

Dogmas, violence and authoritarianism in the digital age in the stories of Adrián Curiel Rivera.

Dogmas, violencias y autoritarismos de la era digital en las narraciones de Adrián Curiel Rivera.

Literature

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DOI: 10.32870/sincronia.v30.n9. e0908**Abstract.**

The digital age has spawned multiple authoritarian and violent tendencies that lead to human degradation: lynchings and the spread of fake news on social media; imposture and necrophilic narcissism; radical feminism, intolerance and the suppression of the will of others; post-apocalyptic scenarios and dystopian atmospheres; the imposition of inclusive language and political correctness, as well as the dissemination of ideologies dictated by the consumer market and globalisation. These tendencies have been practised in the spheres of governmental power and in private and intimate spheres, by both male and female subjects. In this article, we will analyse the structures and control mechanisms of these tyrannies in some narratives from two books by Adrián Curiel Rivera: *Amores veganos* (2021) and *El camino de Wembra y otras utopías feministas* (2023). To examine this destructiveness that has emerged in contemporary cyber culture, we find methodological support in the analyses of socio-political behaviour developed by Erich Fromm, Noam Chomsky, Edgar Morin, Darío Villanueva and Ana María Olabuenaga, among other specialists.

Keywords: Contemporary Mexican narrative. Adrián Curiel Rivera. Sociopolitical violence. Digital contemporaneity.

Resumen:

La era digital ha engendrado múltiples orientaciones autoritarias y violentas tendientes a la degradación humana: linchamientos y propagación de noticias falsas en las redes sociales; imposturas y narcisismos necrófilos; feminismos radicales,

intolerancias y anulación de la voluntad del otro; escenarios postapocalípticos y atmósferas distópicas; imposición del lenguaje inclusivo y de la corrección política, así como diseminación de ideologías dictadas por el mercado de consumo y la globalización. Estas propensiones han sido practicadas en los ámbitos del poder gubernamental y en esferas privadas e íntimas, tanto por sujetos masculinos como femeninos. En este artículo analizaremos las vertebraciones y los mecanismos de control de estas tiranías en algunas narraciones de dos libros de Adrián Curiel Rivera: *Amores veganos* (2021) y *El camino de Wembra y otras utopías feministas* (2023). Para la examinación de esta destructividad emergida en la contemporaneidad cibernética encontramos apoyo metodológico en los escrutinios de los comportamientos sociopolíticos elaborados por Erich Fromm, Noam Chomsky, Edgar Morin, Darío Villanueva y Ana María Olabuenaga, entre otras y otros especialistas.

Palabras clave: Narrativa mexicana contemporánea. Adrián Curiel Rivera. Violencia sociopolítica. Contemporaneidad digital.

Introduction

Every period of human history is marked by its progress and discoveries, but also by its ambivalences and obscurantism. Scientific advances are paradoxes of contemporaneity if we consider that, as Edgar Morin has been warning us for decades, "they are accompanied by multiple regressions that can take the form of a great regression towards barbarism," towards planetary destruction propelled by the anonymous and cold hatreds of our civilisation's technology (2010, pp. 15-16)..

The digital age, characterised by the emergence of the Internet, computers, mobile phones and enormous flows of information, has favoured "the globalisation of instant communication networks" (Morin, 2010, p. 70), but has, in contradiction, given rise to its own monsters and tyrannies: the normalisation of violence, hate speech, digital lynching or online humiliation, the imposition of inclusive language, fake news, extreme feminism, narcissism and the proliferation of authoritarian forms and coercion exercised by both the civilian population and socio-political and economic institutions acting within their spheres of power. It is not that these misguided practices did not exist in previous centuries, but rather that the current problem, according to expert , is that information is disseminated in real time to a huge number of users who—often out of egotism, resentment, and intolerance—circulate it under the cover of anonymity or false identities, and consider themselves the holders of an imaginary power granted by the use of social networks or, rather, "anti-social networks," as Rocco Carbone, among other intellectuals, calls them. Thus, hyperconnected users

aspire to influence the factual world and, from their malicious consciences, set themselves up as "a moral court that judges and verbally lynches and demands that lynching be carried out in a factual manner" (Olabuenaga, 2019, p. 250).

The factors listed highlight the vulnerability of human subjects, their defencelessness in the face of the fluctuating tides of the cyber ocean. Not for nothing, "the internet is a constitutive part of our new way of being in the world—whether we are connected or not" (Olabuenaga, 2019, p. 235).

On the other hand, literature has never ceased to perceive, criticise and interpret the conflicts of the contexts in which it is produced; thus, writers from all corners of the globe have sought to reveal, through lies, the truths of their historical times. But sometimes storytellers go beyond their chronologies, anticipating times to come and expressing their uncertainties through political dystopia or critical dystopian narrative, an approach that has gained prominence in recent years due to "its ability [to] ethically condemn the abuses of the Anthropocene [and because it] addresses [...] ethical, environmental and social problems" engendered in this period (Santana, 2024, p. 131).

These issues converge in the prose of Adrián Curiel Rivera (Mexico City, 1969), one of the authors committed to narrating authoritarianism and violence perpetrated in the digital age, especially in the novels *A bocajarro* (2008), *Blanco Trópico* (2014) and *Paraíso en casa* (2018), and in the short story collections *Día franco* (2016), *Amores veganos* (2021) and *El camino de Wembra y otras utopías feministas* (2023).

In our opinion, Curiel's narrative approach is based on two cornerstones: one is the ironic, sometimes grotesque and hyperbolic focus on situations, behaviours and environments that surround the protagonists clinging to their daily lives; the second, based on a critical vision, breaks down sectarian positions and socio-political complexities contrary to the praxis of "a politics of civilisation" aimed at eradicating "the barbarism of human relations: the exploitation of man by man, the arbitrariness of power, egocentrism, ethnocentrism, cruelty, misunderstanding" (Morin, 2009, p. 59).

These phenomena, visible in Curiel's works, are often linked to the use of technology and sometimes lead to science fiction stories where:

[...] the emergence of totalitarianism and the atrocities of the 20th century [...] multiply examples of violence and continue to fuel the pessimism of dystopian universes. The evolution towards a horizon of social perfection today translates into a regression towards

inconceivable forms of savagery, towards a terrifying technified Middle Ages (Curiel, 2018, p. 8).

In this article, we will focus on four stories by Curiel: 'Amores veganos' ('Vegan Loves'), 'De la justicia nada poética de los linchamientos (el caso de Zacarías Justo)' ('On the Unpoetic Justice of Lynchings (the case of Zacarías Justo)'), 'Operación limpieza profunda' ('Operation Deep Clean') and 'Camino de Wembra' ('The Road to Wembra'). The first two titles belong to the book *Amores veganos*; the other stories are included in the volume *El camino de Wembra y otras utopías feministas*.

In "Amores veganos", the frivolous and biased female character exemplifies the radicalism of certain individuals who, under the guise of carnal passion, reactionary fanaticism and the indiscriminate use of technology, seek to impose their idiosyncrasies as absolute truth, without realising the depersonalisation and destruction of others. In "De la justicia nada poética de los linchamientos (el caso de Zacarías Justo)" (On the Unpoetic Justice of Lynchings (The Case of Zacarías Justo) and the Imposition of Political Correctness), justice is exercised by the digital hand of angry cybernauts and the factual hand of fundamentalist feminists. On the other hand, the threats derived from the non-use of inclusive language and the imposition of political correctness, state deception, the domination and annihilation of masculinity, and extreme feminism are explored in the extensive dystopian narratives "Operación limpieza profunda" (Operation Deep Clean) and "El camino de Wembra" (The Way of Wembra), whose plots unfold in futuristic settings on the Yucatan Peninsula. In these last three narratives, Curiel updates themes projected in political science fiction, such as furious anti-patriarchal movements, the dissemination of *post-truths*, which, although it may have seemed fantasy decades ago, is now a fierce reality (Villanueva, 2020, p. 90), or the abuses of inclusive language, considered by Darío Villanueva to be "a postmodern form of censorship" that does not originate, as is customary, in the Church, the State or the Party, "but emanates from a liquid or gaseous force, to a certain extent undefined, related to civil society. But no less effective, destructive and fearsome for that" (2021, p. 44).

The stories chosen exhibit, as we shall see later, inflexibilities enhanced by digital advances and capitalist development and its "generalised commodification" (Morin, 2009, p. 31), as if these manifestations triggered or made fashionable the necrological nature of the human condition, which is that "morbid orientation [which is a] response to life that is in complete opposition to life, for what is loved is the death and destruction of the other" (Fromm, 1966, p. 45).

In short, technological and scientific progress has thrown human beings into a landscape of despair and incomprehension, for it was once believed "that social networks and new technologies [...] would bring us all together. Instead, we have found that they have divided us into an infinite collection of tribes facing each other with infinite fears and grievances" (Brill, 2025).

Toxic attachments to fashion trends: "Vegan Loves"

An omniscient narrator—at times intruding on the consciousness of Rodrigo Villa, the protagonist—recreates in "Vegan Loves" the two time frames that articulate the plot: the first is the present of a lonely older man living in Mérida; the second is a return to his past as a married university bureaucrat who, at the age of forty-six, on a business trip to Mexico City, coincides with Fabiola —an acquaintance from his adolescence— with whom he becomes involved in an extramarital affair fuelled by his escapes to the country's capital. Months later, a photo in his email is discovered by his wife, leading to divorce and the abandonment of his spouse and children, leaving him free to continue his affair.

The power cut in the flat blurs Villa's memory of flashes of that romance of just over a year with Fabiola, who has a PhD in philosophy from a Spanish university and a thesis on the rights of non-human animals, who is, in addition to being corny and childish, addicted to wild sex. Remembering her, Villa wonders: "Has she continued with her animal rights activism, with her fascist veganism?" (Curiel, 2021, p. 42).

Fabiola lives off her inheritance, resides in a *penthouse*, travels around the city by bicycle, is vegan, practises yoga, reiki, *chi kung*, and is an animal rights activist, to the extent that she posed nude for an animal protection association's calendar. As demonstrated by her words and actions, she seems to love animals at the expense of hating people, and she used to proclaim that there were too many humans on the planet and that "one day [...] zoos will disappear from the face of the earth" (Curiel, 2021, p. 85). She is an individual who clings to beliefs that she unilaterally considers worthy of practising, such as her aversion to showering, as she considered bathing an arrogant act "that threatened the balance of natural resources" (Curiel, 2021, p. 84), as well as the use of deodorants and plastic bags for rubbish bins.

Not only Fabiola, but also her clique of friends reveal characteristics typical of the age of digital communication: authoritarian convictions sometimes cloaked in ridiculous childishness. These tendencies often give rise to "exacerbated, narcissistic and often victimising individualism, which is

emotionally toxic and imposes the 'authentic self', the 'unique and incomparable identity' of each person as the measure of all things" (Villanueva, 2024, p. 98). In effect, these characters display dogmatic thinking, which excludes those outside their orbit; in other words, they exemplify the monopoly of reason, as they wish to persecute and exterminate "the fools who insisted on being omnivores" (Curiel, 2021, p. 73), a harangue that Rodrigo imagines to be issued by a "cell of terrorist veganism [or] vegan death squad" (Curiel, 2021, p. 73). Those who do not share the vegan ideology are strangers and deserve aggression; Erich Fromm reflects on dogmatism: "the stranger is precisely the individual who is not part of my clan [...] is not part of the group to which I am narcissistically attached" (1966, p. 102). Therefore, individuals who do not profess Fabiola's habits, a convoluted individuality, deserve contempt, even for their physical appearance: "Fat and short" (Curiel, 2021, p. 57), she says of a security guard, and in a letter to her lover she distils her totalitarianism and her "hatred of fat people, because they have no willpower and deserve to die without exception" (Curiel, 2021, p. 94). Fabiola embodies malignant narcissism, one of the socio-political problems of the global village; in other words, she does not accept a reality outside her own, promotes antagonism and believes in the "need to change the world and win others over to share ideas and illusions" (Fromm, 1966, p. 86), in this case, veganism.

It is not uncommon for this narcissism to exalt the body, whether one's own or that of others, as is the trend among social media users. Fabiola's concern with beautifying Rodrigo's body and physical appearance is nothing more than an echo, an extension of herself to show off in society (Fromm, 1966, p. 77), as she intends to do at her niece's wedding party: to be the centre of attention, rather than the bride and groom. Fabiola's mental structure fits Fromm's diagnosis of a certain type of human being "[who] is so alienated that he feels his body is only *an instrument* of success. His body must look young and healthy, and he narcissistically experiences it as a precious asset in the marketplace of personalities" (Fromm, 1975: 347). For Fabiola, her body and her beauty are an obsession, her good looks and "her body is the only important reality she knows" (Fromm, 1966, p. 76); therefore, it is not surprising that this concern and zeal for her body leads to hypochondriacal episodes that demand her lover's attention. In fact, in her satisfaction and high opinion of herself, in her self-admiration and pretensions of notoriety, she belittles her lover by telling him that she shines brighter, that he was nothing more than "a member [...] of the anonymous masses [...] a mediocre professional", while she "was an internationally awarded activist and member of the Editorial Board of a well-known newspaper" (Curiel, 2021, p. 91).

Likewise, Fabiola is a victim of virtuality, which unconsciously imposes its dominance with the help of "a sophisticated industry of persuasion" and manipulation so characteristic of today's world (Marina, 2025): she is a futile tourist who replaces the enjoyment of the live landscape with a photo on her mobile phone, and instead of being dazzled by rock formations, "the only thing that interested her was photographing them to upload the images to Facebook and Instagram, eager for *likes* and hearts" and kiss emoticons (Curiel, 2021, p. 80), which made her jump for joy.

Fashionable happiness brings applause, admiration for trivial matters, and mass acceptance and approval. Fabiola reveals a personality besieged by external mental pathogens and automatisms that have undermined her ways of thinking. José Antonio Marina has detected these pathogens that undermine the will and behaviour of humanity: fake news, mental viruses, and ideologies. These agents want to direct tastes, beliefs, thoughts: "They want our mental immune system to be depressed, for us to be vulnerable to slogans, catchphrases, memes, advertisements" (Marina, 2025). This female subject, prone to the fleeting spectacle of virtual images, gives Curiel the opportunity to sketch a consciousness trapped by the vertigo of technological fashion, a being who is problematic in her interaction with others.

It is not surprising that Fabiola capriciously uses technology to harass and control others: multiple messages and lewd photos sent with the demand for a prompt reply so as not to upset her, regardless of Villa's occupations. Ignoring her presence on the mobile phone is tantamount to unleashing her anger, as it diminishes her interest in *herself* as the centre of the world; she feels criticised, threatened and wounded in her "self-inflation" or "narcissistic security" (Fromm, 1966, p. 84). Similarly, this character takes advantage of the internet to exercise her remote control, forcing Villa to focus on his food, looking for any suspicious signs of a violation of her doctrine, like a pleased mother:

[...] she demanded that they have dinner together on Skype or FaceTime [and] forced him to show her what he was going to eat on camera, to make sure he wasn't cheating with meat or sausages [...] Very good, Fabiola approved, satisfied. Eat well, eat well" (Curiel, 2021, pp. 90-91).

Therefore, it is not surprising that Rodrigo, seen as an aspirant to her brotherhood, is prone to control, living alongside her in an "initial stage of transformation to vegetarianism and then veganism that Fabiola had planned for him" (Curiel, 2021, p. 72).

The corollary of the story is the breaking of the passionate bond and Rodrigo's desire to restore himself, tired of acting like a submissive or a domesticated person without freedom; he was finally able to shake off the yoke of a narcissist who was well-intentioned towards the animal world but repressive towards others, like many humans who glorify barbarism, violence and hatred under the guise of fundamentalism and the protection of digital media.

Abuse and power in the digital and factual crucifixion of others: "The unpoetic justice of lynchings (the case of Zacarías Justo)".

The mechanisms of power and repression of human perversion emptied into cyberspace to prosecute, sentence and destroy the life of others are weighed up and *On the unpoetic justice of lynchings (the case of Zacarías Justo)*. As the title suggests, the fable focuses on the martyrdom of an individual who suffers virtual lynching, an event defined by Olabuenaga as a procedure that "unleashes a storm of indignation and anger in the *online* world through digital social networks [...] against a person or institution, for their words or deeds, without any kind of legal process" (2019, pp. 76-77). Thus, the phenomenon of the ruthless reality of hyperconnections is revealed: internet users who, in real time, publicly humiliate another user for making a *slip of the tongue* when referring to otherness.

Curiel's account shows a multifaceted reality: it not only depicts the lynching incident, but also the details of how the violence is turned back on the instigator, who also suffers it first-hand, in the form of a boomerang effect or internet justice. To demonstrate that any consumer on the planet can cross the thin line and become a victim, the text is structured in three segments: the first, narrated by an omniscient voice, is dedicated to Professor Zacarías Justo; the second part briefly examines three true cases of American citizens lynched in the virtual world and in real life, one in 2012 and two in 2013; the mechanism of these cases filtered into the story is consistent: the tragedy of the future sacrificed is triggered by a joke posted on the internet; the joke is interpreted by users as mocking a particular sector and causes a flood of criticism against the joker, including demands for his dismissal from his workplace; the avalanche of requests pressures the employer to dismiss the offender and leave him out in the cold for failing to be politically correct. In turn, this second section, written in the first person, serves a dual purpose: first, to illustrate real cases of intransigence on the internet that can occur anywhere in the world, as the narrator comments: "Similar episodes have occurred in Germany, Mexico, Argentina, India, Colombia and the United Kingdom" (Curiel, 2021, p.

156); a second function is, as a hinge section, to communicate with a third section, corresponding to the feminist lawyer Estefanía Barca, Zacarías' counterpart, who narrates in her own voice the meditated revenge against Justo and the harassment she suffers months later, very similar to that which she inflicted on her victim.

De la justicia nada poética de los linchamientos is a fictionalisation of the true case of public relations officer Justine Sacco, "patient zero of digital lynchings" (Olabuenaga, 2019, p. 71), as she is classified, who, while travelling from New York to South Africa, wanted to come across as cheeky and tweeted a racist phrase: "Off to Africa, hope I don't get AIDS. Just kidding. I'm white!" (Olabuenaga, 2019, p. 71). Upon landing at her destination after a twelve-hour journey, she learned via her mobile phone that she had been fired from her job and her reputation destroyed on Twitter by hundreds of outraged users who disparaged her. Curiel extrapolates Sacco's anecdote from 2013 and uses phonetic paranomasia to change the names of Justine Sacco () t; secondly, he transforms the gender, nationality, profession and temporality of the person in question, as Justo is a Mexican university academic who suffers collective punishment in 2017.

Justo's story is that of a father of three daughters and grandfather of five granddaughters; he is a university professor who is adept at feminism, both in theory and in practice, as he defends his daughters from the oppression of their husbands. For almost three decades, he has been a "fervent supporter of the language of the egalitarian community" (Curiel, 2021, p. 143), focusing on the analysis of patriarchal paradigms in cinema and universal literature. He has written articles and books in which he exposes and advocates for the misogynistic works of Hemingway, Bukowski, Neruda, and Vargas Llosa to be banned and burned. He also teaches courses on toxic masculinities at study centres in Europe and America.

A second sequence narrates the story of a sixty-year-old character who retires from the university and leaves the Mexican capital to settle in the city of Mérida. He has left behind teaching, the academia and scientific bureaucracy; he distances himself from social media, including Facebook, where he has around ten thousand followers, but accepts an invitation to give a lecture at the World Congress of New Feminism at Nelson Mandela University in South Africa.

His flight from Mexico City to London is delayed. Anxious, he wanders around the airport, reviewing his presentation on female clothing dictated by androcentrism in Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth*; bored, he "gives in to the impulse to pick up his mobile phone, perhaps the greatest curse of our time" (Curiel, 2021, p.148), to joke with a sexist friend; as the call goes to

voicemail, he sends him a tweet, which will be his downfall: "*I'm going to South Africa to the Feminist Congress. I hope they don't rape me. Just kidding. They're all lesbians*" (Curiel, 2021, p.149). The message is intercepted and has hundreds of replies to his tweet; his friend informs him that it is the number one *trending topic*. On Twitter, he discovers his mass execution, both by colleagues and collectives, who send messages insulting him and exposing him as a covert hypocrite. His fear grows when he reads that the rector has posted a message about his future expulsion from the study centre that had honoured him so much.

In Port Elizabeth, his final destination, he is greeted with angry banners, insults and filming. A Mandela collaborator rescues him from the mob and takes him to his hotel. She informs him that the university has cancelled his participation and that, as a courtesy, they have reserved a few nights for him, but that he will have to pay for his stay.

Estefanía Barca, author of the book *Todes nosotros*, presides over the third part of the story. She confesses that she was the first to retweet Zacarías' joke among her thousands of followers: the levity of the doctor —whom she admired and respected— caused her indignation as a lesbian. In her digital intervention, she encourages the masses to humiliate and punish the fake feminist while he travels to South Africa. Estefanía feels damaged and hurt, and considers that she has suffered, on behalf of other women, an affront to her self-image; Hence arises her need, as Fromm examines in his study of human nature, to restore that esteem through the irrational use of *vengeful violence* to bring about justice and restore the values derived from "law and order" (1966, pp. 24-39). What a cruel spirit delights in her confession: 'As if I were at the cinema, I enjoy the mockery of her person that I myself have brought about. Ignominy brought to the simultaneity of a global Roman circus' (Curiel, 2021, p.157). The comparison that Curiel puts into his character's mouth is apt, given that, as Fromm observes, the "Colosseum in Rome is certainly one of the greatest monuments to human sadism" (1975: 286).

Estefanía's next act is to toast her partner and ask him "[...] if the justice of social media is not poetic" (Curiel, 2021, p.157). The enjoyment of revenge and destructiveness over the covert promoter of phallocentrism stimulates her cruelty and sexual appetite. While she watches Zacarías' remorseful face on her computer wallpaper, she enjoys pleasurable sex with Damiana. This social media user personifies sadistic sexual destructiveness: she is someone whose arousal is stimulated by the pain, public humiliation and intense suffering of another (Fromm, 1975, pp. 282-283).

Months later, the lawyer recounts that she has been the victim of what she so highly praised: after giving a lecture at the faculty where Zacarías taught, she is lynched in the car park by young anarchists wearing hoods and black clothes with skulls, who accuse her of being a "posh, sanctimonious lesbian" (Curiel, 2021, p.159) and of calling them misandrist. They are also vigilantes and beat up the women who cover up for the asshole men. Despite putting forward egalitarian arguments, both she and her partner are shaken up and the barbarians flee in the convertible they steal from Estefanía, who later reports the incident to the ministry and writes on her Twitter: "vandalism is not feminism" (Curiel, 2021, p. 161). The response to her statement is a barrage of insults accusing her of justifying repressive patriarchy, as well as suggesting that she should be shot.

Barca understands that her reputation is equivalent to symbolic civil death, just as she manoeuvred against the loud-mouthed professor, who, with a single sentence, saw his accredited existence in the service of an ideal crumble. Neither her temperance nor her dissuasive discourse were of any use to her, as a week before the vindictive episode with Justo, she managed to convince some angry young women to stop hammering a sculpture of Sor Juana during a demonstration in the historic centre, whom they accused of being an "undercover agent of the hegemonic viceregal patriarchy" (Curiel, 2021, p. 158). This is another example of the dogmatic feminism practised by certain groups who flaunt "their strength and destructive capacity" (Fromm, 1966, p. 40) through their actions.

Both Barca and Justo have been victims of the so-called cancellation process, that is, when a person with a reputable personal and intellectual track record is easily "socially and professionally destroyed if publicly denounced according to the criteria of those who label them racist, sexist, homophobic or even fascist" (Villanueva, 2024, p. 220). Thus, in an act of solidarity, Barca tries to reach Zacarías by phone to share his misfortunes, but at his home he is told "that he is ill and does not want to talk to anyone" (Curiel, 2021, p.161).

The online humiliation suffered by the characters in this story reveals two realities: "internet users love lynching [a] painful impulse typical of the 21st century"; the second is that "social media magnifies episodes that, without such mass dissemination, would have been much less important", as the event would have been nothing more than a reckless or trivial occurrence (Soler, 2015). Thus, by involving cases that have occurred and been documented in the online world and in real life, Curiel presents a postmodern non-fiction story in which the characters' desires, as the author said in an interview, "contrast with reality" (Paul, 2021).

In short, both virtual lynchings and adaptations to uncompromising political correctness add to "the postmodern abuses of reason that baffle our common sense [and have] gained prominence through social media and [are] taking advantage of all the opportunities, which are many, offered to this end by digital society" (Villanueva, 2024, p. 92). The thirst for cheap publicity and fame associated with sadism and narcissism has found a powerful outlet for venting with impunity and from the comfort of home on social media and digital platforms.

The unpoetic justice of lynchings (the case of Zacarías Justo) brings together two stories that illustrate the fine line between a thoughtful and respected person who, by breaking with the norms of political correctness, is judged and sentenced by a bloodthirsty virtual court made up of zealous guardians of political correctness who, out of idleness, ignorance and hatred, demand the crucifixion of others.

Authoritarianism and cruelty in the digital age: "Operation Deep Clean" and "The Way of Wembra"

Intimidation and despotism in the digital age are also the subject of "Operation Deep Clean" and "The Road to Wembra", stories set in south-eastern Mexico, a microcosm that supplies oil and logwood dye; additionally, it is worth noting that this is an area that the empirical author has incorporated into many of his most recent works of fiction, perhaps because he has been living in Mérida for the past twenty years.

These stories function as dystopias: both refer to power and its intricacies; additionally, both allude to "the historical and social circumstances from which the reader [...] contemplates the dystopian work." In other words, the futuristic plot operates as a critique of elements of the present that are recognisable to the reader (Curiel, 2018, p. 6).

"Operación limpieza profunda" establishes intertextualities with George Orwell's two novels, *Animal Farm* (1945) and *1984* (1949), as well as Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* (1953), to cite a couple of canonical dystopian works in which the vigilant and controlling state erects separatist walls, distributes happiness and leisure among its subjects, and manifests its power through the relentless application of the law, the dissemination of hoaxes, and the manipulation of public information. In this way, the state publicises and endorses its exercise of power, the values it upholds and the threat of punishment that hangs over defiant citizens (Olabuenaga, 2019, p. 226).

Likewise, this narrative highlights the punishments imposed on those who disagree with political correctness and inclusive language or verbal hygiene: public intimidation, social and

professional ostracism (Villanueva, 2021, p. 71) and, in extreme cases, the death penalty; and, as in new speculative fiction, it hypothesises "about futures of pollution, waste and rubbish, criticising the ways in which the expansion of the logic of the Anthropocene, promoted thanks to (bio)technological development, [...] has established new forms of dehumanisation" (Santana, 2024, pp. 131-132).

Curiel's futuristic story unfolds in the Kingdom of Yucatán, southeast of the Empire of the Good and Wise People, ruled by an oligarchy headed by Emperor Anastasio —a grotesque allegory of Manuel López Obrador, president of Mexico from 2018 to 2024—, always at the service of the whims of Harry Rayburn, Arch-Emperor of America, names and titles that obliquely refer to Donald Trump and the United States of America.

In this civilised environment, the Yucatan Peninsula, surrounded by walls that protect the territory, "including the kingdoms of Quintana Roo, Campeche and Tabasco [isolating it] from the siege of 'the barbarian hordes of [...] Central America'" (Curiel, 2023, p. 30), life is lived "under the precepts of a new, highly technologised feudalism" (Curiel, 2023, p. 34): the free movement of individuals is regulated, except for those close to power and "the founders of the empire" (Curiel, 2023, p. 34); non-binarism predominates in society, the traditional family is tolerated, and wall screens that broadcast government content have been installed on the walls of houses by law; hospitals, mental institutions, and prisons are almost empty, as there is health control, offences are punished *ipso facto*, and criminals are immediately exterminated; transport is levitating and electromagnetic, people abandon their addictions, and their bodies do not age thanks to injections authorised by the system. In this sense, "Operation Deep Clean" outlines the assumption that a literary dystopia often dystopically exhibits a pseudo-utopia (Abraham, 2024, p. 10).

However, technological advances show their downside, a regression to periods of savagery reflected in dehumanisation, cruelty and decadence: part of the citizens' entertainment is the coliseum —built by the king of Yucatán— with its gladiatorial skirmishes broadcast on the wall screens of homes; added to this is the lack of respect for the ecosystem, a catastrophe evident in the seas polluted with all kinds of waste and radioactive rubbish; in other words, in addition to institutional violence, ecological disaster is another palpable reality. Noam Chomsky's reflection on the social control exercised by the political elite by implementing a strategy of distraction among their subjects, so that they do not become aware of or think about "essential knowledge [or] real social problems" (Chomsky, 2016), is pertinent.

The dystopian experience in Curiel's narrative also encompasses culture and education, in the manner of Bradbury's fiction: in libraries and bookshops, there are no books that encourage reading for aesthetic pleasure, only materials that exhort personal improvement; face-to-face classes have been replaced by interdidactic holograms and videoconferences; furthermore, in order to exalt bourgeois values, promoting discrimination and disregarding indigenous roots, subjects such as European literature have been removed from the curriculum, and other entertainment subjects such as "Camino a la fama" (Road to Fame) are privileged, which is in high demand among students seen not as a sector to be enlightened and invited to think, but, as Villanueva comments, as a clientele to be seduced and entertained; In any case, educational broadcasts are interrupted by *spots* glorifying the government.¹ Once again, we turn to Chomsky's analysis of the government's desire to provide a mediocre education in order to keep the population mired in ignorance and unable to critically examine reality, conditions that predispose them to control of the will and slavery (Chomsky, 2016).

The framework of "Operation Deep Clean" encompasses two parallel actions: one public, the other covert. The first is the execution of Epigmenio Baas, a teacher who contravenes the code of inclusive language in a virtual classroom; the second operation appears to be an ecological issue, the cleaning of the Chicxulub crater under pressure from the Arch-Emperor of America, a task entrusted to the corrupt and predatory academic guild, thus labelled by the system.

The public punishment promoted by the government is Baas' execution. Although the emperor does not consent to his sacrifice, he yields to the request of his wife, who is close to a feminist group that persecutes the hegemonic patriarchy. The teacher's punishment stems from his virtual class on poultry; after presenting the topic, he asks a question that none of the students—many with their cameras turned off—answer. Faced with silence, he chooses a female student, whom he calls "classmate," but she demands with insulting emphasis to be called "classmate." The conflict arises when the student considers himself victimised by the teacher's uncomfortable attitude, as the digital network has been used by schoolchildren as a perfect shelter, a private space of leisure, which exempts them from learning and debating, infantilises them and frees them from intellectual challenges. This "safe space" or isolation in education is one of the emblems of virtual times, as

¹ The disappearance of humanistic subjects, which are replaced by superfluous content, is discussed in *Fahrenheit 451*; for example, in the dialogue between the fire chief and the protagonist Montag: "Schooling is shortened, discipline is relaxed, philosophy, history, languages are abandoned, little by little grammar and spelling are neglected and finally almost completely ignored" (Bradbury, 2021, p. 70).

Villanueva observes: "The security of this *online* universe contrasts sharply with the dangers that lurk *offline*. Social life has already been transformed into an electronic or *cyber* life" (2021, p. 285).

The case of the offended victim in Curiel's story is heard in a gender court presided over by a magistrate, who sides with the student by sentencing the teacher to death. Shortly thereafter, Bass is apprehended by "five muscular women from the Feminist Squad for Inclusive Language" (Curiel, 2023, p. 46). Curiel's narrative irony highlights a reality that has been spreading in the educational world in the 21st century: "cleansing university campuses of words, ideas and issues that might make someone uncomfortable", a phenomenon that is "the breeding ground for the total subjugation of language to the norms of political correctness" (Villanueva, 2021, p. 87).

The fictionalisation of this intimidating atmosphere, based on norms that seek to eliminate harmful language in the academic world, is supported—from the 1980s to the present day—by the factual world of English-speaking study centres. One example being Stanford University, which in 2020 released its proposal entitled "Initiative to Eliminate Harmful Language," which aims to eradicate "all verbal expressions considered aggressive or harmful, especially those that are racist, violent, and biased in terms of ethnic and sexual considerations, or related to gender issues" (Villanueva, 2024, p. 196), a situation explored in Curiel's text.

The dismissed professor of European literature, treated with cruelty, is displayed half-naked in public, to the delight of the crowd, who "broadcast it on their social networks, while eating popcorn and drinking from disposable cups that they then threw into the sea" (Curiel, p. 32). The execution of the punished man, by laser beam, is broadcast live on television and digital platforms, another nod to Bradbury's work, as it recalls the massively broadcast spectacle of the police authorities' real-time pursuit of the protagonist of *Fahrenheit 451* in the streets. Thus, the state, in a kind of lynching, fulfils the role of entertaining and offering moral lessons to its citizens (Olabuenaga, 2019, p. 225), which justifies the presence of children at the professor's execution. Furthermore, it is clear that the state uses technological advances to retaliate, unfairly and unjustifiably, against one of its citizens.

The other task involves lies, fake news or state *post-truth*: it is not a question of cleaning up the Gulf of Mexico, but of collecting samples from the ocean floor in search of oil reserves to build the Chicxulub Mega Refinery. But in the depths, the scientists reveal their psychopathologies and professional jealousies—hyperindividualism, necrophilia, the decadence of a technified society—and engage in a fight in which they exterminate each other; the three survivors are devoured by a giant kraken, a monstrosity of dark waters with a double representation: as the ruin of the planetary

ecosystem and as an allegory of the state: an abyssal creature that devours its citizens.² In turn, the vigilant military police replicate the situation: due to workplace mistrust, Colonel Pech harpoons Lieutenant Cocum and Captain Monica murders her male counterpart for not calling her "Captain Monique".

The emperor, aware of the deception of public opinion, announces with great fanfare the success of the mission in Yucatán, without caring that he is spreading *fake news* or rumours, that is, falsehoods disseminated "on purpose to misinform the public with the aim of obtaining economic or political gains" (Villanueva, 2021, p. 187); This action is not surprising, since "lies are part of the resources of political practice" (Villanueva, 2021, p. 188). For a leader accustomed to distorting reality, the mission in Yucatán was a triple success: according to him, gender justice was served, although in reality, like "a piece of bloody meat [the professor was thrown] to the feminist beasts to keep them happy" (Curiel, 2023, p. 61); he also got rid of some troublesome scientists and bandits and, finally, he announced that the Mega Refinery would be built, despite secret reports on the level of sea pollution. In this way, in its closed-mindedness, the state institution, as Chomsky reflects, "risks total destruction to ensure its prestige and dominance" (1972, p. 186).

In "Operation Deep Clean", the "rogue state" or "criminal state" triumphs, expressions coined by Morin to reflect the police powers that the body attributes to itself to control the civilian population (2010: 79), the latter conglomerate which, as we have discussed, is not far behind the public administration in matters of roguery. In Curiel's dystopian narrative, we see attacks on individual freedom and actions that further accentuate human decadence, as the "barbarism of hatred, which emerges from the depths of other historical eras, is combined with the anonymous and cold barbarism of the technology of our civilisation [Both] contain enormous potential for destruction" (Morin, 2010, pp. 16, 29).

Apart from the corrosive irony and dystopian settings, there are interesting key points in "Operation Deep Clean" that are similar to *Animal Farm*: the presence of an empowered leader or emperor, as in the case of the pig Napoleon in Orwell's work, who from his totalitarian circle —other pigs— limits the freedom of his citizens, issues veiled threats, does not tolerate dissent, shuts down

² The narrator even links the voracity of the monstrosity in the story to the devastating activity of the head of Culture in Pueblo Bueno y Sabio. In this vein, some critics of contemporary Hispanic narrative tend to equate the figure of the monster with the "prevailing socio-economic system" and judge the government as its accomplice and the repressive police as servants of that system (Barberán, 2025, pp. 41-42).

debates and questioning, and, in possession of the official truth, spreads fake news to perpetuate his ends and orders the assassination of enemies of the system he has implemented. In his ambition and delirium for power, Napoleon promotes corruption and ends up mutating to resemble, both in attitude and physically, the humans he hated so much in the early days of the Animal Rebellion. For his part, in his revolutionary megalomania, Emperor Anastasio seeks to perpetuate himself in power thanks to a cloning process devised by a geneticist of the empire; his wife—an unwitting accomplice to the mandates of patriarchy—his leaders, and he himself believe that he has been such a good ruler that he deserves to reproduce for future generations.

We include Camino de Wembra in the spectrum of new dystopian stories, based on Domingo's view that part of the content of a classic dystopia is the exhibition of the scourges and abuses of governmental power systems, but that today the term has broadened to include new agents that sometimes supplant state power: "corporations, multinationals and visionary scientists are now suspects" (Domingo, 2008, p. 251).

Curiel's story fictionalises two extreme feminist positions that each seek, in their own way, to resolve machismo. Both are based on the nullification of the other's freedom or, in the most severe case, on total extermination: the first position, that of American academics, is to resolve the situation by inventing a vaccine that will be administered to the bodies of virile subjects; in other words, it proposes using technology to subdue masculinity; the other alternative—a renewal of Greek myths—responds to the fascist-like disposition of a remote community of warlike Mayans who practise ancestral rites: murder of males, sexual unions for reproductive purposes, emasculation of the best-endowed survivors for the purposes of slavery.

In this narrative, the world is run by women: the United Nations, Europe, the United States and Mexico, including the governor's office and mayor's office of Mérida, as well as that of Acanceh, in Yucatán, where Celestún, the epicentre of the story, is located, as this region is home to the dye tree that contains the raw material for the manufacture of the utopian vaccine.

The plot follows the journey and adventure of Dr Wembra Dunaway,³ head of the Posthuman Composting Department at the University of Maine and an outstanding pioneer of ecofeminism,

³ Once again, as in the story "De la justicia nada poética..." (Of Nothing Poetic About Justice...), Curiel uses paranomasia to name his character, in this case Wembra Dunaway, who shares phonetic traits with Donna Haraway, an American activist and university researcher who promotes the "Capitalocene" and cyberfeminism, ecofeminism and feminist science fiction, and who is "a fundamental reference in various disciplines of contemporary academia, both in the natural sciences and the social sciences, due to her training in biology and

accompanied by the cyborg Martha Askew, a biochemist specialising in organic dyes. They are also assisted by a state-of-the-art robot and Tim, a Labrador dog. This is a speculative fiction story starring women: a prestigious American scientist, a female cyborg who is half human and half electronic components, that is, "a machine hybrid [a creature that is] simultaneously animal and machine" (Haraway, 1995, p. 253), peninsular warriors and the automaton R2Dta, all with female characterisations.

The plane lands in the jungles of Celestún, territory of the Kingdom of the Amazons, and the university delegation immediately witnesses violent reprisals against anyone who does not use inclusive language correctly. On the runway, they are greeted by two female soldiers and an official. For not including the soldiers in his instructions, the bureaucrat receives an electric shock to the chest from one of them, as she cannot tolerate "the patriarchal vestiges that unfortunately still remain to be suppressed in our society" (Curiel, 2023, p. 94). In addition, according to the guard, the inspector will be arrested for three days, pay a fine, take an awareness course, and be exposed on social media.

The foreign delegation comes into contact with Tarmac, the transgender guide hired by the CIA, and Aketzali, the queen of the dissident tribe, who will lead them through the jungle, but they suffer her treacherous abandonment. After days of wandering, she is rescued by an Amazon, who takes her to the territory of the indigenous women, where they receive hospitality; in addition, the academics experience satisfying passionate encounters, either with the queen or with one of the royal guards.

The top-secret mission —paid for by the University of Maine but supervised by the CIA because it represents a "priority geopolitical and strategic interest" (Curiel, 2023, p. 89)—is to extract haematoxylin, a substance from the dye tree that, when combined with a laboratory biological agent, will mass-produce the vaccine "to end one of humanity's greatest plagues [:] the millennial pandemic of machismo" (Curiel, 2023, pp. 88-89). In this context, Curiel's story fits in with a certain type of

philosophy" (Araiza, 2020). In addition, Curiel draws several parallels between the real and the fictional in her text, based on the specialist's themes and theories: the first is based on certain postulates held by both Dunaway and Donna Haraway, such as science as an androcentric construct, the idea of tentacularity and universal symbiosis; the second responds to the cyborg Martha, who shares the limelight in the story and is a kind of dialogue with Haraway's books entitled *Science, Cyborgs and Women. The Reinvention of Nature* (1995) and *A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism at the End of the Twentieth Century* (2014); a third reflection refers to *Cthulhu and Me: A Problem of Tentacularity*, a volume attributed to the heroine Dunaway, when in the real world Haraway has published *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016).

Hispanic speculative fiction that addresses issues of "extractivist neocolonialism [...] the hegemony of the globalised neoliberal market [and] the dynamics of industrial capitalism" in peripheral enclaves (Santana, 2025 , p. 26).⁴

One of the issues that most strikes Dunaway is the relentless system imposed on their fiefdom by the feared Amazons, a regime resulting from the exercise of violence and female domination against the opposite sex. First, they organised a revolution against "the patriarchal fishing hegemony" (Curiel, 2023, p. 91) and slaughtered almost all the men; then they castrated the most intelligent ones to use them as servants.

The American scientist also learns that Aketzali is a Swedish woman who came from abroad to take refuge in Yucatán, a fugitive from the murder of her husband, and that the rebels ride mechanical dragonflies to organise raids in Mérida and kidnap male specimens, either for procreation or for entertainment. After using them for months, they kill them with their arrows. Dunaway has no doubt that the Amazons have cut off concessions to the patriarchy.

The extraction of the substance yields good results for the vaccine, but generates financial suspicion among the aborigines, who consider the removal of their natural resources to be plunder. They believe that the outsiders will cover themselves in glory and gold with the patent for the invention and they will receive nothing in return. The angry fighters kidnap the academics, who try to flee with their precious treasure, but are pursued by the women riding their flying insects. In the melee, Aketzali is crushed to death by a dye tree, which Wembra shot with her laser pistol. As the fugitives are about to be put to the sword, one of the soldiers shows a paper that the queen had hidden in her thong: her political will, in which she names Wembra as her successor. As in a skewed case of neocolonialism, the historical cycle repeats itself in the Kingdom of the Amazons: once again, they will be ruled not by a native, but by a female element from abroad, in this case from the United States.

Wembra's story is one of an epiphanic renunciation of established scientific work and the glory of a new discovery that would reaffirm female hegemony. This physical departure means abandoning scientific, cultural and political ideals by taking on a new form of existence. Ironically,

⁴ In a retrospective sequence, the omniscient narrator recounts how biochemist Martha Askew became a cyborg: she was sent to the East on a mission to detect levels of radioactivity at a uranium deposit, but a mine explosion caused her to lose both legs. The episode illustrates the expansionist activity organised by the US government in foreign territories.

Wembra stays to live among the women who cooked her dog, committed violence against her robot R2Dta, and who only believe in Pachamama and "nature [and] not in that artificial promiscuity with machines and animals" (Curiel, 2023, p. 126), which the doctor advocated. However, Wembra renounces her postulates and sends her collaborator back to Maine with the briefcase containing the immuniser. She appears not to mind ceding the glory of invention to her assistant, who will surely succeed her in her position at the university and see her statue erected.

In her unprecedented self-discovery, Wembra comes to understand the new path that opens up for her upon the queen's death: to rule the territory of the Amazons, as instituted by the deceased. Thus begins a new primitive correspondence between the former academic Wembra Dunaway and tempting nature: "She never imagined the turn events would take, nor did she ever imagine that the Amazonian way of life would so profoundly transform her personality" (Curiel, 2023, p. 129). In this sense, Curiel imbues her transformed and reinvented character Dunaway with some of Haraway's thinking, since for the American professor, nature is like "a prankster programmer with whom we must learn to converse in order to highlight not only its agency, but also its indomitable and deceitful, elusive and seductive vocation" (Araiza, 2021, p. 428). It is no coincidence that part of the title of one of Haraway's books is *The Reinvention of Nature*.

Furthermore, in her new and surprising relationship with the world, Wembra slips into an unprecedented story, like a mirror reflecting Haraway's aestheticising idea about the need to fabulate and speculate in order to feel ourselves in the cosmos: "we experience the world through stories that we inhabit and that inhabit us" (Araiza, 2021, p. 432). With her plume of feathers on her head, Wembra overturns her past ideas and begins a kind of tentacularity or collective intellectual exercise that denotes, according to the academic Haraway, "the interconnection or relationality between beings, histories and thoughts" (Araiza, 2021, p. 432).

Other sarcastic remarks about the human condition and feminist utopia raised in Curiel's text are the perfidies and ambitions unleashed by the invention of the anti-macho vaccine, as if predatory late capitalism were extending its tentacles towards the multimillion-dollar profits that the commercialisation of the new drug will generate. In this context, it is striking how little protection Wembra, the new monarch, offers Martha to desert the jungle and return alone to the United States; she dismisses her at the estuary and watches her row away on the raft with her titanium limbs. It is as if Wembra inherited Aketzali's lack of interest in the fate of the vaccine and the male subject, and maliciously handed her collaborator over to the mercenary arms of Tarmac, who is waiting for her on

the other side of the river because he has planned, gun in hand, to force Martha to sell the remedy and its formula to the owner of a transnational pharmaceutical company in New York. But before Tarmac receives the briefcase from the cyborg, the transgender woman is eliminated by the robot accompanying the expedition, which Martha believed had been destroyed by the Amazons; although, to the academic's astonishment, the machine's vengeful action is not to save her from the ruffian, but to strip her of the loot, as she has agreed to sell the drug to a CIA agent. Not even a product of robotics is safe from the obfuscation and corruption of a dollar bank account.

Fromm suggests that "the psychological foundations of capitalism are clearly patriarchal" (De la Fuente, 1989, p. 37); in this vein, the future of the anti-macho vaccine is threatened by a new totalitarianism, since power and authoritarianism are indissoluble parts of capitalism. Thus, the feminist utopia projected in "The Way of Wembra" seems to be thwarted when its good intentions are betrayed by the desire for domination and accumulation of wealth linked to the technology industry and the US government. The robot embodies the raw excess of ambition of American multinationals and the most savage capitalism governed by pecuniary interests, where everything is a commodity, including the commodification of the formula and the mass vaccine to "deliver the coup de grâce" to machismo (Curiel, 2023, p. 89).

By way of conclusion

The management of information and communication technologies allows discourses and images to flow in real time and with vast coverage, a situation that was unthinkable decades ago. These socio-political phenomena build benign bridges between human relationships, but also favours—as Fromm ponders with regard to unstoppable scientific advances—the development of necrophilic feelings among virtual surfers: the "capacity to destroy" and "malignant narcissism," in addition to various pathological tones of violence generated by "a new barbarism" (1966, pp. 7-8).

These signs of contemporaneity outline an atmosphere of "the Middle Ages with the Internet" (Vilas, 2020): freedom confused in the tangle of digitised networks, freedom subjugated by obscurantism and abuses that burn those who overflow with political correctness with virtual torches. Added to this bleak picture is the habitual reproduction of fake news or *post-truths* by the media in order to distort and manipulate the spheres of the community or the exercise of state power. Fromm and Chomsky agree in their warnings: it is in the interests of authoritarian powers not to "liberate

subjects through knowledge, but to keep them bound, enslaved" (De la Fuente, 1989, p. 31) and distracted, so that they never notice their conditions of subjugation and deception.

Mexican narrator Adrián Curiel Rivera, like other Hispanic creators, has been concerned with highlighting the problems and violence of the *online* space that inevitably affect factual existence: pathological egotism, sectarianism, virtual lynchings, extreme feminism, repression and tyranny engendered by cyber technology, fashion trends and the authoritarianism of government administrations. The four works of fiction analysed in this article examine these decadences and conflicts born of the interconnections between human subjects, both female and male.

In "Amores veganos" and "De la justicia nada poética de los linchamientos (el caso de Zacarías Justo)" Curiel Rivera examines the complexities of everyday life today and focuses on a couple of members of society who use electronic devices and virtual platforms to exercise control and domesticate others, to cultivate egocentric hyper-individualism or, in the case of the second story, to repair wounded narcissism through vengeful destructiveness and intense suffering directed at the offender of the protagonist's idiosyncrasy.

Another tactic Curiel uses to narrate excesses and abuses forged in the present era is the fabrication of dystopian stories; for this reason, he sets his characters and constructs his stories—with caustic and hopeless overtones—in the future. Such is the case in 'Operación limpieza profunda' (Operation Deep Clean) and 'El camino de Wembra' (The Road to Wembra), stories set in southeastern Mexico, a region where natural resources still exist that are pivotal to the stories: oil and logwood. These settings are home to highly technified human societies that appear harmonious, secure and perfect until their narratives mutate into dystopias when the opacity and ambitions of political and economic power end up engulfing the ideals or trampling on the values of the citizens represented.

The devastated seas and jungles, the antigen that suspends the ravages of old age, the circus and its gladiators, the laser executions ordered by the authorities as a lesson to those who violate inclusive language, the dissemination of misleading news, the vaccine that cures machismo in the hands of the CIA, the spread of narcissism and the necrophilic spirit are, in short, pieces of an apocalyptic world narrated by Curiel in his texts, a world that agrees with that envisioned by Morin and Fromm when, in their essays, they denounce that technical "progress" has unleashed nuclear and ecological death (Morin, 2010, p. 84), that the "world of life" has become a "world of death", a

"pestilent and poisoned place", a planet where the entire ecosystem has been corrupted, including human beings themselves (Fromm, 1975, p. 348).

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