16); "the German government recognized the value of these same chemicals as new and devastating weapons in man's war against his own kind" (28); and "nothing must get in the way of the man with the spray gun" (85). As I see it, the parallel between the war, ethnocide, and environmental pollution plays an important role, since it serves to emphasize the seriousness of the tragic effects of chemical insecticides. After all, the long-term effects of chemicals may also provoke the same results as the Holocaust, which made millions of victims. As Carson wrote, in the shade of the Bomb people were prone to fear technology, they had become alert to it.

The dystopian scenario Carson evokes right from the start —, "a spring without voices," "only silence over the fields and woods and marsh," "streams that were lifeless" the "strange stillness," and the "shadow of death" that pervaded everywhere — is reinforced in chapter 12, where she writes that pesticides "now contaminate soil, water, and food . . . have the power to make our streams fishless and our gardens and woodlands silent and birdless" (188). According to Graham Huggan, Carson's text evinces apocalyptic violence, it is "relentless and repetitive, with death appearing on almost every page, conveyed by a shocking abundance of different carriers whose provenance may be from above or below, hidden in the soil or distributed from the air, "but the apocalyptic rhetoric backs up environmental advocacy” (2016, 78-79). Huggan’s argument that “[a]t the center of the text’s apocalyptic vision is its nightmarish view of chemical contamination as planetary plague” (78) makes sense, since Carson extrapolates the chemical contamination to a global scale: “FOR THE FIRST TIME in the history of the world, every human being is now subjected to contact with dangerous chemicals, from the moment of conception until death” (15). As I see it, by imagining that all human beings can be exposed to dangerous chemicals, Carson evinces a planetary environmental consciousness in the 1960s, which is later shared by Harrison, Loyola Brandão, and Aridjis as it is rendered in the novels I analyze and I shall examine in the next chapter.

In the same vein, Rimmerman (1998), criticizes Ronald Bailey’s *Eco-scam: The False Prophets of Ecological Apocalypse* (1993) for pointing out weaknesses in the doomsday perspective and disapproving of the culture that pays too much attention to it. To Bailey, some books such as *Silent Spring* (1962) and *The Population Bomb* (1968) have had negative consequences since they describe the future in hopelessly bleak terms. They affected public policy in a way that led to slow down economic growth and to increase human misery. He believes that economic growth is crucial to a vital and stable society and is critical of the media for drawing attention to the doom-and-gloom analyses warning of ecological collapse which have motivated policy makers to adopt environmentalist policies. According to Bailey, human history showed that our energy and creativity would surmount whatever difficulties we encountered (Bailey qtd. by Rimmerman 290). I dare say that Bailey shows excessive optimism and even inability or unwillingness to accept Carson’s alarm regarding the misuse of chemical pesticides. A similar optimism is evident when he states that human resourcefulness were nearly always right and predicts that instead of ecological collapse, humanity can look hopefully forward to an age of renewal in the twenty-first century (2015, xix).

In light of the environmental and social realities that pervade our times, I firmly believe that environmental apocalyptic writing can effectively help the reader to discern ways to live more sustainably on the planet since it renders a grim future ahead if humans do not change their beliefs and lifestyles. By depicting images of destruction as a consequence of misuse and abuse of the natural environment, apocalyptic texts can raise an ecological awareness and suggest different ways to relate to nature, that is, show that humans should definitely abandon their still prevailing anthropocentric views. Thus, the ecocritical reading of the fictional works in the next chapter will bring to the forefront representations of several environmental matters which question the soundness, both for humans and the Earth of our ways of acting towards the environment and portray alternatives to reverse direction.

2.6 The Challenges of the Environmental Humanities

As humanity is facing the worst ecological predicaments it is still grappling with innovative thought that is being created to face the growing challenges they pose. The environmental humanities, an interdisciplinary research field of natural and social sciences and humanities, count on literature's ability and collaboration, in particular dystopian narratives, to disseminate environmental concerns and appeal to a sounder relationship between humans and the nonhuman world. Concerning the importance of narratives, Heise states that fictional stories about the societies of the future have over the last quarter century pursued the dystopian mode and are seldom concerned with generating and sustaining healthier natural environments and more functional social structures (2016, 30). In opposition, I do think that the reading of *Make Room! Make Room!*, *La leyenda de los soles,* and *Não verás país nenhum* generates ecological concerns and clearly envision healthier environments as I shall demonstrate in chapter 3, although they do not do so overtly. Indeed, were it not for the precious contribution of the language of arts, the effects of climate change, environmental injustice, and the mess humankind is in today would certainly be more concealed or limited to information provided by natural and social sciences, the social media, and data manipulated by political regimes.

Bearing in mind that no effective solution has been presented to date to the current environmental crisis,[46] it is however fundamental to consider the powerful insights that the field of the environmental humanities present to help humans adopt more sustainable lifestyles and mitigate their environmental impact on the planet. In order to do so, I shall shed some light on this relatively new field, how it has emerged and why we need to pay attention to the fertile work under way in this area. I shall further underline some of its aims and how it can offer a precious help to change and ameliorate humans' relation to the Earth.

From the outset, I would like to point out that, although there are not totally disparate standpoints regarding the definition of the environmental humanities, it is not very easy to limit the boundaries of the field. In 2012 academic Deborah Bird Rose and other colleagues[47] published an article in the journal *Environmental Humanities* stating that it was not clear what the environmental humanities were or would become (5), and in 2014 Hannes Bergthaller and other co-workers[48] mentioned in the same journal that scholars in this field needed to map the common ground on which close interdisciplinary cooperation would be possible (261). At the time, Rose and her colleagues saw the environmental humanities, a useful umbrella that brought together many sub-fields that had emerged over the past few decades, as a challenge for a more interdisciplinary intervention (5). Robert Emmett and David Nye, in turn, in their recent book, *The Environmental Humanities: A Critical Introduction* (2017), write that "[b]ecause of its wide range, the field of environmental humanities is difficult to pin down, it has different profiles depending on the scholarly strengths at the institutions where is has emerged" (6). This means thus that thinkers and research groups have fostered different dialogues and studies at universities, for example, while some specialize in postcolonial studies and anthropology others turn to ecocriticism, environmental ethics, and gender studies in the U.S., Europe, Taiwan, Australia, and other countries. That is the reason why Emmett and Nye assert that, "with such differences between research groups, the field might appear incoherent" (6) but then add that it is evolving rapidly and articulating concerns important to fields such as climate science, medicine, or animal rights.

---

[46] Although it may seem irrelevant, I must mention that some authors always talk about an environmental crisis while others talk about environmental crises. I think we should not forget that the environment is destabilized by multiple crises.

Today broad cross-disciplinary work characterizes the field, or movement as several authors and thinkers see it. This is the case of T. J. Demos, director of the Center for Creative Ecologies at the University of California, who writes that "the Environmental Humanities represents an urgently needed interdisciplinary movement of speculative, impactful research" (qtd. by Valentine 2018). Also Emmett and Nye state that the environmental humanities have become a global intellectual movement that reconsiders the relationship between scientific and technical disciplines and the humanities, and consider that they are essential to understand and solve dilemmas that have been created by the industrial society (2017, 4). It is interesting to note, though, that while some academics try to determine the field's scope, Rich Hutchings mentions that a defining quality of the environmental humanities movement is its persistent resistance to being nailed down (2014, 213). In effect, no matter how the environmental humanities are seen, either as a field or a movement, they have emerged as an urgent need to search for better solutions to face the current global environmental crisis, and regarding their emergence opinions also differ.

---

[47] Thom van Dooren, Matthew Chrulew, Stuart Cooke, Matthew Kearnes, and Emily O'Gorman.

[48] Rob Emmett, Adeline Johns-Putra, Agnes Kneitz, Susanna Lidström, Shane McCorristine, Isabel Pérez Ramos, Dana Phillips, Kate Rigby, and Libby Robin.

Whereas Bergthaller et al. observe that the movement started in the early 2000s by scholars in Australia (262), Heise states that environmentally oriented research across disciplines in the humanities and sciences has been done from about 2010 onwards in the U.S. (2017, 294). Emmett and Nye, however, trace the origins of the environmental humanities back more than a century (3). They consider there is a line from thinkers such as Alexander von Humboldt, H. D. Thoreau, and George P. Marsh to the development of the environmental humanities, and assert that the field initiated during the 1970s and 1980s as developments in several departments came finally together (3-4). In fact, the field's emergence has originated from the perception that it should play a major role in the interpretation of scientific data and place emphasis on action. Emmett and Nye illustrate this by giving the example of historian Tom Griffiths's work, which alerted Australians in power to the devastating effects of overstocking and pastoralism on the continent and was overlooked due to cultural constraints that work against environmental change (5). I think that the government's indifference is related to the country's massive devastation caused by wildfires year after year. In 2020, it is known that the fires have destroyed an area about the size of Portugal, killed over two dozen people, and around half a billion animals. In Australia, from Heise's point of view, probably due to the close relation between environmental questions with issues of aboriginal politics and history, anthropologists, philosophers, and literary critics have worked together more than in other countries (2016, 22), but despite this interdisciplinary endeavor to make changes happen, in reality, the scourge of wildfires is not being tackled successfully.

Heise contends that in Europe and North America, environmental crises were primarily tackled by biologists, ecologists, and chemists. When environmental studies were established in many universities from the mid-60s onwards, the social sciences and humanities played a secondary or invisible role, but with the exacerbation of environmental problems, simple insistence on scientific facts is just meaningless if attention is not paid to the cultural, social, political, and affective forms that particular problems assume in some communities (Heise 2016, 24). Only after concluding that natural sciences alone were incapable of putting forward answers and envisioning possible solutions to the problems presented above, did natural scientists see how cooperation with humanities and social sciences could be highly productive and a new "interdisciplinary matrix" emerged, to use Heise's term (2016, 22). This opinion is shared by environmental historian Sverker Sörlin, who writes that "[o]ur belief that science alone could deliver us from the planetary quagmire is long dead. For some time, hopes were high for economics and incentive-driven new public management solutions . . . It seems this time that our hopes are tied to the humanities" (2012, 788). Therefore, research work previously carried out by distinct disciplines such as gender studies, political ecology, environmental philosophy, environmental history, and anthropology, to name just a few, was conjoined under the banner of the environmental humanities. In a still more all-encompassing manner, Pramod Nayar states that we can think of the environmental humanities as possessing a new environmental imagination, drawing on Lawrence Buell's phrase (Nayar 2018). In Nayar's view, the environmental imagination adopts and adapts insights from a wide variety of disciplines which range from multispecies ethnography, ethics, social studies of technology, evolutionary biology to critical animal studies. Consequently, it is no wonder that this research field is growing fast and that it is a more appropriate cross-disciplinary integrated approach to address or grapple with the global environmental challenges different from ecocriticism. For all that has been expounded, one may still get the impression that the environmental humanities are not a sufficiently inspiring, innovative, and challenging field. So it may seem. Therefore, I must emphasize that environmental humanists working in the area are committed to the mitigation of environmental problems and "make an effort to inhabit the difficult space of simultaneously critique and action," as Deborah Bird Rose et al. (3) and Emmett and Nye point out.

It may be argued that today there is environmental awareness, broad knowledge of environmental problems, and technology to resolve or curb the existing environmental crises. Yet, natural scientists have acknowledged their inability to address it alone and, over time, it has become clear that the solutions they have offered are incomplete or ineffective. It is not enough to underline Johan Rockström et al.'s view that from the nine planetary boundaries that define the safe operating space for humanity, three – those for climate change, rate of biodiversity loss, and the nitrogen cycle – have already been transgressed (qtd. by Steffen 2011, 860). More attention is urgently needed to the meaningful insights and challenges posed by the environmental humanities regarding these matters. Living at a time when there is the perception that all rivers, dams, and aquifers are irreversibly contaminated or depleted, the oxygen we breathe is degraded thanks to toxic waste, deforestation, and chemicals launched into the atmosphere are increasing, among other equally serious problems, no issue is more urgent than the state of the planet we inhabit.

It is true that this challenge is not totally new. Suffice it to recall here George P. Marsh's and Barry Commoner's attention and recognition of humans' large-scale impact on the environment and on the humans themselves. It seems few people really "listened" to their arguments and warnings, they failed to reach a wider audience, but they served as trailblazers for early ecocritics, as Bergthaller et al. mention (2014, 262). The environmental humanities' effort to render environmental issues visible, to capture the public imagination and attention is indeed one of their toughest tasks. The environmental imagination is all the most needed especially after science discovered "to its despair that new accretions of information may have no impact and that laying out a set of rational choices may not lead to action" (Holm et al. 2015, 981). This acknowledgement has mobilized collaborative work of academies interested in engaging with environmental challenges, (re)formulating knowledge, and bringing fresh perspectives into view. Obviously, the environmental scientific data mainly accumulated in the last two centuries cannot be undermined or ignored, but as Poul Holm and his colleagues remark, "its analytical power stops short of investigating the main driver of planetary change – the human factor. What humans believe and value, how we organize ourselves . . . lie largely outside scientific calculation" (2015, 979). Their conclusion, presented in “Humanities for the Environment – A Manifesto for Research and Action” (2015), that environmental science provides information about the scale of change but does not help people to change direction (Holm 980) is extremely relevant. We must therefore have the clear notion that if at the heart of environmental degradation lies human behavior, choices, and actions, bringing more scientific data to the fore and adopting political measures will not necessarily change humans’ understanding of the nonhuman world and their relationship to it.

Indeed, the more academics search ways to address global environmental problems together the more they conclude that this is not a purely scientific matter but a quagmire that permeates various fields of knowledge and also demands complex answers. Whereas Bergthaller et al. assert that the ecological crisis is not only a crisis of the physical environment but also a crisis of the cultural and social environment – of the systems of representation and of the institutional structures through which contemporary society understands and responds to environmental change (262), Serpil Oppermann and Serenella Lovino state that environmental problems are also social, political, philosophical, and cultural problems whose risks have extended to the social sphere, a sphere where they are also rooted (2017, 2). Climate change, deforestation, pollution, depletion of natural resources, food and water scarcity, and overpopulation, the themes I shall discuss in chapter 3, have to be seen in the light of this knowledge. It is also crucial to realize the close interconnectedness of these problems and the set of beliefs, values, cultures, histories, and geographies in which they are embedded. Otherwise, as Opperman and Lovino observe, “the solutions offered by natural scientists remain incomplete” since “they seem to neglect cultural values and social practices” (2017, 6). The environmental humanities clarify and help us to grasp that environmental issues and problems are imbricated in historical, social, cultural, and economic contexts that oftentimes lay beyond people's comprehension. Bergthaller et al. observe, therefore, that the "enterprise of the humanities is hermeneutic" and their emphasis is on reflection and interpretation (2014, 265). On one side, it is clear that waiting for the outcome of reflection and interpretation to effectively produce adequate answers is a long-term enterprise; on the other, their assertion that "[f]inding better ways of living in our planet requires long-term experimentation of the sort favored by ecological researchers" (266) seems a provocative statement given that humanity has discovered and known the right manner to live on the Earth but is not by any means willing to relinquish an established well-being.

Holm et al. talk about the New Human Condition, "of how we as species will cope with the consequences . . . [and] responsibilities of being a major driver of planetary change" and add that it might be "the biggest cognitive challenge to human intelligence in history" (983). As these authors state, our intelligence has enabled us to create as well as to destroy "the foundations of our own existence" (983). To me, this is an irrefutable truth and I cannot help stressing that Bergthaller and his colleagues' stand that "humans have never been without answers to these questions" (265) may be questionable given that to reverse the global environmental crisis it is necessary to disrupt traditional modes of thinking, behaving, acting, and living. And despite scientists' warnings that radical changes are direly needed because now we are at the edge, we actually keep procrastinating them.

There is no doubt that the environmental humanities can provide a valuable contribution to ameliorate humans' relationship to the nonhuman world. It is important to underscore that they are motivating action, are eager to translate and transmit their findings to a broader public, as shown by the creation of Environmental Humanities Observatories in Europe, Australia, North America, and Africa. At the African Observatory they take into account spiritual ideas of indigenous traditional societies in Africa, and pay attention to indigenous forms of ecology and how these helped to conserve the environment and create a balanced ecosystem (Holm et al. 988). This acceptance and valorization of different knowledges brings to mind Boaventura Sousa Santos's standpoint on epistemologies of the South, discussed in chapter 1. Holm et al. contend that some Third World countries and indigenous groups are taking some important steps regarding climate change, instead of waiting for First World countries to act, and "are suggesting something of a higher 'human intelligence' than some first world countries" as far as climate change is concerned (Holm 984). Related to this, it must be recalled that the *Buen Vivir* philosophy may be an example of this "higher human intelligence" as well as the Great Green Wall in Africa's Sahel's region – an initiative that started in 2007 and was designed to end by 2030 –, with the objective of restoring 100 million hectares of degraded land to combat climate change, persistent drought, and desertification.

Adjusting to climate change, environmental deterioration, and biodiversity loss requires horizon-shifting, changing perceptions, ethical values, and more responsibility, essential conditions to abandon our present destructive system and support environmental protection and social justice instead. This is in line with Deborah Bird Rose et al. who affirm that the environmental humanities are a wide ranging response to the environmental challenges of our time and engage with fundamental questions of meaning, responsibility, purpose, and value (1). In chapter 1, I noted that Judeo-Christian religious teachings and values may be held accountable for the dominion and exploitation of land; nonetheless, religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Taoism, among others, as well as the environmental humanities can effectively help humans to restore the meaning of land: both religions and the environmental humanities work with questions of ethics, meaning, and value (except for economic value) and promote respect for the human and the more than human world.

John Grim and Mary Tucker's *Ecology and Religion* (2014), for example, explores how religions serve as vehicles to encourage a change of attitudes and values regarding the environment. These authors observe that religions do not have answers to complex environmental problems, but can be active participants in finding solutions along with policymakers, scientists, and economists (11). In order to heal the broken relationship between humans and the land, scientific data must be put side by side with a new ethics towards nature that involves a strong sense of identification and respects and accepts certain peoples' beliefs, for instance, that spirituality permeates the whole Cosmos. In *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), Aldo Leopold wrote that it was inconceivable to him that an ethical relation to land could exist without love, respect, and admiration for land, together with a high regard for its value and he also acknowledged that the most serious obstacle for developing a land ethic was the educational and economic system (1970, 261). According to several critics, the main environmental threats humankind faces have been triggered by capitalism. In chapter 1, I underscored Zizek's stand that capitalism cannot be held responsible for the whole crisis, but his contention that "one can solve the universal problem (of the survival of the human species) only by first resolving the particular deadlock of the capitalist mode of production" (334) should be taken into account mainly by people in business and politicians. Naomi Klein in *This Changes Everything*: *Capitalism vs the Climate* advocates that carbon dioxide emissions, responsible for climate change kept growing because lowering them would conflict with deregulated capitalism, the reigning economic paradigm (2014, 18). For her, climate change is "a civilizational wake-up call. A powerful message – spoken in in the language of fires, floods, droughts, and extinctions – telling us that we need an entirely new economic model and a new way of sharing this planet" (25). This perspective brings to mind Victor Hugo's famous quote, as early as 1840: "[h]ow sad to think that nature speaks and mankind doesn't listen" (qtd. by Klein 2014, 29). When talking about her book, Klein argued that climate change alters everything about our physical world and that humanity still has the chance to remake the global economy for the better. She adds that the change will not come from above but will be demanded by mass movements from below (Democracy Now!).

Curiously enough, the young generation has awakened to the environmental crisis and is taking the problem into their hands: the Swedish sixteen-year-old activist, Greta Thunberg, started a school strike in November 2018, and participated in COP 24, UN climate negotiations in Katowice, Poland (2018), to condemn the world's inaction on climate change. She has accused political leaders of having failed young generations since their main concern is having a robust economy. And this is having a global impact. Also in November 2018, in Youth for Climate, around 300 students demonstrated in Brussels. Two months later there were already 12,000, and in January 2019, over 30,000 went to the streets in Brussels to show the Eurocrats and the country their willingness to preserve the environment and to curb voracious omnivorism. Their awareness that there is no planet B, that the planet must be before profit, and the fact that they stand up for climate are really worth stressing here. This and Thunberg's initiative are also envisaged and advocated by Klein. But will the young generations create a sustainable world in time? What will guide the urgent change? There is indisputably not a plausible answer yet.

In the 1940s, Aldo Leopold's ecological conscience challenged the readers to love and protect the land at a time when the U.S. landscape was not as damaged as today, but to what extent did he impact the readers? Probably very little, considering the pace of environmental destruction in this country and elsewhere. Maybe when indigenous scientist Robin Kimmerer writes about "a braid of stories meant to heal our relationship with the world" and that "the braid is woven from three strands: indigenous ways of knowing, scientific knowledge, and the story of an Anishinabekewe" (2013, x), she impacts the reader differently. As Kimmerer foregrounds, "[i]t is an intertwining of science, spirit, and story . . . that can be medicine for our broken relationship with the earth" (2013, x), a holistic perspective that should shape and restore this connection. Likewise, Linda Hogan observes that we can achieve knowledge by science and intellect but also by listening to nature (1996, 19).

Last but not least, I must highlight that the early twenty-first century massive amount and frequency of "natural" disasters on a global scale confirm the overwhelming scientific evidence of the impact of humans' encroachment upon nature. As they occur again and again, it even seems that nightmarish science fiction is turning into reality. Bearing in mind Tom Moylan's view that all dystopian texts offer a pessimistic and detailed presentation of the very worst of social alternatives (2000, 147), and environmental dystopian texts generally offer the worst environmental scenarios, it is relevant to ask: What lies beneath the dystopian narratives under analysis? What do these novels tell us about how life on Earth may evolve? What representations and landscapes do they present us with and what kind of agency upon the Earth do they convey? What do they say about the ecoapocalyptic condition of the Earth today? In what direction do the portrayed dystopian catastrophic futures redirect humans?

Chapter 3: The Novels: *Make Room! Make Room!*, *Não verás país nenhum*, and *La leyenda de los soles*

3.1 Historical, Social, Political, Environmental Contexts, Genre, and Narrative Style

In my view, before delving into these novels' ecocritical reading, it is necessary to contextualize them, to establish a relation between the narratives and the time when they were written, particularly as far as social, historical, political, and environmental contexts are concerned. I dare say that this approach is essential since the authors' ecological perspectives are embedded in reality and this helps us understand the various reasons that contributed to Harrison's, Loyola Brandão's and Aridjis's sometimes similar, sometimes disparate ecological views. There is little doubt that the fact of their coming either from the U.S. or from Latin American countries means different historical, social, and political realities. Nevertheless, the time span between the publication of *Make Room! Make Room!* (1966), *Não verás país nenhum* (1981), *La leyenda de los soles*

(1993), and its sequel, *¿En quién piensas cuando haces el amor?* (1995),[49] their growing awareness and the rise of environmental problems have definitely determined these authors' ecological stances.

It is understandable that back in the 1960s, Harrison addressed overpopulation allied to food and water scarcity and famine, while in the 1980s and 1990s the themes ranged from heat waves, air and water pollution to endangered species and deforestation. As mentioned in chapter 2, Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) and Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature* (1864) were, each in its own way, groundbreaking works of the nineteenth century, that tackled the degradation of the environment caused by humans in the U.S. In 1962, when *Silent Spring* was published, Harrison was already doing research work to write *Make Room!* (1966), as he himself affirmed that it took him six years to write the novel (Truesdale and McGuire III 2012). Very briefly, the story is set in 1999 when the world population exploded. The plot revolves around a detective, Andrew/Andy Rusch, who investigates the murder of Michael O'Brien/Big Mike in New York. In this city, the police are overburdend with unsolvable crimes from murders to assaults, rapes, and burglaries. When Big Mike – a wealthy and powerful gangster, a central element of New York underworld – is murdered, Mr Briggs, the ruler of that world wants to find out who killed him to know whether some rival organized gang is trying to move into Mike's area. So, he pulls strings in the police department to make sure that a detective will take over the case. Meanwhile, Mike's killer is discovered: Billy Chung, a poor eighteen-year-old boy. Chung is a son of Taiwanese immigrants who lives in a claustrophobic ship in Shiptown – a Manhattan dock ghetto. When he tries to earn some money, Mr. Burgger, a dispatcher of Western Union, asks him to deliver a telegram to Mike, who lives in a luxurious apartment in Chelsea Park (a rich neighborhood). As Chung is confronted with the big gap between Mike's life and his, he returns to Mike's house and kills him. Thirty-five million people live in New York City, so this is not an easy job and Rusch is under pressure to solve the crime and to win Shirl's heart, the victim's beautiful girlfriend. A suffocating heat wave makes the city hot as a furnace, foul air is almost unbreathable, and riots over food and water take place because they have become scarce goods. As the planet's population has exploded – seven billion people are on this Earth –, Solomon/Sol Kahn, the protagonist's friend, comments on the dangers of uncontrolled population growth. In my view, Harrison's dystopian tale tackles the subject matter in a serious way, an opinion shared by Tomlinson, who observes that *Make Room!* is a serious SF novel with a serious theme (1999).

---

[49] Henceforth, I shall use an abbreviated form of the novels' titles in order to achieve a more pleasant and smoother reading.

Today, it is obvious and easy to acknowledge that Harrison does not expand much on other current, serious environmental problems, nevertheless, back in the 1960s, for instance, global warming, ozone depletion, and a threatened fauna and flora were just lurking on the horizon and therefore it is no wonder that his main concern was population explosion and its assisting problems. In order to lend more credibility to his argument, in *Make Room!*, Harrison resorts to an Introduction written by Paul Ehrlich, the founder of the organization Zero Population Growth. It is significant that this biologist calls attention to the problems caused by demographic explosion as well as cities' uncontrolled growth and informs the reader that the fictionally depicted scenario is an important tool which can show where current trends may be heading. B. Shapiro-Hafid observes that the existing edition of the novel lacks this paratextual element and a bibliography on overpopulation, an uncommon addition to SF books which would help contemporary readers to weigh the seriousness and veracity of Harrison's thesis (Shapiro-Hafid 2013) and in my opinion would allow a better understanding of *Make Room!*.

Returning to the novel's main theme, I stress that Harrison's interest in exploring a problem that would affect future societies cannot be underestimated even in light of knowledge we have today concerning environmental matters. After all, he himself remarks that "[a]t that time there were no books about pollution or population" (Truesdale and McGuire III 2012). Moreover, envisioning a grim future ahead as a consequence of overpopulation at a time when hardly anyone reflected on the human impact on the planet demonstrates Harrison's defense of sustainable development, a concept that started to gain relevance in the 1960s.

Unlike *Make Room!*, *Não verás* intertwines political, social, and environmental problems in Brazil in the period of military dictatorship (1964-1985), with emphasis on the 1980s, "Os Abertos Oitenta" (63 [The Wide Open Eighties]), a reason why it becomes difficult to separate the ecological concerns that permeate the narrative from that traumatic era. Since the existing censorship had forbidden the publication of his first novel, *Zero*, in 1974, Loyola Brandão in an uncanny daring manner chose to write a dystopian narrative to criticize the military regime and its associated technocracy, simultaneously addressing Brazilian environmental issues. By exaggerating and extrapolating them to a near future,[50] he shows the reader a bleak scenario ahead if

---

[50] It is relevant to note that in the novel there is no reference to an exact time in the future. However in 2008 the author himself remarked that it depicted a 2010, 2020, or 2030 scenario in Brazil and that some events were already occurring, a fact that is undeniably true considering Amazonian deforestation, for instance. V. "Não Verás País Nenhum - A Realidade Construída". Com Ignácio de Loyola Brandão e Cecília de Almeida Salles. Medição: Claudiney Ferreira. Redes da Criação (2008), accessible at www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PBvvfHdkFM. Accessed 17 Sep. 2019.

Brazilian government and institutions continue to pursue the same policy and model of development. His interest in environmental matters is worth mentioning for it does not come out of the blue because he effectively brings to the forefront an array of latent environmental problems that developed during the 1980s, as I will discuss ahead.

As mentioned in chapter 1, in Latin American countries as well as in the U.S., starting with the European colonization, nature and natural resources have been exploited for economic purposes and the colonial utilitarian perception of them has persisted throughout the twentieth century until today. It is no wonder then that João Câmara states that "[d]o Descobrimento do Brasil em 1500, até meados do século XX, pode-se dizer que muito pouca atenção foi dada à proteção ambiental" (2013, 130), an assertion that fits perfectly well other countries in the Americas and also brings to mind the discussion on the concept "discovery" and its practical consequences, as exposed in chapter 1.

Only in the 1970s did an ecological conscience emerge and curiously enough in the same decade some ecological movements came into being in Brazil. According to Eduardo Viola, during the two decades of military dictatorship, the ecological movements did not exert any influence on the political debate about the future of Brazilian society and both government and opposition agreed with accelerated economic growth (1987, 12). Nonetheless, in 1971, José Lutzenberger founded the Associação Gaúcha de Proteção ao Ambiente Natural (AGAPAN), the first ecological Association in Brazil and in Latin America. AGAPAN had a set of objectives, namely the defense of fauna and flora and took position against the indiscriminate use of pesticides, water pollution, the unnecessary destruction of landscape, and industrial pollution, among others. In 1979, a movement to protect Amazonia came up and spread all over the country, denouncing the voracious depredation taking place since the beginning of the decade.

The activism of both the association and the movement did not probably go unnoticed to Loyola Brandão, who affirmed having read about a hundred books and collected newspaper articles related to ecology to create *Não verás* (1976-1981). As for the plot, and very briefly, in the first decades of the 21st century, under a military dictatorship, Brazil faces the worst environmental degradation ever. In the overcrowded city of São Paulo, people live subjugated by an absurd government, a nasty and deeply corrupt regime – the Scheme ("o Esquema"). The city is divided into neighborhoods according to social classes and hierarchies in the Scheme. Living in privileged areas, ("Bairros Privilegiados"), the elites stay away from the chaotic poor places, are protected from scorching temperature, and have unrestricted freedom. The impoverished and those excluded from the system, in turn, have to live at poverty-stricken camps, ("Acampamentos Paupérrimos"), and use circulation cards which prohibit them from moving around or entering the rich neighborhoods. Order is ensured through strict control over society: domination of academic life, closure of universities and censorship, among other measures. The ineffectiveness of social structures, corruption, and environmental degradation are striking. Owing to the scarcity of food and drinking water, people must eat factitious food and drink recycled urine. It is against this backdrop that the protagonist, Souza, a former History professor, is forced to retire by the regime. He leads a meaningless life with his wife, Adelaide, and receiving water coupons from his corrupt nephew, promoted to the role of captain in the New Army at the age of 23, only makes him feel worse. Therefore, the hole that accidentally appears in his hand marks a watershed: the increased dissatisfaction urges him to sleep on the street. When Adelaide leaves him, he deliberately abandons his bourgeois condition in order to join other social outcasts on the streets, such as Elisa, a former university student or his old colleague Tadeu, also compulsorily retired. As the story unfolds, reality and imagination mingle in Souza's unrestful mind and the harshest scenarios ever are represented. Being a non-conformist, Souza cannot adapt to a society which suffers from a deep ecological, social, economic, and political imbalance. The depiction of a man who has lost his humanity in the midst of a chaotic overpopulated and polluted São Paulo is thus a central idea in this ecological and political dystopia. To my mind, there is little doubt that this dystopian narrative is grounded on reality and reverberates Lutzenberger's words when he talks about cities whose growth was unplanned: "estão cada vez mais feias, a vida em seu seio se torna sempre mais irritante, insalubre e insuportável" or about urban problems: "a substituição de velhas praças com árvores por concreto armado, a terraplanagem, os depósitos de lixos e escombros, a poluição do ar e da água, a deposição de entulhos e detritos de forma incorreta, causando contaminação, a destruição de monumentos arquitetónicos de caráter histórico" (qtd. by Pereira 2012, 994-995).

Deeply influenced by U.S. ecological economist and academic Herman Daly, and eco-philosopher Ernst Schumacher's book *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* (1973), Lutzenberger traces Brazilian environmental problems and tries to look for solutions. Also during the same period, alternative rural communities appeared, formed by young people who rejected mainstream urban culture and decided to abandon cities, seeking a life in permanent contact with nature. All these facts lead me to conclude that Loyola Brandão was very likely fully aware of the inertia prevailing in the country regarding the environment and wrote a gloomy apocalyptic text to awaken dormant minds. He most likely achieved his goal, since *Não verás* has reached the twenty-seventh edition and is part of the mandatory book list in Brazilian schools. [51]

In a more acute manner than Brandão's narrative, Aridjis's novels offer a critique of multiple environmental, social, and political problems that affect Mexico City and its fictional counterpart, Moctezuma City, in the 1990s. To fully grasp the grim visions of these futuristic urban spaces it is fundamental to bear in mind that the author has for long been an activist totally committed to environmental causes. Given the passivity of the authorities and the fact of living in the most contaminated city of the world (Anglada 2012), Aridjis and his wife, Betty Farber, founded in 1985, the *Grupo de los Cien* involving influential people, from artists, environmentalists, archeologists, and painters to writers, Mexican or foreign, such as Gabriel García Marquez, Paul Ehrlich, Günter Grass, and Allen Ginsberg, to name but a few. In the 1980s, other environmental groups emerged in Mexico, such as the *Movimiento Ecologista Mexicano* and the *Alianza Ecologista Nacional*, that later became the *Partido Verde Mexicano*. All of them promoted ecological consciousness and carried out actions to help build a sound ecology; nevertheless, none has played a more active role in Mexican society than the *Grupo de los Cien*, whose name has a double meaning: on the one hand, the number

---

[51] In 2008, in a debate with Cecília A. Salles, who researched the author's creative process of the novel, he himself asserted that it was one of the most adopted books in Brazilian schools and Salles added that it was adopted by Geography courses because of its provocations. V. "Não Verás País Nenhum - A Realidade Construída". Com Ignácio de Loyola Brandão e Cecília de Almeida Salles. Medição: Claudiney Ferreira. Redes da Criação (2008), accessible at www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PBvvfHdkFM. Accessed 17 Sep. 2019.
Não verás was a compulsory reading in the 2017 entrance and selection exam "Vestibular", in which 9 out of 15 questions of the Portuguese Language Test focused on it. V. Processo Seletivo 2017 COLTEC/UFMG. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. EBAP (2017), accessible at www.coltec.ufmg.br/coltec-ufmg/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/COLTEC-Caderno-de-prova-1-2017.pdf. Accessed 5 Oct. 2019.
Also Colégio Dante Alighieri's Portuguese Language Department adopted the novel for the second year of "Ensino Médio". V. "Ignacio de Loyola Brandão ministra palestra no Junho Literário" (2010), accessible at www.colegiodante.com.br/ignacio-de-loyola-brandao-ministra-palestra-no-junho-literario/. Accessed 23 July 2020.

"cien" means a high number, on the other, it has a certain symbology related to contamination levels. According to Aníbal Anglada, hundred is the limit of atmospheric contamination; when it is reached, human existence is extinct because the air suffocates people and, at that time, Mexico City's level was 97, 5%.[52] Therefore, in the first years the group acted as a protest movement against the unbearable levels of contamination in Mexico City, but in addition it also attacked political corruption and the powerful economic interests of multinational corporations. Driven by his concern with the extinction of certain species, Aridjis has fought to protect and save monarch butterflies, marine turtles, and gray whales. This commitment has put his family and his own life at risk, a fact that is not rare for environmental activists in Latin America.

In 1989, Aridjis supported the Declaration of Nature's Rights and called attention to the fact that human rights depended on nature's rights, showing that humans and nature were inextricably linked and that the disappearance of species would lead to our own extinction. In 1991, both he and his wife promoted a week meeting of scientific ecologists, engaged politicians, intellectuals, and representatives of numerous indigenous peoples from Latin America to discuss the situation of the planet and the dangers that threaten it, a reflection on the past, present, and future of humankind and the environment. This meeting gave rise to the *Declaración de Morelia*, whose conclusions were presented in the 1992 Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro. Precisely in the same year, during Carlos Salinas de Gortari's government (1988-1994), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a controversial trade pact was signed. In

---

[52] Aníbal Anglada provides extensive information on Aridjis's dedication to environmentalism in "Su obra: Ambientalismo. El hombre que amaba las mariposas. La lucha ambientalista de Homero Aridjis en el México hostil de nuestro tiempo". Aníbal Salazar Anglada. (Universitat Ramon Llull, Barcelona), accesible at www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/homero_aridjis/su_obra_ambientalismo/. Accessed 5 Oct. 2019.

Aridjis's and other critics' view, the agreement would lead to more environmental degradation, as it increased commerce by eliminating barriers and tariffs on products and services passing between the borders of the U.S., Canada, and Mexico.

To conclude, and in order to condense Aridjis's activism, it suffices to say that he is one of the most prominent environmentalists in Latin America, hence environmental causes and their political connections are of paramount importance to his fiction. In the analysis that follows, it is important to recall that *La leyenda* was written at a time of political, social, and economic turmoil; to write about environmental catastrophes was for Aridjis to engage in a critique of the Western notion of progress and development and of the process of modernization in Mexico. As he himself stated in an interview in 2012, "[c]onstant immersion in the grim reality that is now Mexico City led me to write *La leyenda de los soles*, a mosaic of daily life in Mexico City in the year 2027" (Tuckey 2012). In this complex narrative, Aridjis incorporates the Aztec legend of the Fifth Sun to describe an ecological catastrophe of global magnitude and picture life in Mexico City and in its fictional counterpart, Moctezuma City, in the year 2027. In the most populated city of the world, while painter Juan de Góngora tries to render in his paintings the ongoing environmental degradation, as well as the chaotic landscape resulting from unplanned development, and is entrusted with the task of recovering the last page of the Codex of the Suns, his friend Bernarda Ramírez searches for her kidnapped daughter, Ana Violeta. As Góngora and Bernarda travel across the referred cities trying to find Ana Violeta, the picture of the hopeless living conditions of high numbers of Mexicans is depicted and their lives intersect with characters from Aztec mythology. This is the case with Cristóbal Cuauhtli who asks Góngora to recover the Codex of the Suns, which was stolen by general Tezcatlipoca, Mexico City's chief of police and the reincarnation of the

Aztec god of violence. Since the Codex predicts the exact date of the final earthquake that marks the demise of the Fifth Sun – the era in which Mexicans believe they are living –, its recovery is vital. By no means should general Tezcatlipoca keep the manuscript; if it happens, he will continue in power and sacrifice and violence will dominate Mexican future life. Acting in accordance with the reincarnated figure, general Tezcatlipoca controls city life with the help of the "narcotecas," who instill terror, perpetrate rape and murder, mainly on women and children. Conversely, if Góngora recovers the Codex, the Sixth Sun – the sun of nature –, will rise, that is, an era of harmonious relationship between humans and the environment will come. In like manner, the president of the country, licenciado (graduate) José Huitzilopochtli Urbina, is the reincarnation of the Aztec's main deity. Both, president and general, rule the country through force, fear, and moral depravity: the president is in fact a pedophile and the general is actually El Tláloc, the leader of the underworld, the kidnapper, rapist, and murderer of Mexico City's young women. As the story unfolds, general Tezcatlipoca eliminates the president to take his place, but he himself is murdered soon afterwards and the "tzitzimime," "monstruos del crepúsculo" appear everywhere foreboding the massive earthquake which will mark the death of the Fifth Sun. When the announced earthquake finally strikes Mexico City, amidst rubble and destruction, Góngora and Bernarda see the first rays of the Sixth Sun. Thus, by interweaving the problems of Mexican society (destruction of nature, political corruption, pollution, and population explosion), with the legend, Aridjis portrays Mexicans' entangled life and criticizes the effects of unplanned industrial growth. He ponders upon past, present, and future Mexican history; the legend allows him to bring to light the destruction of the Aztec civilization while the projection into the future serves to imagine and consider not only the effects of the above mentioned problems in Mexican future but also see them as realities of the present.

While discussing SF in chapter 1, I classified these novels as dystopias, yet it is important to acknowledge that they contain elements of different genres. According to author Paul Tomlinson (1999), for instance, *Make Room!* is a serious SF novel and also a detective thriller, while Tânia Cardoso's 2000 comparative study of George Orwell's *1984* and Loyola Brandão's *Não verás* scrutinizes how both works tackle similar problems and criticize modern, totalitarian projects (15). Regarding *La leyenda*, whereas academic James J. López (1997) advocates that it is simultaneously a utopic, futuristic, ecological and *policiacal*,[53] historical, apocalyptic, and urban novel that encompasses romance and comedy (49), author Karliana B. Sakas (2013) considers it has some elements of the *neopoliciacal*[54] genre (18), and I dare say that *¿En quien piensas?* follows the same track. It would not be very far from the truth to say that the blend of genres in these texts show their authors' extraordinary capacity to mix fictional, social, political, environmental, and historical facts, but it simultaneously turns the analysis into a huge, challenging enterprise.

Interestingly enough, each of these three writers has a particular narrative style and employs different SF techniques. Regarding the form, while *Make Room!* consists of part 1 (15 chapters) and part 2 (13 chapters), *Não verás* does not have chapters but subtitles which have the same function as the ones in a newspaper. According to Eva Bueno, these subtitles "may well be a reflection of a journalistic intention" and can help the hurried reader to get a brief overview of the story without reading it (2004, 34). In effect, Loyola Brandão drew on a wide array of newspaper articles, maps, diaries, notes, among other sources while writing the novel[55] and, as Cecília Salles points out, his journalistic background and the type of text he wrote for newspapers could have marked his style (1990, 6). The fact that throughout the first part of the tale all the paragraphs have five lines and, then, as the protagonist Souza becomes mentally deranged, the text also "goes crazy" as the author himself stated,[56] is rather striking. Besides, articles, pronouns, adjectives, and complex clauses are only used sparingly and oftentimes omitted. In my view, this strategy accelerates the narrative's pace, makes it concise tense and intense, almost suffocating, for instance, when Souza is delirious under the marquee that protects him from the sun he is not sure if there is wind and says: "[b]arulho de vento assobiando. Repito a mim mesmo. Barulho de vento. Um sonho dentro do sono leve. As lâmpadas elétricas estão imóveis. Dolorosamente. Sinto o pó seco envolver o meu rosto. . . . É, vento parado. Pode sim!" (347). This tactic makes the reader wish to finish the reading as quickly as possible given that it does not give pleasure or generate good feelings. In this regard, Salles refers that while Loyola Brandão was writing *Não verás*, he once said in an interview that he tried to provoke a reaction and terror through literature, to "throw" a bomb at the reader's head and burst it in order to present a picture of the apocalypse (1990, 10). Bearing in mind Felski's modes of textual engagement expounded in chapter 2, to me, the power of this novel to disturb, its potential to destabilize the reader's "sense of equilibrium" (2008, 113), its capacity to shock and (dis)orient the reader, and to reverberate across time is undeniable. I also see this text as a time traveler, or a time bomb, an incendiary device packed with an explosive force, to use Felski's terms (2008, 115), whose message is even more important today than at the moment of its writing. *La leyenda*, in turn, consists of forty short chapters, most of which have only four pages – the device was not created certainly in a haphazard way but rather to captivate and engage the reader more actively. Thus, I conclude that the way these literary texts were conceived and are organized challenge the reader to confront difficulties and questions posed by environmental problems today, a take based on Opperman's theory discussed in chapter 2, and which has also helped me to direct my attention to them. Besides, I cannot overlook these texts' apocalyptic tone and language: they underpin and expose their authors' stand regarding the deterioration of the natural environment.

---

[53] Spanish has *novela policíaca* (literally, 'policiacal novel') for *detective story* (Trask 236).

[54] For Sakas, the plot includes the sharp social criticism of State power, the protagonist has a conflicted relationship with his status as a hero, and the debate over utopia versus dystopia. Therefore, the novel can be read through the lenses of this genre (18).

---

[55] Cecília Salles provides a thorough analyses of the documents produced by the writer during the creative construction of *Não verás* in her PhD dissertation, "Uma Criação em Processo: Ignácio de Loyola Brandão e *Não verás país nenhum*" (1990).

[56] In the aforementioned 2008 debate, Loyola Brandão himself stated that Souza's disturbance generated a certain rhythm in the narrative.

Both in *Make Room!* and in *La leyenda* two plots are interwoven by the protagonist narrator. Whereas in the first, a detective story, Andy Rusch is committed to investigate a crime and two other characters, Sol and Shirl, discuss and reflect on overpopulation and all that it entails, in *La leyenda*, it is through the painter Juan de Góngora and his girlfriend Bernarda Ramírez that the reader gets a picture of the environmental problems that afflict Mexican society along with the ancient Aztec myth of the Fifth Sun that anticipates the imminent end of an era. By contrast, in *Não verás,* Souza is the protagonist and also the narrator, who perambulates through the degraded city of São Paulo, familiarizing the reader with life under an oppressive regime and a chaotic reality which cannot help awakening unsettling fearful feelings. Julia Garner-Prazeres states that in *La leyenda* the environment becomes a metaphor for the weakening of political and social structures[57] and I do think that the environmental degradation depicted in Loyola Brandão's narrative is a metaphor par excellence for a sharp pungent critique of the military dictatorship in Brazil.

I must still stress that all of these tales were set around thirty years in the future, a time when most of their readers would still be alive to see and experience the narrated adverse conditions in the megalopolises of New York, São Paulo, and Mexico City, in their countries, and on the planet. That is to say, in all of these works the estrangement effect, as Suvin described and I made it clear in chapter 1, allows readers to recognize the described chaotic situation caused by the political, social, and environmental crises and at the same time makes it seem unfamiliar. And here I cannot help remarking that it is interesting to find out that Harrison had employed this SF strategy in *Make Room!* even before Suvin named it in the 1970s.

3.2 Endangered Fauna and Flora

Even when reading the *Guardian*'s environment editor, John Vidal's, assertion that "we are destroying rainforests so quickly they may be gone in 100 years" (2017), I believe there is a general indifference and apathy towards such alarming fact. By discussing Harrison's, Loyola Brandão's and Aridjis's views on the matter in their literary representations, I will show the scale of this problem in the U.S., Brazil and Mexico, i.e., in the Americas. I will also reflect on the female characters' active role in the conservation of animal and plant species, their struggle to save them from extinction, and their affinity with both nature and arts as acts of resistance in the portrayed patriarchal societies. Moreover, I hope to make clear that these novels are useful means to criticize the prioritization of capital, capitalism's incessant demand for economic growth, which does not thwart deforestation and defaunation, and the policy of corrupt governments whose poor urban planning does not foster the preservation of trees or green spaces.

---

[57] In her dissertation, *After the Earthquake: Literary Responses to Catastrophe in Mexico City, 1985-2000* (2012), Julia Garner-Prazeres focuses on novels of catastrophe by Carlos Fuentes, Ignacio Solares, Homero Aridjis and Carmen Boullosa and states that in all of them "the environment becomes a metaphor for the weakening of political and social structures" adding that "natural disasters expose injustices that are buried deep within the country's history" (28) which is oftentimes overlooked.

Despite the existence of studies that draw attention to the inextricable link between deforestation, rainfall, hydrology, and climate change, before the 1950s it was difficult to accept such theories, let alone avoid cutting trees or destroying forests. In the following decades the situation did not change in many countries, and Brazil is the quintessential example of how the problem of deforestation has never been treated satisfactorily. Taken together, the novels under analysis serve both to highlight how humans have been careless and irresponsible towards nature and to demonstrate their authors' ecological worries concerning not only the reality and time in which they lived but also the future, when the depicted hideous scenarios showing an impoverished fauna and flora may become true. In my view, they may also encourage the reader to reflect and cast a different look at trees, flowers, lakes, rivers, and animals, urge him/her to cherish what is still considered nature and the nonhuman world, and challenge his/her beliefs on the nonhuman character of nature.

Strange as it may seem, Columbus, according to his son, Ferdinand, knew from experience that the removal of the forests that had in the past covered the Canaries, Madeira and the Azores had severely influenced the incidence of mist and rain (Williams 2003, 253). Right at the beginning of the nineteenth century, after investigation, Alexander von Humboldt developed his idea of human-induced climate change, at Lake Valencia, Venezuela (Wulf 2015, 5). In the second half of the same century, Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) and George Marsh's *Man and Nature* (1864) are but two groundbreaking works that tackle the importance of forests, obviously, each in its own way. Thus, while one may think about Thoreau's transcendentalist view of the woods connected with the pastoral simplicity of the nineteenth century, George Marsh imparts relevant knowledge which results from his own experience, as Lawrence Buell points out: "Marsh was deeply impressed by the consequences of rapid New England deforestation, which as a one-time agricultural and industrial entrepreneur he himself had helped perpetrate" (2007, 241). One can not but notice when, in Chapter III of *Man and* Nature, Marsh addresses pressing environmental matters such as "Effects of the Destruction of the Forest," "Effects of Fire on Forest Soil," and "Influence of Forest on Temperature and Precipitation" (1965, v-vi). Given the inconclusive evidence on the subject, an experiment was made in the 1870s when settlers of the North American western frontier were given 160 acres of land to plant trees with the objective of turning the "Great American Desert" into "The Garden of the world," to check if tree planting affected rainfall. But since there was a prolonged drought in the plains in the 1890s, the experiment was considered a failure, leaving aside the connection between forest and climate change (Williams 2003, 407). In the early twentieth century, man's misuse of land resulted in the Dust Bowl phenomenon in the U.S., when winds swept away topsoil and destroyed farms, homes, and entire local economies in the Midwest in the 1930s, an environmental disaster so well depicted in John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*

(1939). Finally, academic Michael Williams argues that “[i]t was not until the early 1980s that deforestation became a ‘problem’ that moved from a fairly restricted debate in scientific and conservation journals to coverage in the large-circulation media” (2003, 405).

Taking all these aspects into account, we are now in a better position to grasp the reasons why Harrison, Loyola Brandão and Aridjis render differently the detrimental effects of forests’ mismanagement, deforestation, and habitat loss. Back in the 1960s Harrison’s stark critique does not go unnoticed: “[s]o mankind gobbled in a century all the world’s resources that had taken millions of years to store up . . . until now the topsoil is depleted and washed away, the trees chopped down, the animals extinct, the earth poisoned, and all we have to show for this is seven billion people fighting over the scraps that are left” (*Make Room!* 180-181). There is little doubt that Harrison considers population explosion the main cause of all environmental problems: the cutting of trees and animal extinction occur because there are too many people and not because of human mismanagement. Nonetheless, when he writes that the “topsoil is depleted and washed away” it resonates with depictions of the Dust Bowl effect and brings to the reader’s mind well-known images of drained deforested land. The expressions “the Dust Bowl is still growing” (*Make Room!* 158), “crossed the Canadian border,” and “has become international” (*Make Room!* 142) unquestionably call the readers’ attention to the transnational consequences of deforestation.

Conversely, for Juan de Góngora, the protagonist of *La leyenda*, it is difficult to adapt to and accept the destruction of both forest and animal life, as the narrator describes:

> A Juan de Góngora le costaba trabajo acostumbrarse a una geografía de ríos y lagos muertos, de selvas y bosques devastados, de silencios animales pesados como la muerte, acostumbrarse a la vasta geografía que era el espacio de la extinción biológica.
>
> Prisionero de un mundo que él no había hecho, él no entendía, se negaba a aceptar, el paisaje a su alrededor. (*La leyenda* 123)

Góngora is fully aware that during his short lifetime drastic changes have taken place; as a seven-year-old child, he had played in streets named after rivers which had died and "habían perdido su fisonomía y su gracia" (*La leyenda* 15). He reminisces "una reproducción del primer mapa de la capital de la Nueva España," (*La leyenda* 15) which his father, a painter, had put on the wall when he was nine years old and compares it to today's "selvas y bosques devastados, de silencios animales pesados como la muerte." His sensitivity to the destruction of woods and forests is outstanding for he perceives that the destruction of habitats, the extinction of animals mean an irretrievable loss, a definitive and profound silence as heavy as death.

Góngora's attitude sharply contrasts with the protagonist of *Não verás*, Souza, who admits he is not completely innocent as regards deforestation, habitat destruction, and animal extinction. In Souza's view, the military government is to blame for this catastrophe, though he assumes part of the responsibility because being his grandfather a lumberjack, he has contributed to the current situation. As he explains:

> Meu avô levava o traçador. Era maior do que eu, muito. …
>
> O traçador ficou em minha memória. Anos mais tarde substituí a admiração por um sentimento de culpa aguilhoante. Bem que o Tadeu disse, é coisa de intelectual. A figura de meu avô sumiu, ficou apenas o traçador. Como um símbolo. Eu me sentia … me sentia cúmplice.

> Inconscientemente, condenava meu avô. E me acusava por tê-lo acompanhado tantas vezes. Me censurava por ter admirado o seu trabalho, ficando horas a fio diante de sua banca de carpinteiro, vendo os brinquedos, móveis, portas e janelas, tudo o que ele fazia com sua hábil mão ossuda. (*Não verás* 130)

Here, Souza's sensitivity to the cutting of trees and his "sentimento de culpa aguilhoante" are noticeable and indubitably reveal an unusual concern for the physical environment. Even his friend Tadeu, a fellow History professor also compulsorily retired, thinks his guilty feeling "é coisa de intellectual." However, Souza has a far reaching vision of the consequences deforestation may bring about and reflects on the human-induced modification of Amazonia. In the following digression one perceives how he reflects on everyone's responsibility (complicity) in the present state of affairs:

> Vivi muito tempo com esse sentimento. Quando o Grande Deserto se instalou na Amazônia, quando a Grande Fenda dividiu o país, quando as chuvas passaram a castigar caatingas que por anos não tinham visto água, minha confusão me levou à beira da loucura. Fiquei desvairado.
> … Claro um dia melhorei, percebi que era apoteose mental. Mania de grandeza querer assumir sozinho um fardo tão grande. Tinha a minha parcela, mas cada um de nós levava a sua. Todos nós deixamos que as coisas acontecessem do modo que aconteceu. Não movemos palha. (*Não verás* 130-131)

Souza acknowledges his guilty feelings that drive him almost to madness. He recognizes how helpless he is in face of the unimaginable Amazonian devastation which originated the "Grande Deserto," but by assuming his passivity he also challenges the reader to revise his/her own attitude regarding forest protection. After this episode, Souza recognizes that his grandfather was not an exterminator, and explains how deforestation took place at a rapid pace, "[c]ada ano a derrubada era mais longe" (*Não verás* 131) and finally condemns the daily consumption of meat and animal hunting, "[h]avia arroz, feijão e carne todos os dias. Os animais eram mortos, limpos, carneados, conservados em sal e tempero. Bichos caçados nas matas que os homens estavam derrubando" (*Não verás* 131). In effect, both Souza and his grandfather's feelings evolve. In his case, he still recalls being proud of his grandfather because he chopped down a 300-year-old tree as well as having cried when he saw the first tree falling to the ground, a tree that he sees as a sentient being that also cries, as this personification exemplifies:

> Quando vi a primeira árvore cair, meu pai estava a meu lado. O barulho foi tão horrível que nem a presença dele impediu o meu susto. Chorei.
> Um gigante desprotegido, os pés cortados, solto de repente, desabando num ruído imenso. Choro, lamento, ódio, socorro, desespero, desamparo. Ao tombar, tive a impressão de que ela procurava se amparar nas outras. Se apoiar em arbustos frágeis, que se ofereciam impotentes. (*Não verás* 132)

Here one notes how the tree discloses a state of soul proper to a human being approaching death – utter powerlessness. Despite being a giant tree, it is completely unprotected and its life is ruthlessly taken away when it is cut down. The tree "cries" and "reveals" deep feelings: grief, hate, despair, and helplessness. In vain did it seek the protection of other trees – they were equally defenseless. To me, Souza's concise enumeration: "[c]horo, lamento, ódio, socorro, desespero, desamparo," renders nonhuman reaction to man-made brutal aggression, raises feelings in the reader, awakens empathy, draws his/her attention to the need to look at trees/the forest in a different way.

Similarly, Souza's grandfather also admits that he is proud of his work and thinks that his job should be handed down (*Não verás* 132). Souza acknowledges however that at the time the struggle between his grandfather and the tree was "um mano a mano intensamente disputado" then there was physical struggle between man's force and the tree's size and strength. Cutting down trees demanded hard work and man would not certainly be aware that he was destroying the forest or decimating indigenous peoples and wild animals. (*Não verás* 132). The machine was "o poderio desenfreado, o abate descontrolado. Destroçamento," that is, uncontrollable industrial logging, while man against a tree was "um sistema lento", "dava à floresta chance de reposição" (*Não verás* 132), what can be seen as a more humane/equalitarian interrelationship. And, as it is during his grandfather's lifetime that the chainsaw replaces the axe, seeing the accelerated deforestation and devastation, his grandfather fights against this destruction and ends up being killed, as this excerpt describes:

> . . . a mancha é o caminhão que saía da mata, cheio de toras, pesadão.
>
> Sei hoje que foi loucura do velho tentar deter aquele monstro carregado, logo na ladeira do Jequitibá. Não havia breque que segurasse e o caminhão desembestado passou por cima do velho, que sacudia os braços. Meu avô sabia, os caminhões, os derrubadores com serras, os guinchos. Era o fim.
>
> Não mais machado contra o tronco. A serra rápida, imbatível. Até hoje não tenho ideia do que o velho pretendeu quando tentou parar o caminhão. Um homem de oitenta e cinco anos, mãos limpas, os braços estendidos para a frente. Ele acreditou que era possível e por isso até hoje o admiro.
>
> Tentou, jogando na situação tudo o que tinha: sua vida. Não era uma luta desigual, era o combate impossível. (*Não verás* 307)

The stark contrast between the former rudimentary methods to cut down trees which permitted slow deforestation and the unbeatable power of the fast chainsaw is worth highlighting. There is not a balance in the struggle between man and forest. In fact, it has become impossible for man to overcome the supremacy of the machine, the industrial power. On an individual basis nothing can be done, as Souza's grandfather shows.

As a result of the unstoppable plunder and destruction of the forest, a “magnificent” desert appears, a source of great pride for Brazilian government. The great achievement of the “Esquema” will be recorded in Brazilian history: a desert which is hundreds of times greater than the Sahara, a reason why Brazil will bestow on the world the Ninth Wonder (*Não verás* 62). Souza’s sharp irony is evident here then the replacement of forest by infertile land/desert is simply deplorable. And while in the past wood was one of the main Brazilian export products – the name of the country itself derives from pau-brasil, the wood which baptized the country and is its symbol [58] –, its disappearance gives rise to the Ninth Wonder, the one reason why the Amazonian destruction is not deplorable:

> Por oito anos abastecemos o mundo de madeira. Convencidos de que não havia problemas, aceitamos que vendessem pedaços da amazônia [sic]. Pequenos trechos, diziam. Áreas escolhidas por cientistas para que não se alterassem os ecossistemas. … Todo o miolo da floresta dizimado, irremediavelmente. O resto demorou pouco, em alguns anos o deserto tomou conta. …
> - E continuamos endividados.
> - Mas ganhamos a Nona Maravilha. (*Não verás* 101)

Here it must be stressed that, besides using irony to criticize the destruction of Amazonia, the protagonist also condemns the corrupt political system which prioritizes capital, does not pursue sustainable development practices and does not care about the loss of important ecosystems. In addition, this passage illustrates that forest conservation was a mirage in Brazil in the eighties, probably, at a lower level than it was in the eighteenth century during Portuguese colonization, as shown by the 1760 royal decree issued by the Count of Oeyras, Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, on behalf of Dom José I, king of Portugal[59] (*Não Verás* 13-14). This decree, which precedes the tale, forbid the felling of mangrove trees whose bark had not been removed. As that bark was the only one that contained tannin used for the curing of leather, it had already reached an excessive price and in a matter of a few years it might run out. Regarding this, Elizabeth Ginway and Luis Souza share a similar stand: while the former asserts that this is a first attempt at conservation, although it recalls the predatory use of nature that dates from colonial times and is taken to a logical extreme in the novel (2004, 131), the latter states that the royal decree before the beginning of the narrative serves to demonstrate there is a historical justification for the ensuing chaos described in the novel (2013, 131). In fact, disparate analysis of the decree mention "the exploitative mentality of the colonizer" (28). For instance, Saulo Gouveia contends that the decree only condemned the felling of trees that still had bark – the others were of no concern for the Portuguese authority. This showed that what was at stake was economic interest and its implications for trade (28). Nonetheless, I do agree it had a conservationist purpose, I consider it evinces environmental responsibility, being an attempt to ensure a good forest management. As Sandra Marcondes corroborates, it showed concern about the excessive felling of trees (2005, 67). Furthermore, in face of today's wildfires and the absence of governments' coordinated prevention and intervention worldwide, it is worth stressing the fact that there was fifty *mil-reis* and a three-month prison penalty for infractors (*Não verás* 13), i.e., two punishments with a great dissuasive power.

---

[58] It is interesting to recall that, shortly after the Portuguese arrival in Brazil in 1500, the first economic activity of the country was the exploitation of pau-brasil, which was highly desired because of its red ink. In effect, the abundance of wood throughout the coast and indigenous slavery encouraged the colonization of the country and its massive exploitation. Around 1850, when chemistry created new pigments and the depletion of the rainforest had increased, the utility of pau-brasil also changed – the Tourte brothers had discovered its virtues – its exceptional density, rare elasticity, and excellent vibratory capacity produced the best and most expensive violin bows ever. Thus, the exploitation of this wood continued until the brink of extinction.

---

[59] As a matter of fact, on July 9 1760, king Dom José I issued a royal decree to protect mangroves (Bursztyn 40). Historical data ends up adding authority to the ecological cause.

Curiously enough, just like Loyola Brandão, Aridjis pictures Amazonia transformed into a desert but aggravated with famine: "hambrunas en el desierto más grande del planeta, el de la Amazonia" (*La leyenda* 85). In addition, Aridjis also envisions Lacandona jungle, in the Chiapas province of Mexico, transformed into Desierto Lacandón. Firstly, in *La leyenda,* Bernarda Ramírez observes that "[d]esde que murieron los árboles ya no hay estaciones, hay grandes sequías, grandes calores, grande lluvias de polvo, tudo se ha trastrocado" (*La leyenda* 121) and Juan de Góngora adds that "[d]onde había encinos y fresnos hay hierbas rastreras; donde había fauna silvestre hay hormigas, ratas y cucarachas . . . Ahora se dice: 'Cuando desapareció la Selva Lacandona', 'Cuando murió el Mar Mediterráneo'" (*La leyenda* 121), a contrast between past and present that undoubtedly displays the ultimate consequences of deforestation, such as the destruction of animal habitats and extinction of species. It is not indeed just a contrast, it is as if these events had become historical landmarks, marking a "before" and an "after" (as with B.C. and A.D.), it is as if ecological disasters had determined history. In *¿En quién piensas*, Yo sees a giraffe that is "[e]brio de contaminación" in "el Parque de Conservación Ecológica" that "estiraba una e otra vez la lengua flexible hacia un árbol sin ramas en busca de hojas, pero encontraba nada" (87). When Yo stops for a while to watch the animal, she stares at its eyes and realizes there is mutual understanding, that is, she sees the giraffe as her natural double, acknowledges that her strong sense of herself is interconnected with the non-human being and the giraffe, in turn, seems to perceive Yo as "su doble humano" (87), as if both grasped an impending death. Afterwards, she walks away and remarks that this is an animal "sin pareja, el ultimo de sue specie, que se extinguía lejos de su habitat" (88), thinking about a very near future when that park will very likely turn into a museum with a euphemistic name. And then, among the species exhibited at the museum there will be specimens of the animals which are becoming extinct. Also when Maria stops in front of a tent, she only sees adornments made of skins, paws and other parts of animals. There is solely a real monkey which is displayed as something quite unusual, as the sign says: "[e]l ultimo individuo de su especie. Procedencia: Desierto Lacandón" (213).

It may be argued that these dystopian narratives are not to be taken seriously, yet they bring to light concerns that can appeal to a large readership. Moreover, they also deserve our attention because their depicted scenarios may happen, a standpoint shared by Joseph Bruchac, as he describes a trip to visit the Lacandon Maya people in the Chiapas province of Mexico. He describes that, fifty years before, the province was green and moist with jungle and then this had been clear-cut for its lumber and made into cattle pasture. As a result, "[w]ithin a few years, where there was once a vast self-sustaining system, there would be a desert which would support almost no life at all" (1995, xxiv).

It is the character Sol, in *Make Room!*, who raises pertinent questions regarding endangered species and animal extinction, as he once tells Shirley:

> One time the prairie was black with buffalo, that's what my schoolbooks said when I was a kid, but I never saw them because they had all been turned into steaks and moth-eaten rugs by that time. Do you think that made any impression on the human race? Or the whales and passenger pigeons and whooping cranes, or any of the hundred other species that we wiped out? (196)

Sol cannot help mentioning the hunting and near-extermination of the American buffalo and whales as both are tragedies in the environmental history of North America. To me, his rhetorical questions evince his belief that these calamities seem to have not made an impression on the human race. According to Rebecca Paredes, who writes about green technology and sustainability, in the 1500s, the number of buffaloes was between 30-60 million (2016), while other sources mention there were hundreds of millions roaming the Plains.[60] In the 1990s, there were around 250,000 buffaloes left. Their slaughter was a way to starve and submit the Plains Indians tribes, hence the slogan "kill every buffalo you can! Every buffalo dead is an Indian gone" (Phippen 2016). The American bison, widely recognized as American buffalo, played a vital role in the Indians' survival. For them, it was a sacred animal and a means of subsistence, since it provided them with food and other materials such as clothing. Krech III condenses its importance: "[d]ay or night, Plains Indians could not ever have been out of sight, touch, or smell of some buffalo product" (2001).

In *La leyenda*, the extinction of species is occurring at an accelerated rate. Góngora observes: "[d]e un tiempo para acá los pájaros migratorios ya no se caían muertos en la ciudad, porque ya no había pájaros" (36) and Bernarda Ramírez addresses it in a more overt manner, when she remarks, "entramos a la era de la extinción biológica" (121), which confirms Steffen et al.'s belief that "the world is likely entering its sixth great extinction event and the first caused by a biological species" (2011, 850). For Yo, the narrator of the sequel of *La leyenda*, *¿En quién* piensas, the news which appear on the illuminated billboards of a building, "la extinción del lobo mexicano . . . de la palmera nakax . . . de una orquídea . . . la muerte del Río de las Mariposas" (*¿En*

---

[60] Regardless of the number, there is not a doubt that it was very high, considering the expressions Anthropology Professor Shepard Krech III uses to describe them: "countless thousands," "dense masses," "herds that blackened the plains," "the ground trembles with vibration when they move" or "bison in such numbers that they drink a river dry" (Krech 2001).

quién piensas 48), does not go unnoticed. And, if by chance people see a butterfly, they consider it “como sobreviviente de la extinción biológica y como fantasma de migraciones pasadas, fuera de lugar y de tiempo” (*¿En quién* piensas 25).

Also the reader of *Não verás* often comes across a scenario of death: for instance, Adelaide, Souza’s wife, tells him that there are animals only in his head “[b]icho, Souza? . . . Só se for na sua cabeça” (51) and once, while hearing a noise on the terrace, Souza concludes, “NÃO ERAM ANIMAIS, POIS ANIMAIS NÃO EXISTEM” (66). In fact, he acknowledges: “[o] passado nos legou peixes, pássaros, animais fossilizados” (184), “terra calcinada, nenhuma vegetação, o chão juncado de esqueletos de animais, empoeirados, se desfazendo ao sol” (186). As I will try to show ahead, when addressing the preponderant role of women in species’ conservation, the few exceptions of characters who try to save animals from premature death are not always ecologically committed females. Actually, other characters such as Sol in *Make Room!* and Tadeu in *Não verás* also reveal that they care about the environment.

Besides this grim look at deforestation and fauna that is rapidly vanishing, it is worth highlighting the governments’ attempts to divert attention from the advanced ecological damage either in the futuristic Mexico City or São Paulo. Yet, in the light of this study, I claim that the passage in *Make Room!*, when Andy proposes to Shirley a real excursion to the country and says: “[t]he train goes up along the Hudson River to Croton-on-Hudson . . . I’ve never seen it, but they say you can walk over to Croton Point Park – it’s right out in the river – and they still have some real trees there. If it’s warm enough we can have our picnic, then go back on the train” (208), is a kind of premonition of what will happen regarding the flora in the aforementioned cities and other megalopolises worldwide. From Michael Williams’s point of view, the social and environmental benefits of leaving forests unchanged and untouched came late, were seldom appreciated,[61] and deforestation was not a problem before the 1980s (2003, 405). Yet, Andy's assertion that "they still have some real trees there" seems to suggest that trees are disappearing. Besides, his acknowlegment of the forest's benefits such as recreation – a place where people can do things for pleasure, for example, having a picnic – is also worth stressing and cannot but bring to mind Thoreau's similar opinion that each town should have a park or a forest for recreation and education. (1984, 387). Today many city dwellers continue to yearn for an escape to public parks and to the countryside unaware of the "socio-spacial continuum" that Maria Kaika talks about. There are no boundaries between city, outskirts, and country, all kinds of materials (sewage, waste, chemicals, goods, etc.) flow between spaces, which impacts the Earth negatively as it brings about more pollution.

In the unplanned São Paulo, Mexico City and Moctezuma City (a metaphor of present-day Mexico City) with the sprawling suburbs that host the rural populations who migrate to the urban sites searching for a better life, the traces of nature are rare. Seldom does someone see trees, plants, flowers, or animals; what remains of them are mere artificial replicas, simulacra, images used by governments to camouflage destruction and pretend progress in order to deceive people. Animals and plants are not seen as objects of human contemplation as it is implicit in Clark's sense of nature I discussed in chapter 1. The spectacularization of nature serves instead to distract people from the alienation and insecurity modern life has imposed on them; animals and plants or what remains of them, as well as parks are not kept to celebrate nature, to keep them alive in people’s memory, or because of the well-being they provide. In these novels, this is certainly a critique of the patterns of development pursued both by Brazilian and Mexican governments that follow the Western notion of progress, ignore destruction and environmental costs. Consequently, the rendered fictional landscapes are permeated with a trail of destruction and death, a completely bleak scenery that leaves the reader uncomfortable, imagining “o chão juncado de esqueletos de animais” (*Não verás* 186), “[l]as avenidas desarboladas” *(La leyenda* 17), “[l]os esqueletos de los árboles muertos del Paseo de la Malinche” (*La leyenda* 132), and avenues that are “una sucesión de árboles muertos” (*¿En quién piensas* 315). In the sequel, Yo wanders through overcrowded streets to “Parque Nacional” where she observes:

---

[61] Regarding environmental benefits, Williams points out rainfall, biodiversity, and ecological stability (405).

> Miles de pupilos deambulaban aquí y allá comiendo alimentos chatarra, y mirando los árboles de plástico y las estatuas de concreto de los próceres de la historia oficial. Árboles y próceres no sólo ofendían los ojos con sus colores chillones, eran una agresión material a la estética y a la ecología. Aunque los delfines en el largo artificial eran de hule, el espectáculo hechizo que representaban cada dos horas tenía sus admiradores y los mozalbetes ya hacían largas filas para presenciarlo. (*¿En quién piensas* 163)

The fact that “las estatuas de los próceres” are present at the zoo next to the plastic trees suggests different meanings: it may imply that the historical figures they represent do not deserve a prominent site to be exhibited; the indifference of the government regarding national history leading to a loss of national identity and memory; or it may be a way to make money (exploit people); therefore, trees and statues are gathered together “con sus colores chillones” in the national park to call people’s attention. I can not help noting that “los árboles de plástico” result from the environmental destruction caused by heroes of official history who are dead. And trees and “heroes” are dead but this does not seem to make an impression on humans. In different occasions, Yo refers, "[m]e senté en un banco de la Plaza de la Emperatriz Carlota y me puse a observar las rengleras de árboles artificiales, color ceniza para ser realistas . . . Eran muy deprimentes, aunque fueran falsos" (*¿En quién piensas* 116), "[e]n el centro de la plaza surgió un árbol de metal. . . . Flores artificiales, iluminadas por dentro, fosforescían," and ironically adds that "[t]uristas e niños rodeaban ese novísimo árbol de la vida" (*¿En quién piensas* 48). Indeed, in this context, the tree of life paradoxically depicts fake.

For Souza, in Loyola Brandão's novel, the tree represents its associated symbolism, as he points out, "[d]ebaixo da terra é a treva, repousa o escuro profundo. . . . Acima da terra é a luz. A árvore é a união desses dois mundos . . . junto com a água, a árvore é o símbolo da criação"[62] (*Não verás* 133). In the depicted São Paulo, "[s]omente os muitos ricos conseguem plantas naturais" (*Não verás* 174), which are sold at art galleries at such huge prices that "[u]ma planta vale mais do que as pinturas valiam anos atrás" and at auctions, "trocam-se Picassos por samambaias, Portinaris por avencas" (*Não verás* 174). Given the scarcity, or almost inexistence of plants, people have reached the point of buying their aromas, for example, "[f]olha Seca, Folha Podre Úmida, Eucalipto no Fim da Tarde, Coqueiro, Flores, Verduras" (*Não verás* 87). This dire reality, in which humans practically have no vegetation left, contrasts not only with the book's first epigraph – Colombo's depiction of the fragrances, when he arrived in America –, "el olor tan bueno y suave de flores ó arboles de la tierra, que era la cosa mas dulce del mundo" (*Não verás* 11), but also with Pablo Neruda's vision offered in another epigraph: "América arvoredo / sarça selvagem entre os mares / de polo a polo balançavas,/ tesouro verde, a tua mata," (*Não verás* 11). This hyperbolic metaphor, America compared to woodland, no doubt can be seen as the recovery of the myth of abundance and the promise based on natural richness.

---

[62] For more information regarding Loyola Brandão's creation of the symbolism of the tree see Cecília Salles's "Uma Criação em Processo" 119-120.

Therefore, as I see it, Loyola Brandão's mentioned epigraphs have a twofold meaning: to show his intention to approach ecological issues right from the start, and to contrast the Edenic idea of America with its environmental contemporary reality, aligning it with a scathing critique of the country's dictatorship that is complicit in the exploitation of nature. Hence, Fernando Pessoa's words in another epigraph, "[o] inexplicável horror de saber que esta vida é verdadeira" (*Não verás* 11) have a deep meaning, since they convey the malaise that pervades the whole narrative, in other words, people's perception that their life is trapped in a destroyed environment under a dictatorial regime. To me, while Pessoa's lines presage the feeling of uneasiness that the reader will experience when reading the novel, Colombo's and Pablo Neruda's aforementioned epigraphs call attention to a topic which will be addressed – the degradation of the natural world. Clara Angélica's words in another epigraph, "[r]espirar terra é não querer saber de limites" (*Não verás* 11), also show the author's attention to the same subject. I see in Angelica's lines a total identification of humans with nature/land, a recognition that breathing and land are vital to one's survival.

It is significant that Aridjis's novel has a gender component the other novels lack. He emphasizes the acknowledgment of women's role both in Mexican society and in environmental protection in particular. Whereas in *Não verás* only Tadeu, Sousa's friend, is actively engaged in protecting animals, in *La leyenda* and in its sequel, *¿En quién piensas,* female characters work actively to protect fauna and flora. This is the reason why López-Lozano claims that these novels can be called ecofeminist (2008, 216).

In this author's view, the incorporation of an ecofeminist perspective is one of the most original aspects of *La leyenda*, which I extend to its sequel as both narratives aim at creating a "constructive alternative to the ecological and social devastation of Mexico City" (2008, 215). In *Não Verás*, the two female characters act differently; Souza's wife, Adelaide, despite being against the regime and living a dissatisfied life, does not question the surrounding environmental deterioration, while Elisa, a nineteen-year-old homeless university student, overtly shows her distress and awareness of current problems, for example, when she admits "[c]ristã sou eu. A última cristã num mundo fodido" (*Não verás* 273), or when she tells Souza "[e]u e o meu namorado pintávamos painéis nas laterais dos prédios. Contratavam a gente para desenhar matos e florestas em tudo o que era muro e parede desta cidade . . . Desenhava avencas, orquídeas, parasitas . . . Acredita, nunca vi uma árvore de verdade na minha vida?" (*Não verás* 277). As referred earlier, Tadeu is the only male character whose agency resembles Aridjis's female characters, since he works for a project that aims to protect endangered animals which scientists managed to reproduce (*Não verás* 125). One day, when he takes Souza to visit the small animal reserve and comes across total destruction, he almost dies of grief, as Souza notes: "[n]ão sobrou nada. Os que invadiram destruíram, comeram o que havia de comestível. Observava Tadeu e via nele uma ruína maior que a da reserva. Desconsolado, era um homem estropiado . . . Impressionava o estado de Tadeu. Os ombros caídos denunciavam a derrota" (*Não verás* 128). And the fact that later Tadeu commits suicide probably demonstrates his incapacity to survive in a devastated world dominated by men implying a gender issue. His concern for the environment and his effort at animal conservation distances him from the ideas and attitudes imposed by the patriarchal society in which he lives. Only Souza, his friend, is able to understand his environmental concerns as he himself is a victim of the same oppressive system that prevented him from teaching and preserving people's historical memory. As he recalls, without memory there is no critical thinking and "o Esquema" can subdue and manipulate people, the main reason why he tries to keep his own mental faculties for as long as possible.

In *La leyenda*, even though Juan de Góngora is not passive, he is not as fully committed to the conservation of fauna as is General Carlos Tezcatlipoca's half-sister, Natalia. Góngora writes an article "que iba a enviar a una revista ecológica para su publicación" (*La leyenda* 132) and feels the urge to paint the Mexican Valley before it vanishes: "[s]entía . . . el deseo de volver a su estudio para acabar el paisaje del Valle de México, antes de que desapareciera el Valle de México" (64). Góngora's effort to paint the Mexican Valley before it disappears denotes his sensitive manner of apprehending reality, his strong wish to give meaning to, to leave a representation, a memory of that time and landscape. It highlights his commitment to history and the crucial role art may play in the preservation of nature to rescue the future. His attitude is, undoubtedly, distinct from the government's mismanagement, corruption, and apathy already described. Due to the accelerated pace of the unplanned development in Mexico City and concomitant changes, Góngora finds it difficult to render the alteration occurring in the landscape resulting from the rapid environmental deterioration:

> Por esa avenida venía un río, ¿cómo pintar ahora su ausencia, su cuerpo entubado, su carga de aguas negras?, ¿cómo pintar la desesperación de un río, el grito silencioso de la Naturaleza en agonía? – se preguntó, delante de su cuadro - ¿Cómo pintar la soledad del último conejo teporingo que se extingue en la falda de un volcán? (*La leyenda* 164)

In effect, Góngora's questions draw one's attention to man-made manipulation and pollution of watercourses in Mexico City. Also his vision of the river's despair and screams for having its stream limited and full of garbage, having its existence threatened is worth stressing. His feeling of helplessness is after all similar to that Souza and other characters show, in *Não Verás*. As Saulo Gouveia observes, Loyola Brandão's characters feel paralyzed by the unimaginable devastation because it has occurred in a short time; within a few decades the physical environment has seen degradation on a scale comparable to that suffered in millions of years, therefore, this phenomenon is hard to comprehend (2017, 27). To my mind, Gouveia's take encapsulates in a few lines Loyola Brandão's and Aridjis's characters' feelings toward a planetary problem that is not only hard to grasp but also to tackle, given its amplitude. This certainly brings to mind the environmental humanities' effort to grapple with the global environmental crisis, as I discussed in chapter 2. Góngora's perception of the environmental deterioration, his commitment to reflect it through art, show how the field of Arts can contribute to the environmental humanities's advancement.

By contrast, for Aridjis, women's voices mean "un nuevo lenguaje poético para los tiempos de la crisis ecológica," to use Niall Binns's words (2004). In both novels, female characters actively engage in the protection of the environment, species conservation and point to a better world where humans live in harmony with nature. In sharp contrast to Tezcatlipoca, whose evil, corrupt, maleficent character and actions influence the unfolding of the plot, Natalia is the female spokesperson in the patriarchal society, the one who fights to save endangered animals: "[e]lla habitaba una casa en una granja en el ex bosque del Desierto de los Leones. Fama era que se dedicaba a reproducir fauna en peligro de extinción. En vida, el general la había llamado ecoguerrillera y más de una vez había mandado a sus nacotecas a visitarla, con instrucciones de matarle o robarle sus animales" (*La leyenda* 12). There is no doubt that the space in Natalia's house differs from the public spaces or parks created by a government that does not prioritize environmental protection but hasty development at any cost. As I will discuss ahead, her project rejects subordination to capitalist policies, therefore the General cannot accept or bear seeing her commitment to animals facing extinction. And being a guerrilla she must die. It may be argued that Natalia's activity parallels Góngora's painting; I contend that she actually wants to be an agent of social change: she believes she can protect animals from extinction, and does so until the moment she is murdered. Therefore, I would say she plays a more proactive role than Góngora. And since Tezcatlipoca is imbued with the values and projects of a society responsible for the exploitation of nature and the subjugation of women, he cannot accept or bear his half-sister´s dedication to animals. He admits that "[e]l hombre obtiene placer en destruir lo que no ha creado, en cegar la vida de especies cuya vida no comprende" (*La leyenda* 69). His anthropocentric mindset prevents him from understanding that all species in the world are entitled to the same rights. The General hates his sister, her engagement with the conservation of species whose endangerment stems from poorly planned projects of modernization. For him, she must be eliminated, since she does not fit into the political and economic system that aims at continuous growth, even though the species conservation is important to humankind and the Earth: "[m]i hermana tiene animals que ya sólo se hallan en la memoria de los hombres o disecados en los museos de historia natural o cosidos en un abrigo" (*La leyenda* 70). The fact that she tries to save the "remains of paradise" is totally irrelevant, as well as her unconditional love of animals, as it is shown in this passage:

> Desde niña se preparó para conservar a los animales en peligro de extinción. Sin apoyo de nadie y con poco dinero, logró reproducir monos aulladores, jaguares, guacamayas, teporingos, quetzales, zopilotes y chachalacas. Ha dedicado quince años de su vida a la labor secreta, subversiva, de constituir un santuario con las sobras del paraíso. (*La leyenda* 69)

Thus, when the ruthless General attacks the animal sanctuary, he kills Natalia, “le apuntó con la pistola y le dio un balazo en el vientre” (71). Since “el vientre” is associated with reproduction, the shooting at that part of her body suggests his wish to eradicate the reproduction of both humans and nature given the association of both, as I shall illuminate a little bit ahead. However, his hatred for his half-sister may have other deeper roots: after the murder of his father, a “narcotraficante,” his mother “fue la amante de todos los de la banda.” One of them, “la preñó y la abandonó con una hija sietemesina que se llamó Natalia,” and Tezcatlipoca never accepted “la promiscuidad sexual de su madre” (*La leyenda* 25-26), probably wondering whether Natalia did not follow their mother’s footsteps. Also the fact that both left home at an early age and rarely met together may explain their “desamor fraterno” and “deagrado mutuo” (*La leyenda* 12) throughout their lives. He considers her life less valuable than the one of “un jaguar negro”: “[q]uiero que Natalia no se muera, quiero que agonice viendo esta carnicería” (*La leyenda* 71). Little value does he attribute to women and nature and knowing Natalia’s love of nature, for cruelty, hatred, or misogyny, he wants her to witness environmental destruction, that she sees before dying that her project for a society where women and nature are not subjugated is eradicated. The only animal he spares is the black jaguar and this is not without meaning as he himself is nicknamed “el Jaguar” (*La leyenda* 11). In the Aztec religion, Tezcatlipoca is an omnipresent and invisible god, an embodiment of change through discord and conflict and his companion spirit is the jaguar (Aguilar-Moreno 150). Tezcatlipoca incarnates this mythological figure, therefore he spares the black jaguar to preserve his own spirit.

Likewise, all female characters in *¿En quién piensas* – the three sisters, Arira, Rosalba, her twin sister, María, and their friends, Facunda and Yo –, are concerned with the conservation of the fauna and flora in the contaminated city of Moctezuma. After Rosalba's death, they all feel they have to share the responsibility of taking care of her birds, "y como antes de fenecer le había encomendado a María el cuidado de sus pájaros, mantenidos con dificultad en las afueras de las afueras de Ciudad Netzahualcóyotl, discutíamos la forma en que las cuatro nos distribuiríamos la responsabilidad" (30). Rosalba loved birds and seemed to have special powers, as Arira acknowledges, "[u]n día hace mucho tiempo, Rosalba niña le devolvió la vida a un jilguero . . . La muerte del pájaro duró una noche. Ella, con sólo pasarle la mano por la cabeza hizo que se movieran sus ojillos apagados, que las patitas tiesas se estiraran y que abriera el pico pidiendo alimento. A lo mejor sólo estaba entumecido, pero nosotras creímos que por sus poderes ella lo había resucitado" (*¿En quién piensas* 50). Arira further adds, "Rosalba tenía buena mano para los pájaros, como yo la tengo para las plantas" (56) and Facunda states: [d]esprecio a la gente que deja morir a una planta por falta de agua y no da de comer a los animales" (246); also when talking about her father, Yo says, "[p]adezco su hábito de contar en las calles los árboles muertos, doliéndome de ellos igual que si fuesen mis parientes" (78). In *¿En quién piensas*, María, Arira, Facunda and Yo illustrate how they take care and share responsibility for animals and plants and, in doing so, they show ecological alternatives for the future. From my point of view, by choosing four female protagonists for *La leyenda*'s sequel, Aridjis brings to the forefront women's social role in Mexican society. In *La leyenda*, Natalia's struggle against the extinction of animal species might be considered unsuccessful since she is killed. Nonetheless, it is worth remarking that in both novels female charaters are committed to building new models of society in which they have a stronger, more proactive role than male characters in finding solutions for environmental and social problems. I cannot help agreeing with López-Lozano's contention that Aridjis illustrates how marginalized sectors can overcome historical marginalization by starting an ecological and cultural reform in the country (2005).

Last but not least, despite the fact that throughout Aridjis's texts there are other examples which display the female characters' commitment to preserve the environment, I believe it suffices to call attention to the blue goddess's meaning at the end of the novel, "la figura azul," who has in her hands "un pájaro dorado de plumas luminosas" (*La leyenda* 198). In Javier Ordiz's view, "el pájaro dorado . . . parece ser una referencia al ave fénix, imagen tradicional del renacimiento y la nueva vida" and "'la diosa azul' . . . inaugura un 'tiempo nuevo' que recupera los valores perdidos del pasado" (2010, 12). This is in line with the Aztec myth, in that the death "del Quinto Sol" brings about the birth "del Sexto Sol" which entails rebirth and renewal. As I see it, the use of the female goddess has a double meaning: firstly, the notion that women should not be excluded from the project of modernity, since the actions of men end up destroying the environment, women present themselves as capable of saving nature and its creatures for future generations (López-Lozano 2005), and secondly it makes the reader ponder upon the role of women in matriarchal societies and the reverence for the Earth and the harmonious cohabitation between humans and nature. As Binns remarks, prior to the patriarchal era, in the "edad de oro," there was a reverential respect for the natural world that was lost with the imposition of the androcentric system. Since then, due to historical changes, women and nature have shared the values of regeneration and life in the symbolic imaginary of men (qtd. by Ordiz 2010, 12).

To conclude, I firmly believe that the destruction of flora and fauna are clearly human-induced and are mainly driven by economic and political forces. I consider that Aridjis's perspective concerning this problem summarizes the reality of the Americas and of the world: "[n]uestra flora y fauna desaparecen cada día. Nuestros bosques, desiertos y mares son saqueados en busca de árboles, aves . . . cactos, plantas . . . que se convierten a su vez en muebles, mascotas, zapatos, bolsas y trofeos, y en medicinas patentadas en el mundo industrializado. Nada de lo que vuela, repta, nada, anda o crece en la tierra está a salvo de la codicia propia y ajena" (1992). As it is known, the devastation of fauna and flora is interconnected with global warming and climate change, which are in turn triggered by humans, but more than confirming scientific knowledge I want to examine how Harrison, Loyola Brandão, and Aridjis represent them in the tales I analyze.

3.3 Global Warming and Climate Change

As I expounded in chapter 1, only around the second half of the nineteenth century did scientific research and data collection about the increase in global temperature start and at the time it was a subject that practically escaped everyone's concern. Even in the 1960s and in the 1980s, when Harrison and Loyola Brandão wrote *Make Room!* and *Não verás*, hardly anyone talked about global warming let alone climate change and there was no irrefutable evidence of their existence. Both authors researched the scarce available material on these matters and when environmental scientist Jonathan Cowie states that Harrison did proper background research and that his novel has a sound environmental basis (2015), to my mind, it may apply to Loyola Brandão as well. It is worth highlighting that, by envisaging and depicting life on a much hotter Earth, they bring to the forefront two of the most complex environmental problems human beings have to face in the twenty-first century: global warming and climate change. In the early 1990s, when Aridjis approached the anthropogenic climate change in *La leyenda* and in its sequel, he followed the global academic trend, precisely at the time this topic raised interest in Mexico, as Simone Pulver states (2006, 3). While air pollution worsened (in 2012 Mexico City was one of the most polluted megalopolises in the world), Mexico tried to curb the problem and became one of the few developing countries to create laws to curb climate change threats. Therefore, up to a certain point, I dare say that by engendering apocalyptic tales on a hotter Earth Harrison and Loyola Brandão were harbingers of the major predicaments of our times.

Right at the beginning of *Make Room!* Harrison writes, "[o]n this hot day in August in the year 1999 there are – give or take a few thousand – thirty-five million people in the city of New York" (2). In order to have a clear notion of the importance the author gives to the temperature rise and how he envisions human lives being affected by it, in the 143 pages of Part One (Part Two has 88) there are several instances when some of the characters allude to the heat, in fact there are more than twenty references. Andy, the main character, notes:

> Christ but I'm morbid this morning, Andy thought, it must be the heat, I can't sleep well and there are the nightmares. It's this endless summer and all the troubles, one thing just seems to lead to another. First the heat, then the drought, the warehouse thefts and now the Eldsters. They were crazy to come

> out in this kind of weather. Or maybe they’re being driven crazy by the weather. It was too hot to think […]. (*Make Room!* 10)

In an astounding manner Andy perceives the direct connection between heat, drought, his melancholy, his difficulty in sleeping and thinking, and the troubles and thefts caused by food scarcity; as he puts it, “one thing just seems to lead to another.” Andy’s discomfort is still evident on another occasion when “[h]e had had another bad night and was tired. And the heat wave was still on . . . and felt the beginning of a headache squeeze at his temples” (52). It is evident that the heat affects his night’s rest causing headaches later. In fact, Harrison’s depiction of the effects of the heat wave immediately brings to mind Loyola Brandão’s remarks, “[o] sol deve ter alterado o comportamento de todo o mundo” (*Não verás* 154), and “[e] o sol. Não há nenhuma sombra para me abrigar, a cabeça arde, como se eu tivesse levado uma tijolada” (*Não verás* 85). Likewise, Aridjis renders the stifling atmosphere of Mexico City, “[h]acía calor. Un calor que se pegaba en la cara y se metía en los ojos y en la boca. Un calor que se llevaba en las manos y en la piel como un trapo sobado, como una escoriación. Un calor que salaba el aire y daba sed” (*La leyenda* 142). To me, these excerpts clearly show that the heat is becoming almost unbearable for humans and, although it is not overtly mentioned, affecting all the ecosystems on the planet Earth.

It is significant that in the three narratives under study, the phrase “global warming” is never used, nonetheless, in the light of an ecocritical reading there seems to be little doubt that the authors mean to emphasize an abnormal rise in temperature and what this could mean for all life on Earth. At least, in my view, this is what Harrison suggests: “[i]t was a record-breaker: Day after day had passed, but the heat stayed the same. The street outside was a tub of hot, foul air, unmoving and so filled with the stench of dirt and sweat and decay that it was almost unbreathable" (*Make Room!* 89); and Loyola Brandão: "[m]etereologistas acentuam que a temperatura tende a subir, ainda mais que nos aproximamos dos meses que, em outros tempos, correspondiam ao verão" (*Não verás* 154). Thus, while Harrison stresses the "foul air" which is "almost unbreathable," Loyola Brandão extrapolates this and depicts a future when human life is threatened to death because of the sun, as I shall mention ahead. One day, one of the characters living at Souza's house told him how life had become unbearable in the Northeast, and how the harshest of dry weather conditions had forced people to leave: "[a]çudes secos, barragens vazias, o gado morto na caatinga, o sol esquentando, crianças morrendo" (187). When confronted with that new unsustainable life the character posed absurd questions such as "[m]odificar o clima? De que jeito? Empurrar o sol para cima?" and then added: "[e]ra o que dava vontade de fazer para se livrar da quentura que arrancava a pele, ardia a cabeça, torrava os pés" (187) and wondered how all that would end. He further explained that he had seen "aquele Nordeste devastado . . . Horrorizado a cada novo dia, porque o sol levantava sobre o sangue seco das pessoas mortas no escuro" (189) and that "[à]s vezes o lixo se incendiava em pleno ar antes de cair" (192). The following passage illustrates what happened when the odd "Tempo Intolerável" came up:

> Havia outra situação estranha, curiosa. As regiões de quentura. Verdadeiros bolsões em que era impossível ficar, passar, atravessar. Você ia andando, mergulhava naquele calor insuportável . . . Até que chegou o Tempo Intolerável. Não dava mais para se expor ao sol. Você saía à rua, em alguns segundos tinha o rosto depilado, a pele descascava, a queimadura retorcia. A luz lambia como raio laser . . . O sol atravessava como verruma, matava. Ao menos era a imagem que a gente tinha, porque a pessoa dava um berro enorme, apertava a cabeça com as duas mãos, o olho saltava, a boca se abria em busca de ar. Num segundo, o

> infeliz caía duro sem se contorcer. A gente via, a alguns passos, a pessoa murchando, secando, desidratada, a pele se desgrudava como folha seca, mais um pouco e os ossos dissolviam. (*Não verás* 190-191)

This hyperbolic description of the “Tempo Intolerável” illustrates how the heat had become unbearable and led to death in a matter of seconds. Through various comparisons, "[a] luz lambia como raio laser," “[o] sol atravessava como verruma," and "a pele se desgrudava como folha seca" the reader realizes that no one could bear the deadly sun. When someone was dying “dava um berro enorme, apertava a cabeça com as duas mãos, o olho saltava, a boca se abria” – the image people kept of such a horrendous death brings to mind "Der Schrei" by Norwegian painter, Edward Munch, whose figure mirrors the deepest anguish and existential despair. Also the fact that "os ossos se dissolviam," may suggest that after death there would be no trace of one’s existence. To further exacerbate such a terrible death, the narrator describes it in absurd terms for, on the one hand, a person died in a matter of seconds, and, on the other, people could see "a pessoa murchando, secando, desidratada . . . como folha seca,” a gradation that better describes death and the brutality of the situation caused by the extreme hot sun that goes far beyond the real. I think no reader remains indifferent before this appalling scenario. The comparison of human death with that of the plants also reminds that both species are governed by the same laws and die.

Hoping that “no Centro, no Leste e no Sul existissem cidades que o sol não tivesse atingido” (193), “[o] povo resolveu fugir” (192). The words and expressions used to describe people’s departure intensify the description and certainly awaken the reader’s deepest feelings and memories as they bring to mind the Jews walking to the concentration camps during the Holocaust: “[c]ada um levava sua mala . . . Puxavam carrinhos com roupas . . . A primeira leva foi trágica . . . Perceberam que iam morrer" (193). And the tragic long trek from the Northeast to São Paulo is described as follows:

> O solo fervia, o chão queimava a sola dos pés. E o que se via era a dança mais incrível, todos pulando, os pés mal tocando o solo e se erguendo como que impulsionados por molas. Pulavam e gritavam de dor. À medida que o dia crescia, a dança da morte ao sol aumentava em intensidade. Parecia um ataque histérico, um transe colectivo, o santo baixado em todo mundo. Logo ia diminuindo. O sol comia as roupas, os quadros, os guarda-chuvas que não eram de seda preta. Lambia os cabelos, a pele, as carnes, os ossos. Pelas nove da manhã sobravam montes de cinzas espalhados pelas terras, misturados ao asfalto derretido. (*Não verás* 193)

In this passage, as in the previous excerpt commented above, the hyperbolic metaphorical language, the gradation of human suffering draws the reader's attention again. The personification of the sun that "comia as roupas . . . lambia os cabelos, a pele, as carnes, os ossos" evinces no one could survive the deadly effects of the sunrays: people vanished mingled with the molten asphalt without leaving any trace (revealing the devaluation, the total precariousness of human life) because it was not the sun everybody knew or used to see, it was a monster. As the character then proceeded with the explanation, "[q]uem tinha sobrevivido nos poucos abrigos esperava a noite para recomeçar a sua marcha" (193). In order to better understand the difficult and paradoxical situation he added that "[à] medida que o dia crescia, a dança da morte ao sol aumentava em intensidade,"[63] there was "um transe colectivo" – the climax –, which "[l]ogo ia diminuindo" (193). Interestingly, the personification "[o] sol . . . Lambia os cabelos" is a repetition of "[a] luz lambia como raio laser" employed in the previous excerpt from Loyola Brandão reminds me of Aridjis's similar vision when Yo says that "[l]os rayos solares son dañinos. No debemos ver al dios sol ni de frente ni de soslayo; la piel humana ya no puede recibir sus rayos, como en la antigüedad" (*¿En quién piensas* 186). And pondering upon Yo's comparison between the present situation and "la antigüedad," I cannot help emphasizing that throughout the novel Harrison constantly refers to the heat wave, Loyola Brandão makes global warming sound much more catastrophic and Aridjis's texts tackle it directly, as Juan de Góngora asserts that people have adopted a new language, "[u]n nuevo vocabulario ha entrado en su lenguaje cotidiano" (*La leyenda* 42). Therefore, the protagonist of *La leyenda*, Bernarda Ramírez underscores the disappearence of seasons, "¿[h]as notado que ya estamos en noviembre y no ha habido otoño?," Juan de Góngora remarks "[t]ampoco habrá primavera" and Bernarda adds "[d]esde que murieron los árboles ya no hay estaciones, hay grandes sequías, grandes calores, grandes lluvias de polvo, todo se ha trastrocado" (121). Similarly, Facunda says, "[n]o hay estaciones, los fríos y los calores se dan cuando quieren" (*¿En quién piensas* 186) and the narrator Yo condenses this matter in this excerpt:

---

[63] Curiously enough, Loyola Brandão's depiction of "dança da morte" seems a description of the dance featured in the video "A Dança da Morte"since capoeira dancers jump, their feet barely touch the ground, and they rise as if propelled by springs, accessible at www.youtube.com/watch?v=foSkkdzjhlg. Accessed 20 July 2020.

> Afuera el planeta se resquebrajaba . . . hacía mucho calor o mucho frío y había epidemias y hambrunas. El agujero en la capa de ozono se agrandaba sobre Ciudad Moctezuma y desde hacía tiempo no llovía. En el país una sequía ubicua diezmaba el ganado y mataba a los animales domésticos, el agua se había acabado en varios países en vías de desarrollo que se habían quedado siempre en vías de desarrollo. (*¿En quién piensas* 178-179)

Here the narrator not only underscores the various environmental problems that exist in the fictional Moctezuma City but also the destruction of the environment on a global scale, “el agua se había acabado en varios países en vías de desarrollo,” something that happens in both novels. In *La leyenda*, Juan de Góngora sees the title “EL QUINTO SOL” in a paper and information “sobre cosas extrañas que estaban sucediendo en la Tierra: Sobre guerras ecológicas entre países del Cuarto Mundo, sobre hambrunas en el desierto más grande del planeta, el de la Amazonia; sobre las exequias simbólicas del mar Mediterráneo, sobre ríos biológicamente muertos . . . sobre terremotos y erupciones volcánicas en Colombia . . . Italia y Portugal” (85).

By intertwining strange ecological events and worldwide catastrophes with the Aztec myth of the Fifth Sun in an apocalyptic tone, Aridjis both criticizes the environmental destruction that results from the Western model of development and industrialization and announces that the death of the Fifth Sun does not mean the demise of civilization but marks the beginning of a better new life under the era of the Sixth Sun. Here it may be worth remembering that, according to the Aztec legend of the Five Suns, the universe was created and destroyed five times. Each world – better known as “sun” – represented an era and was associated with forces representative of one of the four elements: earth, water, fire, and wind. Each sun’s demise, that is, the end of each era was caused by a natural catastrophe prompted by two conflicting deities, Queztzalcoatl that represented life, light, and fertility, and the Black Tezcatlipoca that represented darkness and war (Aguilar-Moreno 2007, 139). After the destruction of each world, both Queztzalcoatl and the Black Tezcatlipoca tried to recover the lost cosmic order being the next sun presided by the one who prevailed in the dispute.[64]

---

[64] To very briefly expose the legend, the era of the first sun ended when deadly jaguars emerged and devoured the giants, the inhabitants of the Earth; the second sun, the wind sun, was swept away by a hurricane wind and its people were turned into monkeys; the third, the sun of fire rain, was destroyed by fire that rained from the sky and volcanic eruptions, and its inhabitants turned into butterflies, dogs, and

López-Lozano states that the Fifth Sun was different from the previous ones in that it represented cosmic balance because no single element predominated then (2008, 176). The Fifth Sun was nonetheless also fated to destruction, this time by earthquakes and famine. The Aztecs believed they were living under the Fifth Sun when the Spanish conquistadors arrived in the Valley of Mexico; they interpreted the arrival of the Spaniards and their conquest under Cortés's authority as supernatural signs of the end of the world and the Fifth Sun. I would say that their forebodings about the demise of the Fifth Sun were not wrong given that the Spanish conquest meant the end of their world, the beginning of a new era marked by colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and all the effects I already addressed in the previous chapters. This time, after the destruction of the Sun, did not emerge a new, stronger, and better one.

Despite the fact that a thorough knowledge of the Aztec cosmology is unnecessary, the notion of the Legend of the Suns, which gives the title to Aridjis's book, helps one to better perceive the tale. Moreover, it should also be pointed out that some characters are named after the most important Aztec gods. According to Aguilar-Moreno, *Huitzilopochtli* is the reincarnation of the patron deity of the Aztec, god of sun, fire, and war who was worshipped in the Great Temple of *Tenochtitlan* and was honored with massive human sacrifices throughout the year (2007, 148), and *Tezcatlipoca* is the reincarnation of the god of warriors and sorcerers, the embodiment of change through conflict and discord (2007, 150). The *tzitzimime*, in turn, were star demons of darkness that caused a great deal of anxiety and fear among the Aztec population (2007, 151). It cannot be ignored that the Aztecs believed they had to appease their gods so that they

---

turkeys; people living under the fourth sun, the sun of water, were swallowed by water and were turned into fish; after that came into existence the fifth sun, the sun of movement (Aguilar-Moreno 139).

could maintain the flow of life in the universe and life would continue on Earth. They therefore sacrificed humans in rituals to extract their heart and blood in order to continue getting fertility (2007, 156), and engaged in wars not only to extract tribute from other peoples but also to take captives for subsequent sacrifice which generated discontent among those peoples. Consequently, when the Spaniards arrived in Mexico, they (the Spaniards) forged alliances with the Aztecs, a fact that contributed to their defeat and demise.

Drawing on the pre-Columbian myth of the Five Suns, Aridjis invented and incorporated the birth of the "Sexto Sol," "el Sol de la Naturaleza" (*La leyenda* 66), as Cristóbal Cuauhtli explains to Juan de Góngora. Cuauhtli is a messenger from the past who once appears to Góngora as "un hombre indígena de unos cuarenta anõs de edad, de ojos negros y pómulos salientes . . . mediría un metro sesenta y cinco centímetros de estatura. . . . vestido a la usanza de los mexicanos antiguos" (*La leyenda* 36-37). He has travelled through time to assign Juan de Góngora the task of recovering the *Códice de los Soles* which had been stolen by General Tezcatlipoca, "antes de que aparezcan los tzitzimime, monstruos del crepúsculo" (*La leyenda* 39). Juan de Góngora must rescue the codex because it predicts the date of the end of the Fifth Sun, as well as the name of the god of the Six Sun. Besides, if Tezcatlipoca keeps the manuscript, it means that there will be violence and human sacrifice in the future. This is significant for Tezcatlipoca is Mexico City's chief of police and the reincarnation of the Aztec god of violence – a 35-year-old man "moreno oscuro, lampiño en la cara y en el pecho . . . que siempre llevaba los ojos ocultos tras lentes negros y la dentadura de oro reluciente" (*La leyenda* 25). If the eagle kills the jaguar, the Sixth Sun will be the Sun of Nature, as

Cuauhtli tells Juan de Góngora: "[s]i el jaguar mata al águila, el Sexto Sol será el Sol de la Muerte. Si el águila mata al jaguar, tendremos el Sol de la Naturaleza" (*La leyenda* 66).

On the whole, I must underscore that both Aridjis and Loyola Brandão exacerbate the rise of temperature and the environmental degradation to such an extent that life in the futuristic Mexico City and São Paulo is almost inconceivable. But while Loyola Brandão intermingles his ecological concerns with the critique of the military dictatorship, Aridjis resorts to the Legend of the Fifth Sun, that is, the pre-Columbian paradigm of creation and recreation of the world in order to tackle the environmental problems that afflict Mexico. According to Garner-Prazeres, by evoking the Aztec worldview Aridjis almost automatically calls to the contemporary reader's mind the thought of the Conquest as every reader knows how and why the Aztec world came to an end (2012, 20), and adds, in my view, an apocalyptic tone to the narrative. He further reminds the reader how the Spanish invaders' encounter with the Aztecs led to the destruction of their culture and knowledge. Sousa Santos calls this epistemicide and further speculates whether their world was not more sustainable than the modern one.

In the face of all that has been exposed, it is worth asking whether (dystopian) literature cannot seize an abstract topic like global warming and tackle it successfully, exploring and expanding feelings and ideas in a way that scientists would never do. Moreover, it simultaneously makes the reader ponder: what difference can I make? What can be done? And what alternatives does humankind have? Bill McKibben is probably right when he states that "it's far too late to stop global warming . . . Our crusade . . . will be on behalf of a relatively livable world" (2003, xviii), nonetheless, it is within almost everyone's reach to curb air and water pollution. Their reduction will be beneficial for all elements in the global ecosystem a reason why they need more attention and reflection.

3.4 Air and Water Pollution

It is known that poor, ethnic, and (im)migrant communities, either in urban areas or throughout countries, are oftentimes settled in less privileged neighborhoods or lands, having difficult or no access to clean pipe water and breathing more polluted air, i.e., they are more exposed to all kinds of environmental hazards. In *Make Room!*, this is the case of Billy Chung's family and the other Formosa refugees who settled into ships – temporary quarters in Shiptown –, after the Second World War, a subject on which I will shed more light when I discuss "Riots over Food and Water"in the next section of this study.

In Harrison's and Loyola Brandão's narratives, the theme of air pollution is not addressed the way it is in *La leyenda* and *¿En quién piensas.* This does not mean, however, that the problem did not exist when the novels were written. For instance, in *Não verás*, the underprivileged must endure the stench of death and decomposition from dumps where corpses are unloaded along with garbage. Thus, when Souza travels with his nephew through the different neighborhoods, so that he can leave the bodies of those who died or were murdered at his home, he is perplexed and does not understand how people can bear such contaminated air, "[p]avoroso, mefítico . . . O que chega até mim é um cheiro de morte e decomposição. De lixo e excrementos, de esgotos e suor . . . Cheiro acre . . . Cortante. Como esse povo suporta?" (225). This excerpt is in effect a repetition of the novel's beginning and shows how the initial oppressive sinister atmosphere pervades the whole text: "[m]efítico. O fedor vem dos cadáveres, do lixo, e dos excrementos que se amontoam além dos Círculos Oficiais Permitidos, para lá dos Acampamentos Paupérrimos . . . Os caminhões, alegremente pintados de amarelo e verde, despejam mortos, noite e dia" (15). This passage shows the existence of different sectors in Brazilian society, as, due to excessive centralization, the division into neighborhoods was implemented according to classes, social categories, professions and hierarchies "no Esquema." This epitomizes Robert Bullard's stance, I discussed in chapter 2, that "communities are not created equal" and the fact that "some have become the dumping grounds for garbage and dumping waste" (2005, 4-5).

Moreover, right from the start the reader is confronted with the nationalist and patriotic feeling the government tries to maintain, for the trucks are painted yellow and green, the main colors of the Brazilian flag. I draw a parallel between this fetid rotten setting and the one Andy, the protagonist of *Make Room!* has to endure: "[t]he street outside was a tub of hot, foul air, unmoving and so filled with the stench of dirt and sweat and decay that it was almost unbreathable" (89). As time goes by, Andy gets used to it "[y]et for the first time since the heat wave had set in, Andy did not notice it" (89), because he knows he has no alternative.

But, whilst in Brazil, in the late 1970s and in the early 1980s, air pollution was not a debated issue, the same is not true for the U.S. in the previous decades, as I have shown above, despite the fact that Harrison addresses it only briefly. As Edward O. Wilson puts it, in the 1950s and 1960s, the U.S. was a prospering and exuberant nation living in a period of peace and economic growth and "an ethic of limitless progress prevailed" (2002, 358). Then, the environment was excluded from the mainstream political agenda, environmental warnings were discussed with irritable impatience and, for the sake of prosperity and security, science and technology were rewarded (358), hence the importance of the publication of *Silent Spring* (1962). Also environmental photographer, Arthur Tress's photos show the negative effects of the industrial boom in the New York City landscape of the 1950s and 1960s: the great chimneys "belching out black smoke" depict "an image of hell or the apocalypse," to use his own words[65] (Tress 00:01:11-16). As he notes, when people went to the windowsill, it was covered with dust and dirt, precisely the situation described in Jim Dwyer's article "Remembering a City Where the Smog Could Kill." As Dwyer wrote, back then people could touch the air in New York – it was that filthy. For example, when environmental lawyer, 78 year-old Mr. Butzel, moved to New York City in 1964, it had the worst air pollution among big cities in the U.S. Butzel said he not only saw the pollution, he wiped it off his windowsills and when he looked at the horizon it would be yellowish. It sounds like business as usual, therefore I assume that it was simply as if residents had got accustomed to it (2017). I am taken to conclude that *Make Room!* and *Não* verás tackle air pollution in a very similar manner, despite their countries' disparate realities.

Several passages in *Make Room!* and *Não verás* represent water pollution. For instance, in *Make Room!* when Detective Dwyer is explaining to the patrolmen and detectives the rationing of water to come, he says, "but people are still drinking river water. I don't know how they can – the damned river is just an open sewer by the time it reaches us, and salty from the ocean – but people do it. And they're not boiling it, which is the same as taking poison. The hospitals are filling up with typhoid and dysentery cases and God knows what else" (159). Later it is said that "[t]he Health Department had forbid the use of river water: it would have been like spraying poison" (168), and when talking with Shirl about environmental problems the character Sol asks: "[a]nd the rivers – who polluted them? The water – who drank it?" (195). Despite the fact that there is no reference to any particular New York City river, it is important to bear in mind that river pollution was not uncommon at that time.

---

[65] In the same video, "Smog Almost Killed New York City, Here's How," Tress also refers that toxic smog surrounded New York City for decades and that, on certain days, residents could not even leave their homes because at the time the city looked a lot like Beijing does today, accessible at www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTQDJy0opaM. Accessed 20 Nov. 2019.

On several occasions, the Cuyahoga River, in Cleveland, one of the most polluted rivers in the U.S., caught fire. Over the latter part of the nineteenth century and until the 1960s, the river became polluted from decades of industrial waste, but at that time the residents of Cleveland saw water pollution as a necessary evil for industry made their city prosper. However, in 1969, when a fire broke out on the Cuyahoga River due to an oil slick, the city's residents were already worried about the oil wastes, debris, and chemicals that polluted the river and put efforts to clean it. The *Time* magazine article about the incident and a picture of the river on fire[66] ended up bringing mass attention to Cleveland and greater involvement in pollution control (Rotman 2019).[67]

Likewise, the rivers of São Paulo are either polluted or dry. In *Não verás*, the protagonist's nephew blames the previous governments, "[a]gora vai pôr a culpa no Esquema dos rios terem secado? Do calor? Seja razoável, tio . . . A culpa foi dos governos que fizeram experiências nucleares, transformaram a atmosfera (75). Similarly, sea water is so highly contaminated that even after desalination it is of poor quality: "[o] mar estagnado, negro . . . Nem água do mar se consegue tirar para tratamento e distribuição à população. Construíram-se todo o tipo de filtros para torná-la potável. Inúteis. A água termina o ciclo de refinação com uma cor cinza e um cheiro enjoativo de ovo podre. Parece vingança do mar . . . Os esgotos do país fluem para o oceano dia e noite" (90). To me, the expression "a água com uma cor cinza e um cheiro de ovo podre" as well as the use of the adjectives "estagnado" and "negro" convey to the reader the amplitude of sea contamination, whereas the personification, "vingança do mar," reminds him/her that if the sea continues to be polluted "dia e noite," it will rebel against humans' ongoing mistreatment. In like manner, the personifications "o rio em agonia" and "um filete tentando sobreviver" in the following extract illustrate how nature is unable to endure the continuous pollution and the environmental devastation perpetrated by humans: "[o] rio tinha entrado em agonia após anos de devastação em suas margens . . . Quando o São Francisco se reduziu a um filete tentando sobreviver na areia quente, o povo ficou maluco. Com razão" (187). The river's struggle for survival, as if it were a living entity, brings to mind the evidence of the epistemologies of the South (Santos) in the Maori Tribe 140-year struggle for the recognition of the Whanganui River's rights in New Zealand.[68]

---

[66] Ironically, the fire image shown in *Time* magazine in 1969, was actually of a more serious fire which had occurred in 1952, since according to Michael Rotman, there is no picture of the 1969 fire.

[67] It is interesting to note that the impact of the various fires was such that it inspired different pop songs, namely Randy Newman's "Burn On, Big River, Burn On" (1972), REM's "Cuyahoga" (1986), and Adam Again's "River on Fire" (1992).

This vision of the Whanganui River, so different from Eurocentric knowledge, is obviously in stark contrast with the Tietê, in São Paulo represented by Loyola Brandão as that "fedia, grosso, coalhado de detritos. Até que foi bom secar, não passava de um estéril caudal de imundície, intestino pobre da cidade" (116). This hyperbolic depiction of the river Tietê "coalhado de detritos," as "um estéril caudal de imundície," and "intestino pobre" offers the reader a very dark picture of humans' actions and helps him /her imagine such bleak reality. It has its counterpart in *La leyenda*, when one reads "[d]esde hacía décadas, la urbe no era otra cosa que un laberíntico y explosivo canal de desagües. Las tuberías y los túneles de concreto que recorrían subterráneamente cientos de kilómetros parecían ahora los intestinos abandonados de un animal fantástico del subsuelo" (17). On the one hand, the comparison of waterways to animal guts has implicit the idea of an extension with several meanders probably associated to body waste, something dirty that spreads rotten smell. On the other, "las tuberías y los túneles de concreto" are associated to "los intestinos abandonados de un animal fantástico" to illustrate how the labyrinthic explosive drainage channel results from rampant uncontrolled urban growth. I cannot help noting that the hyperbolic language used to depict the river Tietê pollution and the sewage system in Mexico City stands out. In both passages there is a comparison to guts, the personification of the river and of the sewage network, that is, the personification of nature and human work evincing that after all the portrayed world is beyond any hyperbole.

---

[68] In 2017, the same rights as a person were finally granted to this river, which is a sacred entity for the indigenous population –, in recognition and respect for the elements of the natural world which was unthinkable some years ago. For the Maori, the Whanganui River is an indivisible and living whole that contains all physical and spiritual elements from the mountains to the sea. As it is born in Mount Tongariro – one of the main settlements of the Whanganui Iwi tribe –, it means a lot to Maori people, who consider themselves equal to rivers, seas, and mountains and a part of the universe. Thus, the Whanganui River is a member of the tribe with "legal personality" with the same legal rights as a human being (Brenna 2017).

By contrast, the representation of air and water pollution is more exacerbated in *La leyenda* and *¿En quién* piensas. Despite the fact that both novels' settings are projected into 2027, it actually mirrors Mexico City large-scale problems in the 1990s. As López-Lozano puts it, "[i]n both novels, the city formerly surrounded by lakes has become a tragic testimonial to industrialization which has resulted in a massive ecological and human disaster" (2008 186). The fact that Tenochtitlan – "the city formerly surrounded by lakes," said to be the most beautiful, organized, and developed city of South America, exactly the way painter Juan de Góngora envisages "los lagos, los canals, los puentes, las calles de agua de esa Venecia abolida que un día fue México Tenochtitlan" (*La leyenda* 94) and wants to render before its extinction, needs deeper reflection. In fact, as environmental degradation worsens, Juan de Góngora is urged to represent it: "[p]or esa avenida venia un río, ¿cómo pintar ahora su ausencia, su cuerpo entubado, su carga de aguas negras?, ¿cómo pintar la desesperación de un río, el grito silencioso de la Naturaleza en agonía?" (*La leyenda* 164). Góngora's questions are striking for they show how it is hard to put on the canvas nature's "desesperación," "agonía," and also the violence brought about by humans; he sees the river as a sick and intubated body – an association with disease then it may bring to mind intubated patients. Whereas literary language/the expressions "la desesperación de un río" and "el grito silencioso de la Naturaleza" render the ongoing environmental degradation in a very poignant manner, Juan de Góngora feels at a loss for capturing the very same degradation in his painting, therefore I think that literature and painting contribute to the preservation of memory in a different manner. The contrast between the abolished Venice/Tenochtitlan and what had become an unsustainable city in the sense put forward by Danilo Anton, poses the following question: how has that City become one of the most polluted cities in the world, as suggested in the following excerpt – "Un olor nauseabundo flotaba en la ciudad, gatos, perros, gorriones y ratas aparecieron muertos en las callas, en los sótanos, en los patios, en las azoteas y en las trastiendas. Los únicos que corrieron con puntual fetidez fueron los ríos de aguas negras y los basureros líquidos, reminiscencias viles de lo que un día fue la Venecia americana" (*La leyenda* 19).

On several occasions, there is reference to rivers which have disappeared, for instance, right at the outset of the narrative, the protagonist states that, "[l]as calles por las que había jugado y corrido, con nombres de ríos ahora muertos, habían perdido su fisonomía y su gracia" (*La leyenda* 15). Later, he acknowledges how difficult it is to adapt to such landscape, "[a] Juan de Góngora le costaba trabajo acostumbrarse a una geografía de ríos y lagos muertos" (*La leyenda* 123). He further refers to the constant stench from rivers which "daban la impression de fluir en el aire, por su hedor omnipresente" (*La leyenda* 43), "[l]os cuerpos de agua" that "eran basureros líquidos" (*La leyenda* 45). In addition to the polluted rivers, "[l]os caminos que llevaban a la ciudad de México estaban minados de heces humanas y de alcantarillas abiertas" (*La leyenda* 44).

In effect, it is not difficult to imagine the polluted, overpopulated outskirts of Mexico City with a stench hanging in the air from the open sewers. Due to the country's rapid industrial growth in the early 1990s, urban slums resulting from rural exodus and migration expanded and the effects are now all too visible. In Javier Ordiz's view, in *La leyenda* and its sequel, the mistreatment of the natural environment is carried out under the protection of corrupt public powers that act at the service of an economic system governed by dehumanization (2010, 4), a fact that is not far from reality. However, these problems are not confined to Mexico, there are manifold examples in Latin American cities where slums swarm, whether in Brazil (Rocinha, Sol Nascente, and Rio das Pedras, to name but a few) or in Venezuela, with the largest and most dangerous slum in Latin America: Petare in Caracas.

In Mexico City, in "[l]a ciudad de los lagos, los ríos y las calles líquidas ya no tenía agua y se moría de sed" (*La leyenda* 17), during the night, "una *pipa* distribuía agua" (*La leyenda* 98), "los hombres se ven secos y amarillentos" (*La leyenda* 43), very likely "por la falta de agua" (*La leyenda* 43), as Juan de Góngora observes and "los habitantes de Ciudad Moctezuma tenían que ir a buscar agua a veinte kilómetros de distancia cada día” (*La leyenda* 43). The sharp contrast, between the past, when the Aztecs had to work hard to build their city in the midst of water and the present, when ironically water scarcity is a very serious problem in Mexico City due to mismanagement, overpopulation, and excessive consumption is worth highlighting.

By comparing Mexican writer Alfonso Reyes’s essay (1953) and *The New York Times*’ critic Michael Kimmelman’s article (2017) referring to Anáhuac, or Aztec Mexico, with Aridjis’s literary representation, will also help us better understand the calamity of water scarcity in Mexico City today. Reyes observes that “[l]a tierra de Anáhuac apenas reviste feracidad a la vecindad de los lagos. Pero, a través de los siglos, el hombre conseguirá desecar sus aguas, trabajando como castor” (1953, 12). Kimmelman, in turn, states that the conquering Spaniards fought a war against water, determined to subdue it. He adds that they replaced the Aztec built dikes and canals with streets and squares, drained the lakes and suffered flood after flood, including one that drowned the city for five years (2017).

Reyes’s description of Anáhuac’s air is also meaningful. In the first chapter of Visión *de Anáhuac*, he writes: “[v]iajero: has llegado a la región más transparente del aire,” and expressions such as “el aire brilla como espejo,” (14) and “la atmósfera de extremada nitidez,” (16) belong to a remote time and place which disappeared about five hundred years ago (around 1521) with the Spanish conquest. Thus, in a timespan of five centuries, humans have interfered and contaminated the air in such way that to a large extent it puts their own life, fauna and flora at risk.

In *La leyenda*, Juan de Góngora’s mouth “exhalaba *smog* como si la contaminación le saliera de las entrañas” (84), “[u]n niño, borracho de *smog*, tosía y lloraba parado en una esquina, sin saber qué dirección tomar” (132). In *¿En quién*

piensas, in Parque de Conservación Ecológica, a ruminant mammal was "[e]brio de contaminación" (87). Air pollution does not go unnoticed: smog and contamination affect everyone's health, it is as if one's body was rejecting and expelling them and given that children are more vulnerable than adults they are more affected. In Parque de Conservación Ecológica an absurd situation occurs: instead of being cared for and conserved, animals are also contaminated, a contradiction that highlights how severe and uncontrolled air pollution may become.

In both novels, the characters live in a menaced world that seems to be close to the end of times, where people try to survive as if they were totally aware of Ben Dibley's notion that "[l]ife in the Anthropocene has no future; it has prospects" (2012, 147). They are aware of these bleak prospects in such a way that Bernarda Ramiréz offers her friend Juan de Góngora *Viajero por un Planeta Degradado*, *Desastres por Venir*, *Enciclopedia de la Sobrevivencia*, among other suggestive titles (*La leyenda* 34). The narrator Yo, in *¿En quién piensas*, states: "[s]oy un animal urbano, desarraigado de la naturaleza, que respira aire contaminado y bebe agua poluta, y así moriré" (165). In effect, there is a parallel between humans' fragile, endangered environment and the imminent end of the Fifth Sun era. As the plot unfolds, the reader realizes the era is about to end when "[l]os tzitzimime, monstruos del crepúsculo, surgían en las calles, aparecían en las azoteas de las casas, iban a los autobuses, atacaban a las mujeres, habían tomado la ciudad" (180). According to the Aztec myth, "los tzitzimime, monstruos del crepúsculo," were mythological creatures or night demons that would come and devour men and women at the end of the Fifth Sun, so when these grotesque demons invaded the city, they inspired fear and a great deal of anxiety among the Aztec population. The author resorts to these mythological figures to better emphasize the feeling of doom brought about by the ecological crisis in Mexico and simultaneously recall that, after the Fifth Sun, it will arise a time of hope and optimism under the Sixth Sun.

As previously stated in Chapter 2 (Davis 2017), some decades ago in Mexico City, birds would fall dead from the sky, killed by the highly polluted air. In *La leyenda*, a more apocalyptic megalopolis is conceived. As Juan de Góngora notes, there are no seasons and birds anymore: "[l]os calores de mayo se habían quedado hasta noviembre . . . De un tiempo para acá los pájaros migratorios ya no se caían muertos en la ciudad, porque ya no había pájaros" (36). Ironically, it is later said that "[i]gnorándose unos a otros, todos compartían la cosa mejor distribuida en el Valle de México, la infición del aire" (42), an excerpt that highlights on the one hand, that air pollution (as well as water pollution) cannot be confined to a particular area evincing Tomashow's discussed angle that local environmental problems form part of a global network (2001) and, on the other hand, that even when living in the same place, people are not exposed to environmental hazards in the same way bringing to mind the concept of environmental (in)justice, as this passage further elucidates:

> Ante la infición general, algunos transeúntes se tapaban el rostro con una máscara. La calidad y la forma de la máscara correspondían a las posibilidades económicas de cada uno. Los más pobres se cubrían la nariz con una mano, un pedazo de plástico, un trapo sucio. Las personas nerviosas como Arira decían que lo mejor era no respirar, no hablar, no comer, no beber, no abrir los ojos. (¿En quién piensas 186-187)

To conclude, there seems to be little doubt that the greater the seriousness of environmental problems, the more emphasis the authors place into their works. No wonder then that Aridjis's novels render a more acute critique of the pernicious effects of accelerated industrialization, poorly planned urban growth, and the policy of corrupt institutions that have led to ecological devastation in Mexico. And since population growth is another environmental quandary, I shall focus my attention on the representation of this topic now.

3.5 Overpopulation and Riots over Food and Water

It might seem at first sight that the depicted scenarios of a 1999 New York City with thirty-five million people, an overcrowded Mexico City in 2027, and a crammed São Paulo around 2030 are very much alike. Indeed, in *Make Room*, in *La leyenda*, and in Não verás, the rendered urban areas are spaces of insecurity and fear, which awaken a sense of suffocation, oppression, and anxiety in the reader, a sense that arises from the fact that there are too many people everywhere and that, when outside home, people are under pressure and squeezed in the midst of huge anonymous crowds from which sometimes they cannot escape. From my point of view, Harrison mirrors the Zeitgeist of the 1960s, as I expounded in chapter 1, and overtly addresses birth-control and overpopulation to indoctrinate the reader in its effects – scarcity of food, water, and other resources. Aridjis, in turn, focuses mainly on the scarcity of water in the ill-planned Mexico City while Loyola Brandão envisions an overcrowded São Paulo whose population drinks "urina reciclada" (*Não verás* 31) and eats "comida factícia" (49) because water and food are scarce or nonexistent.

As I mentioned in chapter 1, in the early 1960s and 1970s, literary and scientific works were not totally disconnected; so much so that Paul Ehrlich wrote the "Introduction" of the first editions of *Make Room!*. In order to make clear that he wants to criticize the political establishment and to address demographic growth in a serious manner, Harrison also starts the "Prologue" with a quote by Dwight D. Eisenhower, in which the president states that the government will not have a positive political doctrine that has to do with the problem of birth control for it is not its business (*Make Room!* n. p.). Curiously enough, in the second half of *Make Room!*, we "hear" Harrison's voice through the character Sol blaming "the stinking politicians and so-called public leaders" who have avoided the issue of birth control and "covered it up because it was controversial" (180). In light of the rampant world population growth however it is legitimate to consider if governments have nothing to do with the problem.

Sol is a 75-year-old man who brings to the fore the topic of population explosion; he also supports population control. He seems to be Harrison's rational voice who contends that "birth control has nothing to do with killing babies" (177), while Shirl, the protagonist's young girlfriend, is representative of a conservative mindset who interrogates whether birth control is not a violation of natural law (177). Since the novel's plot comprises two imbricated "stories" and, in the first, the protagonist, Andy Rusch, is under pressure to solve a crime, in the second, after reading more than half of the book, almost unexpectedly, a frenzy Sol confronts the reader with his worries about humanity's biggest threat – people. As he explains to Shirl:

> Modern medicine arrived. Everything had a cure . . . Death control arrived . . . More babies lived who would have died, and now they grow up into old people who live longer still . . . Three are born for every two that die. So the population doubles and doubles – and keeps on doubling at a quicker rate all the time. We got a plague of people, a disease of people infesting the world . . . We got death control – we got to match it with birth control. (*Make Room!* 178-179)

Sol’s remark is indeed pertinent, since population growth results from this unbalance between birth and death rates. Even though the fertility rate has been falling in most countries – the last years of the twentieth century witnessed the slowing of population growth –, the upsurge of population may seem an unbelievable fact. In Sol’s opinion, it is the Catholic Church's fault that families are big, “I suppose we can mostly blame the Catholics for that, they’re still not completely convinced that controlling births is a good thing” (*Make Room!* 194). In the same vein, Sol says “[t]he whole world used to be one big Mexico, breeding and dying” (*Make Room!* 178), a statement that overtly degrades the U.S. neighbor, but calls attention to the stark reality of this country whose pace of population growth and death is high.

In Aridjis’s rendered fictional Ciudad Moctezuma, there are also too many people, “[e]n todas partes, a todas horas, había nacimientos, había personas de más y ninguna ausencia se notaba” (*¿En quién piensas* 22). This picture undoubtedetly makes the reader perceive the meaning of overpopulation more clearly than numbers and statistics, as Scott Slovic and Paul Slovic (2015) remind us. Also, when people die there is not a chance to give them a proper burial, “solo incineración y tumbas en condominio” (*La leyenda* 44). I see the following excerpt as a critique of the accelerated pace of urban life that dehumanizes human relations and hinders people from caring for their beloved dead: “[l]a ciudad de la agresión no tenía tiempo para la muerte. Sus muertos no importaban” (*¿En quién piensas* 22). In effect, these depictions resonate with Loyola Brandão’s beginning “[n]ão há tempo para cremar todos os corpos. Empilham e esperam . . . E o sol violento demais, corrói e apodrece a carne em poucas horas” (*Não verás* 15). In my view, the way Arijis and Loyola Brandão render life in the cramped Mexico City and São Paulo suggests there is a surplus of people living there and shows these cities' governments do not care for or protect the population.

Conversely, population explosion does concern the Mexican government for it takes concrete measures to deal with this complex problem: when General Carlos Tezcatlipoca replaces José Huitzilopochtli, he orders his secretary of Health and Birth Control to limit the number of children to two per family (*La leyenda* 160). Moreover, the fact that young Melibea regrets getting pregnant from old Joaquín and tells him "[l]o evitable sucedió, la sobrepoblación gana el mundo" (*La Leyenda* 48), evinces awareness of this matter. In *Não Verás*, the "Esquema" does not put forward concrete measures to curb population growth despite having the clear notion that there are too many people living in the city: "[q]uem fica no meio da multidão sofre. Empurrões, apertos, batidas, pontapés, insultos e bolinações . . . Um dia, os Departamentos Circulantes verificaram que ninguém podia se mexer. Estavam todos aglomerados, apertados, comprimidos. Praticamente imóveis" (40). Souza's nephew, who works for the "Esquema" also tells him, "[t]em gente demais. Não pense que o Esquema está interessado em aumentá-la. Ao contrário. Senão o que seria? Onde colocar tanta gente?" (81).

It is no wonder that people lose or erase their individuality and have difficulty in keeping their identity in the huge anonymous masses of urban spaces. This is easy to perceive at both collective and individual levels: in Mexico City "[m]iles de gentes andaban en el Paseo de la Malinche, más como un organismo múltiple que como cuerpos independientes, más como fantasmas del presente que como seres reales" (*La leyenda* 46) showing the effects of the process of dehumanization. In contrast, even before Souza is changed by the hole that accidentally appears in his hand, he does not recognize his humanity, as he admits, "[q]uantas vezes não reconheço este Souza que desliza num líquido viscoso. Sou, todavia não pode ser eu" (*Não verás* 21). Prevented from teaching and preserving the collective memory, this nonconformist retired History professor fights against the dehumanization and oppression imposed by an absurd dictatorial government. He knows that for the "Esquema" it is fundamental to erase the collective memory – an indispensable tool for maintaining one's critical thinking –, therefore, it suppresses the press and makes libraries inaccessible, in order to promote alienation and the detachment among citizens instead. As Souza wonders, "[n]o distanciamento em que ficamos uns dos outros, na ausência de imprensa, nas bibliotecas inacessíveis, como se situar?" (*Não verás* 162). He further adds that he is afraid of becoming marginalized without noticing it (*Não verás* 162). Therefore, for him, keeping his memory is vital to continue recognizing himself as a human being. While living an apparent stable life with his wife, Adelaide, Souza accepted reality without questioning it "contemplando sem agir, reagir" (*Não verás* 82), like the other people around him that "pareciam sem reação, sem reflexos" (*Não verás* 104). He acknowledges that the hole in his hand has brought him a different consciousness, "cabeça se abriu a partir . . . furo na mão . . . Foi o . . . modo de readquirir consciência" (*Não verás* 159), an awareness that urges him to the street to search for a sense of humanity and a deeper meaning for his existence. Later, while living in the street, he says again, "[v]erifico que preciso de me reconhecer outra vez, me identificar . . . A cada momento indago se vale a pena o esforço para sobreviver, ou para renascer" (*Não verás* 159). Souza is after all one of the few characters who manages to keep his memory, a critical view on the things happening around. He, therefore puts the fundamental question – if it is worth living –, right at the outset of the narrative, "a fim de designar o espaço exíguo em que vivemos. Vivemos?" (*Não verás* 16).

Regarding life and survival, it is significant that the inhabitants of Mexico City face scarcity and rationing of water but not of food. I have already discussed the problem of water in Mexico City and, as I see it, the excerpt "había protestas por el aumento de los precios de la carne y el huevo, por la escasez de agua" (*La leyenda* 55) could effectively portray a situation in any city in today's world. Related to this, López-Lozano states that Aridjis shows that the scarcity of water and energy result from unplanned urbanization and are linked to overpopulation and underdevelopment (2008, 188), an important aspect since there is a sharp critique of the project of modernity in the novel.

In the city of New York, as depicted by Harrison, there are riots over food and water: seldom do people eat real food and even soylent burgers have bad flavor; as Sol notes, only if he were drunk would they taste like meat (*Make Room!* 151). But this is not Billy Chung's opinion, for he eats damp slices of oatmeal and brown crackers (*Make Room!* 25) every other night and every other year (*Make Room!* 24) and has no idea when it was the last time he ate a soylent steak. Chung, an eighteen-year-old son of Taiwanese immigrants, lives in a boat in Shiptown, like other Formosa refugees since the Second World War. When a hungry mob bursts the plate-glass windows of the food department to have access to the food, he finds himself in the middle of the riot and Andy Rusch, one of the city cops on duty, is helpless when a "thin Chinese boy in shorts and much-mended shirt crawled out of the window almost at his fingertips, holding a white box of soylent steaks against his chest" (*Make Room!* 16). Chung forced his way and fled, looking for "a hiding place, a spot where he could have a few moments of privacy" (*Make Room!* 16), the hardest thing to find in that city. After getting it, firstly he wolfs down three of the soybean and lentil steaks and then continues eating them more slowly, until "his stomach was stretched out tautly, and grumbling at the unusual condition of being stuffed so full" (*Make Room!* 19). Later, having satisfied his devouring appetite, he sells the remaining soylent steaks and goes to the Chelsea branch of Western Union for he had got the required "board money" and could now work delivering telegrams. It is striking that he does not even think about his hungry seven-year-old twin brothers, sister, and mother (his father had committed suicide when the twins were born), who always share a meager meal with him. Thus, when he goes back home and receives the usual meal, has to bear a suffocating heat and lack of electric power, he immediately returns to the Western Union where Mr. Burgger asks him to deliver a telegram to Michael O'Brien/Mike, in Chelsea Park. When he got there, the contempt of the doorman and the guard enraged him (*Make Room!* 31). He had never been "inside the solid cliff of luxury apartments . . . walled, terraced and turreted in new-feudal style, which appearance perfectly matched their function of keeping the masses as separate and distant as possible" (*Make Room!* 29). The following day, encouraged by mixed feelings, Chung returns to Mike's apartment to steal money, jewelry, and any item he could sell for a high price in the flea market (*Make Room!* 49). Hardly realizing what is happening, he kills Mike and in his hasty escape leaves everything behind. Amber Pearson remarks that "the murder occurs when Chung and O'Brien finally confront the disparity between their lives" (2013, 144) and I would add that possibly Chung could not endure a life without the basic living conditions, food, clothing, and a house, and would not accept his underprivileged situation. To me, Chung's life is a paradigm of the other precarious lives of Formosa refugees who live in ships separated by "foul, garbage-filled water between them" (*Make Room!* 25). The way this minority is marginalized, discriminated against, forced to live in a polluted area calls to mind Rob Nixon's concepts of environmental racism, environmental (in)justice, and slow violence. It shows how environmental and social problems are inextricably linked, how issues of social justice and environmental protection must be addressed intersectionally as advocated by Peter Wenz, as I addressed in chapter 2. But this is not an isolated case; a group of outraged Eldsters (old people who get a miserable handout to live on) also demonstrate in the streets against the rising costs of goods, starvation, poverty, and the social inequity that pervades the U.S. society for “money buys less and less every year, every month, almost every day” (*Make Room!* 12).

In São Paulo most drinks and food are “factícios” (fake), sodas, fruit, and beans (*Não verás* 21, 49). Our rational thinking cannot indeed even bear that, because of the lack of water, urine is collected, traded, recycled and drunk (*Não verás* 31). From António Silva’s point of view, water scarcity seems to be the central element of the fabular tension in this narrative (2008, 9), undoubtedely a relevant environmental problem that is alluded throughout the narrative on several occasions. For example, the corrupt government takes advantage of the situation, as Souza shows, when he tells his nephew: “[n]ão há mais água. Se você não trouxesse as fichas, eu e sua tia íamos morrer de sede” (*Não verás* 77). The following comparison suffices for one to understand absurd and unconceivable situations created by water scarcity, human degradation and dehumanization when men are described as animals that licked the floor like dogs, pushing and disputing each little puddle that formed between floorboards. They were anxious so that the water would not disappear through the cracks, therefore, “[u]m empurrava o outro, debilmente.” And finally “[t]erminaram caindo, extenuados pelo esforço” (*Não verás* 150). In this rendering of men licking the ground like dogs to survive, I also see an implicit critique of humanism, of the anthropocentric vision that fundamentally places emphasis on the superiority of the human. The assumption of human-centredness has no doubt excluded nonhumans and has contributed to the extinction of species, animals and plants. This passage further evinces that only by resorting to their animal survival instinct are the men at Souza's home allowed to continue living, if this can be called a life. That is to say, only by understanding that humans are not superior to nonhuman beings, that our rational and autonomous self should not put us at the center of everything, will we live in this world imbued with different attitudes, interests, and values and act accordingly.

Even though it may be thought that authors of dystopian texts expose their concerns in an exacerbated manner to spread doom and gloom, I contend that over time writers, scholars, and scientists are actually gaining sensitivity, a new outlook, as regards population growth, and are trying to find answers to this quandary humankind has to face. I cannot help reemphasizing the vital role of literature in the comprehension of environmental issues and reminding Scott Slovic's and Paul Slovic's view that "stories and images have the power to help us understand large, complex problems that we cannot comprehend through quantitative information alone" (2015, 21). As some critics argue however maybe it will be easier to curb population increase than overconsumption, an issue I shall approach in the next section.

3.5.1 Capitalism, Overconsumption, and Consumerism

The range of topics covered by this analysis of *Make Room!*, *Não verás*, *La leyenda*, and its sequel must be further extended, as I claim that these narratives also challenge the reader to reflect on how capitalism, overconsumption, and consumerism go hand in hand with environmental deterioration. They allow him/her to consider how industrialization, first in England, then in other European countries and in the U.S. and the idea of progress based on economic growth were associated with what later became disastrous due to lack of planning, excess, social imbalances, among other factors. Bearing this in mind, I shall highlight how Harrison's tale draws attention to the consequences of stretching the Earth's resources back in the 1960s, at a time when most human beings hardly thought about the detrimental effects overconsumption and consumerism could bring for themselves and for the planet. I will also elaborate on Loyola Brandão's critique of the Brazilian model of development and globalization in the early 1980s, as well as on Aridjis's depiction of the deteriorated ill-planned Mexico City and his critique of capitalism, Western ideas of progress, development, economic growth, and consumption in the 1990s.

The U.S. society was deeply shaped by materialism and consumerism, therefore Donald Worster's asserts that in the postwar decades, U.S. people went on a global consumer binge (2016, 151). Indeed after the Second World War, the U.S. experienced an economic boom, a time when people were influenced by the car culture, acquired household appliances, started eating fast food, and got used to new ways of spending and credit cards, among other cultural habits related to consumption. As I expounded in chapter 1, in 1955, Victor Lebow showed the benefits of making consumption a way of life, of seeking one's spiritual and ego satisfaction in consumption (qtd by Assadourian 2010, 15). And this consumption model promoted in the post-war was exported by the U.S. to its areas of influence as the formula for individual happiness and economic development. To my mind, the fact that in *Make Room!* Harrison sees the depletion of natural resources as a consequence of the overconsumption of the U.S. ever-growing population is worth considering. This is clearly expressed right from the outset, when

Harrison writes in the Prologue that "[i]n 1950 the United States – with just 9 per cent of the world's populations – was consuming 50 per cent of the world's raw materials" (n. p.) and draws attention to the fact that, if the population continued to increase, by the end of the century the country would need more than 100 per cent of the planet's resources to maintain their living standards (n. p.).

Throughout the narrative, the character Sol stresses the shrinking resources twice: "[s]o mankind gobbled in a century all the world's resources that had taken millions of years to store up" (180) and "[e]verything has been gobbled up, used up, worn out. What we got left – our own natural resource? Old-car lots, that's what" (196), while he expands on the dangers of overpopulation. Were this matter not so relevant, Harrison would not have written, in the Afterword, that in 2008 he had dug out information on overpopulation, pollution, and oil consumption over a century ago, and his guesses on population, food shortage, and oil consumption were correct. This preoccupation with the consumption of natural resources brings to my mind Chris Hedges's similar stand when he affirms that Europeans and Americans spent five centuries conquering, plundering, exploiting, and polluting the Earth in the name of human progress (2018, 48), an idea I illuminated in chapter 1.

In *La leyenda*, in its sequel, and in *Não* verás, the critique of the model of development and progress implemented by the governments of Mexico and Brazil does not go unnoticed, as well as their subservience to U.S. capitalist ideology. The rendered Mexico City, Moctezuma City, and the city of São Paulo appear as chaotic growing megalopolises whose fast urbanization does not allow careful planning and the necessary infrastructures. Moctezuma City is a "conglomerado de miseria al pie de una barranca . . . es fea sin remedio . . . no es un cataclismo social ni un drama geográfico, es un chancro" (*La leyenda* 41). In Mexico City, "en nombre de un desarrollo económico dudoso . . . las máquinas de construcción hacían agujeros, hacían demoliciones, levantaban edificios baratos, altos e flacos. Ruinas contemporáneas" (*La leyenda* 16). Likewise, in Brazil the unregulated urbanization is equated to progress, therefore "[n]as zonas rurais não ficou ninguém. Para quê? Somos um país urbano. A terra gretada não produz nada" (*Não verás* 108). Souza, the protagonist, brings back to mind the city's growing population and reminiscences of a more remote past, what it was like to live in community: "[h]avia antigamente, e nem sei que tempo é esse antigamente, a possibilidade de divisão. Dor e alegria eram repartidas, porque se vivia em comunidade" (*Não verás* 170).

If the dictatorial regime in Brazil is criticized for erasing its citizens' memory, destroying history, and community life – History Professor Souza is not even sure of how long ago there was a sense of belonging to a community –, the same happens in Mexico. The representation of the fast urbanization is tinged with negativity. One can obviously infer that it leads "to the loss of a sense of community and historical consciousness," as López-Lozano's states (2008, 197), a sense of community that human beings must recover according to an idea close to that of *Buen Vivir*. Aridjis, more than Loyola Brandão, highlights the consequences of an ill-planned urban growth and to do so he compares what existed in the early days of colonization, "[c]uando el casarío español era blanco, los lagos verde pálido, los caminos de agua verdes y los indios . . . iban vestidos de blanco" (*La leyenda* 16) with "los conglomerados de miseria recientes" (*La leyenda* 16). Of course it may be argued that this is a romanticized depiction of the indigenous people's life, yet I think it is cunningly employed to better display today's urban debacle and disarray.

By invoking the image of a labyrinth, Aridjis represents and criticizes the chaotic urban growth. While in Mexico City there is an underground labyrinth, “la urbe no era otra cosa que un laberíntico y explosivo canal de desagües . . . Las tuberías y los túneles . . . recorrían subterráneamente cientos de kilómetros” (*La leyenda* 17), the whole Moctezuma City is a labyrinth itself: “Ciudad Moctezuma . . . Era un laberinto . . . y bastante feo . . . era una creación de osados avances tecnológicos; en Ciudad Moctezuma el laberinto era una suma de desórdenes pretéritos. No era un sueño futurista, era un delirio actual” (*¿En quién piensas* 27), which evinces even more chaos and anarchism. As López-Lozano states, while technology and industry have benefits for wealthy nations, they can lead to disorder in Latin America, and Aridjis uses the metaphor of the labyrinth to deconstruct notions of order and progress, pillars of the modern national projects proposed by postrevolutionary Mexican regimes (2008, 197). Hence, the rendered picture of the chaotic growth of Mexico City and Ciudad Moctezuma is an acute critique of the model of development adopted by Mexico, which promotes industrialization and urbanization, and neglects policies prioritizing social justice and care for the environment.

The interdependence between the proclaimed model of development proposed by the U.S. and consumerism stands out on other occasions. For instance, Juan de Góngora prefers wearing old clothes inherited from his uncle to new ones, “por el desagrado que sentía por los materiales sintéticos” (*La leyenda* 34), a rejection of what is new and whose quality is doubtful. Also, when Yo, the narrator of *¿En quién piensas* says that “los letreros de las tiendas, los restaurants y los bares . . . Chicken Rápido, Century Veintiuno; . . . Café Mejor Lazy que Crazy . . . Come: Rumberas Brasileñas” are “ejemplos lucientes de la contaminacíon del idioma” (*¿En quién piensas* 235), to my mind, this language is used to better lure people into consumerism and is simultaneously a critique of a Mexican culture that is “contaminated” by English and subject to the forces of globalization.

In São Paulo, however, consumerism takes on another dimension, that is, the population is forced by law to consume, as Souza says, “[e]spertos os camelôs. Sabem que odiamos as lojas. Somos obrigados, por decreto, a frequentá-las em nosso Dia de Consumação” (*Não verás* 41). I think that the term “consumação” (used instead of the term “consumição” in Brazil), is not employed accidentally, for Loyola Brandão criticizes the fact that the law forces people to fulfil themselves through the acquisition of goods. Later Souza says that “SEGUNDA É O DIA OBRIGATÓRIO DE COMPRAS. O POVO DEVE CONSUMIR, PARA QUE AS FÁBRICAS POSSAM FABRICAR E NÃO HAJA A INSIDIOSA RECESSÃO” (*Não verás* 83), and then adds that “[o] Distrito das Compras é vertiginoso” (*Não verás* 85), which brings to mind Aridjis’s metaphor of the labyrinth discussed before.

Souza himself and his wife are after all the best paradigms of the contemporary consumers, despite the fact that he simply accepts Adelaide’s options. In order to fill the void in their lives,[69] “[f]omos preenchendo o apartamento com objetos. Até que ele se assemelhou a um bazar de artigos únicos, invendáveis. Cristaleiras cheias de compoteiras, xícaras, saleiros, copos, taças e licoreiras . . . lâmpadas votivas, cestinhas de costura decoradas . . . Brindes ganhos nos Superpostos de Distribuição Alimentar” (*Não verás* 18). When Souza’s nephew later decides to empty his uncle’s apartment of all objects and throw them away, Souza admits that "[a] casa vazia, despojada de meus objectos, perdeu a personalidade. A nossa marca estava impressa nos objetos . . . Humanizamos os objetos, fizemos deles os nossos representantes. Eles nos simbolizavam, definiam. Eram a nossa expressão. Eles eram nós" (*Não verás* 221). This is precisely what James Speth contends in his study of capitalism: "[o]ur possessessions give us meaning and identity; they speak loudly, to ourselves and to others" (2008, 159). I cannot help pointing out that Souza's recognition of the existing total identification between the couple (himself and Adelaide) and the objects – "eles eram nós" –, epitomizes the inversion of values brought about by consumerism. To me, it suffices to add that this excerpt could also lead to a more in-depth discussion on the human being: What makes us humans? Who is the human being? To what extent are the most dispossessed of this world still human beings? Despite being aware of the "trap" consumerism represents, Speth admits his personal attachment to consumption's benefits and says that besides meeting basic needs, it is stimulating, empowering, relaxing, fulfilling, and educational, just to choose some of the numerous adjectives he uses (2005, 125). This is an aspect stressed by Souza: when he goes to Distrito das Compras, he says that "é um tormento," nevertheless "[a]s pessoas parecem gostar. Riem, se divertem . . . Há uma atração neste Distrito" (*Não verás* 86).

---

[69] Although there are some hints throughout the narrative that Souza and Adelaide had a son, Daniel, who was forced to embark on the ship *France* because of a nuclear power plant catastrophe, this fact is unclear. At a certain point, Souza says that Adelaide’s obsession was to have a son and that “[e]la não via sentido no casamento se não viessem crianças” (*Não verás* 334).

All things considered, I think this short discussion highlights how *Make Room!*, *Não verás*, *La leyenda*, and its sequel help the reader to discern the consequences of overconsumption of resources and of a materialistic and consumer lifestyle. I find it relevant to emphasize Loyola Brandão's and Aridjis's critique of U.S. influence on their countries' development which has led to an alienated life in the chaotic rapidly urbanized Latin American megalopolises.

Conclusion

After delving into and comparing Harrison's, Loyola Brandão's, and Aridjis' narratives, I conclude that, despite belonging to disparate generations and countries, they share identical ecological concerns and represent similar themes. I must reemphasize that in this reading of the novels I could not help conjoining literary and scientific discourses as Opperman suggests (2006, 118) and the environmental humanities find crucial. The "dialogic interaction of texts and contexts," to use Opperman's phrase (118) is the basis of my analysis of the novels because, to my mind, an ecocritical analysis has a broader scope than the one Cheryll Glotfelty's definition suggested – "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (1996, xviii). Reading these novels in the Anthropocene involves an expansion of environmental and historical contexts, so that one can perceive how the multiple environmental issues are articulated in complex ways with other equally relevant social and political matters. I further emphasize that the three novelists adopt similar literary devices, that is, resort to the use of parallel intertwined plots to better address their ecological worries and thereby challenge the reader to reflect on and confront difficulties concerning environmental problems.

I have also demonstrated that these narratives must not be seen merely as figments of their imagination for two motives. Firstly, the authors ground their fictional texts on the reality they observe, casting a critical glance at the social, political, and historical moment in which they live. They filter and reshape the most pressing issues and project them onto a not too distant future. This standpoint makes me interrogate whether Robert Adams' definition of science fiction, "a fiction of the imagination rather than observed reality" may not be challenged. His view that the depicted fictional worlds are distinct from those in which people live is crystal clear, yet, the more we live, the more some aspects of the fictionalized world may turn into reality. Secondly, by revealing the environmental degradation, they bring to light the flaws of social, economic, political, and cultural structures in their countries, and expose great social imbalances and injustices, in sum, what life is like in the overcrowded, cramped New York, São Paulo, and Mexico City, respectively, which are representations of other emerging megalopolises. These dystopian cities prefigure what life would be like in the world megacities in the twenty-first century, "the first truly urban century in the history of humankind," to use Christopher Schliephake's expression (2015a, 205). Since this reality has an impact both on human beings and on the environment, it requires more attention, study, and discussion in order to foster debate on sustainable growth.

I believe that, while reading this study, one has a clear notion that Loyola Brandão's and Aridjis's critical dystopias depict problems different from the ones rendered in *Make Room!* and I infer that this stems from these authors' sensibility to acknowledge and represent the existing imbalance between the Americas. At their core, when they criticize the model of development and the process of modernization, they problematize, discuss, and compel the reader to think about the reasons why Latin American countries have fallen behind their northern neighbors. They implicitly question a range of Western ideas of progress, economic growth, consumption, and power structures and show the path humanity will tread, if it does not find alternatives to the exploitation of resources.

From my point of view, one would not be far from the truth to state that Loyola Brandão cunningly and ironically makes a pun on Olavo Bilac's line "[c]riança! não verás nenhum país como este!" ("A Pátria", 1904) and writes *Não verás país nenhum* instead in order to reflect, interrogate, and bring to the fore the effects of human exploitation of the Earth's natural resources, against pride and a sense of national identity, which Bilac tries to instill. Indeed, Bilac's poem reads "[a]ma, com fé e orgulho, a terra em que nasceste! /Criança! não verás nenhum país como este! / Olha que céu! que mar! que rios! que floresta!" (2014, 47). For João B. Gomes though, Bilac's poem fitted in with the first Republic's ideological and social project under construction, which was manifestly patriotic and aimed to highlight the productive capacity of the land to guarantee the wealth to the country (2014). Realizing the existing environmental deterioration, Loyola Brandão projects its consequences a generation ahead, evincing that it is up to people to change or continue to ravish, decimate, and plunder the land.

In the same vein, *La leyenda* and *¿En quien piensas* simultaneously call attention to the ecological and socio-political concerns regarding Mexico City, in the last decade of the twentieth century, despite the fact that, in my view, these narratives are more focused on environmental degradation than on the dictatorial quality of Mexican politics. To do so, Aridjis incorporates indigenous mythology and resorts to indigenous imagery – a similar appeal to the mentioned one on the approriation of Bilac's patriotic title. As Laurence Pagacz puts it: "[t]anto en su prosa como en su poesía renace un México precolombino que utiliza para interrogar, metaforizar y deformar de manera imaginativa la sociedad actual" (2015). The distortion of contemporary society is a hallmark of Aridjis's and Loyola Brandão's novels, which use an apocalyptic tone to exacerbate the problems they depict. If the reading of *La leyenda* and its sequel generates a feeling of discomfort and apprehension towards an uncertain, unpredictable future, the reading of *Não verás* does create an enormous sense of uneasiness in the reader, who soon grows weary of the rendered gloomy scenario where there is almost no good to counterbalance evil.

Nonetheless, the endings of *La leyenda* and *¿En quien piensas* are optimistic. Karliana Sakas's view that the apocalypse in the first novel "is the catalyst of hope" (2013, 17) equally applies to its sequel: in both, after an earthquake, in the midst of chaos, confusion, and massive destruction comes hope. In the former, the picture of "la figura azul de una mujer hacia el Sol" with "un pájaro dorado de pluma luminosas" perching "[e]n su mano" (198) and, in the latter, "los pájaros" that "se pusieron a cantar, creyendo que era el alba" (273) symbolize nature, representing the beginning of a new era, the Sixth Sun. Thus, the death of the Fifth Sun, that is, the destruction of its era is a necessary step for the rebirth and renewal of society and the world which resonates with the Biblical Apocalypse.

In *Não verás*, only at the end does the reader find a glimmer of hope and even so he/she does not know whether "a pequena e alegre planta, crescendo corajosamente entre as fendas calcinadas" (320) and the "vento prenunciador" that could bring rain (348) are really true and harbingers of a better, fairer world, or simply the protagonist's hallucinations.

All things considered, I conclude that these dystopian narratives anticipated many of the complex environmental debates on the Anthropocene. Comparing and understanding Harrison's, Loyola Brandão's, and Aridjis's ecological concerns, exploring their insights into life in the megalopolises, may reorient the reader's attention to the nonhuman environment and "may direct thought toward alternative futures" (Buell 2005, 2). In *Make Room!*, *Não verás*, and *La leyenda*, some characters' ecological imaginations and concerns go beyond national borders; given that these tales' comparative analysis provides a national and global perspective on ecological issues, it compels one to redefine the very notion of humanity and to imagine oneself as part of a planetary community comprised of humans and nonhumans, that is, an eco-cosmopolitan perception, a new form of global awareness, as Ursula Heise puts it. Finally, by providing a comprehensive picture of environmental problems on both American continents, Harrison's, Loyola Brandão's, and Aridjis's urban dystopias certainly contribute to a better ecology in the Americas. As Rita Felski reminds us, "literay works allow readers to apprehend truths previously unseen" (2008, 79).

Last but not least, by no means would I say that this is an exhaustive study covering the amplitude of ecological concerns in the Americas. Firstly, the three novels discussed in the previous chapter solely span the years between 1966 and 1995; secondly, ecological considerations are such a broad subject matter that it would be impossible to tackle them by examining three novels which do not account for the plurality of the literary production in the Americas; and thirdly, since it purposely intends to focus on how Harrison, Loyola Brandão and Aridjis voiced their ecological worries in the dystopias I analyzed, I do not deepen the intertwining of those matters with political and social issues. Nonetheless, I highlight that the discussion on the diverse ecological concerns these novels prompt contributes to broaden knowledge. These authors far-reaching ecological gaze also make the readers feel the social, political, and cultural zeitgeist of the U.S., Mexico, and Brazil, stimulating them to take a critical look at injustices and inequalities, raising new and different feelings pertaining the topics addressed, and providing a reflection on the need for the change of dominant Western cultural values. In Sverker Sörlin's view, it seems the world has come to a point where pathways to sustainability must be determined again and our hopes are tied to the humanities (2012, 788), which reminds us of the prominent space that literature deserves: conveying information without provoking feelings is not the key to understanding environmental issues.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Anglada, Aníbal Salazar “Su obra: Ambientalismo.” Biblioteca Virtual Miguel Cervantes, 2012, www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/homero_aridjis/su_obra_ambientalismo/. Accessed 17 Oct. 2019.

Aridjis, Homero. ”The Rights of Nature.” *A Voice for Earth: American Writers Respond to the Earth Charter*. Eds. Peter B. Corcoran, James Wohlpart, and Brandon P. Hollingshead, Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2008.

---. *La leyenda de los soles*. México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1993.

---. “La era de la Ecología: El sol de la Tierra.” Biblioteca Virtual Miguel Cervantes, 9 June 1992, www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/la-era-de-la-ecologia--el-sol-de-la-tierra/html/17895045-5f63-4b3b-8901-930ccb4c681a_2.html. Accessed 25 Oct. 2019.

Binns, Niall. "Nostalgia y militancia en Homero Aridjis: La escritura en un mundo Poluto." Biblioteca Virtual Miguel Cervantes, 2004, www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/nostalgia-y-militancia-en-homero-aridjis--la-escritura-en-un-mundo-poluto/html/f7bf891d-82e0_44d6-b471-_3c2b61daa776_2.html#I_0. Accessed 15 Oct. 2018.

Brandão, Ignácio de Loyola. *Não verás país nenhum*. 1981. 27ª ed., Lisboa: Ulisseia, 2011.

Cardoso, Tânia Cardoso de. "'Banquete-ê-mo-nos': uma relação entre George Orwell e Ignácio de Loyola Brandão". U Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, MA Thesis, 2000.

Garner-Prazeres, Julia. *After the Earthquake: Literary Responses to Catastrophe in Mexico City, 1985-2000*. Brown University of Providence, PhD Dissertation. 2012.

Gouveia, Saulo. "A Collision of Disparate Historical Timescales in Ignacio de Loyola Brandao's And Still the Earth." *Latin American Literary Review* 44.87 (2017): 24-34.

Harrison, Harry. *Make Room! Make Room!*. 1966. Penguin Books, 2008.

López, James J. "Homero Aridjis: La leyenda de los soles". *Revista de Literatura Mexicana Contemporánea* 2.5 (1997): 48-56.

López-Lozano, Miguel. *Utopian Dreams, Apocalyptic Nightmares: Globalization in Recent Mexican and Chicano Narrative*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2008.

---. "Pensar la nación mexicana a través del Apocalipsis ecológico en dos novelas distópicas de Homero Aridjis." Biblioteca Virtual Miguel Cervantes, 2005, www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra_visor/pensar-la-nacion-mexicana-a-traves-del-apocalipsis-ecologico-en-dos-novelas-distopicas-de-homero-aridjis/html/37f16c6f-ecf6-4aeb-9a36-0831b7c79e61_3.html#I_0. Accessed 15 Oct. 2018.

Pagacz, Laurence. "El autor: apunte biobibliográfico." Biblioteca Virtual Miguel Cervantes, 2015, www.cervantesvirtual.com/portales/homero_aridjis/autor_apunte/. Accessed 16 July 2018.

Pearson, Amber. "*Make Room! Make Room!*, Harry Harrison (1966)." *Encyclopedia of the Environment in American Literature*. Edited by Geoff Hamilton, and Brian Jones, Jefferson, N.C., and London: McFarland, 2013, 143-145.

Sakas, Karliana Brooks. "Apocalypse as Catalyst of Hope for a New World in Homero Aridjis" *La leyenda de los soles*." *Revista de literatura mexicana contemporánea* 59 (2013): 17-26.

Salles, Cecília Almeida. "O processo de criação de não verás país nenhum" *REEL – Revista Eletrônica de Estudos Literários, Vitória,* s. 1, a. 5.5, 2009, 1-19.

---. *Uma Criação em Processo: Ignácio de Loyola Brandão e "Não verás país nenhum*." Universidade Católica de São Paulo, PhD Dissertation. tede2.pucsp.br/handle/handle/13991. 1990.

Shapiro-Hafid, B. "*'Make Room! Make Room!'* and a [sic] The Politics of Contraception." *A Study of the Hollow Earth*, 4 July 2013, thesymzonian.wordpress.com/2013/07/24/make-room-make-room-and-a-the-politics-of-contraception/. Accessed 2 Oct. 2019.

Silva, Antonio de Pádua Dias. "A cidade deteriorada: Distopia literária e ecologia na ficção de Ignácio de Loyola Brandão." *Terra Roxa e Outras Terras: Revista de Estudos Literários* 12 (2008): 5-15.

Souza, Luis Filipe Brandão de. "HISTÓRIA, CIDADE E DISTOPIA: A ficção científica ridícula de Não Verás País Nenhum." *Contraponto* 2.2 (2013): 129-140.

Stauder, Thomas. "Lo fantástico en la obra del autor mexicano Homero Aridjis: Análisis de la novela La leyenda de los soles." Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 1993, www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmcvx277. Accessed 10 Feb. 2019.

---. *"La luz queda en el aire": estudios internacionales en torno a Homero Aridjis*, vol. 48, Texas: Vervuert, 2005, 283-286.

Tomlinson, Paul. "Make Room! Make Room! Introduction." *Michael Carrol's Website,* www.harryharrison.com, Dec. 1999, www.michaelowencarroll.com/hh/n07.htm. Accessed 2 Oct. 2019.

Truesdale, Dave, and Paul McGuire III. "An Interview with Harry Harrison." *Tangent Online*, 18 Aug. 2012 [*Tangent* #3, September 1975]. tangentonline.com/interviews-columnsmenu-166/interviews-columnsmenu-166-interviews-columnsmenu-166/classic-harry-harrison-interview/. Accessed 27 Dec. 2017.

Tuckey, Melissa. "Interview with Homero Aridjis." *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 22 Mar. 2012, fpif.org/interview_with_homero_aridjis/. Accessed 27 Dec. 2017.

Secondary Sources

Acker, Antoine, Olaf Kaltmeier, and Anne Tittor. "The Social Production of Nature between Coloniality and Capitalism (Introduction)." *Negotiating Nature: Imaginaries, Interventions and Resistance* 9.2 (2016): 5-24.

Acosta, Alberto. *O bem viver: uma oportunidade para imaginar outros mundos*. Trad. Tadeu Breda, São Paulo: Editora Elefante, 2016.

Adamson, Joni, Mei Mei Evans, and Rachel Stein, eds. *The Environmental Justice Reader: Politics, Poetics, & Pedagogy*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2002.

Adamson, Joni. *American Indian Literature, Environmental Justice, and Ecocriticism: The Middle Place*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001.

Aguilar-Moreno, Manuel. *Handbook to Life in the Aztec World*. New York: Facts on File, 2007.

Alves, Isabel M. F. “Sob a influência da natureza: do Transcendentalismo à imaginação ambiental. Exemplos de uma viagem americana.” *Dedalus - Revista Portuguesa de Literatura Comparada* 1 (2015): 613 - 626.

Anderson, Mark and Zélia M. Bora, eds. *Ecological Crisis and Cultural Representation in Latin America: Ecocritical Perspectives on Art, Film, and Literature*. New York: Lexington Books, 2016.

Angus, Ian. *Facing the Anthropocene: Fossil Capitalism and the Crisis of the Earth System*. NY: Monthly Review Press, 2016.

Anton, Danilo J. *Thirsty Cities: Urban Environments and Water Supply in Latin America*. Ottawa: International Development Research Centre IDRC, 1993.

Assadourian, Erik, et al., eds. *State of the World 2010: Transforming Cultures: From Consumerism to Sustainability (State of the World)*. New York: WW Norton & Company, 2010.

Attali, Jacques. *Breve história do futuro*. Trad. Patrícia Xavier. Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote, 2008.

Awiakta, Marilou. *Selu: Seeking the Corn-Mother's Wisdom*. Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Pub., 1993.

Bailey, Ronald. *The End of Doom: Environmental Renewal in the Twenty-First Century*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2015.

---. *Eco-Scam: The False Prophets of Ecological Apocalypse*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1993.

Bakeless, John. *America as Seen by its First Explorers: The Eyes of Discovery*. New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1989.

Barbas-Rhoden, Laura. *Ecological Imaginations in Latin American Fiction*. Gainesville, FL.: University Press of Florida, 2011.

Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992.

Bello, Andrés. “Silva a la agricultura de la zona tórrida.” Editorial del Cardo. Biblioteca Virtual Universal, 2003.

Bennett, Michael. "From Wide Open Spaces to Metropolitan Places: The Urban Challenge to Ecocriticism." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 8.1 (2001): 31-52.

Bennett, Michael, and David Warfield Teague, eds. *The Nature of Cities: Ecocriticism and Urban Environments*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999.

Bergthaller, Hannes, et al. "Mapping Common Ground: Ecocriticism, Environmental History, and the Environmental Humanities." *Environmental Humanities* 5.1 (2014): 261-276.

Bíblia Sagrada. 4ª ed., Lisboa/Fátima: Difusora Bíblica. Missionários Capuchinhos, 2003.

Bilac, Olavo. *Poesias infantis*. São Paulo: Poeteiro Editor Digital, 2014.

Blumstein, Daniel T., and Charlie Saylan. "The Failure of Environmental Education (and How We Can Fix It)." *PLoS Biology* 5.5: e120 (2007): 973-977.

Boff, Leonardo. *Ecologia: grito da terra, grito dos pobres*. São Paulo: Editora Ártica, 1995.

---. *Saber cuidar: ética do humano, compaixão pela Terra*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1999.

Bolton, Herbert E. "The Epic of Greater America." *The American Historical Review* 38.3 (1933): 448-474.

Booker, M. Keith. *The Dystopian Impulse in Modern Literature: Fiction as Social Criticism*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994.

Bramwell, Anna. *Ecology in the Twentieth Century: A History*. London: Yale University Press, 1989.

Brenna, Lorenzo. "New Zealand, Maori's sacred river gets same legal rights as a Human being." *Life Gate,* 28 Mar. 2017, www.lifegate.com/people/news/new-zealand-river-maori-legal-personality. Accessed 25 Nov. 2019.

Brodey, Kenneth. *History of the United States*. Milan: La Spiga Languages, 1996.

Bruchac, Joseph. *Native Plant Stories*. Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 1995.

Buell, Frederick. *From Apocalypse to Way of Life: Environmental Crisis in the American Century*. New York and London: Routledge, 2003.

Buell, Lawrence. "Ecoglobalist Affects: The Emergence of U.S. Environmental Imagination on a Planetary Scale." *Shades of the Planet: American Literature as*

World Literature. Eds. Wai Chee Dimock, and Lawrence Buell, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press 2007, 227-248.

---. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Oxford, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

---. *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture and Environment in the US and Beyond*. Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2001.

---. *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard UP, 1995.

Buell, Lawrence, Ursula K. Heise, and Karen Thornber. "Literature and environment." *Annual Review of Environment and* Resources 36 (2011): 417-440.

Bueno, Eva Paulino. *Latin American Science Fiction Writers: An a-to-z Guide*. Ed. Darrell B. Lockhart, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2004.

Bullard, Robert Doyle. *Quest for Environmental Justice*. San Francisco: Sierra Club Books, 2005.

Burkeman, Oliver. "Memo exposes Bush's new green strategy." *The Guardian,* 4 Mar. 2003, www.theguardian.com/environment/2003/mar/04/usnews.climatechange. Accessed 24 Feb. 2018.

Bursztyn, Marcel, and Marcelo Persegona. *A grande transformação ambiental: uma cronologia da dialética homem-natureza*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Garamond, 2008.

Caldeira, Isabel. "Who Has the Right to Claim America?" *America Where? Transatlantic Views of the United States in the Twenty-First* Century. Eds. Isabel Caldeira, Maria José Canelo and Irene Ramalho Santos. Bern: Peter Lang, 2012: 173-196.

Callenbach, Ernest. *Ecotopia*. 1975. New York, Toronto and London: Bantam Books, 2009.

Câmara, João Batista Drummond. "Governança ambiental no Brasil." *Revista de Sociologia e Política* 21.46 (2013): 125.

Canavan, Gerry, and Kim Stanley Robinson, eds. *Green Planets: Ecology and Science Fiction*. Wesleyan: Wesleyan University Press, 2014.

Canelo, Maria José. "'America,' a View from the South." *America Where? Transatlantic Views of the United States in the Twenty-First* Century. Eds. Isabel

Caldeira, Maria José Canelo and Irene Ramalho Santos. Bern: Peter Lang, 2012: 95-115.

"Capitalism vs. the Climate: Naomi Klein on Need for New Economic Model to Address Ecological Crisis." *YouTube,* uploaded by Democracy Now!, 18 Sep. 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=8W3scqbuJVQ. Accessed 1 Feb. 2019.

Cardenal, Ernesto. *Antología nueva*. Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 1996.

---. *Ernesto Cardenal para niños*. Madrid: Ediciones de la Torre, 1990.

Carrington, Damian. "Global pollution kills 9m a year and threatens 'survival of human societies'." *The Guardian*, 20 Oct. 2017, www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/oct/19/global-pollution-kills-millions-threatens-survival-human-societies. Accessed 22 Apr. 2018.

Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. 1962. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002.

Carter, Jimmy: "Address to the Nation on Energy and National Goals: 'The Malaise Speech.'" 15 July 1979, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project.* www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=32596. Accessed 11 July 2018.

Carvalho, Susan. *Contemporary Spanish American Novels by Women: Mapping the Narrative*. Vol. 237. Suffolk, New York: Boydell & Brewer Ltd, 2007.

Casas, Bartolomé de las. *The Devastation of the Indies: A Brief Account*. Trans. Herma Briffault. New York: Seabury Press, 1974.

Clark, Timothy. *The Cambridge Introduction to Literature and the Environment.* Cambridge, New York and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

---. *Ecocriticism on the Edge: The Anthropocene as a Threshold Concept*. London and New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015.

Cloud, Christine. "Accounts of the Four Voyages of Columbus." *Encyclopedia of the Environment in American Literature*. Eds. Geoff Hamilton and Brian Jones, Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2013.

Clute, John. "Science Fiction from 1980 to the Present." *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Eds. Edward James and Farah Mendlesohn. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 64-78.

---. "Fantasy." *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*. Eds. John Clute and John Grant, Orbit, 1997. sf-encyclopedia.uk/fe.php?nm=fantasy. Accessed 20 Mar. 2019.

Collins English Dictionary, 2019, www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/mesoamerica. Accessed 22 Jan. 2020.

Colón, Cristóbal. *Relaciones y cartas de Cristóbal Colón*, vol. 164. Madrid: Librería de la Viuda de Hernando y C.ª, 1892.

Coupe, Laurence. *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Cowie, Jonathan. 12 Sep. 2015, "Review of *Make Room! Make Room!*." *Fiction Reviews*, Posted: 09.4.15 Updated: 12.9.15. www.concatenation.org/frev/make_room_harry_harrison.html. Accessed 6 Nov. 2018.

Crow, Charles L., ed. *A Companion to the Regional Literatures of America*. Oxford, MA.: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2003.

Crutzen Paul, J. "Geology of mankind: the Anthropocene." *Nature* 415.3 (2002): 23.

Culliton, Kathleen. “New York among most polluted cities in the U.S., analysis shows.” *Patch*, 27 Jan. 2020, patch.com/new-york/new-york-city/new-york-among-most-polluted-cities-u-s-analysis-shows. Accessed 24 July 2020.

Darío, Rubén. “A Colón.” *Poemas del Alma*, 30 Jan. 2017, www.escritores.org/recursos-para-escritores/colaboraciones/19286-ruben-dario-y-la-critica-del-descubrimiento. Accessed 6 Nov. 2017.

Davis, Lucas W. "Saturday Driving Restrictions Fail to Improve Air Quality in Mexico City." *Scientific Reports* 7 (2017): 1-9.

Davis, Mike. *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles*. New York: Vintage, 1992.

DeLoughrey, Elizabeth M., and George B. Handley, eds. *Postcolonial Ecologies: Literatures of the Environment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Denevan, William M. "The Pristine Myth: The Landscape of the Americas in 1492." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82.3 (1992): 369-385.

Devall, Bill, and George Sessions. *Deep Ecology*. Layton, US: Gibbs Smith, 1985.

DeVries, Scott M. *A History of Ecology and Environmentalism in Spanish American Literature*. UK: Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

Dibley, Ben. "'The Shape of Things to Come': Seven Theses on the Anthropocene and Attachment." *Australian Humanities Review* 52 (2012): 139-153.

Domingo, Andreu. "Demography as a Seed of Dystopia." *Papers de Demografia* 432 (2014): 1-20.

Dorey, J. Milnor. *Great Britain and the U.S.A., Past and Present*. Lisboa: Livraria Sá da Costa Editora, 1972.

Downey, Kyle. "The Importance of Environmental Education in America." *Law Street*, 9 Sep. 2016, www.lawstreetmedia.com/issues/education/environmental-education-america/. Accessed 10 Nov. 2019.

Dussel, Enrique. *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of "the Other"and the Myth of Modernity, trans. Michael D. Barber.* New York: Continuum, 1995.

---. *1492 El encubrimiento del Otro: Hacia el origen del "mito de la modernidad"*. La Paz: Plural Editores, 1994.

Dwyer, Jim. "Remembering a City Where the Smog Could Kill." *US Kings,* 2 Mar. 2017, uskings.us/news/photos-videos/remembering-a-city-where-the-smog-could-kill. Accessed 20 Nov. 2018.

Ellis, R. J. "Frank Herbert's Dune and the Discourse of Apocalyptic Ecologism in the United States." *Science Fiction Roots and Branches*. Eds. Rhys Garnett and R. J. Ellis. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990, 104-124.

Emmett, Robert S., and David E. Nye. *The Environmental Humanities: A Critical Introduction*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2017.

Ehrlich, Paul R., and Anne H. Ehrlich. *The Population Bomb*. 1968. New York: Ballantine Books, 1988.

---. "The Population Bomb Revisited." *The Electronic Journal of Sustainable Development* 1.3 (2009): 5-13.

Erin Brockovich. Prod. Danny DeVito, Michael Shamberg, and Stacey Sher. Dir. Steve Soderbergh. CA: MCA/Universal Pictures, 2000. Film.

Famin, Victoria. "Revolución íntima y revolución universal: una lectura de Vuelos de victoria de Ernesto Cardenal." *El Hilo de la Fabula* 16 (2017): 83-94.

Felício, Ricardo A. "Aquecimento global é farsa!" *Revista Pará Rural* 3, (Junho de 2012): 16-19.

Felski, Rita. *Uses of Literature*. MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

Fenn, Vathana. "Roots of Ecocriticism: An Exploration of the History of Ecocriticism, a Literary Theory of the Post-modern World." *Veda's Journal of English Language and Literature* 2.2 (2015): 114-119.

Ferreira, Rachel Haywood. "Back to the Future: The Expanding Field of Latin-American Science Fiction." *Hispania* 91.2 (2008): 352-362.

---. *The Emergence of Latin American Science Fiction*. Middletown and Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2011.

Fischer, Daniel P. *Anthropolis: A Tale of Two Cities*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1992.

Fleming, James Rodger. "Gilbert N. Plass: Climate Science in Perspective." *American Sciencist* 98. 60-61. Jan. 2010, www.americanscientist.org/article/carbon-dioxide-and-the- climate. Accessed 20 Jan. 2020.

Foerster, Norman. *Nature in American Literature: Studies in the Modern View of Nature*. New York: Macmillan, 1923.

Fraser, Nancy, and Rahel Jaeggi. *Capitalism: A Conversation in Critical Theory*. Medford, MA: Polity Press, 2018.

Freire, Diogo. “Danger in the skies of São Paulo.” *Pesquisa FAPESP*, Issue # 259, Sep. 2017. revistapesquisa.fapesp.br/en/2018/02/07/danger-in-the-skies-of-sao-paulo/. Accessed 22 Apr. 2018.

French, Jennifer. *Nature, Neo-Colonialism, and the Spanish American Regional Writers*. UPNE: Dartmouth College Press, 2005.

Galeano, Eduardo. *Las venas abiertas de América Latina*. 1971. 76ª ed., Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2004.

---. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. Trans. Cedric Belfrage. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997.

Gardner, Gerald T., and Paul C. Stern. *Environmental Problems and Human Behavior*. Boston; MA.: Pearson Custom Publishing, 2002.

Garner-Prazeres, Julia. *After the Earthquake: Literary Responses to Catastrophe in Mexico City, 1985-2000*. Brown University of Providence, PhD Dissertation, 2012.

Garnett, Rhys, and Richard John Ellis, eds. *Science Fiction Roots and Branches: Contemporary Critical Approaches*. London: Macmillan, 1990.

Garrard, Greg. *Ecocriticism*. 2nd ed., London and New York: Routledge, 2012.

Gifford, Terry. *Green Voices: Understanding Contemporary Nature Poetry.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995.

Ginway, M. Elizabeth. *Brazilian Science Fiction: Cultural Myths and Nationhood in the Land of the Future*. Cranbury, NJ: Bucknell University Press, 2004.

Ginway, M. Elizabeth, and J. Brown, eds. *Latin American Science Fiction: Theory and Practice*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Glotfelty, Cheryll, and Harold Fromm, eds. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens and Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Gluck, Christoph Willibald. "Christopher Columbus." *New World Encyclopedia*. www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Christopher_Columbus. Accessed 8 Nov. 2018.

Gomes, João Batista. "A Pátria (Olavo Bilac) – Leitura e Interpretação." *Youtube*, uploaded by Língua Portuguesa, 26 Apr. 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3QfMMXvYh0. Accessed 22 Jan. 2020.

González, Andrés. *Huffpost*, 23 Jan. 2018, www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/mexico-city-improved-clean-air_us_5a620fbde4b074ce7a07be81. Accessed 23 Apr. 2018.

González, Gregorio Gutiérrez. "Memoria sobre el cultivo del maíz en Antioquia." *Latino Poemas.* www.latino-poemas.net/modules/publisher2/article.php?storyid=1469. Accessed 6 Aug. 2018.

Greenblatt, Stephen. *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*. Oxford: OUP, 1991.

Grim, John, and Mary Evelyn Tucker. *Ecology and Religion*. Washington, Covelo and London: Island Press, 2014.

Grove, Richard H. *Green Imperialism Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1860*. Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Guattari, Félix. *The Three Ecologies*. Trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton, London: Athlone, 2000.

Harvey, David, and Bruce Braun. *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Vol. 468. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996.

Hay, Peter Robert. *Main Currents in Western Environmental Thought*. Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 2002.

Hedges, Chris. *America: The Farewell Tour*. New York and London: Simon & Schuster, 2019.

Heise, Ursula K. "The Environmental Humanities and the Futures of the Human." *New German Critique* 43.2 (128) (2016): 21-31.

---. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.

---. "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism." *PMLA* 121.2 (2006): 503-516.

---. Ed. *Futures of Comparative Literature*: ACLA State of the Discipline Report. New York: Routledge, 2017.

Hogan, Linda. *Dwellings: A Spiritual History of the Living World*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

Holm, Poul, et al. "Humanities for the Environment—A Manifesto for Research and Action." *Humanities* 4.4 (2015): 977-992.

Howarth, William. "Some Principles of Ecocriticism." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm Athens and Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996, 69-91.

Huggan, Graham. "From Arctic Dreams to Nightmares (and back again): Apocalyptic Thought and Planetary Consciousness in Three Contemporary American Environmentalist Texts." *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 23.1 (2016): 71-91.

Humboldt, Alexander von. *Views of Nature: or Contemplations on the Sublime Phenomena of Creation*. Trans. E. C. Otté and H. G. Bohn, London: Bell and Daldy, 1872.

---. *Cosmos: A Sketch of a Physical Description of the Universe*. Trans. E. C. Otté, Vol. 1. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1858.

Hutchings, Rich. "Understanding of and Vision for the Environmental Humanities." *Environmental Humanities* 4 (2014): 213-220.

Ickstadt, Heinz. "'Our America': Transnational (and Transatlantic) Mirrors and Reflections." *America Where? Transatlantic Views of the United States in the*

Twenty-First Century. Eds. Isabel Caldeira, Maria José Canelo and Irene Ramalho Santos. Bern: Peter Lang, 2012, 21-38.

James, Edward. "Utopias and anti-utopias." *The Cambridge Companion to Science Fiction*. Eds. James Edward and Farah Mendlesohn, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 219-229.

Jan, Abid U. "Overpopulation: Myths, Facts, and Politics." *Albalagh Newsletter*, 9 July 2003, www.albalagh.net/population/overpopulation.shtml. Accessed 7 Dec. 2017.

Josephy Jr., Alvin M. "American Indians." *Collier's Encyclopedia.* Vol. 12, Michigan: Macmillan Educational Company, 1992, 642-694.

Kaika, Maria. *City of Flows: Modernity, Nature, and the City*. New York and London: Routledge, 2005.

Kane, Adrian Taylor, ed. *The Natural World in Latin American Literatures: Ecocritical Essays on Twentieth Century Writings*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2010.

Keil, Roger. "The Environmental Problematic in World Cities." *World Cities in a World-System*. Eds. Paul L. Knox and Peter J. Taylor. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995, 280-297.

Kern, Robert. "Ecocriticism: What is it good for?" *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* 7.1 (2000): 9-32.

Kimmelman, Michael. "Climate Change is Threatening to Push a Crowded Capital Toward a Breaking Point." *The New York Times*, 17 Feb. 2017, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/02/17/world/americas/mexico-city-sinking.html. Accessed 11 May 2018.

Kimmerer, Robin Wall. *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Milkweed Editions, 2013.

Kittleson, Roger A. "History of Latin America." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. www.britannica.com/place/Latin-America. Accessed 3 Dec. 2018.

Klein, Naomi. *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2014

Kolbert, Elizabeth. *Field Notes from a Catastrophe: Man, Nature, and Climate Change*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2006.

Kovarik, William. "Sixties 1960-69. *Environmental History Timeline*" 2012, environmentalhistory.org/20th-century/sixties-1960-1969/. Accessed 11 Nov. 2019.

Krech III, Shepard. "Buffalo Tales: The Near-Extermination of the American Bison." National Humanities Center, revised July 2001, nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/nattrans/ntecoindian/essays/buffalo.htm. Accessed 24 Jan. 2018.

Kucukalic, Lejla. "Apocalyptic Fiction: A Brief History of American Apocalyptic Literature." *Encyclopedia of the Environment in American* Literature. Eds. Geoff Hamilton and Brian Jones, Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2013, 14-16.

Kunstler, James Howard. *The Long Emergency: Surviving the Converging Catastrophes of the Twenty-First Century*. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2005.

"La agricultura de la zona tórrida." *Enciclopedia Biográfica en Línea*. www.biografiasyvidas.com/obra/agicultura_zona_torrida.html. Accessed 6 Aug. 2018.

Lebow, Victor. "Price competition in 1955." *Journal of Retailing* 31.1 (1955): 1-7.

Leff, Enrique. "Sustentabilidad y racionalidad ambiental: hacia" otro" programa de sociología ambiental." *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 73.1 (2011): 5-46.

Lehrer, Tom. "Pollution." (Concert live) 1965. YouTube, uploaded by Alexander Shekhtman, 28 Mar. 2016, www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmAECWmbxTs. Accessed 11 Nov. 2019.

Leonard, Annie. *The Story of Stuff: How our Obsession with Stuff is Trashing the Planet, our Communities, and our Health-and a Vision for Change*. New York and Sidney: Simon and Schuster, 2010.

Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac: With Essays on Conservation from Round River*. 1949. New York: Ballantine Books, 1970.

Love, Glen A. *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment*. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2003.

---. "Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism." *Western American Literature* 25.3 (1990): 201-215.

Love, Glen A. Glotfelty, Cheryll, and Harold Fromm, eds. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Athens and Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Lovelock, James. *Gaia: A New Look at Life on Earth*. 1979. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

---. *The Vanishing Face of Gaia: A Final Warning*. New York: Basic Books, 2009.

Lynch, Tom, Cheryll Glotfelty, and Karla Armbruster, eds. *The Bioregional Imagination: Literature, Ecology, and Place*. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2012.

Magnaghi, Russell M., and Herbert Eugene Bolton. *Herbert E. Bolton and the Historiography of the Americas*, Westport, CT.: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998.

Malthus, Thomas R. *An Essay on the Principle of Population.* London: J. Johnson, 1798.

Mann, Charles C. *1491: New Revelations of the Americas before Columbus*. New York: Alfred a Knopf Incorporated, 2005.

Marcondes, Sandra. *Brasil, amor à primeira vista!: viagem ambiental no brasil do século XVI ao XXI*. São Paulo: Editora Peirópolis, 2005.

Marcone, Jorge. "Jungle Fever: The Ecology of Disillusion in Spanish American Literature." Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C.: IDB Cultural Center, 2007.

Marsh, George Perkins. *Man and Nature*. 1864. Ed. David Lowenthal, Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965.

Martí, José. “Our America.” *Our America: Writings on Latin America and the Struggle for Cuban Independence.* Trans. Elinor Randall. Ed. Philip S. Foner. New York and London: Monthly Review Press 1977, 84-94.

Martínez, Esperanza. “La naturaleza con derechos: de la filosofía à la política” Polis, Revista de la Universidad Bolivariana 10.29 (2011): 479-485.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy Volume I – Part II. The Process of Capitalist Production.* Ed. Friedrich Engels. New York: Cosimo Classics, 2007.

Marx, Leo. *The Machine in the Garden*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.

Mayor, Federico. "Rediscovering 1492." *UNESCO Courier* 45.5 (1992): 4-5.

Mazel, David, ed. *A Century of Early Ecocriticism*. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 2001.

McKibben, Bill. *The End of Nature*. London: Bloomsbury, 2003.

McLendon, Russell "How polluted is US drinking water?" *Treehugger*, updated 9 Apr. 2018, www.mnn.com/earth-matters/translating-uncle-sam/stories/how-polluted-is-us-drinking-water. Accessed 23 Apr. 2018.

McNeil, Maureen. *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society,* edited by Tony Bennett, et al., Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

McPherson, Guy. "Abrupt Climate Change: Dr. McPherson Guy Interview." The Library of Humanity, *YouTube,* uploaded by The Spiritual Download, 10 Apr. 2019, www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Q4vp-MhzT8. Accessed 22 May 2019.

"Medical Journal Sounds Alarm on Pollution." BIMC Hospital, 10 Dec. 2017, bimcbali.com/health-e-update/medical-journal-sounds-alarm-pollution.html. Accessed 22 Apr. 2018.

Meeker, Joseph W. *The Comedy of Survival: Literary Ecology and a Play Ethic*. [1974]. 3rd ed., Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997.

Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick; or, The Whale*. 1851. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

Merchant, Carolyn. *Reinventing Eden: The Fate of Nature in Western Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Mi, Sou. "Know their Names: Eight Activists Assassinated for Fighting Climate Change." *Left Voice,* 22 Sep. 2019, www.leftvoice.org/know-their-names-eight-activists-assassinated-for-fighting-climate change?fbclid=IwAR2XwFxMFJwN1qEcMFspsMURbW9gLv8sa-cmPllPAwoXRdiu4iBDJ05jXBs. Accessed 6 Feb. 2020.

Miller, Perry. "Nature and the National Ego." *Errand into the Wilderness*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956, 204-216.

Molina-Gavilán, Yolanda, et al. "Chronology of Latin American Science Fiction, 1775-2005." *Science Fiction Studies* 34.3 (2007): 369-431.

Moore, Jason W. "World Accumulation and Planetary Life, or, Why Capitalism Will Not Survive Until the 'Last Tree is Cut'." *IPPR Progressive Review* 24.3 (2017): 175-202.

Moylan, Tom. *Scraps of the Untainted Sky: Science Fiction, Utopia, Dystopia*. Colorado: Westview Press, 2000.

Moylan, Tom, and Raffaella Baccolini. *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

"Mr. Truman emphasized the danger to crops, property and human life from contamination of the air." *The Berkshire Eagle*, 4 May 1950, www.newspapers.com/newspage/30752952/. Accessed 12 Aug. 2020.

Murphy, Graham J. "Dystopia." *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*. Eds. Mark Bould, et al., London and New York: Routledge, 2009, 473-477.

Nayar, Pramod K. "Introduction: What Is the Environmental Humanities? Part 1." *YouTube*, uploaded by ELC UoH, 6 Aug. 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=DTe-dWzrpjk. Accessed 20 Dec. 2018.

Neruda, Pablo. *Obras Escogidas* Tomo I. Selección de Francisco Coloane. Chile, S.A.: Editorial Andres Bello, 1972.

New Encyclopaedia Britannica. Encyclopaedia Britannica UK Ltd, 1974.

Nichols, Ashton. *Beyond Romantic Ecocriticism: Toward Urbanatural Roosting*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011.

Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011.

Nuccitelli, Dana. "Scientists warned the US president about global warming 50 years ago today." *The Guardian*, 5 Nov. 2015, www.businessinsider.com/scientists-warned-the-us-president-about-global-warming-50-years-ago-2015-11. Accessed 24 Feb. 2018.

O'Gorman, Edmundo. *La invención de América: investigación acerca de la estructura histórica del nuevo mundo y del sentido de su devenir*. 1958. México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006.

Oppermann, Serpil. "Theorizing Ecocriticism: Toward a Postmodern Ecocritical Practice." *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, 13.2 (Summer 2006): 103-128.

Oppermann, Serpil, and Serenella Lovino. "Introduction: The Environmental Humanities and the Challenges of the Anthropocene." *Environmental Humanities: Voices from the Anthropocene* 2017, 1-21.

Ordiz, Francisco Javier. "Historia, apocalipsis y distopía en la narrativa de Homero Aridjis." *Hipertexto* 12 (2010): 3-14.

Orenstein, Shelly, "The Native American." The United States Information Agency. 1986, n.p.

Osborn, Fairfield. *Our Plundered Planet.* Boston, U.S.: Little, Brown and Company, 1948.

Oxford Dictionary of English. 3rd ed., Oxford: OUP, 2010.

Oziewicz, Marek. Children's Literature, Fiction, 20th and 21st Century (1900-present). *Oxford Research Encyclopedias. Literature.* Online Publication Date: Mar 2017. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190201098.013.78 oxfordindex.oup.com/oi/viewindexcard/10.1093$002facrefore$002f9780190201098.013.78. Accessed 7 May 2019.

Paredes, Rebecca. "Where Have All the Buffalo Roamed." *Green Future*, 30 Dec. 2016, greenfuture.io/sustainable-living/are-buffalo-extinct/. Accessed 24 Jan. 2018.

Patel, Raj, and Jason W. Moore. *A History of the World in Seven Cheap Things: A Guide to Capitalism, Nature, and the Future of the Planet*. Carlton, VIC: Black Inc., 2018.

Paz, Octavio. *The Other Voice: Essays on Modern Poetry*. Orlando and Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1991.

---. "In search of the present." *Inti: Revista de literatura hispánica* 1.32 (1990): 3.

Pearce, Fred. *The Coming Population Crash: And Our Planet's Surprising Future*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2010.

Pereira, Elenita Malta. "Fim do futuro? O tempo no manifesto ecológico brasileiro de José Lutzenberger." *XI Encontro Estadual de História*, 2012, 990-1003.

Peterson, Thomas C., William M. Connolley, and John Fleck. "The Myth of the 1970s Global Cooling Scientific Consensus." *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 89.9 (2008): 1325-1337.

Phippen, J. Weston. "'Kill Every Buffalo You Can! Every Buffalo Dead Is an Indian Gone'." *The Atlantic*, 13 May 2016, www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2016/05/the-buffalo-killers/482349/. Accessed 24 Jan. 2018.

Ploutz, Paul F. *Global Warming: Handbook of Ecological Issues*. Bloomington: Xlibris Corporation, 2012.

Porter, Joy, and Kenneth M. Roemer editors. *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature.* Cambridge, NY, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Potter, David M. *People of Plenty: Economic Abundance and the American Character*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1958.

Pratt, Mary Louise. *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation.* New York and London: Routledge, 2008.

Pulver, Simone. "Climate Politics in Mexico in a North American Perspective." Providence: Brown University, 2006.

Quaratiello, Arlene Rodda. *Rachel Carson: A Biography*. Westport, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, 2004.

Quijano, Aníbal, and Immanuel Wallerstein. "Americanity as a Concept; or, the Americas in the Modern World-System." *International Social Science Journal* 44.4 (1992): 549-57.

Radway, Janice. "What's in a Name? Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, 20 November, 1998." *American Quarterly* 51.1 (1999): 1-32.

Ramalho, Maria Irene. "American Exceptionalism and the Naturalization of "America." *Prospects* 19 (1994): 1-24.

Ray, Michael. "Flint Water Crisis." *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 9 Oct. 2019, www.britannica.com/event/Flint-water-crisis. Accessed 12 Feb. 2020.

Reyes, Alfonso. *Visión de Anáhuac (1519)*. México, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 1953.

Rimmerman, Craig A., "Critical Reflections on the Doomsday, Apocalyptic Vision." *The Coming Age of Scarcity: Preventing Mass Death and Genocide in the Twenty-first Century*. Eds. Michael N. Dobkowski and Isidor Wallimann, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998, 283-295.

Rivera-Barnes, Beatriz, and Jerry Hoeg. *Reading and Writing the Latin American Landscape*. New York: Macmillan, 2009.

Roberts, Adam. "The Copernican Revolution." *The Routledge Companion to Science Fiction*. Eds. Mark Bould, et al. London and New York: Routledge, 2009, 3-12.

---. *The History of Science Fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

---. *Science Fiction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.

Robbins, Paul. *Political Ecology: A Critical Introduction*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Romero, Simon. “Taps Start to Run Dry in Brazil’s Largest City.” *The New York Times,* 16 Feb. 2015, www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/world/americas/drought-pushes-sao-paulo-brazil-toward-water-crisis.html. Accessed 23 Apr. 2018.

Rosa, Ana Beatriz. “In Brazil’s Most Polluted City, A Tough Choice between Health and Money.” *Huffpost,* 23 Jan. 2018, www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/brazil-air-pollution-santa-gertrudes_us_5a620fbae4b01d91b2551664. Accessed 22 Apr. 2018.

Rose, Deborah Bird, et al. "Thinking Through the Environment, Unsettling the Humanities." *Environmental Humanities* 1.1 (2012): 1-5.

Rotman, Michael. “Cuyahoga River Fire.” *Cleveland Historical*, 22 Sep. 2010, clevelandhistorical.org/items/show/63. Accessed 9 May 2018.

Rueckert, William. “Literature and ecology.” [1978]. *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Eds. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens and Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1996, 105-123.

Salvucci, Richard. "Capitalism and dependency in Latin America." *The Cambridge History of Capitalism* 1. Eds. Larry Neal, and Jeffrey G. Williamson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014, 403-30.

Santos, Boaventura de Sousa. *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018.

---. *Epistemologias do Sul*. Orgs. Boaventura de Sousa Santos e Maria Paula Meneses. São Paulo: Cortez Editora, 2014.

---. "Do pós-moderno ao pós-colonial. E para além de um e outro." *Travessias. Revista de Ciências Sociais e Humanas em Língua Portuguesa* 6/7 (2008): 5-36.

---. “Nuestra America: Reinventing a Subaltern Paradigm of Recognition and Redistribution.” *Theory, Culture & Society* 18 2-3 (2001): 185-217.

Sargent, Lyman Tower. *Utopian Literature in English: An Annotated Bibliography from 1516 to the Present*. Penn State Libraries Open Publishing, 2016, openpublishing.psu.edu/utopia/content/introduction. Accessed 7 Mar. 2017.

---. *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

---. “The Problem of the ‘Flawed Utopia’: A Note on the Costs of Utopia.” *Dark Horizons: Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*. Eds. Tom Moylan and Raffaella Baccolini. New York: Routledge, 2003, 225-232.

Scharm, Heike. "Entre biorregión y globalización: la ecocrítica en el ensayo latinoamericano." *Anales de Literatura Hispanoamericana*. Vol. 46. Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2017, 29-48.

Schliephake, Christopher Martin. "Review Essay: Re-mapping Ecocriticism: New Directions in Literary and Urban Ecology.” *Ecozon@: European Journal of Literature, Culture and Environment* 6.1 (2015a): 195-207.

---. *Urban Ecologies: City Space, Material Agency, and Environmental Politics in Contemporary Culture*. New York and London: Lexington Books, 2015b.

Sisk, David W., and Thomas More. *Transformations of Language in Modern Dystopias*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997.

Slovic, Scott, and Paul Slovic. *Numbers and Nerves: Information, Emotion, and Meaning in a World of Data*. Corvallis, OR: Oregon State University Press, 2015.

Smith, Richard. "Capitalism and the Destruction of Life on Earth: Six Theses on Saving the Humans." *Real-World Economics Review* 64 (2013): 125-151.

Sörlin, Sverker. "Environmental Humanities: Why Should Biologists Interested in the Environment Take the Humanities Seriously?" *BioScience* 62.9 (2012): 788-789.

Sousa, M. Isabel. “Environmental Concerns in Melville’s Moby-Dick and Thoreau’s Walden.” MA Thesis, Universidade de Aveiro, 2013.

Soylent Green. Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Dir. Richard Fleischer. Warner Brothers Pictures, 1973. Film.

Speth, James Gustave. *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008.

--- . *Red Sky at Morning: America and the Crisis of the Global Environment*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005.

Steffen, Will, et al. "The Anthropocene: Conceptual and Historical Perspectives." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 369.1938 (2011): 842-867.

Steffen, Will, Paul J. Crutzen and John R. McNeill. "The Anthropocene: Are Humans Now Overwhelming the Great Forces of Nature?" *AMBIO: A Journal of the Human Environment* 36.8 (2007): 614-621.

St. John De Crèvecoeur, J. Hector. *Letters from an American Farmer*. 1782. New York: Fox, Duffield & Company, 1904.

Suvin, Darko. "Estrangement and Cognition." *Strange Horizons*, 24 Nov. 2014, strangehorizons.com/non-fiction/articles/estrangement-and-cognition/. Accessed 15 May 2017.

---. "Thesis on Dystopia 2001." *Dark Horizons, Science Fiction and the Dystopian Imagination*. Eds. Raffaella Baccolini, and Tom Moylan. New York and London, Routledge, 2003, 187-201.

---. *Metamorphosis of Science Fiction: On the Poetics and History of a Literary Genre*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979.

--- . "On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre." *College English* 34.3 (1972): 372-382.

The Unchained Goddess. Prod. Frank Capra. Dir. Richard Carlson. The Bell Laboratory Science Series, 1958. Film.

Thomashow, Mitchell. *Bringing the Biosphere Home: Learning to Perceive Global Environmental Change*. Cambridge and Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001.

Thoreau, Henry David. "Walking." *The Norton Book of Nature Writing*, edited by Robert Finch, and John Elder. New York and London: WW Norton & Company, 1990, 180-205.

---. *Walden and Civil Disobedience*. 1854. New York: Penguin Books, 1986.

---. *The Journal of Henry David Thoreau,* Vol. 12. Eds. Bradford Torrey, Francis Henry Allen. University of Minnesota: G.M. Smith, 1984.

Tittler, Jonathan. "Ecological Criticism and Spanish American Fiction: An Overview." *The Natural World in Latin American Literatures: Ecocritical Essays on Twentieth Century Writings*. Ed. Adrian Taylor Kane, Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2010, 11-26.

Tobin, Mitch. “Water pollution near top of America’s fear.” 4 Dec. 2017, waterpolls.org/chapman-fears-survey-2017/. Accessed 23 Apr. 2018.

Trask, Robert Lawrence. *A Dictionary of Grammatical Terms in Linguistics*. London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

Tress, Arthur. “Smog Almost Killed New York City, Here’s How.” *YouTube*, uploaded by *Seeker*, 24 Mar. 2017, www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTQDJy0opaM. Accessed 20 Nov. 2019.

Turner, Frederick Jackson. “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.” *The Frontier in American History*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1921, 1-38.

University of California - Berkeley Haas School of Business. "Plan to reduce air pollution chokes in Mexico City: Study finds Saturday driving restrictions fail to improve air quality." *ScienceDaily*, 2 Feb. 2017, www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/02/170202122751.htm. Accessed 18 Nov. 2018.

Valentine, Ben. “How the Environmental Humanities Can Heal Our Relationship to the Planet.” *Hyperallergic*, 13 Mar. 2018, hyperallergic.com/414831/environmental-humanities/. Accessed 4 Jan. 2019.

Vidal, John. "We are destroying rainforests so quickly they may be gone in 100 years." *The Guardian*, 23 Jan. 2017. www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2017/jan/23/destroying-rainforests-quickly-gone-100-years-deforestation. Accessed 11 Nov. 2018.

Viola, Eduardo J. "O movimento ecológico no Brasil, 1974-1986: do ambientalismo à ecopolítica." *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* 1.3 (1987): 5-26.

Virilio, Paul. *City of Panic*. Oxford: Berg Pub Limited, 2005.

Vogt, William. *The Road to Survival: A Discussion of Food in Relation to the Problem of Growing Population*. New York: Sloan, 1948.

Walls, Laura Dassow. *The Passage to Cosmos: Alexander von Humboldt and the Shaping of America*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

Warren, Louis S. “Spirited Discussions.” *YouTube*, uploaded by Buffalo Bill Center of the West. 9 Oct 2012, centerofthewest.org/explore/buffalo-bill/research/buffalo-bill/. Accessed 10 Dec. 2018.

---. *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Show*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

Washburn, E. Wilcomb. "A New Image of the World." *UNESCO Courier* 45.5 (1992): 14-18.

Weart, Spencer R. *The Discovery of Global Warming*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Weinberg, Meyer. *A Short History of American Capitalism*. Amherst, MA: New History Press, 2003.

Wenz, Peter S. *Environmental Justice*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1988.

Westfahl, Gary, ed. *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy: Themes, Works, and Wonders*, vol. 2. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2005.

Weston, Del. *The Political Economy of Global Warming: The Terminal Crisis*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014.

White, Lynn Jr. "The Historical Roots of our Ecologic Crisis." *Science* 155.3767 (1967): 1203-1207.

White, Richard. “Frederick Jackson Turner and Buffalo Bill.” *The Frontier in American Culture: Essays by Richard White and Patricia Nelson Limerick*. Ed. James R. Grossman. Berkley: University of California Press, 1994, 7-66.

Williams, Chris. *Ecology and Socialism: Solutions to Capitalist Ecological Crisis*. Chicago and Illinois: Haymarket Books, 2010.

Williams, Michael. *Deforesting the Earth: from Prehistory to Global Crisis*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Williams, Raymond. *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015.

---. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Wilson, Edward O. “Afterword to Rachel Carson.” *Silent Spring*. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2002, 357-363.

Worster, Donald. *Shrinking the Earth: The Rise and Decline of American Abundance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

---. *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas*. 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

---. *Rivers of Empire: Water, Aridity, and the Growth of the American West.* New York, OUP, 1985.

Wulf, Andrea. *The Invention of Nature: Alexander von Humboldt's New World*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2015.

Zamora, Lois Parkinson. *Writing the Apocalypse: Historical Vision in Contemporary US and Latin American Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.

Žižek, Slavoj. *Living in the End Times*. London and New York: Verso, 2011.