

TEARS IN RAIN BY ROSA MONTERO: AN ECOGOTHIC HARDBOILED TRIBUTE TO PHILIP K. DICK'S DO ANDROIDS DREAM OF ELECTRIC SHEEP?

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ABSTRACT

Tears in Rain is set in Madrid in 2109, a large city in a heavily polluted dystopic world which has seen several wars, alien contacts, genetic engineering, teletransportation, pollution and dramatic climate changes due to ecophobia and a limitless appetite for resource exploitation. It is a world in which the management, privatization and monopolization of vital resources by large multinationals have caused scarcity; exacerbating the environmental injustice towards those who contribute least to it. Mixing the SF with the Postmodern EcoGothic and the hard-boiled model, this fictional society is immersed in a civilizational crisis that affects our own conception as subjects. This situation of environmental injustice translates into social tensions and the marginalization of those humans, replicants and aliens who are forced to live in the most degraded areas. These underprivileged marginalized beings serve to renegotiate human identity, but also to ignite fanatical fundamentalisms that define their identity in aggressive opposition to the 'other'. The goal of this article is to explore fear, the dissolution of the self, the construction of peoples as monstrous others, the preoccupation of bodies which are modified and nature as a space of crisis as markers of Postmodern EcoGothic in Rosa Montero's novel.

KEYWORDS: Dystopia, Postmodern EcoGothic, Hard-boiled, Rosa Montero, *Tears in Rain*.

LÁGRIMAS EN LA LLUVIA DE ROSA MONTERO: UN HOMENAJE ECOGÓTICO DE ESTILO
HARDBOILED A ¿SUEÑAN LOS ANDROIDES CON OVEJAS ELÉCTRICAS? DE PHILIP K. DICK

RESUMEN

Lágrimas en la Lluvia está ambientada en Madrid en 2109, una gran ciudad en un mundo distópico muy contaminado que ha visto guerras, contactos extraterrestres, ingeniería genética, teletransportación, contaminación y cambios climáticos dramáticos debido a la ecofobia y a un apetito ilimitado por la explotación de recursos. Un mundo en el que la monopolización de recursos vitales por parte de grandes multinacionales ha provocado escasez; exacerbando la injusticia hacia quienes menos contribuyen a ella. Mezclando la ciencia ficción con el ecogótico posmoderno y el modelo *hard-boiled*, esta sociedad se encuentra inmersa en una crisis civilizatoria que afecta nuestra propia concepción como sujetos y que se traduce en tensiones sociales y la marginación de aquellos humanos, replicantes y alienígenas que se ven obligados a vivir en las zonas más degradadas. Estos seres desfavorecidos sirven para renegociar la identidad humana, pero también para encender fundamentalismos fanáticos que definen su identidad en oposición agresiva al «otro». El objetivo de este artículo es explorar el miedo a la disolución del yo, la construcción de las personas como otros monstruosos, los cuerpos que se modifican y la naturaleza como espacio de crisis como marcadores del ecogótico posmoderno en la novela de Rosa Montero.

PALABRAS CLAVE: distopía, ecogótico postmoderno, *hard-boiled*, Rosa Montero, *Lágrimas en la Lluvia*.

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I have seen things you people wouldn't believe, attack ships on fire off the of the shoulder of Orion. I watched c-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhäuser gate. All those moments will be lost in time, like tears in rain. Time to die.

Blade Runner 01.46.24/ *Tears in Rain*, 240

1. INTRODUCTION

Rosa Montero (Madrid, 1951) has had an illustrious career as a journalist and writer. Her work has been acclaimed by critics and the public and she has received prestigious awards such as the Premio Nacional de las Letras Españolas in 2017. Montero has been published in various reputable newspapers and magazines such as *Fotogramas*, *Pueblo*, *Posible* and *Hermano Lobo* and she has collaborated with the Spain's leading newspaper *El País* since 1976, for which she has written over 2,000 literary interviews, as well as countless articles and columns. She has also published articles and opinion columns in various prominent international newspapers. In her journalistic role, Montero consistently denounces human rights violations, racism, war, unbridled capitalism, the loss of public investment, the acuteness of social problems and ecological destruction. She also points out the moral poverty of the political and privileged classes. Regarding citizen and political passivity in the face of climate change, the author expressed her indignation in *El País* at the fact that a football match between Real Madrid and F.C. Barcelona was arousing more interest than the South African climate summit, which took place almost simultaneously but ended with insufficient agreement on minimums (Prádanos 2013, 46).

After making a name for herself as a journalist, Montero arrived on the literary scene at the age of 28 with the publication of her first novel, *Crónica del desamor* (1979), a female-centered testimonial about the Transition. Her fiction, which is filled with many marginal, suffering characters who are always in search of self-knowledge and self-control (Serra-Renobales 2012, 73; Gascón-Vera 2012, 21), has been consistent, prolific and heterogeneous; progressively incorporating a range of (sub)genres into her novelistic production, including the bildungsroman, crime fiction, romance, the historical novel, fantasy, autobiography, autofiction, personal essay and science fiction, among others. Her fiction has been translated into more than twenty languages, including five novels into English, and several of her works have been adapted into films, comic books and art installations.

Tears in Rain is set in Madrid in 2109, a large city in a heavily polluted dystopic world which echoes that of Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* In Montero's novel, the world's nations have merged to form the United States of the Earth (USE), a political alliance constituted in the year 2098 in defensive response to the discovery of three extraterrestrial civilizations. Here, replicant (or 'technohuman') detective Bruna Husky is tasked with solving a bizarre and disturbing pattern of crime, whereby some replicants are driven to kill because of the adulterated memories that they have had forcibly implanted. She is hired by Myriam Chi, the leader of a political organization known as the Radical Replicant Movement, after someone sends her a video in which Chi is brutally murdered by a



technohuman. The political leader is convinced that the same person is responsible for other replicant killings, and she wants Bruna to find the culprit. Tensions between humans and replicants are rising, Bruna's investigations lead her to infiltrate the Human Supremacist Party disguised as a woman and she discovers a connection to archivist Yiannis Liberopoulos' concerns about changes being made to official records: someone has been manipulating documents and falsifying information to provoke a revolt against the technohumans. Thanks to their investigative work, we learn that all the incidents are connected as part of a global conspiracy to enforce human superiority over the replicants.

Smith and Hughes define the ecogothic as a genre of fiction that plays with all the stock characteristics of the Gothic whilst focusing on a world that is ravaged by climate change (2013, 9). In consequence, this paper argues that *Tears in Rain* explores the essence of humanity and its fears through a science fiction detective novel that is set in an ecogothic, dystopian world. While Patrick Murphy suggests that ecocriticism and science fiction have the potential to illuminate each other (2009, 373), I contend that the same can be said for ecologically focused crime fiction.

2. MADRID 2109: THE SETTING

The reader learns from the first pages that, during the past century, there have been several wars, alien contacts, improvements in both genetic engineering and teletransportation, and dramatic climate changes and pollution. This context is conveyed, in part, through Bruna's thoughts and comments but, mostly, thanks to the notes of Yiannis Liberopoulos, a historian at the Central Archive, the United States of Earth, Modifiable Version. Furthermore, despite scientific advances, life is basically a struggle for survival. Many people are incapable of finding a job and are forced to live on the street and clean air is a commodity which must be bought. If not, human citizens are forcibly relocated to a zone where the contaminated air can make them sick. It is a scenario that owes much to Dick's *Androids*, whose action takes place in Los Angeles in 2019, in a world radioactively polluted because of the so-called World War Terminus which devastated the population of Earth and left it nearly uninhabitable. After the war, the United Nations encouraged mass emigrations to off-world colonies to preserve humanity's genetic integrity. Moving away from Earth comes with the incentive of free personal androids: robot servants that are identical to humans.

Yiannis' concerns about someone tampering with official records are shown from the beginning. As a matter of fact, the first article he is editing, "#376244," is labeled "Technohumans/ Keywords: history, social conflicts, Rep War, Moon Pact, discrimination, biotechnology, civil movements, supremacism" (2012, 9). Thanks to this and many other entries, the reader is made aware of key historical developments. We also learn that "The Central Archive, one of the most powerful of the USE institutions, was owned by PPK, a huge private corporation, although the Central Planetary State had full voting rights on its board of management" (2012, 337).



The object of social discrimination are replicants, who are also known as ‘reps,’ ‘technohumans,’ and ‘technos.’ They are humanoid artificial life-forms that were originally created to be a slave race –that is, to carry out those tasks that humans do not want to do, like working under the hardest conditions on a hostile planet or military combat. Montero’s replicants have been given rights, but that does not prevent them from being feared by many humans. Nevertheless, they are not the only source of people’s anxiety. Three days after the first contact with extraterrestrials, when “an alien spaceship landed on the Chinese sector of the mining colony of Potosí” (2012, 40-1), humans signed the “Human Peace” agreement and, eventually, created the United States of Earth in 2098 (2012, 41). Out of the three known alien species, the Gnés, the Omaás and the Balabís, the most common ones on Earth are the Omaás because they fled by the thousands from religious wars on their home planet. However, and despite all cultural and good exchanges among species, “The official name for extraterrestrials is Other Beings” (2012, 44).

According to Sainath Suryanarayanan, the choice of Madrid as a location for the novel is not simply because it is Montero’s home city. Spain has proven to be one of the most enthusiastic countries about commercializing biotechnologies (2015, 237) and the country’s “biotechnology firms are clustered predominantly in the Madrid area and Catalonia” (2015, 238). Madrid is also a major hub of high-level tertiary functions. The most important ones, which relate to the world’s economic organization, are executed from the central headquarters of corporations and transnational banks. For that reason, it could be categorized as a “global city,” a term coined by Saskia Sassen (2009). For the Dutch American sociologist, “Major cities have become distinct socio-ecological systems with a planetary reach” (2009, n.p.) and, therefore, the source of many environmental changes. It should thus come as no surprise that some sociological studies on globalization note how, among Spaniards, the perception of global warming as a major threat to Spain doubled between 2002 and 2008 (Noya Miranda *et al.* 2010, 284). Madrid is, consequently, an ideal setting for a story based on biotechnology and pollution.

3. GLOBAL WARMING, SLOW VIOLENCE AND THE ENVIRONMENTALISM OF THE POOR

In *Tears*, eighteen percent of the planet is overpopulated due to global warming. As the coastal regions went underwater, their inhabitants migrated to higher lands and these massive migrations caused wars in which millions died. This scenario exemplifies Rob Nixon’s concept of ‘slow violence,’ which often has an immediate impact on the world’s poorest inhabitants (2013, 2). According to Nixon, slow violence is:

a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all. [All due to] climate change, the thawing cryosphere, toxic drift, biomagnification, deforestation, the radioactive aftermaths of wars, acidifying oceans, and a host of other slowly unfolding environmental catastrophes. (2013, 2)



This is exemplified in the novel by the comments of the Nobel Laureate in Medicine, Gorka Marlaska, who says that “Just as a frog placed in water that is gradually being heated is unaware of the problem until it boils to death, so humanity was unaware of the catastrophe until the massive number of deaths became evident” (2012, 193). This is a catastrophe that leaves no country untouched because no single nation can expect to become a winner. As Nixon suggests, “under the current globalization regime, since there are, in every country, significant groups of both winners and losers” (2013, 159).

Following this line of thought, Montero situates Spain as part of the privileged northern hemisphere, a region that is less polluted than the rest of the world. However, she also places emphasis on marginalized groups within the southern European space because, as Alicia Puleo states, ecological damage negatively impacts all life forms, yet the consequences are not evenly distributed (2011, 53-64; 74-81). In *Tears*, people without medical insurance are only be treated by NGO Samaritans, “the only civic association that offers health services to those who have no insurance” (2012, 6). Notwithstanding, due to the overwhelming number of people needing their services, they prioritize humans over nonhumans:

a practice that wasn't legally acceptable, but it was what happened. And the worst bit, Bruna thought to herself, was that it made sense on one level. When a medical service was overloaded, maybe it was sensible to give priority to those who had a much longer life expectancy-those who weren't condemned to a premature death, like the reps. (2012, 8)

The USE's policies reflect those mentioned by Braidotti, such as “dismantling the welfare state and increasing privatization” (2007, 21), that have dire consequences for most of the population.

Midway through the novel, the reader learns how this critical situation has been reached, whilst connecting it to the responsibility that the past (or our present) has had in triggering it: “Although global warming had already begun to melt the polar ice caps in the 20th century and the sea level had been rising progressively for several centuries, it is clear that its devastating impact on society seemed to explode suddenly around 2040” (2012, 193; emphasis in original). As cities and most arable lands were inundated, hundreds of millions of desperate hungry people climbed to ever higher places. But those places were already inhabited and suffering from hunger. As a result, “a blind violence overtook the world, and one massacre followed another for several years” (2012, 194). It is estimated that, “after a decade of conflicts, two billion people, mostly of non-Caucasian origin, had died through famine, disease and direct violence” (2012, 194). For the Ultra-Darwinists, this was “a process of natural selection of benefit to Earth” (2012, 195).

Even in a disastrous scenario like this, large multinationals benefit financially as they “decided to exploit the Submerged Worlds to the maximum. Various sites were established, containing the most iconic of the flooded zones, and their management was auctioned among several leisure and tourism mega-enterprises. To date, about a dozen theme parks have been opened” (2012, 197). Montero's fiction thus echoes the ideas of Vandana Shiva and Simon Estok about a long-term



ecophobia, which instead of promoting real change amidst crises and catastrophes, has, rather, reinforced the neo-capitalist logic that generated them (Estok 2018). In doing so, the multinationals' limitless appetite for resource exploitation, with the help of modern science, provides the ethical and cognitive license to make such exploitation possible, acceptable and desirable (Shiva 1992, xvii). The result is a polluted and waste-filled ecosphere (Sassen 2009, n.p.) that affects daily life. To make things worse, the management, privatization, and monopolization of vital resources by large multinationals have caused scarcity; exacerbating environmental injustice towards those who contribute the least. We can see some examples of this in *Tears* with the characters' need to buy purified water cards (2012, 54), take steam showers given the very expensive price of water (2012, 313), the ingestion of synthetic foods (2012, 402), the possibility of purchasing an expensive license to eat meat (2012, 55) and the extinction of polar bears "through drowning as the Arctic ice cap melted" (2012, 158). This mass extinction also takes place in *Dick's Androids*, where the effects of the war induce progressive species death, beginning with birds, then "foxes one morning, badgers the next, until people had stopped reading the perpetual animal obits" (1996, 36).

Amidst this unjust and polluted world, wealthy people go through surgery countless times to avoid looking old; a practice that, for David Huebert, explicitly transforms bodily being into a "trans' practice" (2015, 252). The privileged spend their time at places like "HUNGRY. The best multi-entertainment center in Madrid. A multipurpose venue to satisfy every conceivable craving. [...] Open 24 hours 365 days of the year" (2012, 212). After all, as Carlo Petrini puts it, "Consumerism is an ideology that pillages and wastes resources, but ultimately fails to satisfy needs" (2010, 43). In addition, Puleo contends that today's narcissism and self-indulgent speciesism lead us to societies in which the only anthropos that really counts is the one who can pay for the products offered, which turns the world into an immense warehouse of raw materials and clone centers of commerce and consumption (2011, 409).

4. AN ECOGOTHIC HARDBOILED STORY: CRIME, FEAR AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE SELF

4.1. THE HARDBOILED MODEL

The hardboiled fiction model that was developed by Dashiell Hammet, Raymond Chandler, Mickey Spillane and Chester Himes, among others, depicts an immoral world in which corruption and excessive violence are rife. The protagonists of such fiction are tough detectives who are accustomed to guns and aggression, and whose actions sometimes resemble those of the criminals that they pursue. Typically, they are lone wolves who do not trust the system and who choose to live by their own rules and moral code (Ramón García 2022). Following this model, Bruna Husky has few savings to draw on and desperately needs to find a client, but times are dire: "The USE had been in permanent financial crisis since Unification, but in recent



times there seemed to be a crisis within the crisis and business everywhere was at a standstill” (2012, 26). This notion is in line with Amaya Orozco’s statement that “it is a civilizational crisis, it is a whole way of understanding how we are in the world that is blown up. As a matter of fact, it is a crisis that affects our own conception as subjects” (2010, 132).

Bruna was created in a world “ravaged by climate change” (Ganz 2013, 87) as a combat replicant, which means that she was created “bigger and more athletic than most” (2012, 3). She has better coordination and speed and the ability to “see quite well in the dark” (2012, 63). After serving her required two years in the military, she started to work as a private investigator. Her origins remind us of Dick’s androids, which were first invented as “Synthetic Freedom Fighters [for use in World War Terminus, but later] had been modified [to] become the mobile donkey engine of the colonization program” (1996, 16). Given that these replicants were initially created as a product of warfare and designed as replacement soldiers, they seem to reflect a typical scenario of human-created technology. As Christopher Sims explains,

I say “typical” here because Dick is reflecting the historical truth that many actual technological developments come out of military projects. But after the near destruction of the Earth in World War Terminus in the novel there is a more urgent need to pull together as a species and make new habitats on nearby planets, in order to ensure the survival of humankind: the most advanced technology has to be adapted as a means to this new end. (2009, 69)

Regardless of Montero’s protagonist being a replicant and Dick’s bounty hunter Rick Deckard being a human who ‘retires’ replicants, they both show the traits of the hardboiled detective genre. As a matter of fact, Nigel Wheale labels Deckard as a twenty-first-century version of Raymond Chandler’s Philip Marlowe (1999, 300) and, in this sense, Bruna Husky would be a twenty-second century version.

Bruna is a tough, solitary, and independent character who feels miserable and drinks heavily to counteract her loneliness. In her own words, “If there was anything that depressed her more than getting drunk, it was doing so during the day. Alcohol seemed less harmful, less despicable, at night. But starting to drink at midday was pathetic” (2012, 1). Her loneliness is partly due to her lack of social skills, which make relationships difficult, as the narrator informs us: “Bruna was not particularly keen to have dealings with other reps. Although, if truth be told, she didn’t mix much with humans either” (2012, 2). Her behavior fits with what Julia Kristeva calls “pseudo-relationships with pseudo-others” (1991, 13) since she is incapable of having acquaintances that satisfy and complete her. Instead, she always maintains a certain distance from the people around her, a typical trait of a hardboiled private investigator (PI).

Notwithstanding, she has one friend, Yiannis Liberopoulos, a government archivist who lost his son, Edú, almost forty-nine years ago and still grieves his loss. Yiannis helped Bruna through a difficult time in the past and they have been close friends ever since. For Bruna, he “was like her father. The non-existent father whom a non-existent murderer had killed when she was nine years old. Nine equally non-existent years” (2012, 31).



She is also on good terms with Oli, a woman of “vast body [and] equally enormous hospitality [who runs a small diner and] never turns up her nose at anyone: techno, alien-usually referred to as bicho- or mutant. It was for this reason that her clientele was varied” (2012, 26). Such a location is commonplace in hardboiled fiction. This is the kind of business in which, unlike many others, billboard-people are allowed: poor and miserable beings who worked for a few gais and cannot mute or turn off their commercials, which are always on a perpetual loop. For that reason, billboard-people “would spend their day wandering the streets like lost souls, with the publicity slogans blaring in their ears nonstop” (2012, 27). It is worth noting that the name of the currency in *Tears*, gais, derives from the Greek term for the mother goddess, Gaia, the personification of the Earth. It is also a term used by James Lovelock in *A Final Warning. The Vanishing Face of Gaia*. A scientist concerned with global warming mentioned in Montero’s novel *Instrucciones para salvar el mundo* (2008).

In accord with the hardboiled fiction model (Ramón García 2022), Bruna occasionally reaches out to other people to help her; one of them being Paul Lizard, a police inspector who follows her very closely. Bruna is attracted to him but does not know if she can trust him; especially since he treats her like a suspect throughout most of the novel but also saves her twice from enigmatic assailants. Their relationship is a complex one because, as a PI, her work always depends on a good relationship with law-enforcement agencies. After all, “maintaining her private detective’s license was inevitably linked to how well she got on with the police” (2012, 117), a scenario that echoes that of Deckard and the LAPD.

Among this diverse troupe of characters, we also find the former memoirist charged with writing the memoirs of the replicants, Pablo Nopal, who was forced out of the business when he was suspected of killing his rich uncle. Nopal now writes books and is searching for one specific replicant who has the memories he wrote last; one with more –and more vivid– scenes than usual (which are estimated to be 500). Bruna’s feelings towards the memoirist, as well as towards the inspector, are never free of suspicion. Her short list of human acquaintances and friends also include Gándara, the forensic MD who works the night shifts and gives her firsthand information about the deceased and their causes of death.

Apart from humans and replicants, there are several other forms of life in *Tears*. The Omaás, for example, have transparent torsos and can read the thoughts of those they have sex with. The members of this species are called bichos, or ‘creeps’, and both humans and reps try to avoid them. However, Bruna makes friends with one of them, in a development that is typical of crime fiction: she awakens one morning with a drug-and alcohol-induced hangover, horrified to discover an Omaá named Maio in her bed. Bruna initially ignores him, but Maio, seemingly homeless, sits at the door of her building during the day and night. After some time, she invites him to stay with her and together they develop a communicative and mutually beneficial relationship. Eventually, Maio ends up saving her life.



4.2. THE ECOGOTHIC

Andrew Smith and William Hughes state that in Gothic works “nature becomes constituted ... as a space of crisis which conceptually creates a point of contact with the ecological” (2013, 3) and this is the scenario in which Bruna works and lives. This is a space that reminds us of the way Margaret Atwood “plays with all the stock characteristics of the Gothic genre, [including scientific and global threats], using the markers of the Gothic to advocate environmental awareness and change” (Ganz 2013, 87-88). In this sense, the environment in *Tears* is a human-modified ecosystem that has destroyed “biodiversity at a rapid pace” (Martínez-Alier 2012, 65). Here, the last polar bear died after swimming for some four or five hundred kilometers and not finding ice. This polar bear was cloned by scientists from secured genetic material and now lives in an aquarium inside a shopping mall. After it dies, a replacement bear clone must be produced from its cells. Its name was Melba (2012, 158). As in Dick’s novel, in which most of the scenes involving animals show that, for the humans, such creatures exist as commodities rather than as beings in their own right (Vint 2007, 114), *Tears* presents a world “with diminished diversity and wonders, fewer species, less of the conveniences we currently enjoy” (Estok 2018, 45). This is a world that, according to Vandana Shiva, kills people by the murder of nature “which is today the biggest threat to justice and peace” (1992, 36).

Following this line of thought, Sherryl Vint contends that humanity has been attacking nature for centuries but, especially, since

Descartes conceptualized the human self as separate from nature, including the nature of its own body. He also argued strongly for an absolute split between humans and animals, asserting that animals are merely mechanical beings undeserving of our empathy rather than living and feeling creatures like ourselves. (2007, 112)

According to this order of things, Shiva contends that the scientific revolution transformed nature from terra mater into a machine and a source of raw material whilst removing all ethical and cognitive constraints against its violation and exploitation (1992, xvii). By doing so, humans have been overexploiting Earth’s resources and burning fossil fuels as if these actions have no consequence, but this could not be further from the truth. Joan Martínez-Alier states that CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere was about 300 ppm when Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius first conceptualized the enhanced greenhouse effect in 1895 and that, by 2012, it was nearly 400 ppm and increasing 2 ppm each year, mostly as the result from burning fossil fuels (2012, 53-54). Despite this worrying scenario, Nixon explains,

It is the oil companies that are currently most opposed to taking measures to alleviate the ecological crisis –which they contribute to accelerating– that end up profiting from this crisis [and that’s why a company like] BP spent less investing in solar, hydrogen, and wind energy over a six-year period than it did on a two-year advertising campaign to rebrand itself as “Beyond Petroleum.” (2013, 268)

In Puleo’s words, the same people who denied that there was climate change now affirm that it is necessary to adapt to it and propose to do business with it



(2011, 10). This is exactly what happens in Montero's novel as those who negate climate change also want to sell people the solution.

In her analysis of Dick's *Androids*, Vint contends that "the novel's anxiety about the unstable boundary between humans and androids can thus best be understood as an expression of anxiety about the distorted life of humans under capitalism, a life alienated from our species being" (2007, 124), a situation that is also the case in *Tears*. This is a world in which, according to Luis Prádanos, global capitalism has appropriated planetary space by degrading it with its excrement. A system that destroys abundant resources to privatize and commercialize them (2013, 56). This is what happens, for instance, with the multimillion-dollar company that sells purified water cards and provides vapor showers (2012, 306) due to the scarcity of water. In this world, the amount of clean air is so scarce that only the middle and higher classes can afford to live in relatively clean zones. The poor are forced to live in hyper-polluted areas with the result that their life spans are reduced by half. If they try to sneak into the clean zones, the tax police detain them straightaway. In this world, there are "lung parks [...] with rows of artificial trees [which] absorbed much more carbon dioxide than genuine trees [and] belonged to Texaco-Repsol" (2012, 59); one of those companies that destroyed the environment and now advertise themselves as the solution. This company makes use of billboard-people like the woman who wears "a horrible uniform in the corporate colors, crowned by a silly little hat [and with] screens on her chest and back [playing] the company's dammed commercials on a perpetual loop" (2012, 27). In Bruna's opinion:

You either had to be a poor wretch or very unlucky to end up in that line of work; Billboard-people were only allowed to take off their outfits for nine hours a day; [...] they would spend their day wandering the streets like lost souls, [...] In return for such torture they were paid a scant few hundred gaias, although in this case, being Texaco-Repsol, the woman would undoubtedly get free air as well. And that was important, because each day there were more and more people unable to pay the cost of breathable air who would then have to move to one of the planet's contaminated zones. If truth be told, many would kill to have such a lousy job. (2012, 27-28)

This situation of environmental injustice translates into social tensions and the marginalization of those who are forced to live in the most degraded areas as it so happens with those who run "the risk of living clandestinely in Clean Air Zone ... for fear of the undeniable harm pollution caused to children" (2012, 179). They are commonly known as 'moths' because they "illegally abandoned their contaminated cities with permanent gray skies and appeared, just like moths, attracted by the sunlight and the oxygen, only for the vast majority of them to go up in flames, because the tax police were incredibly efficient" (2012, 179). They live in a society that Bruna ironically calls a "magnificent democratic system that poisons children who have no money" (2012, 180). This injustice becomes more unbearable when contrasted with the vision of a rich girl flying with a toy reactor "despite the prohibitive price with which the waste of fuel and the resultant excess pollution were penalized. For what it cost the child to fly an hour, a human adult could cover the cost of two years of clean air" (2012, 117). Another example of environmental injustice is caused by



a reversal of the so-called Arctic oscillation, which “periodically caused brief and unusual waves of extreme cold, with one or two days of heavy snowfalls, howling gales, and plummeting temperatures that in Madrid could easily reach minus four degrees Fahrenheit ... the icy cold always left a trail of victims: the very old, the very sick, the very poor” (2012, 288). Montero’s novel thus presents a scenario in which neoliberal logic is taken to its maximum conclusion, as it is not satisfied with exposing the less fortunate—which seem to be the majority—to the most adverse effects of the ecological crisis, but also shows the general public’s lack of support and empathy. For the privileged classes, the existence of these human beings, as well as of any other non-profitable being, is a burden, and so their existence becomes diluted amid the toxic clouds of pollution, a postmodern echo of the dark fogs of early Gothic.

4.3. SCIENCE

Underprivileged humans, replicants and aliens are marginalized beings. But they are also more able to overcome prejudice and care for one another than those in positions of power. In Val Plumwood’s words, “these new ‘others’ serve to renegotiate human identity, but also to ignite fanatical fundamentalisms that define their identity in aggressive opposition to the ‘other’” (2002, 228). In the case of extraterrestrials, all humans could do was to unite in a single country and stop wars among themselves, and in the case of underprivileged humans these were simply ignored. But replicants represent a typical postmodern Gothic trend; “the construction of peoples or individuals as monstrous or ‘other’ [...] the preoccupation with bodies that are modified” (Spooner 2006, 8). Hence, they are feared.

Shoshannah Ganz reminds us that “the role of science in interfering with or manufacturing life [stirs the] debates about genetic engineering [which have] been a part of Gothic literature from its inception” (2013, 94-95). In *Tears*, science has greatly progressed in the areas related to war and resource extraction by creating replicants that fight and work on inhospitable planets. Capitalism and science seem to be the only things of import in this world, thus, as is the case of other postmodern Gothic works, “human values are no longer defended against religious superstition or belief in the supernatural, as with earlier Gothic literature, but against an absence of any values at all” (Bolton 2014, 4). The only exception to this except final notion is that of the global market-based economy and, as a matter of fact, the reader soon learns that human greed led not only to the devastation of the planet, but also to the creation of monstrous others:

Given that teleportation eliminated distances and traveling a mile was thus no different from travelling a million miles, Earth’s governing bodies became locked in a race to colonize remote planets and exploit their resources. This was referred to as Cosmos Fever and became one of the principal triggers for the Robot Wars, which devastated Earth from 2079 to 2090. (2012, 37-38; emphasis in the original)

Significantly, the consequences of repeated teleportation echo the Frankenstein effect because, after several such journeys, humans experience dangerous



physiological changes such as their “eyes moved to cheeks, defective lungs, hands without fingers, and even skulls lacking brains. This destructive effect of teleportation is referred to as TP disorder, and those individuals afflicted by visible deformities are colloquially known as mutants” (2012, 39; emphasis in the original). Even though it was proven that repeated teleportation inevitably ends up producing organic damage and that the possibility of suffering from a serious TP disorder increases dramatically, some people nevertheless continue to do it in order to earn the money they need. This is, for example, the case of Mirari, a violinist who lost an arm when trying to get the money to buy a Steiner violin and now has a mechanical one (2023, 305).

4.4. FEAR

The dissolution of the self, one of the distinctive traits of postmodern Gothic according to Fred Botting (2005, 109), is presented in more than one way in *Tears*. For underprivileged humans, this can mean anything from losing their mental stability to losing an organ, becoming a mutant, or dying. The supremacists, on the other hand, fear the replicants most of all, and the uncertainty of what humans will become and what will be left of human beings after the change. This key premise of this novel indicates what Bolton describes as “the source of dread in the posthuman Gothic” (2014, 3). As Yiannis points out, “Fear induces a hunger for authoritarianism in people. Fear is a really bad advisor. And now look around you, Bruna: everyone’s afraid” (2012, 180). In this sense, as David Punter contends, “exploring Gothic is also exploring fear and seeing the various ways in which terror breaks through the surfaces of literature” (1980, 21).

For replicants, the dissolution of the self comes in more than one way because it involves not only their life span but also their memories. The fact that they die after just ten years of Total Techno Tumor (or ‘TTT’), is a source of constant angst. TTT is a painful way to die; with tumors growing inside the replicant’s body until it collapses. Bruna knows this suffering well because she accompanied her boyfriend, Merlín, during his last excruciating days on Earth. As a constant reminder of her death approaching, the first two lines of the novel say “Bruna awoke with a start and remembered that she was going to die. But not right now” (2012, 1). At this point in her life, Bruna has “four years, three months, and twenty-nine days” (2012, 1) remaining until TTT occurs. Like humans, replicants are mortal, but unlike them, who generally do not know the exact point at which they will die, techohumans await a specific date with great distress. Montero’s replicants, like those of Dick’s, exist “at the definitional threshold of species plasticity, occupying a nebulous interstice between organism and machine” (Huebert 2015, 252). Despite reps making up fifteen percent of the population, less than one percent of the budget for medical research is spent on the search for a cure to TTT (2012, 50). However, as Bruna observes, the greater discrimination is not that of humans against reps, but that of the powerful against the wretched, whether they are humans or not. As a matter of fact, close to the end of the novel, she learns that some replicants have lived up to



three decades. But scientists do not bother to investigate the TTT because it is not profitable to do so (2023, 455).

Another source of fear about the dissolution of the self comes from the manipulation of memories, and, once more, this is not only a concern for reps. On the one hand, at the level of the global psyche, the multinational company that controls the Archive of USE allows the manipulation of History, whether its owners know it or not, in a way that generates rampant technophobia among humans; a manipulation denounced by Yiannis which costs him his job. In addition, some privileged people pay to have their painful memories extirpated, a practice that can become addictive. On the other hand, replicants are beings who are implanted with artificial memories of their childhood and adolescence to help them integrate better in human society, into which they are born with a physical age of twenty-five. These memories are designed according to “the Law of Artificial Memory of 2101” (2012, 15) and they are unique to each rep. Nevertheless, all technohumans have a memory of being around 14 years old, the ‘Revelation Scene’ or, as it is popularly known, the “dance of the phantom” (2012, 15). This is the point at which the individual’s parents tell him or her that s/he is a technohuman. Society is aware of the ethical and social dilemmas arising from these memories and, therefore, they are studied at universities such as the Complutense in Madrid (2012, 15), but that does not stop them from creating new ones.

Even though Bruna is aware of her memories being entirely false, she cannot see them as anything but her own and, as a result, she continues to struggle with this illusionary past. As she states, “I’m not my memory. Which, moreover, I know is fake. I am my actions and my days” (2012, 75). Notwithstanding the fictional nature of her memories, they are a constant source of fear to her: “It was a dark, childhood terror. A deadly pain. It was the same thing she’d suffered at night as a child, when her fear of things had crawled through the shadows like a slimy monster at the foot of her bed” (2012, 373). In this sense, like with the creature of Victor Frankenstein, Bruna’s life is made of fragments that derive from other sources. The horror that Victor experiences at his first sight of the patchwork creation that is his creature echoes that of Hericio, the human supremacist leader, when he says: “the reps are our mistake. In fact, I even pity them, I feel sorry for them, because they are monsters that we humans created. They are children of our arrogance and greed, but that doesn’t stop them from being monsters” (2012, 82). This affirmation, once again, reminds us of Spooner’s words about the “construction of peoples or individuals as monstrous or ‘other’ [...] the preoccupation with bodies that are modified” (2006, 8). Replicants thus suffer from speciesism, which Vint, following Singer, defines as “a prejudice or attitude of bias toward the interest of members of one’s own species and against those of members of other species [an] attitude [which] must be understood in analogy to sexism and racism” (2007, 113).



5. CONCLUSION

N. Katherine Hayles (1999, 160) suggests that in Philip K. Dick's novel androids are associated with unstable boundaries between the self and the world. They represent the ethical gray zones that have arisen from technological advances and, thus, the fiction in which they exist can be interpreted as cautionary tales about scientific progress. In fact, by the end of *Androids*, Deckard becomes a different person: his experience with the bounty hunter Phil Resch and the replicant opera singer Luba Luft provokes his greater empathy for humanoid robots and, thus, killing them does not seem so justifiable anymore (Galvan 1997, 426). In Montero's novel, friendship between humans and replicants already exist but anxieties about their relationship derive mostly from people's actions and their consequences. As a result, the androids in *Tears*, like those of Dick, "exist under threat ... of the inability to self-replicate, of species enslavement, of sexual abuse and exploitation, of being highly human-like and yet fundamentally inhuman" (Huebert 2015, 252).

Maria Beville, when defining "Gothic-postmodernism," mentions the frequency with which spectral characters and hellish waste lands feature in such fiction, which causes a gradual but unstoppable deterioration of reality and self (2009, 10). This description is apt for Montero's hyper-polluted, dystopian world that is populated by underprivileged citizens who resemble lost souls. *Tears* features buildings that remind us of the crumbling edifices in the Gothic tradition, such as Nopal's secret hideouts or Yiannis' apartment. However, while these Gothic buildings are crucial to the effect of the novel, outdoor spaces play an equally integral role as they demonstrate a convergence of the human and the natural world which, in this case, is a severely damaged environment. Because of such a location, it is difficult "to maintain the self when the environment which produced that self no longer exists [giving way to] a journey about an eroded sense of the self" (Smith and Hughes 2013, 11).

Similarly to early Gothic works in which the past haunts those in the present, historical assaults on the environment in Montero's futuristic novel continue to disturb those living in the time of *Tears*, an ecogothic space that has become "one mass grave and garbage dump that the survivors must navigate" (Ganz 2013, 99). Montero's text exposes humanity's problematic role as participants in the destruction of life on the planet; a circumstance that forces the reader to question who the monsters in the novel are and what constitutes the monstrous. In this dystopian world, humans and replicants face daily fear: of the dissolution of the self, of dying because of TTT, of pollution, because of water scarcity, or even a fear of becoming a mutant. As a result, Myriam Chi tells Bruna, "we reps and humans are sick beings; we always feel our reality isn't enough. So we consume drugs and give ourselves artificial memories; we want to escape from the confinement of our lives" (2012, 51). *Tears in Rain*, thus, explores to highly dramatic effect the disintegration not just of a specific individual or a specific place, but of life itself.



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