



Ecozumbis e Revenants de Trauma: *Espanto del mundo nuevo* de Gabriela Damián Miravete

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Ecozombie and Trauma Revenants: *Haunts of the New World* by Gabriela Damián Miravete

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Resumo

Este artigo examina *Espanto del mundo nuevo* (2022), texto da autora mexicana Gabriela Damián Miravete. Como uma história de terror gótico ambiental, apresenta um *revenant* ou ecozumbi que representa as vítimas esquecidas da lenta violência da degradação ambiental. Na história, a figura do ecozumbi viaja no tempo até os terremotos que devastaram a Cidade do México ao longo de vários séculos, guiado pela divindade canina mesoamericana Xolotl. Apresentando análises baseadas na ideia de Chthuluceno de Donna Haraway e na teoria do feminismo pós-humano de Rosi Braidotti, o artigo interpreta a história como uma proposta para uma relação mais igualitária entre os humanos e o mundo natural não-humano. Através das transformações abjetas do corpo, a figura do ecozumbi surge paradoxalmente como sinal de esperança de sobrevivência coletiva diante dos estragos do Antropoceno.

Palavras-chave: Ecogótico. Cthuluceno. Feminismo pós-humano. Antropoceno.

Abstract

This article examines *Espanto del mundo nuevo* [Haunts of the New World] (2022), a text by Mexican author Gabriela Damián Miravete. As an environmental gothic horror story, it features a revenant or ecozombie who represents the forgotten victims of the slow violence of environmental degradation. In the story, the figure of the ecozombie time-travels to earthquakes that have devastated Mexico City over a period of several centuries, guided by the Mesoamerican canine deity Xolotl. Featuring analysis based on Donna Haraway's idea of the Chthulucene and Rosi Braidotti's theory of posthuman feminism, the article interprets the story as a proposal for a more egalitarian relationship between humans and the nonhuman natural world. Through the abject transformations of the body, the ecozombie figure paradoxically emerges as a sign of hope for collective survival in the face of the ravages of the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Ecogothic. Cthulucene. Posthuman feminism. Anthropocene.

Resumen

Este artículo examina *Espanto del mundo nuevo* (2022), texto de la autora mexicana Gabriela Damián Miravete. Como historia de terror gótico ambiental, presenta a un retornado o ecozombi que representa a las víctimas olvidadas de la lenta violencia de la degradación ambiental. En la historia, la figura del ecozombi viaja en el tiempo hasta los terremotos que han devastado la Ciudad de México durante varios siglos, guiado por la deidad canina mesoamericana Xolotl. Con

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un análisis basado en la idea de Donna Haraway sobre el Cthuluceno y la teoría del feminismo posthumano de Rosi Braidotti, el artículo interpreta la historia como una propuesta para una relación más igualitaria entre los humanos y el mundo natural no humano. A través de las abyectas transformaciones del cuerpo, la figura del ecozombi emerge paradójicamente como signo de esperanza de supervivencia colectiva frente a los estragos del Antropoceno.

Palabras-clave: Ecogótico. Cthuluceno. Feminismo posthumano. Antropoceno.

Introduction

This article explores, through a posthuman feminist perspective, how Mexican writer Gabriela Damián Miravete reimagines the interconnectivity of humans and the natural world in her speculative fiction. Her 2022 story *Espanto del mundo nuevo*, [*Haunts of the New World*] combines ecohorror and time travel to examine the relationship between humans and the environment in Mexico City during various significant earthquakes. The story also connects the Aztec canine god Xolotl² with the environmental crisis of the Xochimilco canals, given that in Aztec mythology this canine deity guides the dead to the underworld through water.³ The story's protagonist experiences a symbolic death in the canals that transforms her body yet allows her to communicate with the living. I argue that she is transformed into an ecozombie, who despite her abject appearance and trauma ultimately offers hope to the victims of the city's recurrent earthquakes and ecological devastation.

In *Cyborgs, Sexuality and the Undead*, I describe trauma zombies as those who “bring us back to our humanity by exposing us to those who die but refuse to disappear from our collective memory” (GINWAY, 2020, p. 116). I classify the protagonist of *El espanto del mundo nuevo* as a trauma zombie because she appears to be both dead and alive, and because she is a revenant deriving from key moments of Mexico's collective history. Since her body features both human and zoomorphic elements, she can be described, using the terms of Giorgio Agamben's biopolitical model of society (AGAMBEN, 1998, p. 4), as partly *bios*, i.e., an autonomous human, and partly *zoe*, i.e., merely alive, like plants and animals. As such, she exemplifies a subcategory of the trauma zombie, namely, the ecozombie, a posthuman figure that is paradoxically able to provoke horror and, at the same time, provide protection in face of cataclysmic climate change.

² See Benson for an examination of the figure of the canine god and its avatars throughout Mesoamerica: “The dog escort concept existed for gods as well as for human beings. *Xolotl*, a skeletal, dog-headed or dog-figured Aztec deity was the twin of *Quetzalcoatl*” (1991, p. 96).

³ In order to understand more about the links between the axolotl and the Xochimilco canals, see the article “A Tale of Two Axolotls” (VOSS et al., 2015) that explains the difficulty in implementing environmental efforts in Mexico City, and the attempts at preservation of the species by the government to offset the impact of highway construction above the canals.

The New Female Gothic and Ecozombies

Contemporary Latin American speculative fiction written by women often features ecozombies, who are characterized by both psychological and physical deterioration due to the oppressive conditions of climate change. Damián Miravete's story could be classified as part of the new Latin American female gothic, which uses this subgenre to take "a political stance, tackling anxieties about gender-based violence, environmental destruction, capitalist precarity, and exploitation" (LOGIE, 2023, p. 279). Within the new Latin American gothic, I would argue that the ecozombie is a distinctive feature of several works. For example, Mariana Enriquez's story *Bajo el agua negra* [Below the Black Water] (2016) employs an ecozombie revenant to convey the economic disparities and environmental crisis of the polluted depths of the Río de la Plata in Buenos Aires, while Fernanda Trías's 2020 novel *Mugre rosa* [Pink Slime] features a female protagonist whose mental and physical deterioration makes her feel like a zombie as she tries to escape the toxic algae that are spreading a fatal disease in Montevideo. As Allison Mackey has suggested, such texts illustrate the resurgence of horror in the fiction of women writers, who use the ecogothic genre, with its combination of Gothic horror and environmental degradation, in stories that are often deeply connected to the non-human in ways that suggest agency and hope (MACKEY, 2022, p. 253), as in the case of "Espanto del mundo nuevo".⁴

Terry Harpold notes that, under apocalyptic conditions, humans take on the movements, actions and disconnected memories and thoughts that characterize the paradigmatic zombie. I would argue that trauma zombies a part of Harpold's living dead, since, drained of their sense of humanity and connectedness after moments of profound social and economic change, they feel as if they are "neither living nor dead but somehow between both orders" (HARPOLD, 2011, p. 161). The same can be said of ecozombies, in that they are often the forgotten and often abjectly disfigured victims of the slow violence of environmental degradation associated with long term pollution. According to Rob Nixon, this amounts to "a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (2011, p. 2). In Damián Miravete's story, this violence takes the form of the historic damage to the water systems of Mexico City in general, and the devastation of the

⁴ For an in-depth analysis of these texts, see Allison Mackey's 2022 article that interprets Fernanda Trías's novel *Mugre rosa* [Pink Slime] (2020) along with Mariana Enriquez's "Bajo el agua negra" as prime examples of the ecogothic. Similarly, Marcia Tiburi's 2018 novel *Sob os pés meu corpo inteiro* features a victim of torture who years later must face urban violence and environmental degradation in futuristic São Paulo. In my view, the the only way to survive an increasingly dangerous and precarious world is to become a type of ecozombie, or a trauma revenant caught in an environmental crisis.

populations of the Mexican axolotl, which lives in the Xochimilco canals in particular. This species is also associated with the canine deity Xolotl, who transformed himself into this amphibian in order to escape from being sacrificed to give life to the sun (QUIÑONES KEBER, 1991, p. 234).

Surprisingly, ecozombies are often portrayed as a positive force, as beings who use adaptive strategies to survive in the new order, however devastating, by developing both emotional and physical immunity. Although they are often portrayed by those in power as a pathogen or threat to society at large, in reality, ecozombies succeed in developing immunity both to political oppression and environmental change, to the point that they qualify as a type of posthuman (GINWAY, 2020, pp. 111; 129-130). Ecozombies can thus provide psychological and physical protection for themselves and surrounding populations facing ecological and political crises (GINWAY, 2020, p. 17). As we will see below, Damián Miravete's protagonist personifies the cycle of the ecozombie who moves from abjection toward healing and a new order.

Ecozombies and Strategies of Survival

Since the language of the natural world is often opaque to humans, ecozombie revenants must develop a new relationship to their environment, which has been devastated by the projects of modernity. Ecuadorian philosopher Bolívar Echeverría questions the values of the Enlightenment and the sacrifices that have been made in the name of modernization. He uses the term “trans-animalization” to describe the divorce of humans from any connection with other creatures (ECHEVERRÍA, 2019, p. 30). According to him, the forging of the modern self, including the privilege of humanness and our perceived sense of freedom and autonomy have obscured the consequences of our economic activity – especially its impact on the environment – because they endanger our sense of human superiority. As such, Echeverría notes, we constantly suppress any thoughts of this connection (ECHEVERRÍA, 2019, p. 31). The current climate crisis has turned the tide against this way of thinking, however, and the future of urban and natural environments has become central to much of contemporary Latin American literature.

Notably, Echeverría posits that Latin America is a product of cultural encoding, in what he has called ‘*codigofagia*’ – or “code eating” – a recombination of social meanings, signs and even bodies within disparate Latin American cultures – that provided a means of survival after First Contact (ECHEVERRÍA, 1998, pp. 51-53). This concept also furnishes an innovative way of imagining relational ethics and inter-species symbioses that have arisen as possible strategies for collective survival of climate change, as portrayed in speculative fiction. The ecozombie's ambivalent body does not belong to only one culture, species, race, gender or time period, but is rather an assemblage,

exemplifying *codigofagia* within Latin America and its resilience.

Codigofagia and a sense of inter-species assemblage and survival in Latin America are keys to understanding Gabriela Damián Miravete's story, which was translated into English as "Haunts of the New World" for the 2022 horror edition of the *Southwest Review*. I note that the linguistic subtlety of Damián's Spanish title "Espanto del mundo nuevo" cannot be perceived in the translation, as by using "mundo nuevo," as opposed to *Nuevo Mundo* – the traditional Spanish designation for colonial America – she emphasizes the utopian possibility of a new start or new destiny for humans and the environment in a polluted apocalyptic Mexico City.

To fully analyze the environmental aspects of Damián Miravete's story, I draw not only on the ecogothic, but also on Donna Haraway's idea of posthuman kinship and Rosi Braidotti's posthuman feminism. The body of the protagonist, a teenage woman named Chenti, combines aspects of both the human and the nonhuman world, thus adding a new aspect to Echeverría's concept of survival and *codigofagia*. These concepts explain how the body – reconfigured by horror tropes – can provide new ways for humans to rethink their relationship to the natural world and other species.

"Haunts of the New World": Story Weaving and Tentacular Thinking

The first part of the story comprises three different versions of a single event, namely, Chenti's walk along the Viga canal on her way to school shortly after the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City. This event created a crisis that was not only environmental but also political: the aftermath of this earthquake was characterized by the abandonment of the city's inhabitants by the Mexican government due to a neoliberal dismantling of protective governmental programs that began in 1984. This placed more onus on the citizenry to help each other in moments of crisis, and indeed, in Damián Miravete's story, citizens help one another informally after the earthquake. Chenti's family and neighbors distribute towels, soap, clothing, bread and other supplies to neighbors in need, while students pack food boxes to distribute to families. Before leaving for school one fateful morning, Chenti's mother warns her to avoid the canal, but Chenti walks along it anyway, catching sight of a dead dog floating in the water. She is troubled that this sight moves her to tears, since many of her fellow schoolmates have lost parents and other relatives to the disaster. Later that day, sensing Chenti's fear and sadness, her mother tells her to grow a thicker skin, reminding her that the city will survive and rise again, as it always has after earthquakes.

Chenti's family lives along the canal, and her grandmother recalls a time when all the

Xochimilco canals were unpolluted and could be used for leisure activities. They remained as one of the few waterways of the original city of Tenochtitlán, which was built on Lake Texcoco, an ironic origin story for a city that now suffers from impending water shortages and pollution. This temporal connection also highlights the importance of women in shaping the past and, through storytelling, the future. Chenti's mother and aunt are both seamstresses, and indeed it could be said that the seamstresses of the story are related to the weavers of ancient myth and literature, such as the three Fates, or Arachne, Ariadne, and Penelope. All are weavers of fate, combining myths and history to form communities and to convey the importance of women's contributions, which are often overshadowed in traditional heroic adventure narratives about men.

The metaphor of weaving, storytelling and nature is also present in Donna Haraway's 2016 book *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*, which includes the idea of considering spiders as a means of engaging in "tentacular thinking." For Haraway, the spider is connected to other "tentacular" beings, including jellyfish, fibrous entities, microbial and fungal entanglements, roots and climbing plants, and even human hands. She believes that both the process of creation and the use of imagination are "tentacular," because they encompass speculative fabulation, helping us understand the networks of life. She invokes Lovecraft's tentacular monster Cthulhu, whose 45 limbs remind us of the cosmic horror that we feel when thinking of the Anthropocene. However, Haraway also reminds us that the monstrous Gorgons, especially the chthonic Medusa, with her tentacular locks, also have a creative side, noting that Medusa's blood gave birth to Pegasus, the winged horse, a symbol of hope (2016, p. 54).

According to Haraway, such a combination of despair and hope is necessary for contemporary story tellers, who in their narratives about destroyed landscapes must also help grieve the dying (2016, pp. 37-39) and give readers access to "tentacular thinking," which provides hope in the face of environmental crisis. Haraway turns away from the bleak and overwhelming grand narratives of the Anthropocene and the Capitalocene, featuring instead smaller-scale narratives that provide alternative ways of imagining the future in this particular planetary moment (2016, p. 56). Damian Miravete's story takes on Haraway's challenge to imagine a future among the ruins, because her story connects the horror of Mexico City's polluted environment with inspiration from Aztec mythologies and interspecies connections. At the same time, the motif of the earthquake lays bare the city's material and cultural layers, simultaneously exciting the imagination while mourning those lost in the disaster and honoring those who survive.

Embodiment, Sexuality and Braidotti's Posthuman Feminism

In the second version Chenti's walk along the canal after the 1985 earthquake, she experiences a profound bodily transformation. She is suddenly drawn into the polluted canal, and instead of seeing a dead dog, she realizes that she is in the presence of the Mesoamerican canine deity Xolotl, which gives her the ability to breathe underwater like axolotls, frogs and carp. She feels her body dying as she learns to breathe underwater, saying, "I see how I am, and not just my veins or the blue and green and violet colors my body contains, but the thing I am – the intelligence or the desire that brings this jumble of flesh to life" (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 79). Her body is now abject in appearance, but it allows her to feel a profound connectedness with the environment, as well as with historical events and mythological beings, such as a pair of mythological twins, also associated with the canine deity.

During the third iteration of the canal scene of 1985, Chenti experiences what Braidotti calls "the relational and collaborative nature of all living systems" and the "multi-species ethical interconnection [that] is also the lesson of indigenous cosmologies and life philosophies" (2022, p. 125). Her embodied experience continues to expand her awareness when twin beings, male and female, appear approach to help her out of the canal. The passage begins with a description of the female twin:

Buds sprout from her arms, her cheeks.... The buds bloom on her face, her legs. I notice hummingbirds hovering around them, their wings are iridescent ... Her beautiful twin seems like he's always been here with us. I press into his arms, caress her solid belly, bite the lips I am offered. Eat, they command me, and he brings my head to his chest so I can taste the fruit that grows from his heart, I pluck flowers from his skin. ... We take pleasure in each other, him, her and me, all of us together. (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 80)

Chenti experiences a sexual and affective bond with both the male and female twins. For Braidotti, fluid sexualities such as this are an extension of environmental humanities that promote a recognition of life in all its forms, in symbiotic and irreducible assemblages (2021, p. 135). The issue of sexuality is actually raised earlier in the story when Chenti is called a "dyke" at school (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 78), and although she has a boyfriend whom she kisses in the supermarket where she works, she also recalls kissing a friend named Fanny, whom she also desires. For Braidotti, queer sexuality is an affirmation of the "freedom, desire and becoming" that respond to the phenomenology of the body (2021, p. 113), and this affirmation is part of Chenti's posthuman feminist experience.

After her encounter with the twins, Chenti finds herself dragged to a lagoon by the Xolotl where she is suddenly transported to 1507, yet another year when an earthquake devastated

Mexico. She finds herself on land, but her body is without skin, and she feels such pain that she slips back into the water, where snakes take pity on her: “they creep up my legs, link together, drape around my waist and make me a skirt. In this incredible vulnerability, I feel strong” (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 81). Wearing her phallic skirt of snakes, like a tentacular Medusa, she is able to rise out of the water to warn the population that invaders will soon appear riding upon deer-like animals. Unfortunately, this warning, which refers to the arrival of Hernán Cortez in 1517, goes unheeded.

The dog avatar of Xolotl accompanies Chenti through a series of tunnels to the next temporal venue, which is the so-called Temblor Maderista earthquake of 1911. Stylish men and women traveling in elegant boats along the canal are shocked to see Chenti emerging from the water. Still skinless, she is called a “monstrosity” by some onlookers, but she justifies herself to them as “a multitude” (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 81). This hints at her ties to both the natural world and the changes soon to be brought about in Mexico by the Revolution, as she gives a speech about a future struggle between the masses and the elite classes of the Porfiriato.⁵ At this point it is possible that Damián Miravete’s focus on earthquakes should be construed as a call to consciousness and political awakening, given that Chenti quotes from a speech made by one of the founders of the Mexican union of seamstresses, Evangelina Cordona Cadena, who connected the 1911 earthquake with political awakening. This information is provided by the author in a footnote to the story (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 83).

Mythological Cycles, the Gothic, and Braidotti’s Dematerialization and Rematerialization

By incorporating the Aztec water deity Xolotl in a time-travel story, Damián Miravete fuses myth and science fiction. According to Austin Cline, Xolotl has a number of functions in Aztec mythology. He is a god of death and disease but also the caretaker of a pair a boy and girl who later repopulate the Earth after an apocalyptic event destroys humankind (2017, n/p). Xolotl is associated with grief, for he has lost his eyes from weeping as he accompanies the dead to the underworld (CLINE, 2017, n/p). In these ways, Xolotl embodies the contradictory aspects of death and rebirth that Chenti experiences in her journey: her living death, her grief for those lost in earthquakes, and her sexual awakening with the twins. Thanks to Xolotl, she loses her fear of bodily transformation

⁵ The Porfiriato refers to the authoritarian regime of Porfirio Díaz. The elites of the Mexican Porfiriato (1876-1911) tended to favor European cultural models and adhere to positivist doctrine, abandoning the mestizo and indigenous majority of the population to poverty. These elitist policies sparked the start of the Mexican Revolution that lasted for over ten years. The Porfiriato bears some resemblance to Brazil’s First Republic (1899-1930). For more on politics and modernization in Brazil and Mexico, see GINWAY, 2020, pp. 5-6.

and death and learns to enhance her connections to other life forms.

It is important to distinguish between this manifestation of Xolotl and a more traditional gothic reading of this figure, which can be found in Carmen Serrano's insightful analysis of Julio Cortázar's famous 1952 story "Axólotl." In Cortázar's story, which takes place in an aquarium in Paris, a human observer claims that he has transformed himself into an axolotl. By the end of the story, he finds himself on the other side of the fish tank, encased in the axolotl's body and looking out at his own human form. Serrano interprets Cortázar's use of the axolotl as Xolotl, as the archetypal double of gothic fiction and a trickster figure "in which the human is subsumed in an animal identity in a variation of the gothic motif of live burial" (2019, p. 148). Clearly, Damián Miravete's story invests Xolotl with new meanings that allow us to move beyond the anthropocentric sense of horror of live burial to a deeper connection among all earthly things.

As part of her journey with Xolotl, Chenti learns to associate the destruction and reconstruction resulting from earthquakes with the cycle of life and death. When she travels in time to experience yet another earthquake in 2017, people stare at her as she emerges from the water in Mexico City, where she describes herself in almost surreal imagery as she makes her way through the urban landscape:

I walk with my head held high, discovering the new world with my flesh exposed, red and radiant as fruit. The air hurts me, the light hurts me.... Little by little people have been getting used to me, a viscous, colorful figure wandering like a prophet through this desert, a concrete plain that ceases to be one with every step I take. Flowers, mushrooms, lizards and fish hover around me like a retinue. Some people try to push them aside; others try to do away with the invasion from another world by trampling on them like ... vermin. But their feet are quickly infected with green and damp, their bodies scaled by climbing things, a flower, an animal, a fruit or a word. (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 82)

By infecting those whom she passes, Chenti cannot help but make us think of ecozombies, because she combines an abject body spreading what many consider to be vermin that act like a disease or pathogen to those who come in contact with her, much like the fear of disease associated with Xolotl. Chenti's presence promotes an infection "of green and damp" among humans that allows them to relate to non-human others, offering a strategy of resistance or strength to her followers who will survive the ecological crisis through her example. Her abject body suggests a path inspired by her own transformation through Xolotl, who has helped her develop resilience against forms of oppression and fear during crisis, having overcome the standard binaries between life and death, disease and health, the natural world and built environments.

We can also understand Chenti's experience in the future Mexico City through Braidotti's concepts of dematerialization and rematerialization. The first occurs when humans become alienated

by the environmental impacts of modernity, fragmenting the body and consciousness (BRAIDOTTI, 2021, p. 144). This where Chenti's journey begins, when she feels disconnected from her family and the natural environment. The second concept, rematerialization, takes place when humans are reinserted into "multi-species webs of environmental and social relations" (BRAIDOTTI, 2021, p. 142). The latter is reminiscent of Chenti's encounter with the fraternal twins who are linked to other species.

The Ecozombie Revenant: Indigenous Phenomenology and Zoophytographic Writing

In the final part of Chenti's story, she travels to a future Mexico City in the year 202? (a year mistakenly transformed to 2025 in the translation), where she is amazed at the changes in the cityscape: "[T]here are new buildings that already look old. Some plants and animals have disappeared. So has the lagoon. And wonderment. This is the future" (DAMIÁN 2022, p. 82). Chenti does not despair over the loss and dematerialization of the modern world but rather inserts herself into a new circuit of relations in the future city. Using her connection with nature, she is able to rematerialize in her original apartment where her aunt, mother and the spirit of her grandmother all recognize her, unperturbed by her abject skinless appearance. They tell her that they have been weaving her a new skin for her in order to prolong her survival in this new world. Chenti's artificial skin garment represents the weaving of past and present by her relatives – who like the three fates now inhabit a world that is profoundly damaged. These women, because of their connections with each other and the weavings of time and materiality that they have created, understand the flexibility of time and their connections to the modern and natural world.

Chenti does not give up when she sees the harsh conditions of the future city but instead considers the power and insight that her new artificial skin provides. As she walks out onto the middle of the Viga expressway, which covers the ancient canal, she is accompanied by even more living beings than before. She floods the highway with water, stopping all traffic, and declares: "Concrete is followed by the kingdom of water, the kingdom of trees.... My voice isn't mine, it's ours. It belongs to the twins who make everything reborn and to the crowd of the living and the dead" (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 82). The idea that city will rise again completes the Braidotti's posthuman cycle as well as the mythological cycle of time evoked by Xolotl. Chenti's purpose at this moment is to allow rematerialization, through which the inanimate, polluted matter of the city is reincorporated into the natural environment where it may interact with living matter.

The trope of time travel and the cycle of Braidotti's dematerialization and rematerialization reinforce the concepts established by indigenous phenomenology. Brazilian anthropologist Viveiros

de Castro has explained the perspective of indigenous thought as one of unity that does not divide the powers of experience and agency between humanity and other forms of life (2004, p. 474). According to this world view, reality is co-created by diverse perspectives, and shamanic power allows for humans and other species to change or transform into one another and back again, creating what Patricia Vieira calls as an endless feedback loop that is based on exchange rather than hierarchy. This reciprocity is a common theme among writers who take inspiration from other life forms. For Vieira, the “zoophytographic” texts of these authors give voice to non-human subjects, decentering humanity and creating a mutual gaze of subjectivity in narrative (2018, p. 74). While Vieira examines this phenomenon in the works of canonical Brazilian authors, including Guimarães Rosa and Clarice Lispector, this reciprocity is also readily seen in Chenti’s experience in Damián Miravete’s story.

Chenti's future world of 202? combines the past, present and future, combining bodies and techno-futures. Her embodied experience of her new skin exemplifies *codigofagia* in a combination of discourses and bodies. Ultimately, she serves to immunize the population against despair and the corrosive cynicism of the Capitalocene and the Anthropocene, whose expected outcome is apocalypse and the end of life.

Chenti's journey affirms Haraway's assertion that the era of the Chthlucene “is made up of ongoing multispecies stories...” (2016, p. 55). Chenti, who represents trauma zombies in kinship with nature tells just such a story, standing for vitality as the revenant of a historic crisis. This is the gift of the ecozombie: to assert a counter-immune response to crisis and blame. As Braidotti herself says:

Posthuman feminism brings back the elements to their non-anthropomorphic strata, through a series of relational assemblages with non-human others. The vital approach to living matter displaces the boundary between bios, the portion of life that has traditionally been reserved for *anthrophos*, and *zoe*, the wider scope of animal and non-human life. The dynamic, self-organizing structure of non-human life as *zoe* stands for generative vitality.... It is the transversal force that cuts across and reconnects previously segregated species, categories and domains. (2021, pp. 126-127)

Chenti strengthens resistance against persecution and the destruction of the natural world. Her assemblage of natural phenomena and lived experience, grief and joy, pain and pleasure capture the trials of embodiment and generative vitality. In her final words, she echoes the utopian hope voiced by her mother at the start of the story, reminding readers that “all of this will rise back up again” (DAMIÁN, 2022, p. 82).

Conclusion

As Rachel Haywood outlines in her chapter in *Parabolas of Science Fiction* (2013), the apocalyptic scenarios evoked by the Anthropocene are not new to Latin American science fiction. She notes that there is a strong tendency in Latin American narratives of First Contact to project empathy with the colonized and to question the primacy of Western values and the scientific world view (2013, p. 72), and it is clear that the same ethos undergirds thinking about the special position of Latin America in imagining the Anthropocene. While some writers examine climate change based through the perspectives of new materialism, extractivism and the ecogothic, Latin American women writers tend to focus on the body and kinships with other people and other species through embodied experience as a way of rescuing a dying planet.

The figure of the ecozombie is an important symbol of environmental protection and egalitarianism offered by Latin American speculative fiction. Since the societies of the New World survived the apocalyptic effects of First Contact, drawing on resources through *codigofagia* to survive, we can expect that the same strategies will guide them through the apocalypse of climate change. Latin American science fiction writers approach this problem through a posthumanism that explores the body and suggests the tools and resources needed to grieve and overcome.

We can contrast this Latin American manifestation of posthumanism with transhumanism, i.e., complete disembodiment, through which first-world, insular subjects live without a body as pure minds in a world of ever-expanding capitalism, as explained by Adam Kirsch in his recent article *The End of Us* (2022). Kirsch speculates on these topics, lamenting the destruction of the environment and human life, speculating on whether humans will be subsumed by other life forms or denied any human agency, as Jeff Vandermeer imagines in his *Annihilation* series, where Earth's DNA is recombined almost randomly by alien agents. Alternately, the Anthropocene posits that human life may simply be erased, “like a face drawn in the sand at the edge of the sea,” as Foucault speculates at the end of *The Order of Things* (387). In my view, Latin American science fiction – especially that written by women – weighs in on the side of transformative survival of humankind in narratives that reimagine both the past and the future to model possibilities of adaptation and connectedness.

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