



Introduction

How is other-than-human nature represented from a cultural perspective? Understanding the environment to understand our world and the world of everyone

Margarita Carretero González
José Marchena Domínguez

In the world today, it is frequently claimed that global problems need global answers. Paul Geddes' famous phrase "Think globally, act locally" has now become a kind of mantra for socio-ecological activism because it reflects an awareness of the current planetary crisis though without causing people to fall prey to the frustration and despair that would invade them if they were fully conscious of the magnitude of the crisis and their inability to deal with it. Even though the world can be changed if each person acts locally in his/her immediate sphere, such responses must also be global, and in the academic sphere, they should be interdisciplinary.

The current environmental, economic, and social crisis demands such answers. This is evident to anyone who pauses to think and to acknowledge that at this point, scientific and technological advances are hardly sufficient to mitigate the impact of our predatory attitude towards the planet where we live. It will be even more difficult to undo these negative effects if we do not question and re-think our place on Earth. Even though the great Chain of Being placed humanity between angels and animals, and Renaissance Humanism situated human beings at the center of the universe, it is now necessary to dethrone mankind from this imaginary pedestal and take a closer look at human nature and other-than-human nature through a more biocentric lens.

Environmental Humanities initially arose from the Humanist conviction that academic disciplines are not watertight compartments. This means that ecology needs anthropology, philosophy, history, and literature (and vice versa) to be able to effectively reconceptualize the position of our species on Earth. More than 20 years ago, Daniel Worster stated that the people were facing a global crisis not because of the way that ecosystems function but rather because of how our

ethical systems function. He claimed that overcoming the crisis was a question of understanding our impact on Nature, but it also meant understanding those ethical systems and using that to reform them. Although he maintained that historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists, and philosophers, could not achieve this reform, they still could play a decisive role by helping to understand it (Woster, 1993, p. 27).

These are not favorable times for Humanities in Spain. The recent educational reform has significantly reduced the presence of Philosophy and World Literature in the classroom. Nevertheless, the government has begun to realize that Humanities can lead to a development of ecological awareness, and that they ultimately bring about a social transformation. This was evident in 2016 when the Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness funded the research project *Environmental humanities: strategies for ecological empathy and the transitions towards sustainable societies*, whose objective was to reflect on the synergies between visual arts, literature, and ethics in relation to the development of ecological awareness (Ecohumanities).

The diversity of our environment marks the basic profile of this study, whose interdisciplinary nature demonstrates the variety of analyses that characterize the hypotheses in academic and scientific forums. In addition, it also addresses the plurality of Nature and the environment from the perspective of the interrelations between its protagonists: human beings and other-than-human beings. From this starting point and with the leitmotif of the cultural representation of other-than human nature, this book addresses this research focus from an ecocritical, philosophical, and sociological viewpoint.

This three-pronged proposal is structured in a kaleidoscope of forms and variants, which in turn create substructures with a view to linking and intertwining literature, moral reflection, philosophy, anthropology, sociology, zoohistory, and cultural history. For this reason and also to foment dialogue and cross-fertilization, the chapters are organized thematically rather than by discipline. For this purpose, we integrated cultural, spatial, and chronological variants, whether individual or collective, as well as supporting data, sources, and witnesses upon which these studies are based. All of them point to a single natural and environmental context, which makes our world, everyone's world, so interesting and unique. This is a study from a cultural perspective, which according to García Huerta (this volume), permits us to adapt concepts extracted from objects and animals over the course of evolution.

Nonetheless, we cannot escape the fact that in this world, the questions that have become increasingly relevant are those pertaining to our role as human beings in a highly modern and denaturalized society, whose environment and biodiversity is at serious risk of deterioration. Even though in recent years, these

topics have been actively discussed in opinion and study forums, their genesis goes back to the beginning of time. In fact, they can be found in all contexts, in the same way as they have been used as tools by those that have experienced fascination, curiosity, respect, guardianship, responsibility, and respect for the environment and its inhabitants (see Wall 1993; Cahn, O'Brien 1996).

In the terrain of cultural and literary studies, ecocriticism appears at the end of the 20th century as a way to bring literature and culture nearer to more realistic and less nostalgic approaches, whose objective is to analyze cultural and literary representations of Nature and to study the relation between human beings and other-than-human beings from the perspective of language as well as to raise concerns and suggest models of analysis. As a rapprochement to literary texts, ecocriticism is interdisciplinary since its sociological and philosophical foundations make it compatible with other disciplines such as environmental ethics, ecology, and moral philosophy, which will be discussed in what follows.

It was William Rueckert who first coined the term *ecocriticism* in 1978. However, Raymond William's seminal work, *The Country and the City*, can be considered to be the earliest example of ecological criticism. As a school of literary studies, ecocriticism arose in the American West, initially as a set of isolated initiatives of researchers and ecologists. Such initiatives subsequently led to the Association of Literature and Environment (ASLE), which quickly expanded throughout America and the United Kingdom.

Despite its youth, the history of ecocriticism has been intense, as reflected in the proliferation of publications as well as in the number of conferences held throughout the USA, Europe and Asia. It has also generated a wide range of international associations such as the ASLE with branches in Ireland, the United Kingdom, Japan, India, and Taiwan. Other associations include the European Association for the Study of Culture and the Environment (EASCLE), and the *Asociación Interdisciplinar Iberoamericana de Literatura y Ecocrítica* (AILE) (Flys, Marrero and Barella, 2010, pp. 15-22). In fact, since 2004, EASCLE has celebrated various biennial international conferences, two in Spain (Álcala de Henares in 2008 and Tenerife in 2011). The most recent of these was held in Brussels in 2016, and was organized in cooperation with the Benelux Association for the Study of Art, Culture and the Environment (BASCE).

The AILE has organized various annual conferences on Literature and Ecocriticism. The three held in Valladolid were titled *The connection between humans and animals* (2014), *Old and new magic: magic realism and other challenges* (2015), *Cosmopolitanism and cosmopolis. The global city as a laboratory of ideas* (2016), and *Of animals and men: boundaries between humans and animals*. The *Grupo de Investigación en Ecocrítica* (GIECO) has pioneered ecocriticism studies in Spain. Despite the fact that its headquarters are in the Benjamin Franklin

Institute of North American Studies at the University of Alcalá de Henares, its researchers come from ten universities in Spain, one university in the United Kingdom and another in the USA. In 2010, it created the journal *Ecozon@: Revista Europea de Literatura, Cultura y Medioambiente*, which publishes articles in Spanish, English, French, German, and Italian. Though mainly within the context of English, French, and Spanish, the papers focus on ecocritical theory, the perception of Nature and its representation in the arts, ecofeminism, otherness in the natural environment, fantasy literature, children's literature, folk literature, as well as environmental awareness and justice.

Current members of the association include Carmen Flys Junquera, Julia Barella Vigal, Juan Ignacio Oliva Cruz, Montserrat López Mújica, José Manuel Pedrosa Bartolomé, Irene Sanz Alonso, Margarita Carretero González, Terry Gifford, Lorraine Kerslake, José Manuel Marrero Henríquez, Imelda Martín Junquera, Diana Villanueva Romero, Esther Laso y León, María Carmen Valero Garcés, Teófilo Sanz Hernández, Purificación Bibiana Pérez Ruiz, María Antonia Mezquita Fernández, Patrick Murphy, and María Isabel Pérez Ramos.

As previously mentioned, studies on Moral Philosophy and Bioethics are directly related to the research on ecocriticism. According to Ralph R. Acampoara, interest in ecocriticism began in the second half of the 20th century as evidenced in publications characterized by ethical reflections on anti-cruelty, animal rights, and the liberation of other-than-human animals. This work was based on biocentric principles, such as those of Albert Schweitzer, well known for his compassion for all creatures, or John Rawls' concept of *moral community* in which humans and other-than-humans are obliged to understand each other (Acampoara, 2007, pp. 139-142; Tafalla, 2003, pp. 21-23).

The 1970s witnessed the publication of *Animals, Men, and Morals; An Enquiry into the Maltreatment of Non-Humans*, edited by Stanley and Rosalind Godlovitch and John Harris, which raises the issue of speciesism (Wolf, 2014, pp. 15-19; Dorado, 2010, p. 49), and Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* (1975). After *The Case of Animals Rights* (1983) by Tom Regan, the legal scenario and moral status of ecocriticism gained a clearer and more definitive shape. By revisiting and examining former utilitarian and contractual models, though with new profiles more suitable to present times, questions regarding animal rights and obligations, the ethics of bullfighting, animal slaughter and experimentation, and vegetarianism or veganism became increasingly frequent.

In Spain, a leading role in this area was taken by the *Centro de Estudios de Ética Animal* at the University Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona, the *Grupo para el Estudio de la Violencia hacia Humanos y Animales* (GEVHA) and the *Observatorio Justicia y Defensa Animal*, whose members are professionals in the field of law and communication. Worth mentioning is the "I Workshop on Animal Rights"

held in 2016 at the University of Oviedo. Along with philosophers such as Jesús Mosterín and Jorge Riechmann, members of these groups include animal rights activists such as Marta Tafalla, Montserrat Escartín, Joaquín Valdivieso, Carmen Velayos, Nuria Querol, Nuria Menéndez de Llano, Óscar Horta, Estela Díaz, José Tomás García, Francisco Lara, Olga Campos, and Lydia de Tienda, as well as the prestigious ecofeminist, Alicia Puleo.

The research line on the other-than-human environment is deeply rooted in social history, which in turn branches out into many other scientific areas or profiles, with evident English and French influences, such as the cultural history of animals, zoohistory, and animal studies. The scaffolding for this work comes from archaeology, literature, symbology, 'applied' history, and a new vision of science liberated from tradition.

As pointed out by Morgado García (2015, pp. 10-12), in the 1980s, the main motivation for this type of research came from outside of Spain, which served to highlight Spain's strengths and weaknesses in the field. Spain has largely focused on early medieval period, whereas modern and contemporary ages have received somewhat less attention. In all likelihood, the reason for this lies in the fact that in Spain, the typography and pictographic elements of classical literature, bestiaries, and medieval heraldry have been studied in greater depth.

It is relevant to mention the pioneering work of Lola Carmen Morales, professor of Medieval History at the UNED in Madrid, on animal symbology, primarily in relation to birds, horses, and other mammals. Important work has also been published by Rosario García Huerta and Francisco Ruiz Gómez, history professors at the University of Castilla la Mancha, more specifically, the volume, *Animales simbólicos en la historia: desde la Protohistoria hasta el Final de la Edad Media*, with papers from a colloquium organized at this university in 2010, and subsequently published in 2012. Contributions to this volume were made by specialists in History, Archeology, Linguistics, and Literature, namely, Lucía Soria, María Luisa Cerdeño, Agustín Muñoz-Alonso, Fernando Quesada, Carmen Quiral, Jorge Cuesta, Jesús Melero, Ángeles Muñoz, and Concepción Quintanilla.

However, there have been many important studies on Animal Symbology as well as on Art, Emblematic Symbology, and even Botany and Zoology. Authors include Xosé Ramón Mariño Ferro, José Julio García Arranz, Alicia Esther Ramadori, Lucía Orsanic, Fernando Baños, Ana Martínez Pereira, Consuelo Mata Parreño, Helena Bonet, Eva Collado, Mercedes Fuentes, Isabel Izquierdo, Pere Pau Ripollés, Carmen Tormo, Arturo Morales Muñiz, Juan Pimentel, José Manuel Fradejas Rueda, and the late Carlos Gómez Centurión.

Generally speaking, in the last twenty years, this line of research has become increasingly popular in Spain. This is confirmed not only by the results obtained

by researchers, associations, and projects, but also in the seminars and workshops organized by universities to foment knowledge exchange among specialists as well as the recruitment of young researchers, who wish to work in this area. For example in 2010, a colloquium titled *Los animales en la historia en la cultura* took place at the University of Cadiz, organized by the cultural association *Ubi Sunt?* (Morgado and Rodríguez Moreno, 2011). The University of Madrid also hosted another seminar, *Animals and Otherness in the Middle Ages*, organized by the Medieval Animal Data Network (MAD). Other venues for knowledge exchange on this topic include the International Conference, *Four-Footed Actors: Live Animal* (Valencia, 2012) and the *I Congreso Internacional sobre Animales Literarios* (Leon, 2015).

As an introduction to this volume, the papers on other-than-human research and analysis begin with the chapter authored by José Tomás García, whose work is both fruitful and thought-provoking. Deeply indebted to utilitarianism, contractualism, and ecofemipacianimalism, humans are in pursuit of an inclusive society, and thus are obliged to ask myriad questions in order to reconcile themselves with the living world. This harmonious society has no choice but to dispense with disparaging and limiting clichés (language) and become attuned to animals as well as cultures, natures, and religions. In other words, society should embrace an optimistic pedagogy that excludes dogmas and exclusionary ideologies of domination that opens the door to alternative worlds of multispeciesist, multicultural, and holistic values.

The second section of the book includes speciesist and kyriarchic studies on the representation of certain animal species, depending on whether they are tame or wild, which inspires attraction or repulsion, respectively. The work of Lucía Orsanic focuses on the dog, a domestic animal, typically linked to humans. From the perspective of zoology and iconography, she blends reality with imagination while identifying the omnipresence of animals in all facets of social, aesthetic, philosophical, and scientific culture. The medieval sources used are bestiaries, travel literature, and books on chivalry. The palpable influence of religious culture creates a social system of animals that are virtuous and animals that are bad or even demonic.

For this same reason, dogs, usually categorized as guardians, hunters, companions, hybrids or Christians, can even be repudiated by Christianity in the same way as the pig. The beginning of a harmonious nature, free of abuse, in the writings of Sidonie-Gabrielle Colette, causes Montserrat López Mújica to study the cat, another domestic animal. From admiration and even respect, Colette enhances the concept of the rational love of animals, and in the case of cats, a certain anthropomorphism that does not rob them of their unique signs of identity.

At the other end of the animal spectrum and with diametrically opposed views, two wild animal species are also focused on. More specifically, Francisco Javier Macías studies the literary representations of the wolf. Initially the wolf was viewed as a cunning predator in a Europe, ravished by plagues and wars. However, in a more contemporary context, linked to Nature, the wolf is portrayed in a more positive light, as occurs in the work of Kipling, and particularly in America writers such as Jack London.

Something similar occurs with the whale. Arturo Morgado studies the evolution of this monstrous animal in the classical and medieval world, linking it to the Christian vision that permeates the parable of Jonah. From the more anatomical vision reflected in travel literature, he switches to a more naturalistic image typical of the Enlightenment, though neither is imbued with an affective component. It was necessary to wait until the 19th century and Jules Verne's Captain Nemo to find the first praise of the whale's goodness and inoffensive nature.

The chapters in the third large section of the volume identify highly transversal elements in the organigram as well as human uses in relation to other-than-human nature., namely, cosmogony as organization, symbology as evaluation, and economy as application. Two studies specifically focus on cosmogony in Mesoamerica. Yolotl González examines this concept in the pre-Columbian period, whereas the proposal of Ana Verdú and Teresa Shiki is more modern and focuses on the Shuar-Jivaroan community. Both papers propose a model of human beings integrated into Nature through religion and worship, without barriers while accepting otherness within a system of equality.

The Mesoamerican cosmovision is pervaded by zoomorphic and anthropomorphic gods with a profusion of animals with their corresponding symbols: eagle-sky, jaguar-night, snake-power, and quetzal-beauty. However, the Shuar are not anthropocentric. They believe in animism in which plants, inanimate objects, and natural phenomena all have living souls. In practice, this produces societies that hunt and sacrifice living creatures, but at the same time, respect the environment, rituals, and need for food. Not only do they recognize the harmonious co-existence of humans and animals, but also the equality between sexes.

The research of Rosario García Huerta and José Julio García Arranz addresses animal symbology in prehistoric and modern times. The animal iconography visible in cave paintings confirms the human-animal connection and its prominence. Each animal gradually acquires a value in the human microcosmos. Death, irrevocably linked to life, relies on the spiritual presence of animals in tombs and burial sites. The same thing occurs with the shaman dressed in animal heads and skins, further evidence of this integration.

Their symbology stems from this interrelation, also reflected in birds connecting the earth to the sky, dogs associated with hunting, and cows signifying food

and life. This relation has different phases such as predation, domestication, and environmental protection. The virtues of these animals are used to create symbols that can guide humans, based on the laws of Nature, as proposed in zoological literature that recognizes creatures created by God as a symbol of His greatness and to decipher their meanings.

This opens the door to an aesthetic vision of Creation that generates useful models in the animal world (thanks to Philology and Emblematics), which from the 17th century onwards acquire political and religious overtones. In fact, it even results in treatises for young noblemen, describing the industriousness of bees, the discretion of the cobra, the watchfulness of the lion, the fairness of the eagle, and the strength of the hours.

This section ends with two papers by Francisco Ruiz Gómez and Lola Carmen Morales, who analyze the feeding habits of animals. In the context of medieval Spain, the first provides an overall vision of the topic and the second specifically focuses on poultry. From the perspective of food as a physiological necessity and given the fact that food involves a basic relation with the other-than-human environment, the starting point is a certain cultural-religious contextualization of bodily sacrifice and food, as represented in Christ's own sacrifice, to define three moments in the Medieval world: (i) Biblical vegetarianism; (ii) the abomination of the flesh; (iii) the reconquest, characterized on the one hand by the barbarian custom of gorging oneself and on the other, by gastronomic courtliness at banquets.

The consumption of meat as well as that of eating raw or cooked food were indicators of social differentiation. However, they were also evidence of agricultural scarcity or abundance. In regard to avian species, halfway between domestic and tamed animals, apart from gastronomic and zoological sources, they are also important in hunting and medicine (their consumption was recommended to prevent diseases). Whereas the rooster is regarded as the paradigm of watchfulness, the hen is known for its dietetic and curative properties. Other species that were consumed, somewhat less frequently, were ducks and doves, whereas the consumption of pheasants, turkeys and quails were a sign of social distinction.

The fourth section of the book includes two chapters that discuss another of the most characteristic uses of historical anthropocentrism in relation to other-than-human Nature. We are referring to speciesist integration in entertainment spectacles. First, Lydia de Tienda analyzes the cultural, economic, and moral debate on bullfighting, formulates a hypothesis regarding its popularity, and the difficulty in reconciling its supporters and detractors. She bases her arguments on the cultural and moral premises of Ortega and Gasset, who alludes to aesthetics, the cosmovision and energy of the bull, the human advantage and the preservation of the species. At the same time, bullfights represent life itself,

namely the suffering that comes with the struggle and the death that follows it. Finally, she identifies three emotions that humans feel towards the bull: (i) envy of its power; (ii) shame because they are irrelevant compared to the bull; and (iii) revenge when it is sacrificed.

In his chapter on entertainment spectacles, José Manuel Pedrosa describes the world of trained rats that performed in Spain in the middle of the 19th century in the circus troupe of Salvador Siciliani. The skill of these tiny animals is a presage of future circus spectacles with intercontinental species as well as of violence and abusive treatment. Human spectators attended those spectacles for entertainment, but this did not stop them from feeling contempt for the rats and mice, a species universally abhorred. In any case, this bridge between humans and animals is only mentioned humorously as a way of comparing the trained rodents to mediocre politicians.

The chapters in the fifth section of the book are classified by literary genre and their subsequent moral and typological analysis. In her paper on fables and fabled novels, Diana Villanueva Romero compares *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn and *Juicio a los Humanos* by José Antonio Jaúregui with a view to constructing a model of other-than-human vision. In both works of fiction, animals play a key role in saving the planet and its future. When animals are finally given a voice, humans have no choice but to acknowledge their superiority as occurs in the novels of Swift and Orwell. However, in this case, the animals assert their ecological wisdom, and in the face of human arrogance, take charge. The moral of the fable defines a transition from anthropocentrism to biocentrism and establishes a change of harmony.

José Marchena proposes the use of reading primers as a learning tool for children and as a way of instilling respect and protection for other-than-human Nature. Based on the analysis of *Los seres inferiores* by Alfonso Moreno Espinosa, his study focuses on the first animal protection societies, which were first created in Europe and America in the last three decades of the 19th century. The stories analyzed in this study are permeated by anthropomorphism, personification, and kyriarchic speciesism where domestic animals predominate over wild animals. The author maintains that religion and religious precepts convey the Fourierist and Krausist idea of God as a harmony-promoting force, where the concept of 'moral community' fits reasonably well.

Two chapters in this section focus on English literature in the second half of the 20th century. Terry Gifford demonstrates how from 1960 to 1990, there is a shift from the rural to the environmental. In the face of the Cold War and the threat of radioactivity and contamination, literature thus became less literary and more socially committed. In novelists from the English rural tradition, such as Keith, Morton, and Allsop, a new writing style became popular, more in tune

with Donna Haraway's "nature-culture". The mission of these authors was to demonstrate that human culture resides in Nature. This led to the proliferation of Nature guides, magazines, and theater plays, as well as a new genre known as "mountain literature". Gifford cites other important authors, such as Jacquetta Hakwes, Robert Macfarlane and the "new nature writing" group, Richard Mabey, and environmentalist poets, such as Ted Hughes.

Lorraine Kerslake centers her work on the creative journey of Ted Hughes, an environmental activist and a writer of animal fables influenced by Kipling. The narrator of his work seems to criticize God for allowing men to claim the anthropocentric right to rule the Earth. For this reason, he promotes the idea of Nature's superiority over the human world. Hughes' fables, evidently influenced by Darwinism, defend the interconnection of entities within their surroundings. They underline the need to move away from the divine world to discover another more creative world in harmony with more animistic and primitive cultures.

This section of the book closes with two chapters on fictional narratives. Serenella Iovino analyzes *La Iguana*, a novel by Anna Maria Ortese, an Italian author, who writes from an ecofeminist and animalistic perspective. In her study, Iovino discovers a work of fiction, whose purpose is to fight against the oppression that encapsulates women, other-than-human animals, and indigenous peoples, who oppose the dominant power structure. From the perspective of magical realism, Ortese creates a lens where the human can overlap with the other-than-human, which allows the integration of otherness in our ethical horizon. The actions of the creatures in her stories stem from a need for solidarity between living beings in the face of human blindness and with the desire that subjectivized otherness prevent suffering and pain in those who are most vulnerable. Accordingly, Ortese gives her characters a soul that is more literary than confessional. They also have the gift of ontological communication, where the Iguana is the paradigm of most of these ideas and values. The alien nature of Estrellita, the main character, is the moral hybrid that prevails over the untamed nature of the other in a world governed by likeness.

In the following chapter, Margarita Carretero González selects Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and its posthumanist discourse to study the tragic consequences for Victor Frankenstein, its main character and narrator, when he refuses to consider other-than-human nature in general and his creation, in particular, as an ethical subject. Influenced by Romanticism and Enlightened Rational Humanism, Shelly also shares an enthusiasm for technology although she perceives its risks and warns that it can lead to the same arrogance that led to the downfall of Prometheus, a myth also linked to romanticism. Although at first, Victor has an apparently noble (though extremely anthropocentric) objective, his vision is only initially posthumanist. Further on, it becomes evident that his vision is really

transhumanist because when the new being that he has created actually comes to life, Victor denies him the capacity of being an ethical subject and condemns him to a non-integrated otherness.

The sixth and last group of chapters in the book target other less frequently studied media, such as document use, music, and film. These are currently topics of interest in ecomedia studies because they are valuable sources of information and reflections on the cultural representations of other-than-human nature.

In the first chapter of the section, Marcos José Gálvez analyzes the struggle between Nature and humans, based on Iron Maiden's *Stranger in a Strange Land*. After a criticism of resilience as an instrument of capitalism, which affects the victims of social problems rather than the culprits, he analyzes a story about an expedition to Antarctica in the 20th century that discovers a body apparently dating from the beginning of the century. The song reconstructs the history of the frozen man's body, isolated from Nature, which tests its resilience because to survive, he needs tools that have become obsolete. The conclusion is that Nature is not readily available to humankind, which is converted into a spectral mass of life. The frozen corpse raises a series of questions for its discoverers and produces an ecological awakening, thanks to the aesthetic experience of the sublime.

In regard to cinema, Pedro López de la Osa analyzes *The Hateful Eight*, a western by Quentin Tarantino. After the middle of the 20th century, the integration of Nature as another agent has become an inherent characteristic in the film genres. From a postmodernist perspective, he discovers a Nature that is active and external in contrast to the predominance of interiors in the development of the plot. Even though spaghetti westerns and road movies initially gave landscapes a key role in films, he warns that Nature recedes into the background in the myth of the American west where the conquest of the nation also signified the control of land as well as of the Native American tribes living on the land. Though the film setting is the Wyoming Mountains, the main characters are trapped in a general store for most of the movie until the storm has abated. These are evidently times when the conquered land can turn against its conquerors.

In agreement with Donald Worster, Gala Aras, PhD in Environmental Humanities, insists on the role played by Humanities in our way of addressing the environmental crisis. Since many environmental problems are caused by human behavior, directly linked to their ideas and emotions, Humanities provides valuable insights and even solutions for these problems. More specifically, they provide an understanding of the complexity of the program and our contribution to the problem, after which it is possible to visualize more realistic and effective solutions (see "La hora de las humanidades ambientales", 2016).

Firmly convinced that humankind is part of a broader and infinitely more complex network, the authors of this volume aspire to become another link in

the ever-growing chain of studies on this crucial topic. It is necessary for more scholars to contribute proposals, and ideas that translate into research groups and projects, books, PhD theses, articles, papers, and chapters. Such initiatives will be another step forward toward the creation of a sustainable planet, which is fairer for all of the living beings who reside on it, and share this space with others as well as with Nature itself.