

Review of: "From Necro-Politics to Necro-Ecology: framing the current climate environmental politics in the Americas"

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As stated in the title of the article, Lucatello and Fernández propose the coining of the new concept of "necro-ecology" to understand the current climate environmental politics in the Americas. The concept proposed by the authors is suggestive, and, to me, grasps a truth which would be worthy to dig in.

However, personally I haven't been able to identify in their article which would be the distinctive characteristics of those current politics that the concept of "necro-ecology" would seek to capture, according to the authors when they assert that "necro-ecology can be therefore considered as the latest stage of the political ecology thinking in the region and the necro politics dimensions, given not only the dramatic impacts of decision-making policies in the conservancy and nature preservation but also in the way current governments adopt decisions that can deeply affect in negative terms human beings and their relations with the ecosystems". To me, the exposition becomes particularly blurry when trying to distinguish necro-ecology from Political Ecology. The examples given do not help to clear up the novelty of the present policies claimed by the authors and the necessity of a new concept to catch up that novelty.

The present disregard of environment and Nature showed by the examples given could have been explained recurring to theories that link that disregard to the past. For instance, some may recede to the classic Greek dichotomy between *polis/physis* to underline the Western cultural roots of the problem. Others may highlight, in reference to the history of the ideas, the modern project of domination of the Nature (which would have had its specific development in the Americas in the environmental racial theories, theories which justified not only the "humanization" of "wild" environments, but also the persecution and expulsion of indigenous peoples from their ancestral lands). Also, the first industrial revolution could be pointed as the beginnings of the systematic and massive destruction of the environment, and a main cause in the intensification of the colonialist practices of human and animal exploitation, and extractivism under the logic of capitalism. So, what would be new in the present context and policies?

In most of the examples, further explanations should have been given. For instance, when they state that "Another current example is the COVID19 pandemic, where lifting the lockdowns in a number of countries in order to open up the economy and preserving economic growth while the pandemic rages, can be seen as a necropolitical decision. In this specific case, necro politics can amplify existing inequities that emerge over disruptive conditions and exacerbated injustice, as well as a frightening possibility". It's true that Bolsonaro's and Trump's policies on pandemics in the Americas could be characterized as biopolitical or necropolitical, but the same could be said of the draconian lockdowns in China or other East Asian countries, or the declarations of the state of emergency in the European countries with which, by the way, Agamben has been very critical (see, among others, [Giorgio Agamben, L'invenzione di un'epidemia - Quodlibet](#)). Trump's dismantling of environmental institutions in the US is also pointed out as an example of necro-ecology and, therefore, criticized. But, then, those environmental institutions dismantled by Trump had to be created by some US Government whose policies had to be, it seems, not necro-ecological.

To overcome these criticisms, it seems to me that they should have developed their initial intuition that "climate change and the global environmental crisis have become an existential threat to human beings, bringing the Earth's physical and biological systems to a critical point of collapse", or, later, when they assert that "we are witnessing the exposure of large populations to death, given the increasing avoidance to take actions from government or favoring corporate interests to keep carbonizing economies". The threat of the destruction of complete ecosystems (ecocides) or of a massive extinction of species (including the human species) may be a good candidate for a distinctive feature of the current environmental policies and the convenience of the concept "necro-ecology" to explain them. Maybe, the difference lays in that, nowadays, the politics of death are not just about the management or disposal of life of individuals or vulnerable groups (ethnic or racial groups, for instance, and the possibility of genocides), but about species, about the management of the environmental conditions for the existence of life. In this regard, scientists have pointed an increase of 1°C above preindustrial average temperatures as the safe limit for a just management of the environmental crisis, and 1,5°C as the safe limit for not transgressing the conditions for the existence life (the increase is already of 1,2°C). According to the statements of the States and international organizations, that second limit is at the stake of the current environmental policies, at least, on climate change.