

## The “End” of the *Tierra Caliente*

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### Abstract

This article outlines an analysis of the imaginary of tropical American nature as built from the colonial gaze, as a starting point for understanding the control and appropriation of nature. This has legitimised, since the dawn of Modernity and up to present-day Latin America (and specifically Colombia and its territories), a discourse based on dispossession and racial violence, in the interests of the further growth of the global capitalist system.

### Keywords

Decolonialism; nature; capitalism; Colombia; greenhouse; modernity; control; Enlightenment; Anthropocene; armed conflict.

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*Imagine, my son, a man who never  
has seen a plum tree, small, incipient.  
A plum tree, that man would say, is a useless stem.  
That man does not know what a plum tree is,  
nor that it has a bone inside.  
The whirling dervish, Mevalana, says that if it didn't bear fruit,  
the tree would not be planted.  
When the man looks at the fruit, he understands the tree's reason for being,  
why it blooms, why it drinks up light, why it leans in the wind.  
Rather, the tree only grows because it has a tree made of dreams,  
the tree dreams of a cherry entering the winter.  
The future that carries is the cause of the past and not the other way around.*

Alfonso Cruz



Figure 1. "La nature dévore le progrès et le dépasse".

The open call for this edition of *Re-visiones*, i.e. *The Political Ecology of Images: Energy Cultures and Decolonial Ecologies*, features an image of a locomotive being "devoured" by plants that are gradually climbing up it, entangling themselves with each other. The locomotive tries to poke through, but its structure and figure are completely engulfed. However, it seems that nature and the machine become one.

To think of nature as something ravenous and savage, that consumes and destroys everything in its path, is undoubtedly a myth —it is nonsense. We must bear in mind that the control over nature, and the distinction between what is *natural* and what is *human*, has developed over the centuries in such a way that what we now call "natural" is a decidedly ambiguous concept.

In order to trace a route through the various mechanisms and visual regimes that have contributed to the creation and representation of American<sup>1</sup> nature, this essay will seek to adopt a *decolonial* gaze, creating an ongoing dialogue with what Boaventura de Sousa Santos calls "decolonising knowledge".

This form of confronting the imposition of the modern Western system must be based on decolonisation itself, as social and political emancipation. Sousa Santos proposes the "distancing from the Eurocentric critical tradition", which necessarily entails a thinking based on the epistemologies of the South. This distancing is proposed in order to rethink the "other" knowledges that have been marginalised and made invisible within the Western tradition, in geo-corporate-political terms (Romero, 2015). Furthermore, this distance, that Sousa Santos proposes, necessarily applies to my own place of enunciation, since I am a body marked and

subjectivised based on the situated thinking about the tropical South of the colonial hemisphere to which I belong, there on the “other side of the line” (Sousa Santos, 2010, p. 29), built and laid out to suit the modern West.

This dividing of the world into two halves, East and West, is in turn proposed as a way of building and assembling the world from a neutral point, so that a universalised vision can thus be created. As such, everything could be renamed and restarted, as an “absolute epistemological beginning” (Castro-Gomez, 2010, p.25) —this is what Santiago Castro-Gomez calls *zero-point hubris*.

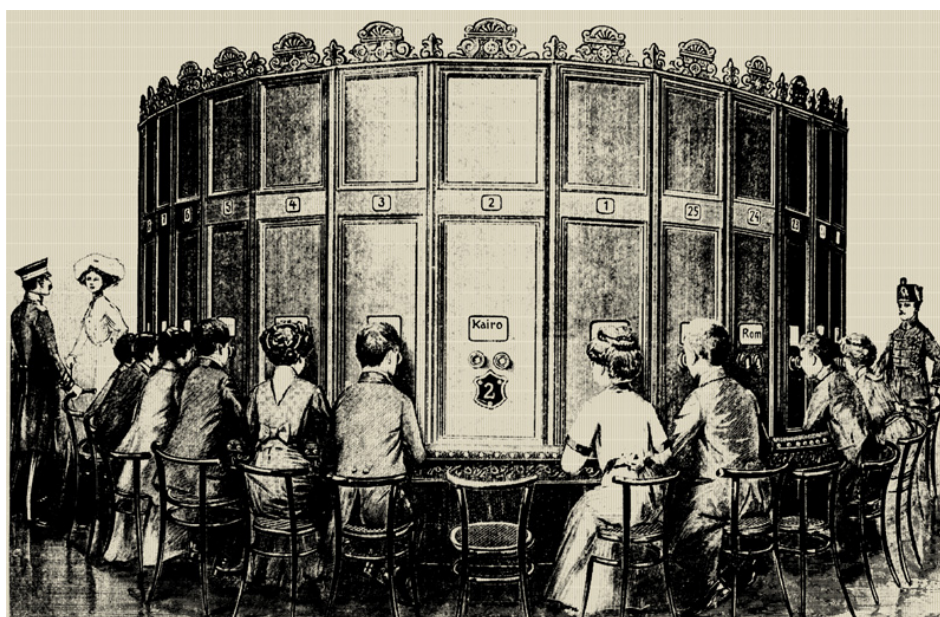


Figure 2. *Kaiserpanorama*, 1880.

This concept is extremely important in order to understand the exertion of colonial power. That is, *zero-point hubris* is represented as a universal point of observation: it determines which kinds of knowledge are either legitimate or illegitimate for the colonial project of modernity; it establishes a hierarchical order of the world and, as such, endorses the domination over those bodies and kinds of knowledge that inhabit supposedly “peripheral” geographical spaces. This emerged from the Enlightenment thinking of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, with its construction of the world-system, generating thus a geopolitical division and establishing Europe as the centre, and the rest of the world as the periphery. Castro-Gómez states that the scientific thinking of the Enlightenment paved the way, as a colonialist discourse, for the documenting of America as if it were an object of knowledge and study, thus legitimising the expansion of Europe into its colonies.

Abya Yala was not considered a “New World” —despite being named as such— since it was, on the contrary, an extension of the Old World. This encounter between Europe and America would not only propagate the idea

of finding an earthly paradise, but it would also change how the world was represented cosmographically at the time. The *orbis terrarum*, that great island in the middle of the ocean, made up of Africa, Asia and Europe, would vanish, and yet the Eurocentric view would still be reaffirmed. The world beyond the Pillars of Hercules, the so-called *plus ultra* —now with the unforeseen appearance of the American continent on the map— would not only change the organisation and construction of the globe, but would also strengthen the discourse of the modern world (Castro-Gómez, 2010). Europe had already been at man's disposal, following the expulsion from paradise —so what about this land that did not fit into the prevailing Western organisation of the world-system?

America would be built and imagined according to the specifications set out by the white European man, and, now that it was on the map, the foundations of modernity and global capitalism would be introduced there. The "New World", established as a place of novelty and emergence (Segato, 2015), directly implied coloniality —it was an apparatus of domination to quench the desire for the new, so that the European ideals of modernity and capital could be founded there.

The decolonisation of America already took place once in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, with the colonies' independence processes, and their consolidation as nascent republics. However, this decolonisation was not completed in its entirety, since it sought only juridical-political independence from Europe, leaving intact the epistemic, racial and gender hierarchies that had been established during Modernity (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007). Decoloniality must therefore be approached as a second decolonisation, or a *decolonial turn* (Castro-Gómez and Grosfoguel, 2007), and not as a repeat of what has already happened. It needs to be regarded as a turning point and a re-reading of those past events, so that the present can thus be reconfigured (Segato, 2015).

For Anibal Quijano, the "Coloniality of Power" is a structure of domination in which the social classification and hierarchy of the world's population is the foundation upon which the bases of Eurocentrism are sustained, as "a mental construction that expresses the basic experience of colonial domination" (Quijano, 2014, p.777). This is the foundation of the colonialism that would be imposed from the 16<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and that would reach its peak in the naturalist and human sciences discourse during the period of the Enlightenment, in which ethnic categories would become the cultural matrix of the world-system (Segato, 2015), as a colonial invention for exploitation. Race is established as a scientific discourse or truth by the discoverer (Zavala, 1992), in which the *other* is regarded as inferior, and is dehumanised (Romero, 2015). With all the eagerness to

create and invent America, one of the pillars of colonialism was established: that of "race".

Race and gender constitute a discursive model, fundamental for establishing a social and geographical order based on colonial difference. The physical and moral characteristics of people were closely linked to the geographical and environmental space in which they lived. David Arnold claims that *otherness*, proposed by Edward Said as a discourse of "the other", based on 15<sup>th</sup>-century European thinking, has legitimised the ontological division of the world into peripheries and centres —the East where the sun rises, and the West where it sets. This sets up the imaginary that distinguishes between hot and more temperate lands, and it creates a direct relationship between nature and culture: the climate is posited as the main cause of civilising thought and development, by linking it to the influence it has on inhabitants.

There were two initial ways, as proposed by Belén Romero, that helped instigate the *zero-point* gaze for the representation and stereotyping of American nature (or, in this case, its tropical nature). The first was the story, i.e. the travel chronicles of European missionaries, explorers and conquerors. The second was via cartography or engraving, in which depicting landscapes was encouraged. This latter point would be crucial for unifying this gaze and control over the colonised, peripheral territories.

Therefore, the region of the *tropics* was created and established as a geopolitical space, defined from the colonial/modern conception of *otherness*. The tropics, besides being a physical place —that is, a geographical category, represented as the strip between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn— must also be considered as a conceptual space (Arnold, 2000).

It could be said that there is a *tropicality*<sup>2</sup> of the tropics, an envisioned representation of a hot place, of an exotic nature, with greener-than-green plant life, a "nest of reptiles and fevers" (Silva, 2015, p.73): the creation of a space based on colonial otherness, as a device, shorthand for what is different, what is alien, what is not considered Europe.

The tropics, referred to as the "hot land" (the *tierra caliente*), "burning land", "green hell", "El Dorado", "fertile land", "*terra firma*" and "virgin land", in the various European chronicles, was a place imagined as somewhere pure, a land where all kinds of natural riches grew and where the gaze was lost among all the overwhelming green.

In some of the first chronicles of the Spanish colonisation, America was compared to Paradise and the Garden of Eden, since the nature they

described reflected an Edenic nature that had not yet been tainted by human hands and was therefore ripe for exploration. A virgin nature, ready to be penetrated (Romero, 2015).

The concept and definition of *tropical nature* was consolidated during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Nancy Leys Stepan (2001), this came about through the natural history discourse, in terms of its approach to collecting and classifying species according to their geographical origin. As such, the *Systema Naturæ* model was imposed, a taxonomic system for the classification and cataloguing of plants proposed by Swedish naturalist Carlos Linneo, who wanted to create a universal language of nature. Therefore, any plant could be recorded, anywhere in the world, by using this particular system —meaning that other kinds of life, i.e. other types of knowledge and languages, were essentially nullified, since they were no longer legitimate.



Figure 3. *Mimosa* sp.

The names of the “discovered” plants had to be in Latin, a language linked with the cultured elites of the time, and could therefore only be read by a privileged sector (Nierto Olarte, 2019). This distancing (Castro-Gómez, 2010), non-negotiable as it was, would create a universalisation of metalanguage and knowledge. Controlling nature includes the naming of it, and, as a result, possessing it. The power of controlling and dominating nature meant it was transformed into an object of study, integrating it into

a new “field of visibility” (Foucault, 1968, p. 133), formed by a network of fictions and inventions as a truth (Zavala, 1992), and thus excluding all other languages that were not part of that structure of what was deemed to be rigorous science.

One of the representational mechanisms that allowed for the appropriation of nature was botanical drawing. These images were produced throughout the various botanical expeditions to the American colonies during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, establishing a single, unified view on the concept of nature, turning it into an object of study.

The prints and illustrations produced during this period “acted as visualisation projects” (Bleichmar, 2016, p.13) which, despite the distance, allowed nature to be mobile, so that one could get to know the “New World” via the measured observations of naturalists. These naturalists, such as Alexander Von Humboldt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, contributed to the creation of tropical nature based on the globalised and universal gaze.

The imaginary of tropical nature would be relocated to these artificial spaces. Nature exhibited itself as an object of study that —much like the *wunderkammer*, or cabinet of curiosities— permitted a neutral observation point: the *deus absconditus*, the “hidden God”. The exhibition and constructed space, that the observer is faced with, created a representation of the present sorted into epistemic categories and catalogue objects. This applied to the geographical origins of the plants, which were brought over from the various colonies.

Despite managing to glimpse this exotic American nature, in botanical illustrations, the expedition members faced the impossible task of preserving the natural. The vast distance and the climate conditions would hinder the transporting of the species collected from the colonies, as proof of that productive and useful other world of the colonies in America. This is why glass greenhouses were invented and built, as well as botanical gardens —they were devices to reproduce the natural world. *Wardian cases* were created in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. small glass containers or terrariums based on the glass greenhouse model, so that plants could be transported in their “natural” state.

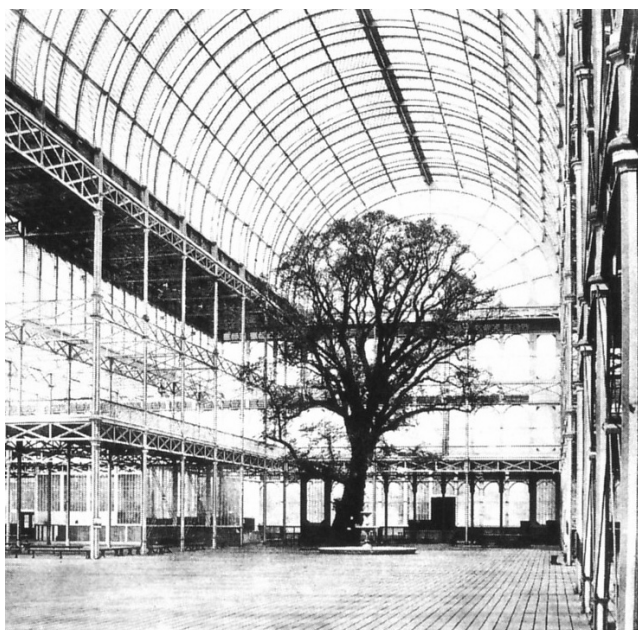


Figure 4. A tree enclosed inside the Crystal Palace.

The construction of the Crystal Palace, in 1851, in London's Hyde Park, to house the first Great Exhibition, would mark the arrival of modernity and progress, and the origin of buildings and structures made of glass and iron (Benjamin, 2004). In its interior, all the objects were exhibited on the same level of perception, and, in turn, great importance was given to the construction of gardens with exotic plants, brought over from the various European colonies, to be put on display. Under the central dome there was an elm tree that had not been cut down, which had already been standing in Hyde Park before the construction of the central pavilion. Paxton, its architect, had created an Edenic and dreamlike garden, a garden that fulfilled its true function: to delimit and enclose.

The glass greenhouse would recreate the idea of the *wilderness*,<sup>3</sup> an untouchable and paradisiacal nature, free from human intervention, a natural space that references the Edenic place to which white, Western man wants to return. Nature was turned into the raw material of a capitalist system that has been gradually forged ever since, and which still poses great problems when it comes to thinking of a sustainable and co-inhabitable ecology. The practices established during the period of modernity still underlie how we understand the natural world, legitimising the hegemonic discourse and differentiating the human from the natural, as validated by the representation of the "nature/other" (Romero, 2015).

But returning to the Garden of Eden as the world's bright hope for humans, a place free from sin, where "Western Man may begin again the first journey" (Haraway, 1984, p.20) entails a greater concern: the world is only considered as such when the white man turns up. This suggests that the



world is made for man and with man, representing himself outside of nature, since he considers it part of the past. The Crystal Palace, as an apparatus for exhibition, reflected a kind of nature acclimatised with living “arche-fossils” (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, p.135), understood and represented based on the difference between the human and the non-human.



Figure 5. Tropical Plants in the Crystal Palace.

The acclimatisation of plants, as well as the uprooting and shipment to which they were subjected, would not only allow them to be preserved, but it also propagated the idea that white men, under “appropriate conditions”, could indeed inhabit those areas that had otherwise seemed so rough and savage (Sutter, 2014). This requires the expansion and adaptation of the biosphere, producing specific environmental changes so that the “conditions” demanded by white men can be created without intermediaries. Furthermore, they can thus be implemented under the excuse of the discourse for development and civilisation, fostering the idea that nature can be quantified and mathematised. As such, this positions man himself — let's keep talking in the masculine— as the only living being capable of bringing about geological change in the territory, and he thus brings about, via this kind of thinking, the current narrative in which we find ourselves, i.e. the Anthropocene.

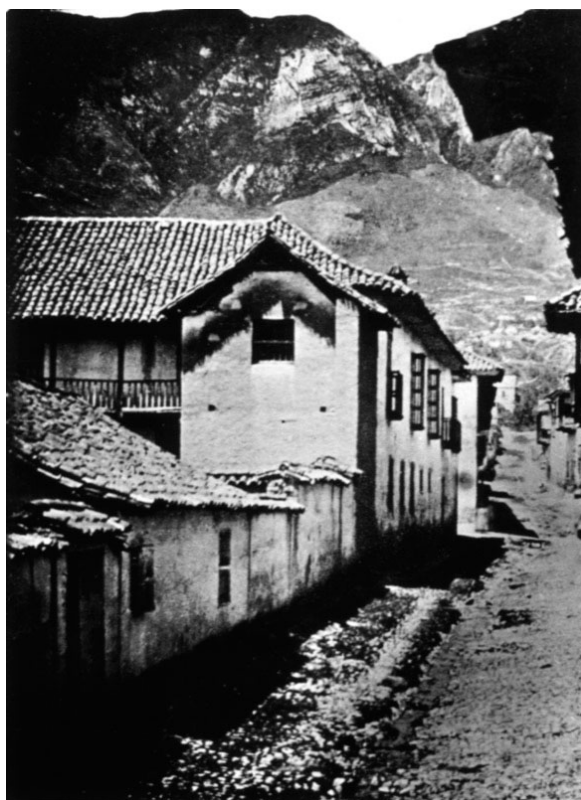


Figure 6. Calle Observatorio. Bogotá, 1842.

This idea of the destruction and appropriation of territory, under the logic of the domination of nature, is reflected in the first daguerreotype taken in 1842 in Bogotá, Colombia. The picture shows houses and mountains with very little vegetation. Deforestation, in some areas of the hills of Bogotá, was the result of the colonial-era exploitation of the mountains surrounding the city, since everything that came from the mountains served as a resource, under capitalist logic. Furthermore, all those elements that were once sacred or part of the belief system and rituals of central Colombia's indigenous populations, such as the Muisca people, were eradicated and dismissed as "pagan" —this included water, trees and the mountains.

In order to carry out the project of civilisation that the city would undergo as a Spanish colony, everything that had symbolic or sacred value for the indigenous communities had to be eradicated, such as the native trees of the Andean forest where the Muisca and Chibcha communities lived, in Bacatá, now known as Bogotá. This was achieved by subjecting the many subjectivities to an epistemological change, controlling the imaginary about the social world of the "subaltern", as well as the identities of the colonised and the coloniser (Castro-Gómez, 2005, p.20).

In the year 1520, the Spanish conqueror, explorer and chronicler Juan de Castellanos ordered the destruction of the forests surrounding Bogotá, causing many of the native trees of the area to be felled. With this, foreign

species were introduced into the ecosystem, such as willows in 1540, by decree of Charles I of Spain.

In the indigenous cosmogony of the Muisca people, nature was seen as sacred. The world, as well as the origin of the human, comes and rises from the sacred land. For the Muisca community, in particular, life emerged from water, with which the world was formed —lagoons, for example, were places of worship, sanctuaries, politicised spaces and shelters. History is built together with nature, so the mountain is human, the river is human, the tree is human and the animals are human too, living together from multiple subjectivities. By considering everything that surrounds us as human, the Anthropocene is rejected, since it rejects the idea of the human species as some kind of special event that has come to give meaning to the universe and transform it (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, 2019, p.135).

This destruction of the world, as suffered by the indigenous Amerindian communities, was the end of the world for them, yet it marked the beginning of the modern world for Europe. “Without the plundering of the Americas, there would be no capitalism, nor would there have been, later, the industrial revolution; therefore, perhaps, there would not be the Anthropocene either” (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, 2019, p.194).

This destruction of territory, to which I referred in the previous case, and the epistemic violence exerted against the diverse subjectivities of indigenous peoples, have not completely disappeared —this situation is ongoing with regards to the supposedly Edenic nature in America, and I will focus here on the specific case of Colombia. The objectified view of nature —from the *zero point*— as fostered since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, can be complemented with what Juan Camilo Cajigas-Rotundo (2007) has termed the “biocoloniality of power”,<sup>4</sup> set out with the dawn of globalised capitalism and the current production of nature as a resource. Given the current economic growth and the new economic models in post-industrial society, the Edenic nature has persisted. However, it has now turned into the discourse of sustainable development, to help large foreign multinationals achieve the capitalisation of the territory, a turn which has brought grave consequences to the country, in the midst of an armed conflict that has dragged on for over 50 years.

The current situation in Colombia is critical: since the signing, in 2016, of the Peace Agreement between the Colombian government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (the FARC), 971 leaders and human rights defenders have been killed, according to the Indepaz report,<sup>5</sup> and 64 land and environmental activists were killed in 2019, the highest number of murders against environmental activists ever recorded, anywhere in the world, by the Global Witness report.<sup>6</sup>

One of the main causes of this increase in killings since the implementation of the Peace Agreement has been the presence of paramilitary groups in the areas formerly inhabited by the FARC guerrillas,<sup>7</sup> areas where a large number of *campesino* and indigenous communities live, i.e. those which have been the most affected by this whole situation. In turn, the national government's breaching of the agreements, and the multiple attempts to "shatter the peace agreement",<sup>8</sup> have put those who were calling for restorative peace in a vulnerable position, making them the object of persecution. But, above all, these systematic murders of social leaders occur and have occurred in Colombia for many years, because these leaders are, above all, political agents who have offered resistance in order to defend life.



Imagen 7. Demonstration against the assassinations of social leaders, Bogotá, July 2018.

In terms of the whole continent, Colombia is the country with the highest number of murders due to the defence of human rights, where people are killed for defending land and its restitution, as well as bodies of water and moors, and for fighting against illegal mining and deforestation.

A few days ago, the Colombian government signed the renewal of the "Plan Colombia", now called "Colombia Crece" (i.e. "Colombia Grows") by the Duque-Trump alliance. Plan Colombia has used the U.S. discourse of the war on drugs, drug trafficking and illegal coca fields. This plan, which over

15 years has spent 93.3% of its budget on the war, and 6.6% on social investment, has been shown to be an extractivist plan that benefits from and uses the discourse of peace-building as an excuse. It merely reproduces the state's paramilitary apparatus in order to displace, murder and abuse indigenous and *campesino* communities in their territories, because they are seen as a hindrance for the wider project of the appropriation of land, which is earmarked for the planting of monocultures (used for cultivating the coca plant). Their natural resources are also coveted by the multinationals, so they can access the genetic resources present there (Cajigas-Rotundo, 2007, p. 181). "Colombia is the world's fifth largest coal exporter and has important oil, gas and palm oil producing sectors",<sup>9</sup> according to the Global Witness report.

With this type of alliance, the Colombian state continues to legitimise the discourse of development and extractivism in Latin America, allowing intervention and capitalisation into its territories. Furthermore, it undoubtedly undermines the efforts to once again prioritise life in Colombia. The state contributes to the same discourse of displacement that, since the beginning of modernity and until the 18th century, as we have seen throughout this article in terms of the strengthening of the global capitalist system and the development discourse, has perpetuated violence and "the conquest of territories and people for their ecological and cultural transformation based on a logocentric perspective" (Escobar, 2010, p. 77).

Perhaps we should now ask ourselves how we can prioritise life again, and whether the actions and transformations proposed to address the ravages of climate change are diverse enough. It is worth noting that in the Latin American context the concept of Anthropocene has been the source of much debate, since it is considered that this concept is framed in a global way, ignoring the great many local, social, environmental and economic issues that Latin America is going through and that "[require] global responses, which demands global-local actions and interventions" (Ulloa, 2017, p.60). As we have seen in the case of Colombia, the environmental damage is located in the midst of an armed conflict, forced displacement and dispossession, the capitalisation of territory, neo-colonialism and extractive industries. The changes that need to be made, therefore, must entail the least anthropocentric gaze possible, looking in from the peripheries, to include the other ways of life and ontologies that have been marginalised.

The Anthropocene appears to be the end of an era, but in turn it implies that the human being is the greatest catastrophe of all. We forgot that the greatest threat of all was ourselves, hidden under the iron and glass shelter of capitalism, which so suddenly and quickly collapses before our eyes, allowing us to see the devastating present left behind by the construction of modernity that we thought would last forever. The beginning is the end,

and like a snake that bites its own tail, the future is in a constant spin in terms of what is yet to happen, but what is inevitable in the near future.

*The Crystal Palace burned down in one day.*



Figure 8. Fire at the Crystal Palace, 1936.

As such, the solid ground, which was to be our garden, was gradually created, and it became decent enough to house life on a larger scale. Man then arrived to continue the work of nature. Escaping alive from the interior, happy to have saved his skin, he built a shelter with reeds, then a wooden hut and finally a baked-clay brick hut. (Eden, 2019, p. 20).

## Images

Figure 1. Anonymous photograph, reproduced as an illustration for the article by Benjamin Péret: "La nature dévore le progrès et le dépasse", *Minotaure*, No. 10, Winter 1937, p. 20. Source: *Constellations* by Susan Buck-Morss and *Re-visiones*.

Figure 2. *Kaiserpanorama*, 1880. Public domain image.

Figure 3. *Mimosa sp.* Project of digitalisation of the drawings of the Royal Botanical Expedition of the New Kingdom of Granada (1783-1816), directed by José Celestino Mutis: [www.rjb.csic.es/icones/mutis](http://www.rjb.csic.es/icones/mutis). Real Jardín Botánico - CSIC.

Figure 4. A tree enclosed inside the Crystal Palace, unknown author. Image public domain.

Figure 5. Delamotte, P. (1852-1860) Interior of Crystal Palace, Sydenham [photo]. From: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/>

Figure 6. Lous Gros, J.B (1842). *Calle Observatorio. Bogotá, 1842*, [daguerreotype], from: *Historia de la Fotografía en Colombia*, Eduardo Serrano. Museo de Arte Moderno, Bogotá, undated. <https://www.villegaseditores.com/historia-de-la-fotografia-en-colombia-aribo-y-primeros-experimentos>

Figure 7. Demonstration against the assassination of social leaders, Bogotá July 2018. Personal file.

Figure 8. Fire in the Crystal Palace, 1936. Author and source unknown. From: <http://intranet.pogmacva.com/>

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Throughout this article I shall use "America" to denote the geopolitical space, referring to the continent as a whole.

<sup>2</sup> This term was introduced and studied by David Arnold, referring to how the representation and the imaginary of the tropics has been built upon a discourse implemented from the West: "Tropicality was the experience of the northern white people entering an alien world - alien in terms of climate, vegetation, people and diseases" (Arnold, 2000, p.130).

<sup>3</sup> The concept of wilderness contributed to the creation of the imaginary of the tropics. "The myth of the Edenic world today persists in the idea of wilderness, those spaces —which are ever reducing in number— of a pure nature, not corrupted by human presence, *horti conclusi* that attest to a past that would have survived "untouched" from primitive times to the present, but that today would be at risk of disappearing due to the blindly predatory action of Western civilisation". (Danowski and Viveiros de Castro, 2019, p.58).

<sup>4</sup> This notion is established as the basis for the argument of Anibal Quijano's *Coloniality of Power* concept.

<sup>5</sup> For the complete Indepaz report, see:

<http://www.indepaz.org.co/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Informe-Especial-Asesinato-lideres-sociales-Nov2016-Jul2020-Indepaz.pdf>

For the complete list of murders, see:

<http://www.indepaz.org.co/lideres/>

<sup>6</sup> For the Global Witness report, see: <https://www.globalwitness.org/es/defending-tomorrow-es/>

<sup>7</sup> In the mid-20th century, the first guerrilla groups in Colombia were beginning to take shape as *campesino* guerrilla groups. They were faced with an absent State, in the rural areas of the country, and after several violations of the agrarian reforms deployed by the United States towards Latin America, under the excuse of the continent's development, the *campesinos* demanded active political participation, and they formed unions. To date, 211 former Farc-Ep combatants have been killed, since the signing of the Agreement.

<sup>8</sup> This phrase, from former defence minister Fernando Londoño of the right-wing Centro Democrático party, from 2017, is echoed today, as we witness an increase in deaths in Colombia. Centro Democrático has complicated and hindered the peace process in Colombia.

To listen to Londoño's striking words, see:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIRJK2d84-8>

<sup>9</sup> On this subject, Arturo Escobar writes the following about the case of the Colombian Pacific zone and the extraction of palm: "In recent years, researchers have interpreted the history of the Pacific as referring to a persistent extractive economic model inaugurated by the expansion of the gold mining frontier since the 17<sup>th</sup> century. From this perspective, the region's social and natural landscapes have mostly been shaped by production systems that depend on the exploitation of natural resources and work, so that the benefits of economic activity do not remain in the region" (Escobar, 2010, p. 92).