

NAUSICAÄ AND THE RESPONSE TO FUTURE UTTERANCES

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the dialogic relationship between the environmentalist discourses of Greta Thunberg and Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. Using Mikhail Bakhtin's principles of dialogic discourse analysis, it examines how contemporary environmental speech resonates with Miyazaki's narrative, which kind of predates current ecological concerns by decades. The analysis reveals that Miyazaki's work, created in the early 1980s, resembles the ecofeminist discourse, portraying a dystopian future shaped by human environmental neglect. Through the protagonist, Nausicaä, Miyazaki's narrative parallels the youth-led environmental activism embodied by Thunberg. This study highlights the timeless relevance of Miyazaki's ecological message and its alignment with modern environmental activism, demonstrating how past narratives can be in dialogue with contemporary discourses. The paper underscores the importance of understanding historical context to appreciate the continuity of environmentalist and feminist thought in literature and popular culture.

KEYWORDS: Hayao Miyazaki, ecofeminism, environmental discourse, dystopia, Greta Thunberg.

NAUSICAÄ I LA RESPOSTA A FUTURS ENUNCIATS

RESUM

Aquest article explora la relació dialògica entre els discursos ecologistes de Greta Thunberg *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. Utilitzant els principis de l'anàlisi del discurs dialògic de Mikhail Bakhtin, examina com la parla ambiental contemporània ressona amb la narrativa de Miyazaki, que és anterior a les preocupacions ecològiques actuals per dècades. L'anàlisi revela que l'obra de Miyazaki, escrita a principis de la dècada de 1980, s'assembla al discurs ecofeminista, retratant un futur distòpic modelat per la negligència ambiental humana. A través de la protagonista, Nausicaä, la narrativa de Miyazaki és paral·lela a l'activisme ambiental liderat pels joves encarnat per Thunberg. Aquest estudi destaca la rellevància atemporal del missatge ecològic de Miyazaki i la seva alineació amb l'activisme ambiental modern, demostrant com les narratives passades poden estar en diàleg amb els discursos contemporanis. L'article subratlla la importància d'entendre el context històric per apreciar la continuïtat del pensament ecologista i feminista en la literatura i la cultura popular.

PARAULES CLAU: Hayao Miyazaki, ecofeminisme, discurs ambiental, distòpia, Greta Thunberg.

Data de recepció: 30/v/2024

Data d'acceptació: 01/xI/2024

Data de publicació: desembre 2024

To eat and to be eaten... One and the same in this world. The entire forest —one life.
(Hayao Miyazaki, *Nausicaä* 6)

1. INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE QUESTIONS

The title of this paper comprises a curveball: how would it be possible to respond to an utterance which will be said in the future? Although it sounds like an anachronism, this is a proposal that remains in the deep of dialogic discourse analysis, based on the studies of the language philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin and the collective of thinkers named Bakhtin Circle. They understand that a concrete utterance (what means, a discourse dropped in the world, a statement that actually happened) is part of a or many discursive chains. It is easy to understand that a discourse could respond to other discourses which came before it; however, when one speaks, he is also organizing his exposition in a way that responds to imaginary issues which could come up from the context of production or from the reader.¹ It is through these lens that we will build the relations between contemporary environmentalist discourse —expressly the discourse-actions of Greta Thunberg— in dialogue with the environmental vision and proposal in Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1982)² and the raising of its protagonista.³

Following the Bakhtinian analysis proposal, he indicates in “Notes from 1970-1971” that the discourse analyst has two basic tasks in order to a better reading of past utterances:

The first task is to understand the work as the author himself understood it, without exceeding the limits of his understanding. This is a very difficult problem and usually requires introducing an immense amount of material.

The second task is to take advantage of one's own position of temporal and cultural outsidersness. Inclusion in our (other's for the author) context. (Bakhtin 1987a: 144)

For the 21st-century reader who is immerse in both environmentalist and feminine debate, it might sound conflicting assume Miyazaki as forefront in these discussions, as his vision of the relationship between Nausicaä and the “corrupted” nature in the narrative seems quite schematic and simplistic facing the current discussions on the matters. Nonetheless, we cannot baulk at a deep comprehension of the context in which Miyazaki produced his utterance: he

¹ We are using the idea of an oral speech, which has a *speaker*, a *listener* and a *topic*, all settled in a *context*, as is expressed by Volóchinov (“Literary Stylistics”, from 1930, published in *Bakhtin Papers*), but understanding that the relationship between these three instances of the discourse are not restricted to verbal communication.

² Took more than 10 years (1982-1994) to Hayao Miyazaki published the 59 chapters of the narrative —which were later compiled in 7 volumes. Miyazaki also adapted this manga as an anime —a kind of a Japanese animation— in 1984.

³ As it was said by Pérez-García (2023: 174), “Miyazaki, haciendo uso de la libertad creative que le permite el medio, combina vanguardia, utopía y humanismo”.

wrote *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* in early 1980's, when environmentalist issues were not being discussed outside specialized milieu.⁴ Miyazaki drives his discourse towards mass culture,⁵ amid which environmental and feminist issues had a very different reception then and now. Besides, *Nausicaä* can be mainly classified as a *shoujo*,⁶ which is a style that seeks teenager and young-adult feminine readers—which makes it doubly controversial in a patriarchal and excluding society such as the Japanese society even now. Getting into the production conditions of an utterance in its own context helps us in the task of relativizing and resizing a discourse—what is considered as moderate or even arguable today wasn't always seeing this way. Under all these layers of prejudice and common sense, even so Miyazaki's utterance positively interacts with contemporary discourses such Greta Thunberg's.

Our proposal of interaction between Miyazaki's discourse and the current environmental discourse—and between *Nausicaä* and Greta—is part of the Bakhtin's second task, which claims that, after recognizing the utterance's context, we should read it through our own “position of temporal and cultural outsideness”. As researchers and living-beings in the current world, we see in *Nausicaä* the germen of Greta.⁷ It is also we who see the discursive chain which connects Miyazaki and the contemporary environmentalists. More than that, in this text, we add one more link in this chain—as well as in the other chain in which participate Miyazaki's discourse (mass culture, dystopia etc) and this own discourse (cultural studies, gender studies, ecofeminism etc).

2. AT THE BEGINNING, DYSTOPIA

Teenage characters surviving in dystopic futures is a common occurrence in literature written for young adults recently. As dystopias previously belonged to

⁴ An important time when the environmental subject came out in a global discussion is in 1972: “The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (also known as the Stockholm Conference) was an international conference convened under United Nations auspices held in Stockholm, Sweden from June 5-16, 1972. It was the UN's first major conference on international environmental issues, and marked a turning point in the development of international environmental politics” (Available on: <<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/milestones/humanenvironment>> [Accessed on: 27/12/2019]).

⁵ “La presencia del manga en la realidad japonesa es un hecho que va más allá de la lectura [...] Es un fenómeno que no se circunscribe a Japón, sino que de allí ha saltado a todo el mundo” (Arcos Pastor & Pena Ibáñez 2023: 179-180).

⁶ Although *Nausicaä* use to be read as a “strong young female lead drawn strongly from the *shoujo* tradition” (Nakamura & Matsuo 2002: 73), the narrative seems bigger and more complex than productions usually filiated to this tradition, both for lacking a love story on the plot, and for going deep on “less feminine” matters.

⁷ Although this paper focuses Greta Thunberg on her discourse-actions on the environmental topic, it is important to highlight her lately commitment on denouncing genocide in Gaza. It brings more lays on her attachment with *Nausicaä*—both pacifists in a world in war—and Miyazaki's world view, himself being also a pacifist.

high literature, our goal here is to examine how they were assimilated into the young adult literary field, the assumed reader interfered in the writing. Using the tripod of speaker-listener-topic (see footnote 1) as a support, we will look closely at the *environmental dystopia* present in Hayao Miyazaki's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1982) and its reverberations as a concrete utterance, a concept introduced by Mikhail Bakhtin:

For speech can exist in reality only in the form of concrete utterances of individual speaking people, speech subjects. [...] The utterance is not a conventional unit, but a real unit, clearly delimited by the change of speaking subjects, which ends by relinquish the floor to the other. (Bakhtin 1986: 71-72)

In this sense, it is not anachronistic to see in a text from the early 1980's a reinforcement of the ecofeminist⁸ point of view. As current readers, we resort to our own context, making different connections of those that readers did when the text first was published. Our point here is to understand that the 1982's manga⁹ is a link in the chain of the contemporary ecofeminist discourse, which arises from the dialogue established between us, contemporary readers, and this concrete utterance.

The oeuvre of the animator, screenwriter, director, author, and manga artist Hayao Miyazaki has an incontestable importance within the presentation of Japanese culture to the West. In this paper, we read the author's work in light of its insistence on raising the environmental awareness of its public. Additionally, we consider Miyazaki's work as a reference point in the discussions which have culminated in the heightened environmental conscience of today's youth. This is because, in Western culture, graphic novels and animation are mostly addressed to children —which is not their assumed reader in their context, but a consequence of Occidental culture about comics. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* specifically establishes a direct dialogue with other youth-led social manifestations and with contemporary dystopic literature, we argue. To establish a better understanding of the genre,

Dystopia seeks to put itself in continuity of the historic process, enlarging and formalizing the negative tendencies that operate on the present, which can almost fatally lead to perverted societies (the dystopia itself) if they are not obstructed. (Berriel 2005: 6-7)¹⁰

⁸ Ecofeminism could be described as a school of thinking with its roots in both environmentalist and feminist movements, which seeks for an interconnection between women and nature, both of which have been dominated by men. On this battlefield where men repress the presence of women and nature in society, there is an identification among the oppressed.

⁹ Manga is a Japanese comic book, which has the peculiarity of presenting a very different worldview from ours, which is reflected in its narrative construction. For more about the definition of manga, see Arcos Pastor & Penas Ibáñez (2023: 180-181).

¹⁰ All the non-English texts have been translated by the writers of this paper. Original, in Portuguese: “a distopia busca colocar-se em continuidade com o processo histórico, ampliando e

Miyazaki looks to the world from where he is (the early 1980's) and, going through current environmental issues of his time, he projects a terrible future (the present time of the narrative). In other words, his imaginary world starts from a negative attitude of Humanity towards environment—which in part is still real today, besides the advances in the environmental field in the last forty years. We have taken a dystopian utterance from the past and looked at its echoes in the present— how Miyazaki composes his environmental discourse and how he reads the female party in his “nature rebellion” against humanity in comparison of current environmental discourse and young female participation on it.

There is a profitable field in the proliferation of dystopias for young audiences, especially those which represent a range of real problems and concerns for this age group. A great war is responsible for the current state of affairs in *Nausicaä*, but the young protagonist does not deal with the adult subject matter directly, similar to Katniss and the corrupt government in *Hunger Games*. Katniss does not understand President Snow or President Coin's adult political games and ends up being swept up by them—on this front, the narrator follows the protagonist and also gives us no details about Panem's political workings. In *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, we know Torumekia and Dorok's motives and interests in relation to the war thanks to the speech of Kushana, Kurotowa and Charuka; however, this information barely interferes with *Nausicaä's* purpose, as she does not aim to finish the war, but to achieve the balance between human society and nature.

In this sense, we also remember that there is a common sense which say that men are generally viewed as being more connected to history and culture, in opposition to women and their relationship with nature. Therefore, if we come back to the common sense in which is based the mass culture, *Nausicaä* is doubly opposed to masculinity, because she aligns to both the anti-war and the pro-nature discourses, asserting her feminine position in the face of common sense.

Common sense, however, does not come from nowhere, but it raises from a way (even if it is a superficial one) to read surrounding reality. When we see a potent action coming from *Nausicaä* concerning to her planet's nature, we (modern readers) cannot help but think about Greta Thunberg. In 2019, the teenage activist was chosen as *Time's* person of the year in recognition of her activism to raise awareness of global warming. The magazine describes her as “an ordinary teenage girl who, in summoning the courage to speak truth to power, became the icon of a generation” (Alter, Haynes & Worland 2019), which is quite similar to Katniss Everdeen's situation in *The Hunger Games* trilogy, for example. The Swedish girl started a global movement with a simple individual

formalizando as tendências negativas operantes no presente que, se não forem obstruídas, podem conduzir, quase fatalmente, às sociedades perversas (a própria distopia)”.

attitude, which echoes the thoughts of many young people around the world.¹¹ In an Amnesty International report (10th December 2019), in which 11.000 youths were interviewed, climate change (of which global warming is a symptom) was the most cited topic among the vital questions of our time.¹² Amongst the young, Greta stands out for the uncompromising nature of her speech: “Where others speak the language of hope, Thunberg repeats the unassailable science: Oceans will rise. Cities will flood. Millions of people will suffer” (Alter, Haynes & Worland 2019).

This youth mobilization should not be disparaged or seen as exaggerated. The *Times* article says more:

Thunberg’s moment comes just as urgent scientific reality collides with global political uncertainty. Each year that we dump more carbon into the atmosphere, the planet grows nearer to a point of no return, where life on earth as we know it will change unalterably. Scientifically, the planet can’t afford another setback. (Alter, Haynes & Worland 2019)

For all of these reasons, the topic of climate change, its effects and consequences are becoming a point of interest among the young, who are increasingly preoccupied with the scientifically predicted emergency of today, a concern which has historically been moulded by the media and school education. In cinema or literature, the artistic utterance reflects and refracts a current issue in wider society, and especially in the semantic-discursive field of young community speech.

Ambiguous, like all artistic objects, dystopic narratives cannot always be read as an alert or an attempt at mobilization in the face of a terrible future. Lepore indicates another possible contemporary reading perspective:

Dystopia used to be a fiction of resistance; it’s become a fiction of submission, the fiction of an untrusting, lonely, and sullen twenty-first century, the fiction of fake news and infowars, the fiction of helplessness and hopelessness. It cannot imagine a better future, and it doesn’t ask anyone to bother to make one. (Lepore 2017)

When it comes to culture as a general concept which involves art and daily life, to be unable to “imagine a better future” in art puts dystopia in the middle of the ecofeminist matter of concern: if there is no future in the current system, the system must change. Fiction portrays an imaginary world based on daily life; if literature has been representing present society in a point of no return, ecofeminism proposes a new order, based on the relationship culturally built between women and nature. This is what we can read, from now, on *Nausicaä*.

¹¹ “[*The Hunger Games*,] like all Y.A. dystopian fiction, it’s also addressed to readers who feel betrayed by a world that looked so much better to them when they were just a bit younger” (Lepore 2017).

¹² *Future of the Humanity Survey*.

3. BEFORE AND NOW, NAUSICAAÏ OF THE VALLEY OF THE WIND IN DIALOGUE WITH ITS THEMATIC CONTEXT

Lepore also indicates that

the second half of the twentieth century, of course, also produced liberal-minded dystopias, chiefly concerned with issuing warnings about pollution and climate change, nuclear weapons and corporate monopolies, technological totalitarianism and the fragility of rights secured from the state. (Lepore 2017)

The highlight Lepore puts on environmental questions on dystopia's subjects can also be seen in Miyazaki's production: *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* focuses its narrative on a dystopic future which deals with all the themes enumerated by Lepore in the above quote. The manga opens with a panorama of the human situation on the planet:

In a few short centuries, Industrial Civilization had spread from the Western fringes of Eurasia to sprawl across the face of the planet. Plundering the soil of its riches, fouling the air, and remolding life forms at will, this Gargantuan industrial society had already peaked a thousand years after its foundation: ahead lay abrupt and violent decline. (*Nausicaä* 1, first pages)¹³



FIGURE 1: Map of Torumekia, fictional country of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. French version. (Available on: <<https://aurynsakura.tumblr.com/post/57726254370/map-of-torumekia-nausicaa>> [Accessed on: 02/01/2020]).

¹³ The deluxe edition of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* by Viz Media publishing house has two tomes: I for volumes 1 to 4; II for volumes 5 to 7. The page references correspond to this edition.

Like other dystopias for the young, the main characteristics of the fictional world are outlined at the very beginning of the narrative, in order to orient the reader. In this context, *The Sea of Corruption* (*Mer de Corruption*, in French, as it can be seen in the map below) is the consequence of the degradation of the natural resources in Nausicaä's world.

A narrative note between the manga's panels describes the Sea of Corruption in the following terms:

The Sea of Corruption was the new world... An ecological system born in the polluted wastelands created by civilizations long past. Only the great insects could live amongst the giant fungi and the miasma they exhaled, and so the Earth was slowly submerging beneath that decaying sea... (*Nausicaä* 1: 24)

The time of the narrative is 1000 years after the destruction of Industrial Civilization, but man's greed and bellicosity continue to jeopardise humanity's existence in the world. In many passages, characters note that the world's population (or that of a certain community) is decreasing, or that the nations are destroying each other in wars—which, as we know, also results in losses for the populations involved.

Nausicaä, a young princess of the Valley of the Wind, is the protagonist of the narrative, with whom readers are meant to identify. She represents her father, King Jihl—who is sick because of the effects of the proximity of the Sea of Corruption—in the war between their neighbours, Torumekia and Dorok. Nausicaä's main feature which distinguishes her from other characters is her youth. As highlighted by Pérez-García (2023), that the interpretation of a pig as a character—in this case, the protagonist of *Porco Rosso* (1992 animation of Miyazaki)—, also in *Nausicaä* the young protagonist is read through a local interpretation, which differs of Western senses of it. Cherdel affirms, in reference to child (but also young characters in general) protagonists in manga:

If we find a child at the centre of some major manga works, this is not just for commercial reasons concerning target audiences [...]; this happens in line with the poetic and ethical potentialities of the particular status of the child in Japan. [...] This is because the child evolves, for a while, in the world of roots, of nature, and of such deep and clear values that they become literally impossible to pronounce for most adults, which means they could be considered as a guide. (Cherdel 2002)

As we can see in this quote, Nausicaä is not just a character, but also a symbol. Highlighting Nausicaä's youth, as much as contrasting her "differed" actions towards nature, Miyazaki leads his reader to see a connection between youth and nature. To reach a bigger picture, as Western readers, we also add in this scenario the teenager impetuosity which circulates in our culture as a common sense—Western art and culture portrait it from Greek mythological

characters,¹⁴ such as Icarus or Phaeton, to Ferris Bueller (*Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, 1987 movie).

At first, we can think that the question of gender does not figure prominently in the manga, even though the narrative touches on it in passing. The fact that Nausicaä is a woman creates hardly any obstacles for the heroine: "If only she'd been a boy... I would have no complaints" (*Nausicaä* 1: 26); "I can't help thinking you should have been a man" (*Nausicaä* 4: 424); "I may be a woman, but I've got strong legs. Don't underestimate me and fall behind" (*Nausicaä* 7: 454); "Uh-oh! It's another new king. And a woman, to boot!!" (*Nausicaä* 7: 501). These few sentences—the only we could catalogue in the matter—, putted in the middle of a 7 volumes narrative, does not make any statement about women's condition in the narrative world. In fact, her youth and, most of all, her "odd" relationship with nature are the great dilemma that put society in between her and her objectives.

In the narrative, Nausicaä has the capacity to read the wind ("She has the heart of it. With just the touch of a breeze on her skin, she can read the soul of the wind...", *Nausicaä* 1: 28), understand the Sea of Corruption's fauna ("It's almost as if she can read their minds...", *Nausicaä* 1: 20), and, as noted by Mito, Nausicaä's co-pilot on the gunship of the Valley of the Wind:

Mito: That lass has a wondrous power we don't share. She can hear voices we can't hear... she reads the very soul of the wind... In her heart, she loves even the plants and insects of the rotwood. (*Nausicaä* 1: 78)

As we can read it as metonymy of Miyazaki's view of Nausicaä, how interesting for an ecofeminist view of the narrative that the two old men of the narrative (Mito and Yupa) are talking about the connection that this young girl has with nature, which they do not have. In just one sentence we have almost all the common sense about the women/nature relationship: she can interact with nature in a way that men cannot (male/female opposition); Nausicaä's connection with nature is not individualised, but with nature "in general" (disposition of women); it is an emotional connection, based on "heart" and "love" (oppose to reason). The question, in this paper, is more about how much deep we can go in this reading than about how deep went Miyazaki when he wrote it. Reinforcing it is Yupa's answer to Mito:

¹⁴ Also, the protagonist's name was taken from Greek mythology: "Nausicaä is the name of a Phaeacian princess in the Greek epic poem, *The Odyssey*. I learned of her when reading Bernard Evslin's *Handbook of Greek Mythology* (published in Japan by Shakai Shisousha and translated by Minoru Kobayashi) and have been fascinated ever since" (*Nausicaä* 2: last pages). Following the path of Western literature, the human actions that lead to the great environmental cataclysm come from a tragic plot—recovered from the very first Western literature: the human attempt to overcome the divine.

Yupa: But her power's not meant for war. Aye, it's meant to heal something, to heal some wound... (*Nausicaä* 1: 78).

reinforcing that war belongs to our imaginary as a masculine enterprise, which masculinizes or marginalizes the feminine. The female character was not made for war, but for nature.

However, in a perhaps more “practical” sense of what “male” and “female” mean in society, Miyazaki affirms, in a 1984 interview, that *Nausicaä* “is someone who lives on a different dimension. That kind of character should be female rather than male” (Miyazaki 1984, *apud* McCarthy 1999: 79). *Nausicaä*'s uniqueness, same as Greta's, lays on both her youth and gender. An artist does not need to socially justify his choices, but Miyazaki *knows* that an adult female character who does the same action which did *Nausicaä* would be seen differently —she might be called “calculated”, “over-react”, “smug”, or that she “throws a temper tantrum”.¹⁵ Not much different from real life, when, months before being elected *Time*'s Person of the Year, the misogynist Brazilian president, Jair Bolsonaro, called Greta Thunberg a “pirralha” [“little brat”] when she talked about the murder of indigenous peoples in Brazil.

So, it is not by chance that *Nausicaä*'s main antagonist is also a woman, but a grown one: Kushana. Under all the schematic representations of a popular literature, as an active player in the war, this character denies her belonging to a female status in different levels; relays on her certain ambiguity in terms of she can represent an women empowerment, once she is Torumekia's commander and Imperial Princess; but, as antagonist and warrior, she turns her back to nature. In *Nausicaä*'s fandom¹⁶ page, we have good examples of how this character is seen by readers: “Just like *Nausicaä*, she [Kushana] was born into a man's world. She had to survive by, in a sense, becoming a man; she wore armour, commanded fleets, etc”.¹⁷ She got some interest from the audience, but she lacks on empathy, which was an attribute specially drawn to *Nausicaä* in this narrative, as Miyazaki says in the same 1984 interview: “[*Nausicaä*] is not a protagonist who defeats an opponent, but a protagonist who understands, or accepts”.¹⁸

Nausicaä tries to understand the Sea of Corruption, which she includes in her conception of living beings. Her commitment to the protection of nature dialogues with the utterances of some environmentalists, such as Greenpeace.

¹⁵ Yes, we are quoting Taylor Swift's interview to CBS Sunday Morning in 2019, where she affirms that “there's a different vocabulary for men and women in the music industry”. Available on: <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z7o6TEZwmes>> [Accessed on: 09/08/2022].

¹⁶ According to *Cambridge Dictionary*, a fandom is “a group of fans of someone or something, especially very enthusiastic ones”. Available on: <<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/pt/dicionario/ingles/fandom>> [Accessed on: 03/06/2022].

¹⁷ Available on: <<https://nausicaa.fandom.com/wiki/Kushana>> [Accessed on: 03/06/2022].

¹⁸ Available on: <<https://nausicaa.fandom.com/wiki/Nausica%C3%A4>> [Accessed on: 03/06/2022].

We can note the proximity of the publication of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* and Greenpeace's first international action —when the group achieved a whaling moratorium adopted by the International Whaling Commission against industrial whalers in 1982,¹⁹ a development which directly affected Japan. Miyazaki has never cited this specific influence, but the discussion was part of the context of *Nausicaä's* production —the whales could be easily associated with the ohmu, for example. Beyond this theme, it is worth noting that the same *modus operandi* is shared by Greenpeace activists and *Nausicaä*, who does everything within her grasp to save the Sea of Corruption's creatures. Her actions are interpreted as forceful by other characters.

Besides the destruction described in the beginning of the narrative, there are other environmental catastrophes in the history of the world of *Nausicaä*, such as the daikaishō 大海勝 (which means "great sea swelling"). Having happened for the first time 300 years before the time of the narrative, the daikaishō is a large and rapid expansion of the Sea of Corruption, which starts to happen again in the fourth volume of the narrative. However, it was already announced by the matriarch of the Valley of the Wind in volume two:

In those days, the tribes of the periphery were bound together in the kingdom of Eftal... the forest lay far distant of the heart of the continent, and oases glittered in the desert like the stars in the sky. [...]

Fired by greed, they made no effort to understand the forest, and in time found cunning ways to hunt down and kill the ohmu.

The secret of their methods has not survived the years. But the ohmu were slaughtered in fearsome numbers... [...] The Sea of Corruption trembled with rage-- and in the end, it overflowed. Countless maddened ohmu charged wildly from the forest. A tidal wave of insects scattering spores like the foam of the ocean...

All efforts to stop them were in vain. The giant tide of ohmu swallowed up town after town. The people perished. The king fell. The miracle technologies were forever lost...

For 20 days, the Daikaishō covered the land of Eftal. The enraged ohmu would not be calmed until starvation brought their lives to an end. A full 2,000 leagues beyond the fringes of the forest, the ohmu finally perished.

Their corpses became rich cultures for the spores, which stretched their roots deep into the soil in search of water and when they found it, they began to bloom. A black growth spread from corpse to corpse, until in time it had transformed the desert into a vast new Sea of Corruption... (*Nausicaä* 2: 215-218)

Reading this long quote, we realize that human actions cause the daikaishō, which means that we are not talking about a natural change of the life flow on Earth, like an asteroid, for example. The presence of humans in the world, doing nothing more than what they usually do, makes the destruction happen. And, at the end of the narrative, we discover that the contribution of human actions to the environmental cataclysm was even bigger than previously supposed (*Nausicaä* 7: 441). However, rather than demonstrating the insignificance of men

¹⁹ Available on: <<https://www.greenpeace.org/canada/en/about-us/history-successes/>> [Accessed on: 22/12/2019].

when faced with nature, the dystopic narrative of the matriarch in *Nausicaä* discusses the oppression of nature by men.

Nausicaä has a holistic vision of the world because she sees it as a whole. The devastated scenario does not concern only nature, but also humanity itself. At the end of volume five, Nausicaä confirms what she has suspected since the very beginning: the Sea of Corruption exists to restore nature. Despite the vision presented by dystopias of a future scene of desolation and destruction associated with current human actions, Valente (2010: 17) affirms that, even while painting the future of society in dark tones, dystopia makes itself paradoxical in some senses, revealing hope at its core.

The *promising ending*²⁰ of the narrative can be related to the general context of environmental discussions—in which significant changes happened through the years of publication of *Nausicaä*, of which the last chapter came out in 1994. In this period, environmental issues have become prominent—since the UN Rio92 Conference, as pointed out by Lamim-Guedes:

In general, since the preparations for Rio92, we have a larger presence of environmental themes in the media, which ends up affecting society as a whole, including with a stronger presence of Environmental Education in school programs.²¹ (Lamim-Guedes 2017)

While it is not of our best interest to scrutinize the narrative changes that could have been made in accordance with the worldwide discussions that have reached the general public, we cannot help but notice a “pitch of hope” and renovation which permeate the resolution (published in 1994) matches with the UN covenants’ goals signed in 1992, in Rio.

Notwithstanding, the hope carried by Miyazaki’s dystopia mainly resides in the character of Nausicaä, who is seen as the long-awaited saviour. Later this feeling spreads to others who cooperate with Nausicaä—whether friends or enemies, a fact which blurs the Manichaeism that is often automatically attributed to children’s literature.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS IN AN ATTEMPT TO ANSWER FUTURE UTTERANCES

Crossing popular manga with a dystopic environmental discourse, Miyazaki reaches out to the masses. As Luyten explains when speaking discussing the “Japanese Dream”:

²⁰ Despite we cannot say that is a *happy ending* for the narrative, it is indeed a *promising* one, full of hope about the end of the war amongst the destruction it caused in the natural and human world.

²¹ In Portuguese: “De forma geral, a partir do processo de preparação para a Rio92, temos uma maior presença da temática ambiental na cobertura midiática, o que acaba por afetar a sociedade como um todo, inclusive com uma maior inserção da Educação Ambiental nas escolas”.

And where are we going to find the dream of a nation? In its expression, in its art and, more explicitly, in mass media. It is exactly in these products, those which the masses consume without contesting, that we will find answers to our longings and dreams. (Luyten 1995: 132)

There are some answers, but there is also guidance for discussion and dialogue with other areas of the reader's life.

Nausicaä [Greta Thunberg] is this voice which emerges in a humanity that has ceased to dialogue with nature. Her youth, beyond serving as a basis for identification for young Western audiences (and the general Japanese audience), is an instrument of inner meaning in the roots of manga. As readers from today, it makes impossible to read Nausicaä other than through glasses that include Greta in the picture. As reinforces Bakhtin in other text, our position as readers (situated in a different space-time and which consider this *distance*) adds meanings to the utterance:

Creative understanding does not renounce itself, its own place in time, its own culture; and it forgets nothing. In order to understand, it is immensely important for the person who understands to be *located outside* the object of his or her creative understanding—in time, in space, in culture. [...] In the realm of culture, outsideness is a most powerful factor in understanding. It is only in the eyes of *another* culture that foreign culture reveals itself fully and profoundly. (Bakhtin 1987c: 7)

Thus, the projection and the mere existence of Greta Thunberg's speech in this world change, interferes, enlarges our understanding of Nausicaä's character. From our place of existence and from the current discussions about those subjects which cross the narrative, our reading can create other meanings which Nausicaä has not in the early 1980's or even in 1994, when its last chapter is published.

The same goes for discussions about the environmental crisis. The knowledge about this field that has been generated since Miyazaki wrote *Nausicaä* until now and the contact with this work change our reading of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* regarding how it was read when it first came out.

When considering environmental dystopias specifically, it is only in an explicit context that they acquire dialogue with the "outside world". As artistic speech, it should also reflect and refract current social discussions in order to reframe them, showing viewpoints and interpretative possibilities which could expand reflections about these topics. The bond that Nausicaä creates with the life in the Sea of Corruption converges to many realities of women forcedly or voluntarily associating themselves to nature.

Miyazaki takes advantage of a very widespread genre to communicate his content, helping to popularize another genre: dystopia. In the context of production of the 1980's, it makes sense that dystopia, which began to be popularized because of its appeal to the common reader, appeared in popular genres such as manga. On the other hand, the contemporary reach of dystopias

among young readers finds its roots in movements such as those we can see in Miyazaki's manga and anime. These products were capable of producing a fertile relationship between two genres from different registers: erudite literature and pop culture.

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