

Radical Environmentalism and Literature:

An Analysis of Nature, Environmental Exploitation and Direct Action

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Introduction | 1 |
| 2. The Theoretical Framework: Ecocriticism | 6 |
| 3. The Ecocritical Approach to Literature | 9 |
| 1. Nature Writing | 14 |
| 4. Humans and the Environment in the USA | 21 |
| 1. The Frontier Myth and Expansion | 23 |
| 2. The Westward Expansion and the Exploitation of the Land | 31 |
| 1. Mining | 33 |
| 2. Logging | 37 |
| 3. The Oil Industry | 43 |
| 3. Water and the American West | 48 |
| 4. Nature and Industrialization | 60 |
| 5. The Conservation Movement | 71 |
| 5. Radical Environmentalism | 83 |
| 1. Predecessors to Radical Environmentalism | 87 |
| 2. The History of the Radical Environmental Movement | 94 |
| 3. Philosophy, Ideology and Working Methods | 103 |
| 6. <i>The Monkey Wrench Gang</i> (1975) | 116 |
| 1. Edward Abbey | 116 |
| 1. Edward Abbey and Glen Canyon Dam | 121 |
| 2. Introduction to <i>The Monkey Wrench Gang</i> (1975) | 123 |
| 3. Nature and the Environment in <i>The Monkey Wrench Gang</i> (1975) | 126 |
| 4. Environmental Exploitation/Destruction and Radical Environmentalism in <i>The Monkey Wrench Gang</i> (1975) | 146 |
| 7. <i>Hayduke Lives!</i> (1990) | 194 |
| 1. Introduction to <i>Hayduke Lives!</i> (1990) | 194 |
| 2. Nature and the Environment in <i>Hayduke Lives!</i> (1990) | 196 |
| 3. Environmental Exploitation/Destruction and Radical Environmentalism in <i>Hayduke Lives!</i> (1990) | 211 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 8. <i>Jokerman 8</i> (2004) | 257 |
| 1. Introduction to <i>Jokerman 8</i> (2004) | 257 |
| 2. Nature and the Environment in <i>Jokerman 8</i> (2004) | 259 |
| 3. Environmental Exploitation/Destruction and Radical Environmentalism in <i>Jokerman 8</i> (2004) | 277 |
| 9. <i>The Secret World of Terijian</i> (2007) | 312 |
| 1. Introduction to <i>The Secret World of Terijian</i> (2007) | 312 |
| 2. Nature and the Environment in <i>The Secret World of Terijian</i> (2007) | 315 |
| 3. Environmental Exploitation/Destruction and Radical Environmentalism in <i>The Secret World of Terijian</i> (2007) | 322 |
| 10. Conclusions | 339 |
| Works cited | 348 |
| Appendices | 358 |

1. Introduction

The interest for applying ecocritical approaches to the study of literary theory has increased in recent years and ecocriticism has become significantly important in the academia. Often regarded as a minor study field, compared to gender studies or postcolonial studies for example, ecocriticism has entered especially North American academic circles, partly, thanks to what has traditionally been called ‘nature writing.’ The rich tradition of North American ‘nature writers’ such as Henry David Thoreau and John Muir planted the seeds of what today is being reshaped in the form of ecocritical theory. Their works led to a reconsideration of the relationships between human beings and the natural world and the study of these very relationships has become a main focus for the ecocritical approach. As natural and social beings, humans have always interacted with the environment in different ways; sometimes establishing relationships of balance and sometimes developing behaviours that affected the environment negatively. Today, the concern about these relationships is focusing particularly on real life environmental problems that derive from negative connections with the natural world, like the constant exploitation of resources or the reduction of natural spaces in order to spread human communities.

The disquieting situation of the environment which includes, among others, the rising temperature of the Earth, deforestation or extreme pollution that affects all living beings including humans, is nowadays one of the main impulses for writing works about, or including, nature and the environment. These writings are the result of specific situations and reflect the realities of a time in history, so the perspectives they offer must be considered in order to understand and, ultimately try to solve, the environmental situation. A notable example of that could be Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), which was written as a reaction to the use of chemicals and showed a big environmental concern regarding the effects these chemicals could have on life forms. The book gave place to a debate about the use of DDT in agriculture and was an impulse for the creation of the environmental movement. As human and industrial intervention is strongly related to the appearance and worsening of these problems, a reconsideration of traditional ideas about how humans should behave regarding nature is vital nowadays. Works about nature and the environment like *Silent Spring* are, not

surprisingly, usually aimed at making people aware of these dramatic facts. In the case of the mentioned work, of the negative effects of pesticides. Other works which describe landscapes or experiences in contact with nature, such as Edward Abbey's *Desert Solitaire* (1968), also show clear political and moral ideas, strongly related to the environmental problems that have just been mentioned.

The expansion of civilization, technological development and an increasing human population have traditionally been considered positive for the humankind. But they have also posed a threat to natural spaces and living beings of all types. The exploitation and destruction of the environment caused by the hyper-industrialized societies of the 20th and, especially, 21st centuries, is leading to the extinction of species and to the loss of entire ecosystems. Besides, pollution levels hardly imagined years ago are being reached, also endangering human lives. Radical environmental groups (sometimes) labelled as 'ecoterrorists' fight for the defence and preservation of nature, struggling against those who profit from the exploitation and destruction of the environment. In countries like the United States, they have become as active in the defence of nature as industrial and capitalist powers in its destruction. These activists show that other type of relationships between humans and nature exist in the 21st century; their love and respect for nature is taken to an unprecedented point in which fighting against the powers of industrialism and capitalism seems necessary for the preservation of nature. Thus, the environmental situation of the end of the 20th century and of the 21st century somehow presents a conflict in which two sides struggle: on the one hand, there are powers that want to continue growing and developing and, on the other hand, there are people that want to preserve nature and oppose endless growth.

The aim of this project is to analyse the way the destruction and the exploitation of nature and radical environmentalism as a response to this situation is represented in contemporary literature. For this purpose, four works whose main themes are radical environmentalism, nature and human-natural relationships will be analysed, using an ecocritical approach. The first one is *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, a novel by Edward Abbey published in 1975 in which a group of four people try to stop the advancement of so-called progress through acts of sabotage. The second work is *Hayduke Lives!* another novel by Abbey published in 1990. It is a sequel to *The Monkey Wrench Gang* where the activists (as well as new ones) try to stop new attacks against nature. *Jokerman 8*, written by Richard Melo in 2004, tells the story of a group of young people who engage

in different kinds of actions to save the environment and animal lives. Finally, the last work that will be analysed is a short book for children called *The Secret World of Terijian* published for the first time in 2007 by an anonymous author. In the book two kids try to stop the destruction of a forest. Although the stories, characters and developments of the four works are obviously different, they all share the depiction of radical environmental actions presented in reaction to different attacks to nature and the environment. Even if there are more examples of radical environmentalism in fiction, these works are the most appropriate ones for the following analysis due to the fact that they offer perspectives from the inside of the radical environmental movement. Besides, a considerable part of these literary works is dedicated to the movement, unlike other works that can include isolated examples or that deal with them only superficially. In addition to that, they portray the links between radical environmentalism and other types of relationships between humans and nature, allowing a more profound comprehension of these phenomena.

In particular, this project will analyse the way radical environmental actions are represented from an ecocritical approach, that is, considering the way they portray different kinds of relationships between humans and nature. Humans have always developed different kinds of relationships with the natural world, including links of balance as in the case of some Native Americans for example, or relationships of power like the ones of domination and exploitation promoted by civilization. In the case of radical environmentalists, the love for nature and a desire to live in a world where nature, its living beings and humans live in a more balanced way are characteristics of these relationships. For them, such links with nature imply defending it from any threat posed by other humans in order to serve the economic interests of a minority. Thus, for them struggling against industrial and capitalist powers in order to protect the environment is another kind of relationship with the natural world. Their struggle is a part of their relationships with nature and their appreciation for all forms of life, accompanied by contempt towards the values of the industrial-capitalist society, shows different ways of relating to nature in modern times. Their protection of the natural world is also a protection of the relationships they have with nature. These are really important for them because they offer them (among other aspects) a meaning and a spirituality that the alienating industrial society cannot provide. The intended analysis will mainly encompass the ideas that lay behind these actions, their causes and

consequences and the procedures by which they are carried out. The reasons radical environmentalists have to act against any agent that damages the environment, driven by certain political or philosophical beliefs, will be important, but also the consequences their actions (or lack of actions) might have on their ‘enemies,’ namely industrial and capitalist powers, and, above all, on the environment. In the works that will be analysed, as well as in real life, the intervention of these activists proves successful in protecting the environment and its living beings, for example, by stopping the exploitation of resources in natural spaces.

The first part of this dissertation functions as an introduction to ecocritical theory and ‘nature writing’ and offers information about these fields in order to make the subsequent analysis more comprehensible. The next section addresses some aspects related to the history of the expansion of industrialization and exploitation of the environment in the United States to provide a geographical context to the analysis. This is due to the fact that the main setting of three of the four works is this country, while the exact location of the actions of the fourth one is undefined. So as to create a thorough context, the next part of the dissertation focuses on the explanation of the concept of radical environmentalism, taking into consideration aspects like its history and the political/philosophical ideas related to it. Although radical environmentalism as a social movement has attracted a lot of attention, the presence of this topic within the field of literature has not been studied. As cultural representations of a certain place and time in history, the literary pieces dealing with radical environmentalism can offer interesting perspectives of the modern ways in which humans relate to the natural world. An analysis of these representations of radical environmentalism in literature seems necessary in order to fully understand a movement that has become so powerful in countries like the USA and to comprehend the ideas about nature protection that are the basis of the movement. This dissertation aims at this analysis, because representations of radical environmentalism seem to have been neglected. Besides, even if the study is done within the field of literature, the links it can establish with other fields like the study of social movements or of environmental problems must not be undervalued. Taking this into account and due to the scarcity of sources of academic studies in the literary field regarding this issue, sources that can be considered more informal will be used, such as actual testimonies from activists involved in this kind of struggle. These sources will be highly helpful in order to understand the motivations

and ideas that lay behind radical environmental actions. Considering these introductory explanations, the fourth and main part of the dissertation focuses on the way radical environmentalism is portrayed in the four pieces of fiction, as it has already been mentioned. However, special attention is paid to the environmental exploitation and destruction portrayed in these works due to the fact that it motivates the actions that will be examined. Analysing other relationships between humans and nature represented in the four texts is also a main concern because these links present important ideas about subjects like freedom or spirituality as a consequence of the contact between humans and the environment. All these kinds of relationships are strongly connected and radical environmentalism cannot be explained isolated from the other bonds, so they are all subjects of analysis in this paper. As will be explained later, these relationships with the environment (especially love and appreciation of nature) motivate direct action directly. But not only that, because the defence of the environment is also a defence of the relationships that exist between environmentalists and nature, that is, the protection of nature can also be the protection of, for example, the freedom and spirituality achieved thanks to it. So, it is clear that all these relationships are interconnected.

Although the four works that are the object of analysis are fictional, there are strong connections between them and the real life radical environmental movement. Fiction has influenced the movement and similarly, real life people and groups are present in the fiction. Therefore, the analysis of these texts will not be done in purely literary terms. In addition to a literary analysis, facts and connections between the fiction and the real-life environmental movement will be presented. Thus, the paper will not only focus on literature, but it will also illustrate how the real radical environmental movement works. Direct action methods that have been used in real life are present in the works, so their analysis can be equally useful for the understanding of real life activism. In fact, testimonies of real activists and events will be also present during the analysis in order to study this phenomenon in the field of literature more thoroughly. This will be done especially due to the fact that these pieces of fiction, as well as accounts by activists, look for a change of people's minds regarding the real environmental situation. Therefore, their perspectives to try to solve environmental problems are worth considering, both in fiction and in real life.

2. The Theoretical Framework: Ecocriticism

Taking into consideration the characteristics of the four works that will be analysed in this dissertation and the essence of the analysis, that is, the study of radical environmentalism, ecocriticism is, undoubtedly, the most appropriate approach for such endeavour. Although different from what ecocriticism normally deals with, it is undeniable that radical environmentalism can be understood and studied as a type of relationship between humans and nature. More traditional examples of relationships that are the object of study of ecocriticism can be related to concepts such as beauty or spirituality with regards to nature. The worsening environmental situation of the last decades has had radical environmentalism as a response, so the ties between human activism and nature are more than noteworthy. Due to the increasing importance of this field and of issues endangering the environment and life on Earth (climate change and pollution so as to mention a couple of them), studying literature from the point of view of ecocriticism is becoming necessary to comprehend and to be aware of how human beings relate to the world surrounding them. Likewise, ecocritical studies can lead to the reconsideration of certain ideas and behaviours regarding the natural world. Rethinking about negative behaviours towards the environment can lead to significant real life changes and, ultimately, to improvements of the situation of the planet, so ecocritical studies must not be underestimated.

Besides, this paper is aimed at studying a phenomenon that originated relatively recently (late 20th century) and that is directly responding to the current environmental situation, that is, the radical environmental movement. There are only a few representations of radical environmentalism in literature or, more exactly, there are few works that focus primarily on that topic, but the ones that exist must be taken into account. Edward Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975) can be considered the main literary text dealing with radical environmentalism; it was a main driving force in the creation and the development of the movement and made it visible. The relevance of this novel and its sequel *Hayduke Lives!* (1990), makes them essential for the following analysis. This is due to the fact that they present perspectives and actions from within the movement and because what they portray is very illustrative of the real life movement and key in order to fully comprehend it. The other two works that complete

the corpus of the analysis are *Jokerman 8* (2004) and *The Secret World of Terijian* (2007). They are also mainly dedicated to the radical environmental movement and offer aspects about it not developed by Abbey, so they must be also considered. There are other examples of radical environmentalism in fiction, but in some cases they deal with it superficially, while in other cases they offer perspectives that are not necessarily related to reality. In Karen Joy Fowler's *We Are All Completely Beside Ourselves* (2013), for example, there is a character who is a radical environmentalist, but not much attention is paid to the movement, while in Michael Crichton's *State of Fear* (2004) a radical environmental group that produces natural disasters and kills people is depicted. Works of this kind would not be adequate for a deep analysis of radical environmentalism in literature and, for that reason, the four works selected for the analysis seem the most appropriate ones for our purposes.

The main reason for focusing on these works and on this topic is the real life importance of radical environmentalism and its increasing activity since its creation, due to the worsening environmental situation and to the inefficacy of the measures taken by institutions. Besides, it must be especially considered that groups and individuals of this kind are incredibly active in the United States (as well as in other countries) with the objective of saving the Earth from destruction, so their actions are worth considering in relation to the current environmental situation. Focusing on a human-natural relationship that promotes direct action in order to defend the environment will show that these relationships have changed over the years (obviously depending on the situation of the environment) and that these differ significantly from traditional views. The radical activists' way of defending the Earth implies harming institutions that profit from its exploitation, so the complexity of these relationships is evident. In more classical literary works dealing with the natural world other relationships between humans and nature were portrayed. For example, Ralph Waldo Emerson's *Nature* (1836) focuses mainly on philosophical and spiritual perspectives in connection to nature. Even though this kind of relationships is present in the four works (for example, characters see the intrinsic value of nature, but they also link it to their own spirituality and freedom), topics like the opposition to industrial civilization or anarchism will also be presented in the analysis.

The four works of literature that will be the object of study in this dissertation are highly political and criticize ideas and attitudes of the present Western

civilization/system while presenting alternative ideas to these realities. Thus, they can function as a way for the transmission of ideas that might mean behavioural changes of people that would ultimately lead to a positive transformation in human-natural relationships. That is why, even if they are works of fiction, they must be analysed considering the socio-political background and the environmental context in which they were written. These works seem essential for a literary study about radical environmentalism, especially *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, considered one of the key elements for the creation and development of the movement. In fact, this novel represents the beginning of the radical environmental movement for the Earth Liberation Front (one of the most popular groups) and in their no-longer existing webpage they showed its importance through a timeline of the movement's development (see Appendix A). The other three works include real life people, groups or references such as Dave Foreman (co-founder of Earth First!) or the Earth Liberation Front, among others, so the connection between them and the real movement is undeniable. Although there are also examples of radical environmentalism in other cultural expressions, the reason for focusing on these works is that they are very much dedicated to that movement and allow a deep analysis of it. Notable examples of other cultural expressions dealing with radical environmentalism include the 1994 videogame *Eco Fighters* in which the protagonists are activists fighting against a company or the 2010 film *Bold Native* that develops around actions of animal liberation. The actions in the four works will be analysed separately, but as some procedures are common to all and as they strongly linked, the perspective they will offer of radical environmentalism is quite complete.

3. The Ecocritical Approach to Literature

Before focusing on radical environmentalism and other relationships between humans and the natural world, an introduction to the tool of analysis that will lead the study is necessary. Without the proper explanation of the field of study, that is, ecocriticism (with its meaning and implications), the comprehension of the paper could be difficult, especially considering that this approach to literary study has been developed only recently. That means that ecocriticism is not a traditional form of studying literature, although it is becoming increasingly important.

There is more than one definition of the term ecocriticism, but there is a general consensus about the nature of the field. Cheryll Glotfelty states that “ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xix), while Greg Garrard considers it “the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human” (5). What these two definitions make clear is that ecocriticism deals with relationships. These two definitions do not completely coincide, but all in all, they show that ecocriticism studies the relationships between humans and the natural world and how these are represented in literature. So, the different attitudes of humans toward the natural world, including radical environmentalism, that are presented in literary works can be studied from an ecocritical perspective.

One of the main characteristics of the ecocritical approach, along with considering nature and the environment as main objects of study, is that it is not an isolated form of studying literature. As environmental issues depend on and are related to different social, economic and political factors, ecocriticism is also strongly linked to other fields, politics and philosophy for example, and depending on the focus or specific subject, a different ecocritical study can be made. According to author and professor John Tallmadge,

the environmental view has become a mode of omnibus critique (...) with feminism, gender, race, culture, ethnicity, and even deconstruction in the challenge it amounts to dominant modes of thought, discourse, and social relations. (3)

Thus, the environmental view can include realities that are deeply rooted in our society and these can be studied from an ecocritical perspective. This way, while traditional ways of thought are questioned in literature, nature and the environment still have predominance and these are linked to various aspects of society. One of the most important 'subcategories' or fields that can be connected to the environment, ecofeminism, is a clear example of that, due to the fact that it makes comparisons between women and nature as victims of patriarchal and capitalist societies. The ecofeminist view defends that the dominant capitalist system, with its values of progress and development, is a "Western, male-oriented and patriarchal projection which necessarily entailed the subjugation of both nature and women" (Shiva, *Reductionism* 22). The oppression of women is equalled to the oppression of nature because the source of these relationships of power is the same in both cases. Ecofeminism presents traditional relationships between humans and nature (and other humans in this case) as highly destructive, because it relies on practices considered positive only for patriarchy. It proposes an alternative world-view opposed to current science, mechanization and, all in all, so-called progress, favouring a responsibility "based on the fact that the earth and its resources are limited, that our life is limited" (Mies, *Feminist Research* 52). This branch of feminism, strongly related to environmental issues, is a clear example of the scope of the environmental approach nowadays, which encompasses different aspects of society and deals with human-natural relationships as in the case of ecocriticism as a whole.

Taking this into account, it is clear that ecocriticism is not only concerned about descriptions of nature, it is also highly political. For David Mazel "ecocriticism is a kind of environmental politics" (38) and implies taking a political stance of some type. This idea is more than comprehensible considering that relationships (especially the most destructive ones) between humans and nature are usually driven by political or economic forces. The exploitation of resources or the construction of new structures to replace natural spaces can be deemed intrinsically political actions and the effects these have on the environment are also politically laden. Considering the fact that ecocriticism and politics go hand-in-hand, a subject so politically charged like radical environmentalism seems the perfect combination of both and a study of its representation in literature is worthwhile.

As the ecocritical approach focuses on humans and on their ideas towards nature, the possibility to encompass political aspects is another fundamental feature of this approach. So, a politically-concerned ecocritical analysis can lead to highly important reflections regarding humans, politics and the environment due to the fact that the study would not be only aimed at dealing with literature, but also at offering possible perspectives and solutions for real-life issues related to the environment. “Ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory” (Garrard 3), and having ties with currents of thought like ecofeminism or social ecology, politically-oriented ecocriticism is highly critical of capitalist attitudes towards nature. It also tries to provide alternatives to environmental concerns such as pollution by reconsidering political and economic behaviours that produce or increase it. Later in this paper, environmental issues linked to the advance of industrialization and capitalism will be presented. This will allow political and philosophical perspectives in relation to the subject of radical environmentalism to have predominance over aspects like the beauty of the natural world. Among the currents of thought linked to the radical environmental movement, anti-civilization or eco-anarchist ideas can be mentioned. Considering the fact that civilization is deemed intrinsic to the domination of the environment and its forms of life and that eco-anarchism defends the extension of a non-hierarchical society to the natural world, it seems clear that politics, philosophy and the environment are currently part of a complex web of relationships.

Strongly linked to the political dimension of ecocriticism, there is another main characteristic of this type of study, namely, the moral dimension. Pieces of literature that are objects of ecocritical analysis strive to create specific reactions on readers and to transmit certain ideas about what relationships towards nature can be right or wrong, being, thus, sources of environmental awareness. As Timothy Clark argues, “the moral impetus behind ecocriticism (...) necessarily commits it to take some kind of stance (...) on the huge issue of what relationship human beings should have to the natural world” (5), so it seems clear that certain moral behaviours want to be conveyed through ecocriticism. For example, a novel showing the dramatic situation of the glaciers melting in the arctic may encourage people to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide. Through these works and studies, people learn about environmental problems that affect everyone and, as a consequence, they might take some measures to try to save the planet.

Considering the existence of a topic with such a depth and complexity as radical environmentalism, and especially as it involves politics and morality, it seems obvious that in ecocriticism, environmentalism and in any field concerned with nature and the environment, there are different views and different approaches towards the human-nature relationship. Greg Garrard differentiates various positions in environmental studies, politics and philosophy, among them ecofeminism and social ecology. Social ecology promotes a vision in which relationships of power of humans over other humans is extended to the natural world (as in the case of ecofeminism) and defends that “ecological problems are fundamentally social problems requiring fundamental social change” (Bookchin 42). Murray Bookchin, developer and promoter of this current of thought, embraced anarchist ideas and this is why “social ecology promotes a decentralised society of non-hierarchical affiliations” (Garrard 29). Thus, in order to solve environmental problems, a radical transformation of society is necessary due to the fact that inequalities between people are also considered the source of human domination over nature. This vision focuses especially on the exploitation of human beings and is, therefore, anthropocentric.

Nevertheless, there is another perspective mentioned by Garrard called ‘deep ecology’ which is probably the most important one for the subsequent analysis and for its understanding. This position is important within academic circles, but also outside, being an inspiration for activists and organizations of different types (moderate or radical ones). So, the radical environmental actions that appear in the works that will be analysed have a lot to do with deep ecology. This current of thought will be explained in more detail while talking about the ideas that lay behind the radical environmental movement. However, it is important to point out that according to Garrard, “the shift from a human-centred to a nature-centred system of values is the core of radicalism attributed to deep ecology” (21). This and the fact that it acknowledges the intrinsic value of nature and all living beings are key ideas to understand the set of reasons and values that motivate radical environmental actions. In opposition to social ecology, deep ecology gives more importance to the natural world and it can be considered ecocentric. An ideology that gives more importance to the natural world than to the human world (or social world because humans are still natural beings) can be the basis for a new understanding of the relationships between humans and the environment. Ecocriticism can play an important role here, especially when this ideology is portrayed through

literature. As “ecocritics generally tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a “green” moral and political agenda” (Garrard 3), ecocritical studies will show many of the concerns of deep ecologists and the ideas exposed by these will be extremely important for political and moral purposes.

In the relatively few years of existence of this discipline called ecocriticism, it has shown that it can achieve an important place in literary studies, due to the fact that it can encompass a variety of topics that are related to how humans interact with the natural world, for example, politics or the worsening situation of the environment. Ranging from descriptions of landscapes, flora and fauna to overtly political stances like the ones dealing with the advancement of industrialization over nature, the so-called ‘nature writing’ that is the main object of study of ecocriticism, has offered multiple views about life, society and, ultimately, the world. As it has been already mentioned, ecocriticism cannot be considered an isolated discipline and an important socio-political background is essential for the studies. Ursula K. Heine notes

the emergence of a wide spectrum of thought that ranges philosophically from deep ecology to social ecology and ecosocialism, and that politically encompasses projects (...) e.g. radical groups such as Earth First! (46)

so, the interrelatedness between environmental issues and new ways of thought must not be underestimated. In fact, the study of the environment and environment-related areas seems to be alive and well, as the existence of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (founded in the USA) and affiliated associations in countries like the UK or India shows. These groups encourage investigation in the fields of the Humanities and the Arts in regards to environmental issues, so human-natural relationships and currents of thought linked to them are being studied. This dissertation will consider issues like political commitment or direct action in defence of the environment as essential for an ecocritical analysis. For this reason, actions of groups like the Earth First! will be central for the analysis, taking into consideration their real-life commitment to defend the environment, not only by presenting alternative ways of thinking, but also by putting them into practice.

3.1. Nature Writing

Even if ecocriticism can be applied to any text which deals with human and natural relationships (although the text does not focus much on them, they can be present and become objects of study), there is a kind of literature that is normally the object of study of this field. 'Nature writing' can, therefore, offer interesting and thorough perspectives about humans and the environment in which they live. Thus, a proper definition of the term 'nature writing' seems more than necessary. Many of the characteristics of ecocriticism derive from those of nature writing and, for that reason, they seem to go intrinsically together. Leaving aside the fact that ecocriticism is a theoretical approach while nature writing can be the object of its study, both share elements, predominantly their interest for human-natural relationships, that make them interrelated. In fact, so as to differentiate them, it can be said that nature writing is the object of analysis of the theoretical approach that is ecocriticism. Sean Prentiss and Joe Wilkins state that nature writing is

writing that honors the connection between the natural world and human experience, that understands them as parts of a whole, that reckons with the complex forces of place and landscape in human lives. (8)

This definition emphasizes the relationship between humans and the environment that ecocriticism deals with, so nature writing can be considered the putting on paper of this connection. This relationship must be understood as a constant flow because humans and nature are always interacting; the relationship is not static, but dynamic. Besides, as the given definition asserts, these are relationships between subjects of a whole. That means that humans and nature belong to the same world and that (even if there are obvious examples of human attitudes that show the contrary) a balance exists between them. Therefore, nature writing considers humans in relation to a world they belong to, with no human separation or detachment from their environment. The influence and impact of the environment on humans and of humans on the environment and the complexity of these interactions is also a main feature of nature writing.

There is not a universal definition of the term nature writing and its characteristics or main strengths may vary from one author to another. Thomas J. Lyon explains that

this type of literature has “three main dimensions to it: natural history information, personal responses to nature, and philosophical interpretation of nature” (276). Thus, nature writing is firstly related to the observation of the natural world, its elements and natural beings. This observation and appreciation of the environment is followed by a response from the part of humans and that way, certain relationships are established, in the way of respect, love or spirituality so as to mention a few. According to this view, what would ultimately characterise nature writing is the appearance and development of philosophical thoughts that arise from the contact with the environment and that focus on how humans and nature interact. So, it seems clear that nature writing does not only deal with the outer world, but that it is significant in subjective and reflective terms, focusing much on the inner world of the writers. The fact that nature writing can be very personal allows a deep understanding of human-natural relationships and shows the complex ways in which humans can interact with their environment and think about it.

Although there seems to be a consensus about what nature writing is or, at least, about some of its characteristics, there are aspects that are not fully accepted by everyone. Timothy Clark accepts nature writing as “a kind of creative non-fiction associated with usually meditative accounts of natural landscapes and wildlife” (5), but he defends that this term is tricky and not fully acceptable nowadays. This definition presents nature writing as a type of literature dedicated to the natural world and strongly linked to reflections and ideas arising from a human-natural connection, as in the case of the previous definitions. However, Clark is not fully convinced of the use of the word nature. For him nature writing is the one that “celebrates wilderness in the mode associated with such nineteenth-century American writers as Thoreau and John Muir” (6) and argues that as the kind of nature or wilderness these writers witnessed and described no longer exists, this kind of literature is not really written today. Nature that was untouched in the 19th century ceased to exist in that form and, for that reason, talking about that nature also changed notably. Thus, the origin of the controversy of the term lays on the fact that he considers nature that has not been touched by human development the real object of nature writing, not modern nature that has been significantly altered and influenced by human intervention. Writing about nature has become writing about the environment for Clark and this is why he suggests environmental writing as a more appropriate term.

All in all, in spite of some disagreement, it seems clear that nature writing is a literary genre in which writers express different thoughts and feelings that derive from previous connections with the natural world or the environment and a type of writing that usually also has moral intentions. These thoughts can include issues of beauty (linked to descriptions of landscapes, for example) or philosophical ideas that can range from freedom to the possible duties of humans and society regarding nature, as well as perspectives about what attitudes can be right or wrong. Thus, the moral dimension of nature writings is strongly related to the environmental concern ecocriticism shows in its analyses.

The natural world has a long history as an important subject of literary works and this can be clearly appreciated, for example, in the pastoral poems or idylls of the Ancient Greek poet Theocritus who dedicated much of his work to the rural environment of shepherds. Nevertheless, all writings that have included nature in them are not considered nature writing because they do not fit with the previously mentioned characteristics. Nature writing, as “a tradition of nature-oriented nonfiction (...) originates in England with Gilbert White’s *A Natural History of Selbourne*” (Glotfelty xxiii) published in 1789. This work is based on observation and scientific data, mainly related to phenology, that is, the study of life-cycles of plants and animals. White showed a significant ecological awareness in this work and it can be considered a predecessor to the North American tradition of nature writing, which includes authors like Susan Fenimore Cooper or Henry David Thoreau.

Although Gilbert White’s work was key for the development of nature writing, there were other movements and literary expressions that preceded and helped establish this kind of writing, such as Romanticism. As a reaction to the growing industrial society and its mechanization, the Romantic Movement that developed at the end of the 18th and 19th centuries, favoured feelings over rational thinking and had a special focus on nature. Romantic writers wanted to “escape from the over-industrialized, overpopulated urban world to a quieter, wilder, more beautiful natural world” (Prentiss and Wilkins 19) and the motif of that natural world was very present in their literature. So, in clear opposition to what industrial society meant for them, that is, ugliness and evil, nature was associated to ideas like tranquillity or beauty. That way, a new perspective of the natural world appeared, showing relationships and ideas towards it that would also be present in nature writing. Among these, the idea of nature as a place

for repose and positive solitude, separated from industrial society or as a place not corrupted by the evils of society where the mind and morality could thrive, are noteworthy. However, the fact that Romantics favoured feelings over rationality led to a writing about nature which was very far from the scientific perspective (unlike Gilbert White's work that had an important part of research) and they "focused more on experiencing nature in its sublime and terrifying beauty" (Prentiss and Wilkins 19). In Romantic literature nature was strongly linked to what writers perceived as authentic emotions such as terror or awe. These writers tried to achieve the sublime through relationships of this kind with the natural world. Romantic literature also attempted to show the consequences of the domination and destruction of nature, but in ways that did not resemble much the environmental awareness transmitted by nature writing. Unlike authors like Edward Abbey who focused on the direct exploitation of natural spaces, works like Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) or Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798) send a message of the negative consequences actions against the natural world can have without considering them from an environmental perspective. For these authors, the attempt at dominating nature ultimately leads to punishments to perpetrators of offenses against the natural world by powers beyond their reach. Although the environmental awareness shown in nature writing was not really present in these works, the views they offered were influential for the development of that type of writing.

In addition to Romantic literature, the pastoral tradition that existed since Ancient Greek times and continued in later centuries, for example with Alexander Pope's *Pastorals* published in 1709, also influenced the development of nature writing. This type of writing dealt with the rural lives of shepherds, but, in a wider sense, it focused on the subject of a retreat from society to the natural world, an idea that became very present in American literature. During the 18th and 19th centuries the USA lived a significant process of urbanization and industrialization and many people "gazed toward the pastoral world they remembered from not many years ago" (Prentiss and Wilkins 20) in order to escape from factories or increasing pollution. Pastoral elements are present in the American literary tradition, but in it the retreat to the natural world became more important than the lives of shepherds. This motif is present in works as notable as Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884) in which the river signifies the retreat to nature. The desire of going back to a pastoral world "was coupled

with the growing fear that we hadn't just mastered but destroyed nature" (Prentiss and Wilkins 20) and, for that reason, people wanted to experience nature. This was an impulse for writing and reading about the remaining natural world. Writers such as Henry David Thoreau wrote pastoral narratives and experiences escaping from the city to be in contact with the natural landscape. Works like *Walden* (1854) have significant pastoral elements, especially considering that this work is based on a retreat to nature. In general, pastoral writing was, like Romantic literature, far from the scientific perspective and it was "more concerned with aesthetic, emotional, philosophical, and ethical concerns" (Prentiss and Wilkins 21). American pastoral writing offered a perspective that opposed the growing industrial society and developed thoughts about relationships between humans and nature that would be the main focus of nature writing. Thus, going back to nature and establishing connections with it became a response to industrial society that took an important place in literature and human thought.

Natural history can also be considered a predecessor to nature writing. The fact that the land that later became the United States was, since the arrival of colonists (and during their expansion), a world of wild nature that did not look like Europe at all, was impressive, but also terrifying for the newcomers. Facing a completely different and unknown natural world, the new inhabitants of the continent tried to understand (and to dominate) the world surrounding them through scientific observation and thought. The observation and cataloguing of data is done in natural history to study "the geography, plants, trees, animals, and people of a place as a way to understand scientific processes and relationships" (Prentiss and Wilkins 19). Thus, this type of nonfiction writing is based on scientific research in order to describe and comprehend the natural world. However, there are natural histories that mix scientific data with a language that is closer to art and which includes reflections and thoughts about that research. William Bartram's *Travels* published in 1791 is a clear example of that because he "describes many of America's exotic plants and trees, yet he also focuses on human nature and society" (Prentiss and Wilkins 20). Taking this into account, it can be inferred that although natural history is based on scientific observation it can also lead to important and deeper thoughts about human-natural relationships; that way, its influence in the North American tradition of nature writing is noteworthy.

The different characteristics of these predecessors of nature writing led to a type of literature with an interesting background and the potential to deal with human and natural relationships in more complex and innovative ways. Nature writing established itself as a rich literary tradition in the United States as the number and importance of authors and works shows. 19th century authors like John Muir and Henry David Thoreau are notable examples of this tradition of nature writers. Muir's *The Mountains of California* (1894) offers great descriptions of nature and the environment as a result of his innumerable travels through the American landscape; and a work as significant for nature writing as Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) shows the author's reflections living a 'simple life' surrounded by nature. Thoreau's retreat to nature made him develop thoughts regarding human-natural relationships, like his choice to live a simpler life in opposition to the endless progress promoted by his society. This retreat was also the origin of reflections about humans being part of their natural environment and about the personal growth the author achieved by being one with nature. These are just two examples of the wide variety of topics nature writing can deal with, but religious or political concerns can be also strongly linked to this kind of literature. Ralph Waldo Emerson's thought that the divine could be found in nature, as expressed in his essay *Nature* (1836), exemplifies religious issues derived from contacts with the environment. In Edward Abbey's case, his love for nature went hand in hand with hate towards the government and he considered attempts at defending nature political actions.

As nature writing is "writing that highlights the intricacy, beauty, danger, fear, and/or current conditions of the natural world" (Prentiss and Wilkins 10) it is not necessarily always fiction. In fact, it is usually based on real experiences, as in the case of John Burroughs' *Wake-Robin* (1871), a collection of essays with descriptions and thoughts related to nature. However, the works that will be analysed in this dissertation are indeed fiction. This is partly due to the fact that the illegal nature of radical environmentalism (illegal actions appear constantly in the works) would compromise the authors of non-fiction works. Besides, in the works that will be analysed, fiction enables a quite profound development of the topic, which might be limited if the events narrated were real. Even if fictional stories and characters will be presented, the authors' descriptions of nature, feelings and thoughts about it are real and personal. Thus, while actions that never happened develop, the beauty of real landscapes and their current environmental situations will be portrayed. For example, in the two novels by Edward

Abbey that will be analysed, the author dedicates parts to talk about the magnificence of the desert of the American Southwest and to criticise the human activity (constructions and exploitation) carried out in the area. Although these tell fictional stories, Abbey describes the real desert of the American Southwest and informs about its environmental situation. There can be different types of writings all under the label, or related to, 'nature writing' and these can include essays, such as Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) which was incredibly important for the American conservation movement, travel books, a quite modern example can be Dan Richards' *Outpost* (2019), and poetry, Gary Snyder's *Turtle Island* (1974) for instance, among others. Essays have proven to be effective sources for offering interesting perspectives that arise from the contact with the environment, although novels (objects of study of the following paper) can also provide fascinating ideas. Novels, and fiction in general, might give writers the opportunity to explore environmental issues in imaginative ways and to speculate about the future of the environment in order to make people aware of its problems.

All the mentioned works are examples of a literary tradition that seems to be increasingly important and that includes new political, social and philosophical perspectives. More modern authors who try to offer new perspectives include Annie Dillard or Barry Lopez, who have written about human-natural relationships regarding religion or solitude (as in Dillard's *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*, 1974) or about human-animal connections (as in Lopez's *Of Wolves and Men*, 1978, where he tries to understand the complex relationships of humans with these animals). All these ideas can become essential in the 21st century in order to face new environmental problems and much of the importance of nature writing and ecocriticism lays in this fact, indeed, as Cheryll Glotfelty expresses "in an increasingly urban society, nature writing plays a vital role in teaching us to value the natural world" (xxiii).

4. Humans and the Environment in the USA

The development of civilization in the land that later became the United States brought the complete transformation of the continent and its living beings. Both the natural world and native peoples suffered the arrival of Europeans. In addition to the decimation and the destruction of cultures, the development of civilization by settlers was followed by a radical change in the relationships and ways of life between humans and the environment. Human-natural relationships changed significantly after the arrival of Europeans due to the fact that the settlement of these people provoked the clash of two opposed visions; “where the settlers could see only chaos and wilderness, the Indian’s eye and mind could construe an order, a kindred intelligence in all things” (Slotkin, *Regeneration* 27). Although Native American communities differed from each other in the way they experienced human-natural relationships (some were hunter-gatherers, others practiced agriculture, some provoked fires to modify the landscape), they lived in more balanced ways with their environment than European settlers. The civilization newcomers developed in American lands was an attempt at dominating wild land and living beings. It was an imposition of what they considered, according to their ‘civilized’ viewpoint, order. This domination of the continent and its inhabitants meant a dislocation from the natural world, which, in turn, became the source of negative attitudes towards it.

The importance of the impact of the arrival of Europeans on native peoples and on the continent itself is essential for the construction of the narrative of US history and its significance must not be undervalued. The fact that big populations of native inhabitants were erased from the surface of the continent seems to have been forgotten for years, as in the case of wild nature, which could be found all through the continent and is now scarce and threatened. Forgetting or becoming unaware of the ancient ways of living harmoniously with the environment and establishing new relationships of power in the continent, either through the massacres of natives or through the exploitation or destruction of wilderness, has led to an environmental situation that is apparently a point of no return and has established violence (against humans or nature) as a rule for the American civilization. Even if these first contacts had a clear environmental and human impact, this work will not focus on the arrival of Europeans or on the elimination of

natives, but on more recent actions against the environment which are direct consequence of the industrial-capitalist era and whose devastating effects are leading to a dramatic environmental situation.

The following sections will consider the expansion and development of the new American civilization across the United States, paying special attention to the exploitation of the land. Completely opposed to native ways of life, the development of a civilization based on endless growth, technological progress and the extraction of resources on what was considered 'a new world' supposed a radical transformation of the landscape, the environment and, all in all, life on the continent. As a thorough account of the history of the new civilization would be extremely exhaustive and difficult to explain, the focus will be mainly put on the 20th century, when big changes related to the exploitation and destruction of the land occurred, which can be considered the direct originators of the current environmental situation.

4.1. The Frontier Myth and Expansion

Most of the original communities of what later became the USA¹ developed a lifestyle of balance and respect toward the natural world and became a part of the environment, a part of a whole. Their cultures were not based on the endless growth and exploitation of the land that new settlers considered ‘progress,’ because, although some natives exploited the land, for example through agriculture, they were not nearly as destructive as colonists. Nevertheless, for the Europeans that were to become the new inhabitants of that land, America was a new place for resources and settlement. The fact of settling new lands and the abundance of resources that were not exploited until then allowed them to develop a civilization similar to the one in Europe: towns and cities were created, commercial links were established, connections like railways appeared and all this development started shaping the United States of America. Besides, the exploitation of resources, through actions like mining or logging, allowed a rapid development of a civilization that took the place of the wild nature that characterized the continent. Starting in the Atlantic coast of the USA, this new civilization expanded to the Pacific coast, thus populating and spreading a new way of life throughout a big part of the country.

This expansion to the west² became key to spread civilization across the continent and it laid on the mythological idea of the West that became so important for US society and culture. For the American social imaginary the West meant, among other things, new opportunities, freedom, a promise of resources and wealth and a way of life only possible in such a wild and mysterious place. The mythical idea of the West went hand in hand with the idea of the frontier, which advanced as civilization did. The frontier marked where civilization ended and where savage and unknown lands began. This limit, partly geographical and partly imaginary, was constantly being pushed farther, thus spreading civilization. The fact of going west and pushing the frontier “had done the most to spawn the democracy, individualism, and nationalism” (Malone and Etulain

¹ US/USA hereafter. Even if we acknowledge that the geographical and political construction of the nation was still in process, these terms will be used for economic and narrative purposes.

² West, with capital letter, makes reference to the concept while, west, with small letter makes reference to the direction.

1) of the USA. Contemporary American society and culture today, thus, owe a lot to the Frontier Myth. As new lands were discovered by those pioneers, areas that used to be wild started being exploited and, later, industrialized. The Myth of the American Frontier is also strongly related to certain human and natural relationships. As Marc Reisner explains, the conquest of the West was justified by “the myth that the hostile natural forces of the West could be overcome by individual initiative” (112-113). Thus, the idea of establishing a power relationship of humans over nature that led to the taming of the environment became essential in the mythological conception of the territorial expansion of the USA. Therefore, constant expansion accompanied by the taming of wilderness became an essential aspect for the development of the new American civilization. So, it seems that the expansion of civilization in what is now the USA has a somehow mythological basis. However, the fact that mythological ideas contributed to the development of civilization must not be undervalued, especially considering how these were and still are deeply rooted in the American mind-set.

When European settlers reached what they considered the New World, they encountered a continent that presented new possibilities and the opportunity to start anew leaving the Old World behind. The mythology of the frontier, created and developed since the times of early settlements (when everything outside their borders was wild and mysterious), led to the “conception of America as a wide-open land of unlimited opportunity for the strong, ambitious, self-reliant individual to thrust his way to the top” (Slotkin, *Regeneration* 5). This idea justified the exploration of unknown lands and the accumulation of resources (wood, minerals) which seemed endless. The expansion of the frontier allowed said accumulation, which likewise offered individuals the chance to become rich and powerful, something that was improbable back in the already exploited Europe. The promise that every single man and only men (it seemed that the promise was not made to women) could become a successful person gave place to a quite extreme way of individualism, which is still one of the most prominent values of the USA. Thus, the Myth of the Frontier contributed greatly to shape the American ideological foundation while it justified the expansion across the continent. Indeed, the main task of the Frontier Myth as part of a collective ideology “was to explain and justify the establishment of the American colonies” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter* 10). These colonies grew and became interconnected, giving place to a civilization that thrived thanks to its myths.

Although the Myth of the Frontier was created as a way to justify early settlements, the frontier did not remain in a fixed place. The frontier, that is, the imaginary border that separated both worlds (wilderness and civilization) was constantly being pushed farther and the expansion of colonial powers came with every re-establishment of that border. As European colonies expanded and became more complex the Frontier Myth acquired new meanings, showing that it could adapt to the circumstances of colonial development. According to Richard Slotkin, the Myth that justified the early colonies later “was called on to account for our rapid economic growth, our emergence as a powerful nation-state, and our distinctively American approach to the socially and culturally disruptive process of modernization” (*Gunfighter* 10). Thus, the Frontier Myth became a justification and reason of the prosperity of settlers and of the rapid development of their civilization even though it went hand in hand with the exploitation of the land and massive killings of Native Americans. In sum, the conquest of the West was a promise of development and wealth and as it could be adapted to new realities encountered, it became significant for the ideological, economic and political establishment of the USA as a modern nation-state.

The exploitation and accumulation of resources brought a degree of development and power that made the expanding American civilization more autonomous and independent from Europe. The real American individual the Myth portrayed “was one who had defeated and freed himself from both the “savage” of the western wilderness and the metropolitan regime” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter* 11). Thus, this American individual had to become independent from wilderness, but also from the powers of the metropolis. He had to leave the Old World behind to be able to create a new beginning in a new continent and to, eventually, seize all the opportunities offered by the Myth of the Frontier. That liberation from the metropolis ultimately led to the establishment of a new country, but the idea of freeing the new American individual from the ‘savage’ can be considered more problematic. This so-called ‘liberation from wilderness,’ brought the emergence of relationships based on power of humans over nature. These provoked the exploitation of the land, its destruction and the deaths of living beings, such as Native Americans. These dominating behaviours towards the natural world and the indigenous peoples were established on the basis of a self-proclaimed moral superiority. As Slotkin points out, “the moral landscape of the Frontier Myth is divided by significant borders, of which the wilderness/civilization, Indian/White border is the

most basic” (*Gunfighter* 14). The Myth also encouraged the assimilation of this collective morality during the expansion across the continent. According to it, Native Americans and the natural world surrounding them were on the other side of borders that separated them from settlers and, thus, they were morally evil, so their elimination was not only justifiable, but a kind of duty. The Myth accounted for the subjugation and elimination of Native peoples and nature and established violence against humans (based on racism) and against the natural world (as antagonistic to the American civilization) as the basis for a collective ideology and as relationships that should be taken for granted.

From the beginning the Frontier Myth promoted well-defined values and attitudes that were followed without being questioned; the mythical characteristics of this idea made it something that should be pursued unconditionally, although it implied extreme violence. As Slotkin explains, “its ideological underpinnings are those same “laws” of capitalist competition, (...) of Social Darwinian “survival of the fittest” as a rationale for social order, and of “Manifest Destiny”” (*The Fatal* 15), so these main values promoted by the Myth are very specific and give an idea about what laid behind the expansion across the continent. Besides, their transcendence is clear because they can be easily recognised in modern American society; the similarities between what the Myth promoted and modern capitalism are evident. People in search of the life promised by the Myth established a social order based on competition and accumulation of resources and along with it came the elimination of forms of life (human and non-human) that were not compatible with this imposed new order. The idea that colonists were destined to expand across the continent (known as Manifest Destiny) along with ruthless competition led to the violent situation of eliminating Native inhabitants and getting as many resources as possible in order to enable the emergence of the rich and powerful individuals promoted by the Frontier Myth. However, even if social growth and expansion through the continent were considered part of the civilizing process and sources of power and prosperity, the reality of the origin of this civilization was masked by the Myth. Slotkin explains the true nature of the prosperous American civilization stating that:

the conquest of the wilderness and the subjugation or displacement of the Native Americans who originally inhabited it have been the means to our achievement of a national identity, a democratic polity, an ever-expanding economy, and a phenomenally dynamic and “progressive” civilization. (*Gunfighter* 10)

The civilization that expanded through the ‘new’ continent and that has become the modern USA, achieved its development and wealth based on a myth that promoted the exploitation of the land and the elimination of humans, that is to say, the erasure of the original life forms of the continent was the real reason for its success. Even if such violence was apparent also at that time, it was covered by the ideology and values promoted by the Myth. These were incredibly meaningful for settlers and that is why the use of extreme violence was not considered an impediment in their way to create a new beginning and a new life.

The conquest and expansion through that part of the American continent has always been characterised by violence. Nevertheless, this violence must not be considered a consequence of the civilizing process, but the other way round; it was the very root of all development. The Myth of the Frontier was key for the creation of the American civilization and considering that “violence is central to both the historical development of the Frontier and its mythic representation” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter* 11), these brutal attitudes can be deemed the origin of all that is now known as American. Cruel and ferocious methods were always present in the process of pushing the frontier farther. This was mainly due to the fact that these methods were backed by a set of mythical values rooted in violence. The fact that ruthless attacks against the land and its inhabitants were the main driving force for the creation of a new country seems justifiable enough, but it also seems its very foundation. It is generally thought that the Founding Fathers of the USA were a small group of men who, after the American War of Independence, and based on democratic principles, created a frame for a government, although not everyone agrees with that. Slotkin explains that the real founding fathers of the USA were those who

tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness – the rogues, adventurers, and land-boomers; the Indian fighters, traders, missionaries, explorers, and hunters who killed and were killed until they had mastered the wilderness. (*Regeneration* 4)

Thus, the true founders of the USA would be all those perpetrating violence while pushing the frontier farther. Considering the significance of that fact, it could be said that this country was founded even before formal talks about it appeared. Starting that path of cruelty was what really led to the creation of the new country. So the beginning of brutality against the land and its life forms meant the new beginning individuals

driven by the Myth wanted to create. Besides, this was a violence directed towards wilderness and Natives, considered savages and thus part of wilderness. Therefore, the war against wild nature that started with the arrival of settlers and the complete transformation of human-natural relationships it implied was the origin of the new civilization. The new relationships of power of humans over nature changed the face of the continent forever and, as part of the violent foundation of the country, persist as the ideological tenets of ‘progress.’

A new beginning in a new land had the objective of breaking away from what the Old World stood for and settlers looked for a regeneration of spirit and wealth in the American continent. However, what was a renewal for the people who left Europe was an elimination of existence as they knew it for Natives. Settlers saw America as an opportunity for regeneration, but due to the characteristics of their mythical conceptions, this regeneration came by force and violence. In fact, “the myth of regeneration through violence became the structuring metaphor of the American experience” (Slotkin, *Regeneration* 5). So, colonists saw that the violence against wilderness and against what they considered savages was the proper way for starting a new life, for regenerating themselves from the evils left in Europe. In order to create the new beginning they dreamed of, they had to erase existing life forms seen as wild and evil and start building a new society from the very basis. Furthermore, considering that this new beginning promoted by the Frontier Myth would free settlers from European and wilderness sins, it can be considered that “the Myth represented the redemption of American spirit” (Slotkin, *Gunfighter* 12). Thanks to the beliefs associated to the Myth and to putting them into practice, colonists destroyed all they considered evil and miserable and achieved a spiritual renewal that made their new beginning possible, even if all this was achieved through extreme violence.

Regarding human-natural relationships and the killings of natives, the violent foundation of the new society could be hardly considered the most appropriate one. This is why, in addition to a huge impact on the original life of the continent, this basis also became the cause for internal social and economic conflicts. The Myth of the Frontier made people imagine “that the natural environment is so rich in resources as to render competition harmless, class conflict absurd, and monopoly almost impossible” (Slotkin, *The Fatal* 139), so the Myth was also a device to avoid social tensions as the colonies expanded. The fact of facing a continent that had not been exploited and the quantity of

resources that were achieved made people think that wealth was endless and, indeed, at the beginning, the resources could easily enrich the population of the colonies, so the Myth was true at least for a time. The promise of interminable lands and richness for everyone the Myth represented “offered one solution to the social divisions arising from economic expansion” (Slotkin, *The Fatal* 138), because although some people had less wealth than others, they could continue expanding and exploiting until their richness reached similar levels. Nevertheless, the frontier could not be pushed farther infinitely and it began closing. Along with that fact, people realized resources were limited. What the Myth of the Frontier had always promised ceased to be true but people continued behaving “as active and ambitious pursuers of wealth and power” (Slotkin, *The Fatal* 138). That is, they continued acting according to the terms established by the Myth. The frontier closed, as a consequence, people had to deal with resources from a huge but limited space. Slotkin points out that the fact that the frontier could not be pushed farther “would be seen as the clamping down of a safety valve, producing the intolerable internal pressures that are born of the competition of classes for limited resources” (*The Fatal* 138). Thus, that mythical device that avoided internal tensions could no longer fulfil this task and people started competing against each other more fiercely for the limited resources of the continent. This competition, so characteristic of capitalism, led to socioeconomic inequalities because not everyone could get the same amount of resources if these were limited. That way, the Myth of the Frontier and the violence against wilderness (seen as mere resources) could also be considered the source of social and economic conflicts that are still present in the American society.

All in all, the Myth of the Frontier and its values of violence and domination of the American nature were incredibly important in the creation of the modern USA and they are still present nowadays. The Myth is deeply ingrained in the American mind-set even though it has led to problems such as the ones settlers wanted to leave behind in Europe (poverty or religious sins for example). An unconditional faith in the Myth and its ideals “has blinded us to the consequences of the industrial and urban revolutions and to the need for social reform and a new concept of individual and communal welfare” (Slotkin, *Regeneration* 5). The individualism and voracious competition promoted by the Myth have permeated a social sphere that is full of inequalities. Likewise, industrial and urban expansion based on power over the natural world has led to an environmental degradation that could be hardly imagined when settlers encountered a ‘new’ world of

wilderness. The fact that the USA is (one of) the most prominent economic power of today is very much due to the Frontier Myth, so abandoning this set of values seems impossible. However, significant internal changes, for example, regarding the obtainment and distribution of resources, promoted by ideals like a greater environmental awareness, would be necessary to try to solve socioeconomic tensions and the worsening environmental situation.

4.2. The Westward Expansion and the Exploitation of the Land

Although seemingly mythical in origin, the American civilization that was to become the industrial-capitalist civilization of today was characterised, since the very beginning, by the relationships it established with nature and the environment; in fact, it was characterised by the war it started waging against them. Considering that “civilization as we know it depends on the domination and exploitation of every type of ‘resource’ (whether living or habitat for the living) and cannot exist without such exploitation” (Marshall, “The Inseparable Earth” 35), it can be said that the existence of a new civilization whose growth depended on the exploitation of the land was incompatible with what the American continent was until then. The much more peaceful relationship between Native Americans and the environment started to be replaced by relationships of power that included the domination of land, resources and living beings, including humans that were not so high in the hierarchy of the developing civilization. As Christopher Manes explains, “from its origins, civilization defined itself in relation to the natural world” (40) more specifically “by dividing the world between cultivated lands and wilderness” (40), so in the north of America a division between tamed lands and wild spaces was created. The expansion of civilization, as a power that opposed wilderness, meant an obvious reduction of wild spaces, which became mere sites for extracting resources, and an increase of exploited lands, firstly by agriculture and later by more destructive and technologically advanced means, part of the industrializing process. Furthermore, this expansion also had a catastrophic impact on native species because “we killed off the last of the eastern bison (...) we drove the Arizona elk to extinction, killed off the bighorn sheep in the Badlands, and shot the last passenger pigeons from the skies” (Prentiss and Wilkins 20). Thus, the civilizing process was a violent attack against the land and its living beings and its unstoppable force changed life as it was known before in the continent. All this development, as well as the pushing of the frontier, was justified by certain ideas deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness. The dominion over nature was due to a discourse that defended that “the undisturbed processes of nature are somehow stagnant or defective or detrimental and must be improved by human intervention” (Manes 40). Thus, the obligation of

transforming the environment was taken for granted in the civilising process, without considering that the American continent was suffering irreversible damages. Progress was considered the substitute for 'flawed nature' and that meant the beginning of new and destructive relationships with the environment.

4.2.1. Mining

During the westward expansion of the developing American civilization and, obviously, once that civilization was established, different kinds of land exploitation were carried out in the North American continent; one of the most important ones was mining. The extraction of abundant and unexploited resources was one of the reasons and pillars for settling new lands. In fact, as Rebecca Solnit points out, “mining was the major impetus for white settlement, and a major source of environmental damage” (169). The popular gold rushes existed before the 18th century and, along with the extraction of other minerals, the surface of the continent started changing and showing important environmental damages. The wealth promised by the Myth of the Frontier was found under the surface of the continent, but obtaining it meant an irreversible transformation of the land.

Even though mining has a longer history in this land, the beginning of the 20th century marked an important period regarding the exploitation and negative effects on the environment. The desire to obtain a mineral as precious as gold never vanished and, as time passed, technological developments allowed a more productive, but also (environmentally) destructive exploitation. In the first decades of the 20th century “mining outfits continued to extract surface gold by such environmentally disastrous methods as blasting away stream banks with large hydraulic hoses and digging up stream beds with floating dredges” (Malone and Etulain 23). So, the new technological procedures for the extraction of surface gold were intrinsic to the deterioration and transformation of rivers, with significant consequences to the land and to all living beings depending on those rivers. River areas were completely remodelled in order to respond to the greed for gold, showing that the domination of humans over nature could reach yet another dimension, radical transformations of landscapes and natural formations. Furthermore, mining had important effects on rivers even if complete alterations of the landscape were not needed because it affected “groundwater in shallow aquifers by lowering the water table, reducing the rate of flow, or changing the chemical quality of the water” (Cook 30). Thus, although in some cases rivers were not directly attacked by mining, the fact of drilling the surface of the earth and working

inside of it had negative consequences such as a reduction of quantity and the presence of chemicals on the underground water.

The mining sector became especially important in the American West, indeed, “pit mining spread rapidly across the interior West” (Malone and Etulain 25). Hence, this part of the continent became full of huge exploiting sites that completely transformed the landscape and that had serious effects on the land. The desert and wild landscapes of the Southwest became full of ‘holes’ for the extraction of minerals and along with that, came a process that made the desert adapt to the demands of the mining sector. Therefore, in order to make a place adequate for mining, the remodelling of land and the destruction of natural formations had to happen. In the first three decades of the 20th century “Arizona, with its many mining centers, became the nation’s copper leader” (Malone and Etulain 26), so it seems clear that the American West was a preferred place for mining. The promise of wealth in the West became true in Arizona, which being the major copper exploiter, had a significant increase in resources and wealth to continue developing. However, the destruction of the land and the water pollution it implied were irreversible damages that went hand in hand with so called progress and a direct consequence of the promise made by the Frontier Myth.

During the second half of the 20th century the mining sector continued extracting minerals from the earth, but due to technological advancements and an increased population, the methods used were different from previous times. Bigger scale mining sites were required to extract more minerals and the technological developments that increased productivity and effectiveness were also more harmful for the environment. Nevertheless, the most significant change in this period of mining came with the exploitation of a mineral not so popular until then. As Malone and Etulain explain, “only one major new metal came to western prominence after the war: uranium for nuclear energy, which was mined heavily in New Mexico and Utah” (244-245). In addition to the obvious consequences of establishing new mining sites with all it implies (roads, for example) the extraction of a mineral with the characteristics of uranium meant high rates of pollution. In places for extraction and processing of uranium “systematic pollution of various components of the environment with radionuclides and other toxic pollutants is observed” (Torgoev, Aleshin and Ashirov 293) and it especially affects rivers and streams, being thus, dangerous for living beings, including humans. The extraction of uranium was mostly done in said two western states, furthermore,

Arizona was “by far the epicentre of western metal mining” (Malone and Etulain 245). Thus, it seems evident that the American West was still the place for the extraction of minerals in the American civilization. The fact of filling the western landscape with mines (huge holes in the earth) transformed that land. With that exploitation came pollution and, thus, the West became victim of its own process of development. Among the numerous negative effects mining had on the American continent, Cook mentioned the “inability to establish adequate long-term vegetation, and emission of fugitive dust” (31) along with “aesthetic degradation, landslides, and acid mine drainage” (31). That way, although mining became a source of wealth for the West, it also brought the presence of chemicals to water and air, landslides not caused by natural conditions (which also transformed the landscape) and a reduction of vegetation in a place usually characterised by its scarcity. Last but not least, the wild beauty of that part of the continent became shaped by the viewpoint of the civilizing powers and, with the presence of innumerable mines, the landscape changed forever and ceased to be the wild land it was before.

Another mineral whose exploitation became key in the economic and geographic expansion of the American civilization was coal. It also had a huge importance in the West because “coal mining grew up at various locales throughout the region, primarily as an adjunct of coal-burning railroads and mining smelters” (Malone and Etulain 36). The exploitation of coal was located close to places where it was necessary for the expansion of civilization. Trains needed coal so as to function and, as railroads were extending through the continent, mines for the extraction of coal also appeared not far from them. In addition to that, the energy resulting from the burning of coal was used in smelting, in order to be able to deal with other metals, thus, making clear that the exploitation of coal contributed greatly to expansion. The exploitation and burning of coal was done in a massive way as the example of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company shows. This company “owned sixty-nine thousand acres of coal land and mined twelve thousand tons daily by the 1890s” (Malone and Etulain 36) what means that a big space of land was under the dominion of a company that was intensively exploiting it. The energy that could be created every day with such an amount of coal and the economic benefits it produced, proved that the promise of wealth promoted by the Myth of the Frontier could become true.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that coal was a source of wealth, the exploitation and burning of this mineral had obvious environmental effects. In addition to the already mentioned consequences mining has on the earth and on its water, coal mining can produce serious problems like the “creation of closed surface depressions, erosion, and mineralization of surface waters” (Cook 3) at a local level. Taking this into consideration, it seems evident that mining is intrinsic to the deterioration and transformation of the surface of the Earth and of its waters, even if these are found under the surface. In addition to that, coal is a dirty mineral in the sense that coal-related filth when mining makes miners be exposed to diseases like “black lung, silicosis, and pneumonia caused by inhaling mine dust” (Yarnell 21). The process of mining can lead to serious health problems, but also when coal is burnt it produces filth and pollution and it fills the air and water with various toxic chemical elements like arsenic and mercury. So, in addition to environmental problems, mining can be the source of health problems that especially affect humans. Malone and Etulain proposed the Farmington-Four Corners as a clear example of that pollution and expressed that this was a “complex of coal-fired plants carried by high-tension wires mainly to southern California and emitting so much steam and pollution as to become for space travellers the most visible human activity on earth” (251). The fact that the steam and clouds produced by this complex of coal burning could be seen from out of the planet gives an idea of how extreme pollution could be in that place and how negatively it could affect living beings in the area by filling air and water with toxic particles. It is also worth mentioning that this complex is built on the Navajo Nation, but the property was leased from them. Such a contaminant and destructive relationship with the environment, differs from the ancient lifestyles of the Natives inhabiting the country. Besides, it shows in which ways the new civilization that started dominating that land and its living beings established a relationship of power over nature without caring about the possible environmental consequences it could bring.

4.2.2. Logging

Another important sector of exploitation that developed along with the pushing of the frontier was logging, a clear example of unbalanced human-natural relationships. It can be thought that in a continent that was so full of wild lands with immense forests logging would easily supply the new settlers with huge amounts of wood, what in fact did. However, as will be seen, ferocious logging also meant a threat for the continent. Using the wood of the trees was common even for Native Americans (to make fires for instance), but, as a sector, “commercial timbering dated from fur trade and gold rush days” (Malone and Etulain 26). That is, commercial timbering existed in that land earlier than the 18th century. As in the case of any other resource encountered during the process of expansion, wood trade also became an important part of the colonial market. Talking about logging or any other exploitation activity in general means talking about new towns and cities, the expansion of trains and railroads and, all in all, new connections of the American civilization across the continent. This is due to the fact that the material wealth produced by these very kinds of exploitation allowed the prosperity and development of settlements and their connections. “In the lush pine, fir, spruce, cedar, and tamarack forests of the western coastal states, and in the less valuable pine and fir stands of the Rockies, frontier lumbering grew up in conjunction with industrial mining and the railroads” (Malone and Etulain 26), thus, logging did not make its way alone towards the West, it spread along with other exploitation forms and brought civilisation with it. The expansion of railroads became very important for the development of logging because they “opened up the new forests and transported lumber to markets in a volume that only a few years earlier would have seemed impossible” (Lewis 4). Railroads made their way through forests in order to connect points of the continent that were not linked at all and, thus, continuing with their expansion, they entered as disruptive forces into these natural spaces. Besides, the fact that trains could transport huge amounts of wood (much more than in previous times) to markets far from their origin was an extra impulse for obtaining that resource. This is why trains and railroads had a direct impact on the wood-market and on the forests across the continent.

Like in the case of the exploitation and burning of coal, which developed close to the expanding railroads, logging was also only a part of the huge and complex structure of the growing civilization. This civilization could only be so effective exploiting and expanding due to various and simultaneous attacks on the environment among which logging was one of the most significant ones. Fredy Perlman saw the effectiveness and success of civilizations (including the American one) as a consequence of preying on the natural world and he expressed that the progress of civilization, that is, the progress of the machine, “is first of all an unrelenting war against everyone and everything that is not a machine” (*Against His-story* 202). Thus, constant and repeated attacks on nature in the form of exploitation and more mechanized methods (as a sign of a mechanizing society) for doing so can be considered characteristics of the warring American civilization. The expansion of the railroads, mining and logging belonged to the many weapons of that civilization against the natural world and contributed greatly to the elimination of what was not a machine, that is, of life.

The fact that logging is not a process as complex as the extraction of minerals (cutting trees is in itself the extraction and land does not require an adaptation for that work), allowed it to spread rapidly and if the frontier was marked by savage lands, logging functioned as a way to cut that frontier and push it farther. The disappearance of a frontier made of trees, meant obviously the disappearance of old forests that could not be replaced in the same form; the way westward had to continue as a consequence of depletion. “With the depletion of the splendid forests of the upper Midwest, (...) lumbermen began migrating toward the perennial, hardwood forests of the South and the humid, evergreen timberlands of the Pacific Northwest and California” (Malone and Etulain 27), so the inability to continue logging in other places, made settlers go West to continue exploiting forests. The desert of the American Southwest did not offer the possibility of obtaining huge quantities of wood, thus expansion had to continue until the westernmost parts of the continent were reached, including the North and the South. Taking this into account, it could be thought that the idea of wealth promised by the Myth of the West could be translated as a promise for land exploitation.

The disappearance of old-growth forests and all the environmentally negative consequences it brought, the loss of ecosystems and the deaths of plants and animals among others, were not taken into account by the ones spreading civilization. It seemed to them that logging could continue eternally. Huge quantities of wood were wasted

through the years, that is to say, trees were being cut down for the sake of cutting. However, there were some changes of ideas and “western lumbermen, previously among the most wasteful of environmental exploiters, now began salvaging their waste products in the interest simply of widening profit margins” (Malone and Etulain 28-29). This change meant less waste, but as it was motivated by profits instead of by an environmental concern the impact of logging did not decrease. The real and significant change came where exploiters realized that there were no more new lands to be conquered and trees were finite; as Malone and Etulain explain:

The threat of depletion, and the final realization that no more frontiers of virgin lands awaited them, caused lumbermen, federal and state authorities, and thoughtful conservationists to abandon the old ways and to begin treating (...) timber stands as renewable sources – in other words, as agricultural crops. (29)

The fact that the frontier that was being pushed farther ceased to exist marked a turning point in the development of the American civilization, but it was also significant in environmental terms. Settlers that became inhabitants of the new American civilization spread throughout that northern part of the continent, reaching places where nobody had arrived before. Indeed, it is quite noteworthy that “there are few places in North America that were not first walked upon by the indigenous inhabitants of the continent” (Solnit 24); that is, there were still virgin lands in the continent until civilization and exploitation arrived. The end of the frontier and the end of forests came together and a new era of human-made forests began. Transforming old forests into crops was environmentally disastrous for the continent; ecosystems were lost, different and more ‘efficient’ species replaced the ones that inhabited the land before the arrival of colonists and wild nature was tamed to a degree never seen before. What remained true and wild in this part of the continent was being erased.

In the second half of the 20th century logging continued, especially involving forests developed as crops, only for their exploitation. This was due to the fact that old forests were not as numerous as before and, in order to avoid their complete disappearance, some wanted to be preserved. In this period new techniques for logging, such as clear-cutting, were developed and they were accompanied by more modern technology, especially related to milling. Logging increased in dimension and “the clear-cutting of large swaths of timberland, fifty to one hundred acres at the least, became the common mode of operations, after which the ground was burned and

replanted” (Malone and Etulain 246-247). The process of clear-cutting made huge areas of trees disappear and the land was completely transformed. In spite of this reduction in the number of trees, these newly created crops could be replanted continuously, and thus, they became highly profitable. Nevertheless, such a technique brought diverse negative environmental effects. Daniel D. Chiras explains that “erosion in clear-cut areas may deplete the soil of nutrients, thus impairing or even preventing revegetation” (234) and that the burning in clear-cutting “can damage soils by destroying nutrient-cycling bacteria. Burning also volatilizes soil nitrogen, robbing nutrients from the soil itself” (234). Thus, clear-cutting has a highly negative impact on the soil and on its capacity to be a place overflowing with life. In addition to that, it directly affects animal and plant species by destroying their habitats. Although clear-cutting brought economic benefits to those practicing it, in the 1960s it became unsustainable because they were “cutting more from their own lands than replanting could replace. Even in the magnificent Douglas fir forests of southwestern Oregon, America’s greatest remaining stands of “old growth” timber eroded rapidly” (Malone and Etulain 247). Although the timber they were using belonged to replanted ‘crops,’ they also had to recur to old growth forests because the amount of wood they were cutting was above the quantity ‘crops’ offered. The greedy practices of the logging sector had a huge impact on the continent and changed its surface forever. Besides, this process of development of the modern American civilization meant the end of numerous old forests, thus eliminating a part of the wild essence of that land.

In addition to a bigger environmental impact, more modern technology and market behaviours also brought negative consequences for the workers of the logging sector. As Rebecca Solnit explains, “logging and milling jobs were largely being lost to mechanization, exports of unmilled timber, mills in Mexico, and the unsustainable rate at which northern California was being shaved bare” (92). Mechanization made work easier and faster, but it went hand in hand with the reality that less human workers were needed to do the work. The fact that timber was sent to Mexican mills in order to reduce costs also affected American workers: they lost their jobs because companies hired Mexican people and because these people worked the same for less money. As in the case of Oregon, California was losing the majority of its forests (including plantations considered crops) due to excessive logging. That situation also meant a reduction of jobs in the sector because there were no more trees to cut. That way, the greedy

practices of some individuals and companies did not only bring negative consequences for the environment, but also worse labour conditions and even unemployment for the people of the logging sector, thus making clear that resources and development were considered more important than humans and nature.

Although the environmental consequences of ferocious logging could be observed in various points across North America, one of the places that suffered the impact of logging more was the Appalachian region. This area encompasses a big part of the Eastern USA (stretching from north to south) and includes (parts of) the following states: Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, New York, Ohio, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama and Mississippi. Deforestation was a dramatic consequence that logging and competition for resources brought to that region. In the state of West Virginia, for example, “by the 1920s virtually the entire state had been deforested” (Lewis 3). Already in the first two decades of the 20th century West Virginia had been depleted from the trees and forests that characterised this wild region. As a solution to this deforestation loggers either moved to other places or started planting trees anew. Reforestation made the landscape green again, but the original life of that land disappeared and the new trees that were planted were intended to be used as mere resources. The new trees that were treated as crops could be exploited faster and more efficiently due to technological improvements, because “yarding machines accelerated tree removal in the rough terrain, and new bandsaws accelerated milling” (Yarnell 20). Thus, technological developments allowed an easier and faster exploitation of trees (even of trees whose location could imply problems in earlier times) and a process of milling that became notably faster. However, the capacity of a faster exploitation of trees almost led to a second deforestation, a deforestation of the trees that were already considered crops. These greedy practices towards the environment along with diverse technological developments led to a situation in the Appalachian region that almost finished with all its trees for a second time.

Said technological improvements benefited economically those exploiting the forests of the Appalachian region. These can also be considered one of the main reasons (along with ruthless competition) for the ruining of that land. In addition to deforestation, “mechanization increased soil leaching, erosion, flooding, and fire frequency” (Yarnell 20), so more technologically advanced techniques of logging had a

significantly negative impact on Appalachian lands. The loss of trees and forests was accompanied by the degradation and transformation of the soil and the land became prone to destructive natural disasters like floods or fires, even though these had their origin in human and technological intervention. It seems more than evident that if the human and mechanical intervention in Appalachia caused deforestation and an impoverishment of the land itself, it would definitely also affect animal lives in the region. Animals were indeed affected and Yarnell explains some of the effects deforestation in the south of Appalachia had on them stating that “beaver vanished and bear, wild turkey, and deer were nearly gone. Native trout populations decreased sharply because deforestation caused silting and warmed streams” (21). Some animals disappeared from the region and the number of some species was reduced dramatically, due to the fact that their habitat, food and water supplies were transformed or destroyed. The fact that deforestation had a big impact also on aquatic life-forms like trout, gives an idea of how powerful negative attitudes towards the environment could be, but also of how all living beings within the same ecosystem are interconnected and, in the end, completely affected by the disruption caused by the exploitation of the natural world. Thus, although Appalachia is only part of the USA, it serves as a quite illustrative example of the dramatic consequences an exploitation kind like logging can have on the land and on all its living beings. Furthermore, the effects of logging show that even if that sector has traditionally been a source of wealth, it has been so by exerting extreme methods of violence against nature.

4.2.3. The Oil Industry

The oil or petroleum industry has also been another significant way of exploitation of the land and its natural resources and has meant an increased wealth for the American civilization or, at least, for certain people and companies. Especially during the 20th century but also in the 21st century, oil extraction, refining and transportation has become an important sector of the American economy. Texas and California, for instance, became producers of huge quantities of that product. Desert areas of the American West have proved to be quite rich spaces for the extraction of oil and the complexity of that industry has allowed a process of exploitation that manifested itself at various levels. For example, in California, even if a big number of oil wells could be found in the early 20th century, “oil refining surged to become California’s chief manufacturing industry” (Malone and Etulain 32). Thus, even if there was also a big presence of oil extraction in this state, the industry was especially devoted to oil refining, to the transformation of crude oil into more useful products like fuel. At the beginning of the 20th century, the “Rockefeller moved in quickly, buying out local developer Demetrius Schofield and forming Standard Oil of California (SoCal) as the West Coast arm of his empire” (Malone and Etulain 32). A family already known by their wealth and power, saw California as an opportunity to become even richer. By absorbing a smaller company and founding a company like Standard Oil of California, the West became for them the mythical land of promises of richness. This company later became what today is the Chevron Corporation, one of the biggest and most important multinational corporations working in the fields of oil and gas, which covers all the stages of the oil refining process, from exploration to transportation. Thus, California became one of the leading states in the oil industry, a sector characterised by its exploitation of the land.

However, the leading state in the extraction and production of oil was not California, but Texas. The discovery of innumerable oil wells in this part of the country filled the landscape with drilling rigs that perforated the surface of the Earth, which also meant a rapid economic growth for a small number of people. The ability to exploit a big number of wells led to the creation of new companies and even companies from outside Texas appeared in order to exploit the resources of that state. The Mellon family

“formed Gulf Oil in 1901 and took over a large part of the Texas trade” (Malone and Etulain 33). The company was formed in Pittsburgh, but it became powerful by working and trading with Texas oil and, indeed, Gulf Oil controlled a big part of that market. However, the company ceased to exist in 1985. Other companies were also created in Texas “to dominate the Houston-Beaumont complex, such as Joseph Cullinan and Arnold Schlaet’s Texas company (Texaco)” (Malone and Etulain 33). Texaco is still an important American oil and gas company part of the Chevron Corporation nowadays, one of the biggest ones in the field in North America. The existence of these companies and the fact that their success depended much on Texan lands gives an idea of the big quantity of oil that existed under the surface of that state and of the kind of wealth this type of land exploitation brought.

When companies like Texaco were already exploiting Texan lands at the beginning of the 20th century, the quantity of oil they could obtain from the earth was notable. However, even if until then that state was a good source of oil, the year 1917 marked a period of discovery of new wells, and oil production (as well as land exploitation) soared considerably. Indeed, as Malone and Etulain explain, “at Ranger in 1917, then at Burkburnett, Breckenridge, Desdemona, and a succession of West and North Texas sites, such a bounty of new wells came in that Texas held the potential of outproducing all the rest of the country combined” (35). Since that year, innumerable wells were discovered in Texan lands, especially in the western and northern parts of the state. The companies that chose these places for their exploitation increased their production along with their wealth. The quantity of oil that was found was as abundant as to make Texas not only the main producer of the country by far, but also enabled the state to produce more than the rest of the states combined. Such discoveries had an obvious environmental impact because in addition to the construction of drilling rigs and pipelines to transport the oil (which meant alterations and transformations on the land), working under the surface of the Earth had negative effects on the natural world, as in the case of mining. Amongst these, drilling can be directly linked to pollution of underground water, moreover, air pollution and acid rain are also possible consequences of the different processes (extraction, refining, transportation, etc.) of the oil industry. Besides, the Western landscape of Texas became infested with rigs and pipelines, being this a clear example of the taming of the land.

On another level, the oil industry is strongly linked to the extraction of natural gas and companies are normally specialized in the exploitation and marketing of both products. Natural gas is also found under the surface of the Earth, but at the beginning this resource was not exploited actively. However, in the early 20th century a significant change occurred and “natural gas, which had at first been wasted as a troublesome nuisance, was now captured and marketed via pipelines for home and business heating” (Malone and Etulain 34). Land exploiters realized that this mixture of naturally formed gases could also be used for creating energy. Thus, in addition to the many oil rigs that filled the landscape, new drilling rigs, stations and pipelines appeared specifically for the extraction and transportation of this resource. It was mostly used for domestic heating purposes and as it could be sold practically to every household, the economic impact the use of natural gas brought was highly favourable for companies. As happened with the discovery of various oil wells in Texas, natural gas proved to be abundant in that state. If the discovery of these wells was incredibly beneficial for the production and income of companies working in the area, “the opening of the enormous Panhandle gas field in 1927 had the same effect on that industry” (Malone and Etulain 35). That way, the exploitation of natural gas became an important sector in itself, although companies worked both with oil and gas. Texas became one of the main centres for gas extraction in the country and, while these resources meant economic wealth, the environment of the exploited areas became notably deteriorated.

Every kind of land exploitation has its negative environmental consequences and even though natural gas is less polluting than oil, its impact on the environment is evident. In addition to drilling the surface of the Earth, “the environmental impact of natural gas extraction includes land disturbance and habitat disruption. Exploitation and transportation by pipeline also carry the risk of leakage and explosion” (Jackson and Jackson 274). Therefore, gas extraction affects mainly the balance of the natural world by transforming the land and disrupting habitats as a consequence of the building of all the structures (rigs, pipelines, etc.) needed for the process. This can have a direct impact on the flora and fauna of the area because it can reduce the former and mean a decrease of food for the latter. Besides, dealing with gas can be dangerous for human beings, especially workers, because the risk of explosions during the transportation via pipelines of this resource exists. It has to be also considered that the burning of natural gas releases carbon dioxide, being that a gas strongly contributing to climate change.

The environmental effects of the extraction of oil are, in some cases, similar to those of the extraction of natural gas, especially due to the fact that the structures needed for the drilling of the land and for the transportation of the resources resemble much. Drilling rigs and pipelines for transportation are needed in both cases and the environmental impact of their presence is very much linked to habitat disruption. As Jackson and Jackson point out, “land-based oil extraction and transportation by pipeline can also cause pollution problems as well as disturbing natural habitats” (274). Habitats and their life are affected by the construction and presence of the structures and machinery related to this kind of exploitation. Besides, as has previously been mentioned, the exploitation of oil can lead to water and air pollution. In the second half of the 20th century new techniques in the sector were developed “such as deep drilling, computerized refineries, and the flooding of old oil fields with water and solvents to recover hitherto unreachable deposits” (Malone and Etulain 249). These advancements in the sector brought a higher productivity and the ability to deal with wells that could not be reached before. Likewise, these methods increased already existing environmental problems. Deep drilling meant deeper holes in the surface of the Earth, which implied the pollution of underground water that was not touched until then. Thus, water pollution appeared in places much deeper under the surface and chemicals spread across the interior layers of the ground. In the same way, the flooding of oil wells, known as waterflooding, also brought a higher presence of chemicals in the water, although it became an effective method for the recovery of oil reservoirs. These new working methods in the field of oil exploitation enabled the continuation of the extraction of this resource, even if the industry continued transforming the land and polluting it.

Another material that is linked to the oil industry and to this exploitation of the land is oil shale, which can be a substitute for crude oil. This material was especially abundant in western parts of the country, but its extraction was more costly and environmentally harmful than the usual obtainment of crude oil. Malone and Etulain explain that “oil shale – the fossil fuel kerogen imbedded in limestone – that lay across much of western Colorado and neighboring areas of Utah and Wyoming (...) required massive excavations, water diversions, and waste rock dumpage” (250). A significant transformation of the land was needed for the exploitation of this material in the mentioned western states and, as a consequence, the environmental impact of the

extraction of oil shale became notable. Considering that, in opposition to normal drilling, in order to get this material huge excavations were needed, this process meant a complete transformation of a part of the western landscape. Enormous holes were done in the Earth, which had a disastrous impact on the surface of the land and on its living beings. Besides, water was diverted according to the needs of exploiters, another clear alteration of the natural balance that existed before this exploitation. The attempt of getting rid of the materials (even if they were natural) that were left over from this process also led to accumulations similar to dumps, what implied a negative use of natural spaces. Although getting oil shale was costly (due to the transformations of landscape needed) and was environmentally damaging, it became popular, in fact, a company like Exxon “projected a thirty-years, \$ 500 million program to erect 150 plants across the Colorado western slope” (Malone and Etulain 251). Exxon spent huge quantities of money for the creation of more than a hundred oil shale plants in Colorado, that is, a part of this state became full of huge excavating sites and the river courses there were changed radically. Therefore, the extraction of oil shale had a clear impact on the landscape of Colorado, but also on its environment. The mining and processing of this material brings negative consequences such as air pollution and emissions of greenhouse gases, so this intervention that took place especially in the West meant a serious deterioration of the environment.

It seems clear, then, that, since the earlier times of the colonizing process, the land and its resources have been exploited in several ways, all with negative consequences. Pollution, transformations of the landscape or a decrease of animal and plant species are only some of the consequences of such behaviours towards the environment. Although the obtainment of resources like minerals or wood has been key for the development of the American civilization, this has happened at the expense of the natural world and its life. The relationships that settlers established with their new environment were defined since the beginning by the domination of the land and its living beings. This attempt at dominating the natural world (along with factors like the increasing human population) can be considered the origin of the current environmental situation. Thus, the exploitation that was taken for granted in the process of ‘progress’ and the ideas of progress and development themselves have become direct causes of a worsening environmental situation.

4.3. Water and the American West

The taming and exploitation of the lands of the United States of America was not only a matter of altering the landscape and getting its resources. Among other negative consequences for the environment, mining and the extraction of oil created holes in the surface of the Earth while logging brought the disappearance of forests, so it can be considered that the American civilization was created and developed by any means necessary. These actions against the environment had an obvious impact on the face of the continent. However, the most disastrous effects of human intervention of this kind happened arguably in the American West and concerned, above all, its water. Although this part of the continent is known by its desert areas and its tough climate, the West was also characterised by rivers that were full of (and surrounded by) life and that made it a very unique place. Even if there were numerous forms of plant and animal life in this desert landscape, it was not an appropriate place to establish and to develop a civilization due to the climate or to the fact that, in theory, agriculture could not be practiced there. Nevertheless, those spreading civilization and exploiting lands did not give up and transformed the desert into another area of their nature-dominating kingdom. In order to carry out this feat, they completely transformed the hydrography of this part of the continent according to their needs. Merely thinking that “there are huge reservoirs where there was once desert; there is desert, or cropland, where there were once huge shallow swamps and lakes” (Reisner 12) gives an idea of the impact of this intervention in the desert. Humans did not only break the natural balance of this area, but they reversed the natural order so as to spread their civilization. Flooding areas that were dry and drying areas that were full of water, destroyed habitats and, consequently, life, but such human intervention also transformed the landscape in a way not seen before.

The 20th century witnessed the ‘restructuring’ of rivers and lakes in the country, not only in the West, despite the fact that in this part, and due to its desert characteristics, the transformation of the landscape had a bigger impact on nature. In order to develop a civilization in a desert, many changes in the environment had to be done and this led to a radical transformation that became more evident and catastrophic in the West than in the rest of the country. This process of transformation began after the Great Depression

as part of the measures promoted by the New Deal to recover the economy of the country. The process consisted mainly on building dams and diverting natural courses of rivers. Malone and Etulain explain that

Often working together, the PWA and the Reclamation Bureau, and also the Army Engineers, initiated an enormous dam-building campaign throughout the arid West during the New Deal, dams that provided not only irrigation to farmers but also cheap electric power, flood control, and jobs for the unemployed. (97)

Different agencies worked for the creation of innumerable dams across the desert landscape of the West so as to carry out the objectives of the New Deal. President Franklin D. Roosevelt believed that constructing dams in the desert could benefit the American economy, mainly by allowing agriculture and irrigation for it in areas with no water, but also by creating an important quantity of jobs. Thus, although the campaign for the building of dams also functioned as a source of energy, it was very much concerned with the creation of jobs and a significant boost for agriculture.

During the Great Depression the unemployment rate in the USA reached unparalleled levels. Indeed, “the highest rate of U.S. unemployment was 24.9% in 1933, during the Great Depression” (Amadeo “Unemployment rate by year”). The fact that so many people did not have jobs showed the negative economic situation the country was in. In order to solve this situation the measures of the New Deal promoted the construction of dams, big-scale projects that needed the workforce of many unemployed people. In addition to engineers, supervisors or chiefs, the construction of dams required plain workers and, at that time and considering the economic situation of the country, the building of these structures proved to be an antidote to unemployment. A big quantity of dams was built across the American West and the fact that in order to build one a lot of time and work was required, these jobs became a safe and, to a certain extent, stable source of money for workers and their families. This idea for the creation of jobs was a complete success and “all across the arid West, monumental dams arose to symbolize the New Deal’s role in building up the regional economy” (Malone and Etulain 97-98). The new dams offered an escape from poverty for many unemployed people and they also brought economic power to towns and cities in the desert and the ability to continue developing. The creation of dams was an economic impulse for the West and these immense constructions “epitomized the new Uncle Sam’s West” (Malone and Etulain 98). The West, considered the mythical land of opportunities and

wealth, also became the place in which, thanks to the American government and its institutions, jobs were abundant and economy could recover and grow. This way, government agencies established themselves as the controllers of this new American West, led uniquely by economic growth and without considering the environmental impact of filling the land with dams.

When talking about dams, the fact that in the 20th century “something like a quarter of a million have been built in the United States alone” (Reisner 104) must be taken into account. This means that innumerable jobs were created while at the same time the hydrography of the country was completely transformed. Such a quantity of constructions with the aim of accumulating water in a certain place led to the presence of huge reservoirs, especially in the West. However, the natural course of rivers was altered or, even, diverted, so the face of the country changed forever. The environmental impact of this dam-building project was not considered, because its main objective was to create jobs. Reisner explains how the damming of rivers, especially in the South, was contradictory in itself and how its purpose was to end unemployment:

With one hand they dam them; with the other they channelize them; the two actions cancel each other out – the channelized streams promote the floods the dams were built to prevent – and the whole spectacle is viewed by some as a perpetual employment machine invented by engineers. (307)

One of the supposed objectives of the dams, that is, flood control, seems to be a hoax because, even if the rivers are dammed, floods will still happen if waters are channelized. This contradiction can make one think about the real purpose of the whole dam-building campaign, because, although it is true that energy can be obtained from dams, these did not seem completely necessary except for economic development. Therefore, the situation in which the Great Depression left the country was partly solved by employing people to build huge structures that were needed mainly for that, employment. Turning the unemployed into active population improved the country’s economic situation, but dams also helped the American economy and development in other ways.

In addition to the creation of jobs, dams and river diversions became key for agriculture in the West, especially considering that before these kinds of interventions this region was not fit for it. The arid lands of the West did not allow the practice of

agriculture, but the accumulation of water in dams and river diversions that led to areas where land wanted to be worked changed this reality. In order to make agriculture possible in a big part of the West, water was conducted from previously accumulated water (that is, dams) to settlements that could grow thanks to the work in this sector, even if for that purpose, river courses had to be radically changed. The Bureau of Reclamation, a federal agency that is responsible for water management in the American West, was behind the work to allow irrigation in arid lands and it “could, by 1980, boast of over nine million acres under irrigation on nearly 150,000 farms and could well present itself as the most vital sponsor of western growth” (Malone and Etulain 230). This agency managed to irrigate millions of acres of the West, a fact that transformed the surface of the land and made it apt for agriculture and animal husbandry. These activities implied an economic growth for the region that would have been impossible without the transformation of its hydrography and the number of farms that were benefited from the intervention of the Bureau of Reclamation gives an idea of the boost this intervention meant for regional economy. Towns and cities in the West thrived thanks to the Bureau of Reclamation and its management of dams and rivers. The agency became a pillar of development and progress in the West, not only by making people work, but by establishing a strong primary sector of the economy. The development of agriculture and animal husbandry in a land that, apparently, could not be worked and the obvious transformation of hydrography that allowed it, brought significant transformations to the West. As Reisner explains, “the cow and the cowboy and the irrigated field came to symbolize the region, instead of the bison and the salmon and the antelope that once abounded here” (517). The cowboy and the works with land and animals related to that image became a symbol of the West and of its mythology. Agriculture and animal husbandry became so important in this part of the country that the use of the land brought by the construction of dams and by the diversions of rivers was taken for granted. However, the development that had its origin in water management changed the face of the continent forever, affecting negatively the wild species (bison, salmon or antelope among others) that lived freely before this human expansion.

An incredible amount of jobs and agriculture in the West were possible thanks to innumerable dams, some of which were not very big-scale ones, but due to their size, more numerous. However, monstrous constructions of concrete were also built and

these huge dams transformed the landscape with their ability to accumulate millions of acre-feet. The first of the colossal and “great multipurpose dams was Boulder (Hoover) Dam on the lower Colorado river, begun in 1931 and completed in 1935 to supply large volumes of water and electricity, mainly to southern California” (Malone and Etulain 97). The well-known Hoover dam, one of the biggest and most important dams in the USA, was built in the Colorado river and with its storage capacity of more than twenty-eight million acre-feet, it flooded a big area of the arid West. The fact that its completion took several years makes clear how it served to create jobs and helped reduce unemployment during the years of the New Deal. The water accumulated there was and is still used to supply water for irrigation and other uses (like domestic use) and electric power to southern California. So, even if the dam was built in the border between Nevada and Arizona, it was used to supply water and energy to a part of California. In fact, many dams built in the West were used to supply California. For example, Imperial Diversion Dam and Parker Dam in the Colorado River, which, along with many other dams, became driving forces for the state’s development. The natural order of the lands of California could not allow a development like the one the state had without the ‘restructuring’ of rivers and the construction of dams. As Reisner points out, “the whole state thrives, even survives, by moving water from where it is, and presumably isn’t needed, to where it isn’t, and presumably is needed” (333). California developed and became economically powerful within the USA thanks to what moving water implied: irrigation that established an important primary sector of the economy, electric energy or the ability to transform arid land into a kind of garden. Agencies like the Bureau of Reclamation, managing the water of the American West, thought that water in its original place was not useful and, for that reason, they decided to move it to California to allow the state’s development. Thus, another justification for the transformation of the western landscape and its waters was the economic advancement of California, a state that thrived at the expense of nature’s order and balance.

Moving water for the development of California was a complete success and an arid state was transformed into one of US’ most important economic centres. Nevertheless, such a growth had significant environmental consequences, even if the effects of Hoover Dam could be hardly appreciated in California. The fact that Hoover Dam (or Boulder Canyon Dam) was built outside this state meant that the radical transformation of the land this construction brought was not suffered in California,

although it was benefiting from its water and energy. In order to understand the kind of land transformation this dam brought with it, the fact that “the first eighteen months of work on Boulder Canyon Dam involved the construction of a new Colorado River” (Reisner 127) must be considered. The Colorado River and its waters, the habitats and the living beings around the river were not only changed, but completely transformed. Water agencies (the Bureau of Reclamation more exactly) decided to flood dry areas or areas with not much water and to control the original flow and course of the Colorado River according to their needs. This resulted in a complete restructuring of the landscape, above all, in order to allow California’s development. Reisner explains how some of the works for the construction of the dam were and his explanation gives an idea about the transformation the land suffered:

Four diversion tunnels were blasted through the rock of the box canyon, two on the Nevada side and two on the Arizona side, each of them three-quarters of a mile long. (...) The task required the excavation of three and half million tons of rock with enough dynamite to level Toledo. (127)

The canyon and its rock walls were blasted in order to create tunnels, that is, huge holes that went through these natural formations transforming them into another sign of the expansion of civilizing and industrializing powers. This was equally done in Nevada and Arizona, but the Californian canyons did not suffer any changes through explosions, so the state could benefit from the dam without considering the damage done to the Colorado River and its canyons. The fact that the construction of Hoover Dam needed millions of tons of rock to be excavated makes clear that the height of the area was reduced and that the original land was eliminated until the appropriate point for construction was reached. Therefore, this huge construction implied a radical transformation of the area, along with its obvious impact on life forms that saw their ecosystem tamed, destroyed and also polluted by a human intervention that was based on such violent methods as the use of huge quantities of explosives against the natural world.

Hoover Dam became an icon of the development of California, but at the same time, the trace it left on the Colorado River and on its environment changed the natural history of the region forever. Nevertheless, it was not the only dam built on that river and much less, the last dam in the American West. Indeed, as Malone and Etulain explain, “the completion of Hoover dam proved to be only a first step in harnessing the

Colorado, and the big postwar booms in California and Arizona greatly whetted appetites for its diverted waters for farm and city” (229). The fact the Hoover Dam completed so greatly its objective of accumulating water and creating energy for California, opened the path for the construction of more dams. That way, the Colorado River started to be dammed and diverted many more times in order to supply water to agricultural and urban settlements. Among many others, “they did get mighty Glen Canyon Dam, whose huge Lake Powell rivalled Lake Mead in its storage of a two-year river flow, and a number of others including Navajo and Flaming Gorge dams” (Malone and Etulain 230), so it is clear that the river was transformed time and again through the construction of several dams. Huge constructions like Glen Canyon Dam, which could accumulate a quantity of water comparable to the flow of the river in two years, implied transformations of the environment similar to those produced by the construction of Hoover Dam. It flooded a huge area in northern Arizona transforming the landscape and its ecosystem, so water management in the West led to negative effects for the environment across a big part of its geography.

Although the construction of dams was a big menace for the natural order of the American West, its hydrography was also seriously threatened by river and lake diversions. Solnit explains that “the largest lake in California was the shallow Tule Lake which still exists in my 1901 atlas but has since disappeared, thanks to flow diversion for agriculture” (336). The waters of this lake were notably reduced because they were used for irrigation for agriculture; they decreased so much that the lake no longer appeared in atlases. However, this was not the only significant example of water diversion in the West. In fact, a big and mighty river like the Colorado, which is among the longest ones in the USA, offered water management agencies innumerable opportunities for it. Indeed, several projects for water diversion were carried out. Malone and Etulain explain some of these projects saying that “the Colorado-Big Thompson project diverted precious Colorado River water under the mountains to the South Platte (...) and so did the San Juan-Clama Project, diverting Colorado waters to the Rio Grande” (227). The results of these two projects are examples of a serious transformation of the Western hydrography because the waters of the Colorado were diverted to distant rivers and water was moved a huge quantity of miles from its original source. Water diversion implies constructions and excavations in the surface of the Earth with the objective of creating an artificial course for the water, so these projects

do not only harm the river, but also the land that exists between it and the new river that will receive the water. The water level of the original river decreases as a consequence of this human intervention and it can affect the life forms in the area by transforming their habitat. The various dams and diversions that changed the Colorado River forever were motivated by a need (or wish) for water for diverse uses such as irrigation or domestic use and electricity. Once the river was completely transformed, its waters could be used for anything; Reisner explains some of these uses as follows:

The river system provides over half the water of greater Los Angeles, San Diego, and Phoenix; it grows much of America's domestic production of fresh winter vegetables; it illuminates the neon city of Las Vegas. (120)

The fact that a single river can provide more than enough water to the mentioned cities gives an idea about how much water it carries, but also about how much water that should flow freely is accumulated for human purposes. In addition to water for cities, the Colorado is used for the irrigation of fields that would not exist without its diverted waters. The production of vegetables thanks to Colorado waters is one of the biggest ones in the country and thinking that this happens in an area in which agriculture was not possible shows how much the landscape was transformed. Besides, using the energy created by this water for the illumination of casinos, hotels and innumerable lights of Las Vegas shows that economic reasons are always behind water management. This city, whose economy is based on tourism and endless consumption, can only offer all its services thanks to the Colorado waters. Using Colorado waters as the fuel of Las Vegas could be considered progress and development by some people, but transforming a unique environment to allow gambling and consumerism seems quite sad. All this shows that many settlements and people depend on the power of nature, even if that implies its taming to make the control of this power possible. If, for any reason, the Colorado River could no longer supply water to these places they would probably collapse, as a consequence of trying to develop more than necessary in an area that had to be completely transformed to allow this development.

All in all, the 20th century in the American West was characterized by the construction of dams and, more specifically, this “age of dams reached its apogee in the 1950s and 1960s, when hundreds upon hundreds of them were thrown up, forever altering the face of the continent” (Reisner 158-159). The big-scale projects of filling

the western landscape with dams did not end with the New Deal and more constructions were built in the following decades. A dam as important as Glen Canyon Dam is a clear example of that, due to the fact that it was built between 1956 and 1966. The environment continued to be transformed by the taming of rivers and by the changes of their courses. The domination of the western hydrography by water management agencies became such that “every major river of the West came, to a greater or lesser extent, under the control of the dam builders and water pumpers” (Malone and Etulain 227). The big rivers that extended through the western landscape and that flowed wild and free until that century were repressed and dominated by the representatives of progress and development. Transforming every (or almost every) big river of the West into mere sources of water and electricity showed that even a wild region like that could become the object of domination of civilization and industrialization. The land was transformed and exploited in a way early settlers would have never imagined. In fact, water management agencies working in the whole country “hold back rivers our ancestors thought could never be tamed – the Columbia, the Tennessee, the Sacramento, the Snake, the Savannah, the Red, the Colorado” (Reisner 104). The civilization started by early settlers was in the 20th century a big machine for nature domination, and although they could not imagine the future impact of their actions, this process of domination started with more simple ways of exploitation of resources, for example, through logging. The construction of a multitude of dams implied breaking with the past and the history of the West’s nature and the original land, which had always followed its natural course, ceased to be characterised by its wilderness to become another region under the domination of humans.

The main organization behind the creation of so many dams in the American West, and therefore, of the transformation of that part of the country was the Bureau of Reclamation, a federal agency that controls the water of the West. The fact that the Bureau “built Hoover Dam mainly for California’s benefit” (Reisner 134), shows that it was very much concerned with development (specially the economic one) and this makes the big number of (arguably) unnecessary dams understandable. Economic reasons and a wish for endless growth motivated the constructions of this agency. The impact the Bureau of Reclamation had on the western landscape is so big that the existence of a single agency transforming the land in such a way seems improbable.

However, Reisner sees the work of the Bureau as the reason behind the domination of the western hydrography and asks himself the following:

Could one imagine what the West would be like if there hadn't been a Bureau of Reclamation? If the rivers hadn't been turned out of their beds and allowed to remake that pitless landscape? (478)

If the Bureau of Reclamation (or another similar agency) had not existed, the West and its waters would have probably followed their natural courses. Rivers would have flowed freely, more animal and plant species would have abounded in the region and the land would have retained its ancestral beauty. Nevertheless, the Bureau existed and still exists, continuing with its management of western waters and strongly contributing to the progress and development of settlements that would have not survived without accumulated and diverted waters. Expansion in the West necessarily implied remaking a landscape considered to be wrong and only a transformation of this kind allowed civilization to thrive. Rivers were tamed and life was replaced by progress with a clear intention, "make the future of the American West secure" (Reisner 486), while, indeed, "what we really did was make ourselves rich and our descendants insecure" (Reisner 486). Human intervention with regards to water in the West brought wealth and power to a society living in a desert. Expansion and growth were a success, but they came at the expense of the natural world, which had to suffer the environmental consequences of the radical transformation of the hydrography of the region.

The whole transformation of the rivers and landscape of the West, in addition to flooding some areas while drying others, brought negative consequences for animals and plants, that is, all life forms were affected by this transformation. Habitats were altered and destroyed and life ceased to be as it was before. Nevertheless, these were not the only dramatic consequences the 'restructuring' of the West had on the environment. Malone and Etulain explain that this human intervention concerning, above all, water led to consequences like the following:

Depleted rivers, falling water tables, accumulations of salt and selenium that threatened the future of lands and their wildlife, reckless assumptions about growth that even envisioned hauling waters hundreds or thousands of miles. (232)

Minor rivers lost important amounts of water and the smallest ones all their water (almost), due to the fact that accumulation in dams reduced their flow. The transformation of river beds directly affected water tables, which, having lost their original form and consistency, started falling. The lowering of the levels of water tables had effects on underground waters that were disturbed by materials coming from above, in addition to the fact that land masses were coming down. The accumulation of so much water also led to accumulations of salt and selenium, which would not pose a threat for the environment in small quantities. However, in these cases big quantities were accumulated with negative consequences for the environment. The excessive presence of salt on the land makes it barren, so life cannot thrive and, definitely, it impedes activities like agriculture. In the case of selenium, big quantities of this chemical are toxic for the life forms in the area. These negative effects on the environment were all consequences of a desire to grow and develop in a region that was not appropriate for it. Hauling water thousands of miles from their original source would have required new constructions and structures to allow such a transfer, with an obvious impact on the land. This would have shown that water was wanted for the development of specific settlements, but as this plan was not carried out, its possible environmental effects are only speculations.

Although the mentioned negative environmental effects show that the 'restructuring' of the West dramatically affected the land and its life forms, these were not the only ones. Reisner also expresses how the construction of dams and river diversions affected the American West and, even if some of the consequences he explains coincide with the ones mentioned by Malone and Etulain, he adds new facts that contribute to the understanding of the deterioration of that region. Reisner states the following:

By erecting thirty thousand dams of significant size across the American West, they dewatered countless rivers, wiped out millions of acres of riparian habitat, shut off many thousands of river miles of salmon habitat, silted over spawning beds, poisoned return flows with agricultural chemicals, set the plague of livestock loose on the arid land. (511)

The first fact that has to be considered is that a huge amount of dams was built, so the environmental effects caused by a dam were not place-specific, they spread all through the western geography. As it has been already mentioned, as a result, rivers lost most or

all of their waters and land habitats next to rivers were destroyed, that is, riparian areas no longer existed and could, therefore, no longer be inhabited by animals and plants. Obviously, the habitats that formed the rivers themselves were also transformed and the lives of many species, such as salmon, changed. Salmon, a species characterised by its migratory flows, lost the ability to move freely and this reduced their numbers significantly. In addition to salmon, the rest of the fish-species in dammed rivers were also affected by accumulations of silt, which spread over their spawning beds, thus making reproduction difficult and reducing their numbers. In a somehow indirect way (but still caused by the proliferation of dams), the developments in agriculture and animal husbandry also affected the environment negatively. In addition to the changes they brought to the land, by creating fields and croplands where only arid land could be found or by the soil erosion caused by livestock, pollution levels increased. Toxic chemicals used for agriculture spread through land and water and, all in all, the management of the waters of the American West made difficult or impossible the lives and survival of many species.

It can be asserted that, undoubtedly, human intervention through the damming and diverting of rivers in the American West during the 20th century changed the face of that part of the continent forever. The environment was transformed in a way that could hardly be imagined before it actually happened. The domination and exploitation of the land and its resources reached unparalleled levels in this region and the landscape was radically changed in order to adapt it to the necessities of progress. The powers of civilization and industrialization did not only extract resources from this land, but they completely remodelled it to allow their expansion. These transformations suffered by nature, like any other violent exploitation of the land, brought negative environmental consequences that nowadays still mark the region. The destruction of habitats and the reduction of numbers of animal and plant species are only some of the effects water management had on the West. One of the last wild places in the USA was therefore tamed and the original nature of that arid land and its life forms found themselves inside the machine of progress.

4.4. Nature and Industrialization

The different forms of exploitation of nature and the spread of civilization throughout that part of the continent changed landscapes and lives forever and established a relationship of power through which humans (more exactly, colonists) dominated the land and its original inhabitants. Technological advancements and the accumulation of resources, not only through the exploitation of land but also of peoples (slavery and, later, factory work) led to a country that, like the continent that was left behind, that is, Europe, became highly industrialized. Industrialization implied continuous attacks on the environment in various forms such as pollution or the extraction of resources, but it also transformed the American society in a significant way, affecting especially the collective mind-set, culture and cultural representations like literature. Industrialization brought new ways of thinking about the ‘New World,’ nature and the lives of people in a mechanized society for mass production. Leo Marx, in his book *The Machine in the Garden* (1964), studies the tensions between two images that characterised the United States. On the one hand, the image of the rural and natural space, and, on the other hand, that of industrial society. Due to the fact that this work offers interesting ideas about human and natural relationships in the context of industrial development it is worth being considered, especially because it is also dedicated to literature and how it represented the two mentioned images.

Literary works of 19th century American writers like Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne or Henry David Thoreau were partly dedicated to nature or to lives in rural and natural spaces, so they portrayed that image of pastoral life associated with the USA. However, Marx realized that in their works, sudden irruptions of machines (or their sounds) are present and these signify the expansion of industrial powers over the rural environment. People enjoying tranquillity and rest in a rural ambience were disturbed by the noises of machines and with these irruptions “tension replaces repose: the noise arouses a sense of dislocation, conflict and anxiety” (Marx 16). The peace of the rural landscape is interrupted by industrial elements and it produces negative feelings to those trying to live calmly in a natural space. This event appears repeatedly in 19th century American writings, making clear that the impact industrialization had on rural lives was notable. Thus, the two images (the rural one and the industrial one) of

this new USA come together in literature, a cultural representation that, to a certain extent, can be considered a mirror of the lives and realities of that time. Indeed, although literary works must not be considered exact accounts of the realities of the 19th century, they, certainly, reflect the ways in which human and natural relationships developed.

Although industrialization developed both in Europe and in the US, its meaning was not completely the same for the inhabitants of the two places. Usually, industrial expansion and technological advancements were seen negatively by a part of the population, but as will be explained later, they became more widely accepted in the USA, even if criticism was still present. In the ‘Old World’ contempt towards the industrial society was made evident. In fact, “in England, as early as the 1780’s, writers had been repelled by the ugliness, squalor, and suffering associated with the new factory system, and their revulsion had sharpened the taste (...) for images of rural felicity” (Marx 18). English Romantic writers opposed the Industrial Revolution of their country and favoured human-natural relationships in rural ambiances. For these writers, accumulation of resources and an incredibly increased production was not positive, especially if these came along with filth, misery and oppression. This predilection for the rural instead of the industrial also characterised the view of writers in the ‘New World,’ due to the fact that while nature had always predominated in the colonized lands, industrialization was developing threatening the rural way of life. The new industrial society brought factory work, stress and the defilement of the landscape among other negative aspects, so it is not surprising that people preferred to live in more natural spaces. In rural areas in which humans have a stronger relationship with the natural world, “the superfluities and defences of everyday life are stripped away, and men regain contact with essentials” (Marx 69). That is, away from the industrial society and its newly built ideas about work and production, people are in contact with each other and the world that surrounds them; in a natural environment people are in contact with what really matters and is essential for life.

The arrival in the American continent was considered as a new opportunity and as a new beginning by colonists, leaving behind the mistakes made in Europe. It was a chance for regeneration, to recover from the evils of the ‘Old World.’ The power to restore themselves was found in the natural world; indeed, as Marx points out, “the regenerative power is located in the natural terrain: access to undefiled, bountiful,

sublime Nature is what accounts for the virtue and special good fortune of Americans” (228). This statement can be understood in two opposite ways. On the one hand, it can be interpreted that the characteristics of nature could somehow heal the colonists, make them return to a way of life closer to the Earth and its living beings; something the industrial society could not do. On the other hand, it can be interpreted that the ‘access,’ as Marx says, to bountiful lands could imply the use and exploitation of this nature in order to allow an emergence of the US as a new power independent from Europe. This interpretation could be possible due to the fact that Marx accepted the irruption of industrial powers on nature as ‘natural;’ for him both the industrial and rural were part of a country that was developing rapidly. Thus, the ‘New World’ would be seen as a chance for regeneration in which both, the rural and the industrial, were pillars of this process. Nevertheless, the fact that these two worlds were completely opposed led to tensions in the lives of people and in society in general, something that could be appreciated in literature. The literature of pastoral ideals of people living happily in natural and rural areas was, as a result of the changing society, invaded by images of machines. In fact, “it is industrialization, represented by images of machine technology, that provides the counterforce in the American archetype of the pastoral design” (Marx 26), meaning that industrial powers entered the literary realm and the collective imaginary as the country became more industrialized. The machine and the pastoral fused in what Marx named a ‘middle landscape,’ that is, a country both industrialized and rural. However, a retreat to the natural world in search of peace and tranquillity became difficult due to the presence of machines that created tensions in the inner worlds of people and in an increasingly mechanized society.

At the beginning, colonists had the idea that the ‘New World’ was a wild and hostile place that had to be tamed by means of force and violence. However, in the times of industrialization, this idea had already changed and the continent was seen in a very different way. The first idea about the continent “to describe America as a hideous wilderness (...) is to envisage it as another field for the exercise of power” (Marx 43), that is, the fact of considering that the newly discovered lands were evil, brought a relationship of power between settlers and the environment. The first image settlers had about the continent they encountered was that of a malignant place whose inhabitants (both human and non-human) were evil powers that went against the ‘civilized Europeans.’ For that reason, they decided to exercise their power over the land and its

living beings in order to eradicate all their evil. This led to the killings of natives, the disappearance of big numbers of animal and plant species and, all in all, to the exploitation of the land. Nevertheless, once that evil disappeared as a consequence of the power of colonists, a new vision of the continent was created. With the domination of nature and the end of wilderness a new image appeared in the American mind-set to prevail over the previous conception of evil nature: the image of the garden. Transforming nature into a garden meant that the powers of nature (once they had been dominated) were used to serve the wishes of the powers of progress and development. As Marx points out, “to describe America as a garden is to express aspirations still considered utopian – aspirations (...) toward abundance, leisure, freedom, and a greater harmony of existence” (43). This transformation was a sign that civilization followed the correct way and it stood for values like abundance and freedom that were promoters of American expansion and development. The garden brought Americans the ability to enjoy nature in a controlled way within their civilized societies. Peace and tranquillity were made possible, to a certain extent, in a country that became highly industrialized. The image of the garden was also possible due to a relationship of power of humans over nature and it became a representative of the ‘middle landscape’ that characterised the industrial society. Transforming the country into a garden was a sign of power that led to a society in which not only the domination of nature prevailed, but also its transformation in order to satisfy human needs and wishes, like tranquillity and a separation from machines, that could also be found in that subjugated nature.

Since the very arrival of colonists in American lands, they were determined to dominate the natural world in order to start their new lives. The image of the ‘new continent’ as an immense garden was not in their minds at the beginning, but subjugating wilderness was part of its creation. Thus, to a certain extent, the control they exerted over it made it a kind of garden even if it still retained some of its wild characteristics. This controlled nature was a way to leave Europe behind and as Marx explains, “both the wild and the cultivated versions of the garden image embody something of that timeless impulse to cut loose from the constraints of a complex society” (42-43). This creation was a means to escape from the corrupt society of the Old World, but later, it also proved to be a way to escape from the industrial and mechanized society that developed in the US. The impulse of going back to nature survived and, thus, the American society that was becoming increasingly industrialized

never forgot its desire to live calmly surrounded by nature. These two opposed views existed at the same time, but industrial powers imposed themselves as the correct view in the way for progress. The garden proved to be the means for satisfying the impulse for life in nature and, that way, this impulse was pacified through a controlled nature that was far from being what, Native Americans for example, had known. The American industrial society was characterised by machinery and factories for the confinement of workers, but it also offered the garden that meant a break from them. Therefore, these two worlds, the industrial and the (controlled) natural and rural one, existed together in an increasingly complex society.

A new life in a new continent was taken as a kind of Genesis; America was an escape from the sins of the Old World and the opportunity to start again. For this reason, it is not surprising that the nature encountered in this continent came to be seen as a potential Eden, as an Edenic garden. Wilderness was transformed and dominated to create an earthly paradise, but not only that, because it also embodied American values like freedom and abundance. As Marx explains, “the garden image brings together a universal Edenic myth and a particular set of American goals and aspirations. So with the machine” (164). The garden symbolized the new beginning and a characteristically American mind-set that promoted expansion and progress. Besides, this new beginning and American values were also symbolized by the image of the machine, which meant that two apparently opposed images became representations of the same society. Thus, the American society that was, on the one hand, natural and rural and, on the other hand, industrial and mechanized, developed as a society of complexities and oppositions, because although strong parallels were drawn between the garden and the machine, these were still opposed concepts. The former was natural (although created by humans) and alive while the latter was unnatural and dead. However, these two images seemed to reconcile in the ‘middle landscape’ of the industrial society because “the machine (...) is an instrument for making what the age calls “improvements”. With its help, a waste land can be transformed into a garden” (Marx 183). The machine was an instrument for the transformation of nature, an object for its so-called improvement. This instrument for satisfying the desires of humans transformed nature into another object that could be used for anything they wanted (exploitation, construction, rest). That way, thanks to the use of machines as instruments, humans (male colonists, more exactly) became the creators of the new Eden in America; thanks to machines they could become gods. The

power of machines over the environment was noteworthy, but, anyway, although a relationship of power existed, the two images became inseparable and they came to symbolize the two sides of the same coin.

During the creation of the garden and the development of the industrial society, there were desires “for improving upon raw nature and for economic and technological development” (Marx 226), so the transformation of nature and mechanization went together in a process that led to the appearance of modern America as a society and as a set of concepts. The simultaneous existence of a natural and rural world and a highly mechanized one became part of the American collective consciousness due to shared ideas of creating “a society of the middle landscape, a rural nation exhibiting a happy balance of art and nature” (Marx 226). The newly built garden was a part of a society that displayed machinery and technology, so both worlds fused to create a ‘middle landscape.’ In the American mind-set (and also for Marx) this landscape was the perfect balance between art, that is, machinery and any sign of development such as factories and nature, in this case modified for human purposes. Natural spaces close to industrial areas became common and accepted in the minds of Americans as a ‘natural’ step in the process of development. Marx explains that “the noise and smoke, the discomfort and visual ugliness, even the loss of peace and repose (...) are of little consequence to true Americans” (214), that is, although negative consequences were obvious, people did not care and continued supporting the values of progress. The negative impact of industrialization both on the environment (transformations and pollution) and on people (unrest and oppression) was normal in a landscape that ‘happily’ embraced art and nature. A society that supposedly embodied a perfect balance between two worlds was reached although not everyone seemed to be pleased with this idea.

Obtaining a ‘happy balance’ based on the subjugation of nature and the confinement of workers in factories seems problematic and this is why this idea has been criticised. In his *The Machine Against the Garden* (1985), Fredy Perlman criticized the ‘happy balance’ and other ideas proposed by Marx in *The Machine in the Garden*. Perlman stated the following regarding this idea of balance:

I readily admit that it is no easy task for me to imagine a “balance” between a wild rose and iron; I picture the flower firmly held in a vise; in human terms, I imagine an individual, gifted with life and thought, encased in armor. (*The Machine Against* 9)

Perlman rejects Marx's concept of a balanced society and considers it a dangerous illusion. He does not see balance and stability in a society that oppresses both the natural world and human beings. The balanced or 'middle landscape,' for him, serves the purposes of a destructive civilization that eliminated wilderness and mechanized human beings. Accepting this kind of society and admitting that it is a 'natural step' in the course of progress led to the vision of subjugated nature (the garden) and tiresome factory work as positive aspects of a developing industrial society. Thus, these attitudes became part of the modern American collective consciousness. The relationships between humans and the natural world in the industrial society were only 'positive' in the garden, which was a man-made natural space. On the contrary, the wild nature that was dominated to allow the 'middle landscape' was only the object of negative human-natural relationships and, that is why, Perlman considers more appropriate to call it "the raped landscape" (*The Machine Against* 15). Whether the 'middle landscape' that contained the garden is considered a step in the process of development or a rape of nature, it is clear that the domination of the environment by violent means happened, provoking that transformation. The industrial society and the negative effects it had on the environment and on the lives of people were perceived and criticism appeared as a reaction to this society.

As in the case of English Romantic writers, who portrayed industrial and technological development as evil forces that threatened nature and the inner and spiritual worlds of people, some American writers also showed their opposition to industrial society while favouring life in contact with nature. Marx defended that writers like Thoreau, Melville and Hawthorne portrayed the 'middle landscape' and the tensions between the rural and the industrial worlds in their writings. Although these felt a predilection for the former, the latter was an essential part of society, their lives and works in Marx's opinion. Nevertheless, Perlman stated that "many of North America's best-known 19th century writers, among them Melville, Hawthorne and Thoreau, were profound critics of the technological society" (*The Machine Against* 6), making clear that both authors interpreted the works of 19th century American writers in a different way. For Perlman, these writers were fervent critics of industrial society and civilization and they had a desire to go back to a state in which humans and nature could live in a more harmonious way. He mentioned Melville's *Typee* (1846), Hawthorne's *The May-Pole of Merry Mount* (1836) and Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) as examples of writings that

opposed industrial society and civilization. In *Typee*, a life among natives of an island of the Pacific Ocean is favoured over the work of missionaries who try to ‘civilize’ people who live in a state of balance with nature. *The May-Pole of Merry Mount* portrays a group of people living happily surrounded by nature and enjoying dances and festivities until Puritans interrupt them. Finally, *Walden* talks about a retreat to nature and away from society, which is key for an inner development of the author and its ideas and to establish stronger links with nature. These works show an opposition to the values of American society (like expansion and domination of the environment) and its industrialization process while favouring a more balanced life with nature. The ‘middle landscape’ of balance between the natural and the industrial worlds does not seem to be accepted in these works and opposition and contempt towards ‘progress’ seem to be ideas that permeate all of them. Although Marx and Perlman interpreted the works of 19th century American writers in different ways, it is clear that these writers showed different ideas and portrayed other relationships between humans and nature that opposed the current of thought of exploitation and production promoted by industrial society. Thus, American industrial society, with its values and its lifestyle, met criticism and reconciliation with nature developed in people’s minds.

Regarding the tensions that existed between nature and industrial powers and the relationships humans could developed with these two worlds, Marx and Perlman also expressed significantly opposed views. As it has already been mentioned, Marx understood a society where the natural and the industrial worlds coexist as a further step in the process of the development of civilization, American society and of humans themselves. This ‘progress’ was accepted as something necessary, but also as something that could not be avoided; it was the only path that could be taken. Any other way to advance as a society was not considered realist and a mechanized society with access to a garden became the embodiment of what was considered realist. For Perlman, in this industrial society, “the middleman, the entrepreneur, the man who undertakes to cut up the environment into processed, saleable commodities, becomes the model realist” (*The Machine Against* 15), so the idea of the man (image of a man, not of a woman) that dominates nature and becomes part of the industrial machinery was considered the only correct and realist approach within that society. Living outside the limits of this industrial society was not considered realist by its peoples (and by Marx) and therefore, such ways of life and thought were not very present in the collective mind-set.

However, Perlman mentioned Native Americans and their lifestyles as examples of 'living outside,' so options to live away from industrial powers and in close relationship with nature existed. Leaving society and starting a new life surrounded by nature was, nevertheless, not really considered due to the fact that all the developments of industrial society, the progress that was achieved until that moment, should have been abandoned. With a collective consciousness characterised by the values of expansion and progress, an escape from industrial society was unlikely, and living there became apparently the 'only' way of life possible. The 19th century American society showed a predilection for technological advancements and for the degree of industrialization it reached, although there were people who expressed criticism and a desire (and possible alternatives) to escape from it. The previously mentioned writers and works looked for another path that differed from that of industrial society and offered possible perspectives for it, like lives among natives or independent communities in natural spaces. Thus, although industrial society seemed to be the only alternative for humans, other ideas to regain contact with nature developed in some people's minds, making clear not only that progress could be criticized, but also that close relationships with the natural world were needed in an increasingly mechanized world.

Perlman's criticism of industrial society and its garden goes hand in hand with a criticism to values considered American, like the constant need of expansion and the domination of the environment, so it is not surprising that he also criticized the original idea of America as an evil wilderness. For the promoters of development, "a "hideous wilderness" is already desolate; it cannot be devastated, it is a waste land" (Perlman, *The Machine Against* 17), that is, the forces of civilization considered that wilderness had no value and, for that reason, they dominated and 'improved' it without considering the impact of their actions. For them, a wasteland could not be harmed, only transformed into something useful. Perlman opposed this idea because he understood and respected the intrinsic value of the land and of its animal and plant lives and, especially, the lives of Native Americans and their relationships with the environment. From his point of view, it is clear that the relationships between humans and the environment since the arrival of settlers in America took the wrong path and that they became increasingly problematic (for example, with industrial development) leading to problems for the natural world, but also for humans. During the process and once the industrial civilization was established, "the devastation of the "raw" forests, valleys and

prairies, are carried through with unmatched energy. But the promise of the machine in the garden is not realized” (Perlman, *The Machine Against* 17). ‘The machine’ was incredibly effective and successful in its objective of producing goods and wealth and of creating the technologically advanced modern American society. However, this mechanized society that owed a lot to the domination of nature, also brought negative consequences that were not included in the promise of the new America that wanted to be created. The perfect balance between the garden and the machine showed notable flaws.

“Within the lifetime of a single generation, a rustic and in large part wild landscape was transformed into the site of the world’s most productive industrial machine” (Marx 343), significantly transforming not only the natural world, but also the relationships between this and human beings. Such a radical change distanced humans from nature and brought significant negative consequences for people, something that could not be thought of considering the utopian idea of the machine having nothing but benefits for humans. The idea of progress and development as purely positive values proved to be wrong and although Marx and Perlman’s ideas clearly differ, both authors saw negative effects of industrialization in people’s lives. Tedious work hours inside of factories, stress, pollution or a life dedicated to production became characteristics of the industrial society, making clear that workers did not enjoy the supposedly created American Edenic garden. Alienation from the natural world and from themselves occurred to these people and instead of as natural beings, they were seen as parts of the industrial machinery. The inner lives of humans were also affected by the machine because “science and technology were producing a moral and spiritual decline” (Marx 188). Industrial capitalism, with its concern of producing as much as possible while decreasing costs, turned humans to tools whose inner life had been corrupted. In this kind of society humans are seen closer to machines that produce goods for the correct functioning of the industrial complex. Furthermore, being also separated from the natural world to which they belong, they are somehow dehumanized. For Perlman, ‘the machine’ had huge negative impacts and he explained that the “Industrial System has existed for a bare few centuries and it has already consumed numerous species of plants and animals, masticated most communities and dissolved the varied human cultures with its lethal acids” (*The Machine Against* 19). The development of the industrial civilization killed animal and plant species as well as the relationships between humans

with their natural environment. Besides, communities like the surviving Native Americans that still lived in harmony with nature, were forced into the machine and peoples of different cultures were assimilated to the culture of production of the industrial society. Thus, the machine brought a society separated from nature whose main values were exploitation and production.

In conclusion, it can be said that, regarding the relationships between humans and the natural world in times of the development and when industrialization already established itself as the dominating system, the appearance of a complex society in which nature and technology coexisted was a pivotal event. A wild landscape was transformed and machines took the place of the natural world. Although natural spaces under the influence and control of humans were abundant, these became the embodiment of the idea of the garden. The creation of the garden as a nature dominated to satisfy human desires showed a mentality concerned with technological developments and production while preserving an impulse towards the natural. The complex industrial society that, to a certain extent, still felt a desire for the rural and the natural world proved to be more imperfect than what promoters of progress had expressed. Along with the exploitation and deterioration of the environment, industrialization brought tiresome factory work, alienation and the impoverishment of the inner lives of humans. Criticism of this society and its ways of life occurred, as can be appreciated in some writings of 19th century American authors. These opposed the mechanization of humans and expressed ideas and desires to go back to more simple lives in which humans could live harmoniously with the environment. Thus, opposition to so-called progress and values that promoted the domination of nature were not non-existent in the American society during the 19th century.

4.5. The Conservation Movement

Although the American society became highly industrialized, the impulse towards the natural world remained in people's minds and in the 19th century a movement for the conservation of nature (what later would be associated to environmentalism) started taking shape. The appreciation and love for wild and natural spaces along with a desire to escape from cities, led some people to think about the preservation of areas so as nature would not disappear from the American landscape. This would equally mean restraining somehow the expansion of human communities over the natural world, which would be positive for the land and its animal and plant species. Activities in contact with nature such as hiking were considered beneficial and enriching experiences that could not be obtained in the mechanized society. So people realized that nature had more than resources to offer. The role played by cultural representations like literature and (landscape) painting helped create a romanticised idea of nature that also contributed to the love for it and to the desire for its preservation. Nature started to be seen by some people not in terms of domination (at least not understood as the previous ways of exploitation), but as something that should be kept alive for the good of everyone and for future generations. As will be explained, nature would be sometimes preserved for the use of humans, that is, the use of nature as an instrument to fulfil human purposes became a part of the movement. Despite this fact, arguably more positive relationships between humans and the environment started developing.

Despite the fact that the term 'conservation' is the one used to name the movement and that nowadays 'preservation' is used as a synonym, these two concepts implied different approaches towards the natural world as the movement was developing. As Dorceta E. Taylor explains, "conservation implied a utilitarian view of natural resources: that is, they should be developed and used for the current generation" (27), which means that the conservation approach towards nature meant using natural spaces for resources. In order to make sure resources were always available, natural spaces were left untouched and unexploited until they were needed. For example, the natural growth of trees was not interrupted, but when wood was needed, these were cut. Conservation was strongly associated to the construction of dams and to the accumulation of water for the use of humans (because water was another resource to be

appropriated and used when necessary), but it also included, for example, forests whose wood or minerals could be used. Conservation was not concerned about the intrinsic value of nature as much as about “planning and efficiency” (Taylor 27), so a relationship of power in which humans would use nature for economic growth was still present in the conservation movement. Natural spaces were managed to be efficient sources of resources, so, even if natural spaces were conserved, this was done in a way which was planned for exploitation without the complete disappearance of these spaces. Thus, natural areas were exploited in a somehow restrained manner when resources were needed, but these spaces were not completely exploited in order to secure the existence of resources and to allow their future regeneration. On the other hand, “preservation implied saving resources for their own sake or their intrinsic value” (Taylor 27), a fact that makes clear that there were significant differences between the terms conservation and preservation. The approach of ‘preservation’ defended that nature and its elements (forests, rivers, etc.) had value on their own and that, for this reason, they should be kept undamaged. In the same way, animals and plants, as living beings, should also be protected due to their importance and value as part of nature. This approach is the one that showed a real preoccupation for the natural world and the one that established what can be considered a positive relationship with the environment. The conservation movement started taking shape in the late 19th century and, despite the fact that two different approaches or relationships with the natural world developed, it promoted keeping natural spaces intact (at least to a certain degree, in the case of conservation) and restraining the expansion of society over the natural world.

This movement, which showed a respect and a preoccupation for the natural world, was developed by what can be considered male elites or privileged people of the American society and this is why sometimes the movement was considered elitist. Women, poor people, exploited workers, immigrants or any other type of people in a bad social and economic situation would not really care about the environment; surviving in the industrial society would be their preference. In the case of Native Americans, the contact with nature was obviously not considered elitist, but intrinsic to their lifestyles. However, some privileged Americans who wanted this type of contact with nature showed certain attitudes that would manifest the elitism of a movement that wanted nature only for the benefit of the dominant class. A clear example of that is John

Muir, a key figure in the movement, who, in spite of being a fervent defender and preserver of nature and its living beings, showed openly racist ideas that, in a few words, defended that nature should be preserved only for the good of white people. These elites that somehow denied nature to some sectors of society started to see nature in a positive way and this change of perspective “coincided with the elites’ desire to take pride in being American” (Taylor 291). American elites realized the uniqueness of the nature and remaining wilderness that surrounded them and they used it as a representative of the American identity. American nature differentiated the USA from Europe, thus it became a sign of their own identity. Cultural representations like writings about nature and landscape paintings, which portrayed the unique American wilderness, offered views of what was truly considered American. As Taylor points out, “wilderness appreciation and advocacy was closely linked to the emerging cultural nationalism and romanticism that elites espoused” (290). So, to a certain extent, the attempt at preserving natural spaces was a consequence of a culture promoted by the elites in which nature was a key element in defining ‘American-ness.’ Although there were people who really cared about the intrinsic value of nature and its living beings, a main achievement by the elites in the conservation movement was to create a culture that romanticised nature as a source of beauty that would represent the country. The national parks that were created later became the great symbols of this new idea of nature as part of the American identity.

When talking about the conservation movement, the concepts ‘national forest’ and ‘national park’ must be considered and as in the case of the terms ‘conservation’ and ‘preservation,’ the differences between them are worth being noted. Both kinds of spaces, as areas that wanted to be protected, resulted from the developing conservation movement. National forests are related to conservation, while national parks are connected with preservation. National forests are natural areas conserved with the aim of using their resources, that is, wood, water or minerals are exploited. Although in national forests nature is somehow protected, if resources are needed, these are exploited. In such spaces exploiters do not use up resources to the point of making them disappear; some resources are left untouched for future exploitations and time is given so as new resources can appear, for example by letting new trees grow. This is precisely the objective of national forests, to allow the exploitation of resources without making them disappear while keeping natural areas to a certain extent. Thus, the relationships

between humans and nature concerning national forests are still relationships of power in which exploitation and the extraction of resources dominates. Even if a kind of respite is given to the natural world in national forests (because exploitation is done in a more controlled way) it is still the object of human domination.

National parks differ significantly from national forests, mainly in the fact that the exploitation of resources does not (or should not) occur in them. As it has been mentioned, national parks and their beauty became representatives of the identity of the USA, so exploiting their resources and destroying these landscapes would be useless. If destroyed, they would not serve the purpose of representing what was considered truly American. Thus, although a main aim of national parks was to represent the country, preservationists also cared and succeeded in protecting natural spaces and their living beings. However, even if resources like wood were not extracted in these parks, a kind of exploitation still existed because “scenery was an obvious resource that could be commodified and consumed in a nonextractive manner” (Taylor 329-330). The scenery of the parks and the beauty of their landscapes could be somehow exploited; it could be turned into a product for people to consume it. In fact, as national parks were not literally exploited, their developers tried to make them “scenic wonderlands – the nation’s playgrounds” (Taylor 330), encouraging tourism and activities like hiking. Although the resources of the parks were not exploited, their image was transformed into a good for consumption and nature was offered as a commodity to people. The preservationists’ idea of protecting natural areas was not like the one of conservationists, but, to a high extent, it was still utilitarian. It seems obvious that if nature was transformed into a product, some people could obtain profits from it. Indeed, as Taylor explains:

Far from leaving the parks unmodified for future generations, preservationists promoted commercial development, increased accessibility, and expanded tourism in the parks. (330)

Therefore, national parks were also exploited for economic purposes, mainly tourism. Besides, money was invested to make these spaces accessible to everyone and, all in all, they became important sources of income due to the creation of jobs and as part of the recreation sector. Taking this into account, it can be considered that human-natural relationships with regards to national parks were also relationships of power; nature was

dominated in order to serve human purposes. However, as the land and its living beings were not so negatively affected as by the direct exploitation of resources, it can be said that these relationships were more 'positive,' somehow. Although controlled nature was offered to people so as they could consume it like another product, big natural areas were conserved. That way, the land and its animals and plants were protected from further encroachment, even if not only environmental awareness but also economic profits were behind this attempt at protecting nature.

It has been mentioned that the conservation movement started taking shape in the 19th century, but more exactly, the first step that led to the creation of the movement was the idea of the first national park. As Malone and Etulain explain:

Even as early as 1872, an alliance of farsighted citizens and railroad promoters orchestrated the creation in Wyoming Territory of the giant Yellowstone National Park, preserving for the edification of future generations some of the world's most spectacular wonderlands. (66)

Already in the last decades of the 19th century, a group of people who would be associated with 'preservation' thought about transforming a huge area of Wyoming into a national park. Thus, in 1872, the Yellowstone National Park, the first national park of the country, was created. The park, formed by mountains, canyons, rivers and other natural formations, covers an area of 8,983 km² and it is characterized by its diversity of animal and plant species, including bison and bear. The creation of this national park implied the protection of the land and its living beings from exploitation and the extraction of resources. The appreciation of nature and the respect for its intrinsic value was a main impulse for protecting such a huge natural area, but the fact it could be exhibited as a wonderland also contributed to the creation of the park. The non-extractive exploitation of the scenery of national parks has already been explained, but it must be considered that although this was still a form of domination of nature, it kept huge natural spaces unharmed. If national parks had not been created, these areas would have probably been exploited, so even if wilderness (without human presence) was somehow lost, at least, nature remained. After all the destruction of nature carried out since the arrival of colonists, it seemed that the war waged against the natural world was becoming softer. Establishing spaces where exploitation could not be carried out was a significant change in the human-natural relationships in the USA, which until then were mainly characterized by the exploitation and destruction of the environment. The

concept of national parks, “a triumph of concern for posterity over selfish development, set a new precedent for the nation and the world; and more national parks, like California’s majestic Yosemite, were established in time” (Malone and Etulain 66-67). Keeping natural spaces safe from human and industrial expansion was a turning point in the history of the country and more national parks were established following Yellowstone’s model.

The Yosemite National Park, in California, was established in 1890 and it became one of the most important national parks of the USA as well as a representative of the country’s identity. It covers an area of approximately 3,028km², so its establishment meant the protection of a significant part of California’s nature. Nevertheless, the history of the park was marked, even before the idea of preserving the natural space, by the killings of natives inhabiting the area. The Ahwahneechee people, who lived in the Yosemite area before colonists arrived there, were massacred by the Mariposa Battalion in 1851. Thus, colonists took the control of the area that years later became a national park. The killings of natives and the appropriation of their lands were widespread across the country since the arrival of Europeans, but later, Native Americans became sovereign nations. That means that “they are autonomous and have a legal right to govern and to determine how their lands are used” (Taylor 20). Supposedly, native peoples were given the rights to inhabit and use their lands in the ways they pleased, but this was not really true in the context of the conservation movement. Although natives are sovereign, “the notion of sovereignty is nebulous when it comes to the appropriation of Indian land for conversion to parks and forests, the extraction of valuable resources, and operation of hazardous facilities” (Taylor 20). In order to establish national parks and forests, the rights of native peoples were sometimes ignored. In the case of Yosemite, natives were killed before considering the establishment of a protected environment. However, depriving natives of their lands and rights has occurred during the establishment of national parks and forests (or simply for the exploitation of resources), making evident that along with a desire to protect nature, racist attitudes were very present in the conservation movement.

The establishment of Yosemite National Park was essential for the conservation movement, as was its preservation. For example, when the construction of a dam was planned within the park. The Hetch Hetchy Valley is a valley within the boundaries of Yosemite, which means that the area is supposedly protected and that attacks against the

environment should not occur. However, in 1913 an act of Congress, known as the Raker Act, allowed the construction of a dam and the flooding of the valley. Many people showed their disconformity with this project, among them John Muir and the members of the Sierra Club. This organization was created by Muir himself (who was also its President for years) in 1892 with the aim of protecting nature and enjoying it through activities like hiking. The opposition of this organization against the construction of the dam was a turning point in the development of the conservation movement. As Solnit explains:

The battle over Hetch Hetchy Valley, the next valley north of Yosemite Valley, was the first time Americans took such a stand against growth, progress, and development, and this battle transformed the Sierra Club from a hiker's association to the country's first significant conservation organization. (221-222)

At the beginning, the members of the Sierra Club were involved in the establishment of some national parks (the Glacier and the Mount Rainier for example), but it was with the opposition to the damming in Hetch Hetchy Valley when they became the country's most important environmental organization. This event consolidated conservation as a real movement that could face and oppose the 'progress' of humans over nature. However, the opposition shown by the Sierra Club was not successful and the O'Shaughnessy Dam was built, leaving a part of Yosemite flooded. Although environmental organizations like the Sierra Club achieved significant objectives and managed to protect huge natural spaces, the construction of dams and the diversion of rivers was such important for the development of the West that they could not do much to change the ideas of water developers. Reisner describes how little impact the conservation movement had in relation to water-development policies as follows:

The conservation movement had been little more than a minor nuisance to the water-developing interests in the American West. They had, after all, twice managed to invade National Parks with dams; they had decimated the greatest salmon fishery in the world, in the Columbia River; they had taken (...) the virgin Central Valley of California, with its thousands of grizzly bears and immense clouds of migratory waterfowl and its million and a half antelope and tule elk – and transformed it into a banal palatinate of industrial agriculture. (241)

In spite of the efforts made by nature protectors, water developers dominated nature even inside of national parks. Thus, it is clear that the power dam-creators had in the

American West was significantly superior to that of preservationists. Even if there was a growing environmental awareness at the beginning of the 20th century, those controlling the water of the West continued acting like before. Their actions had huge negative environmental consequences like the killings of innumerable animals and the transformation of nature into fields for agriculture. Although protected natural spaces like Yosemite existed, nature was still exploited (in some cases even inside of national parks) and, for that reason, the protection of more areas became key for the conservation movement.

National parks were (and still are) huge natural spaces where wildlife can exist without being threatened by human development (except for the construction of dams) and the extraction of resources that destroy habitats and landscapes. Preservationists like John Muir really cared about the intrinsic value of nature and its life forms and considered that national parks were essential for the protection of nature. Indeed, “Muir believed the public lands should remain pristine and inviolate, as eternal havens for humans and animals” (Malone and Etulain 69). For him, natural spaces under the control of the government should be kept untouched and preserved as places where not only animals, but also humans could live freely. Humans living in the industrial USA of the 20th century needed open and vast natural spaces to explore and enjoy freely and national parks were appropriate places to establish relationships with the environment in Muir’s view. Muir did not think about national parks as centers for mass tourism and he wanted to preserve these areas as wild as possible. “The wilderness he sought was an antidote to society and use” (Solnit 260), so the idea of overcrowded national parks as safe havens for animals and humans was inconceivable. National parks were for Muir a way to escape from industrial society and its oppressive institutions. However, as the 20th century industrial society of the USA was based on expansion and constantly needed resources, the establishment of national parks also had a negative side for nature throughout the country. Preserving some spaces meant exploiting or sacrificing others so as the industrial society could continue working. As Solnit explains,

National parks counterbalance and perhaps legitimize the national sacrifice areas, which in the nineteenth century meant mostly mining and timbercutting and now has grown to include waste disposal and military-use areas and places drowned by dams. (246-247)

Protecting some natural spaces served as a justification to exploit and destroy others, so even if national parks were established, many areas across the country were subjugated and used as mere resources. Besides, the industrial society created so much waste that it was accumulated in places where previously life abounded and, for the first time, natural spaces were destroyed to allow military practices such as bomb tests. Thus, although huge natural spaces were preserved, in other places violence against nature was as harsh as ever. Even if in the American society the environmental consciousness was growing, the characteristics of industrial civilization required the constant exploitation of resources and life forms. That is why, with an immense part of the country's nature already lost, national parks showed one of the few opportunities of protecting the environment.

The establishment of the first national parks and their success in preserving huge natural areas, along with the consolidation of the conservation movement, brought government decisions that promoted the protection of more spaces. Forest reservations, used mainly for the establishment of national forests, were created and their territories were expanded by various presidents. Indeed, "President Benjamin Harrison set aside thirteen million acres in fifteen such reserves; the administration of President Grover Cleveland added twenty-one million acres more, and that of William McKinley another seven million" (Malone and Etulain 68). In three presidential terms forty-one million acres were protected, showing that the government was taking the task of keeping nature and its future resources intact seriously. These territories under the control of the government were conserved as national forests, that is, some of their resources were exploited. Although this exploitation was done more moderately than in non-protected areas, resources were still extracted from the land. However, as resources are not used up in national forests, life can still thrive in them. Even if, for example, exploitation of wood is carried out in national forests, they also have characteristics of national parks, such as a concern for wildlife and the fact that they can be places for recreation. Thus, national forests, like national parks, can also serve to protect huge natural spaces and their life forms, even if exploitation exists in them. "By 1909 the national forests numbered 159 and covered 151 million regal acres" (Malone and Etulain 69), what makes clear that at the beginning of the 20th century vast territories of the USA were protected and more positive attitudes towards the environment were becoming prominent. The conservation movement became more powerful and thanks to the

environmental awareness it promoted, natural areas throughout the country were preserved.

The efforts made by the conservation movement to protect and preserve nature were not limited to spaces like forests or rivers. With the consolidation of the movement, a time came when preservationists showed to be increasingly aware of plant and, especially, animal lives. Various national forests and parks had already been established and “for the next few decades the conservation movement shifted its focus to the protection of wildlife” (Fox 148). Preservationists acknowledged the value of wild animal and plant species and struggled in order to improve their situations and conditions. The USA is inhabited by animal species like bison, antelope, elk, grizzly bear or bald eagle (a national icon) and many of the country’s species can only be found there. For this reason, preservationists thought these species (and many others) should be protected to avoid their possible disappearance caused by human expansion and exploitation. The establishment of national parks, as spaces that could not be exploited, functioned also as a measure to protect species. However, the species that lived outside the boundaries of national parks were still potential victims of human exploitation. Although various government acts were enacted through the 20th century, probably the most important one was the Endangered Species Preservation Act, created firstly in 1966. This act protected species that were in danger of extinction, but it could be argued that it came late because for the second half of the 20th century the numbers of many species had been significantly reduced. Besides, the act cared about species that were already threatened, excluding others that could become threatened later. Nevertheless, the preoccupation shown by the conservation movement and its efforts to protect non-human lives proved that, regarding relationships between humans and nature, more positive attitudes towards the environment were taking an important place among the nature-domination of previous times.

The American West was a place where nature abounded (especially in comparison to the East as a consequence of colonist expansion throughout the country) and where the last signs of the wilderness of the USA could be found. National parks with immense forests like Yosemite were established in order to protect the nature of the West, but that part of the country was also characterized by desert areas that were unique natural spaces. Natural formations like canyons, rock structures and rivers formed a landscape that could not be equaled anywhere in the world. Besides, the

natural diversity of the area that included species like the desert tortoise or the desert horned lizard, made preservationists think about protecting desert areas of the West. That is why, “in addition to the established preserves of Yellowstone and Yosemite, more of the West’s most impressive scenery now came under federal preservation, including (...) Arizona’s Grand Canyon (1919)” (Malone and Etulain 71). Preservationists succeeded in protecting an area like the Grand Canyon, whose wilderness and apparent desolation could initially be less attractive to people than Yosemite (although now tourism and recreation are common there), but that was considered a unique environment full of life worth preserving. The environmental awareness of (a part of) the population continued growing and protecting wild areas of the West became a main concern for the conservation movement. In 1964, the Wilderness Act was created in order to define and protect wilderness. The Wilderness Society (an organization advocating for the protection of natural areas) was behind the act and thanks to it around 37,000km² were protected. Although the conservation movement was an important part of the history of environmentalism (the set of ideas and values to protect the environment), in the second half of the 20th century the efforts to preserve nature and other issues related to it (those concerning pollution for example) came to be known as part of the environmental movement. Malone and Etulain explain that this movement “which budded in the 1950s and 1960s and then surged in the 1970s, was not unique to the West, but it focused here, where most of the lands in question lay” (284). Environmentalists focused on the protection of wild areas of the West, so their environmental concern was not related to keeping resources safe or to offering people recreation in nature, but to maintaining nature wild and untouched by human intervention. The relationships between environmentalists and nature can be considered positive because these advocated for spaces free from human presence and exploitation. Large areas of the West were preserved, some of them considered wilderness, but all of them were controlled by government agencies. Indeed, “the Bureau of Land Management, the US Forest Service, and the National Park Service – between them controlled more than 350 million acres of the West” (Malone and Etulain 285). The protected natural areas of the West were under the control of three federal agencies, so, even if their aim was to preserve nature, they could act for their own benefit as in the case of water-developers in national parks.

Nevertheless, and despite the fact that the government controlled natural spaces, the conservation movement and its ideas about the preservation of the environment succeeded in protecting huge areas of the country. Earlier environmental concerns of, for example, Romantic writers evolved until they gave place to a movement to actually protect the environment. The relationships between humans and nature (and its living beings) became more positive throughout the end of the 19th and the 20th centuries, although domination and exploitation of the land and its resources continues. The efforts to continue protecting the environment in the second half of the 20th century, associated to the name ‘environmental movement,’ were an evolution of the conservation movement and both were part of the set of ideas related to environmentalism. While the conservation movement focused mainly on protecting natural spaces, the environmental movement extended its preoccupation for the environment and included issues like pollution or climate change. Thus, people became increasingly concerned about the situation of the environment and the struggle to protect the planet and its living beings achieved an importance never seen before.

5. Radical Environmentalism

The conservation movement and its evolution into the modern environmental movement showed an increasing awareness for the environment and its problems. In the last decades of the 20th century their concerns did not only include the conservation of natural spaces or the protection of species. Environmentalists also became aware of realities of this century like increased pollution or global warming and they struggled in order to solve these problems. The anti-nuclear movement, especially important in the 1970s and 1980s, was linked to the environmental movement due to their opposition to nuclear energy (and to nuclear weapons) as a dangerous and polluting source of energy. Campaigns and protests against nuclear energy, deforestation or climate change were common in their struggle to protect the environment. For the first time, taking the streets and demanding changes to governments and companies became a way to try to improve human-natural relationships. Significant organizations for the protection of the environment were created, such as Greenpeace. This organization was founded in 1971 with the aim of protecting life in the planet and it carries out campaigns and even direct actions related to issues like whaling.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that more favorable attitudes towards nature existed in the last decades of the 20th century, exploitation and pollution continued and the environmental situation worsened. Some of the ways of action of environmentalists were considered ineffective to stop the further encroachment of nature. Potter explains that “their leafleting, letter-writing, marching and protesting had earned some victories, yes, but not enough. Perhaps they felt they needed a new voice, a new language” (21). The inability sometimes shown by the mainstream environmental movement to succeed in their struggle to protect the environment made some people take more extreme measures to try to save life in the planet. Radical environmentalists showed an unprecedented consciousness for the environment and its life forms and, as a consequence, they used radical direct actions such as the destruction of machinery to try to stop the further exploitation of nature. Thus, the radical environmental movement developed, showing opposition to government agencies and companies profiting from the domination of nature and using illegal methods to protect the environment.

As the actions of these environmentalists target different agencies and companies, they have sometimes been labeled as terrorists; more exactly as ‘ecoterrorists.’ This term is used mainly by what can be considered ‘enemies’ of environmentalists and of nature and it has very specific connotations, such as creating a distorted image of them. ‘Radical environmentalists’ is the term that will be used throughout this work, but considering that both terms make reference to the environmental activists who use specific direct action methods, a definition of ‘ecoterrorism’ can be included here. Although there is not a complete consensus about the definition of this term, its main features are common to all. According to DeMond Shondell Miller, Jason David Rivera and Joel C. Yelin, “eco-terrorism is the violent destruction of property on the behalf of individuals or environmental groups in the name of saving the environment from further human encroachment and destruction” (113). This definition makes clear that ecoterrorism (or radical environmentalism, depending on who refers to this type of activism) aims to destroy properties or objects that endanger the environment; human beings are never a target. Saving the environment from attacks perpetrated, for example, by companies is the aim of radical environmentalists and by destroying their properties by provoking them economic losses they hope to stop their advance.

Although this definition of the term is a quite illustrative one, there are others that add information and include other dimensions of what is known as ecoterrorism. Jennifer Jean Webb, aligning with the definition provided by the FBI, defines it as follows:

the use or threatened use of violence of a criminal nature against innocent victims or property by an environmentally or animal rights oriented subnational group for environmental-political reasons, or aimed at an audience beyond the target, often of a symbolic nature. (19)

This definition emphasizes the fact that radical environmentalism is not only concerned with the environment, but also with animal right or animal liberation issues, a fact that is essential to comprehend the whole nature of this movement. Indeed, an incredibly big number of radical environmental actions have been carried out by a group called ALF (Animal Liberation Front) that focuses on animals rather than on the environment. Understanding that there are also groups and activists fighting for animal liberation and wellbeing is key, for it constitutes another dimension of the struggle of these activists. The political level this definition adds is also quite illustrative because all actions taken

against property by activists are politically laden. These are not just ‘acts of vandalism’ and they are motivated by political stances like anti-capitalism or anti-industrialism. The relationships between activists and the environment are highly political, so their actions must be understood as political decisions but also in the context of human-natural relationships. The symbolic nature of actions that the proposed definition mentions and the fact that actions might be aimed at an audience are also essential to comprehend the working methods of radical environmentalists. As in the case of nature writing or writings about the environment, these activists want to make people aware of environmental problems and their actions attack sectors that exploit nature while making others think about the situation. Thus, the impact their actions can have on the people’s way of thinking can be as important as the actions themselves.

Taking all this into account, it could be considered that the definition provided by Webb (based on the one of the FBI) is acceptable and illustrative to a great extent. Nevertheless, when talking about an issue like this (that threatens property), it is inevitable to be subjective to some extent, especially considering the existing enmity between radical environmental groups and the FBI. Using words like ‘criminal’ or ‘against innocent victims’ makes clear that the FBI tries to portray these groups as a dangerous menace. However, it can be said that this statement is a biased exaggeration, because radical environmentalists do not aim at people. After many years of direct action throughout the United States no one has ever been killed by these activists. Indeed, as Potter points out, “the list of top eco-terrorism crimes from one of the top adversaries of these movements does not include a single injury or death” (48). Thus, labelling people who have not killed or even attacked anyone as terrorists seems controversial. The use of the term ‘terrorist’ is applied to environmentalists especially because they threaten the property and profits of specific sectors. These sectors try to protect their interests not only by considering activists terrorists, but by any means necessary. This is made evident through an example of an attempted bomb-attack by an activist to US Surgical, a company that was experimenting with and killing dogs. In 1988, Fran Trutt was arrested when she was about to attack US Surgical. She strongly doubted about what she was going to do and, when she went back to her truck without placing the bomb, she was arrested. Potter explains that “the money for the bomb, the truck, the logistics, the encouragement – US Surgical and a “counterterrorism” firm called Perceptions International had orchestrated it all” (51). A possible bomb-attack

that could have injured or killed people was planned and set in motion by a company and a 'counterterrorism' firm that deceived an activist in order to arrest her. Therefore, radical environmentalists were not really behind this 'terrorist attack,' what makes one think who the true terrorists are.

Considering these environmentalists as terrorists instead of as people who struggle to defend and protect nature and its living beings leads to perceptions of insecurity, fear or hate by the population. However, there are also people who think about this activism in positive terms, support and even join it. Regarding these groups and activists, Murray Bookchin (among other things, the philosopher who conceived the theory of social ecology) stated that "they are not terrorists as the FBI would have you believe. They are doing important work, work I strongly support" (38). Bookchin's ideas about how the domination of humans over humans extended to the natural world and his environmental views of a more balanced society with the environment made him view radical environmentalists as a positive force. Statements like this show that a division between the supporters of radical environmentalism and the ones opposing it exists and that it seems that a side must be chosen in this struggle; it is not something that can be discussed from the outside.

5.1. Predecessors to Radical Environmentalism

Radical environmentalism, as a part of the set of values and ideas associated to environmentalism, developed in the last decades of the 20th century, evolving from the conservation movement and the mainstream environmental movement. However, its roots can be traced to previous relationships between humans and nature and to earlier forms of resistance. The opposition to the domination of nature and to the exploitation of its resources did not appear for the first time with radical environmentalism. In fact, the defence of the environment by direct action and struggle has been present throughout time and space. Human-natural relationships like the love for nature or a balanced lifestyle with the environment led to active opposition against the powers that tried to destroy nature and such relationships. This type of resistance existed before, but the protection of the environment through methods of property destruction and sabotage reached its highest point with the radical environmental movement and its direct action.

The opposition to the exploitation of the land and to the advance of industrial powers over nature happened several times in the USA even before the radical environmental movement started developing. This was done by Native Americans who fought to preserve their homes and lifestyles. During the process of expansion to the West “the invasion of sacred lands was rarely welcomed by the native tribes” (Hellenbach 28), so resistance against such invasions was common. The invasion of lands inhabited by natives and other forms of animal and plant life was not accepted by these peoples and the exploitation of resources, along with the continuous development met strong opposition. Natives considered the land sacred, so attacks against it were deemed insults to nature and life. But not only that, because, in addition to the land itself, aspects like their spirituality or their ways of life were also threatened by such attacks. Therefore, Native Americans defended themselves and their environment by using different methods. The resistance of these peoples against so-called progress is made evident considering the following:

Survey markers and telegraph poles were favorite, and vulnerable, targets of sabotage. Indians attacked the railroad by unbolting the rails, or constructing barriers of stacked ties secure to the rails with freshly cut telegraph wire. (Hellenbach 28)

Natives, like radical environmentalists later, attacked properties through acts of sabotage. Survey markers or telegraph poles, signs of the process of expansion of colonists, invaded the sacredness of the land but they were easy to destroy. In addition to that, Native Americans struggled against one of the most evident symbols of progress and expansion in the country, that is, the railroad. The rails were sabotaged to avoid their further extension and the passing of trains. So the defence of the land by the natives consisted on attacking properties and elements of an industrial era that threatened to destroy nature and their lifestyles. In some cases, native resistance included more extreme methods, although the attacks perpetrated by colonists were still more brutal and destructive. In the already mentioned Hetch Hetchy Valley, when colonists were already exploiting the area, natives continued resisting not only by destroying property. As Solnit explains, “these original inhabitants were interfering with the economic development of the area: They resisted incursions into what was left of their territory, sometimes by killing miners” (272). When they were deprived of almost all the lands they used to inhabit, natives even killed people directly exploiting the area, that is, miners. The resistance of natives was really a way to try to preserve their endangered lives and those of other living beings, so killing people was an extreme method they also resorted to. In the case of radical environmentalism, killing people is not a method for action. However, natives killed invaders to protect the environment because their relationships with nature were incredibly strong.

The resistance shown by natives in the USA is not an isolated example of the indigenous peoples trying to defend the environment and their lives. In fact, this kind of direct action in order to protect the natural world has happened worldwide and in different moments of history. There are recent cases of indigenous resistance of this type and, undoubtedly, these peoples will continue resisting as long as their communities are attacked. Manes explains that “in January 1984 a band of Piromasco Indians, painted red and firing poison-tipped arrows, attacked a Shell Oil work crew drilling an exploratory well on their traditional hunting grounds in the Peruvian Amazon” (122). The Amazon rainforest and its living beings, including human communities, have constantly been (and still are) attacked by powers exploiting resources and destroying life. Some of the members of the Piromasco tribe decided to defend fiercely their environment by attacking those who were drilling the surface of the Earth in order to obtain resources. The continuation of Shell Oil’s work would have

meant the destruction of the area and its life forms, so indigenous people attacked the drilling works to protect their local environment. The natural balance of the area, as well as the balance and relationships of the area with the Piromasco (it was their hunting area, the sustain of the whole community) would have been disrupted if the attack had not been carried out. Thus, counterattacking directly those trying to profit from the exploitation of the land was the way of indigenous peoples to resist and protect nature. “For tribal peoples, defense of their environment and their existence as a people were one and the same thing” (Manes 122), because their relationships with the environment are so strong that both are part of the same community. The way radical environmentalists resist to the powers exploiting nature is similar, regardless of the obvious and significant differences concerning their relationships with nature and those of indigenous peoples. Radical environmentalists understand the intrinsic value of nature and its life forms and develop relationships of, for example, love or spirituality with the natural world that drive them to resist the domination of nature. However, in the case of indigenous peoples, resisting the attacks perpetrated against the environment becomes even more important than for radical environmentalists. This is due to the fact that, as indigenous peoples are part of the natural community, their lives are seriously threatened if they do not take action to protect the environment. Thus, for them, protecting the natural world is always a matter of life and death.

Indigenous peoples’ resistance and actions to defend the environment are local, that is, they are concerned with their communities and with the spaces that directly affect them. Although radical environmentalists take action in a more global scale (they do not only act locally and as there are activists worldwide they can do so in different places), their struggle has its roots in the resistance of native peoples. Indeed, it can be considered that “radical ecology has always taken its cue from indigenous resistance” (Do or die 148). The reasons for action in both cases can differ: while indigenous peoples try to defend their communities and the life forms that surround them, radical environmentalists mainly act moved by an environmental concern. Nevertheless, the opposition of environmentalists to industrial and capitalist powers profiting from the exploitation of the land by direct attacks against property has indigenous resistance as a source of inspiration and as its basis. The domination carried out by these powers does not only destroy nature, but also human-natural relationships. The expansion of the highly industrialized modern society over the natural world destroys the bonds between

humans and nature and, therefore, humans lose contact with the natural world they originally belong to. Perlman expressed that “resistance is the natural human response to dehumanization” (*Against His-story* 130), that is, resisting the process of exploitation and industrialization (as indigenous peoples and radical environmentalists do) is the correct reaction to avoid being denaturalized and dehumanized by industrial and capitalist powers. For Perlman, “the forms of resistance are sometimes original but usually they are inspired by earlier forms” (*Against His-story* 130), so radical environmentalism can be deemed the continuation of indigenous resistance.

Although radical environmentalism has its root in native ways of resistance, there are other events and people in history that can be considered predecessors to that movement. Ned Ludd, an English weaver of the 18th century, can be considered a pioneer of the destruction of machinery and industrial sabotage. In 1779, he broke some mechanical knitting machines and, years later, a group called the Luddites took him as inspiration to protest against industrialization by destroying more machines. Although anti-industrial ideas are also present in the radical environmental movement, all these English workers attacked industrial machinery for a different reason. Industrialization and the mechanization of work were threatening their jobs, so they decided to attack the machines that would take their places. Even if the reasons behind the actions of Luddites and environmentalists are different, the ways of action of the former (sabotage of machinery) influenced the latter. In fact, along with some introductory quotes, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* has the following words in the beginning: IN MEMORIAM: Ned Ludd. Besides, in the chapter called “The Wooden Shoe Conspiracy” (a direct allusion to the sabots, that is, the wooden shoes used to destroy machines) Dr Sarvis, one of the four protagonists, talks about Ned Ludd:

Dr. Sarvis told his comrades about a great Englishman named Ned. Ned Ludd. They called him a lunatic but he saw the enemy clearly. Saw what was coming and acted directly. And about the wooden shoes, *les sabots*. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 68)

So, the figure of Ned Ludd became highly important and a source of inspiration for radical environmental groups and activists. This was especially due to the fact that he aimed directly at industrialization and attacked machines through acts of sabotage. The fact that the word ‘sabotage’ derives from that of the wooden shoes used to kick and destroy machines, the sabots, is quite illustrative of Ludd’s working methods and

implies that these shoes were effective in the task of destroying machines. Shoes made out of wood, being hard and heavy, could easily destroy machines and, thus, Ludd became a pioneer of sabotage by kicking knitting machines. The actions carried out by Ludd and the Luddites cannot be considered a form of environmentalism, because they acted to keep their jobs instead of by an environmental concern. Nevertheless, these people paved the way and established the procedures for radical environmental actions.

Another important predecessor to radical environmentalism can be an already mentioned nature writer of the 19th century, Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau developed ideas about the relationships of humans with the natural world and opposed modern society to live a simpler life surrounded by nature, as his *Walden* shows. However, his thoughts did not only focus on the natural world and his writings developed other influential ideas. His work *Civil Disobedience* (1849) argued that citizens must resist the oppression of governments and the injustices perpetrated by them. He expressed ideas like the following:

All men recognize the right of revolution; that is, the right to refuse allegiance to, and to resist, the government, when its tyranny or its inefficiency are great and unendurable. (Thoreau, *Walden* 182)

According to Thoreau, people must resist and act against the injustices of governments; resistance is a duty for him. Governments, as well as companies, perpetrated (and still perpetrate) attacks against people, but also against the environment and in the 20th and 21st centuries environmentalists have realized about that. Radical environmentalists consider that actions carried out by governments and companies against the environment are intolerable and, for that reason, they resist the domination and exploitation of nature. This kind of environmentalists “can trace their roots back to Thoreau’s *On Civil Disobedience*” (Miller, Rivera and Yelin 117) but they clearly extend Thoreau’s ideas to environment-related issues. Civil disobedience (along with sabotage) is an environmentalists’ way of resisting and protecting nature and Thoreau’s influence on them is noteworthy.

Despite the fact that radical environmentalism has been mainly influenced by the mentioned events and people, these were not the only cases in which common people took direct action against what they considered injustices. Even before the environmental movement developed, some people acted in ways similar to modern

radical environmentalists. In the last years of the 19th century, the American West saw the introduction of barbed wire in areas used as public pastures until then. People whose lives depended on public grasslands in order to feed their livestock opposed the process of enclosing public lands by cutting fences. “Fence cutting wars resulted, with small ranchers and farmers forming secret societies” (Hellenbach 29), so people whose work and, therefore, lives were threatened by the introduction of barbed wire decided to act against this measure that also oppressed the land and living beings, as it made the free movement of animals impossible. Radical environmentalism has strong similarities with this movement against barbed wire, because activists also cut fences (especially for actions of animal liberation) and act in undercover groups. The opposition to fencing was huge and “estimates of fence cutting damage in Texas alone ranged from 20 to 30 million dollars” (Hellenbach 29). So, as in the case of radical environmentalism, the destruction of property was a method of resistance that caused significant economic losses to those enclosing lands. Another event in the West of the USA that is quite illustrative of people’s resistance to the signs of ‘development’ imposed by those in power is, unsurprisingly, linked to water development. In the Owens Valley of California the building of an aqueduct was planned in order to transport water to Los Angeles. Farmers of the area strongly opposed this construction, because it would deprive them from a valuable resource in order to provide the city. The farmers’ complaints were neglected until “on May 21, 1924, a group of men “broke” into the (...) warehouse, “stole” three cases of dynamite, and blew a large section of the aqueduct to smithereens” (Reisner 93). The dissatisfaction of farmers regarding the aqueduct was so huge that they decided to destroy it by using dynamite. The construction would imply taking water away from farmers and the impossibility to continue cultivating and working, so they took extreme measures. Radical environmentalists rarely use explosives (and only when human lives are not endangered), but the sabotage of structures like the mentioned aqueduct is part of their resistance. Although a clear environmental concern is not behind the mentioned events, actions are taken because the land is attacked as well as the lives of people who depend on working on that land. Nevertheless, the methods used resemble the ways of action of radical environmentalists and they are examples of resistance against the powers that try to use the land and its resources for their own specific purposes.

So, even if the radical environmental movement developed in the last decades of the 20th century, resistance by use of direct action existed in previous times. This had an obvious influence on that movement. Although some of the predecessors to radical environmentalism did not have a clear environmental concern, resistance was necessary for them in order to protect their lifestyles and local environments. Ideas related to anti-industrialization or to civil disobedience lied behind the actions of these predecessors to modern radical environmentalism and later, these ideas (among others) became the basis of that movement. Working methods like sabotage of machinery or constructions were successful in different struggles separated by time and space. Thus, this kind of actions became the main way of action of radical environmentalists, what clearly shows what the roots of their resistance were.

5.2. The History of the Radical Environmental Movement

Although the appearance of radical environmentalism can be traced to an approximate time and space, it cannot be deemed that it started in a specific moment because, as it has been explained, events and movements of resistance similar to it existed before. Besides, before the consolidation of radical environmentalism as a movement for the defence of the environment, many individuals and small groups resorted to direct action to oppose the exploitation and pollution of nature. These can be considered the first real examples of radical environmentalists, but, normally, it is with the birth of the most important groups (like Earth First!) when the existence of a movement is thought about. Even if radical environmentalism developed in other parts of the world, the USA is arguably the cradle of the movement and the country where it became more important.

Even before the 1970s, isolated individuals with no ties between each other decided to take direct action against what they considered injustices against nature and the environment. Although they did not have a common ideology as part of a movement, they saw the worsening situation of the environment and attacked the powers exploiting and polluting nature by direct action methods like sabotage. Individuals of this kind appeared in different parts of the country, responding to the situation of their local environments (as in the case of indigenous peoples). Edward Abbey was one of these individuals and, as early as in the last years of the 1950s, he attacked billboards and removed survey stakes in the American West. Years later he was also involved in the sabotage of bulldozers, so the activism shown in his novels is partly based on his own attempts at saving the environment. However, Abbey was not the only lone radical environmentalist in the West. The Arizona Phantom, who acted in Black Mesa, “disrupted coal mining projects” (Webb 25) in an attempt to stop the direct exploitation of the land and its resources. The wild spaces of the West were the target of representatives of “progress” and environmentalists were active trying to protect that wilderness. In the 1960s another important environmentalist appeared and started taking direct action in Chicago. He was known as The Fox and he “plugged industrial drains, and smokestacks, collected effluent and dumped it in corporate offices” (Young 31). The Fox thought that industries in Chicago were polluting the area highly and the negative consequences to life forms (human and non-human) it implied were

inadmissible for him. He was one of the radical environmentalists who acted before the consolidation of the movement and he did not act by the (sometimes) well-defined values of a group or movement. In fact, he “was not appealing to any special environmental ethic, just the commonsense notion that pollution is a threat to life” (Manes 185). Thus, although *The Fox* did not take action explicitly in the name of saving the environment, his environmental concerns were evident because he attacked polluting industries in order to save living beings.

The actions of these first radical environmentalists were very significant because they meant a new dimension of preoccupation for the environment and resistance to the abuses perpetrated against it. This was a turning point regarding human-natural relationships due to the fact that an environmental consciousness motivated actions against industrial and capitalist powers (considered positive by a big part of the population) so as to protect the natural world. Besides, these activists and actions led to the formation of small groups of environmentalists in the 1970s. Groups in defence of the environment appeared through the country, especially, in order to respond to attacks carried out in their local environments. In Michigan, the *Billboard Bandits* was formed, a group that focused on sawing down billboards. In Minnesota, a group of farmers who shared opposition to a power line (that would also led to the construction of a station to generate electricity and a coal mine) came together to form the *Bolt Weevils*. This group took direct action “against the construction of 400-foot power lines (...) by toppling the steel structures” (Webb 25). This example shows that, even if they were small, these environmental groups were already taking serious measures to try to stop what they considered injustices against the environment. In Florida, the *Eco-Commandoes* were formed and got involved in actions related to sewage. Although environmentalists came together in many points of the country, the American West stood out as an important focus of activism. The West, a place that saw the emergence of lone radical environmentalists, was also the area where probably the most important of these early groups took action. The *Eco-Raiders*, a group that took action in Arizona, was “engaged in direct action ranging from removing survey stakes to destroying newly built homes” (Webb 25). The actions of this group were serious attempts at defending the wild spaces of Arizona and the fact that they even destroyed (uninhabited) houses shows how fervently they opposed human expansion over nature. At the time these groups were taking actions in defence of the environment, they were not considered part

of a movement. Nevertheless, many other groups were formed thereafter and with the creation of more 'formal' groups the radical environmental movement was born.

In addition to the appearance of early lone individuals and small groups, the creation of the radical environmental movement owed a lot to certain books that exposed thought-provoking realities associated to the environment. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, published in 1962, showed the negative effects the use of pesticides has on the environment and its life forms. The facts explained in her book created an environmental consciousness in many people's minds and its influence was so huge that "Carson's poetic call to action is widely credited with igniting the modern environmental movement" (Potter 53). Carson's ideas regarding the danger of pesticides made people aware of, at least, a side of the worsening environmental situation and these were so influential that the book played an important role in the creation of the environmental movement. However, the radicalization of that movement came, to a great extent, thanks to another book: Edward Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (in 1975). The novel portrayed a group of activists carrying out actions of sabotage in order to protect the environment, as small groups and activists (including Abbey himself) had already done. The novel popularized the kind of direct action early radical environmentalists used, "inspired a quickly maturing environmental movement and threw some dynamite on Rachel Carson's fire" (Potter 53). Thus, while *Silent Spring* helped in the creation of the environmental movement, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* helped in the creation of the radical environmental movement. Despite being a piece of fiction, Abbey's work showed that actions (like the ones taken before by real people) could be taken in order to attack those exploiting nature. That way, the sabotage of property started to be considered an option for environmentalists and radical environmentalism became a reality. *Ecotage!*, a book by the group Environmental Action, also showed methods for sabotage for environmental causes. It was published before *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, in 1972, but it was not taken seriously then. With the publication of Abbey's work, *Ecotage!* gained relevance and it also became a reference in terms of radical environmental action. Therefore, the transmission of environment-related ideas through certain books was key for the creation of environmental activism and especially for the radical movement. The change in the set of some people's ideas provoked by the mentioned works can be considered as important as earlier forms of

resistance because these books offered possible ways for protecting the environment and made ideas available to a big part of the population.

The first important (due to the number of actions and their impact) radical environmental group was the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), formed in the United Kingdom in 1976. Later, it spread to the USA, where it became one of the most prominent groups. The ALF is not engaged in actions directly related to environmental issues because they focus on animal liberation and wellbeing, which are also a part of the radical environmental movement. Prior to the foundation of the ALF, there were two groups in the UK involved in actions related to animal issues and these are considered the predecessors to that group. The Hunt Saboteurs Association was formed in 1963 in order to stop hunting, especially fox hunting. They used direct action methods like road blockades or smoke bombs in order to frustrate the efforts of hunters. In 1972, two members of the HSA considered that other actions were needed to protect animals and they formed the Band of Mercy. This group sabotaged hunt vehicles but later they also attacked laboratories where vivisection was being carried out. The group's first attack against a laboratory under construction was incredibly important because it was the first time that arson was used as a method for direct action related to environmental or animal issues. The two founding members were arrested in 1974 after an action. When one of them, Ronnie Lee, was released from prison, he formed the ALF along with other members of the Band of Mercy. In the late 1970s the ALF was very active in the UK, but it became especially strong in the USA. The direct action methods of the ALF consist mainly on "liberating animals from laboratories and damaging property to intimidate businesses to withdraw from destructive practices" (Webb 32). The main objective of the group is to liberate animals used for experiments or deprived of freedom for other human purposes, like treating animals as resources as in the case of the fur industry. However, like other radical environmental groups, they also resort to the sabotage of property in order to cause economic losses that could put an end to practices against animals. The group is more active than any other and a huge percentage of radical environmental actions in the United States has been carried out by them alone. That means that over the years the ALF has caused huge economic losses to those profiting from animal exploitation. Indeed, between 1992 and 2002 in the USA "estimates of damage and destruction (...) put the fur industry and medical research losses at more than 45 million dollars" (Young 42). Thus, even if the ALF focuses on

animal-related issues instead of on environmental issues, it is a radical environmental group which is very active in the struggle to protect the natural world. Its formation and subsequent actions partly consolidated radical environmentalism as a movement, although it is with the appearance of straightforward environmental groups when the movement gained its full power.

Greenpeace, probably the most famous and important group within the mainstream environmental movement, was formed in 1971 and carried out direct actions in order to, for example, stop whaling. However, even if there was a line the group was not ready to cross, some people that belonged to Greenpeace felt the need of taking more extreme measures to save the environment. “While Greenpeace just got bigger, gaining millions of members while all the time becoming more symbolic and less of a threat” (Do or die 13), Paul Watson decided to form another group that would fight more fiercely in the name of saving the environment. Considering that Greenpeace was not doing enough to protect the planet and its life forms, Watson formed the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society in 1977. The SSCS is a radical environmental group concerned with the seas, both on environmental and animal terms. In order to protect sea environments, the group acts mainly by “halting illegal fishing activities, such as pirate whaling, poaching, and shark fining” (Young 33). Protecting wildlife is their main objective although the group also makes efforts to interfere with the destruction of ecosystems like coral reefs. Unlike earlier forms of resistance, such as indigenous resistance, the SSCS uses direct action worldwide (even if it is based in the USA) and tries to make people get involved in their struggle. The first action of the group was carried out in 1979 and it consisted on the “ramming and disabling of a whaling ship off the Portuguese coast” (Do or die 141). An action of this kind makes two things clear: firstly, that the SSCS is concerned with the protection of the environment in any part of the world and, secondly, that they resort to methods that mainstream environmental groups would never use. The fact of taking direct action in order to disable a ship whose aim is to kill animals shows the preoccupation of these activists regarding marine life forms and makes clear that the struggle to protect the natural world from human attacks can happen everywhere. The direct actions of the SSCS are varied; they try to protect the environment by “slicing the nets of driftnetters, ramming and scuttling whalers, and sabotaging seal and turtle kills” (Do or die 141). Therefore, the idea that Greenpeace was not effective enough to protect the seas led to the formation of a group that uses different methods of direct action to

defend life in marine environments. The SSCS's awareness for environmental injustices worldwide and its actions (and methods) have made it one of the most important and active radical environmental groups and the principal one in the protection of the seas.

The formation of the group Earth First! was a key event in the history of the radical environmental movement, because it was the first significant group focusing on purely environmental action, instead of on animal liberation and wellbeing and, unlike the SSCS, working on solid ground. EF! was formed in 1980 due to the increasing discontent of a group of people and as a consequence of a decision taken by the US Forest Service. The Forest Service's Roadless Area Review and Evaluation II determined that instead of the initial eighty million acres of wilderness for preservation, only fifteen million would be preserved. This decision enraged environmentalists and the EF! was founded in order to take more effective measures to protect the environment. The group and its logo (see Appendix B) were strongly influenced by Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and sabotage was one of their main working methods. The first action by the group, in 1981, was a stunt that symbolized a crack in Glen Canyon Dam, even if other direct action methods to stop the exploitation of nature came soon. The destruction of property or tree spiking became working methods of the EF! because "a new kind of group was needed. One that would break the law, push open the envelope, hit the corporations where it hurt (in the pocket)" (Do or die 14). The efforts made by mainstream environmentalists seemed useless and more radical methods that would cause economic losses to those profiting from exploitation was seen by the EF! as the appropriate way to improve the environmental situation. The strong environmental concern of radical groups made them break the law and directly attack companies and government agencies, making evident that the ties they had with nature manifested themselves in fierce opposition to the rules of their society. "Earth First! activists advocated for the preservation and restoration of all existing wilderness areas and believed that industrial civilization was an evil" (Webb 28), so the fight between industrial powers and nature reached a new level with this group and its actions of sabotage. In 1989, two members of the EF!, Judi Bari and Derryl Cherney, were injured and arrested after a bomb exploded in Bari's car. The author of the bombing is still unknown (although intervention of the FBI is suspected), but after this incident the group decided to soften a bit its direct action methods. In spite of this, at that time, the EF! was the most important group in the struggle to protect the environment, indeed it

can be considered that “in 1991 EF!’s handful of activists *were* the radical ecological movement” (Do or die 32). Moreover, in 1993, the group “not only had 45 local groups but had catalysed thousands to take direct action” (Do or die 32), what makes clear that its influence was huge. With the appearance of the EF! the existence of a radical movement to protect the environment became undeniable. The group’s working methods and power to make people join their struggle led to an unprecedented situation in the fight to save the natural world from human attacks.

Nevertheless, as in the case of Greenpeace and the SSCS, some people thought that they could be more active and fight even more fiercely in order to save the environment. Thus, an offshoot of the Earth First!, called the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), was created. The group was formed in the United Kingdom in 1992 and, before being active in the United States, it spread to other European countries, which made its international nature evident. The ELF is considered the most important and active group struggling for the defence and preservation of the environment and, although its aims are the same of the EF!, its working methods are more extreme (arson for example) and try to be more effective. The ideology and philosophy of this radical environmental group is related to anarchism, anti-capitalism and, in general terms, to the opposition to Western civilization and its values of nature domination. The group was also influenced by Abbey’s novel and it is noteworthy that in the no longer existing webpage of the ELF a timeline showed the history of ‘ecoterrorism’ with the publication of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* as the starting point (see Appendix A). The ELF’s first action in the United States was carried out in 1996 and it involved the gluing of locks in a Chevron station in Oregon and the spray-painting of its walls. Even if this action could be considered a minor incident, the actions of the ELF became more numerous and effective. In fact, as an example, the group “was responsible for more than 130 attacks in 2001 (...) the costliest resulted in about \$7 million of damage” (Young 39), which shows that they engaged in the struggle to save the environment in really serious terms. However, probably the biggest action the ELF was engaged in happened in 1998 in the Vail ski resort. “ELF set fire to a ski resort in Vail, Colorado incurring between \$12 and \$24 million in damages” (Webb 28) due to the opposition to the intentions of expansion of the resort. The expansion of the resort threatened the habitat of the already endangered lynx and the arson was the ELF’s way to preserve both the animals and their environment. An action of this kind could be easily found in the works that will be

analysed later, but the fact that it happened in real life makes clear that, regarding radical environmentalism, there are not many differences between reality and fiction. Since its creation, the ELF has engaged in numerous actions of sabotage of machinery, buildings and other properties in order to protect the environment and it has established itself as the most active group in this struggle along with the ALF.

With the formation and actions of all these groups, radical environmentalism consolidated itself as a powerful movement in defence of the environment and its living beings. As years passed, radical environmentalism became more active and the movement evolved through the collaboration between groups and through the emergence of new and numerous (but less popular) groups. The impact and impetus of some of these groups is made evident, for example, by considering that the ALF and the ELF “have committed more than 1,100 crimes and caused \$110 million in damage” (Potter 25). However, what is really significant of these two groups is that they started collaborating and carrying out some actions together. Their solidarity of actions was expressed through a communiqué in 1998 and, since then, they have acted together several times in order to carry out more effective actions. One of these joint actions was carried out in 1998 and it involved an attack against “the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal Damage Control Building near Olympia, Washington, in which damages exceeded two million dollars” (Young 48). Thus, the cooperation between the ALF and the ELF showed that their struggle to cause economic losses to companies and government agencies could be successfully carried out by joining forces. Proceedings of this type are not very common because the presence of many activists can threaten their actions. Nevertheless, it showed that links between groups could be established within the radical environmental movement. In addition to that, through the years other less-popular groups emerged to join the struggle of defending the natural world. The Animal Rights Militia and the Justice Department were formed in England in 1982 and 1993 respectively. The two groups focus on issues of animal liberation and wellbeing and they also spread to the United States. The Evan Mecham Eco-Terrorist International Conspiracy was formed in 1987, focusing on environmental issues and especially concerned about the consequences of the use of nuclear energy. Furthermore, an important campaign (sometimes labelled group) called Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty was created in 1999 in England, spreading later to the USA. It struggled against the organization Huntingdon Life Sciences because they killed “between 71,000 and

180,000 animals annually to test household cleaners, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, pesticides and food ingredients for companies like Procter & Gamble and Colgate Palmolive” (Potter 23). The emergence of so many and active groups shows that the struggle to save the environment is taken really seriously and that probably taking extreme measures is the only way to improve the environmental situation. Thus, since the time of early lone activists, many groups have emerged in order to fight against the injustices perpetrated against the natural world. These groups that engage in illegal direct actions around the world have formed a movement with the clear aim of protecting the environment and its living beings from further exploitation.

5.3. Philosophy, Ideology and Working Methods

Some of the ideas related to radical environmentalism (for example, the use of sabotage in order to cause economic losses) have been made clear when talking about its history or about some prominent groups or actions associated to the movement. However, the philosophy and the set of ideas and values that characterise this movement must be considered more thoroughly, not only to fully understand radical environmentalism, but also due to the interesting perspectives they offer regarding the relationships between humans and the natural world. First of all, it must be considered that radical environmentalism is not associated to a specific, defined or limited ideology. The ideas of people who engage in radical environmental actions can differ significantly from each other and these people can come from very different backgrounds. The motivation for their actions can also be different; as it has already been explained, sometimes action is taken because the life of the activist is directly affected by the exploitation of the environment. Radical environmentalism does not have an ideological homogeneity because instead of following a doctrine, it “is responding to a particular social context, a culture dominated by technology, and its relationship to that society (...) defines it” (Manes 21). The situation of exploitation in which humans and nature find themselves in the modern industrial society is what makes radical environmentalists take action. These actions are not the result of a specific set of ideas, indeed, they come ‘naturally’ as a result of existing relationships between humans, society and the natural world. Thus, the specific industrial context of the 20th and 21st centuries (not certain ideas promoted by individuals or groups), can be considered the driving force behind radical environmentalism. Although the realization that nature is brutally exploited (also affecting humans) and the existence of relationships that make people be closer to nature while distancing them from industrial society can happen individually, there are, certainly, some common ideas that make these people engage in the struggle to protect the environment. Even if radical environmentalists can differ in other ideological issues, they share the following:

the persuasion that humankind is not the center of value on this planet, the conviction that the other species on Earth have just as much right to exist as humans do, the belief that wilderness and not civilization is the real world.
(Manes 21)

Thus, all radical environmentalists consider that the thought that human beings are the centre of existence has led to a catastrophic environmental situation and, for that reason, in addition to direct action, they promote a worldview in which all life forms have intrinsic value. The domination of some living beings by others led to the domination of the natural world and the development of civilization (whose basis is that domination), which took the place of wilderness and established unnatural institutions and ways of living, is considered a root of environmental problems. It is clear then, that (before focusing on more specific ideas related to radical environmentalism) this movement is firstly characterised by a respect and appreciation of the natural world that contrasts with the values promoted by the industrial society they oppose.

Although all radical environmentalists do not share a common ideology, there is a current of thought that is especially associated to the movement: deep ecology. The principal tenet of this philosophy is “a bio-centric ideology that put humans in a position of equality with all forms of life” (Young 26). According to the philosophy of deep ecology, human beings are as important as the rest of living beings, that is, no living beings are above others. All living beings have value in themselves and all are part of a whole, which is disrupted by human dominance. Therefore, the domination of nature by humans is considered unjustified and the source of environmental problems and the disappearance (or extinction) of innumerable living beings. The anthropocentric vision of civilization is challenged by deep ecologists and, this is why it is seen as a radical way of thought. Deep ecology considers life above issues like development or technological advancements in clear contrast with the system of values and ideas that put humans in the centre of existence, that is, anthropocentrism. Recently, a concept strongly linked to anthropocentrism (especially in regards to the current environmental situation), has gained prominence in environment-related spheres, the anthropocene. The idea of the anthropocene proposes a geological epoch defined by “human impact on the planet, including transformations of the landscape, urbanisation, species extinctions, resource extraction and waste dumping, as well as disruption to natural processes such as the nitrogen cycle” (Hamilton, Bonneuil and Gemmene 3). Thus, the fact that human impact on the planet, through different forms of destruction and exploitation, has led to another geological epoch is being seriously considered in environmental and scientific circles. The current environmental situation is deemed part of the geological epoch that is the result of human dominance over the rest of the planet and its living beings. That

way, the anthropocentric view deep ecology opposes to, leads not only to the domination of the environment, but also to the transformation of the whole planet. The planet's critical situation that originated from humans' domination over the rest of the natural world should make one rethink about traditional human-natural relationships in the era of the anthropocene. In this respect, deep ecology offers interesting perspectives by proposing much more balance connections with the environment.

“Mainstream environmentalism remained within the anthropocentric camp, even if it attempted to pitch its tent on slightly higher moral ground” (Manes 145), so promoters of deep ecology differ significantly from mainstream groups and individuals in terms of values and ideas. Even if mainstream environmentalists show a concern for the environment other people do not have, they still do so from an anthropocentric point of view, which, according to deep ecologists, cannot really solve environmental problems. Thus, the viewpoint of deep ecologists and radical environmentalists proposes a drastic change in the way humans see and relate to nature and defend that humans are not the centre of existence, just another form of life that belongs to a whole. Furthermore, deep ecology is not only concerned with life forms and, for that reason, ‘biocentrism’ can be considered a wrong word to characterise it. Instead, ‘ecocentrism’ is considered a more appropriate word because the promoters of this current of thought place “not life, *bios*, at the center of this new ethic, but the entire community of living and non-living entities that make up an ecosystem” (Manes 144). Thus, deep ecologists do not only care about the lives of animals (human and non-human) and plants, but also about rivers, mountains and any natural space and formation that is part of an ecosystem and that allows the thriving of life. This fact makes radical environmentalists' reasons to protect the entire natural world evident; they do not try to protect only life, but the whole natural community.

The term deep ecology was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. He was an important figure in the task of defining it, but it can also be argued that the set of ideas that form this current of thought are not something new. As Manes explains, deep ecology “is a response that flows from a relationship that already exists and that has moved increasing numbers of people to resist in thought and deed what is happening to our environment” (140). As in the case of radical environmentalism, already existing relationships with nature give place to deep ecology; it is not a philosophy that promotes new relationships, these relationships are the ones that lead to the development of deep

ecology. Relationships of love, respect and a desire to live in a more balanced way with the environment existed long before radical environmentalism (indigenous peoples and their resistance are a clear example), but deep ecology is a way to put all these ideas together in a philosophy that has made a lot of people rethink about humans' attitudes towards the environment and to take action. Human societies that existed before the development of civilization (and the ones that still strive to survive in modern times) were based on quite balanced relationships with the environment. In fact, humans that were not part of civilization had very often a particular idea of their community, "which includes plants and animals, those in the next generation, and the dead" (Manes 144). Thus, in clear opposition to the concept of community in the modern industrial civilization, these peoples, who existed for years until civilization swallowed them, considered animals, plants and those who were not yet born (also the dead and their spirits) fundamental parts of their lives. This fact avoided the establishment of relationships of power of humans over nature and thinking about future generations made them protect the environment in order to continue with the cycle of life. Thus, the relationships between humans and nature that deep ecology defends have existed since ancestral times. However, as in modern times such relationships have mostly disappeared as a consequence of industrial domination, deep ecology tries to make humans close to nature again. This current of thought "appeals to more than just the logic of technology and responds to the profound spiritual attachment people have to nature" (Manes 149), that is, leaving 'progress' and technological advancements aside, deep ecology tries to revive the spiritual links between humans and nature. Industrial society has alienated humans from the natural world and deep ecology does not only want to establish egalitarian relationships between humans and the rest of nature, but also to give people a rich spiritual life back, which would restore a meaning to life.

Another current of thought that is usually associated to the radical environmental movement is anarchism, more specifically, green anarchism. "The green anarchist critique is one that raises fundamental questions about the nature of social life and its relationship to the natural world" (Matthews 18), that is, it is based on anarchist principles but these are extended to include human-natural relationships. If anarchism defends a stateless and non-hierarchical society without oppressed or oppressors, green anarchism looks for an extension of this idea to include the natural world, which means that hierarchical forms of power between members of the natural community want to be

eliminated. Strongly linked to this idea, green anarchism proposes the establishment of an environmentally-sustainable society in opposition to the nature-dominating industrial-capitalist system. As in the case of anarchism, green anarchism is an umbrella term that encompasses different sets of ideas, although the main principles (like the elimination of hierarchical relationships with nature) are common to all. Within the green anarchist philosophy, currents of thought like the already mentioned social ecology or anarcho-primitivism can be found. Anarcho-primitivism considers that the change from hunting-gathering to agriculture, which dominates nature, also led to the appearance of relationships of power of humans over humans and, that is why this current of thought criticizes civilization and proposes going back to a feral state. All in all, green anarchists/radical environmentalists “abhor the notion of human dominance implied by constant development and encroachment on nature” (Young 26) and this is why they oppose this domination through direct action. The domination of nature by capitalist and industrial powers is considered equal to the domination of humans and green anarchism defends that what is normally deemed progress or development is highly destructive for all forms of life.

Radical environmental groups like the ALF and the ELF are commonly associated to green anarchism, which is made evident through their strong anti-capitalist and anti-industrial ideas. The resistance of these groups to industrial society is comprehensible because, in clear opposition to the values promoted by green anarchism, “industrial capitalism has continued civilization’s age-old attack on the wild and free – resulting in unparalleled biological and cultural meltdown” (Do or die 107). The exploitation and domination of the natural world that civilization has carried out for centuries reached a level never seen before with the development of the industrial civilization. Industrial capitalism is guilty not only of destroying natural areas and driving to extinction life forms (as a consequence of power relations that would not exist in a green anarchist society), but also of the disappearance of peoples and cultures that have been swallowed by it. Therefore, it seems clear that industrial capitalism dominates both nature and humans and that a system of that kind could never be synonym of an environmentally-sustainable society. The establishment of hierarchies and the domination of living beings are considered the “social root of the popular belief that nature is a mere object of social domination” (Bookchin 41). Domination is not a result of human existence, but of humans who have placed, for example, men over women or whites over anyone else,

in order to serve the purposes of a minority. These ideas are also the root of the domination of nature, of considering nature only a resource to allow ‘development.’ Social domination leads inevitably to nature domination and modern environmental problems have their origin in these relationships between humans. Thus, green anarchists consider that humans and nature are equally dominated and exploited by destructive relationships of power that are intrinsic to the industrial-capitalist system/civilization. The ultimate objective of green anarchists is the establishment of a society in which humans and nature live in a balanced way without domination or hierarchies of any kind. The direct action of radical environmentalists cannot really bring about such a society, indeed, as Manes explains, direct action is not “a substitute for major social changes; rather, it is a stopgap measure (...) to protect as much of the natural world as possible until such change is brought about” (186). Therefore, radical environmentalists try to protect nature with the hope that, at some point in history, relationships of power between humans and over nature will disappear. Radical direct action might not lead to the establishment of such a society, but until that happens, it is considered the most appropriate way to defend the natural world. The establishment of a green anarchist society would require the implication and opposition to industrial capitalism of a huge number of people and rethinking about human-natural relationships and different forms of domination. The elimination of these power relationships is extremely difficult (it might never happen), however, instead of only thinking about future societies, radical environmentalists try to protect the natural world from attacks to avoid its disappearance.

Deep ecology and green anarchism are currents of thought strongly associated to the radical environmental movement, but, in more general terms (and not necessarily adhering to the mentioned philosophies), the movement is characterised by its anti-capitalist, anti-industrial or anti-globalization ideas. The opposition of radical environmentalists to industrial capitalism through actions against companies or government agencies makes some of the aspects of their ideology clear and shows an obvious distancing from mainstream environmentalism, which is not so critical of capitalism. Direct action methods that can cause significant economic losses are driven by strong anti-capitalist ideas that oppose the enrichment of a few at the expense of nature. Taking such actions is considered by some as an insult to modern society because they are “an assault on that most American of values, property” (Manes 181).

By attacking properties, radical environmentalists engage in an ideological dispute with the capitalist society (especially significant in the USA where the right to property is so cherished) that sees these properties as expressions of development and freedom. Thus, radical environmental actions are a direct attack on capitalism and on the values promoted by it. Besides, the global expansion of multinational corporations that become bigger by exploiting the environment is also resisted by activists and the wellbeing of local environments and communities is considered much more important than multinational greed. Nevertheless, industrial capitalism is not the only power or structure radical environmentalism opposes because “the animal rights and environmental movements are not seen as a competing civilization, but as threats to civilization itself” (Potter 243). As civilization is based on hierarchical structures between people and on the constant exploitation of natural areas, resources and beings, it is seen as highly destructive and anti-life by radical environmentalists. As in the case of the anarcho-primitivist thought, civilization is seen incompatible with the thriving of life in the planet or with the development of environmentally-sustainable relationships or societies with the natural world. Therefore, in addition to counterattack the institutions representing industrial civilization, the radical environmental movement challenges its fundamental beliefs and values, threatening the idea that endless growth is possible without the destruction of life. All in all, it could be said that “animal rights and environmental movements directly challenge civilization, modernity and capitalism” (Potter 245). However, this opposition is not driven by simple rage or by an unjustified hate of the modern world as some would say, but by the concern that humans are destroying life in the planet (including their own lives) and by the love for the natural world. The traditional relationships of power of humans over nature are considered by radical environmentalists the cause of environmental problems, but also of the disappearance of innumerable natural spaces, animal and plant species and humans and their cultures. That is why the ideas and values associated to the radical environmental movement are in conflict with the dominant industrial-capitalist system, Western culture and especially the ‘grow or die’ ideology as a perspective to see the world.

Although both straightforward environmental activists and activists of animal liberation are part of the radical environmental movement and although they share common ideas and values, there are some differences between them. The specific characteristics of the struggle of animal liberationists, that is, the fact of dealing with

and trying to save the lives of animals, is related not only to ideological perspectives, but also to moral ones. Regarding the animal liberation wing of radical environmentalism, Manes explains that it “was generally less interested in ecological relationships than in what it saw as the moral obligation humans had not to cause suffering to animals” (110). Thus, even if environmental concerns are also part of actions for the wellbeing of animals, these are mainly motivated by moral reasons. The pain and suffering caused to animals by different sectors or industries (scientific research or the food industry for example) is unjustifiable to animal liberationists. The domination of animals for human purposes (which includes suffering and even death) in the modern industrial-capitalist society can lead to scientific ‘advancements’ but the fact that ‘progress’ is based on the suffering of living beings is considered inadmissible. As in the case of environmental activists, animal liberation activists see capitalist and industrial powers dominating and exploiting the natural world, but, even if they share ideological perspectives, the latter are driven especially by moral concerns instead of by environmental ones. In both cases “the right to life and freedom from pain and suffering” (Young 30) motivates their actions, but it can be more clearly appreciated in the case of animal liberationists due to the fact that humans are closer to animals than to, for example, forests. Caring for animals and liberating them from unnatural situations in which pain is the only known feeling is a significant measure in the struggle to protect the natural world. However, animal liberationists care about animals, that is, sentient beings and their struggle “does not include nonsentient beings such as plants or rivers or mountains” (Manes 146). Groups that try to protect animals do not include the environment in their actions (even if activists can engage in both struggles) but as the struggle is ultimately the same, the protection of the natural world, the two types of groups complement each other. It can be concluded that a rethinking about ideas of the relationships (of power) of humans and nature, moral considerations about suffering or opposition to exploitation and endless growth characterise the radical environmental movement, both in terms of environmental and animal protection. Radical environmentalists “challenge fundamental beliefs that have guided humanity for thousands of years, and that have for the most part remained unquestioned by prior social justice movements” (Potter 245), so the depth and perspectives of the movement must not be undervalued. The current environmental situation and the disappearance of so many living beings throughout the years are the consequences of the early times of the human dominance of nature and of other humans that lived in more balanced ways

with nature. For radical environmentalists, anthropocentrism, capitalism or industrial civilization are antagonistic to life. Such relationships between humans and nature have led to a point of no return and the radical environmental movement strives to protect the remaining natural world while proposing alternative ways of relating to the environment.

The sets of ideas and beliefs that characterise the radical environmental movement stand for egalitarian relationships between humans and nature, but, in addition to that, the direct actions that are intrinsic to the movement try to stop the advancement of powers that profit from the seemingly endless exploitation of nature. It has already been made clear that radical environmentalists aim at property, not at people and, although some of their actions have been mentioned, an explanation of their working methods is necessary to fully comprehend the nature of the movement. First of all, it is worth mentioning that radical environmentalists have an array of techniques to use against companies and other institutions and to cause them significant economic losses. Some of these working methods appear in the literary works that will be analysed, so they will be more deeply studied later. Depending on the group and on the specific aim, actions of different kinds are carried out, but the most basic and common technique used by these activists is ‘monkeywrenching,’ “a form of sabotage applied to radical environmental action” (Miller, Rivera and Yelin 115) that, unsurprisingly, was “coined by Edward Abbey in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*” (Miller, Rivera and Yelin 115). Monkeywrenching functions somehow as an umbrella term to describe any small scale act of sabotage done to working equipment, machinery and bulldozers, among others, but never against people or other living beings. For monkeywrenching ordinary tools like pliers or screwdrivers are needed, so the fact that they can be found almost in every home makes this technique the most accessible and easy one for radical environmentalists. Animal liberationists use similar tools and methods to free animals from cages (cutting fences with bolt cutters for example), but as these are not really acts of sabotage (they are not an end in themselves, only a necessary step to free animals) they are not considered monkeywrenching. Although companies and government agencies consider monkeywrenching a violent attack on property that can threaten human lives, radical environmentalists consider and defend that it is a non-violent form of action. As Dave Foreman, founding member of the Earth First!, explains:

Monkeywrenching is nonviolent resistance to the destruction of natural diversity and wilderness. It is never directed against human beings or other forms of life. It is aimed at inanimate machines and tools that are destroying life. Care is always taken to minimize any possible threat to people, including the monkeywrenchers themselves. (*Ecodefense* 23)

While the attacks carried out by companies against nature are highly violent and life-destroying, monkeywrenching consists on sabotaging machines or equipment with no life or feelings. Thus, if this way of direct action was really violent, it would still be incredibly less destructive than the endless attacks perpetrated against the natural world. Besides, efforts are made not to threaten human or any other type of lives, so the preservation of life is a feature of monkeywrenching. Some actions of this kind can be accompanied by spray painting. This is done along with other actions in order to claim responsibility (they make clear what group carried out the sabotage) or with the aim of expressing some message showing the ideological connotations of the action. Writing messages when sabotage has been carried out establishes a kind of communication between radical environmentalists and companies. It makes clear the intentions of the activists and shows their opinions about the practices of companies, which, they consider, should be replaced by more egalitarian relationships with the natural world.

More specific actions and methods depend on the target and they are usually aimed at preventing work that endangers or destroys the environment. The removal of stakes and tree spiking can be considered two of the main 'preventive' measures used by radical environmentalists. Areas planned to be drilled are full of stakes and markers that indicate the exact point to drill. It takes much time and care to place them in the exact point, but removing them is easy and simple. Radical environmentalists do not need much effort for this action, while people involved in the drilling must work hard to do it properly. With the removal of stakes and markers, drilling operations can be slowed down or even stopped, if the removal is done repeatedly and effectively and, thus, the land is preserved. Tree spiking is a specific technique used to avoid wood cutting and the procedure is introducing a metal piece (usually nails) in the bark of the tree. These nails do not kill the tree, but damage the chainsaws of loggers and make the cutting impossible. Therefore, tree spiking is used as a direct form to protect trees and forests. These actions and, all in all, all actions by radical environmental groups are carried out following specific procedures that are very characteristic of the movement. As Webb

explains, “these groups have non-hierarchical structures, sometimes referred to as leaderless resistance where actions are typically carried out by autonomous cells of two to three individuals” (20), which allows their actions to be possible and successful. The fact that there are no leaders or structures of power within the groups and cells carrying out actions reflects the anarchist ideas found in the movement, but they also allow an activism based on cooperation, without coercion, driven by common ideals. Besides, as these cells are not related to others (they are completely independent), they are not part of a bigger structure. Thus, the groups are not threatened if activists are caught and their actions are unpredictable for companies. Radical environmental actions are carried out secretly and illegally in very small groups, because the success of the actions can be threatened otherwise. The implication of a big number of individuals means more probabilities of getting caught, which, in turn, would imply the failure of the action and the further destruction of the natural world. Therefore, acting secretly in diverse ways (monkeywrenching, tree spiking, etc.) and in small leaderless groups seems to be the best way for radical environmental action and for the protection of the environment.

The most extreme and dangerous method used by radical environmentalists is arson, sometimes provoked by explosive devices. This method is used against big targets that significantly threaten the environment and when normal sabotage is not possible or effective. Radical environmentalists set fires in order to destroy structures like power plants or the already mentioned ski complex. Although radical environmentalists have never killed anyone, actions like these can seriously endanger the lives of people, so they really have to make sure that there is no one in the buildings they are attacking. Besides, being caught committing an act of this kind would mean a long period of imprisonment for the activist, as this action implies a clearer illegal nature. That is why, arson is used very carefully and as measure when everything else has failed. An arson committed by the ALF in a horse slaughterhouse in Oregon in 1997 is a clear example of that. Fire was set to the slaughterhouse and a “communiqué said the arson “would bring to a screeching halt what countless protests and letter writing campaigns could never stop”” (Potter 66). Thus, after unsuccessful efforts to stop the killing of animals, the ALF decided to set fire to the slaughterhouse because it seemed the only way to protect the lives of horses. This action meant the end of the slaughterhouse and no one was harmed in the fire.

All in all, the working methods of radical environmentalists can be considered assaults against properties, machines, buildings and other structures that mean a threat for the environment and its living beings. So as to carry out these actions, there needs to be a very specific focus and a previous planning considering all the possible consequences and damages. Furthermore, activists act in small groups and sometimes individually not to draw the attention of guards or police and to leave as few traces as possible. Craig Rosebraugh, an activist who worked as a spokesperson for the Earth Liberation Front, states that the actions of radical environmentalists must be as follows:

There needs to be a direct focus on fighting the desire created by industrialization and the westernized way of life. It needs to be a direct action focus using (...) underground guerrilla tactics in the form of economic sabotage and beyond. (20)

So, the actions of these activists must be done in a straightforward way, focusing directly on the enemy and acting like a guerrilla using any means necessary (without harming anyone). In addition to that, it is worth mentioning that they not only aim at the powers of industrialization and capitalism, but also at the desire they create, that is, the way of living and the values they promote. The struggle of radical environmentalists is also directed at the values of constantly producing and consuming unnecessary goods at the expense of the natural world and at the ideas of a lifestyle in which humans are alienated from nature to serve the purposes of so-called development. Thus, fighting this desire has more to do with ideologies than simply with sabotage and for that reason it is more difficult for activists to gain ground in this aspect.

As “environmental problems ultimately stem from our values, beliefs, and ideas about the proper relations between human beings and nature” (Tallmadge 4), the fight against the industrial and capitalist desire is an ideological one and it has to do with people’s concern with the environmental situation. Radical environmentalists’ struggle is, in part, of a symbolic nature, because they want to make people aware of the worsening environmental situation. They know that even if their actions can slow down or stop the exploitation of nature in some places, the collaboration of everyone is needed to solve problems in a global scale. Young expresses that these radical activists “conduct acts of political motivated violence to force segments of society (...) to change their attitudes on issues considered important” (23), but even if the issue of violence is controversial (depending on which side is asked about it) and despite the fact that

activists do not force anyone to think in a certain way, he is right to some extent. In fact, the impact their actions can have on people's attitudes and ideas is important, because a change in the political views of people and in those concerning human-natural relationships would mean a significant turn regarding environmental problems. Nevertheless, convincing the population to support them, take action or simply change their ideas becomes difficult, especially due to the fact that these activists are widely regarded as a dangerous terrorist threat (that actually threatens profits) for the countries in which they act. For that reason, the representations of radical environmentalism in literature that will be analysed can offer interesting perspectives regarding that movement that can lead to changes in people's ideas.

6. *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975)

6.1. Edward Abbey

The image and personality of Edward Abbey were quite unique and highly influenced the fiction of two of his works, that is, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975) and its sequel *Hayduke Lives!* (1990). Due to the relevance they gained, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and Abbey himself were key driving forces in the creation and development of the radical environmental movement. For that reason, talking about Abbey's life and image is essential before starting the analysis of his works. Besides, as these two novels were shaped by his experiences, information about the author's life seems more than appropriate, especially in order to comprehend the strong relationship between fiction and the reality that lies behind it.

Edward Paul Abbey was born in Indiana, Pennsylvania, on January 29th, 1927 and from a very young age he started exploring the landscapes that surrounded him. In the University of New Mexico, he completed a B.A. in philosophy and English and a master's degree in philosophy. Then, he wrote his thesis, *Anarchism and the Morality of Violence* (1950), which at the beginning was to be called *A General Theory of Anarchism*. During his lifetime he had various and different jobs, among which park ranger and policeman (in Italy) can be mentioned. Abbey married five times and had five children from his various marriages. Throughout his life, Abbey wrote fiction and non-fiction works in which some of the most important features are the author's love for the environment and, especially, for the desert of the American Southwest (where he spent most of his life). They were also highly influenced by his own experiences, feelings and ideas. He wrote much about the natural world and the landscape (these can be considered central in all his works), however, he never considered himself a 'nature writer.' His most well-known work, along with *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975), is the non-fiction work *Desert Solitaire* (1968). This work of autobiographical character presents Abbey's experiences, thoughts and descriptions of nature while working as a park ranger. He was characterised by his outspokenness when expressing his anarchist

and direct action ideas. During his life he took part in several direct actions like sabotaging a bulldozer in Utah or cutting down billboards with some friends in New Mexico. This kind of ideas were expressed in his writings and Abbey himself strongly supported and had relationships with the group Earth First!. He died on March 14th, 1989 and he was illegally buried in the desert inside his favourite sleeping bag.

Abbey's anarchist ideology and his advocacy of direct action in order to protect the environment made him an unusual figure as a writer, but he became very popular in environmental circles. In his writings, "he articulated new arguments, distinguished by a rhetoric of rage, for wilderness preservation; and he advocated political activism in order to defend wild nature" (Scheese 306), so the image of Edward Abbey was inseparable from what he wrote. His way of writing about the natural world and about the relationships derived from experiences in contact with nature can be considered a continuation of the 'nature writing' tradition of authors like Thoreau. However, as his writings about nature are accompanied by rage against the industrial-capitalist society and by his advocacy of direct action, his thoughts about the relationships between humans and the natural world are quite unique. The ideas expressed in his works can be deemed the result of a specific time in which humans had transformed and destroyed the environment so much that a drastic response was needed. Abbey's figure is a clear example of the relationship between environmentalism and politics and as Scheese points out, for Abbey "wilderness should be preserved for political reasons, "as a refuge from authoritarian government"" (310). Governments, especially in industrial-capitalist societies, cannot protect the natural world because interests related to economic growth and expansion are always more important for them than the environment. Nevertheless, Abbey thought that wilderness could indeed protect people from governments and, thus, wild spaces could become anarchist havens, free from hierarchies or government oppression. Therefore, in Abbey's case, the relationship between environmentalism and politics is evident; wilderness stands for life but also for a freedom that the industrial society is unable to provide. Abbey's environment-related anarchist ideas were highly influential and these were conveyed especially thanks to his novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*.

The Monkey Wrench Gang was written in 1975 and although it is a work of fiction, at the beginning of the book Abbey claimed that it is based on true events, a quite provocative statement that could explain its subsequent impact. This novel tells the

story of a group of four people who try to stop the advancement of industrial power and ‘progress’ through acts of sabotage, in order to protect the desert. These radical environmentalists represent an organized group (even if it is small) that fights actively in defence of the environment, thus, showing relationships between human beings and nature that deserve notable attention. These activists defy the values and ideas of their own society, which promotes the exploitation and destruction of nature, in order to protect it through direct action. The fact that there are humans (radical environmentalists) positioning themselves against industrial society and in favour of nature shows how complex the web of relationships between humans, their society and nature has become as a result of the critical environmental situation of the 20th and 21st centuries. The relationships of environmentalists and nature, which are based on love and protection, are, therefore, a direct response to environmental degradation in a specific time of history. The existence of such a relationship and its representation in literature proposes an interesting contribution to what can be called ‘nature writing’ (despite the fact that Abbey rejected this label for his works) in addition to possible new perspectives in the field of ecocriticism. However, this novel is not only a source of interesting ideas regarding the relationships between humans and nature. In fact, due to its representations of radical environmentalism, it comes as no surprise that “‘The monkey wrench gang’ is usually read as a straightforward call to arms for environmentalists, and such radical preservationist groups as Earth First! have even claimed it as their Bible” (Slovic 11). Being the first novel to portray radical environmentalism (and in such a detailed way) made *The Monkey Wrench Gang* not only a late-20th century example of nature writing that represented environmental realities, but also a driving force for the development of the real-life radical environmental movement.

When talking about Edward Abbey, Greg Garrard makes a very important point about the personality and attitude of this writer and he makes the reasons behind *The Monkey Wrench Gang* more than comprehensible. He points out that Abbey’s “enthusiasm for guns, paranoia about federal government and “big business” and support for violent resistance to authority risks appearing to ally environmentalists with survivalist militias” (75). Although the issue of violence is controversial (it has been explained that radical environmentalists only attack lifeless machines and objects that do not feel), Garrard seems to be right to a high extent. In fact, the small group of

activists in the novel is fighting a war against human (more precisely, industrial-capitalist) development over nature (or rather joining nature's side in the old war against it) and this struggle seems to be the only way to avoid the further destruction and exploitation of the environment. Besides, this sense of militia is increased by the presence of George W. Hayduke, an ex-green beret who took part in the Vietnam War. The most radical environmentalists, tired of the policies and actions of mainstream environmental groups, saw an opportunity of making a real change through direct action and, very much influenced by Abbey, started organizing in what Garrard quite appropriately calls "survivalist militias" (75). Radical environmentalists engaged in a war that looked for the survival and preservation of every living being. As it has been explained, their way of organising and acting is based on small and silent groups that recall the characters of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. Such features can easily make one think about militias, indeed, about militias in defence of the environment.

Nevertheless, some might also argue that *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is not really a direct call to arms. As a piece of literary fiction, it can be interpreted in different ways and making one engage in direct action would be just one of the reactions it could provoke. While not everyone reading the novel would start sabotaging any machine or object that endangers the environment, it is true that it can make readers rethink about human-natural relationships. For Scott Slovic, "Abbey is trying (...) to provoke not a singleminded political movement but rather an awareness on the individual level" (103-104). So, considering that, it can be said that the real key in Abbey's work, the factor that stands out and that is so significant in nature writing, is morality, not mere political propaganda. Abbey tried to make people rethink about human attitudes towards the natural world and about what humans should do in order to preserve (or not to end) life on the planet. Undoubtedly, Abbey wanted to create a deep sense of awareness on the reader, but anyway, each reader would/could interpret the novel in a different way. Even if various interpretations could be made out of the novel, Abbey's intention seems more evident. While Slovic suggests that Abbey might only want to make readers aware of the environmental situation, Abbey's defence of direct action and the sabotage acts he committed are strong enough reasons to understand the novel as a call for action. If making people take a political stand in order to defend the environment was really his aim when writing the novel, it can be said the he was (at least to some degree) successful. A work with such an impact changed radically some relationships between

humans and nature, having as a result humans protecting nature and fighting against their own societies and worldviews. The novel transcended academic circles, being a driving force in political and social spheres. Related to this, it seems necessary to mention Slovic's statement that "nature writing is a "literature of hope" in its assumption that the elevation of consciousness may lead to wholesome political change" (18). Thus, it can be considered that *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is a work with a message of hope due to the fact that it created a deep environmental consciousness that led to significant actions. Activists involved in the fight for the preservation of nature and the environment do so because they hope their actions will change the environmental situation. This real-life struggle, like that of the novel, is strongly driven by hope, the hope for a world in which humans and nature coexist in peace and humans no longer dominate the natural world motivated by greed.

6.1.1. Edward Abbey and Glen Canyon Dam

The dam built in Glen Canyon was life-changing for Edward Abbey; it was a structure that radically transformed the desert. His concern with the dam and its removal never left his mind and it also occupied an important place in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. The dam, built on the Colorado River in the north of Arizona between 1956 and 1966, meant, for him, the destruction of a marvellous place that few people had the opportunity to enjoy; he was one of these lucky people. The canyon was not only a full of life, beautiful place, it was one of the real wild spaces left in the United States and a very important agent (even a character) in his writings. The destruction of the canyon as a consequence of the construction of the dam signified an incredible loss for the environment and for Abbey himself, who considered Glen Canyon an essential part of his life. In a speech about the dam given in the spring equinox of 1981, Abbey expressed the following: “Glen Canyon dam is an insult to God’s creation, and if there is a God he will destroy it. And if there isn’t we will take care of it, one way or another” (“Remarks” 1). In the same event, members of the group Earth First! unwrapped a long sheet of black plastic down the wall of the dam simulating a huge crack. This was the first action carried out by Earth First! and although they did not directly attack the dam, the action was highly symbolic and functioned as a message for subsequent actions taken by the group. The statement made by Abbey about the monstrosity the dam was and about destroying it was immediately answered, despite the fact that only in a symbolic way. Abbey’s words about “taking care” of the dam by any means necessary looked like a war declaration and the action by Earth First! showed that efforts would be made in order to protect the environment. Abbey, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and Earth First! were strongly linked in their opposition to Glen Canyon Dam and the fact that this construction is constantly mentioned in the novel is an evidence of how much the author desired its destruction. Even if *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is a work of fiction, Glen Canyon Dam and the environmental destruction it implied are real. Thus, Abbey’s literary representations of the dam and the river can be significant to comprehend the area’s environmental situation in real-life terms and they can (indeed they had) and impact in society and politics.

All through the novel, the destruction of Glen Canyon Dam is the ultimate objective of the group, even if they never achieve it. Before destroying what they consider a huge monster of concrete that has radically changed and destroyed a part of the desert, they have to start with other minor-scale actions, as it will be seen. How to destroy Glen Canyon Dam appears to be a really complex issue for the protagonists of the novel, due to its enormity. For that reason, despite the fact that they think about several options, they are not sure of how to carry out the attack. The most powerful action they think about is related to boats and explosives and, even if that plan seems a bit flawed, it reinforces an idea expressed by Abbey in the speech given in Glen Canyon Dam: “we must continue to strike back at the empire, by whatever means and every means available to us” (“Remarks” 5). In order to stop the overall exploitation and destruction of the natural world, and specifically to reverse the negative effects caused by the dam, Abbey calls for any type of action (without threatening human lives). Thus, Abbey’s ideas related to direct action, presented in the fiction of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, are inseparable from radical environmentalism, especially considering that Abbey hoped for real attacks that would destroy the dam and restore the wilderness it made disappear.

6.2. Introduction to *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975)

The novel, published in 1975, tells the story of a group of four people who try to defend the desert of the Southwest of the United States from the advance of industrialization and capitalism and their exploitation of the natural world. Dr Sarvis, a surgeon who enjoys burning billboards, Seldom Seen Smith, a Mormon river guide, Bonnie Abbzug, a feminist Jew from the Bronx and George Washington Hayduke (ironically named like the Founding Father and President), a beer-loving ex-Green Beret form this group of radical environmentalists. These characters can be, to some extent, considered caricatures due to the fact that each one (and especially as a group) possesses significant peculiarities and because they might seem exaggerated and contradictory at times. For example, Hayduke is a reckless Vietnam War veteran who wants to stop the exploitation of the desert at all costs, but who throws beer cans to desert highways. However, the peculiarities of the characters are part of the many humorous elements of the novel, although the story's serious connotations are more than obvious. This group engages in a big number of sabotage actions in order to stop the work of companies exploiting the desert and it has, as the ultimate objective, the destruction of Glen Canyon Dam, although their efforts do not always lead to success. The activists start to be considered a group of criminals among the people of the area after they carry out their first actions and, later, they are pursued by the 'Search and Rescue Team.' In the final chapters there is a car chase in which authorities try to catch the activists. In addition to the actions carried out by the group, other topics are developed through the novel, such as the personal relationships between the characters, which include the love affairs of Dr Sarvis and Bonnie Abbzug and, later, of Abbzug and Hayduke. Nevertheless, one of the most important elements of the novel is Abbey's way of talking about the desert. His depictions and representations of the natural world (including landscapes, living beings or natural phenomena like the sunrise) are key for the development of the novel and, especially, for the relationships that exist between humans and nature. The desert is a driving force for the actions of the radical environmentalists. Its importance is so huge that it could even be considered a character in itself. Without all of Abbey's descriptions and thoughts about the desert *The Monkey Wrench Gang* would seem incomplete and a

bit incoherent. That is why the constant presence of nature and the desert wilderness are as important in the novel as the direct actions carried out by the environmentalists.

Although the novel is very much dedicated to the natural world of the Southwest of the United States (as the rest of Abbey's works) and although the power of these representations for the overall effect of the novel is undeniable, the depictions of radical environmentalism are what made *The Monkey Wrench Gang* so important. "Abbey viewed mainstream environmental groups as impotent at best, especially in their willingness to compromise one wilderness area to save another" (Menrisky 52), thus, the novel implied the emergence of a new voice, an alternative to mainstream environmentalism in order to really protect nature. The efforts of mainstream environmentalists to protect the environment were not successful for Abbey and he thought (thanks to his own experiences of sabotage) that only direct action could protect nature. Besides, as mainstream environmentalists usually ceded in negotiations and doomed certain areas to disappear, a more radical approach to environmentalism seemed necessary to Abbey in order to succeed in the protection of nature. Although before the publication of the novel there were already individuals and small groups taking direct action against those profiting from the exploitation of nature, *The Monkey Wrench Gang* was a new discourse articulated to make sabotage accessible to everyone. Abbey's work described in detail how to destroy machines and equipment by using common tools like wrenches or pliers, showing thus a deep concern about the environmental situation and a way of action that responded to complex realities and destructive relationships towards nature by the industrial-capitalist society. *The Monkey Wrench Gang* was "designed to project Abbey's increasingly complex vision of what man can do to stop the twentieth century from cannibalizing its land and its humanity" (Ronald 183), so the radical environmentalism portrayed in the novel is presented as an option to stop industrial-capitalism's expansion over the natural world. In a time of history when the environmental situation is worsening every day, Abbey proposed a way of resisting, of directly confronting the exploitation of nature and its living beings (including humans) and of protecting the ancestral bonds that tie humans to the Earth.

In *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, Abbey combines nature writing, environmental activism and humour, among other elements. However, the novel is also an adventure story that presents a new image of the American West, of the Wild West. While during the expansion of the Frontier wilderness was considered an evil to be subjugated, Abbey

presents the wilderness of the American West as infinitely more important than the development and the economic expansion and its protection through direct action becomes essential to preserve one of the last wild spaces of the United States. In the novel, traditional roles associated to the West are reversed and, thus, those exploiting the environment are on the evil side while the ones that want to live peacefully with the land are on the good one. “Abbey replaces cattle rustlers with land grabbers and outlaws with conglomerates” (Ronald 190) and the four protagonists act like agents of justice who try to preserve the integrity and life of the desert from the malignant actions of criminals. Companies and government agencies that act against the laws of nature are soulless delinquents in Abbey’s West and radical environmentalists who protect the frontier of wilderness from exploiters are the true American heroes. *The Monkey Wrench Gang* offers “a nineteenth-century brand of frontier justice on the modern atrocities he sees everywhere” (Ronald 184), what makes one think about Abbey’s characters as vigilantes who have to resort to any means to protect the environment. Therefore, Abbey’s novel presents a different image of the American West in which environmental anarchists are heroes that protect the land from the exploitation carried out by powers moved by economic profit, even if for that these activists have to act partly like sheriffs and partly like outlaws.

6.3. Nature and the Environment in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975)

The degradation and destruction of the desert of the American Southwest is the driving force for all the actions carried out by the group of protagonists in the novel, so the descriptions of how this landscape was/is, become a fundamental part of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. Throughout the novel, the descriptions of canyons, mountains, rivers or plants are innumerable and, in addition to making the work a piece of nature writing, these clearly show Abbey's love for nature. Besides, the thoughts that result from experiences in contact with nature and the relationships that develop between the characters (and Abbey) and the natural world are as important in the novel as the radical environmental actions of the protagonists. Therefore, Abbey's 'nature writing,' in combination with scenes of environmental destruction and sabotage, creates the overall effect of the novel. So as to comprehend the reasons behind the actions of the group, an analysis of the representation of the natural world and the industrial world is essential. Regarding Abbey's personal relationship with the desert of the American Southwest, it must be considered that he "spent his life describing, defending and ultimately abandoning all efforts to understand the desert" (Lane 125). The desert was the place of Abbey's devotion and admiration and that is why his works were very much dedicated to it and why he struggled to defend it. However, the vastness and mystery of this wild landscape also overwhelmed him and he was never able to really comprehend all that existed in the desert and between him and that land. The writing about the natural world in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (through descriptions and reflections) is full of real ideas and feelings of the author, so even if the novel is a piece of fiction, the analysis of Abbey's writing about the desert becomes important to understand how he perceived that wild space and the bonds that existed between it and humans.

In the novel, the appreciation for the natural world is constantly shown through the words of the protagonists but, especially, from Abbey's position of author, outside the story. The unspecified narrator, who resembles Abbey much, offers his own perspectives, thoughts and feelings about the desert and these intermingle with those of the characters due to the fact that all of them share a similar vision of that land. In the

cases when no relevant actions happen or when the characters directly express their thoughts and feelings about the desert, the narrator takes his time to describe and reflect upon nature. Sometimes, if the characters' actions are unimportant, the canyons or mountains that surround them take their place and become the protagonists of the passage. Nevertheless, words are dedicated to the natural world at any point, making evident how important the desert and its elements are for Abbey, for the narrator, for his characters and for the development of the novel. The desert is what keeps everything in motion in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*; a unifying element that could be even considered another character of the novel. Characters and actions, all depend on the desert and are strongly linked to it. That is why the narration of some events is subtly stopped in order to describe and express the thoughts about the desert that marked Abbey's life and work. The novel is full of descriptions of wild spaces that have not been spoiled or destroyed by industrial-capitalist forces as can be seen in the following fragment, which narrates one of Hayduke's many marches through the desert. This passage is a clear example of the narrator's change of focus from a character to nature:

He marched north over the boulevard of sandstone, among the junipers and pinyon pines oozing their chewy gum, in reverse across the sand flats and - almost!- into a nest of needle-tipped yucca blades: Spanish bayonet. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 102)

This short description included while talking about Hayduke's march through the desert portrays that land as a full of life, vivid place. Although the desert might seem an empty place commonly associated to visions of deathlike wastelands, the feeling that it bursts with life and that there is always something going on is transmitted. The grandiose sandstone and the vivacious plants take Hayduke's place, making clear that the landscape and its elements are not less important than the characters or their actions. Although the landscape through which Hayduke walks might seem defined by barrenness, there is much life there, not only rocks and hot sand. Through the use of the word 'boulevard,' Abbey transmits the feeling that his character advances through a place full of life and action, even if other people could only perceive the presence of sand. Instead of cars and people moving from shop to shop, in this 'boulevard,' Hayduke encounters the desert in its purest form, full of action if one looks closely. Abbey understood the essence of the desert and in order to appreciate all the life he perceived, an experience in close contact with the desert (like Hayduke's march)

seemed necessary for him. In order to appreciate and feel the desert, it is essential to live the desert. Life and action are accompanied by a significant sense of greenness through the different types of plants mentioned in the fragment. Furthermore, these plants seem to be really active: junipers and pinyon pines are producing a kind of gum while yuccas transmit a sense of danger with their sharp blades, as if they were defenders of the wilderness. So, through this description the splendour of the desert is depicted, by presenting elements and life-forms that are somehow hidden or more difficult to perceive. In addition to an example of admiration for the desert, this fragment could also be considered an invitation for people to know, enjoy and live this mysterious land, without exploiting it. It also makes evident that losing such a place would imply a serious loss of life. Besides, the wild characteristics of the landscape are made clear through the influence it has on Hayduke. The desert poses problems to his advance in addition to the extreme temperature, which affects him due to the fact that it was a “hot motherfucking day” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 102).

In the desert of the Southwest of the United States, the grandiosity of nature manifests itself in various forms and, especially for Abbey’s work, canyons and rivers are of vital importance. The presence of rivers, so much altered and transformed during the 20th century, in a place that is characterised by its aridity, creates a very unique landscape that blends life with apparent desolation. The following extract is a description of the environment included while Hayduke and Smith go down a river in a boat:

Back-lit by the afternoon sun, the rolling waters shone like hammered metal, like bronze lamé, each facet reflecting mirror-fashion the blaze in the sky. While glowing dumbly in the east, above the red canyon walls, the new moon hung in the wine-dark firmament like a pale antiphonal response to the glory of the sun. New moon in the afternoon, fanatic sun ahead. A bird whistled in the willows.
(*The Monkey* 56-57)

The beauty of the desert landscape becomes more important than the presence of the two characters in this scene and the river does not only seem beautiful in Abbey’s words, but even glamorous. The light-reflecting river is compared to shining metals and to a mirror that makes one with the sky in order to spread light. The moon appears in the scene above the canyons in an elegant sky that has a colour similar to that of wine. The blazing sun, which seems to put the river in flames, and the new moon (its apparent

opposite) come together in a scene that unifies the sky, the river and the desert. Even if Hayduke and Smith are absent from this extract, they are the ones travelling through the river and, therefore, they can witness the shining unification of the elements of the sky and of the Earth. For Abbey, the natural world is a whole and despite the fact that the sun and the moon are very far from the desert, they are all part of the wild landscape of the Southwest. Besides, this part of the desert can be an example of true American wilderness that can only be known, in this case, thanks to a trip by boat. While during the industrialization of the United States the noises of machines abruptly interfered with experiences in contact with nature, in this excerpt the sound that appears suddenly is the whistle of a bird. Thus, in this wild space, there are no machines and the sounds that can be heard, in addition to those of the river, belong to birds and, therefore, to the natural world, not to the industrial-capitalist society.

The occasional predominance of water in an arid land like the desert of the American Southwest makes it a place of opposites, a unique space with a charm that captivated Abbey. In an attempt to describe the trajectory of a river, the narrator seems to 'get lost' at the river's magnificence. He mentions all the places through which the river passes and the description ends incomplete facing the enormity of the desert. The narrator starts talking about the river explaining the following: "that river, that golden Green, flowing down from the snows of the Wind River Range, through Flaming Gorge and Echo Park, Split Mountain and The Gates of Lodore" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 254). The description of the river and of the trajectory it follows continues and, in the end, dots are used to show that while the river continues, the description cannot. Abbey (through the narrator of the story) seems unable to describe and express his feelings and thoughts about this river through language; this cultural construct, which would normally be used to communicate realities surrounding him, is ineffective facing the natural world that transcends it. Thus, conveying the immensity and splendour of the desert and its rivers through language seems impossible and Abbey 'gets lost' in the grandiosity of that land. As Tagnani explains, for Abbey "the expansive desert invites contemplation of the infinite complexities of this vast, strange ecosystem, and his mind therefore strains to encompass more – hence things appear more meaningful" (330). While contemplating the vast desert or the trajectory of a river, Abbey is incapable of deciphering all the 'secrets' this environment hides. However, he tries to understand the complex landscape that surrounds him and, although language seems ineffective to

express his thoughts and feelings, the elements that form the desert acquire a special significance for him. Therefore, even if language cannot express it correctly, the contemplation of the desert leads to a profound connection between Abbey and the desert, characterised by feelings that can hardly be expressed and by a respect for all the elements that form that land. A primordial connection exists between Abbey and the desert, a connection older than language. It is also noteworthy that the author mentions innumerable names of places, showing how well he knew the desert. For him, the only real way of experiencing the desert was living and exploring it. He did so from a very young age and, as a consequence, he was able to develop strong bonds with it.

The desert, being a tough and mysterious place that can display both life and desolation, offers a variety of images. The desert night is not the same as the day and bare rocks and sand can be found right next to grandiose rivers. Thus, visions of this landscape, its elements and phenomena are presented as something unique and Abbey shows his admiration for the opposites that form that land. In the following extract, a sunrise, which seems completely opposed to the cold night of the desert, is described:

Behind them, over the rim of Black Mesa, the first virescent streaks of dawn appeared, announced by slash of meteor dying into flame and vapor down across the fatal sky. (*The Monkey* 187)

Abbey, like his characters, slept in the desert and could, therefore, enjoy the very special sunrise of this place. His awakenings in this land, experiencing the rising of the sun, contrast significantly with the beginning of the day in the modern industrial society. Instead of being awakened by an alarm clock in order to go to work, in the desert, the sun marks the beginning of the day. Hence, the day starts in a very natural way in this environment, not in an artificial manner under the control of machines. In this description of a dawn, the darkness and cold of the desert night disappear in order to give place to the first greenish sun rays. Then a fierce fire seems to start in the sky and, accompanied by vapour, the day begins in a somehow menacing way that anticipates the extreme temperatures that characterise the day there. This sunrise can be considered both beautiful and threatening and this is due to the fact that “Abbey’s desert is seen through the rhetoric of the sublime” (Channell Hilfer 268). As in the case of previous nature writers and the Romantics, Abbey sees in the natural world qualities of the sublime. This natural environment is the embodiment of greatness for Abbey, especially

in terms of beauty, but also for all it represents (freedom, spirituality, etc.) in clear contrast with the industrial-capitalist society. Thus, all of Abbey's descriptions about this desert are done in a way intended to transmit extreme beauty. However, a sense of danger or hostility that can produce wonder and amazement is also a quality of this wild environment. Therefore, the desert in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is always portrayed as an incredibly beautiful place that, at the same time, can be really dangerous. Experiencing beauty and fear in a place full of contrasts is experiencing the sublime and for Abbey this can be done in that desert.

In addition to the landscape and to natural phenomena like the sunrise, Abbey writes about other aspects of the natural world, such as the weather. The extreme climate of the desert of the American Southwest would easily give place to important reflections about the contrasts of this land and other places that would be more appropriate for human living. Nevertheless, Abbey focuses exclusively on the desert, without considering the conditions outside of it. The natural phenomena related to the weather in the desert also fascinate him and something as common or unimportant for people as rain is something marvellous for Abbey. The fact of having rain in the desert is uncommon, so considering Abbey's love for this environment, talking about it not only comes as something completely natural, it also becomes an important event. How it rains in the desert is described carefully in the following fragment:

Mountainous cumuli-nimbi hang above their heads filled with the stuff, in vaporous form. Carloads of water. High over the plateau rims, three thousand feet above at Land's End and all across the canyonlands float huge, massive clouds trailing streamers of rain, all of which evaporates, it is true, before reaching the earth. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 363)

The clouds Abbey's characters witness (as Abbey himself did during his many experiences in contact with the desert) look like huge mountains floating through the sky. Their enormous and somehow intimidating presence over the desert landscape of the American Southwest transmits the sense that a terrible storm is about to start. The unstoppable clouds advance over the plateaus and canyons and the wild features of the desert make one with those of the sky. Thus, as in the previous paragraph, the description deals with the unification of the sky and the earth in the desert. However, this unification of wild nature does not have a violent storm as a result, in spite of (or thanks to) the extreme climatic characteristics of the desert. Although huge amounts of

water fall from the clouds, rain evaporates before reaching solid ground. Having rain in a moment of thirst can be a sign of hope for someone in the desert, but the fact that it evaporates in the air shows how tough that place is. Fear of a possible storm can be followed by despair for not having water, which makes clear that the desert is a full of contrasts, tough place. However, considering it from the perspective of the sublime, this toughness can be part of the beauty of the desert; it is a land of both beauty and danger. This description of the fall of rain shows the author's concern for every aspect of the natural world and expresses how unique this phenomenon is in a place where rainfall is so foreign.

The contrasts and opposites in Abbey's vision of the desert are made clear through many of his descriptions of this land. Beauty and danger can be found together in the desert of the American Southwest, but when Abbey talks about this environment, he also presents beauty along with desolation and apparent ugliness, which increases the sense of contrast. In the following fragment, Abbey seems to write about the desert in a pessimistic and negative manner. However, the description develops in a way that shows the charm and uniqueness of this wild space. The land through which the Colorado River passes is described as follows:

There is no water; there is no soil; there is no grass; there are no trees except a few brave cottonwoods deep in the canyons. Nothing but skeleton rock, the skin of sand and dust, the silence, the space, the mountains beyond. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 119)

If only the beginning of the description is taken into account, this land can be considered the land of nothing. This part of the desert only has a few traces of life and the feeling of death (with the absence of water and grass) is unavoidable, especially through the use of words like skeleton or skin. Only a few trees live there and, even if these cottonwoods are brave enough to live in such a place, they remain somehow hidden in the canyons. Not even cottonwoods dare to live among sand and dust. The place seems completely hostile to human presence; nevertheless, Abbey sees the beauty of this wilderness and understands what it has to offer. The contrasts of the desert are evident in the fragment because, even if complete desolation seems to reign there, the desert offers something industrial civilization is unable to provide. Tranquillity and a freedom only possible in complete contact with nature are part of the beauty (not only in aesthetic terms) Abbey finds in this part of the desert. The silence and the space

described are some of the features of the desert that make it so special and worth preserving. The desert stands as the opposite of industrial civilization, which, with all its noises and limitations, only constricts. Besides, the mountains in the distance make the vision of the desert more grandiose and the fact that they can be seen from so far gives a sense of no barriers that can hardly be felt in the city. As Lane points out, “the sheer and unyielding grandeur of this wasteland incessantly attracts his attention in the way a more docile, ordered beauty never could” (126), which makes clear that the city and its landscape are not for Abbey. Instead, the wild hostility and grandiosity of the desert are what made Abbey love that land and develop a relationship of respect and appreciation with it. The beauty and wildness of this desert attract Abbey to the point of creating really close bonds, in addition to making this land an inseparable part of him.

The description in the fragment, thus, offers two opposed perspectives of the desert: on the one hand, that of a deadly wasteland and, on the other hand, that of a grandiose and quiet space. Including these two visions in the same description can be due to the fact that much of what Abbey wrote about nature “was intended to alarm and disorient his readers” (Slovic 93). With such contrasts, oppositions and a sense of surprise Abbey “imitates the startling effect of nature” (Slovic 93) and, this way, he tries to put one of nature’s wildest features into words. Abbey’s close relationship with the desert shaped his personality but also his way of writing. For that reason, his descriptions of the desert do not only attempt at giving an account of the physical world, he also tries to transmit the essence of the desert through words. The desert of the American Southwest is a really tough place, but this is because it is one of the few wild places left in the United States; freedom at its finest. For these reasons it is not surprising that Abbey calls that place (through the narrator’s words) not only the heart, but the “heart of the heart of the American West” (*The Monkey* 119). Considering that this desert (wild nature) is, for Abbey, the very heart of the West and that his descriptions of nature try to transmit the essence of that land, it can be thought that writings like *The Monkey Wrench Gang* can be attempts at describing the essence of the American West. Furthermore, the writing dedicated to nature in this novel is also dedicated to the bonds between Abbey, his characters and the desert, so their relationships with wilderness can be equalled to relationships with the American West.

Despite the fact that the American West has traditionally been considered a promised land where growth and wealth are possible, for Abbey, the true and wild

American West and the desert that is its heart are not places for human expansion and, above all, industrial-capitalism. While the previous excerpt presents the desert as a hostile and desolate land (yet beautiful and enriching), the following fragment suggests that humans are not really welcome to the truly wild spaces of the American West. Hayduke, in one of his numerous marches through the desert, advances among canyons in a description in which the sense of danger is obvious:

He proceeded almost cautiously (for him) down the long and winding grade toward the river, twenty miles by road and four thousand feet of descent. Had to live at least one more hour. Marble Canyon gaped below, a black crevasse like an earthquake's yawn zigzagging across the dun-colored desert. The Echo Cliffs ranged northeastward toward a dark notch in the sandstone monolith where the Colorado rolled out from the depths of the plateau. North and west of the notch rose the Paria Plateau, little known, where nobody lives, and the thirty-mile-long Vermilion Cliffs. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 28)

Walking through canyons and cliffs can be extremely dangerous due to the irregularity of the landscape, even for a reckless person like Hayduke. This character's way of behaving is quite impulsive and he does not think much before acting. Nevertheless, in order to advance through this part of the desert, he has to be cautious (to some degree). The narrator states that his character has to continue living, but he seems 'uncertain' about it because the geography of the area could easily mean Hayduke's death. The sense of danger increases when he faces a kind of gigantic black mouth that would swallow him if he fell down from the huge cliff he is descending. The hostility to human beings of the area is more than evident considering how dangerous Hayduke's advance is, as a consequence of the desert geography. Furthermore, Abbey talks about the Paria Plateau (along with the impressive Vermilion Cliffs), a place where no one lives and few people know. In addition to presenting a dangerous place, a description of a remote part of the desert where human presence is completely (or almost) inexistent is given; a place where constant growth and so-called progress are not welcome. Despite the fact that this land can be all but welcoming for humans, Abbey and his characters are completely attracted to it. In fact, "what seduces them most is the emptiness (...) the unwelcomeness to human presence" (Channell Hilfer 258), so the danger of the desert and the feeling of loneliness it creates due to its (apparent) emptiness are really charming for them. The desert, which is partly presented as a menacing place, seems more attractive, fascinating and even cozier than industrial civilization. If, for Abbey and his characters, a 'desolate' and threatening land is preferable to the comfortable

industrial-capitalist society, it is evident that the latter has serious defects and that the former provides them with something commodities and material goods cannot. Once again, a relationship with the desert related to the sublime can be appreciated in Abbey's writing about nature. The beauty of the canyons and cliffs, accompanied by the Colorado River, is impressive, the emptiness of the land seems thrilling and the fact that death can come easily in such a wild and dangerous land create feelings that cannot be felt in the city. An overwhelming beauty mixed with a feeling of danger can make people witnessing the grandiosity of the desert perceive that land even more purely; therefore a more intimate bond can develop between people and the land. Feeling death along with extreme beauty can be easily associated to the sublime and, as this sentiment brings humans and the desert very close from each other, experiencing and living the desert in spite of its dangers becomes key for the lives of Abbey and his characters. That way, even if the desert of the American Southwest is not welcoming for humans, for Abbey it is still the source of growth and wealth, but in inner and immaterial terms.

Taking into consideration the already analysed descriptions of the desert, it is more than evident that for Abbey and his characters this land is the source of extreme beauty. However, the desert is not only beautiful, it is also dangerous, unpredictable and lonesome. All these qualities are associated to the sublime in Abbey's conception of the desert and they make him connect with the land in a way industrial society could never equal. Nevertheless, for Abbey, this natural and wild space is also characterised by its 'sacredness' and by its links with the spiritual. The following extract, in which also beauty is present, suggests the sacred quality of the desert, which is strongly related to human-natural relationships:

Down from the sacred mountain into the rosy dawn he rolled, into the basin of the Little Colorado River, the pastel pink and chocolate brown and umbrous buff of the Painted Desert. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 26)

This description shows, once again, the beauty of the desert. The different colours produced by the sunrise make the landscape splendid and, seemingly, even tasty for the narrator; it could be considered a painting, a piece of art. However, the most important word in the description is arguably 'sacred,' which is used to define a mountain a character is descending. The fact that Abbey gives qualities of the 'sacred' to a mountain is highly important to understand the relationships that develop between

humans and the desert. This is because Abbey's love for the desert is not based on mere respect and appreciation, in fact, he and his characters "recognize the earth's sacrality" (Ronald 182). Considering natural elements sacred creates an important spiritual bond between humans and nature and, by doing so, it is shown that the desert offers more than apparent desolation. Attributing sacredness to a mountain does not only imply that this mountain is highly meaningful and spiritually enriching for Abbey, it also makes clear that any attack against it will be considered an offence and that it will be defended by any means. Recognizing the land and its elements as sacred unites humans and, in this case, the desert in a way similar to the bonds developed between ancient peoples and the natural world. Shiva, explaining the adherence of humans to the land they consider sacred, states the following:

Soil has embodied the ecological and spiritual home for most cultures. It is the womb not only for the reproduction of biological life but also of cultural and spiritual life; it epitomizes all the sources of sustenance and is 'home' in the deepest sense. (*Homeless* 102)

Abbey's adherence to the land by considering it somehow sacred resembles the ancestral peoples' notion of land and home. Therefore, this spiritual connection between Abbey and the desert revives bonds between humans and nature that existed long before the development of industrial civilization. The land (or the soil) does not only continue creating life in biological terms, but it is also the origin of cultures and spirituality. Like in the case of ancient peoples, by considering the land sacred, a significant spiritual relationship is created between Abbey and the desert. Such a spirituality and connection is impossible in the industrial-capitalist society due to the fact that humans are drastically separated from the land, which is only seen as a potential resource. Thus, the land, unlike industrial civilization, becomes the true home for humans. For Abbey and his characters the desert of the American Southwest becomes home in a very deep sense because in addition to freedom from oppressive institutions they find a rich spiritual life there. Taking this into account it comes as no surprise that in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* the protagonists do not only try to defend a desert considered sacred, but their very home.

Along with beauty and spirituality, freedom is one of the most important aspects Abbey and his characters associated to the desert. For them, freedom from the oppressive government of the USA and its institutions was only possible in close

contact with nature/wilderness. The desert lacked hierarchies, exploitation and the impulse for consumerism among other aspects that make freedom impossible. That is why Abbey and his characters thought that a relationship of freedom could be established with the desert, something industrial capitalism seems to promise but cannot fulfil. The desert is “the home of free creatures: horned toads, desert rats, Gila monsters and coyotes” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 16) and although all these animals originally belong to the desert, Abbey identifies himself with them and so, humans can also be free creatures there. The desert does not only offer complete freedom, but also a home for free living beings. If the land (the desert of the American Southwest in this case) was home for ancient peoples in deep cultural and spiritual terms, it was also home in terms of freedom. Despite the fact that peoples in close contact with nature could not define freedom (they took it for granted) until they knew oppression, for Abbey and his characters, who knew well how life in the industrial-capitalist society is, this land became home in another way. In addition to a spiritual home, the desert stands for a free home, a home without oppressed or oppressors. Nevertheless, this home that represents freedom is severely threatened by industrial and capitalist powers and “even the sky, that dome of delirious blue which he once had thought was out of reach, was becoming a dump for the gaseous garbage of the copper smelters” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 16-17). The presence of industrial and capitalist powers in the wild desert does not only mean increasing levels of pollution, but the suppression of freedom. With the introduction of machinery, exploitation of the land and pollution, the desert ceases to be a free home for living beings. This includes humans whose bonds with the land are disrupted by powers profiting from the destruction of the desert. Thus, the active opposition of Abbey’s characters to the expansion of industrial civilization in the desert is an attempt at protecting the freedom of all living beings in the desert, including their own. Abbey’s ties of freedom with the desert made it its home and this is why he “makes freedom the driving force behind his dynamic modus operandi” (Ronald 181). The four protagonists of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* try to protect not only the land, but also its living beings and the bonds that exist between them and the desert. The freedom of the desert and its living beings is necessary to keep the wild essence of the land and Abbey’s characters can be considered freedom fighters who struggle so as this essence does not disappear. With the expansion of industrial-capitalist powers in the desert, freedom would be lost and the land would no longer be home for the living, only for economic profits.

As it has already been made clear, for Abbey, the desert he loved so much is the heart and the very essence of the American West, but it is also the true land of the free. The significance of freedom is clear considering the different perspectives depicted in the novel in relation to this concept, not only concerning freedom itself or its suppression. The reflections of the author while closely experiencing nature are sometimes developed through his characters and important thoughts about the relationships between humans and nature are presented along with the actions. Hayduke, while marching through the desert reflects upon freedom, humans and the desert at the presence of “all those sweet-water springs under the lucent cottonwoods” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 113). The water and the trees are always charming in Abbey’s vision of the desert, especially when they are presented opposed to apparent desolation. The beauty of the desert and the ability to walk without limitations with a backpack, some water and food make Hayduke develop interesting thoughts and feelings about freedom that can be summarized as follows: “the sensation of freedom was exhilarating, though tinged with a shade of loneliness, a touch of sorrow” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 114). The freedom this character experiences alone in total contact with nature cannot be equalled to any other feeling; it is thrilling and revitalizing. No one can stop or oppress Hayduke in this land and he can move, feel and live the desert with complete independence. Nevertheless, this freedom is also overwhelming and has a negative side to it. Despite the fact that Hayduke is a loner who usually wanders through the desert, the feeling of loneliness the land produces on him is like a shade that somehow darkens his experience. Besides, the dream of complete freedom the desert fulfils comes, in this case, impregnated by sorrow. Complete freedom seems to be there only for Hayduke and this is a cause for affliction for him. Even if the sensation of freedom overpowers the loneliness and sorrow, Hayduke feels that there should be more people with him, that more people should be liberated from the industrial civilization and revive the ancient bonds with the land. This character feels “that the total loner would go insane” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 114) and this seems an argument strong enough to think that even if Hayduke is normally a lonely person, he would like to share the freedom and the bonds with the desert with more people. Being a complete loner would spoil the sweet feeling of total freedom, so this freedom should be available to people although not commercialized by capitalist powers. Furthermore, being the only one of his species would drive Hayduke mad and, related to this, he reflects upon another desert loner, the vulture. He thinks about the fact that “even the vulture, that red-necked black-winged

anarchist (...) likes to gather with his kin and swap a few stories” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 114), so he feels that complete isolation from other members of his species is not sane. Hayduke identifies himself with the vulture (both are desert loners and anarchists) and, thus, a close relationship is created between both. This bond with the vulture makes him think that, even if voluntary loneliness can sometimes be good, being with other humans should be completely natural and the way to continue with the process of life. Therefore, Hayduke finds himself in a kind of dilemma: on the one hand there is total freedom accompanied by loneliness and sorrow and on the other hand there is industrial civilization with huge numbers of humans. Hayduke, as a lover of freedom, chooses the first option because being alone and sorrowful is, for him, better than being oppressed and bounded. Nevertheless, the ideal option would be an intermediate one; not a desert invaded by the industrial-capitalist society, but a natural space where humans could interact naturally and respectfully between each other and with the environment. What Hayduke needs is free humans, not exploitation and profits.

For Abbey, whose ideology was associated to (green) anarchism, freedom became a highly important concept in his thought and worldview. The ability to act independently without hierarchies and oppressive institutions (and without damaging the Earth and its living beings) was key for the individual freedom he developed in close contact with the desert. As this land was the only place that could offer him the freedom he considered necessary for his full development as a living being, it became a really important part of his life. As Menrisky explains, “Abbey and Bookchin both articulate the idea that “freedom” (...) is somehow intrinsic to the idea of ecology, whether spatialized as “wilderness” or not” (56), so, in the case of Abbey, freedom and wilderness go hand in hand. Although Abbey and Bookchin disagreed ideologically in some points, both consider that freedom and the natural world are closely linked. That means that if wilderness disappeared as a consequence of industrial expansion and exploitation, freedom would also disappear with it. Preserving wilderness and the natural world meant preserving freedom for Abbey, not only for him but for all living beings in the desert. The presence of industrial-capitalist powers in the desert and their exploitation of the land would signify the suppression of freedom and the destruction of the bonds that unite humans and the natural world. Bergthaller explains that, for Abbey, the wilderness that stands for freedom “is not only the essence of *nature* but just as much the essence of the *self*” (qtd. in Menrisky 57), so it is not only an important part of his life, but of

himself. As a (human) animal, Abbey is part of nature and nature is part of him. Being born freely in contact with nature was anciently the beginning of the cycle of life. However, in the industrial civilization, births are no longer like this. Nature and, therefore, freedom had been the essence of humans since ancient times, but as their ties with the natural world were destroyed, the essence of humans has disappeared. Industrial civilization tries to fill the space that was occupied by this essence of the natural and the free, but it cannot do that. The characters of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, based on Abbey's thoughts about the natural world, see that wild nature, freedom and the essence of humanity go together. That is why their defence of the natural world becomes an attempt at protecting human beings and the world they belong to from evil powers that try to mechanize life and increase their economic benefits.

In *The Monkey Wrench Gang* encounters with the wild nature of the desert usually give way to reflections about the beauty of its landscape. However, it has been made clear that thoughts related to human-natural relationships like those associated to freedom or spirituality are also powerful, even though these are not the only ones. When walking through the desert, Hayduke faces wilderness and "only the birds watched him, the pinyon jays, a mountain bluebird, a hawk, the patient buzzards" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 107). Being alone in the desert at the presence of so many free and flying beings, makes Hayduke think about his condition. Abbey, through the thoughts of this character, reflects about humans, wilderness and civilization and imagines how the world would be after the fall of industrial civilization. The liberation of humans from industrial-capitalist powers would be for Abbey as the following fragment explains:

When the cities are gone (...) when sunflowers push up through the concrete and asphalt of the forgotten interstate freeways (...) free women and wild men, can roam the sagebrush canyonlands in freedom (...) herding the feral cattle into box canyons, and gorge on bloody meat and bleeding fucking internal organs, and dance all night to the music of fiddles! banjos! steel guitars! by the light of a reborn moon! (*The Monkey* 107)

Hayduke thinks about a time in the future when cities no longer exist and when nature reclaims and recovers the spaces that were taken away from it. When this moment comes, women and men will all be wild and free in close contact with nature and they will be able to act and move without limitations through the desert. Humans would become hunters again then and, as any other animal does, they would have to fight for

food and survival. The wild essence of human beings, which was lost when their bonds with the land were destroyed, would be recovered and they would be complete again. Furthermore, they would ideally spend their time with music and dances once hierarchies, waged labour or endless production/consumption disappeared. All this would happen after the fall and destruction of the (industrial) civilization and once the moon is 'reborn' in the night sky. The total disappearance of the industrial-capitalist society would not only be highly positive for Hayduke, but incredibly desirable for humans, the rest of living beings and the planet as a whole. The end of (industrial) civilization could mean the end of the exploitation of nature and of all the living beings that are part of it, in addition to the return of humans to where they originally belong to. The idea of the end of civilization and the return to a somehow feral state in which there are no hierarchies, recalls the anarcho-primitivist current of thought. Abbey's anarchist ideology seems to take a primitivist turn in this fragment because, although he might not adhered to this current of thought, he considered that the disappearance of the industrial civilization would be the only way possible to stop the destruction of the environment and to recover the lost relationships with the earth. In this case, Abbey's and his characters' links with nature lead to highly political reflections and, in fact, for Abbey, the reconciliation with the natural world and the liberation that would bring it were "only possible in a collective fight against industry and its marriage to the state" (Menrisky 53). Thus, the elimination of the state and of the industrial powers that are strongly linked to it is necessary not only to make hierarchies and oppression disappear, but also to reunite humanity and nature. This way, Abbey's reflections in contact with the natural world present ideas about the human condition, environmental concerns and politics. However, what is more important is that all of them are interrelated. So, rethinking about human nature and the current environmental situation becomes essential to comprehend politics and social relationships, because even if humans have apparently developed a world of their own, they still belong to nature and their actions have a clear impact on it.

Among the descriptions about the natural world (followed by their subsequent reflections) that can be found in the novel, passages dedicated to the impact of the human/industrial intervention in the desert are also worth mentioning. So, despite the fact that Abbey focuses on the wild spaces of this territory, dealing with places that are being 'domesticated,' industrialized and exploited becomes really important in *The*

Monkey Wrench Gang. The places that are transformed and destroyed by industrial-capitalist powers are presented as total opposites of true wilderness and how the essence of the desert is lost as a consequence of expansion and exploitation is shown through the novel. The already mentioned monstrosity that Glen Canyon Dam meant for Abbey was not the only attack to rivers and canyons present in the novel, because numerous dams and bridges are mentioned. Besides, through the novel, there are plans of building more structures in these spaces. Before starting to take direct actions against the ones destroying the desert, Seldom Seen Smith thinks about how the Colorado River was when it was still a wild place. The following extract includes a description of the river and Smith's thoughts:

He remembered the real Colorado, before damnation, when the river flowed unchained and unchanneled in the joyous floods of May and June, swollen with snow melt. Boulders crunching and clacking and grumbling, tumbling along the river's bedrock bed, the noise like that of grinding molars in a giant jaw. That was a river. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 58)

In Smith's memory, the Colorado River was free and kept its essence in its untamed waters, which were joined happily by the melted snow. Beast-like sounds and the mention of a giant jaw give an account of how wild that river was. In fact, they give an account of when it was a real river, not a space transformed by humans to serve their commercial purposes. The musicality of the second sentence of the description, in addition to the fact that a comparison is made between the river and a beast, transmits the feeling that the Colorado itself was a living creature, wild and dangerous. The use of the word 'real' to refer to the river before human intervention is remarkable and it suggests that now it is 'fake' because its essence has been lost. As a consequence of human intervention, the Colorado River is no longer really natural, but a kind of product. Another key word in the description is 'damnation,' which is used as a play on words. It makes direct allusion to the dam that has transformed the river but it also suggests that this construction is a curse for the desert landscape and environment. The river was grandiose and magnificent in Smith's memory but the reality is that now it has been chained like a prisoner and forced to follow a fixed path. Thus, the account given of this river is highly positive only because it is a remembrance of a character, in opposition to how the river would be described if its nature after human intervention was considered. The fact that Abbey writes about nature that has been transformed or

destroyed is an obvious sign of his environmental concern and love for the desert. However, writing about nature in the past, like he did in this fragment, seems quite alarming because it means that this land is seriously threatened and that the desert and its essence might only survive in memories.

In addition to passages that show transformations of the desert landscape and environment by human ‘development,’ Abbey, who is deeply affected by these interventions in the land, also writes about areas that have been totally devastated by industrial/capitalist powers. The expansion of industrial civilization over nature and its environmental impacts will be more thoroughly analysed in the following section when focusing on all the radical environmental actions carried out in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. However, the following fragment is quite illustrative of Abbey’s writing about nature as a victim of industrial exploitation. While planning one of their biggest and most important actions, the activists of the novel observe the land that has been completely ravaged by industrial powers and the following landscape is described:

The first thing they saw were ridges of overturned earth – spoil banks in parallel formation, windrows of rock and inverted soil never again to nourish the roots of grass, bush or tree (within the likely lifetime of the sold-out, deceived and betrayed Navajo Nation. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 171)

The image presented here is the one of a completely desolated landscape, but unlike the apparent desolation of the desert, which Abbey shows as full of life and charm, here there is only destruction of land and life. The rocks and the earth itself have been ‘modified’ to allow ‘development’ and profit and the land has ceased to be a natural place. The area has been turned upside down and completely transformed until it has become a space that has nothing in common with wilderness. Therefore, it will never be the same again; its true essence has been lost. Besides, as a consequence of the introduction of industrial powers in the desert, the life of plants seems no longer possible. Plants cannot grow again because their roots cannot develop in a destroyed ground, which means that their links with the earth have been eliminated. Not even grass can grow in this place and in a desert where plants are not abundant this can mean a really significant change, a dramatic transformation of the environment. In addition to the damage done to the desert, the issue of the damage done to Native Americans (in this case the Navajo) is also introduced. These original inhabitants of the land, like the environment, are victims of the development of industrial and capitalist powers. They

were deceived by colonists and the introduction of industrial-capitalist powers in the desert meant, to a great extent, the loss of their home and identity. Thus, both the desert and its life forms and humans become victims of the process of ‘development’ of industrial capitalism over this land. Maria Mies writes about the symbioses between life forms, which she also calls ecological systems, and explains that these are “the interdependence of humans, animals, plants but (...) also (...) of people living together” (*White Man’s* 142). These symbioses are, therefore, the relationships of interrelatedness between all living beings. She further explains that “industrial civilization and its science and technology have disrupted these ecological and socio-ecological systems” (Mies, *White Man’s* 142), something that is clearly exemplified in Abbey’s text. The highly destructive introduction of machinery in the desert leads to the desolation of the land, but also to the elimination of the bonds between living beings and of these beings and the land. Plants can no longer connect with and grow in the land and the Navajo have also been uprooted from their ancestral home. The same happens with Abbey and his characters, because their relationships with the desert are destroyed as the land itself is destroyed. Love, beauty or freedom are not possible for them in a place that has become a victim of greedy ‘progress’ and, so, they also become victims. Industrial civilization is, thus, presented as an incredibly destructive and malignant power that eliminates life and the bonds that unite all forms of life.

After considering some examples of Abbey’s writing about nature in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, it is more than evident that the novel is (in a significant part) dedicated to the natural world of the American Southwest. This concern about nature is not only highly valuable in itself, but also key to understand all the radical activism that characterizes the novel. Abbey and his characters do not only show the beauty of the desert landscape, but also an incredible environmental awareness through their love for the land and its living beings and through the necessity of protecting such a unique environment. As in the case of previous works that can be considered ‘nature writing,’ in this novel Abbey reflects about human experiences in close contact with nature and about the relationships that develop between them. In each description he or his characters make about the desert, the uniqueness and special characteristics of the natural elements and formations (rivers, canyons, etc.) are made evident and ideas related to the specificity of the place described are developed. However, through the analysis of examples of the writing about nature in this novel it has also been made clear

that “the desert Southwest is where Abbey’s affections lay” (Tagnani 337). The desert is the place for Abbey’s feelings and emotions, and these are mainly related, on the one hand, to love and beauty and, on the other hand, to danger and awe. Abbey finds the sublime in the desert and the feelings that this land produces on him are also associated to it. Furthermore, due to the fact that Abbey’s emotions are strongly related to the desert, certain human-natural relationships are established and developed through the novel. The protagonists of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* are especially united to the desert through bonds of spirituality and freedom. Besides, these bonds make them reflect about humanity, nature and industrial civilization in quite political terms. In fact, their actions, which stem from their links with the land and from its destruction, can be deemed political and pro-life/environmental at the same time. In the novel, industrial civilization and capitalism are portrayed as evil forces that destroy life and profit from the exploitation of the environment. These powers transform the land according to their wishes and make life impossible. For Perlman, this (industrial) civilization that Abbey loathed so much “is not only against Wilderness; it is against nature as well as humanity, against truth as well as beauty” (*Against His-story* 100). This statement seems incredibly truthful in some of Abbey’s examples and this idea will be further dealt with in the following section, when dealing with environmental exploitation and radical environmentalism. However, it has been made clear that, in the novel, industrial and capitalist powers bring the destruction of nature, wilderness and all they stand for. Beauty is not possible after the intervention of these powers and, with it, human beings lose their bonds with the land and, therefore, a part of themselves. That is why, the four protagonists of the novel try to stop the exploitation and destruction of the desert. They stand and carry out actions against industrial-capitalism in order to protect the land and the bonds that unite all living beings, including humans.

6.4. Environmental Exploitation/Destruction and Radical Environmentalism in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* (1975)

The radical environmentalism present in the novel can be considered its most well-known and characteristic aspect, although it has been made clear that the writing dedicated to nature, reflections and human-natural relationships is equally relevant and key for the development of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. In fact, for Tagnani, Abbey's love for the desert, for the heart and the very essence of the American West, "is the heart of his work, the motivation that propels all the brash political tirades and belligerent critiques of mainstream American culture and values" (317). Thus, Abbey's love for the desert and the existing bonds between him (his characters) and this land and the attacks against this environment, which also mean attacks against these bonds, are what motivate all radical environmental actions in the novel. In order to comprehend the actions against industrial-capitalist powers profiting from the exploitation of the desert, the connections between humans and the land must always be borne in mind. Indeed, radical environmentalism can be understood as another type of relationship with the desert; protecting it from industrial threats that belong to humans is an attempt at preserving life and human-natural relationships. Therefore, radical environmental actions are part of the network of relationships between humans, nature and the industrial-capitalist society. As one of the main aims of this dissertation is to analyse thoroughly radical environmentalism in certain works of fiction, different environmental aspects will also be considered during the analysis of this novel, including the situation of the desert and the impact industrial actions have on it. The working procedures of radical environmental actions will be analysed too because it is highly significant that when describing the activists' actions, Abbey offers very detailed accounts of how to sabotage machinery. At certain points, his work of fiction seems like a manual for sabotaging and this can also explain the huge impact it had on radical environmental groups. *The Monkey Wrench Gang* does not only tell a story, it also tells how to act in real life. The abundance of the protagonists' attacks against industrial and capitalist powers is partly justified by the fact that it is a work of fiction; actual groups do not attack so repeatedly in such a short period of time. Nevertheless, the situation of the characters and, especially, of the desert, as it is described by Abbey and as it will be

shown, somehow justify their constant actions and the struggle against their enemy. As in real life, in the novel there are no human victims and the actions carried out by the activists are mainly concerned with property and economic damages done to companies or agencies. The activists of the story are beginners and they progressively learn to act and aim at bigger targets. They are all concerned with the environment and with the preservation of the desert, but it is with the formation of the group when they start fighting for their ideals and infringing laws in order to protect the desert and its living beings.

Among the four protagonists of the novel, George W. Hayduke is the most charismatic and active one and he can arguably be considered the most important one. He is the only one who has some knowledge about explosives and who explains to the rest of the group how to sabotage machinery. Hayduke is the character who most clearly sees the enemy and who most fiercely wants to fight it. After his return from the Vietnam War, he is disenchanted by the government of his country and what he witnesses when he goes back to the desert produces a radical change on him. Hayduke “returned to the American Southwest he had been remembering only to find it no longer what he remembered (...) Someone or something was changing things” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 16). The environment Hayduke loved, his very home, the place that had been present in his mind during the war, offering him positive thoughts, is being transformed. The link that exists between Hayduke and the desert is disrupted at the sight of industrial development and this sparks his need to take action. The rest of the protagonists are also concerned about the environmental situation of the desert, but it is thanks to Hayduke’s charismatic figure, propelled by the horrifying vision at his return, that they start the struggle against industrial-capitalist development over the desert. This character considers that someone has to do something to stop the transformation and exploitation of the desert and his straightforward temper and behaviour are key elements for all the actions carried out by the group.

The first radical environmental actions presented in the novel appear in the prologue, but these will be analysed in the end due to the fact that they happen chronologically later than the majority of the story. The first direct action is presented along with Dr Sarvis, even before the coming together of the protagonists. However, rather than being described as a radical environmental action, it is presented as this character’s hobby because, as it is explained, “everyone should have a hobby” (Abbey,

The Monkey 9). Dr Sarvis has fun and enjoys the burning of billboards that stand next to the roads and highways that stretch through the desert. It does not matter if these are political, military, product advertisements or simply informational billboards; he feels the need of burning them all. Using the desert and, therefore, spoiling it in order to publicise products, institutions or any other aspect of the industrial-capitalist society clashes with the ideas of the activists of the novel, of Dr Sarvis in this case. So, actions are taken to stop inappropriate practices in the desert, even if these actions are presented here as a hobby. In fact, as it has already been mentioned, Abbey himself took part in the burning of some billboards, so the environmental/political connotations of this action are evident. Although it could be argued if this is really a radical environmental action, “vandalism, some might say” (McKibben 7), the reasons for doing it go beyond simple fun and pleasure and “Abbey would probably call it counter-vandalism” (McKibben 7). The environmental impact caused by billboards is not so huge compared with other examples of industrial expansion that will be analysed later, for example a mining complex. Nevertheless, their presence ruins the natural and wild landscape Abbey and his characters loved so much and implies that the desert is being colonized by industrial and capitalist powers. Thus, burning these structures has the aim of stopping acts of ‘vandalism’ carried out against the desert. Dr Sarvis’ working methods are simple and do not require much effort, but they are truly effective. This character’s procedure is described by explaining that “with a five-gallon can of gasoline he sloshed about the legs and support members of the selected target, then applied a match” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 9). According to what Abbey expresses in this fragment, a match and some gasoline are enough to carry out an action of this type. Besides, depending on where the target is situated, it is more than probable that activists will not be caught by the authorities. Therefore, the burning of billboards is presented as an easy practice that can stop the spoiling of the desert beauty and frustrate the economic interests of companies. This is only the first action that appears in the novel but, since the beginning, Abbey seems to be inciting people to take action in order to defend the environment. That way, the human-natural relationships depicted in the novel can have an important impact in real life attitudes towards the environment or, at least, produce reflections about these relationships.

Once the group of activists comes together, they start planning and aiming at specific targets; they start acting as a real radical environmental group. Their first

actions are carried out in a place called Comb Wash (next to Comb Ridge) and involve, mainly, the sabotage of machinery. Comb Ridge is said to be “like many other canyons, mesas and monoclines in southeast Utah” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 76) and it seems that it stretches through the desert like a wall. Despite the fact that this very part of the desert resembles other desert areas of Utah, it is still a full of life, beautiful place. Nevertheless, while looking from there to Comb Wash, the protagonists see “turmoil of dust and activity” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 77) and hear “whine of motors, snort and growl of distant diesels” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 77). The peace and tranquillity that reigned in the desert is thus disrupted by industrial intervention and the four protagonists understand that their beloved desert is soon to be transformed and exploited. As in the case of 19th century writings, here the human contact with nature is interrupted by the noise of machines and signs of industrial development are presented as totally opposite to nature forces that threaten the bonds between it and humans.

The reason the group of activists has for taking action in that area is the construction of a new road (with its subsequent impact on the desert), because the old one is supposedly in rather bad conditions. Due to this alleged deterioration, some humans, those concerned with ‘development,’ have the objective of altering the landscape and the desert environment in order to pave the land and fill it with concrete. According to Seldom Seen Smith, the construction of the road will not be something needed by ordinary people, in fact, “it’s built for the benefit of certain companies that operate in this county (...) It’s to help out the poor fellas that own the uranium mines and the truck fleets and the marinas on Lake Powell” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 77-78). This project of a new road goes hand in hand with the presence of several companies, that is, industrial-capitalist powers, which want to use the desert to fulfil their economic goals. The new road is just a strategy of some companies to become richer, without considering the impact their actions can have on the environment. Thus, the relationship of these powers with the desert is presented as a one-way destructive one; only companies benefit from this relationship while the desert is damaged. Besides, the companies that would benefit from this new road include uranium owners and land and water vehicle owners, which means that, even without the construction of the new road, these are already profiting from the desert while seriously spoiling it.

The procedures of these companies before building the road are two. On the one hand, the clearing of the land and, on the other hand, what could be considered its direct

destruction. Clearing the land does not pose a major problem to companies because in that area there are not many trees and the ones that can be found are mainly pinyon pines and junipers. Although this means an important loss of life, killing the few trees in that part of the desert does not look dramatic for companies, especially if killing them means profits. However, the second procedure of those working in the new road can have really catastrophic consequences for the landscape and the environment. Indeed, it is explained that the bulldozers working there were “blading off the soil and ripping up loose stone down to the bedrock. Since this was a cut-and-fill operation it was necessary to blast away the bedrock down to the grade level specified by the highway engineers” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 79). Cutting and dynamiting the rocks and boulders that form the desert landscape means its complete transformation and ‘redefinition,’ a radical change that comes by making natural formations disappear in order to allow the construction of a new structure. Natural elements and formations cease to exist and the area is made flat in order to make ‘development’ possible. Furthermore, what is even more dramatic is the fact that all this destruction only brings the economic benefit of a few. Thus, the intervention of industrial-capitalist powers in the desert, as a one-way destructive relationship, only brings “more mute suffering” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 79) to this environment. Not only the land is directly destroyed by this intervention, but also the living beings inhabiting it are deeply affected by it and suffer its consequences. This is due to the fact that “in a limited universe (...) there can be no infinite progress (...) no infinite growth unless others are exploited” (Mies, *Feminist Research* 52) in this case, nature, and, more precisely, the desert of the American Southwest. Industrial development and growth are only possible through the exploitation of colonized others (workers, women, non-whites, etc.), but in this case the destruction and exploitation of nature is what allows ‘progress.’ Taking this into account, all the examples of environmental exploitation in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* must be understood as the plunder of nature, which is inherent to so-called development. Thus, the relationships between the industrial-capitalist society and nature can never be positive for the latter, because the presence of one implies the exploitation of the other. That way, industrial capitalism can be considered antagonistic to life and to the bonds between forms of life, including humans. For this reason and for the obvious environmental impact of actions like the ones preceding the construction of the road, the protagonists of the novel decide to take action.

Being aware of the situation, the four activists decide to go to Comb Wash at night and try to stop the exploitation of the desert. As these are their first actions as a group, they somehow take them as a training, but the motivation to defend the environment is obviously their main driving force. Before reaching the machines to be sabotaged, they find some survey stakes that indicate their enemies where to work in a near future, so they do what they consider most appropriate and beneficial for the desert. As Hayduke tells the rest of the group: “always pull up survey stakes, (...) Anywhere you find them. Always. That’s the first goddamned general order in the monkey wrench business. Always pull up survey stakes” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 85). Hayduke insists on the importance of removing these markers because it is an easy and fundamental work for activists that hinders the beginning of works in an area. While the group can pull up survey stakes effortlessly, workers need much time and effort for placing them correctly again. Doing it as many times as possible becomes an obligation for the protagonists and this simple action can make companies significantly slow down their work. Abbey’s call to action is made clear again through Hayduke’s words, because this action is presented as if it was a manual for beginners in radical environmentalism, in addition to the fact that so much insistence on that procedure stresses its importance.

After pulling up the stakes, the group focuses on one of their main enemies, literally the machines, more specifically a “yellow Hyster C-450A, Caterpillar 330 HP diesel engine” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 85) whose destruction would mean a loss of \$29,500 for the owner. They cut as many cables as they can and attack the deposit of fuel for it to lose it all. As the sabotage of machines in Comb Wash is taken partly as training, draining the oil is only one of the methods they try in order to succeed. Another procedure they use is introducing sand inside the bulldozers so as to ruin their engines. This method appears as a quick and effective one, especially considering that sand is easily available in the desert, and for that reason “they went on, quickly and methodically now, from machine to machine, pouring sand into each crankcase and down every opening which led to moving parts” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 93). By using sand to ruin machines, the desert itself becomes accomplice of the activists’ action against industrial development. Sand is introduced inside the machines and, that way, the colonization of nature is reversed; a natural element disrupts the functioning of machines and destroys them. Thus, a part of the desert seems to be joining the struggle and, that way, the land and some humans (the protagonists) come together against a

common enemy that tries to destroy life. The group sabotages numerous bulldozers and machines in the area of Comb Wash so as to stop the destruction of the land. The fact of sabotaging so many machines through these methods with the aim of protecting the environment highly influenced real-life activists. Indeed, while talking about the actions of real radical environmental groups, the anonymous activist *Do or die* states that “no yellow monster was safe from the hunt” (40), making reference to all the machines that were destroyed or sabotaged by these activists. When all the machines have been sabotaged and the group leaves the area, Hayduke utters very significant words that give an account of the seriousness and scale of their struggle to defend the environment: “the war has begun” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 97). This statement expresses the necessity of joining a side in a war in which neutrality is not possible and the activists make clear their stand by aligning themselves in favour of nature and against industrial-capitalist powers.

The chapter following these first actions by the group is entirely devoted to Hayduke (it is called “Hayduke’s Night March”) and, in addition to reinforce the image of the ex-Green Beret as the main character, it tells his eagerness to see the results of their sabotage. As the actions taken by the group the previous night were partly a training, Hayduke wants to make sure if their procedures were effective or if they should turn to more radical practices. While staring at the agitation caused by workers, this character realizes that “some machines started; others did not, or would not, or never would” (*The Monkey Wrench Gang* 100). He also understands that workers have problems and will have even more if the activists continue being as effective as in their first attack. Moreover, after examining the area more exhaustively, he discovers that the situation of the machines was the following: “all systems mangled, half the equipment down already and the rest doomed” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 101). Thus, the first actions carried out by the group appear as a complete success and Hayduke becomes satisfied with what they did. Nevertheless, when he observes that some workers are already trying to repair the sabotaged machines, a completely new idea to stop the advance of industrial society over the desert comes to his mind. If the group really wants to be effective in their sabotages they have to make a radical change in their working methods. Hayduke’s thoughts are the following:

If you were serious about this wooden-shoe business, he tells himself, you’d get a haircut, shave off the beard, take a shower, put on some clean work clothes and get a job, some kind of a job, any kind of a job, with the construction company

itself. Then – bore from within, like the noble cutworm. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 104)

So, Hayduke's new idea consists on infiltrating the company that is destroying the landscape to build the road in order to sabotage it from within. Changing to this other method could be really effective because machines and equipment would be more easily available to him and because, as a worker, suspicions against him would be more improbable after a time. However, this technique would require much more time and caution than direct action, due to the fact that if an act of sabotage happened after the arrival of a new worker the saboteur would be easily caught. Besides, getting a job in the company might not be guaranteed and it would imply a drastic change for Hayduke, not only physical but also in terms of lifestyle. Direct action offers more immediate responses to environmental exploitation and destruction and this can be the main reason why the idea that came to Hayduke's mind is not put into practice by the group. While infiltrating and damaging a company from within can be more effective, what radical environmentalists really look for is the preservation of as much nature as possible. Therefore, losing time is not an option for them because protecting nature implies acting against the clock.

In his second visit to the area of Comb Wash, Hayduke alone has to pull up several survey stakes, as he considers it is one of the basics of the work they are doing. The stakes spread through a large area in two directions and he removes them as he walks, as it is explained in the following fragment: "he walked east toward the project site, removing as he went every stake, lath and ribbon on the north shoulder of the right-of-way. Returning, he would clean up the south side" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 104). It is an easy but indispensable action that every radical environmentalist must carry out when the opportunity is presented. In Hayduke's case, especially because the workers are far and the works in that area will not begin yet. Thus, when workers arrive at this place, they would have to study it again before starting to work and this would significantly slow them down. Furthermore, when walking through a canyon where a bridge is to be built, as "he saw no need for a bridge" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 106) he writes some messages for the constructor. His first message says "Go home" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 106) and the second one "No fucking bridge, please" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 106). That way, Hayduke makes clear his views about building structures and bringing industrial

society to the desert. Through these messages, a kind of communication is established between companies bringing so-called progress to the desert and radical environmentalists, an important fact considering that activists want their enemies to be aware of the struggle in which they are involved. Hayduke ends his messages by signing them: first as *Rudolf the Red* and later, after crossing out the previous pseudonym, as *Crazy Horse*. Throughout the novel, he signs under different pseudonyms, but for the authorities he is known as *Rudolf the Red* even if he crosses it out the first time. By using numerous nicknames, Hayduke tries to confuse the enemies and make them think there are many people fighting against them, in addition to the obvious reason of using the nicknames to avoid being recognized and caught. Furthermore, the fact of signing as and identifying with *Crazy Horse* makes the similarities between indigenous resistance and radical environmentalism evident. While Crazy Horse fought against colonizers to protect his people, culture and way of life, Hayduke fights against those colonizing nature to protect it and the bonds that exist between it and humans. Considering that the fight against industrial civilization, that is, “the struggle (...) against Leviathan, is synonymous with Life” (Perlman, *Against His-story* 186) both indigenous resistance and radical environmentalism can be considered struggles to protect life. Therefore, Hayduke and the rest of activists are engaged in an old fight to stop the colonization of the land, its living beings (including humans) and the links that unite them all in a way similar to the resistance of natives to the colonization of the land/home, their way of life and their very selves.

After this march through the desert, Hayduke joins the group again, even if they do not get involved in sabotage acts for a time. Dr Sarvis and Bonnie Abzug go back home for a while due to working reasons and Hayduke and Smith decide to travel through the desert. In their voyage, the two characters visit Narrow Canyon, where three bridges are being built. The construction of these bridges and the impact they have on the desert environment will be analysed later because they will be the target of one of the group’s biggest attacks. Nevertheless, in order to give an account of what terrible experience the two characters had when they arrived at Narrow Canyon, the following has to be mentioned: “the first thing they noticed was that the river was no longer there. Somebody had removed the Colorado River” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 120). The fact of taking a river as important as the Colorado away from its place, brings a dramatic and radical transformation of the environment. The presence of such an important river in a

dry land like the desert of the American Southwest is vital for life in the area, so its disappearance means a catastrophe for living beings, in addition to the desert itself. Industrial-capitalist powers ‘caged’ the Colorado waters inside Lake Powell (as it actually happened in real life) making clear again that their relationship with nature can only be destructive. In fact, instead of witnessing the wild waters of the Colorado River, Hayduke and Smith see “a motionless body of murky green effluent, dead, stagnant, dull, a scum of oil floating on the surface” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 120) as a consequence of the intervention of these powers. The construction of Lake Powell significantly transformed the desert according to the interests of a few and it replaced the restless waters of the Colorado with death and lack of motion, as expressed by Abbey. Considering that industrial capitalism is harming the desert in such a way (and in even more destructive ways), the subsequent actions taken by the group are understandable, an attempt at protecting nature and life as much as they can.

Hite Marina is the other important place Hayduke and Smith visit during their travel through the desert and, in this case, they take some kind of action, although in a rather peculiar way. In Hite Marina there is an airstrip that is being expanded, that is, the area is under construction. This airstrip stretches through the land above the dam that has also been built and in the area the two characters “saw a quarter mile of cleared land, a pickup truck, a wheeled loader, a dump truck and, coming to a halt, a Caterpillar D-7 bulldozer” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 122). Thus, industrial capitalism is clearly expanding through this area; this part of the desert has been deprived of the few trees and plants it had and it is now full of machines. The presence of a bulldozer could suggest its sabotage or destruction by the two activists, but in this case they use it as a learning tool. Although the area is full of machines, there are no workers there because Hayduke and Smith arrive in their lunchtime. For that reason, Hayduke decides that it is the appropriate moment for having some bulldozer-driving lessons, having Seldom Seen Smith as his teacher. Learning to drive a bulldozer could be somehow useful for the protection of the desert if used properly, but having a good time is also an impulse for Hayduke. Abbey, through Smith’s explanations, gives very specific and detailed accounts of how a bulldozer works and of how to drive it. The following example tells about one of the procedures after starting the engine:

Now we open the fuel valve by unscrewing this little valve, right... here. Now we pull out the choke. Now we set the idling latch in position. Now we turn on the switch. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 124)

These explanations about driving a bulldozer, like the ones concerning various sabotage actions, can function as a manual for beginners and engaging in radical environmentalism might partly seem easy and funny. Even security is important for Smith, so the first instruction of all is to “check the controls to make sure the tractor is in correct starting position” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 123). In spite of using a humorous tone, Abbey makes procedures quite clear, in case someone would like to try in real life. Thus, he can be trying to incite and encourage people, once again, to take action. Nevertheless, he also stresses the need of taking care to avoid things going wrong and to secure the wellbeing of both humans and non-humans. In the case of Hayduke, he cannot stop the machine once it is running and the bulldozer ends falling from a cliff. “Hayduke crawled to the edge in time to see, first, the blurred form of the loading machine sinking into the depths and, second, a few details of the tractor as it crashed into the lake” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 127) so, in the end, their class finishes with a destroyed machine. None of the two characters really had plans of carrying out an action, but as a consequence of (or thanks to) Hayduke’s clumsiness they kill one of the enemy’s machines. After this action they leave the place so as not to get caught, but they are being chased for a while by the Search and Rescue Team. These consider the activists criminals and their encounter is the first time radical environmentalists and the authorities are face to face in the struggle to protect the desert.

When Hayduke and Smith escape from the Search and Rescue Team, the activists are ready to continue with the sabotage acts aimed at saving the environment. These are narrated in a chapter quite appropriately called “Back to Work.” The actions described here are not carried out by the whole group (only by the two mentioned characters) and it is not until the next chapter that the four activists reunite. However, while continuing their travel through the desert, Hayduke and Smith carry out various radical environmental actions that show a clear increase of scale and effectiveness in their attacks. First of all, they destroy another bulldozer they find in the way to a place called Waterpocket Fold. Sabotaging machines of this type becomes a basis of their work and it seems that every time they see one taking action is a must (as in the case of the survey stakes). In fact, they work quickly and, as it is explained, “the work was developing into

a smooth routine” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 149). The fact of destroying machines so repeatedly makes activists work faster and more easily and this effectiveness means a clear advantage in their war against industrial-capitalist powers. The sabotage and destruction of so many machines implies the need of repairing or replacing them by their owners, which means that they have to spend significant amounts of money if they want to continue with their works. Thus, as Dave Foreman (founding member of the Earth First!) explains, “the rising cost of repairs, the hassle, the delay, the down-time caused by “on-the-ground” wilderness resistance activities (...) could protect millions of acres of wilderness far more effectively than any congressional act” (Foreman, *Defending the Earth* 87). For radical environmentalists, acting against the direct exploitation and destruction of nature by causing economic and time losses to the exploiters is not only faster and more effective than laws for preservation; it is the only way possible to stop attacks against it. Therefore, the sabotage of machines carried out by the protagonists is a way of disrupting the destructive relationship between industrial capitalism and the desert and a way of preserving the bonds between the rest of living beings and their ecosystem. It is worth mentioning that for the destruction of the machine a new technique is used by the activists, as it is explained in detail:

Hayduke performed the drill perfected in Comb Wash, adding a last step: Siphon fuel from fuel tank into can; pour fuel over engine block, track carriage and operator’s compartment; set machine on fire. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 149)

Hayduke decides to burn the machine and, thus, he destroys it in a more effective way than their previous sabotages. Burning the machine is a measure the rest of the group does not completely approve of, but Hayduke considers it necessary to stop the advance of the enemy. The use of fire can be highly dangerous if people are working in the area and it can reinforce the image of criminals that is commonly associated to these activists. Nevertheless, in this case, the target was only a lone bulldozer, so the fact that no one was at risk can be the reason for using fire.

While Hayduke and Smith are driving to the town of Escalante after having destroyed the bulldozer, Abbey describes a landscape deserving of admiration. It is said that the two characters follow a road in a ridge “between forks of the Escalante River (...) among the pale domes – hundreds of feet high – of cross-bedded sandstone. The ancient dunes that turned to rock some years previous” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 150). The

extension of the river among canyons and the magnificent structures of rock make this desert a beautiful and unique place, as Abbey makes clear repeatedly. Besides, he makes a reference to the natural transformations of sand and rocks, expressing, thus, his admiration for the unwritten history of the desert. Nevertheless, this beauty and splendour are disrupted when Hayduke and Smith “passed, from time to time, familiar names on little metal signs at turnoffs along the road: Conoco, Arco, Texaco, Gulf, Exxon, Cities Service” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 150). The sight of a breathtaking landscape is replaced by signs (and their corresponding buildings) of companies that have colonized and tamed the wild nature of that part of the American Southwest. Therefore, industrial-capitalist powers have violently entered the wilderness that occupied the two characters’ vision. Nonetheless, what is more dramatic is the fact that all these companies are oil, petrol and energy companies, that is, their impact on the desert environment is huge. According to Tobias Haller et al, “from the time exploration of oil and natural gas commences till the time it is pumped into huge ships, this activity results in destruction of the environment and humans, partly on a massive scale” (23). The working processes of these companies are long, but they have a significant impact on the environment and on living beings (including humans) since the very beginning. As it has been previously mentioned, among the negative environmental consequences caused by the oil industry habitat transformation/destruction and pollution (especially water pollution) can be mentioned. It is also a fact that pollution caused by the oil industry in desert and arid areas “cause serious, though much less visible damage” (Haller et al 23), which implies invisible dangers for living beings. So, the presence of all these companies in the desert can mean the complete alteration (accompanied by destruction) of the landscape and harm to animals, plants and humans, although it might not be clearly appreciated. This way, several companies are profiting from the exploitation of the land without opposition of the population, which is unaware of all the dangers produced by such an intervention in the desert.

At the contemplation of such a terrible sight, Hayduke can only get angry and express that “the bastards are everywhere” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 150). Hayduke’s anger while looking at what the desert has become (and will continue becoming if action is not taken) is more than comprehensible considering the bonds that united the character with the land he deemed his home. Besides, this anger caused partly by the destruction of the relationships between he and the desert can be considered a justification good

enough for a person like him to engage in a struggle against industrial-capitalist powers. In the speech about Glen Canyon Dam given by Abbey in 1981, the author does not only refer to that dam, but also to any attempt at profiting from the exploitation of the desert like in the case of Hayduke's and Smith's vision of so many companies. He described the real situation of the desert (like the experience the characters of the novel had) with the following words:

The politicians of Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, and Colorado, in cahoots with the land developers, city developers, industrial developers of the Southwest, stole this treasure from us in order to pursue and promote their crackpot ideology of Growth, Profit, and Power. (Abbey, "Remarks" 4)

Thus, Abbey expresses the fact that politicians and companies work together in order to get profits from exploiting the desert. These do not care about the damage done to the environment or to people because their only concern is to get as much money as possible. The relationships between governmental institutions and industrial-capitalist powers and the desert are utterly negative because constant and meaningless growth (unless for profit) necessarily imply the exploitation of nature. The fact that politicians cannot be trusted, in this case, for environmental matters, makes evident Abbey's and his character's approach to (green) anarchism due to the fact that a lack of hierarchies between humans and nature could be the only way to stop such exploitation. Furthermore, Abbey points out that the desert (considered a treasure by him) has been stolen and that now it is used for enriching a few. The fact that the desert is, at the same time, everyone's and no one's, changes and it becomes the colonized property of the rich and powerful ones at the service of capitalism and industrialization. That way, the relationships of interrelatedness between living and non-living beings in the desert are disrupted. Facing such a dramatic situation, activists see the need of radicalising their working methods and this is exactly what Hayduke and the rest of the group will do.

In addition to the colonization of the area of the Escalante River, another natural space Hayduke and Smith are heading to is mentioned, the Kaiparowits Plateau. The Plateau is presented as a full of plants, beautiful place that leaves Hayduke completely amazed. However, as it is told in the novel, this plateau, "like Black Mesa, like the high plains of Wyoming and Montana, faced the same attack which had devastated Appalachia" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 155). As it has been explained in a previous chapter, especially as a consequence of logging, the Appalachian region was completely

transformed and ravaged in the name of progress and development. Abbey mentions other places that have been equally victimized and comprehends that this attack against the environment is also threatening the Southwest, more precisely, the Kaiparowits Plateau. The US Department of the Interior along with several companies of different types will start working in that area and destroying the landscape so as to get big amounts of money. Again, the combined work of politicians and companies is presented as the cause of the degradation of the environment and of the attacks against life. So, counterattacks made by the group of activists can be deemed political responses to a corrupted system that sees personal profit as a much more important goal than the preservation of the Earth and its living beings. Indeed, radical environmentalists “justify their crimes with the belief that modern society commits far more serious crimes against the environment” (Young 26-27). In this case, the destruction of the desert of the American Southwest, of the links that unite living beings and the land and of life itself is what propels the characters to take action while breaking laws that can only benefit those in power. Using illegal methods is the only possible way for radical environmentalists to protect nature successfully, because as industrial and capitalist development implies the exploitation of the natural world, acting according to their rules becomes impossible.

Witnessing the degradation of places they thought unique and abounding with life, Hayduke and Smith understand that they must continue fighting, even more fiercely than before. The next action they carry out is the destruction of geophones, small devices associated to seismic exploration. The presence of geophones implies that companies are looking for minerals and that they are using explosives in order to get them. The removal and destruction of these devices serves as a preventive action to avoid drillings and blastings that would mean significant alterations and direct destruction of the landscape. As in the case of survey stakes, geophones themselves are not really dangerous in environmental terms; however, their removal can be highly important to prevent serious damage against the land. These “expensive little instruments, ripped untimely from the earth” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 151) are easy prey for Hayduke. He effortlessly takes one off and, as all of them are connected with a cable, he just needs to tie it to the truck and start driving. This simple action is an example of a highly effective sabotage, because, in a very easy way, the activists manage to interrupt the destructive relationship of industrial-capitalist powers with the

desert by avoiding drillings and explosions that would destroy the earth. Besides, the sabotage of geophones causes significant economic losses to the company that owns them, something that (if done repeatedly and effectively) could discourage it from further exploitation of the desert.

Soon after they start driving, Hayduke realizes that there is another structure, another sign of the advance of industrial capitalism that they must sabotage: a drilling rig. The lack of workers motivates Hayduke's action, while the absence of cover makes Smith think it is a bad idea. Smith, then, tries to dissuade Hayduke from taking action, but his response is that "it's our duty" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 152). Hearing that, Smith answers that "it's our first duty not to get ourselves strung up" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 152), somehow completing Hayduke's statement. These two answers are highly illustrative of radical environmentalists' ideas while working, because even if sabotaging as many machines and structures as possible is their main job, not getting caught is a major priority. Getting arrested would mean the end of the struggle to save nature for them and an important defeat for the radical environmental movement. Nonetheless, the sense of moral duty in radical environmentalists is really strong. Manes points out that "like the abolitionists of pre-Civil War America, radical environmentalists break the law out of opposition to a moral wrong" (176), a fact that should serve to end the thoughts about vandalism related to environmental activism. Radical environmentalism is, thus, a reaction against a moral wrong committed by industrial/capitalist powers, a wrong that threatens life on Earth. Like those who opposed slavery and, consequently, acted against it, radical environmentalists (in this case Hayduke) see that nature is being enslaved and exploited and that it is their duty to take action against it every time it is possible. Therefore, actions that would be considered criminal by a sector of the population are deemed by activists as morally right and necessary in order to protect the bonds and interrelatedness between living beings and their environment.

The moral duty of doing what is right and good for life forms is what drives Hayduke against a system of corrupted morals. Thus, the drilling rig must be sabotaged and as "somebody had to do it" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 153), Hayduke follows his sense of moral duty. So, he decides to act and climbs to the platform. He looks through the hole that goes underground and starts throwing different objects among which wrenches, crowbars and chains can be found. Due to the apparent inefficacy of this

method, he decides to focus on the engines of the machine and, as usual, a detailed description is given: “He broke open the driller’s toolbox, found the end wrench he needed, crawled on his back under the engines and turned the crankcase plug in each, draining the oil. Then he started the engines and let them run” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 153). This sabotage finishes successfully at this point, although if he had had the appropriate materials, Hayduke would have liked to burn the rig or to detonate some explosives. Finally, before leaving the place, he signs his work with the pseudonym NEMO, a name different from the one used the previous time. This is probably done in order to confuse the people following them or to make them think that there are more activists like them trying to protect the desert.

The last action carried out by these two activists in this chapter called “Back to Work” is highly significant, not because of its impact, but because of its different nature. The last thing Hayduke and Smith do before resting is an act related to animal liberation, something completely different from what they have done before. Besides, this is the only action of this type carried out by members of the group in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and in *Hayduke Lives!*. The two characters see a group of bald face cows surrounded and entrapped by a fence of barbed wire and start cutting it in order to free them. As they only need pliers, they work quickly and effectively and they do not need much effort to liberate these animals from their imprisonment. Barbed wire is highly dangerous and harmful for animals and, as a consequence of it, “now the antelope die by the thousands, the bighorn sheep perish by the hundreds every winter from Alberta down to Arizona, because fencing cuts off their escape from blizzard and drought. And coyotes too, and golden eagles” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 156). In addition to the direct damage barbed wire can cause to animals that are unaware of its presence, its combination with blizzards and droughts results in the deaths of hundreds and thousands of living beings. Thus, thanks to a simple action, animals are liberated from a prison that brings them death, especially, when they cannot escape from harsh climatic conditions. Smith emphasizes the fact that fences have to be cut always and, that way, Abbey could be encouraging people to take an easy but powerful action. The oppression suffered by animals is similar to the one suffered by the desert (a violent attempt at controlling nature), so taking this action comes as something natural, as part of the moral obligation of activists. Just through a simple action like cutting a fence, the destructive relationships towards the desert, in this case dramatically affecting its living

beings, are disrupted. In fact, for most radical environmentalists animal liberation is also necessary for the complete liberation of the Earth and of humans; they are interconnected. As Leslie James Pickering (who worked as spokesperson for the Earth Liberation Front) claimed, “the liberation of the Earth equals the liberation of everyone of us” (29). Therefore, the complete liberation of the Earth would suppose the liberation of all living beings. In order to totally liberate animals (including human beings) the enslavement and exploitation of the land and, in general terms, of nature should stop, but meanwhile, directly liberating animals is also part of the activism of radical environmentalists.

The next action carried out by the protagonists, in this case by the whole group, implies not only sabotaging, but also destruction at a great scale that includes a bridge and a train. For this reason, the group must be really careful with the consequences of their action and it has to be planned in detail trying to foresee possible errors. The place where they will act is not specified, but it is explained that it belonged to the Navajo Nation and that it is not far from the Navajo National Monument in Arizona. This fact brings back to mind the colonization of indigenous peoples and, somehow, a comparison is made between this colonization and that of the desert; both are victims of the powers of so-called progress. Unlike in other extracts dedicated to natural spaces like canyons or rivers, this part of the desert is not described in a glorious way. Indeed, the damage done to this place is so huge that a completely different language is used to describe it. In clear contrast with the depictions of natural spaces and elements, the description given is not accurate in any way, although it is incredibly striking: “their view from the knoll would be difficult to describe in any known terrestrial language. Bonnie thought of something like a Martian invasion, the War of the Worlds” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 171). As a consequence of industrial/capitalist intervention, this part of the desert not only stopped being natural, but also ceased to be from the Earth. While in an example given previously, the beauty of the desert could not be expressed through words, in this case it is not possible to convey such a catastrophe through language. The transformation of the landscape and the destruction of the land are so huge and new for Abbey that he is incapable of expressing this new and overwhelming reality. Besides, the image that is formed in Bonnie’s mind is extremely explanatory. She thinks about the War of the Worlds and, by mentioning it, a comparison is made between those working in the area and aliens that do not belong to this world and try to destroy it. The

exploitation of the desert by industrial-capitalist powers is, thus, equalled to the Martian invasion described by H. G. Wells. Furthermore, as “Wells asks his English readers to compare the Martian invasion of Earth with the Europeans’ genocidal invasion of the Tasmanians” (Rieder 5), the colonial connotations of this brutal intervention in the desert are clear, concerning both natives and nature itself. Thus, the war between radical environmentalists and industrial/capitalist powers is made evident again, in this case emphasizing on colliding worlds (natural and industrial) and on complete destruction of the land.

The many and expensive machines, buildings, structures and pipelines that fill the area destroyed the landscape and the ancestral home of natives, but, in a more spiritual level, they also became a “heartbreaking insult to land and sky and human heart” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 173). The spiritual connection between nature and humans, which was so important for Abbey, is thus eliminated with the only intention of profiting economically from the land. Abbey saw humans as part of nature, not as beings (that should be) alienated from it and so, the bonds that unite them make them interrelated, what means that an insult or attack against the desert becomes so for humans. Abbey’s loathing towards all this technology and signs of industrialization “appears to be attributable to an aversion to that which stands between him and the direct affective experience of the landscape” (Tagnani 334). Therefore, he and his characters’ hate towards all the machinery in the area partly stems from the fact that they are no longer in direct contact with the desert. Machines are interfering with the feelings they experience and with the bonds (including the spiritual ones) they develop as a consequence of being in contact with the land. So, in addition to obvious environmental concerns, the disruption of human-natural bonds is a driving force for continuing taking direct action. The government and several companies spent millions of dollars for working in the area in order to get more millions, that is, exorbitant benefits. However, the purpose of all this machinery seems rather ridiculous, because the various aims of the exploitation of this area include the following: “to light the lamps of Phoenix suburbs not yet built, to run the air conditioners of San Diego and Los Angeles, to illuminate shopping-center parking lots at two in the morning” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 173). The destruction of a unique landscape with its own biodiversity, which is motivated by objectives like the ones just mentioned, can be considered a highly grotesque use (or rather abuse) of nature. Abbey points out at some of the absurdities of

‘progress’ and ‘development’ and presents them as pointless attacks against the environment and life. Witnessing such an insult to nature, activists cannot sit around and action becomes, once again, a must. As *Do or Die* states, using the group *Earth First!* as an example, radical environmental activists “set themselves not only the task of defending the last fragments but of reversing the process pulling down the dams and the powerlines” (15). Thus, the four protagonists will not only try to stop the works in the area, but also to reverse the process of exploitation and to leave the place like it was before, by eliminating the presence of industrial/capitalist powers. Likewise, recovering the relationships that were disrupted when this wild space was attacked is another objective of their actions.

Having studied the area and the machines thoroughly, the group has a clear idea about how to act against the enemy. Their intention in this attack (or counterattack) is to destroy two specific targets, a bridge and a train (both of a huge size), so the environmental activists will have to turn to new methods that would cause a bigger impact. For the former ELF spokesman Craig Rosebraugh “the best targets are those that will have the most effect in stopping the exploitation, destruction and deaths of the natural environment” (20). Considering that, it can be said that the bridge and the train are the best possible targets. They are key elements in the whole exploitation of the area, so destroying them would significantly stop the damage done to that part of the desert. For this mission the group will be mainly using explosives, a fact that gives an idea of how the war between them and industrial/capitalist powers has reached a new level. In addition to being more dangerous, explosives will start having more obvious effects on companies that exploit the desert and, thus, activists will be making an important difference in favour of the environment. In order to enter the working site, they cut the fence but, unlike when they did it to liberate animals, in this case it cannot be considered an action in itself, only a necessary step to carry out the actual actions.

The idea of the group is to place several explosives in the bridge that will be crossed by the train, so as to destroy both through a single attack. The train, which transports coal, is electric and there is no need of human presence to control it, so the attack can be carried out without damaging anyone. Before starting placing the explosives Hayduke checks his demolition card to ensure the perfect amount that is needed for the detonation and he concludes that “one kilogram equals 2.20 pounds; we want three charges 1.25 kilograms each, let’s say three pounds each charge, to be on the

safe side” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 191). Although the process of preparing and putting the explosives is explained through a notable part of the chapter, Abbey makes it obviously more complicated than the sabotage of a bulldozer; all in all *The Monkey Wrench Gang* is a novel, not a manual for using explosives. However, explanations like the following make evident that Abbey knew about explosives and that the novel can be partly used as a guide for direct action:

He makes up a primer by punching a hole in one cartridge with the handle (non-sparking) of his crimping tool, inserting a blasting cap (electrical) into the hole, and knotting the cap’s leg wires. Next he tapes the six sticks together in a bundle, the primed cartridge in the center. The charge is ready. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 191)

While discussing some aspects of their work, Hayduke utters, again, a sentence that characterises his attitudes concerning environmental protection and that can be applied to the whole radical environmental movement: “Because somebody has to do it” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 191). This sense of duty of radical environmentalists can also be considered a key idea of the novel, because, for Abbey, nature and the bonds that unite it with humans must necessarily be protected especially by those who really feel attached to the land (or by everyone if possible). In this very case, Hayduke’s statement refers to a single action of their mission, but in a wider sense it can be compared to the following words by Dave Foreman, co-founder of *Earth First!*: “You have to take responsibility for your life and the world. You have got to do something to pay your rent for the privilege of inhabiting this beautiful, blue-green, living Earth” (Defending the Earth 82). Thus, Hayduke’s words express that stopping the advance of industrial-capitalist powers that are destroying the environment is the duty of the people and that this responsibility cannot be fulfilled by governments or other institutions. Fighting against the machines that directly exploit nature is something people owe to the planet; the Earth gives life, so instead of destroying it, people have to protect it. Therefore, all the actions carried out by the group are justified by a deep sense of duty.

Waiting for the train to reach the bridge, the group of activists realizes that something unexpected happens, the presence of a man in the train. Despite all the care taken when preparing the action, the possibility of harming a human being arises. The train is supposed to be electric and it has to work without the intervention of people, so the protagonists consider that the companies advertising the train lied; it is the

companies' fault. The death of innocent people is not what the group looks for and this is made clear through Hayduke's reaction when he sees the man: "Heart shocked to a stop, brain blanked dead, Hayduke dives into earth with hands locked over skull" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 201). He becomes paralyzed and numb at the possibility of killing a man and rage against the companies that lied about the presence of people becomes his predominant feeling. In spite of the presence of that man the activists cannot stop their attack because it is a unique opportunity to end the exploitation of that part of the desert. Hopefully for everyone, the man jumps off the train before the detonation and no one gets hurt. The fact of wanting to avoid any harm to human beings makes radical environmentalists (ecoterrorists for some people) distance themselves from real terrorists because, indeed, these are not concerned with death, but with life. Even in the most destructive and extreme actions that occurred in real-life, radical environmentalists "killed no one injured no one, and targeted no one" (Potter 44). This is also the case in the novel and, in the end, the action is carried out successfully. A huge industrial complex exploiting the land is destroyed and significant material and economic damages are caused to those trying to profit from that exploitation.

The mission is accomplished when the bridge blasts as a consequence of their explosives and the train subsequently reaches the place where the bridge should have been. The detonation has highly destructive effects as the following fragment depicts: "The locomotive slid with shrieking rigid wheels to the shattered bridge, toppled and fell. Out of sight. A moment elapsed: the boom of the crash rose to the sky" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 203). Both targets are destroyed by several explosions, so the road used to transport materials to the machine-dominated area (and the materials themselves) disappear and the continuation of the works there becomes impossible. The power lines that filled the area are also destroyed by the explosions and the functioning of the overall machinery is then interrupted. Thus, the group's action has important consequences, both for their struggle and for companies. In their fight to protect the desert, this action implies that destructive relationships towards it are disrupted and that a significant area ceases to be exploited for the profit of a few. For companies, it implies serious economic and material losses that could be followed by discouragement and lack of further activity.

In addition to this powerful attack, there is also another minor action worth mentioning, especially due to its symbolic load. The action consists in leaving a

signature, something that has already been done by the activists previously, somehow, as a form of communication. The group signs one of their actions again, but this time it is Bonnie Abbzug who does it. The signature can be deemed more serious than the ones done by Hayduke and the message is the following: “Custer wears an arrow shirt – Redpower!” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 193). This text has more political connotations than Hayduke’s signatures and it bears a strong anticolonial message. It makes reference to George Armstrong Custer, a US Army officer who died in the Battle of Little Bighorn fighting against Native Americans led by the Sioux leader Crazy Horse. Therefore, a clear comparison is made between native resistance and radical environmental activism in the fight against invaders in order to protect the land. Both are characterised by their struggle for the preservation of an America that is free from colonial and oppressive powers, which equally colonize humans and nature and which claim superiority and think they can appropriate the land.

Although most of the actions affecting the environment in positive or negative terms (both by activists and by industrial/capitalist powers) happen in the desert, there is a short but important part in the novel dedicated to forests, more specifically to those not far from Jacob Lake, Arizona. Hayduke and Abbzug spend a time together separated from the rest of the group due to their relationship and they visit places where trees and other plants are much more abundant. There, the landscape the two activists encounter is characterised by “green meadows decorated with herds of cattle and deer, and beyond the meadows the aspen, pine, spruce and fir” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 227), so the differences between it and the desert that predominates in Abbey’s writing are evident. Nevertheless, both these forests and the desert are full of life, unique environments, in spite of the greenness that dominates in the former. This area seems a semi-wild place, almost untouched by human beings. However, the two characters soon realize that the forest has become another working site for exploitation. In the simple and apparently silly conversation that follows, Hayduke and Abbzug express the desolation they witnessed when regarding a clearing in the forest: ““What happened to the trees?” “What trees?” says Hayduke. “That’s what I mean”” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 227). The astonishment both characters feel when they see that there are no trees in that part of the forest seems to affect their thinking and talking capacities, so the shock they experience gives an idea of how terrible the destruction of that forest is. A place they expect to see full of life is only a hole of devastation where stumps and dead remains are the only

things that prove that a forest existed before. The causes behind such desolation are detailed and, unsurprisingly, the forest has become a place for “timber farms, lumber plantations, field factories for the joist, board, pulp and plywood industry” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 227). Thus, the forest is no longer a semi-wild or natural space, but a place for the exploitation of the logging industry. Like the desert, this area is in the way of becoming a victim of industrialization and capitalism, a prey of so-called development.

At the sight of magnificent desert and forest landscapes, the idea of machines eliminating true wilderness comes to Hayduke’s mind and he thinks that they cannot let machines destroy such beautiful natural spaces and the interrelatedness between life forms. However, after witnessing the clearing and the exploitation of the forest, he thinks even more radically and Abzug deduces that what he wants “is a counter-industrial revolution” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 229). The complete removal and disappearance of the industrial (capitalist) system and its ways of producing and living is suggested by Hayduke as the alternative to stop the exploitation and destruction of the planet and its living beings. This time, he is not advocating for a return to a primitive society, but for reversing the industrial revolution that, since its beginning, has brought so much harm to the environment. Although some could think that this idea results from the thoughts of a lunatic, an undeniable and violent enmity exists between the industrial system and nature. As Manes explains, “Industrial society may indeed be the most deleterious and unsustainable economic system the world has ever seen, since it constantly eats into the ecological systems on which it depends” (228). The functioning and growth of the industrial system depends on the exploitation of colonized humans (women, non-whites, etc.) and of nature and the resources that can be profitable to allow further growth. Therefore, the exploitation and destruction of the natural world is intrinsic to the industrial system. The objective of the industrial society is to continue growing and developing endlessly, but as the planet and its resources are limited, such a system of domination is unsustainable and, in the end, it will provoke its own destruction and that of life. The fact that the industrial society is antonymous to life is also evident for real-life radical environmental activists who have similar views to those of Hayduke. Indeed, Craig ‘Critter’ Marshall, activist and member of the group Earth Liberation Front, expressed that “what we need to attack is the totality of the death machine that is industrial society, AKA civilization” (“The Inseparable Earth” 35). Taking this statement into account, it can be thought that even if the work done by these

activists can help the environment to a certain extent, the dimension of the struggle is so huge and the enemy so big that much more would be needed to achieve the complete liberation of the Earth and of its living beings. In fact, it would be necessary to eliminate the nature-dominating industrial-capitalist system and to develop truly sustainable societies and economies without hierarchies and exploitation, which would allow the coexistence of humans, their environment and the rest of life forms. A war against civilization cannot be won by small groups of activists, so radical changes in the foundations of society and in people's behaviours and attitudes would be required to bring modern society down from the inside. The idea of the domination of humans over nature is the root of environmental destruction, so if this thought does not disappear the exploitation of nature will continue. This change of the foundations of society would be a rather utopian way of defending and preserving nature and the environment, but, in any case, the protagonists of the novel will continue taking actions to protect life and against those spreading death.

Despite the fact that apparently only four people (the protagonists of the story) are engaged in this struggle for the preservation of nature, the presence of more activists is made evident through the novel, a fact that makes their battle more encouraging. The first time the engagement of other environmentalists is suggested is through a conversation between Hayduke and Abzug about the possible retaliations by the authorities. Hayduke expresses the following with certainty: "Bonnie, you think we're alone? I'll bet – listen, I'll bet right this very minute there's guys out in the dark doing the same kind of work we're doing" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 182). It would not be surprising to find people with the same ideas doing a similar work as a reaction against the environmental exploitation of the desert by industrial/capitalist powers. In fact, as radical environmentalism developed as a response to extremely negative attitudes towards nature, the environmental awareness of non-related people would easily lead them all to take direct action. During the actions these two characters carry out in the forest (which will be analysed next) a man appears from the dark and tells Hayduke that he is involved in similar actions. Furthermore, as it will also be explained later, one of the most powerful actions in the novel is not carried out by the protagonists. Thus, Abbey shows that, even if he focuses mainly on the four protagonists, there are more actions going on in order to protect, at least, the nature of the American Southwest. This fact proves that the environment-defending side in the battle gains power over those

exploiting it. It also shows that unrelated undercover sabotages over the country can be the best way to try to stop or slow down the destruction of the Earth.

In the forest, Hayduke sees, more than ever, the need of doing everything he can for the defence of nature, even if he alone cannot destroy industrial civilization. After witnessing the clearing of a significant part of the forest, he understands that “my job is to save the fucking wilderness. I don’t know anything else worth saving” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 229). Saving not only the tress of that forest, but also every natural and wild place endangered by industrial capitalism becomes his mission and that of all activists like him. For Hayduke, only wilderness is so true, pure and essential to the point of deserving to be saved. Wilderness is the very essence of nature, of humans and of the human self. In the wild lies the most primordial connection between humans and the land, so its disappearance would mean the loss of the roots and a complete alienation from nature. Menrisky points out that wilderness “is both spatial and psychic, natural and originary, and within its boundaries it has the capacity to include *everything*” (65), an idea that reinforces Hayduke’s wish to save it. Wilderness is not only a tangible place that surrounds humans, it is also a state of mind prior to the violent interference of industrial capitalism; it is the psychic state of the original human in contact with nature. Wilderness is everything essential for a living being, it encompasses all its physical and mental needs and the interrelatedness with other beings, in clear opposition to the industrial civilization, which establishes limitations and unnatural processes and pressures. Furthermore, the state of humans in the industrial society is marked by anxieties and disorders that distance them significantly from their original and wild state of mind. Therefore, wild nature, the environment and its living beings must be saved in Hayduke’s view, but it seems that humans (at least in their state in the industrial society) do not deserve such privilege. After all the exploitation and destruction caused by humans, the chance of salvation for them is not even considered by Hayduke. Wilderness is not guilty of human sins, but if it disappeared, humanity would live in a (industrial) hell they themselves created. Thus, making a comparison with the Christian imagery, Hayduke would be a kind of saviour, but in terms that clash with Christianity because, instead of saving humanity, he would save wilderness. Hayduke’s need for saving wilderness is very much based on the fact that Abbey considers “wilderness itself as the most legitimate alternative to the destructive and alienating forces of industrial and postindustrial capitalist culture” (Menrisky 58). For Abbey, the wild is

the best alternative to a system that dehumanizes people and annihilates life. Wilderness represents true humanity and a belonging to the cycle of life in which humans can be both predators and preys, instead of destroyers of life. A lifestyle in close contact with wilderness (without damaging it) is the best alternative to escape from the oppression and alienation of industrial capitalism and to maintain the bonds that unite humans and the land. For these reasons, wilderness is presented as a shelter, as a reality opposed to industrial society, as the only place and state for humans to live freely and, thus, its protection through direct action becomes the means for salvation.

Hayduke's urge to save the forest that, unless action is taken, will continue to be cleared is unstoppable. As the exploitation of the area does not require as much machinery as that of the desert because it consists basically on the cutting of trees, working in that place means more simplicity and more chances of success for the activists. First of all, and almost like a routine, Hayduke sabotages a bulldozer by attacking the engine and draining the oil. He only needs a wrench and a steel pipe for the action, that is, common tools for a common work. In this case, in addition to the usual explanations about the process, the model of the machine is also mentioned, "an Allis-Chalmers HD-41" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 239). Despite specificities in the models of the machines, Abbey emphasizes the importance of sabotaging as many as possible and, thus, he continues trying to encourage people to take action in real life. In spite of finishing the sabotage of that bulldozer successfully, Hayduke stops, terrified, at the presence of a man he thinks to be the watchman. However, as it has been already mentioned, he is an activist similar to the protagonists.

The man, who wears a mask and rides a horse, acts alone and seems to know more than Hayduke about working in the forest. He is a kind of lone ranger with a lot of experience, which confirms Hayduke's thought of the presence of more people in their struggle to protect the environment. The man's presence in the novel is not very big, but he appears again in *Hayduke Lives!* gaining more pre-eminence. This mysterious man solved the problem of the watchman before Hayduke's arrival by tying and locking him up, taking advantage of the fact that he was half drunk. Thus, this defender of nature seems to have different working methods, especially because, even without hurting him, he took action against a human being, something the protagonists never do. After observing Hayduke working on the bulldozer, the stranger shares his experience with him and gives him ideas about what to do afterwards. Thus, by following his advice and

by using one of the enemy's machines, Hayduke "shifted into reverse and the tractor backed over the Georgia-Pacific pickup truck" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 244), a wise and effective movement because "the truck collapsed like a beer can" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 244). This way, Hayduke learns that machines cannot simply be targets of sabotage, but also tools to destroy more machines. Satisfied with the effectiveness of this new technique, Hayduke aims at two more machines: a skidder and a tanker truck. Thus, the operation in the forest can be said to be a complete success because most (if not all) of the machines used to exploit the area are destroyed. Without these machines the continuation of extremely harmful attitudes towards the forest becomes impossible and this implies significant costs for the companies that lost them. Therefore, the intervention of companies in the area can be diminished or even stopped thanks to the activists' actions.

While Hayduke and Abzug travel and act through different places, the other members of the group continue with their lives. This is worth mentioning because in a chapter devoted to Dr Sarvis' stay at home, the consequences of the exploitation of the desert are shown having a terrible impact on humans. The doctor has to make a thoracic surgery to a young boy because he has a disease on the left lung. The cause of the infection has to do with the fact that "the old-fashioned nineteenth-century air had been replaced by modern scientific thinking" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 232), that is, the pollution of the air is the reason for the boy's lung disease. In addition to destroying the environment, the exploitation of the desert can bring dangerous consequences to huge numbers of humans. So, what modernity, science and so-called progress promise seems to be a lie that, instead of caring about the wellbeing of humans, is driven by greed and only benefits a few. Dr Sarvis thinks that the polluted air brought by 'development' in the desert can cause "from poor visibility to eye irritation, from allergies to asthma to emphysema to general asthenia" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 233). Considering how harmful the intervention of industrial/capitalist powers in the desert is for human health, the idea of taking action against these powers becomes even more urgent and powerful. The destructive relationships towards the desert clearly extend towards humans and industrial capitalism is presented as an evil force that has no consideration for life. Although it was created by humans, the industrial system does not add anything essential to human life and, despite the accepted idea of it making life easier, it brings more complexities (like anxiety or alienation) and consequences like disastrous air

pollution. Thus, the struggle of radical environmentalists becomes not only a matter of saving the environment, but also human lives. In fact, while these activists are considered criminals by governments and companies, these are the ones that really endanger people's health and life by placing endless growth and profit above wellbeing.

The issue of air pollution is mentioned before in the novel through a conversation between Hayduke and a man who works in a gas station. They start talking about a power plant that will be built and continue saying the following: ““They won't let you degrade the quality of the fucking air, is that the trouble?” “Why them ignorant sonsabitches. Why we got more air around here'n ary man can breathe”” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 156). The man's answer suggests that he thinks there is more than enough air for everyone and that it does not matter if some of it gets polluted. Deceived by the promise of prosperity made the powers that promote 'development,' the worker of the gas station does not care about pollution and the health problems it brings because economic profits will be achieved from the exploitation of an apparently desolate place. This complete lack of awareness about environmental problems also contributes to the degradation of nature due to the fact that not seeing the problem makes looking for a solution impossible and, thus, harmful attitudes towards it are perpetuated. In this case, the totally clean air of a wild space is polluted and it becomes dangerous for living beings. Furthermore, as ignorance about these facts leads to the encouragement of further practices of this kind, the exploitation of the desert continues without being questioned. For that reason, environmental activists try to make people conscious of the situation of the planet, because their struggle does not only consist on sabotaging machines. In Craig 'Critter' Marshall's view, “you are to blame if you don't do something drastic to stop civilization's destructive course” (“Solidarity” 33). So, for him, the lack of awareness and of action, which derives from the former, means that these people are, unconsciously and somehow indirectly, as guilty as companies and governments that exploit the land. The fact that people are not aware of and do not act against the degradation of the environment is a serious concern for activists because they need a lot of help and support to continue trying to stop the advance of industrial capitalism over nature and unawareness and misinformation are difficult barriers to overcome. Taking this into consideration, it can be said that radical environmentalists are engaged in a two-sided struggle that includes fighting and making people aware of it, so more and more people gets involved in the active preservation of the environment.

After the actions taken in the woods, Hayduke and Abzug return to the place where they carried out the group's biggest sabotage (the one concerning the railroad and all its machinery) to see how things are developing there. They realize that their work has been highly effective, but that, in spite of it, people continue working there. Apparently, these people need to exploit the area obligatorily in order to get the profits they look for. Indeed, the two activists see that "engineers, technicians and laborers swarmed like ants over the work site" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 250), which means that more people than ever works in the place and that although the consequences of the attack have been catastrophic for the company, the exploitation of that part of the desert is necessary for the achievement of their economic goals. Following the dictates of endless-growth promoted by industrial capitalism, which is antagonistic to life, the company does not stop, even if its machinery has already been sabotaged. The destroyed power lines that were indispensable for the functioning of the machine-dominated area have been re-established and now they pose problems to the activists while "bringing high-voltage energy to those in need" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 250), that is, feeding the machinery activists try to destroy. Therefore, industrial powers have not ceased to exploit nature after the protagonists' attack and, in fact, they have regained full power so as to continue dominating the environment. Despite the fact that the previous actions in the working site were highly powerful, industrial civilization is like a monster that needs much more to be killed. For that reason, the two activists decide to act again in the same place even if this time, the attack is of a minor scale. Being completely aware that their action will not bring down industrial civilization, at least, they want to protect the area by damaging the company working there.

When the train (full of people) leaves the area, the two activists see their opportunity to act even if they do not have as many tools available as in their previous attack to the working site. This time they do not aim at the railroad or at the machinery, but at the power lines that make them work. Hayduke uses a chainsaw to "cut a deep notch in the base of the pole" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 251) and repeats this procedure until eleven of the poles that form the power lines have been sabotaged. This method is quick and effective, but, as it is significantly noisy, Abzug has to play the role of guard so as not to get caught. Furthermore, cutting a notch is not enough to really disrupt the functioning of the power line. For that reason, Hayduke continues with the sabotage and "using the pliers like a capstan handle, he unscrewed the turnbuckles which kept each

guy anchored to the ground” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 252). Using this technique, the poles tumble without much effort and the power line that makes the machinery of the area work is, thus, interrupted. The intervention of the two activists is successful, the negative relationships between the machines and the land are disrupted through the sabotage, at least, until the power lines are restored. However, this is not a great victory for the environmentalists (and for the environment) because the impact of the action is not as huge as the one of the previous attack. Besides, this time, the exploitation of the area will be slowed down, but it will not be stopped because it is more than probable that the power lines will be re-erected and, after that, the works will continue.

Carrying on with their journey through the desert, the two activists stop in more than one occasion in order to carry out new sabotage acts. Still in Arizona and heading towards the canyons of the south of Utah, Hayduke feels the need of taking charge of some structures that do not belong to the desert. They are signs of the irruption of industrial capitalism in wild nature and they are related to violent interactions with the environment. These constructions are a loading depot and a coal conveyor, thus, both are related to the environmentally-destructive activity of coal mining. Both structures are situated near the railroad, more specifically, near “a galvanized tunnel underneath the Black Mesa & Lake Powell Railroad” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 271). This railroad line is used exclusively to transport coal and it is an extension of the machine-dominated area where the group acted previously. The fact that the construction of this railroad line implied serious environmental damages is accompanied by the fact that it only has to do with the coal mining sector. Therefore, in this case, the exploitation of the desert led to even more exploitation in order to allow economic benefits produced by coal-related energy. The actions carried out by Hayduke (because Abzug does not act due to factors like fatigue and fear) are not described in detail this time and it seems that what the readers know about them coincide with what Abzug sees. What is told about the loading depot is that “they saw the lights of the loading depot burning brightly” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 272), while the coal conveyor is said to be “also moving” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 272). It can be deduced that Hayduke’s aim is to act quickly and effectively and, for that reason, he burns both structures using gasoline. This time, arson appears as more powerful than mere sabotage and, as a consequence of this action, a way for transporting coal is destroyed, as well as a depot containing huge amounts of this material. Thus, a part of the whole process of coal mining is disrupted, even if the

actions do not stop the exploitation these activities bring. Nevertheless, these arsons can mean significant economic losses for companies in addition to a loss of a source of energy.

It seems that after witnessing the consequences of these actions and seemingly trying to escape from the authorities that could lurk in the area, the two activists will cease their activities for a while. Nevertheless, Hayduke has a duty as a protector of the environment and he has to take action against any trace of industrialization in the desert. He makes this duty clear to Abzug by telling her that “Got to finish the job” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 272). The morality of radical environmentalists is made clear again and this shows that the novel is overall permeated by the moral duty of protecting nature. Every time a chance is presented, Hayduke has to do something to defend the environment and stop its exploitation. Furthermore, his words suggest that the two previous actions (carried out by him alone) are not enough to stop the advancement of industrial/capitalist powers. In fact, until exploitation finishes, all actions are needed, they are never enough. Hayduke’s work cannot be left half way, it must be finished. Taking this into account, it is understandable that he “tramped forward – a staunch and unplacated force – toward the clanking apparatus the tough red eyes the armored jaws the tall floodlit and brazen towers of...the Enemy” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 274). Hayduke will not stop until he achieves his objective of defending the desert and his next step for that is destroying some unspecified towers that belong to the powers he is at war with, not to the land. Besides, this character’s impetus to act is reinforced after he “pondered for a moment the oceanic unity of things” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 274) that implies that “we are truly all one” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 274). Being aware of the interrelatedness of all living beings and of these beings and their environment, Hayduke cannot let industrial capitalism violently destroy this unity. As Hayduke is one with the desert, its elements and beings, any damage done to them is also felt by him and letting this union disappear (that is, taking him away from nature and nature away from him) is unthinkable for him. Machines (or any sign of industrialization) that are introduced by force between the relationships of life are alien beings antagonistic to these bonds. In this case, the towers Hayduke will act against stand as signs of the domination of nature, even if their actual use is not told at the beginning; they might be used to directly exploit nature or not but, anyway, they are part of the enemy. The measures taken by Hayduke against the towers are not directly explained, but a newspaper the group reads

in the following chapter tells that a “mysterious explosion blows top off loading and storage towers” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 275). Thus, with the help of some explosives, Hayduke destroys more buildings used to accumulate the enemy’s materials and, consequently, potential economic profits.

The newspapers that the members of the group read give the first accounts of their activities from their enemy’s point of view and summarize the main actions taken by the activists. Among the explanations offered by the newspapers the following are noteworthy: “Coal Train Derailed Second Time” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 275) or “Power line leading to strip mine cut for second consecutive night” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 276). The fact that these sabotages are mentioned in the media is important because this means that their impact has been significant for companies, that is, the work of the activists is being highly precise and effective. However, the most valuable information transmitted by the newspapers is that concerning the economic consequences of the attacks. One of the newspapers informs of the fact that the destruction of a coal conveyor and a dragline excavator meant a “damage estimated at one and a half million dollars” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 276) for the company that owned them. Thus, the fact that the work of the group of protagonists is having important consequences on the powers profiting from the exploitation of the desert is made clear, but Abbey can also suggest that actions like the ones described by the newspapers would definitely have an impact in real life. Despite the fact that the economic losses of companies or governments do not mean the direct preservation and defence of the environment, “sabotage can raise the cost of development projects, discourage developers, and thereby slow or even halt specific projects” (Young 54). What seems the main way of radical environmentalists to disrupt or end the negative relationships of industrial capitalism towards the environment is thus based on economic damage. The contradictions and weaknesses of industrial capitalism somehow favour activists in this aspect and those who rely completely on money are deeply affected by being unable to continue growing if their economic means are damaged. Any attempt at exploiting a specific area certainly means huge investments of money and failing to do it because of radical environmentalists’ intervention can suppose the inability of investing such a quantity again. Therefore, due to actions of sabotage, companies can run out of the money needed and be unable to continue with the exploitation of the environment. Besides, the lack of money can be accompanied by discouragement and both can bring the surrender of the exploiters of

nature. This way, nature, life and the relationships that unite living beings (and their environment) can be defended and preserved to some extent, even though unless the industrial civilization disappears, these will continue being threatened.

Furthermore, in addition to economic losses, sabotage can have another important consequence that is strongly linked to the moral dimension of radical environmentalism. Considering that radical environmental actions are also political statements, the objective of transmitting certain ideas is present in their fulfilment. The political aim of these activists' actions is to produce "a change in a particular company's policies or people's behaviour" (Young 53), so their work is not simply concerned with damaging companies economically. Trying to convey the sense of duty of protecting the environment and the fact that industrial capitalism is so harmful for life on the planet is also part of the work of these activists. Although economic sabotage can sometimes make the direct exploitation of nature stop, a change in people's minds would be much more effective in the struggle for the defence of the environment. Raising awareness and transmitting values that seem correct for the coexistence and development of life forms and their environment would be the true aim of radical environmentalists and this would imply a much more powerful impact than sabotage. This awareness would mean a change of mind of the population leading to the appearance of a new set of ideas regarding the relationships of humans and/over nature and it could bring a kind of restructuring of society's attitudes towards nature. The newspapers read by the group, however, make this change of ideas and behaviour difficult because they play an incredibly important role in creating and transmitting the public image of the activists. These are portrayed as dangerous criminals through statements like "large-scale organized band" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 276) or "wave of vandalism" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 276) and, therefore, instead of joining them to struggle for nature, people will probably fear and hate them. This way, the group's procedures cannot be only based on trying to make people aware of the situation of the desert, thus, they have to continue with their works of sabotage. It is also noteworthy that the newspapers tell there are suspicions about Native Americans, especially due to the fact that the message "Rudolf the Red, Native Avenger" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 275) is found where an act of sabotage has been carried out. Other messages are found making allusion to atrocities committed against natives like their interment in Fort Sumner or the Wounded Knee Massacre. The defence and preservation of the land by environmental activists is a kind of continuation

of the resistance shown by Natives against powers colonizing humans, the land and the union of all beings. In a similar manner, the development of industrial/capitalist powers over nature is a newer form of colonization and oppression, a continuation of the expansion of colonists through the continent and against Natives. Therefore, the activists are engaged in a very old struggle against powers that promote the domination and exploitation of others so as they can grow. Their struggle is a story of resistance to oppression that, at the same time, is a fight to maintain the ancestral bonds that unite humans and the land.

Before undertaking their last actions, the group stops to rest in some elevated point of the desert from which its immensity, canyons and mountains can be appreciated. The positive descriptions of magnificent nature and landscapes are not very present during the moments of contact with industrial and capitalist powers, but in the place where the activists can relax wildness and beauty gain pre-eminence again. The landscape that can be seen through the eyes of Smith is described as follows: “He could see the five peaks of the Henrys – Ellsworth, Holmes, Hillers, Pennell and Ellen – rising behind the maze of the canyons, beyond the sandstone domes and pinnacles of Glen Canyon” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 310). The description gives an idea about the beauty and immensity of the vast land the activists try to defend and emphasizes the varied landscape that is worth preserving, not the image of desolate wasteland that is commonly associated to the desert. This image is the one used by industrial/capitalist powers in order to justify the exploitation, but it is made clear that this wild space is not just piled sand, but mountains, canyons, rivers, plants, animals and, all in all, life. Although this description can have a powerful effect, Smith’s reflection at its sight is even more impressive: “Hell of a place to lose a cow. Hell of a place to lose your heart. Hell of a place, thought Seldom Seen, to lose” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 310). What seems to be a funny reference to the vastness of the desert (when mentioning the cow) ends with thoughts about what a person can feel towards nature and the land. Smith and any other person can fall in love with this unique landscape and, therefore, losing it would mean not only an environmental tragedy, but also a drama for many people. The love Abbey and his characters feel for the desert “is a love that recognizes inherent rather than just instrumental value” (Tagnani 344), unlike industrial and capitalist powers that (needless to say, do not feel love) only see this wild land as resources that can be exploited. The love of the activists for the desert is, thus, a pure and sincere love and the relationship

that develops between them is one of maximum respect and appreciation, without any intention of doing harm. This relationship strongly unites activists and the desert, despite the fact that they still live a highly industrialized society. Said bond can be considered the one that puts humans with their roots more closely in contact, with the land they originally belong to. The disappearance of this place for the profit of a few would provoke a serious heartache to the people who really love the land as it really is, in addition to alienation and uprooting from nature. With such feelings towards nature, it is comprehensible that the activists continue with their struggle to stop the advance of industrial capitalism. Indeed, as Tagnani points out, “such profound intimacy with place would certainly motivate one to protect that place” (344), especially when protecting the place implies protecting the unity between living beings and their environment and the belonging to this network of life.

The last big attack planned by the group before being chased by the authorities, aims at three bridges built in the area of White Canyon. The group sees the need of acting against these bridges previously in the novel, but it is after many other actions that they focus on them. The three bridges are apparently unnecessary and could be even considered an extravaganza of the industrial/capitalist powers. However, it seems that, as a consequence of previous destructions and alterations of the desert, they are needed, at least for companies’ purposes. The justification for the three bridges is given in the following way:

When Glen Canyon Dam plugged the Colorado, the waters backed up over Hite, over the ferry and into thirty miles of canyon upstream from the ferry. The best place to bridge the river (now Lake Powell) was upstream at Narrow Canyon. In order to reach the Narrow Canyon bridge site it was necessary to bridge White Canyon on the east and Dirty Devil Canyon on the west. Thus, three bridges. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 119)

Taking this explanation into account, it is more than evident that the industrial/capitalist intervention in the desert has completely transformed and remodelled the landscape. This so-called progress has changed the hydrography of the area having a serious environmental impact but, in addition to that, three bridges have been built in order to adapt to the alterations already made in the desert, causing even more damage to the environment. Rivers stopped following their natural courses after being manipulated for commercial purposes but the construction of bridges, an apparently not very harmful for

the environment structure, is also a threat for the desert and its life forms. Depending on the type of construction (if it is short or long term), bridges and the roads that are intrinsic to them can cause from “soil erosion and sedimentation, disturbance to fish spawning beds, and water contamination” (Transportation Association of Canada 3) to more serious problems like “changes to riparian habitat, alterations to river morphology and processes, disruption of fish and wildlife migration patterns, pollution from road surface drainage, and noise disturbance” (Transportation Association of Canada 3). So, building these three bridges has meant a significantly negative impact for the land, the water and its living beings, including pollution and disruption of the lifestyles of animals. It is evident, thus, that the apparently most harmless examples of ‘development’ over nature are part of the network of highly destructive relationships of industrial capitalism towards the environment. Therefore, the preservation of the area by the group of activists is not possible because it has already been dramatically changed. Nevertheless, their objective is to reverse this process of ‘development’ and to leave the place as it was before (as much as it is possible). In order to do so, the activists want to blast as many bridges as possible, depending on the quantity of explosives and other materials available to them.

However, as in this area bridges are not the only signs of industrial/capitalist domination of nature, the activists also stop to carry out some actions of a minor scale. As always, the protagonists, especially Hayduke, have to take care of the bulldozers, other trucks and machinery present in the area, considering it is their duty. He gets into a bulldozer and Smith into another one and, after tying them together with some kind of chain, they start driving the machines. Between the two machines there is a tanker truck, a billboard of the Bureau of Land Management (the agency that administers federal lands) and a metal shed. Despite the fact that other objects are more harmful for the environment, the billboard is quite symbolic of the domination of nature because the BLM is the ‘owner’ of innumerable lands throughout the country, although the activists do not agree with this ownership and domination of nature. Indeed, the administration of lands according to the purposes of certain agencies is not approved by those struggling for the liberation of the Earth since it means a continuation of the domination of humans over nature for selfish goals that are more concerned with profits than with life. When the environmentalists start driving the bulldozers, all these objects also start to move. The chain that connects the bulldozers pushes the objects and “the billboard

topples, the shed sways, the truck rolls on its side, as all diminish steadily toward the rim” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 318). Hayduke and Smith jump off before reaching the edge of the canyon and, thus, through a simple procedure that only implies tying the bulldozers and driving them, several machines and objects of the working site end up destroyed and unable to continue damaging the desert.

The repercussions of this action might not seem extremely important because, even if it brings economic losses to their enemies, the bridges that are the main target in the area are already built, which means that the negative impact for the environment has already been caused. Nevertheless, the group realizes that through the action they have just carried out, they really can preserve a big part of the desert nature. Hayduke explains to Abzug that “the Government was clearing hundreds of thousands of acres of juniper forest in the West” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 319) and that they stopped that process through their action. The machines and the method (a big chain tied to the bulldozers) used by Hayduke and Smith were the same that the government was using to clear the forest, that is, to destroy trees and eliminate life in the area. However, after the intervention of the activists, the government loses its means to destroy the trees. By stopping the government’s work, the group prevents the disappearance of innumerable trees that add more life through the desert West and disrupted the violent relationships of domination of nature in an area characterised by its wildness. Such actions of sabotage carried out by radical environmentalists cannot bring industrial civilization down or solve all environmental problems but they are “aimed at keeping industrial civilization out of natural areas and causing industry’s retreat from areas that should be wild” (Foreman, *Ecodefense* 24-25). By destroying the machines and objects of the working site, the protagonists stop the advance of industrial/capitalist powers over the desert so that it can stay as wild as it originally was. This defence of wilderness and criticism of so-called development clearly defies the values of the dominant way of thought of always growing, consuming and dominating other forms of life. Although these ideas are deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness, radical environmentalists consider necessary replacing them with attitudes that would allow the thriving and interconnectedness of all life forms, which is not possible under industrial capitalist domination. Thus, sabotage to keep the industrial civilization away from nature is part of the network of bonds of the protagonists (and of radical environmentalists in general) with nature, bonds that include its protection in order to

achieve a world without human domination of nature. Furthermore, the use of the word 'West' by Hayduke is worth mentioning. It can suggest, in addition to the literal sense meaning west of the country, that the government is trying to destroy the true and wild American West, that is, its greedy work is an insult to the land and to freedom. This preservation of the environment, then, implies damage to their enemies and defence of natural spaces, but symbolically it also implies an attempt at keeping the West uncorrupted by industrial capitalism. So it can be deduced that the apparently small action of the protagonists is highly successful because it stops the advancement of the government and of industrial capitalism into the wild American West.

After these actions, the time for the truly difficult work comes and the group has to focus on the bridges. The idea is at least to blast one bridge and, if there are enough explosives, to continue with the other two. First of all, after the planning is done, Hayduke and Smith prepare the mixture of materials that will enable the explosion. This is explained in a very accurate way and transmits the feeling that, with the appropriate ingredients, anyone could prepare the explosives at home. Among other clarifications, it is worth mentioning that the activists are "mixing their powders, rolling them back and forth in a big closed canister: three parts iron oxide to two parts pulverized aluminum equals thermite. Then the igniting mixture: four parts barium peroxide to one part magnesium powder" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 319). The description of their procedure, including aspects like the composition and the measures, could be considered an invitation to take action and for that reason it is not surprising that, as has already been commented, the novel has been taken as a kind of bible for radical environmentalists. However, the use of explosives in real life (as in the fiction) is an extreme measure taken when all other actions are ineffective, in fact, "explosives, firearms, and other dangerous tools are usually avoided" (Foreman, *Ecodefense* 25). Although it seems that Abbey could be encouraging this practice, a lot of care and preparation is needed (as his characters show), especially to avoid possible harm to human lives, but also because explosives "invite greater scrutiny from law enforcement agencies, repression, and loss of public support" (Foreman, *Ecodefense* 25). Thus, explosives are rarely used due to the fact that they can be dangerous for people near in the area (although extreme care is taken to avoid human presence) and for activists, and because a highly negative image of them can be created and, if caught, the punishment can be much worse. The

preparatory procedures of their work do not seem dangerous or difficult, but, due to the complexity of the action, there is uncertainty about if it will work as they wish.

Once the mixture is done, Hayduke wants to insert the explosives into holes in each arch of the bridge. By destroying the arches, the bridge should tumble and thus, the mission should be accomplished easily. He reaches the holes and puts cartons full of the explosive mixture in them. More specifically, he puts cartons that are as follows: “two thirds full of thermite; on top of the thermite is a two-inch layer of igniter mix” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 322). Theoretically, using these materials the bridge will not only explode. In fact, before the explosion the igniter should cause a fire that would debilitate the arches. Nonetheless, after setting fire to the fuses and waiting for the explosion the group only witnesses “some sputtering and fizzling, some creaking and cracking sounds, (...) accompanied by the splash and kiss of fiery shards dropping into the water below” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 324). The expected explosion does not come and the bridge remains in its place. Some error happened when calculating the exact amount of materials in the mixture and, as a consequence, they are unable to destroy the bridge. Furthermore, with the few materials they have left, they cannot try to blast it again, so in the end they do not destroy any of the three bridges. Although their intention was to blast as many bridges as possible, this attack results in a complete failure because not even one disappears. The failure of this action implies that the bridges and roads that unite them will continue being used. Therefore, vehicles will be constantly present in the area, producing more pollution and enabling further activities to continue with the attacks of the ever-growing industrial capitalism against nature.

The inability to destroy the bridges can be considered a heavy defeat for the group and a victory for their enemy, but in a struggle of these dimensions, winning is not always possible. In addition to the inefficacy of their attack, it is worth mentioning that some people get closer to the place where they are trying to take action. These people are indeed the Search and Rescue Team and, in an attempt to escape from the authorities, the group of activists gets involved in a long chase that puts an end to their activities and to the novel (even if there is also an epilogue in which the story continues). After the chase, in which all group members except Hayduke get caught, the biggest and final attack that the group wanted to carry out becomes impossible. This attack was characterized by its difficulty and complexity and it was aimed at destroying (at least partly) Glen Canyon Dam. The relationship between Abbey and Glen Canyon

Dam has already been pointed out; he considered it an insult and wished its destruction. His hatred and loathing toward the dam was partly due to the fact that the canyon “is the navel of Abbey’s universe – its degradation stands for all human folly and arrogance” (McKibben 13). For him, destroying such a beautiful place that abounded with life was incomprehensible and could not be justified by any benefit that could bring to industrial civilization. The construction of the dam symbolised all negative aspects of humanity and of its wish to endlessly expand at the expense of nature and other life forms and implied the violent rupture of bonds that united humans and the desert. The destruction of Glen Canyon through the construction of the dam meant an environmental (and personal) catastrophe for Abbey and for that reason, it is not surprising that his characters’ final attack was to be against this huge structure. All the machines and structures aimed at the exploitation of the desert that have been commented and, especially, Glen Canyon Dam, are targets for the protagonists but for Abbey they are also “symptoms of the “madness”, the “insanity”, the “monster” that is “Industrial Civilization”” (McKibben 5). Industrial civilization, which can only relate to nature and the environment in highly destructive terms, is an insane power that tries to take humans away from nature and Glen Canyon Dam is only one of the terrible manifestations of this power, which threatens to eliminate the bonds that unite living beings and the desert. Thus, although the destruction of the dam does not happen in the novel, its totally evil nature is emphasized and the need of eliminating it is made evident.

The beauty and grandiosity of Glen Canyon is not expressed in the novel as Abbey thought about it, because its image is obscured by the horrifying shadow of the dam. However, in the speech he gave about Glen Canyon Dam in 1981, he described the landscape previous to the arrival of industrial/capitalist powers in a magnificent way. The words he uttered in the speech seem necessary to understand the protagonists’ ideas in the novel, but, especially, to comprehend Abbey’s perception of what was a unique natural space. Among many other things Abbey expressed that few people had the privilege of knowing and enjoying the canyon and that the dam deprived the world of the following:

The living flowing river, with its riffles and minor rapids (...) In and along the river were sandbars, beaches, willow groves and glades of cottonwood, and the innumerable grottoes, caves, arches, amphitheatres, coves, [and] side canyons along the way so aptly named by Powell and his men: Cathedral in the Desert, Music Temple, Hidden Passage, Dungeon Canyon, Forbidden Canyon (...) Everything was full of life – not only deer and lion but also fox, beaver, coyote,

bighorn (...) Plus the ancient human history of the canyon (...) All this plus the sweetness and adventure and wonder of unspoiled wilderness. All this and much, much more. ("Remarks" 3-4)

Considering this, it seems obvious that Glen Canyon was not only rock and water, as it could be thought without previous knowledge of the place. It was a place full of fauna, flora, natural elements and structures, history, amusement and wilderness in the words of Abbey. Thus, the destruction of such a wild and unique space is presented as an offense to nature and the world and the wish of the protagonists to make the area as it was before is more than comprehensible. Their wish to destroy the dam seems even more justified if the Glen Canyon described by Abbey in his speech is compared to the situation in the novel: "What was once a mighty river. Now a ghost. Spirits of sea gulls and pelicans wing above the desiccated delta" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 2). The dam killed the river that flowed through Glen Canyon and now only death reigns in the area. Furthermore, as Smith points out in the novel, filling up the dam would bring even more negative consequences apart from deaths and the transformation/destruction already done in the area. The loss of everything mentioned by Abbey in his speech (and of the bonds that united humans and the desert) would be followed by the fact that "water it's gonna flood more canyons, suffocate more trees, drown more deer and generally ruin the neighborhood" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 157). Therefore, filling the dam would continue ruining the desert and killing its living beings. These dramatic repercussions, produced by the government's intentions of 'development,' would completely alter the natural course of the desert (which has already been quite transformed). For that reason, the group of activists wanted to take action against the dam, despite the fact that in the end acting became impossible.

Although the group did not have a clear idea of how to destroy Glen Canyon Dam (due to its huge size and hardness) they had some thoughts in mind. First of all, and not even considered a real plan, Smith asks God "one little *pre-cision* earthquake" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 158) despite the fact that it only functions to shock the people around him. The specific earthquake Smith asks for would leave the place as it was before industrial/capitalist intervention and, especially, before the construction of the dam, as the use of the word '*pre-cision*' makes clear. As the dam is already built, the only way of leaving the place as it was before is destroying it, but in the end, as God does not seem willing to cooperate, the activists are the ones that have to continue thinking about

how to take action. The next idea that comes to their minds is to infiltrate the dam and act as normal workers inside of it. Using dynamite to blast it from within would be the next step, but they soon realize that it will not work because there are many guards and ID confirmations. Besides, as Smith points out, “one little satchel of dynamite ain’t gonna do much good” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 158), making clear that a much bigger amount of explosives would be needed to really damage the dam and somehow reverse its effects. Thus, the second idea they have to destroy Glen Canyon Dam is put aside and it results as inefficient as the wished earthquake. Their final thoughts about what was supposed to be their definitive action imply a complexity of work not seen in any of their other actions, in addition to incredible amounts of money to buy the required materials. In order to fulfil Smith’s plan, what they need is “about three-four jumbo-size houseboats, the kind millionaires use” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 159), so the necessity of really high investments (of money they do not have) to carry out the action is evident. With the houseboats in their hands, the plan would be to “pack them full of fertilizer and diesel fuel” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 159), drive them so it looks natural (because they want to do it during the day) and make them sink near the base of the dam. Finally, what they would do so as the plan results a complete success is to “connect up the wire from all the houseboats to an electric blaster and we set off the charge” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 159). Through this procedure, the exploding houseboats would destroy the base of Glen Canyon Dam and it would tumble. It would be possible to open a huge crack in the dam and the water would flow freely as it did before the construction of the immense structure and thus, the domination of the desert waters would be reversed. Apparently, the plan would have an immediate and successful effect. However, as the activists do not have much faith in it, especially due to the economic inability to obtain the houseboats, their view of destroying the dam through this method seems rather utopian.

The fulfilment of this complex plan would not only mean the destruction of the construction most hated by Abbey, but the protagonists would also be able to say the following: “welcome back Glen Canyon and the old Colorady River” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 159). The elimination of this human-made structure would suppose the liberation from industrial/capitalist oppression and the recovery of two natural spaces that are part of the desert of the Southwest of the United States. Glen Canyon would recover the form it had before the flood. Likewise, the Colorado River would flow freely following its natural course and, therefore, life would thrive again in the area.

Taking into consideration Abbey's mentioned words about Glen Canyon, it can be thought that the action would bring wildness and beauty to a unique area of the desert that has been corrupted and exploited for the profit of a few. Nevertheless, as it has been said, the destruction of the dam is only a plan and most of the group members are caught even before trying to take action. Thus, the recovery of a part of the desert is made impossible and the environmental impact of the dam, sign of so-called development and of the industrial-capitalist domination of nature, is ineffaceable.

In addition to the many actions carried out by the group of protagonists, there is also another particularly important attack against the powers profiting from the exploitation of the desert, whose originators are unknown. The action aims at a bridge in Glen Canyon, that is, another sign of the domination of this place, so loved by Abbey. In the chronological order of the novel, the action is carried out at some point between the arrest of the group members and the epilogue, but it appears in the chapter that functions as prologue. When Hayduke decides to reunite with the rest of the group after these are freed, the unknown nature of this attack is made evident through the following conversation between Hayduke himself and Dr Sarvis:

“Good old Doc. Say, that was a nice job you and Seldom did on that bridge.”
“What are you talking about?” “No? I mean the Glen Canyon bridge.” “That wasn't us. We were right here that day. We have witnesses to prove it.” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 420)

None of the two activists know who acted against Glen Canyon bridge, which means that more people are working for the defence and preservation of the desert. What is more, these people are using the same (or similar) direct action methods used by the group of protagonists and they are being effective in their works. Besides, the fact that no contact exists between the protagonists and the other activists makes evident that, due to the critical situation of the desert nature and wilderness, ideas about the defence of the environment that were latent until that moment have led to direct action. The inability of making the situation of the desert better by legal means has provoked the same reaction of the protagonists in other people. Thus, actual contact between all the activists was not needed because the idea of defending the desert through direct action was present in people's minds as the solution to stop environmental exploitation. Potter mentions the importance of this idea through the words of an anonymous communiqué, which states the following: “The government and the industries it represents hate us so

much because no matter who they surveil, raid, defame or imprison, they cannot kill the idea and so they cannot stop us” (157). The idea of protecting the environment through actions against industrial/capitalist powers cannot be killed in a moment in which nature is so dramatically exploited and dominated and environmental problems threaten life on the planet. With the imprisonment of most of the group members, the idea of defending the desert through direct action does not disappear. Although the protagonists might be pioneers in taking a radical approach to environmentalism, more people join their struggle and continue with their work even if these have been arrested. Therefore, the four protagonists are definitely not alone in their struggle, they gain allies and the liberation of the desert seems more attainable. In the novel, as in real life, the wish to protect nature and the bonds that unite humans with it exists in people’s minds and this wish comes to action in an extreme situation in which the destruction of the environment can become irreversible. Therefore, activists might be arrested, but the idea will stay alive, making the direct defence of nature unstoppable.

The location of the bridge attacked by the unknown activists is described without paying much attention to the surrounding landscape; the fact that it is built on Glen Canyon is what really matters. In this case, the significance is given to the bridge itself and to the offence its exact location means: it is a further assault against Glen Canyon. It is explained that the bridge is “four hundred feet long, it spans a gorge seven hundred feet deep: Glen Canyon” (Abbey, *The Monkey 2*). The significant length of the bridge is mentioned along with the breathtaking depth of the canyon and the magnificence of this natural space is spoiled by another unnecessary construction. Moreover, more is told about the domination of the river below the bridge through the following words: “flowing through the bottom of the gorge is the tame and domesticated Colorado River, released from the bowels of the adjacent Glen Canyon Dam” (Abbey, *The Monkey 2*). Glen Canyon Dam, Abbey’s and his characters’ enemy and target, seems a monster made of concrete that has swallowed, trapped and imprisoned the Colorado River. Product of the insane industrial capitalist civilization, this structure domesticated the river and its ability to follow its natural course disappeared. The bridge is just another form of perpetuating the domination and colonization of the desert nature and, especially, a further agent in the elimination of the wilderness of Glen Canyon. Taking this into account, the destruction of the bridge can be considered an attempt at partly liberating the canyon and the river. Besides, it is an action with a huge symbolic power

because it is the first action to liberate Glen Canyon and it can establish a path that can ultimately lead to the destruction of the dam, which is, for Abbey, the token of the domination of the desert of the American Southwest.

Focusing on the attack, it is worth mentioning that it is carried out during the public inauguration of the bridge, which implies, first of all, that lots of people (civilians, politicians, etc.) are present in the act. Unlike the group of protagonists, these unknown activists decide to act during the day and with the probability of endangering the lives of people, although no one gets hurt. This can show evident differences between their working procedures, but it has to be considered that an action during a public act can have significant social repercussions (possible changes in people's minds) and the aim of transmitting a certain message. Furthermore, the presence of so many people could suppose some advantages for the activists, for example, the ability of hiding among the crowd or the element of surprise. Nevertheless, the most important reason for acting in that moment is to avoid the circulation of vehicles, because once these start filling that area of the desert taking action would become more difficult. In that respect, carrying out the action during its inauguration can be considered a measure of protecting human lives (instead of threatening them) because, in addition to the absence of cars, the length of the bridge allows an attack without endangering those in the two ends of the structure. As Hayduke told Dr Sarvis, the action of the unknown activists is a good job. In fact, it is a complete success because the destruction of the bridge means a failure of their enemies' plans of making new routes in the desert in addition to serious economic losses.

In terms of their working procedures, very little information is given, especially due to the fact that the originators of the attack are unknown. By putting the focus on a man who seemingly works for the inauguration, it is suggested that he is one of the activists that destroy the bridge. It is said that "a workman dashes from among the onlookers, scuttles to the barrier ribbon and makes some kind of slight but doubtless important last-minute adjustment" (Abbey, *The Monkey* 4). This final adjustment is probably aimed at the destruction of the bridge, instead of at the ceremony of inauguration. Even if it remains unclear if he is really a worker or an activist who pretends to be one so as not to raise suspicions, he is, most likely, the latter. In order to destroy the bridge, the means used are some unspecified explosives. These are hidden among the numerous fireworks placed for the inauguration of the structure, so as no one can realize they are there, and

when the time of maximum expectation comes, they are detonated. The explosives are powerful and the impact of the explosion is huge, as the following description suggests:

The center of the bridge rose up, as if punched from beneath, and broke in two along a jagged zigzag line. Through this absurd fissure, crooked as lightning, a sheet of red flame streamed skyward, followed at once by the sound of a great cough, a thunderous shuddering high-explosive cough that shook the monolithic sandstone of the canyon walls. (Abbey, *The Monkey* 5)

The abrupt fracture of the bridge, the huge flame caused by the explosion, and the loud noise it produced can be taken as evidence of the power and effectiveness of this attack. In spite of the riskiness of the action, there are no victims (no one is even harmed) and as the human-made structure ends up completely destroyed, the attack can be considered a triumph in the struggle against industrial/capitalist development over nature. The disappearance of that bridge does not bring the liberation of the desert, not even the liberation of Glen Canyon. However, the conversation between some politicians in the end of the prologue suggests that the activists are in the way of winning an important part of the struggle. These men talk about the actions of the activists and about catching them and when one tells another about the radical environmentalists' next target there seems to be an opportunity to save the desert. Their conversation develops as follows: ““And just what the hell are they planning next?” “You won’t believe me” (...) “The dam?” “Yes sir” “Not the dam” “Yes sir, we have reason to think so” “Not Glen Canyon Dam!”” (Abbey, *The Monkey* 6-7). The unknown activists' next action is supposed to be against Glen Canyon Dam, Abbey's and his characters' ultimate target, their worst enemy and symbol of industrial capitalist domination of the desert. The destruction of the dam does not appear in the novel, but the possibility of it happening clearly represents Abbey's wish to recover a beloved natural space already lost. The union of Abbey with Glen Canyon was so strong that its loss meant also the loss of a part of him. Recovering the canyon and the bonds that united him with it was a life-goal that could never be achieved during his lifetime. Although his dream of seeing the dam destroyed and the canyon and all its life recovered does not become reality in the fiction of the novel, a strong feeling of hope is transmitted. Considering the impact *The Monkey Wrench Gang* had on radical environmentalism, Abbey's feeling of hope might bring, at some point, the fulfilment of

his dream in real life and, therefore, the process of liberation of the desert and of the true and wild West.

7. *Hayduke Lives!* (1990)

7.1. Introduction to *Hayduke Lives!* (1990)

The sequel to *The Monkey Wrench Gang* was written in 1989 (the year Abbey died) and published in 1990, after the author's death, without being completely revised. The actions of the novel are set some years after those of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* but the protagonists are still the activists of the previous novel. During all these years, Hayduke continues engaging in radical environmental actions, while the rest of the group members live their lives outside this struggle. After several years of inactivity, Sarvis, Abzug and Smith decide to take up their old ways because a new enemy threatens the desert of the American West: the world's hugest walking dragline excavator, known as Goliath. Despite the fact that many other actions are depicted through the novel, the main objective of the protagonists in *Hayduke Lives!* is to eliminate Goliath, an incredibly destructive machine. In this respect, Abbey does not focus on the sabotage of machinery or other signs of industrial capitalism the way he did in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. Although procedures of some of the actions are explained, less attention is paid to sabotages through the novel; the destruction of Goliath is, for Abbey, the event that really deserves to be thoroughly detailed. The struggle to protect the desert environment and its forms of life continues in this sequel and Abbey includes new methods for this defence. This is mainly due to the fact that all means are considered by the protagonists, especially by Hayduke, to stop the exploitation of the desert (including infiltration or explosives), but also because new activists join the struggle. In addition to the four protagonists, the activists in this work include the mysterious man that appeared in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* to give advice to Hayduke. Besides, Erika (a Norwegian environmentalist who wants to protect the desert West), Dave Foreman (the real-life member and co-founder of *Earth First!*) and many more people who oppose the advance of industrial capitalism at the expense of nature and life also take part in the development of the story. In addition to that, the novel focuses on different aspects apart from environmental exploitation and radical activism. For example, on the relationships

between Bishop Love and Ranger Dick (authorities that oppose environmental activism) and on the investigations of the FBI.

As in the case of its predecessor, *Hayduke Lives!* also displays Abbey's nature writing although, arguably, to a lesser extent than in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. This does not mean that nature writing is, in any way, absent from the novel. Abbey continues describing the beauty, uniqueness and magnificence of the desert of the American West while paying attention to the relationships that develop between humans and their natural environment. The desert is, once again, a driving force and a unifying element in the novel. On the one hand, the bonds that unite humans and the desert and, on the other hand, the destruction of nature and of these bonds propel all the radical environmental actions. These actions are another kind of relationship resulting from the extreme attitudes of the industrial capitalism towards nature. In *Hayduke Lives!* Abbey continues portraying a full of beauty and life, modern American West, which is threatened by so-called progress and the wish for endless growth. Unless radical environmentalists act, the wild West will cease to be characterised by untamed beauty and life and it will become another space for lifelessness, pollution and the industrial domination of living beings. Thus, the novel offers two possible perspectives of the American West and of its future. Abbey's choice is the wild land where all living beings (including humans) can live freely and be part of a whole. However, as the reality of the late 20th century offered a different panorama, the novel is also concerned with the environmental exploitation of the West and Abbey deals with topics such as nuclear energy and overgrazing, which highly endanger the place the author was in love with.

7.2. Nature and the Environment in *Hayduke Lives!* (1990)

The appreciation and love for the nature of the American Southwest is again a fundamental part of Abbey's writing and the novel would lose its cohesion and overall effect without the indispensable presence of the desert. The landscape and the environment of the West are as important as the actions and the characters and the desert is the agent that gives a meaning and a sense to the story. The catalyst of all the events are the one-way destructive relationships of industrial/capitalist powers towards the desert. Therefore, as in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, the will to protect the threatened land is key for the development of actions and relationships. The desert and all it represents can, thus, be considered the very essence of the novel. Abbey commences *Hayduke Lives!* writing about nature and one of the first significant descriptions of the desert tells the following:

A molten sun bulges above the eastern canyon wall (...) Wall pink like sliced watermelon, right-angled verticality, rising one hundred feet above the graygreen talus of broken rock, scrub juniper, blackbrush, scarlet gilia, purple pestemon, golden prince's plume. It is the season of spring in the mile-high tablelands of the canyon country. In America the still Beautiful. (*Hayduke* 4)

The fragment is an example of Abbey's characteristic nature writing and it follows the formula of the extracts analysed when dealing with *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. This description of a canyon in the springtime shows the magnificence and splendour of the natural formations of the desert. These are accompanied by the sun, which seems an inseparable companion of this landscape. The presence of several types of plants adds life and variety to the huge and impressive canyon, which makes the beauty of that natural space evident. In fact, the author's intention in this fragment is to show the beauty of the wild America while it still possesses these features. The threat of industrial/capitalist powers is still around until industrial civilization disappears. So, the canyon described is an example of all the still wild and beautiful spaces not transformed or exploited by these powers. Showing the features of the areas belonging to the true West in their original state seems a way of making a clear distinction between these and industrial civilization from the very beginning of the novel. Thus, Abbey defends, from

the start, that true beauty is only possible in wilderness and that the intervention of industrial capitalism would give place to what he might call ‘America the Ugly.’

The evil nature (the anti-nature) of industrial capitalism appears at the start of the novel in the form of the giant dragline excavator Goliath. It interferes violently with the development of life in the desert and the first example of nature writing (even before the fragment above) in *Hayduke Lives!* is related to an animal and Goliath. Abbey starts the novel dedicating some words to an ancient inhabitant of the desert, the desert tortoise. The first lines of the novel explain the following:

Old man turtle ambles along the deerpath, seeking breakfast. A strand of wild ricegrass dangles from his pincer-like beak (...) He walks on long leathery legs, fully extended from the walnut-colored hump of shell, the ventral skid-plate clear of the sand (...) He has fathered many children and will beget more. Maybe. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 3)

The first example of nature writing in the novel is dedicated to an animal species unique to the desert West (not unique to the USA because it can also be found in northern Mexico). Abbey, through the words of the unspecified narrator, expresses his respect and admiration for one of the true inhabitants that belong to the wild West. In the passage, the movement through the desert of this animal in search of nourishment is explained. The physical features of the tortoise (beak, shell, etc.) are described while the reptile is in its natural and wild state, moving in search of food. Furthermore, the fact that the animal has fathered many other tortoises is mentioned and, considering that it is a threatened species, this is a good sign of the continuation of life in the desert. The tortoise lives as another part of the whole desert environment and interacts with other forms of life, for example, the ricegrass that feeds it, in a natural way. Thus, this animal is a symbol of the wilderness of the true West even though it is only one of the many life forms that can be found in the land Abbey loved so much. Nevertheless, suddenly, the life of the animal and the natural processes that unite it with the environment are abruptly disrupted by the irruption of Goliath. The tortoise is buried with the march of the machine and it leaves a dramatic path of desolation. In the end of the novel, with the destruction of Goliath, the tortoise will reappear from the ground making clear that it is the true inhabitant of the desert, not industrial/capitalist powers.

The real-life situation of the desert tortoise is quite delicate because it is a threatened species, so the fact of talking about this animal is quite illustrative of the dangers industrial civilization imply for the desert nature. “The habitat of the tortoises has largely disappeared into a checkerboard of agriculture, developments, and military uses, and off-road vehicles and cows degrade what territory remains” (Solnit 70), so various practices and sectors contribute to the critical situation of this animal. The industrial civilization, either through overgrazing, military uses like bomb testing or many other practices destroys the desert environment and, in this case, the habitats of the tortoise, which implies the deaths of these animals and the inability to continue living as they used to do. Obviously, industrial capitalism, whose existence is intrinsic to the destruction and exploitation of nature, does not only destroy desert habitats and threaten tortoises. In fact, as Manes explains, “species fallout is expected to rise dramatically as plant and animal populations are forced onto dwindling islands of habitat in a sea of human industrial and agricultural development” (25). The advance of industrial civilization means the reduction, not only of wild spaces, but of natural spaces and habitats in general. The disappearance of habitats inevitably leads to the deaths of innumerable numbers of animals and plants and, ultimately, of whole species. The insatiable desire of continuing growing, developing and obtaining profits proves to be an insane set of values and ideas and, as a consequence of it, “we may lose one-third of all species in the next 20 years because of multinational greed” (Foreman, *Defending the Earth* 52). The dragline excavator, Goliath, represents all the folly of industrial civilization and it stands for the values of destroying life and the environment in order to bring ‘progress’ and economic benefits to the desert. Thus, in the two first fragments of *Hayduke Lives!* that have been mentioned, Abbey depicts spaces and species that are incredibly endangered by industrial/capitalist powers. Since the beginning of the work, he makes clear that unless these powers are stopped, the wild environment of the West and all its life will cease to exist as they always did.

The importance of the desert itself and of its formations, elements and forms of life is evident due to the fact that without them, the novel would lose all its sense and meaning. As in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, the desert can be considered another agent or character of the novel and the narrator can push his characters into the background of the events in order to focus completely on the land that surrounds them. The desert takes predominance over characters and actions during some passages, because, even if

actions are happening, the very land, as the essence and driving force of events, is incredibly important all the time. The fact of writing about nature while some action is going on, gives an account of its significance because, while other humans could take the place of the characters, the desert is irreplaceable. There can be many environmentalists trying to defend it, but the wild desert of the American West is one of a kind. The following fragment clearly exemplifies the change of focus from a character to the desert:

Far off in silhouette against an evening sky, dark figure running across a field of gold, a flush of gashed vermillion, the flaring fanned-out rays of setting sun peering for one final moment, under a reef of purple clouds, into the slickrock desert, over the rippled sea of golden lifeless petrified dunes of sand. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 69)

A man seems to be escaping from someone or something but, instead of focusing on the reasons of the chase or on the agents involved in it, the beauty of the desert in the sunset is described. Considering this description, it could be thought that if the man was not in danger, he would feel privileged for the landscape that surrounds him. Darkness and light, earth and sky make one in this passage, where vivid colours stand out. Golden and vermillion spread through the desert making it come together with the sky. Although the dunes might have no life, the brightness and uniqueness of the sight makes them more precious than anything attainable through money. Furthermore, the desert landscape is somehow compared to that of the sea. It is a sea resulting from a unification: the purple reefs are high in the sky and the dunes are like waves. Although the desert and the sea might seem different environments, both are wild, dangerous and hide life and secrets in them. Both are examples of wild nature and, as “the oceanic and the terrestrial are intertwined in the depths of our understanding” (Yamashiro 2), meaningful comparisons can be made between them. The sea and the desert are examples of the wilderness that have not been totally tamed by industrial/capitalist powers, even though both have suffered their consequences. Indeed, it can be said that the seas and its forms of life are also “being slaughtered by the terrestrial interests of industrially driven humans” (Yamashiro 2), which means that deaths or the pollution caused by the industrial civilization make no distinctions and attack all environments. The toughness, beauty and mystery of both environments can easily attract a person like Abbey, because, despite the fact that he was in love with the desert of the American Southwest, both are

nature in its purest and wildest form. Thus, the comparison made shows the author's fascination for the charm of the wilderness in all its forms.

The landscape of the American West, which is also formed by the sky, stars and elements that are, at the same time, incredibly far and right above the desert, exerts a notable fascination on Abbey. His feelings are the result of experiences in close contact with the desert and these are sometimes captured when he writes about nature. In the following description, elements of the desert sky become symbols for Abbey's own feelings, making evident how deep the bonds between the writer and the environment of the West were:

The new moon, signal of hope, glowed in the western sky. Quite near, almost within the moon's embrace, hung Venus planet of love, rare as radium pure as platinum more precious than gold. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 71)

First of all, it can be said that elements that are out of the planet are considered an intrinsic part of the landscape of the West, making the unification of earth and sky clearer than ever. Besides, in spite of the obvious distance between elements in the space, for Abbey, they are not far and he feels their presence in a powerful way. He feels the moon and Venus so close to him that they come to symbolize his sentiments. The moon over the West is a symbol of hope; a hope of liberating the desert and preserving wilderness. The new moon signifies a renewal, which, for Abbey, would come with the end of industrial/capitalist expansion in the desert. The new beginning of the lunar cycle is a sign of Abbey's hope, a sign that the tide might be turning and that the situation of the desert can improve. In addition to that, Abbey contemplates the beauty of Venus, which is also part of the landscape that captivates him. This planet symbolizes the love Abbey feels for the environment that surrounds him and, even though he is more in love with the Earth, his experiences and connections with the realities outside industrial civilization seem to transcend the desert and, even, the planet. Thus, some of the links that connect Abbey with the environment are also cosmic and somehow mystical. In fact, his love for the West can also be due to the fact that "his experiences are marked by the typical mystical characteristics of union and profound love" (Tagnani 336). His union with the desert and the cosmos is a way of experiencing the primordial links that exist between humans and the reality that surrounds them. Furthermore, this mystical and spiritual connection is related to a deep and true love,

which is not possible within the industrial civilization. Abbey's mystical love towards the desert leads to a state of equilibrium and spiritual perfection that industrial capitalism eliminates. The belonging to the network of interrelatedness, to the cosmos, to a whole, gives Abbey a place within existence, unlike industrial civilization, which makes people alien in a world to which they originally belong to.

As in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, Abbey dedicates most of his nature writing to the desert of the American Southwest. However, this is not the only natural space that is described magnificently and in detail. Abbey's appreciation and fascination for the wild nature of the West is made evident by his love for the desert, but this love also extends to other areas and spaces. The following fragment is dedicated to the snowy mountains of the Kaibab National Forest, a place that, in spite of being surrounded by the desert, is characterised by its vegetation and greenness:

They cruised under the trees on a thin frozen crust of snow (...) The rare early summer snow, glittering like glass in the sunlight, blue as pale phlox in the shadows, lay a foot beneath them (...) The air was clear as crystal, the sky unclouded, the sun fierce and pure, the stillness unflawed by any sound. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 127)

Despite the fact that this landscape is part of a National Forest, it seems a truly wild space untouched by humans, except by the characters moving through the trees. Having an 'island' of trees and snow in the desert West, seems a unique phenomenon of this wild land and its beauty is presented as something mesmerizing. Witnessing and enjoying the layer of snow that covers the ground is a kind of privilege for the characters, especially considering that it is summer. This fact shows the many pleasant surprises the nature of the West can offer. The sight is characterised by brightness; the snow shines thanks to the sunlight, but where the sun is not present, it acquires the colour of flowers, which makes dark and illuminated spaces equally beautiful. The whole atmosphere is clean and pure. There is no pollution because human/industrial activity seems to be absent from the area and breathing that air could be even considered enjoyable. Besides, the tranquillity of the place is not interrupted by noises, especially by noises of machines. The description of the place is very idyllic and it shows the variety and uniqueness of the landscapes of the West. Abbey was not obsessed by the desert, but he admired all the natural and wild spaces and the

connections that could be established with all these environments, were incredibly rich and meaningful for him.

Abbey's nature writing does not only deal with descriptions of landscapes, as the analysis of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* has proven, and the relationships that develop between the characters and the environment of the West are also quite remarkable in *Hayduke Lives!* After being released from their imprisonment, Sarvis, Abzug and Smith are absent from radical environmental activities, but, again, in close contact with the desert, they feel a kind of 'call of the wild' that makes them re-join the struggle. The return of each activist is marked by a different experience in the desert that is linked to the strong bonds that unite them with the nature of the West. Bonnie Abzug is the first of the protagonists to go back to the desert and decide to re-engage in its active protection. Among Abzug's passages in the desert the following is worth mentioning:

Deep in the outback back of beyond, far into the hoodoo land of naked stone she walked, she walked, she walked and walked. The noon sun blazed down from a semi-clouded sky and there was no wind, no trace of breeze. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 155)

The fragment transmits the feeling that Abzug leaves the city and its way of life to get immersed into the depths of wilderness. She seems to enter a faraway and magic land where the constraints of industrial civilization are left behind. Despite the menacing characteristics of the desert, with its scorching sun and lack of wind, she goes deeper into the wild land she feels so attached to. Abzug walks and walks as if it was an activity done for the first time in a very long time. In fact, the city life and the fact of walking surrounded by concrete and machines could hardly offer her a pleasant walk. However, in the desert, she is able to walk naturally and without limitations through a wild and extensive land that can seem endless for the human eye. Thus, she recovers experiences lost during her long stay inside of the industrial society. As Menrisky explains, "the free human, for Abbey, is a walking, experiencing creature, who does not rely on any form of technocratic mediation between self and world" (61). Abzug, in reunion with the desert, perfectly fits in with that definition of free human. She recovers a freedom lost due to an estrangement from nature and, considering the importance of the concept of freedom for Abbey, her return to the desert can be considered a new awakening. The ability of moving and acting freely through the land without impositions or hierarchies is highly significant for Abbey's conception of the wild West.

Nevertheless, the capacity of experiencing the desert and being in direct connection with it is what really gives Abbzug freedom. Unlike within industrial civilization, in this wild land, she can establish direct relationships with the environment and experience her interrelatedness with the desert without the artificial interference of technology and machines. Thus, the importance of her return to wilderness lies on a freedom based on the ability to be in close, direct and pure contact with the environment. Her freedom means being one with the desert without industrial civilization disrupting these bonds of union.

The next protagonist returning to the desert is Dr Sarvis and his experiences there are quite illustrative of the relationships that exist between humans and the natural environment. His life within industrial society has produced him “physical, mental, moral and nervous exhaustion” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 167) and, for that reason, he decides to go back to the desert in search of “open space, clean air, stillness, solitude and spiritual renewal” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 167). The industrial civilization, which eliminates the bonds that connect humans to nature, has led Dr Sarvis to a terrible state characterised by uneasiness and unnatural pressures, partly due to the disruption of said bonds. In the desert, an extensive and unpolluted place that clearly contrasts with the city, he hopes to find peace, tranquillity and a spiritual connection with the land that was lost to a certain extent. He is aware of the positive consequences his return to the desert and reunion with the land bring him because, in spite of being absent from the struggle to protect the desert, he knows that industrial capitalism is opposite to life and positive relationships between living beings. He gets immersed into a wild land other people consider uninhabited, but he is delighted by the knowledge that this is not true. Among many other inhabitants, he is surrounded by “pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep, mule deer, wild horses, desert tortoise, mountain lion, black bear, coyote, fox and badger” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 169), so he somehow becomes another wild animal of the West. Dr Sarvis is surrounded by many other living beings, but he finds the lone tranquillity he was looking for. Besides, his return to the desert gives him a “sense of an ancient freedom now recovered” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 169), which emphasizes Abbey’s idea of the connection between wild nature and freedom. The sense of freedom Dr Sarvis feels when being again in close contact with the desert is a quite old and, even, primordial one, as if it would imply a return to a wild state like that of the animals of the West. Industrial capitalism deceitfully promotes freedom and “capital is thus defined as

a source of freedom, but this freedom is based on the denial of freedom to the land” (Shiva, *GATT* 243). Industrial capitalism offers a fake freedom after denying humans the true freedom of the land, but Dr Sarvis, leaving aside the city, returns to the desert and recovers the liberty and the bonds with it. Thus, going back to the land he fiercely tried to defend previously means a re-connection with nature in significant terms. On the one hand, there is the spiritual renewal brought by the desert and, on the other hand, the old freedom it offered. Therefore, the escape from the industrial society makes Sarvis belong to the network of natural relationships again.

Seldom Seen Smith, the last of the protagonists returning to the wild (because Hayduke never left it), re-establishes connections with the desert in a very significant way, but, like the rest of the characters, leaving industrial civilization behind. This measure is necessary for all of them due to the fact that, within industrial society, being in truly close contact with nature is not possible. In his comeback, moving through a canyon, Smith explores a big cave “under the rim, its roof a royal arch formed by ancient conchoidal fractures” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 174). The cave is a huge and impressive space but the most important fact for Smith is the presence of water. There is a spring of water and even more of this liquid drips from the rocks and walls. He thinks about the manipulated and polluted water that can be found in the city and drinks from the cave. Drinking directly from a natural source, having water of the wild West entering his body, is the “simplest of ceremonies, sweetest of rites, in the land of stone and sun” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 177). An action that within the industrial society can seem quotidian and meaningless becomes incredibly spiritual and almost magical in the desert. The ritualistic nature of Smith’s connection with the water of the cave suggests a spiritual bond recovered after a long time. “For all his hostility to religion, Abbey has a spiritual, indeed mystical, vision” (Channell Hilfer 268) of the desert wilderness, as can be seen in the experiences of both Sarvis and Smith. Although he despised organized religion, Abbey considered that spiritual relationships could be established between humans and their environment (land, nature, other beings, etc.), as ancient peoples previous to the development of the industrial civilization did. Such relationships put humans in close contact with nature and gave their existence a meaning within the network of life. In a very personal level for Abbey, it is worth mentioning that “encounters with the desert and writing about them (...) brought spiritual awakenings that were antidotes to his despair” (McClintock 67). So, the desert could be a kind of sanctuary in Abbey’s life: a

place to develop his spiritual life and connections far from the despairing industrial society. Moreover, his love for the desert can also be understood related to this spirituality. According to the author James I. McClintock, “the essentials of Abbey’s spiritual insight are that love, light, and joy are possible” (67), which suggests that spiritual relationships with the desert are linked to the love and happiness that developed inside of him while being far from the darkness of industrial capitalism. Therefore, the destruction of the desert of the American West would imply the elimination of spiritual bonds that unite humans and nature. It would imply an environmental catastrophe but also the perdition for people like Abbey and his characters, because, out of the natural world, they would be forced to the industrial society in which the spiritual life seems so poor, fake and meaningless.

The mentioned passage of water sweetly entering Smith’s body and, overall, Abbey’s love for the desert, can suggest another kind of relationship between humans and the environment, in addition to a spiritual bond. Literary critic Jim Harrison would even argue that Abbey “writes about the Southwest with an almost sexual intimacy” (2), although his love for the desert does not necessarily imply a sexual attraction. Affection and closeness are part of the strong bonds developed between Abbey and the environment of the West, but a direct sexual drive towards the desert seems rather unthinkable. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Abbey’s and his characters relationships with the desert are not characterised by sexual desire or domination, certain libidinal bonds exist in the network of relationships that link humans and nature. What really matters when talking about Abbey and these bonds is the fact that “by acknowledging our libidinal grounding in the cycles of nature, we begin to talk sense about security and sustainability” (Salleh 216-217). Among the many relationships that exist between humans and nature, these libidinal bonds in which humans are rooted are very significant in relation to the protection of the environment. Abbey, his characters and radical environmentalists understand this connection with nature and this fact is taken as a necessary step in order to develop more sustainable relationships with the environment. “Through connectedness, relational selves already exercise communal integration with sensitivity to the needs of future generations and other species” (Salleh 217), so, as these libidinal bonds are part of the connectedness of humans, their environment and the rest of living beings, acknowledging and respecting these bonds seems necessary for the wellbeing and natural continuation of life in the planet. These

bonds are obviously disrupted by the violent interference of industrial/capitalist powers, but action against them is sign of the concern for these bonds and for the wish of preserving them. Thus, it can be argued that in *Hayduke Lives!* there is an awareness of affective and libidinal bonds that unite humans and nature. Through their protection and preservation, more egalitarian and sustainable relationships with the desert can be developed, but for that, action must be taken against those threatening these bonds.

In the novel, not only the four protagonists of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* show an impulse for the protection of the environment and more 'moderate' environmentalists have an important place in the story. Although most of them play secondary roles in the novel (what makes their connections with nature be developed only in superficial terms), interesting ideas arise in relation to the many mottos used by these environmentalists. The slogans cannot be considered part of Abbey's nature writing but they are very illustrative of the relationships that can exist and develop between humans and nature. One of the most significant mottos is "Earth – love it or leave it!" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 237). It directly confronts industrial/capitalist attitudes towards the planet and proposes only two choices for those exploiting it. On the one hand, it proposes loving the land and its inhabitants and, consequently, establishing more egalitarian and respective bonds with the environment and, on the other hand, the other choice is to stop destroying it. Even if not everyone would love the Earth, at least, avoiding any harm to it would be a correct way of relating to the environment. Thus, as industrial capitalism necessarily implies the exploitation of nature, the catchphrase suggests that it should disappear because the two choices it proposes are the only ways that would allow the continuation and thriving of life.

Another interesting motto is "Bio-centric not homo-centric" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 237), which openly defies the set of values and ideas that places humans in the centre of existence. Rather, it proposes that life should be the most important of all values, not human and industrial 'progress.' Besides, the word 'homo' is worth mentioning because it does not suggest human dominance but the dominance of men. "Patriarchal science and technology, in the service of patriarchal capitalism" (Shiva, *Reductionism* 33) are part of the basis of the industrial civilization that exploits and dominates women and nature, so the slogan is also questioning a set of values related to so-called development that are based on male dominance. Many other significant mottos related to the relationships between humans and nature are present in the novel, but the following one

is really worth mentioning: “Defend your mother” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 240). In this case, nature is equalled to a woman (which reminds of the domination of both by industrial-capitalist-patriarchal powers) and, by considering it the origin of all life, the need for protecting it is expressed. Nature as a mother, symbolizes life, constant renewal and the belonging to a whole while industrial capitalism, as an evil father, only brings death, destruction and pollution. The mother must be protected so as life can continue existing, so the phrase portrays a very close relationship between humans and their very origin, the source that allowed their existence. The fact that nature is equalled to a mother makes the idea of affective bonds even more powerful and, thus, humans connect with it while also being a part of it. Taking all this into consideration, it can be concluded that even if these are not examples of nature writing, they are very illustrative of human-natural relationships. The many catchphrases used by the environmental movement in *Hayduke Lives!* show how complex and varied these relationships can be. Furthermore, they are examples of collective bonds with nature, unlike the individual relationships that have been analysed concerning topics like spirituality. The fact of developing strong and positive collective bonds with the environment can be an important step towards establishing sustainable and egalitarian links with it. However, while the industrial civilization continues its destructive path, these bonds are not enough.

As in *Hayduke Lives!* Abbey deals with natural and wild spaces that are being colonized by industrial capitalism, the novel does not only offer descriptions of magnificent landscapes and beautiful sights. In fact, as the degradation and exploitation of the desert are a main concern in Abbey’s writing, the scenes of natural destruction are quite important in terms of nature writing and, more precisely, to comprehend the real-life situation of the American West. The dragline excavator Goliath (the protagonists’ main target in the novel) is an incredibly destructive machine whose mere march implies an environmental catastrophe. The following fragment depicts the situation of a part of the desert after the march of a common machine or bulldozer over it, what suggests that the impact of Goliath is much more terrible:

The flat treadmarks of the tractor lay stamped upon the desert turtle’s grave, implacable and mute, final, permanent, perfect. Nearby, in the half-dammed streambed, a funnel of muddy water poured around the encroachment of the spoilbanks of overturned earth, broken and jumbled sandstone slabs, torn sagebrush, mutilated and slowly dying trees. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 25)

The scene radically contrasts with the descriptions of the unique and beautiful land that is the desert of the West. A machine enters violently into a space characterised by its wildness and leaves a path of destruction. The machine leaves its horrible marks in all the places it moves through and these are like little scars in the surface of the earth. Even the grave of the desert tortoise that the novel starts with is scarred by the march of the machine, a fact that shows the complete disrespect of industrial civilization for life. Its advance through the desert also has an impact on a river. The earth and natural structures that surround the river are turned upside down, that is, the machine implies a drastic alteration or transformation of the area. Besides, the water ceases to be pure due to the advance of the machine and, thus, it can be considered a sign of the corruption of nature by industrial/capitalist powers. Furthermore, this destruction is accompanied by the deaths of all the plants and trees the machine finds in its way. The elimination of vegetation, that is, forms of life, in an arid land is always terrible but the total impact of the march of 'progress' leaves an endangered ecosystem. With the ruin of the river, the deaths of plants and the alteration of the earth, this part of the desert is highly threatened, but what is more terrible is that direct exploitation has not even started, it is only the march of a machine. Thus, it is shown that all signs of 'development' can be highly disastrous for the desert environment and that even an apparently harmless action like driving a machine is antagonistic to the wilderness of the West. The passages showing the beauty of the desert and those of environmental destruction are totally opposed and industrial civilization is portrayed as an evil power that has nothing to do with life.

Abbey's respect, appreciation and love for the desert of the American West is made clear through the descriptions in the novel and the reflections about human-natural relationships illustrate the unions that exist between people and the desert. Likewise, the passages dedicated to environmental degradation and exploitation are evidence of the highly destructive power that is industrial civilization. Thus, two radically opposed worlds within the American West are depicted: on the one hand, wilderness and nature and, on the other hand, industrial madness that strives for the elimination of life. The existing contrasts and enmities between these two worlds are shown all through the novel, but when they directly confront each other the fact that they are completely different realities is made evident. In a passage in which Ranger Dick is immersed in the grandiosity of the desert, the following is expressed:

Beyond the high rim of pale sandstone, sparsely but elegantly decorated with isolated junipers, blooming yucca, and the fragrant shrubs of cliffrose – that scent like orange blossoms – she saw and could see nothing but an infinite expanse of Western sky. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 137)

The description of the landscape is a typical example of Abbey's appreciation for the desert West. The sandstone and the plants do not only create a beautiful sight, but also a delight for the senses, in this case especially for the smell. The fragrance of the desert captivates Ranger Dick, who is a member of the 'Search and Rescue Team,' but the sky of the West is the most impressive element of the whole landscape. It suggests infinity and a complete lack of barriers and, thus, the fact that the desert has a lot to offer, especially in immaterial terms, is shown again. Ranger Dick seems instantly connected to the landscape due to its immensity and beauty and this wild world of nature is presented as enriching and full of life. However, beyond this impressive world lies the terrible reality that is industrial civilization, in the form of various cities of southern Arizona like Phoenix, Mesa or Tucson. The world beyond the magnificence of the desert is described in a dramatically opposite way. These cities are:

Where the huddled masses endured their muddled lives amidst a welter of smog, crime, noise, drugs, police, traffic, disease, heart transplants, sphincter transplants, two-headed babies, hydrocephalic preemies, endless conflict, smouldering hatred, an ever-rising Irritability Level, enjoying the pleasures of Growth, Prosperity and Progress. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 138)

What is supposed to be a civilized world is portrayed as the most horrible and degrading reality possible. People have an existence of confusion alienated from nature and their lives are negatively marked by different types of pollution and diseases caused by industrial 'development.' Besides, aspects like crime, police or hate for everything surrounding life in these cities shows that beauty, love or happiness can hardly exist in such a world. True and sincere connections between humans seem unlikely in this industrial environment and positive relationships with nature and other living beings are probably not possible. The values and consequences (some people would call them benefits) of so-called progress are ridiculed in the fragment and it is suggested that, rather than meaning growth for humans in any way, it can only bring economic growth and the further colonization of nature. Thus, Abbey defies the values of never-ending development and progress and gives infinitely more importance to the natural world to

which humans originally belong to. In nature, humans can develop bonds with other beings and with their environment in different levels, either related to spirituality, the self or other aspects that make life more meaningful. Therefore, in *Hayduke Lives!* two radically opposed and struggling worlds are presented as possible realities for the American West. Nature and wilderness are the essence of the original and true West, while the industrial civilization is only a colonizing power that tries to destroy the desert to establish a West of industrial development and economic profits. Only the wild and natural West is valuable and enriching for Abbey, for that reason, the characters of the novel continue with their direct actions in order to keep evil powers away from the desert.

7.3. Environmental Exploitation/Destruction and Radical Environmentalism in *Hayduke Lives!* (1990)

Hayduke Lives!, like its predecessor, is not only dedicated to radical environmental actions carried out in defence of the desert of the American West. Nevertheless, this radical approach to environmentalism is arguably the most important dimension of the novel, along with the passages dedicated to the natural world and to the relationships that exist and develop between humans and nature, which are all interconnected. The network of relationships between humans, their environment and the industrial society in the late 20th century United States portrayed in the novel shows a complexity of links, which is very illustrative of attitudes (especially negative ones) of humans towards the natural world. The actions in the novel happen several years after the events in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, but Abbey continues depicting extremely harmful attitudes towards nature and the environment. The pursuit of so-called development and progress through exploitation and destruction of the wild desert are still presented as dramatic realities intrinsic to the evil powers of industrial capitalism.

As a reaction to this, direct action and an active struggle to protect the desert are again the only ways to stop the colonization of wild nature. Thus, the radical environmentalism of the protagonists of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, which appeared as a ‘natural’ reaction against the atrocities committed against the desert, continues developing and gaining strength in *Hayduke Lives!* More activists join the struggle of the four protagonists and new methods that were not present in the previous novel are portrayed as possible alternatives to protect the desert. Although the descriptions of radical environmental actions were so detailed in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* that the novel could be even taken as a guide for direct action, *Hayduke Lives!* is not so powerful in that respect. Some actions are really described in detail, but others are only mentioned and not much attention is paid to procedures of sabotage in general. This can be due to the fact that many procedures and actions were already described in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, but also to the fact that the sabotage and destruction of the dragline excavator Goliath, which is depicted carefully and in detail, is the novel’s most important action.

In addition to new activists and methods to protect the environment, Abbey presents new menaces that threaten the desert like overgrazing, nuclear energy and, above all, the dragline excavator Goliath whose mere presence implies destruction and death. The worsening situation of the desert is a main concern for Abbey and, this is why, along with the descriptions of beautiful nature and radical environmentalism, the deterioration and exploitation of that land are main subjects of the novel. The destruction of the land Abbey appreciated and loved so much triggers its direct defence and protection, in fact, as Tagnani explains, “being able to recognize other life forms and even the non-living entities as fellow subjects worthy of respect and admiration is a catalyst for resisting those who would destroy them for ephemeral or selfish goals” (344). The fact that Abbey respected the interrelatedness of living beings and their environment, along with the love and appreciation he felt for the desert and all it contained, inevitably leads his characters (as he himself did) to resist and counterattack their industrial/capitalist enemies. Furthermore, this resistance becomes fiercer considering that, while the desert offers freedom and spiritual bonds with the land (among many other things), industrial capitalism is only concerned with destruction and profits.

Although, as has been mentioned, Abbey does not focus on actions and procedures as much as in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, it does not mean, in any way, that he stopped supporting and encouraging these methods for the protection of nature. Indeed, as the situation of the desert worsened during the years that separate both novels, he advocated even more fervently for the use of direct action. Even before any general information about the book is given (publisher, copyright, etc.), *Hayduke Lives!* opens with a warning by the author in the very first page. This warning is incredibly illustrative of the dramatic nature of the struggle to protect the environment and Abbey is highly aware of the power of his fiction to create reactions in real-life. The author’s warning tells the following: “Anyone who takes this book seriously will be shot. Anyone who does not take it seriously will be buried alive by a Mitsubishi bulldozer” (Abbey, *Hayduke*). Firstly, Abbey suggests that, as the novel is a work of fiction, acting like the characters of the novel would not bring any good to people. Engaging in actions of the kind described in the novel would only bring imprisonment or, even, death. However, Abbey makes clear that not taking action against the exploitation and destruction of the desert would be even worse. People who ignore the industrial/capitalist domination of nature

(with its subsequent impact on human lives) would be crushed by machines and life would not be able to continue developing naturally. Therefore, Abbey does not try to impose a way of acting to the readers directly, but to make them think about two different options in a moment in history when the destruction of nature (and of the links that unite it and humans) can easily become irreversible. Nevertheless, Abbey's position in this struggle is more than obvious, so he can be encouraging people to take direct action again, even before the beginning of the story.

Throughout the novel, the positive and beneficial relationships that develop between humans and the natural environment reinforce the idea transmitted by Abbey's warning and taking direct action seems the appropriate choice. Likewise, the one-way destructive relationships of industrial capitalism towards the nature of the West portrayed in the novel transmit a sense of threat and danger that make the fear of being buried by a bulldozer very real. The first significant threats caused by the industrial civilization presented in *Hayduke Lives!* are overgrazing and the presence of too much cattle. When the march of the turtle that the novel begins with is narrated, this animal encounters difficulties to find food due to overgrazing. As it is explained: "grass getting harder to find these days; his desert infested with a novel enemy, the domestic beef cow" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 4). First of all, the fact that the presence of too many cows, introduced by humans for their own purposes, is endangering the turtle as well as other species of the desert is noticeable. The introduction of cattle is another part of the process of colonization of the desert, but overgrazing also brings severe alterations to the desert's ecosystem, especially, by significantly reducing the food of other animal species. The dramatic consequences of overgrazing are mentioned for the first time when talking about the turtle, but the issue is mentioned several times throughout the novel. This is due to the fact that, even if overgrazing might not seem such a terrible threat for the desert, it really is. Solnit makes this clear by explaining that "where they overgraze the soil erodes back to dust and rock" (7). The soil of the desert West does not have the capacity of giving life to as many plants as a place like a forest can. Vegetation is sparse and overgrazing only leads to the degradation and impoverishment of the soil, which makes life even more difficult. Taking the few plants of the desert away and leaving only dust can really mean a catastrophe for the desert environment, especially, because this fact has further and terrible consequences. Foreman explains that "domestic cattle have grazed bare and radically altered the composition of the

grassland communities of the West, displacing Elk, Moose, Bighorn Sheep, and Pronghorn and leading to the virtual extermination of Grizzly Bear, Gray Wolf, Cougar” (*Ecodefense* 22). Overgrazing clearly implies the drastic alteration of the desert soil and this alteration brings another terrible reality, the disappearance of species originally belonging to, in this case, the West. With the real-life colonization of the West by cattle introduced to serve human purposes, many animal species were forced to search for food in other places and when this was not possible, they perished. Thus, the introduction of too much cattle and overgrazing in the American West implied a radical transformation of the ecosystem and of the environment. The desert, forced to contain more animals than its plants could feed, lost the quality of its soil and innumerable forms of life. Therefore, by introducing the topic of overgrazing, Abbey presents a terrible reality of the worsening situation of the desert West and makes clear that all aspects of the industrial civilization are highly harmful for the environment.

Although overgrazing is really a serious issue that can radically transform the environment, the next topic presented in *Hayduke Lives!* can be considered even more terrible: nuclear energy. The threat of nuclear energy is introduced in a public hearing in which Seldom Seen Smith takes part. Some people are advocating the opening of uranium mines, which would create many jobs, while Seldom Seen Smith and Kathy Smith argue that the consequences of nuclear energy can be devastating. The following words by Kathy, which mainly focus on the impact uranium mining can have on human health, are strong enough arguments to consider this activity a serious menace:

I say uranium is poison. Deadly poison. It gets in the air, it gets in the water, it gets in the ground (...) gets in your hair, gets in our children’s bones. Strontium causes acute leukemia, ruins the bone marrow, makes people die. Especially children and young people. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 18)

She argues that uranium is a poison that pollutes everything near it. Sources of life like the air, the water and the ground cease to be safe and healthy as a consequence of uranium and they become dangerous for living beings due to radiation. Thus, uranium transforms the essentials for life into more poison and life becomes very risky. Besides, the poisoning of the environment implies the poisoning of its inhabitants. In this case, human beings. Mining so as to produce nuclear energy can cause terrible diseases for humans and even bring death, especially to the youngest people. So, even if uranium mining could create jobs and imply economic growth, it would all happen at the

expense of the environment and human health. Smith, who further argues against nuclear energy and uranium mining, focuses on other dramatic consequences of this sector, mainly from an environmental perspective:

This goddam nuclear industry moves into our country, tears up the land with open pit mines, blasts roads everywhere, fouls up the trout streams, poisons the ground water supply, dries up the springs, drives out the wildlife, leaves garbage, junk, mineshafts, tailings dumps and radioactive mills (...) and leaves us nothing but miners with lung cancer. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 20)

Smith, continuing with Kathy's discourse, explains that uranium mining is catastrophic for the desert because it implies a radical transformation of the land through huge openings in the ground, explosions, etc. He reinforces Kathy's statement about water pollution by pointing out that, in addition to that, mining directly ruins rivers and other courses of water. All this affects living beings in the desert radically because their environment is destroyed and, thus, animals and plants cannot thrive naturally. Besides, the desert can become a landfill for radioactive waste and garbage in the name of 'progress' and 'development.' Despite the fact that uranium mining would create jobs, Smith only sees miners with cancer as a consequence of this industry. Therefore, Kathy and Smith are fervent opponents to a sector that only cares about economic profits without considering the huge damage it causes to living beings (including humans) and the environment. Abbey was really aware of the consequences nuclear energy could bring to the desert and its inhabitants and this is made clear in the novel.

However, not everyone seems to care about the destruction of the land or about deadly diseases and Kathy's and Smith's words are ignored by the rest of the people. Bishop Love defends nuclear energy and tries to convince the people attending to the hearing that it is only beneficial. His discourse in favour of uranium mining can be summarized with the following words: "Smells like jobs to me. Smells like money to me" (Abbey, *Hayduke*, 22). It is evident that Bishop Love, as a defender of so-called progress, only cares about the economic growth that uranium mining can bring. He ignores the disastrous consequences it can cause to the environment and to human beings and, indeed, he expresses that "some of us just don't buy this scare talk about cancer and radiation" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 22). Bishop Love's approach to the problems presented by Smith and Kathy implies completely ignoring facts that seriously threaten life or considering them false (or just a way to scare people), in order to obtain more

economic profits. His complete lack of awareness and sensitivity regarding an issue that endangers so many lives only threatens the existence of the desert and its life forms, especially considering that his discourse convinces the people of the hearing. This example of Bishop Love's attitudes with respect to nuclear energy is quite illustrative of real-life opposition to radical environmentalism. Manes explains that "the basis of a conservative critique of radical ecology" (152) is partly the conservative discourse that defends "that no environmental crisis exists" (152). Bishop Love represents this conservative critique by ignoring the existence of environmental problems in general and, more specifically, by ignoring the terrible consequences of nuclear energy and uranium mining. Thus, when this conservative critique takes the place environmental awareness should have, nature and its forms of life are severely threatened. In these cases, the importance of radical environmentalists' ideological struggle becomes more evident, because despite the fact that direct action can be effective, a change of mind of the population would be more powerful.

The first radical environmental action described in *Hayduke Lives!* is related to nuclear energy and waste and it is aimed at the company that would be involved in opening the uranium mines. The company is called Nuclear Fuels Inc. and it is part of Syn-Fuels Ltd. These names remind of real-life companies like Nuclear Fuel Services or Synthetic Fuels Corporation, so Abbey's criticism towards real companies is obvious. The action does not consist on a sabotage in the style of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. It is more like a radical protest against the company and it is an example of the new forms of environmental activism present in *Hayduke Lives!* A woman who works cleaning the offices gets into a room in which important members of the company are gathered to discuss the state of their projects. She takes the bucket that is supposedly used to clean and throws it to the table "dumping the entire contents over the surface" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 35) and explaining that it is "Bout five gallons pee-ure liquid radiation" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 35). The table becomes full of nuclear waste from a uranium mill in Utah and the woman, thus, expresses her dissatisfaction with the management of this kind of toxic waste. The inappropriate disposal of nuclear waste leads to radiation and to the terrible consequences explained by Smith and Kathy, so throwing the bucket to the members of the company is the woman's way of protesting against the policies of the nuclear industry. The action does not mean any economic repercussion for the company, but throwing nuclear waste in the office can be a symbolic move in the

resistance against uranium mining and it can lead to changes of mind of the members of the company. Another highly important aspect of this action is the fact that the woman is not really a woman; he is, indeed, Hayduke. Despite the fact that the rest of the protagonists are absent from actions of this type for a time, Hayduke never stops taking action. In this case, he disguises as a woman in order to infiltrate the company and act within it. This method of infiltration is used by Hadyduke various times in the novel. It is a new way for carrying out actions with the aim of protecting the environment and, even if he had this idea of infiltrating companies already in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, it is in *Hayduke Lives!* when it is put into practice.

The one-way destructive relationships of industrial capitalism towards the nature of the American West continue producing and aggravating environmental problems, some of them already mentioned in the previous novel. Air pollution can be considered one of the most significant environmental problems there, especially taking into account that the air of the wild desert is originally clean and pure. In the spaces that were appropriated for the creation and development of cities the air ceased to be truly natural, but in the late 20th and 21st centuries the situation is dramatically different. Bonnie Abbzug thinks about the issue of air pollution and makes clear that the situation is quite grave. She presents the situation of the air in the city as terrible and completely opposed to that of the desert and she expresses her wish to live in another place, more in contact with nature and wilderness. Her thoughts about the air are the following: “That air’s not so good around here anymore. Damned garbage from the freeways, the smelter, all those projects, half a million too many cars and trucks, we’re breathing dirt. Pure filth” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 43). Abbzug is aware of the horrible consequences industrial civilization brings to the planet and its living beings and the state of the air she and many other people seem forced to breathe is only one of the realities intrinsic to this power Abbey portrays as evil. A natural process as essential and vital as breathing becomes synonymous with the consumption of dirt as a consequence of the destructive practices and values of the always ‘developing’ industrial capitalism. Industries and cars pollute the air to the point of making it dangerous for living beings. Thus, one of the most primordial connections with the environment, that is, breathing its air, is violently altered and air becomes harmful due to so-called progress.

The extreme environmental situation portrayed in the novel (a reflection of reality) is a strong enough reason for environmental activists to do as much as they can for the

protection of nature. As it has already been mentioned, Hayduke never abandons the struggle and, in addition to him, many other people join the fight for the defence of the environment. In *Hayduke Lives!* various plots intermingle and one of them is the investigation carried out by the federals in order to catch radical environmentalists. Through their conversations, several actions committed with the aim of protecting the environment are presented, even though the accounts do not offer much detail. Some agents ask another agent about the people behind the following actions: “Who did in the BLM bulldozer (...) Who dumped the sludge in Syn-Fuels’ boardroom? (...) Who reset the survey stakes at Radium Canyon?” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 52). Thus, the actions known by the federals are the following: the sabotage of a bulldozer, the previously explained incident related to nuclear waste and the sabotage of survey stakes used to indicate the exact location of future works. Fully aware of the (economic) impact of these and further actions, the federals’ work is to catch the activist(s) behind these actions, but they are unable to discover the identity/identities of the enemy. All indicates that only one person is behind the actions and, unsurprisingly, this is Hayduke. The type of activism the federals talk about are clear examples of the direct action methods used by the protagonists of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, especially considering the emphasis put by Abbey on the sabotage of bulldozers and survey stakes. Furthermore, the federals mention a procedure of one of the actions, which is clearly carried out by someone who already knows about sabotage. They wonder “who pulled the linkage pins out of that bulldozer so it runs right off its own tracks” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 53) and through this brief explanation they give an account of how to sabotage a machine and the results of that sabotage. Thus, even if Abbey does not focus on procedures as much as in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, direct action in the name of the protection of the environment is always presented as the only effective way for this mission.

It is worth mentioning that during the conversation of the federals their real ideas about radical environmentalists (terrorists as they call them) are made evident. They are not concerned about the wellbeing of people, because they know that no one is endangered by activists. What they really care about has nothing to do with protecting people. As one of the federals explains, “we’re talking about business. I mean business of critical national value: money” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 58). Environmentalists are a threat for money and profits and this is why federals portray them as terrorists, so that they do not achieve people’s support. The companies and agencies that are the aim of sabotages

are part of 'development' and 'progress.' However, although they always present themselves and economic growth as positive forces, their relationships with nature are utterly destructive. In spite of this fact, the federals in the novel make clear that they are only driven by greed and by the protection of money. Some might argue that these ideas about environmentalists being a threat to the profits of a minority are solely Abbey's thoughts, but it has been proven that, in real-life, it is a fact. Potter explains that "in their own words and their own documents, government agencies have made clear that eco-terrorists do not threaten people, they threaten profits" (240). Therefore, while environmentalists care about nature and the relationships that unite humans with it, companies and governments only care about money and neglect the bonds that connect humans with their natural environment. As a consequence, radical environmentalists act in order to hurt those exploiting and destroying nature where it affects them more: in their profits.

The next action against those exploiting and destroying nature is carried out by just one man who infiltrates a company to attack it from within, that is, Hayduke strikes again by using a false identity. The target is the already mentioned Syn-Fuels Inc., a fact that makes clear the possible environmental impact its policies and attitudes can imply if actions are not taken against it. Hayduke presents himself to the company as the new night watchman under the name of Casper W. Goodwood and, as his I.D. number and photo are correct, he enters the building easily. He then alerts about the discovery of a bomb and explains to his workmates that he will try to disarm it. In fact, in this moment, he prepares the explosives so as to destroy, at least, a part of the building. As in every radical environmental action, Hayduke wants to avoid any harm to living beings and this is why he takes all precautions possible and makes sure no one is in the building in the moment of the explosion. When communicating with a worker, he asks questions like the following: "'Everybody at the main gate?' (...) 'You can see them? Everybody?'" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 77). Hayduke really wants the building to be empty and he puts an emphasis on the necessity of everyone being outside in the gate. When no one but him is inside the building and human lives are not endangered, he prepares the bomb to be detonated. The preparation of the explosives is not detailed but Hayduke tells the worker that he is dealing with TNT, more precisely, with "batteries and digital clocks and bubblegum. All wrapped around about a hundred fucking pounds of trinitrotoluene" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 77-78). Taking this explanation of the characteristics

of the bomb into account, it is clear that both Hayduke and Abbey have certain knowledge about explosives. Besides, the bomb is presented as a powerful device because Hayduke asks again if everyone is out. The bomb explodes and a plant of Syn-Fuels Inc. ends completely destroyed. Hayduke manages to escape after carrying out a totally successful action, which has terrible consequences for those trying to exploit the desert. This activist's action "cost Syn-Fuels about two million (...) and it set back the production schedule by only eleven weeks" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 79). Therefore, the bomb causes huge economic losses to the company and its destructive relationships towards the desert are somehow disrupted for a time. Explosives are a means used in extreme cases and the situation of the desert and the consequences the nuclear industry can bring are strong enough reasons for Hayduke to use them. All in all, as his aim is to cause as much economic damage as possible while preventing harm to humans, in this action, explosives are arguably the best choice against Syn-Fuels Inc.

All through the novel, the advancement of those spreading 'progress' and, especially, of the dragline excavator Goliath is pointed out. These agents are presented as relentless powers that, unless someone stops them, threaten to destroy the nature of the American West. Lost Eden Canyon is one of the places under their menace, more precisely, under the menace of the Bureau of Land Management whose bulldozers enter the area violently. However, the drivers find out "the route blocked by a chain of chanting dancing flag-waving placard-hoisting T-shirted human bodies" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 80), that is, they encounter opposition and peaceful resistance by environmentalists. These activists are adherents of the group Earth First! (what makes the line between real-life environmentalism and fiction blurred) and, instead of using methods of sabotage like the ones used by the protagonists of *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, they act through protest and non-violent resistance. Even though in real-life EF! also engaged in direct actions, distancing themselves from mainstream environmentalists, in this case, they are "prepared only for passive resistance and peaceful demonstration" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 81). Thus, their opposition to the advancement of bulldozers does not include actions directly aimed at the destruction of the machines, but to the blocking of the road so as these cannot move forward. By presenting actions of this type, Abbey widens the spectrum of actions that can be taken in defence of the environment and includes methods that can be considered less extreme than the ones used by, for example, Hayduke. Nevertheless, blocking the road of a

bulldozer is an action that shows a strong conviction and environmental awareness and that entails a certain degree of danger. Bulldozers continue advancing until it is clear that activists are not willing to move, but sometimes drivers can cross the line and hurt environmentalists. In this very case, “the operators revved their engines, raised and lowered their gleaming dozer blades in threatening gestures” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 82), but, in spite of all that, “the crowd refused to budge” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 82). The peaceful resistance to the advancement of bulldozers can be an appropriate method to avoid the destruction or exploitation of certain areas, if the authorities do not intervene against environmentalists. In fact, this method is even supported by Al Gore, a man whose approach to environmentalism is quite different from that of Hayduke. As Potter explains, Al Gore “has called for lawbreaking, saying, “I can’t understand why there aren’t rings of young people blocking bulldozers”” (192). Therefore, if a figure of mainstream environmentalism like him supports acting outside the law for the protection of nature, it is clear that every kind of direct action can have a positive impact in the struggle to protect the environment. Besides, by describing actions like this, Abbey tries to make mainstream and radical environmentalists come together with the aim of more effectively protecting areas like the desert West and its living beings.

Among the environmentalists who try to block the road of the bulldozers there is an activist who arguably becomes one of the most important characters of the novel along with people like the four protagonists or Bishop Love. Her name is Erika and she is from Norway. The fact that she comes from a country so far from the American West makes clear that environmental problems caused by industrial capitalism exist on a global scale and that resistance against further exploitation and destruction of nature includes activism on an international level. In her particular English (especially with a peculiar pronunciation) she expresses her love for the wild areas of the West and her opposition to projects that only bring death and destruction: “in Norge vee luff your Grand Canyon off Arida zona. Vee neffer *dream* you tink to dig it up for making thermonuclear bombshells” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 83). The beauty and uniqueness of the Grand Canyon captivates her and many other people around the world and she cannot understand why someone would like to destroy it for making bombs. For Erika, greedy practices in the name of so-called progress cannot justify the colonization of the wild nature of the West. She is completely aware of the fact that this unique natural space and its life forms are threatened by the advancement of industrial/capitalist powers and,

for that reason, she tries to stop the machines by using her own body and peaceful resistance as weapons. Potter explains that “environmentalists went West not looking for gold or land like the settlers before them, but seeking out this culture of resistance” (84); Erika can be an extreme example of this ‘travel’ to the West. In the West, that is, one of the last truly wild spaces of the country, environmental activism in order to preserve and protect wilderness was incredibly powerful. Instead of going West so as to colonize the land and its inhabitants, environmentalists went there to try to avoid further colonization and to protect the environment. Thus, the myth of the West is somehow reversed and the search for resources that would bring ‘development’ is left aside in order to develop close bonds with wilderness. Erika’s travel to the West is not driven by the wish for the domination of the land, but by an opposition to that domination by industrial and capitalist powers. She looks for the preservation of nature and of the bonds that unite humans (and the rest of living beings) with the environment and in the West she encounters the possibility of a lifestyle devoted to it and to her own relationships with nature.

The bulldozers EF! activists oppose to are machines whose objective is to destroy the land and disrupt the links that exist between living beings and the environment. In fact, just their mere advancement implies significant consequences for the desert nature, because their movement forward means the following:

treads grinding down on earth, on sand, on cliffrose and sego lily, on gopher hole and badger den and kit fox burrow. A dung beetle died in the first bloom of youth. A horned toad (...) was crushed flat as a spatula. Ten thousand ants were never seen again. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 87)

The march of the bulldozers is intrinsic to the destruction of the desert and to the deaths of living beings. The earth and the sand are altered and somehow scarred by the advancement of the machines and the plants they find in their way are killed. Besides, they have a terrible impact on the lives of animals. The very homes of different mammals are destroyed and many other smaller beings like insects are obliterated. Therefore, although this is only a small example, it seems clear that industrial capitalism as part of “humanity’s disruption of the environment has been so systematic and profound that it has halted the same natural processes that have brought everything we know into existence” (Do or die 108). On a large scale, industrial civilization disrupts the interrelatedness of living beings and the environment and establishes exploitation

and death as the norm in such a degree that these destructive relationships transform natural processes and create terrible environmental problems. On a small scale, the violent disruption of the environment by bulldozers changes (or even ends) the lives of the inhabitants of the area by interfering with their process of feeding or by destroying their homes. Taking this into consideration, it would be comprehensible if the environmentalists in the novel took action against the bulldozers, but this is not the case because they only use peaceful resistance as a weapon.

Nevertheless, another mysterious character (the one who helped Hayduke in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*) appears in order to try to stop the bulldozers. He steals another bulldozer, property of Bishop Love, and struggles against this man who is also driving a machine. After several movements and crashes between the machines “both bulldozers clanked over the edge” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 94). Thus, two bulldozers end up being unusable and in a state of total destruction and the adherents of EF! achieve their objective of not allowing the advancement of machines. The methods used by the mysterious man (stealing a machine and using it to attack another bulldozer) are uncommon for environmentalists. In fact, even if he helps the group of protagonists and is incredibly aware of the exploitation of the desert West, he is more like an outlaw who has his own code for the protection of the environment. In addition to the destruction of the two bulldozers, another pickup of the Bureau of Land Management is sabotaged: the four tires are slashed and sand is introduced in the crankcase so as to ruin it. With the ‘deaths’ of these machines the desert recovers its charm and vitality and its sight is described as follows: “golden dunes of sand, aeolian sand, the singing sands of the leanest part of the loveliest region in the whole long wide high-lonesome land of horny toads and soaring buzzards and melancholy coyotes” (Abbey, *Hadyuke* 97). Without the violent interference of machines, the desert returns to its natural state and, instead of industrial/capitalist powers, sand and animals dominate in a land of beauty and uniqueness.

In addition to scenes dedicated to radical environmental actions, in *Hayduke Lives!* Abbey devotes a chapter (called “Code of the Eco-Warrior”) to the ideas and morality that lie behind the movement. Through a conversation between Hayduke and Dr Sarvis, the author expresses his views about what a warrior in defence of nature should be and how s/he should act, according to the rules of a code. The conversation also describes the characteristics the perfect eco-warrior would/should have, despite the fact that not

even the four protagonists of the novel fit completely in that ideal description. The first rule of the code creates a bit of disagreement between both men, but, in the end, Hayduke accepts that there is something more important than not getting caught. In fact, the first rule is the following: “Nobody gets hurt. Nobody. Not even yourself” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 110). As always, Abbey and his characters make clear that their struggle has nothing to do with killing or harming people, which makes the idea of terrorism sometimes associated to activists quite absurd. In fact, avoiding any harm to people is presented as the golden rule for radical environmentalists. Dr Sarvis puts a lot of emphasis on the fact that not even activists should be put in danger, so, for him, attacking someone intentionally or not being careful to avoid any human harm would deprive the activist from the title of ‘Eco-warrior.’ The Eco-warrior is a moral person who does not believe in hurting or killing living beings. For that reason, Dr Sarvis argues that these environmentalists should not carry weapons, not even a knife.

The second rule (probably the first one for Hayduke) is “Don’t get caught” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 110) and it is strongly linked to the third rule, which says that “If you do get caught you’re on your own” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 110). Not getting caught is not only vital for activists, who can be imprisoned or forced to pay huge amounts of money, but for the whole struggle to protect the environment. Taking into consideration that in this struggle small scale groups or individuals are the ones carrying out actions, the disappearance of any activist can mean a possible defeat and, subsequently, the exploitation and destruction of nature. That is why not being caught by the authorities is essential to keep the movement strong enough so as to actively and effectively protect the environment from the advancement of industrial/capitalist powers. Besides, even though actions are usually taken by small groups of people with strong bonds, if someone is caught the rest of the people cannot be betrayed and that person is completely alone facing the law. As the activist is not part of an organization, but of a small group carrying out clandestine actions, no one can respond in his/her favour and help cannot be provided to him/her to avoid fine or imprisonment. Dr Sarvis summarizes what an eco-warrior is as follows:

The ecology warrior hurts no living thing, absolutely never, and he avoids capture, passing all costs on to them, the Enemy. The point of his work is to increase *their* costs, nudge them toward net loss, bankruptcy, forcing them to withdraw and retreat from their invasion of our public lands, our wilderness, our native and primordial home. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 110-111)

Therefore, through Dr Sarvis' words, Abbey makes clear what a real radical environmentalist is: an activist who does not harm living beings and causes economic losses to those profiting from the exploitation of nature without getting caught. The aim of these activists is to cause an incredibly negative economic impact in order to make companies and government agencies abandon their plans of colonizing nature. Only through these methods can nature, the original home of humans, be protected and the interrelatedness of living beings and their environment preserved. Abbey makes evident how these activists have to act and what their preferences are. For that purpose he offers a clear perspective of the kind of struggle they engage in while encouraging people to join the fight.

Furthermore, Dr Sarvis explains to Hayduke that what they call 'eco-warriors' never act in search of recognition by others, their actions are pure and sincere. Fame, glory or money can never be goals for a radical environmentalist and, indeed, achieving the opposite is not difficult. The main driving force for action, as expressed by Dr Sarvis, is love, more precisely, "the love of sparseness, beauty, open space, clear skies and flowing streams, grizzly bear, mountain lion, wolf pack (...) of wilderness and wanderlust and primal human freedom" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 113). Love, a positive relationship humans establish with the environment (in clear contrast with those established by industrial capitalism) makes eco-warriors defend life, ecosystems, the interrelatedness of living and non-living entities, beauty, wilderness and many more aspects offered by nature. Besides, other links that develop between humans and nature, such as freedom or the spirit of being constantly moving and exploring, are also defended by environmentalists, especially because they are considered part of the very essence of the human nature. Therefore, moved by love and other bonds that unite humans and nature, radical environmentalists fight against "an institution, the planetary Empire of Growth and Greed" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 114). They fight a worldview, a set of values and ideas (and their implementation) that defend that humans must dominate the environment and the rest of living beings in order to continue developing, when, in fact, this development only implies material and economic growth for a minority. Although 'progress' is always portrayed as a positive force by its promoters, it is "an all-devouring entity that feeds on humans, on all animals, on all living things, and (...) on the earth itself, on the bedrock basis of universal being" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 114). Industrial civilization, thus, de-naturalizes humans by making their natural essence

disappear, kills living beings and threatens the very foundations of existence, only for the achievement of more resources, money and the expansion over the surface of the planet, which necessarily implies the elimination of nature. Taking this into consideration, it is evident that the struggle eco-warriors are engaged in is an incredibly difficult one.

Dr Sarvis continues telling Hayduke how the perfect environmentalist should be in order to be successful in this struggle and he makes a point that does not have much to do with Hayduke: being healthy. Being fit is considered a must by Dr Sarvis, because an activist has to walk long distances, sometimes in bad climatic circumstances and at night, to carry out actions. Endurance and the capacity to work in situations that require being in a good shape is very important for him and, that is why he suggests that Hayduke stops drinking so much beer. Besides, youth is presented as the perfect accompaniment to a good health, so the best radical environmentalists are, for Dr Sarvis, the young and healthy ones. In addition to these features, the doctor mentions another rule for the code, the fourth and last one, which says “No domestic responsibilities” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 114). For him, radical environmentalists have to be fully dedicated to the struggle, without formal couples or children. The lifestyle of the activist is presented as a tough one, without the ability to have a normal life, all for a higher purpose. Therefore, through Sarvis’ words, Abbey explains how the perfect environmentalist would be and what his/her mission would consist on. In this very case, the author does not seem to be encouraging all people to join the fight, only the best ones for the deed, those who fit completely in the model. However, the protagonists themselves do not fit in that perfect pattern and they are active and successful in their defence of the environment anyway. Thus, leaving aside the perfect ‘eco-warrior,’ Abbey presents the love for nature and for the bonds that unite humans with it as the most important factor in the struggle. For that reason, trying to protect the planet and its living beings in any way possible is what really matters and, for that, anyone who feels deeply attached to the Earth can be the best ‘eco-warrior.’

The next action in defence of nature presented in the novel is not carried out by any of the four protagonists. In fact, the ones who take action are the young and healthy activists (the best ones for Dr Sarvis) that were present in the peaceful resistance previously mentioned. Among these environmentalists Erika is worth mentioning. The group moves through the snowy forests of the Kaibab National Forest with the aim of

protecting trees. Although national forests are areas which are conserved in order to use their resources, they also possess spaces considered wilderness, so defending them means defending some of the last wild areas of the United States. As Foreman explains, the remaining wilderness of the country “are the places that hold North America together, that contain the genetic information of life, that represent natural sanity in a whirlwind of industrial madness” (Defending the Earth 84). Wilderness, the very home of living beings, is what gives a meaning to the country and to its inhabitants, especially considering that the industrial civilization implies destruction and the alienation/estrangement of humans from nature. For these reasons, protecting wild nature is the mission of the environmentalists in the novel, even though they are aware that, as they are in a national forest, trees are easy prey for the logging industry. Indeed, this sector is already replacing original forests with tree plantations so as to obtain more ‘productive’ forests that can be transformed into economic profits. It is explained that certain companies are “managing the land for the best interests of industrial society and fuck anything else like deer or elk or black bear or red squirrels” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 127), that is, the promoters of ‘progress’ and ‘development’ are transforming the forests according to their economic interests without considering the threat it supposes for the original inhabitants of the wild. Besides, the transformation the logging industry causes in these spaces is huge and it is expressed that “they want the whole West to look like an Illinois cornfield” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 127). The wood industry is in the way of transforming and managing the wilderness of the American West (eliminating the essence of the Wild West) so that it becomes a plantation of trees perfect to work in and produce profits. The environmental impact of this transformation of the wild into a storehouse of resources is huge and it brings the destruction of ecosystems along with a threat to all living beings in the area.

However, the logging industry is not the only threat for the nature and remaining wilderness in national forests. Many other activities with a highly negative environmental impact are carried out in these spaces because “the U.S. Forest Service has viewed the national forests as an arena for industrial logging, grazing, mineral and energy development, road-building, and motorized recreation” (Foreman, *Defending the Earth* 84). Thus, national forests are constantly under different menaces that can bring terrible consequences to life. The direct exploitation of the land and of its resources is the most destructive activity that can be carried out in national forests, but an action

apparently as 'harmless' as motorized recreation is also highly negative for the environment. While walking through the Kaibab National Forest, the environmentalists hear the sounds of snowmobiles in the distance from time to time, which means that, in addition to the fact that noises of technology enter abruptly into nature, someone is using the forest as a place for motorized recreation. The purposelessness of driving snowmobiles through the forest is expressed by pointing out that their aim is not going somewhere, "but to generate noise, poison the air, crush vegetation, destroy wildlife, waste energy" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 128-129). Motorized recreation is, thus, another menace for the environment because it is highly contaminant and can directly kill plants and animals. Besides, this kind of leisure activity is another example of the incredibly destructive power that is industrial civilization, both for non-humans and humans. Nature is threatened so as humans can pass the time without a real purpose and instead of enjoying the forest and relating to it in positive and meaningful ways, this activity only offers 'fun' by destroying the natural world, that is, a part of humans themselves.

Such a terrible situation for the Kaibab National Forest makes activists take direct action in defence of trees and in order to be successful they use a technique called tree spiking. The process of this method of action is described in detail and, as it is a procedure that did not appear in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, Abbey makes quite clear how to carry out the action, in case someone would like to try in real life. The action is explained as follows:

At every third tree of saw-timber quality the man with the sledge stopped, pulled an eight-inch helix spike from his ammo sack and drove it into the trunk as high as he could reach, leaving the head protruding slightly. As soon as he moved on the girl followed, driving two 60-penny nails into the same tree, at a lower height, also letting the heads just forth a bit. Behind them came the young man with another hammer and the bolt cutters. He clipped the heads from the spikes, hammered the spikes deep into and beneath the bark, and disguised the shiny dots of hot metal – where necessary – with a dab of brown ink from a Permo-Market. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 128)

Therefore, tree spiking consists on introducing metal nails inside of the trees so as companies do not saw them. This technique requires common tools and, even if it has to be done cautiously in order to place the nails correctly, it is not very difficult to carry out. It is a preventive measure taken before the logging of an area starts and it has the objective of avoiding the deaths of trees and, consequently, of the rest of beings whose existence depends on those trees. Introducing nails inside the trees does not threaten

their lives and it can be one of the only methods to protect them from being cut and to preserve the interrelatedness of living beings in the forest. Tree spiking can be dangerous for the workers involved in the felling: if a chainsaw hits a nail it can hurt the worker. However, when this preventive measure is taken, companies are always informed about it and although they sometimes immediately stop their works, they can also try to carry on. In his case, if all safety measures necessary are taken (hardhats, eye-protectors, etc.), human lives are not endangered. The activists, once again, do everything they can to protect human lives and Erika is especially concerned about the wellbeing of workers as well as that of trees.

The exact way in which tree spiking can frustrate the logging plans of companies is explained as follows: “one spike in a log can strip the teeth from a ten-thousand-dollar circular saw, put a crimp in profits, deter further logging, and thus preserve those living breathing respiring trees” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 129). The nails inside the trees destroy the (expensive) equipment used for sawing and make this process impossible for companies. The loss of equipment and the prolonged inability to achieve their objectives (which usually implies more costs like fuel for vehicles) produces significant economic damages to companies. Besides, as trees cannot be felled, those trying to exploit nature are forced to give up and these living beings, along with all those that are closely linked to them, are protected and preserved. Thus, destructive relationships towards nature are disrupted by using simple nails. Tree spiking can be a very successful method to avoid the killing of trees and a clear example of this is the fact that “at least two timber sales – in Washington State and Virginia – have been withdrawn due to tree spiking” (Manes 13). Achieving the retreat of companies or government agencies that use trees as if they were mere resources is the ultimate objective of tree spiking. Nevertheless, causing economic damages is the most immediate objective of this method and, as one of the activists in the novel explains, “if we can cut down their profits in the national forests the timber corporations will go back to growing trees on private property” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 131). If the economic losses caused by direct action are significant enough, companies can ultimately abandon national forests and, therefore, their nature and remaining wilderness can be preserved. Instead of using national forests, exploiters would be forced to use private lands and, as a consequence, the environmental impact caused by them and their power over nature would be significantly reduced. The negative aspect of tree spiking, that is, that nails can be

removed from trees, is, at the same time, another advantage of this method. This is due to the fact that removing the nails implies a high economic cost and in real life, it has already happened that the Forest Service “had to spend thousands of dollars removing the spikes” (Manes 11). So, tree spiking necessarily implies economic damages to companies or government agencies, whether nails stay in the trees or they are removed. By presenting this method of direct action in the novel, Abbey shows a new way of protecting living beings and the relationships that connect them. Likewise, tree spiking is portrayed as a way for causing more economic damages to companies and, although whether the trees are felled or not is not expressed, the action of the environmentalists definitely means a hard blow for those trying to dominate and exploit nature.

In one of the chapters dedicated to Bishop Love and Ranger Dick, Abbey expounds the radical differences between the wild desert and so-called progress and shows the environmental catastrophe the latter can bring. Facing the beauty and grandiosity of the desert West, Ranger Dick, who is part of the authorities who try to stop the environmentalists, expresses the following about the landscape: “It’s like a fairyland in here” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 135). Although she belongs to those trying to stop the active defence of the environment, she is fascinated by the uniqueness of the nature that surrounds her. The desert becomes a kind of magical and beautiful place for her and she recognizes that this land is valuable in itself and that it can offer much more than resources for economic growth. Thus, she somehow aligns with Abbey’s and his characters’ vision of the desert as a place that must be preserved. Besides, she does not agree with Bishop Love’s idea of progress, which means that environmental awareness develops even in the side of the enemies of those protecting the desert. The magnificence of this land, as it is portrayed by Abbey, contrasts significantly with Bishop Love’s vision, who sees the desert as a wasteland only usable for the ‘development’ of industrial society. The idea of this character is destroying the desert (because for him it has no value) and expanding the industrial civilization over the land thanks to uranium mining. Progress for him is described as follows:

someday we’re gonna have fifty thousand people living here, mining that uranium, digging that coal, building golf courses and swimming pools and condominiums and selling hotdogs and postcards to a million tourists a year. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 135)

The supposed progress Bishop Love talks about is based on the exploitation of uranium and coal, a fact that obligatorily implies a terrible impact for the desert and its living beings. The ‘benefits’ of such exploitation seem quite ridicule and defending that golf courses or hotdogs are ‘progress’ and that these aspects of civilization are better for humans than deep bonds with nature, seems the discourse of someone who is only concerned with economic profits. Thus, greed promotes the elimination of nature and of the links that unite humans with it in order to continue developing a society that values more postcards for tourists than wilderness, freedom or beauty. Solnit points out that “the land and water and woods are being used up in most places – they are being mined (...) in an unsustainable experiment of transplanting a way of life” (54). This experiment or, rather, violent imposition on the natural world and humans is clearly exemplified through Bishop Love’s vision. Imposing a way of life based on constant growth (in material terms) through the exploitation of others is incredibly destructive for both exploited and exploiters and, at some point, it will inevitably lead to collapse, the environmental catastrophe being one of its many horrible consequences. “The March of Progress, which is Leviathan’s name for its war against resisting humanity and nature” (Perlman, *Against His-story* 202) is the maximum aspiration for Bishop Love, that is, he wishes a ‘progress’ that equals war against life. Taking this into consideration, it is clear once again that Abbey portrays so-called progress and industrial capitalism as incredibly evil and destructive powers that do not really benefit human beings. Material development and money are trifle for real human growth in Abbey’s view and, for him, true growth comes through strong connections between living beings and between these beings and the environment. Thus, being in contact with the wild essence of humans is what allows positive growth for Abbey and, on the contrary, industrial civilization, which estranges humans from nature, makes it impossible.

As the story continues developing, the investigations by the federals follow their course in an attempt at finding and arresting the environmentalists. In a conversation, one of the agents is asked about the author of some actions and, this way, Abbey makes a kind of review of some of the measures taken through the novel so as to protect the environment. The federals talk about the explosion caused by Hayduke, the theft of Bishop Love’s bulldozer and the confrontation of this machine with another one driven by Love himself. The agents know about all the actions carried out in the novel but they do not have any clue about who their author(s) can be. Besides, one of them mentions

“rumors of further tree-spiking in the Kaibab National Forest” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 147), which means that, in addition to the fact that they are not completely sure about this action, this method for the protection of trees has been carried out previously. Thus, the amount of actions in defence of the environment is quite significant and this means that, most likely, the economic impact for those trying to profit from the exploitation of the nature of the West is considerable.

The previously mentioned fact that radical environmentalists threaten profits is expressed again through the words of one of the federals who states that these activists are “worse than terrorists. These people attack property. *Property*” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 148). This idea of considering that destroying property and profits is far more serious than killing people makes one think about other forms of terrorism that might be part of the institutions that form modern society. Trying to defend a value as important for the American society as property shows how industrial society is more concerned about profits than about the wellbeing of humans and nature. The economic prosperity of a minority is presented by federals and other supporters of industrial capitalism as incredibly more important than life on Earth, so the fact that evil greed threatens the interrelatedness of living and non-living natural entities is pointed out again. Therefore, the struggle radical environmentalists are engaged in can partly be explained as a life-versus-greed fight. In this struggle, activists are somehow ahead of the federals, because the latter cannot catch the former. In order to solve this problem, one of the agents proposes infiltrating the Earth First! but another one explains that “you can’t join it because they don’t have members, or officers, or dues or any kind of organization at all” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 149). Abbey makes clear that the lack of hierarchies and formal organization of radical environmental groups poses difficulties to ‘perfectly’ structured institutions. Thus, taking direct action so as to protect the environment means joining a fight that does not require big and powerful groups inside the legal framework. Acting in small and unrelated groups is the best way to be effective and to avoid getting caught. So, through the inability of the federals to catch the activists, Abbey can be trying again to turn people’s environmental awareness into active resistance against exploitation and destruction.

The next significant action is carried out by Hayduke alone and his target is once again the company Syn-Fuels. He seems determined to end with the company’s plans related to uranium mining in the desert and, aware of the environmental catastrophe the

accomplishment of these plans would bring, he acts against Syn-Fuels repeatedly and mercilessly. In this case, he pretends to be Dr Wiener and, with the correct I.D., he infiltrates the computer centre of the company. Infiltrating the places that belong to those exploiting nature in order to destroy them from within seems Hayduke's favourite method of action in *Hayduke Lives!*. In fact, although he also uses methods like the sabotage of bulldozers or the removal of survey stakes, attacking the companies from within is quite effective to stop destructive practices against nature and to significantly damage the economy of his enemies. Hayduke's aim is to destroy as many computers as possible so as to interfere with the company's practices and cause it severe economic losses. In order to do so, he wears a pair of gloves (to avoid leaving fingerprints) and with a common screwdriver he opens the computers, leaving their cooling systems uncovered. Then, he takes two jugs and fills them with water, more precisely, with "clear cool chlorinated ethylene glycol-enriched Phoenix City tap water" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 152), that is, with water polluted as a consequence of industrial/capitalist practices. Pouring water into the computers leaves them completely inoperative and the destruction of machines comes thanks to an element synonymous with nature and life. The fact that water is used to frustrate the plans of the company is very symbolic and implies a reversal of the situation caused by industrial civilization; it is a kind of revenge of the polluted water. In this case, instead of having machines disrupting the relationships between living beings and their environment, there is an element from nature that disrupts all links between technological 'beings.' Hayduke's liquid ally against Syn-Fuels destroys the interrelatedness of the computers essential for the functioning of the company and the machines themselves, which means that, although nature is usually colonized by technology, the latter (as a human creation) is not an invincible force and, therefore, there is a chance for nature to recover the place it has been deprived of. Thus, Hayduke's action with a screwdriver and water has as a consequence a "room filled with fetid vapors, the buzz of electronic fusion and confusion, the caustic smell of burning circuitry" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 153). The activist's action is a complete success and the machinery of the computer centre turns totally unusable. Consequently, Syn-Fuels is unable to carry out actions that require computer work, that is, any management, logistics or other issue that needs computers cannot be done. This way, the company's plans for uranium mining cannot be accomplished and destructive relationships towards the environment are disrupted. Furthermore, Hayduke's action implies a significant delay for any plan of the company and severe

economic losses, which can discourage Syn-Fuels and ultimately lead to the cessation of its environment-destroying activities.

Before the four protagonists of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* come together again in order to try to protect the desert from the dragline excavator Goliath, each character (except Hayduke) returns to the wild nature of the West. This return and the re-union with the desert make Sarvis, Abzug and Smith rejoin the struggle to protect the environment. Establishing bonds with the desert again is what leads them to the active and direct defence of the wild West. However, Dr Sarvis takes action even before reuniting with the wild land he loves so much, because his sense of duty never disappears completely (in spite of the possibility of being imprisoned again). In his way to the desert, he stops in a parking lot to rest and urinate. There, he encounters several machines that can produce serious damages to the environment, so he decides to take action in order to avoid wanton destruction. The procedure for sabotaging the machines is described in detail as follows:

He withdrew the dipstick from the loader's engine block, checked the oil. Half quart low. He inserted his funnel, uncapped the milk jug, poured sixty grams of lapidary grit into the crankcase, flushed the dipstick pipe clean with a squirt of WD-40, and replaced the dipstick. He proceeded to the next machine. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 168)

Abbey focuses again on the sabotage of machinery through the use of simple means and Sarvis proceeds cautiously and without leaving any sign that would make the action visible. By using small stones and sand from the very soil, he interferes with the inner functioning of the machines and makes them inoperative. As in the action carried out by Hayduke in the computer centre, Sarvis uses natural elements so as to destroy agents of the technological domination of nature. In this case, grit serves as a powerful weapon against the industrial/capitalist colonization of the desert and the action has as a result “a Case road-grader, a Mitsubishi crawler-tractor and a Caterpillar backhoe” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 169) sabotaged and unable to exploit the environment. These three machines can have an incredibly destructive power, so Sarvis' action disrupts the possible and environmentally-terrible relationships they could establish with (or rather against) the desert.

It is also worth mentioning that while Sarvis is carrying out the action, he has a kind of revelation about the struggle he has just rejoined. He thinks about his radical activism previous to his arrest and about the more mainstream environmentalism he engaged in after being released and some of his thoughts are the following: “How many months, perhaps years have I wasted? (...) besieging politicians, bureaucrats, and the *New York Times* with letters? (Abbey, *Hayduke* 168). Actions like sending letters or donating money for campaigns are considered by Sarvis a waste of time, because acting within the laws of the system cannot lead to real change. Considering that the industrial society is in itself a threat for nature, acting outside its norms and set of values and ideas is the only way for really achieving a positive change in the struggle to protect the environment. Thus, he concludes that, definitely, the approach for the protection of the desert he took with Hayduke, Abzug and Smith was much more effective than mainstream environmentalism and that nature could be defended more successfully through direct action. Abbey expresses again the fact that in order to solve an extreme situation, extreme measures are needed and it is made evident that the fiction of the novel constantly calls for a reaction in real life.

All the actions carried out by individuals (in most cases by Hayduke pretending to be someone else) are not against the company Syn-Fuels and its plans of uranium mining. Indeed, there is another significant action, whose impact is more symbolic than really effective against the exploitation of nature, that aims at an old enemy: Glen Canyon Dam. The attack against this monstrous structure is carried out by ‘The Baron,’ an unspecified activist who can be Hayduke, but also Seldom Seen Smith. First of all, The Baron steals a plane property of the Bureau of Reclamation, that is, the agency that managed the waters and completely transformed the landscape of the American West. Thus, the action aims at the dam but it is also a kind of revenge against those who transformed the hydrography of this land. The stolen plane is filled with jugs containing “black latex all-weather paint” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 182) and the plan is to throw them on the surface of the dam. Flying the plane and once in the correct position, The Baron throws the jugs with fifty gallons of the material inside of them to leave a huge mark on Glen Canyon Dam. The result is “a huge black spattered “X” upon the dam’s massive face, the “X” of condemnation” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 184), which clearly symbolizes that the dam has become a target for future attacks. The action recalls the real-life one carried out by the group Earth First! in which they simulated a huge crack in Glen

Canyon Dam in order to show their desire for its destruction. The Baron's desire is exactly the same and, thus, it is made evident that Abbey's hate for the dam and his wish to see it disappear continue in *Hayduke Lives!*. In *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, an attack against the dam by unknown activists is suggested, but, considering that it still restrains the waters of the Colorado River, it is clear that the destruction of Glen Canyon Dam was not achieved by them. Abbey's wish for the destruction of the dam is never left aside, especially taking into account that "the dam represents the myopia, antagonism, and urbanized anthropocentrism that he loathed" (Tagnani 339). Glen Canyon Dam is, for Abbey, the best example of the terrible consequences the existence of the insane industrial civilization can bring to life and to the environment. That is why he constantly promotes and justifies its elimination through direct action and his characters always think about future actions that could bring the dam down. Abbey could not witness the destruction of the dam during his lifetime and until now this huge structure of concrete continues to stop the natural course of the Colorado River. Nevertheless, Abbey had the hope that someday Glen Canyon would recover its essence after being liberated from the colonization of industrial civilization and *Hayduke Lives!* manifests this feeling through The Baron's action.

In the novel, the presence of the real-life group Earth First! is not only limited to the intervention of various activists in order to stop the advance of some bulldozers through peaceful resistance. In fact, there is a whole chapter called "Earth First! Rendezvous" in which a multitudinous meeting of environmentalists of all sorts is depicted. The meeting takes place somewhere deep in a national forest in the Kaibab Plateau and it lasts several days. The opening of the rendezvous is a welcome speech given by Dave Foreman, co-founder of the Earth First! in real life. By including real people and even references to himself and his work, as when immigration control is mentioned "as preached by your official ideologists Hardin and Abbey" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 202), the author makes the line dividing reality and fiction somehow blurred. This way, the novel loses a part of its fictitious nature and readers can feel the actions and the worsening environmental situation of the West as realities, a fact that can lead to significant reactions from people who might try to protect nature.

The meeting of the Earth First! is full of activities and workshops related to nature and to the relationships between it and humans. One of the workshops is about "wolves and endangered species" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 195), while another one is about deep

ecology. Thus, these workshops include, among other topics, information about the natural world and its species or about some of the ideas and the philosophy that lie behind the modern environmental movement. This kind of activities are helpful for the environmentalists attending the meeting because they focus on and develop around the complex relationships that can exist between humans and their environment in a time of history in which humans are significantly estranged from their natural origin and essence. Furthermore, the fact that someone “is giving a course in diesel mechanics” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 195) is explained, which would seem unrelated to the rest of workshops if the meeting was not a place mainly for radical environmentalists. Someone explains how the inner functioning of machines works so as other environmentalists become able to sabotage bulldozers or other mechanical agents that threaten life. Therefore, the rendezvous offers, at the same time, workshops and activities that focus on the interrelatedness of humans and their environment and on the disruption of destructive relationships by industrial/capitalist forces through direct action.

Nevertheless, these ideas meet opposition due to the fact that more moderate environmentalists, critical of the methods of direct action, are also attending the meeting. One of them expresses the following in a kind of speech against radical measures in order to protect the environment: “Your well-publicized advocacy of sabotage and monkey-wrenching has made Earth First! a synonym for terrorism” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 202). Despite the fact that the man who makes this claim is a (moderate) environmentalist, he seems to align himself with the discourse of those profiting from the destruction and exploitation of nature. This way, due to a fervent opposition to direct action by the most moderate sector, the environmental movement seems to be fragmented, which implies that its power decreases. Instead of a union between moderates and radicals in order to complementarily act inside and outside the laws, there is a clear split within the movement, which can only be negative for the environment that wants to be protected. Furthermore, the man also attacks the beliefs that form the basis of radical environmentalism, for example, by offering a distorted idea about deep ecology. He asserts that this current of thought that promotes the equality of all forms of life is “anti-human misanthropic people-hating bigotry” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 203). Thus, the ideological clashes and different approaches to the protection of the environment of moderates and radicals are portrayed in *Hayduke Lives!* somehow

as obstacles to achieve the union of all people with a significant environmental awareness. Abbey obviously defends the radical approach and sees moderate environmentalism ineffective. Nevertheless, a successful union of both approaches could be beneficial for the environment because activists could push companies and agencies from both the legal and the illegal fronts.

Moderate activism or the peaceful resistance used by some Earth First! adherents is considered useless by Hayduke and he sees the meeting as an occasion for people with an environmental awareness to have fun. He thinks that “they sure the fuck ain’t gonna stop GOLIATH by layin’ their bodies on the line” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 210) and that unless radical measures are taken, those exploiting the desert have the chances to win. Dr Sarvis’ disillusionment with mainstream environmentalism has already been pointed out, but this is not the only example in which activists decide to take more radical approaches considering the inefficacy of actions within the laws of the imposed system. Real-life activist Daniel McGowan explained in a trial that he resorted to radical methods (arson) “after being involved in environmental activism for a few years, and at a time when I felt utterly desperate as my attempts to change anything failed almost always” (Potter 205). McGowan was disappointed with mainstream activism, which was not leading to significant victories in defence of the environment, so he radicalized his approach and used direct action methods when everything else had failed. Furthermore, he expressed that he “felt the environmental situation in the world was getting more and more dire by the day” (Potter 206), so the only way of making a real difference in the struggle to protect nature was using extreme methods. Radical techniques as a reaction to an extreme situation was, for McGowan, the only way for stopping the exploitation/destruction of life in the planet. This idea is exactly the one that is in Hayduke’s mind and he considers that after the inevitable defeat of the Earth First! supporters when trying to stop Goliath, the time for real action will come. He thinks that peaceful resistance will only lead to arrests and beatings by the authorities and that only undercover sabotage of the monstrous machine at night will be able to stop it. Thus, the chapter called “Earth First! Rendezvous” finishes with Hayduke’s plans of direct action against a machine, which makes clear that Abbey always defends and promotes actions like sabotage as the most effective way to protect nature, especially if this protection means the preservation of the wild spaces of the American West.

The highly aggressive colonization of nature and the environment is presented many times all through the novel, making clear that not only radical environmentalists, but also industrial/capitalist powers are active in the struggle. A significant example of the domination of the environment is introduced through the thoughts of Bishop Love's wife during a conversation between both. Although she normally agrees with her husband's ideas of 'progress' and 'development,' she laments the conquest of the night sky by industrial civilization. Her exact thoughts are the following: "No stars available. No moon. Technology hath vanquished night" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 215) in the supposed "America the Beautiful" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 215), which was created after the radical transformation of the original land in order to allow exploitation and economic growth. Technology dominates the night sky (even if they are not in close contact) and the stars and the moon are somehow effaced from existence. These entities from the outer space are eliminated from human lives as a consequence of the predominance of technology in the Earth and, thus, any kind of bond between humans and the night sky becomes impossible. Abbey's fascination with the desert sky has already been pointed out and, especially, the mystical bonds that united both are worth mentioning again. In fact, the woman's thoughts about the conquest of the sky are strongly linked to the fact that "Abbey's aversion to some forms of technology stems from his concern over that technology's potential to disrupt ecomystical experiences" (Tagnani 331). Despite the fact that this technology does not directly destroy the stars and the moon (but their capacity to be perceived by humans and the human capacity to perceive them), the relationships that can be established with them are indeed eliminated. Humans can no longer experience the sky in any way and the chance to develop mystical bonds with it disappears as a consequence of technology. Therefore, in this case, there is a colonization of the environment (of the outer space that, for Abbey, is also part of the West and of its landscape), which does not directly destroy its elements, but which eliminates any kind of interrelatedness that can exist between humans and the sky.

However, this is not the only notable example of the terrible impact of industrial civilization in the West. Like in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, in *Hayduke Lives!* the hydrography of this desert land and all the life forms that depend on specific accumulations of water are negatively affected by so-called progress. When talking about the Green River, the following is expressed: "Gone. A river no more" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 222). As when the protagonists of the novel realize about the 'disappearance'

of the Colorado River in *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, in this case too, the original existence of a part of the West is radically transformed in order to serve the interests of those profiting from the exploitation of nature. The desolated space left after the intervention of industrial/capitalist powers has nothing to do with the description given about the river as it originally was:

A living river flowed and sparkled, fish danced, herons stalked and falcons gyred and stooped, with a green fragrant forest, on either bank, sheltering the secret lives of deer and ocelot, jaguar and javelina, gray wolf and black bear, red fox and puma. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 221-222)

The Green River was characterized by its wild waters and by the many types of living beings that depended on it. Besides, along with the forests that were also destroyed, the river formed a rich ecosystem that was home to species unique to the continent. Therefore, the elimination of this river means a huge environmental catastrophe. Its destruction by industrial/capitalist powers implies the disappearance of a full of life, unique space in an area where water is quite absent, in addition to the loss of innumerable animal and plant lives that can no longer inhabit their original home due to the destruction of the ecosystem. Nevertheless, what is even more dramatic is the fact that this environmental disaster is intentionally produced so as to provide water to “swamp coolers, car washes, fire hydrants, Laundromats, golf courses, swimming pools” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 221) and other examples of ‘development.’ The insanity of the industrial civilization is depicted again through the contrast of the many forms of life in the river and the absurd examples of ‘progress’ that require the transportation of water and that necessarily mean the destruction of natural spaces. In order to allow the creation and growth of the industrial civilization in the desert West, it was necessary to completely transform and destroy the original environment. However, Abbey makes clear that the dispute over water in the West is not settled and that attacks against rivers and other accumulations of water continue happening. In order to maintain that civilization in the desert stealing water from the land is necessary, so the existence of industrial/capitalist powers in the West will always mean environmental catastrophes for the desert and its waters.

The issue of nuclear energy, including nuclear plants or uranium mining, is a main concern throughout the novel because Abbey considered it a serious menace for the desert and its forms of life (human and non-human). Smith’s and Kathy’s opposition to

the plans of Bishop Love and Hayduke's direct action against Syn-Fuels shows that these characters are also profoundly concerned about the future of the desert West, which is threatened by the nuclear industry. Abbey's characters' will to stop nuclear 'advancements' manifests his desire for people to oppose this kind of practices that can be so harmful for life. That is why another significant action related to the nuclear sector is described in the novel. The action is Hayduke's last lone attack made known and it is presented through a conversation between the rest of the protagonists. They talk about an attempt at sinking a ship carrying nuclear reactors by their comrade Hayduke, which makes clear that all the actions carried out by him alone targeted the nuclear industry. The fact that he managed to get inside of the ship without being discovered and that, then, he tried to sabotage it, is explained. In order to sink the ship he "opened the seacocks, monkey-wrenched the pumps" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 227). That is, he proceeded almost like he was sabotaging a bulldozer or any other machine. However, he fails in his mission, the ship does not sink as expected and the nuclear reactors get to their destination, a nuclear power plant in Phoenix. Always being successful in direct actions of this kind is quite difficult and sometimes failure and the inability to protect the environment are the only results. In this case, the ineffectiveness of the sabotage leads to the fact that "now we have the world's biggest nuke plant setting thirty miles upwind from Phoenix" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 227). The success of Hayduke's action could really have made a change: the nuclear reactors would have disappeared in the sea and the nuclear plant would have lost power and money. Therefore, it is clear that some actions can have a really positive impact in the struggle to protect the environment while the absence or failure of actions can have disastrous consequences for nature.

The reaction of the government about this incident is also worth mentioning, due to the fact that it presented the sabotage attempt as an accident without consequences. The reason for not admitting and making public it was an attempt of sabotage is explained by stating that "government don't want people to get hold of no funny ideas" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 228). Companies and government agencies fear that giving information about direct action against them and in favour of the environment can lead to further assaults on their interests and profits. Therefore, they hide as much information as possible about the environmental impact of their practices as well as about actions against them. Potter explains that "the mainstreaming of these movements, and the accompanying shift in public opinion, has potentially grave implications for industries that profit from

the abuse of animals and the destruction of the environment” (240-241). In fact, the appearance in the media of actions of this type can easily encourage more people to engage in the active protection of the environment, especially because, once aware of the terrible implications of companies’ practices for nature and life in general, a change of ideas of the population is not difficult. In this very case, Abbey suggests that informing the population about the consequences of nuclear practices and about opposition to them can easily make people resist nuclear ‘development,’ which can be an important step in order to drive industrial/capitalist forces away from the desert West.

The dragline excavator Goliath continues advancing through the desert, but environmentalists have plans of trying to stop it in a place called the Neck. A big meeting of supporters of the Earth First!, Erika, Kathy and other environmentalists is expected in this place. Nevertheless, Sarvis, Abzug and Smith (and obviously Hayduke) will not attend, because their plan is to act clandestinely afterwards. During a poker game in which they talk about the resistance to Goliath at the Neck, Sarvis expresses the following: “the megamachine means slavery. Submission to slavery is the ultimate moral disgrace” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 234). His words can be interpreted both literally, making reference to Goliath, and metaphorically, referring to the whole complex of institutions, practices and relationships that form the industrial civilization. In any case, the existence of both implies the slavery of living beings because the bonds of freedom that unite them with nature are disrupted by the unnatural impositions and processes of machines. Surrendering and consenting this domination of machines is considered terrible by Sarvis, a moral insult that should be unacceptable for humans, that is, for living beings that originally belong to nature and that are deeply connected to it. For this reason, resistance to the advancement of Goliath is presented as the only option to protect the environment and preserve the dignity of humans as free beings.

The actions of resistance at the Neck are pivotal events in *Hayduke Lives!* and they transmit the sense that a powerful social movement is developing so as to fight against the exploitation and destruction of the planet and its forms of life. The kind of active environmentalism portrayed in this part of the novel is very illustrative of real-life struggles to protect nature and this activism finds a place between mainstream environmentalism and the extreme methods used by Hayduke. First of all, when talking about the resistance actions in the Neck, it must be mentioned that the environmentalists

fighting to protect the place are “more girls than boys, more women than men” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 238). The female presence in the resistance against Goliath is bigger than the male one and, in real life too, the presence of women in (radical) environmental circles is significantly important. That is, in the social movement for the defence and preservation of the environment, women play an incredibly noteworthy role (it is not a male-dominated movement) and, indeed, as Mies and Shiva express, “everywhere, women were the first to protest against environmental destruction” (3). Even outside the radical environmental movement, women around the world protest and resist the attacks against nature perpetrated by industrial/capitalist forces. The wish to protect local communities and the direct and profound bonds that unite them with nature make women oppose actively those exploiting the environment in innumerable places around the Earth. A significant example of this resistance is the one of Chipko women in the Himalaya who “have organized to resist the environmental destruction caused by logging” (Shiva, *The Impoverishment* 85). The environmental impact of logging, which includes soil erosion or the destruction of ecosystems, and the damage it also causes to small communities is resisted by women in the Himalaya and they become the true defenders of life by actively opposing the exploitation of nature. The patriarchal industrial civilization attacks women and nature equally, so an identification of the former with the latter is a main driving force for their resistance. Besides, women “attempt to reweave the web which connects their life to the life of their children and the life of the planet” (Shiva, *The Impoverishment* 85). That is, their resistance has also the objective of recovering and preserving the interrelatedness of living beings and their environment. Therefore, the presence of women in the resistance actions at the Neck cannot be neglected. They are there in order to stop the domination and destruction of nature by machines and to protect the bonds that unite all forms of life (and even non-life forms). However, their resistance is also part of an older struggle of domination of women, of a struggle against those patriarchal and industrial powers that want to grow incessantly by exploiting women and nature.

The very first action during the process of resistance at the Neck is one of the most basic works a radical environmentalist has to carry out: the removal of survey stakes. Abbey always lays emphasis on this work due to its simplicity and to the loss of time it causes to companies. Workers of Syn-Fuels place the survey stakes in the correct position after two removals, but environmentalists are ready to remove them again. In

fact, adherents of the Earth First! “yanked them out and flung them over the rim: pink ribbons flying, the stakes vanished” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 238). Not only do activists remove the stakes, but they also make them disappear so as workers cannot place them again. Thus, the exact place where they want machines to work cannot be known and further exploitation of the land is avoided for the third time. In addition to the environmentalists and the workers, there is also a lone journalist in the area, but this seems to be an exception because the media does not want to talk about incidents of this kind. The existence of resistance to projects of environmental destruction can only harm those exploiting nature and, that is why, as it is explained, “not only the event itself must be suppressed but all news of it as well” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 239). Neither the actions of the environmentalists nor the aggressive repression by the authorities will be known by the population, so making people aware of the exploitation of the environment and of the struggle to protect it seems improbable. As “most acts of ecotage are designed to generate favorable publicity for the cause as well as to end specific projects” (Young 54), the media, serving the interests of industrial capitalism, has no intention of covering the news. The appearance in the media of the environmentalists resisting the advancement of Goliath would undoubtedly mean more opposition to the domination of nature by machines and more people would join the activists in their fight against industrial/capitalist forces. Although the concern for the environment is not widespread among all the population, certainly, there are people who care about the environmental situation and that would become more active in the struggle if information was more available. Nevertheless, Abbey ultimately encourages resistance and direct action every time nature is threatened, independent of the information at hand, because the mainstream media cannot be trusted in the struggle between environmentalists and industrial capitalism.

Despite the fact that the actions at the Neck have the aim of stopping Goliath, there are other machines, which only bring death and destruction to nature, clearing the way for the dragline excavator. In order to protect the place, the environmentalists have to stop all machines, especially considering that the two bulldozers approaching the Neck “uprooted trees and shoved them aside, pushed boulders off the right-of-way” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 242-243). These machines are significantly less destructive than Goliath, but, in spite of that, their advancement implies the deaths of several trees and the violent transformation of the landscape as a consequence of the destruction of natural

formations. Considering the serious impact these two bulldozers have on the desert environment, it can be thought that the damage Goliath can cause notably transcends that of all other machines, which means the consequences for the desert can be catastrophic. Facing such destructive machines, the activists decide to resist again in a non-violent way and, this time, some of them also get chained to a tree. Five women, among them Erika, get “chained by the waist against the hairy-barked bole of the tree, (...) free to operate their arms and legs” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 242). They are chained in a correct and comfortable position that allows them a certain degree of mobility, in case the situation requires arms and legs movements (obviously not to attack the authorities). This example of civil disobedience is expected to stop the bulldozers and preserve the life of the tree. Workers cannot harm the activists, so in order to continue advancing and to cut the tree the women must be unchained. However, as they are not willing to separate themselves from the tree, their enemies are the ones who have to struggle to break the chain or somehow take them away. Furthermore, the rest of the activists join hands and form a human chain, a line of peaceful resisters “up across the narrowest portion of the land bridge” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 243). This human chain makes the advancement of the bulldozers physically impossible because it blocks the narrow path of the Neck in a way that does not allow any movement. Therefore, a notable amount of environmental activists participates resisting the advancement of machines at the Neck, using their bodies as shields in the defence of nature and non-violent resistance as the method of action.

Until the moment when the machines reach the point where the activists are ready to resist, the trail of death and destruction they create continues. Several animals get out from their dens fleeing the noises and tremors produced by the machines and the ones that cannot escape “slipped off the edge of the bridge” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 245). Even the movement of the bulldozers causes deaths of animals, a fact that makes evident that their mere presence implies a threat to life. Although the environmental damage caused by these human-driven mechanical creations is presented as terrible, they are only ‘clearing’ the area for Goliath. Their objective is to prepare the place for the coming of the monstrous dragline excavator so as it can carry out its mission of exploiting and destroying the nature of the American West. When Bishop Love, promoter of ‘progress’ and defender of Goliath, arrives at the Neck, he faces the environmentalists and explains them what the plans of ‘development’ in the area are. Goliath’s purpose is to mine an

exact place and to transform it into a proper exploitation site. Love explains that, for this reason, a road and an access to the mine are needed, so the examples of ‘development’ he talks about are basically related to mining, that is, to the direct exploitation of the land. The environmentalists do not show any sign of giving up despite Love’s menaces and they continue chained to the tree and forming a human chain. In their position of resistance the activists see movement in the distance and the situation seems to get worse due to the fact that the authorities (among them police units and S.W.A.T. agents) are approaching the Neck. Nevertheless, what seems even more terrible is the fact that the image of Goliath is looming over the environmentalists, the giant machine is close to the Neck. Many aspects about the dragline excavator are explained, but the following is worth mentioning:

The red eyes blinked on the summit of the 285-foot boom and A-frame (...) And it rocked as it walked, shaking from side to side on the irregular terrain; the powerhouse roared like a cannibal dynamo, Moloch the insatiable; and the 130-foot gigantic steel shoes (...) rose and fell. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 249)

The machine, with its immense dimensions and terrible appearance, is presented as a true monster that can destroy everything it finds in its way. The incredibly negative consequences Goliath can cause to the environment are unthinkable, but it is evident that the one-way destructive relationships it can establish with the desert would be irreversible. Therefore, the resistance of the activists enters a new phase in which they have to face the authorities and the looming presence of Goliath itself. However, the environmentalists are not willing to give up and they try to stop the advancement of the machines in spite of all adversities.

The peaceful resistance of the environmentalists functions as a weapon against the company that owns Goliath in two different ways. On the one hand, it stops the physical advancement of machines, making further exploitation of nature impossible for them. On the other hand, it causes a severe delay in the plans of the company, in addition to serious economic losses. The direct sabotage of machines would arguably produce a more significant economic impact, but the non-violent resistance of the activists is also economically damaging. As it is explained, “even so trivial an interruption as this Earth First! farce – with motors running – was costing Syn-Fuels Corporation close to ten thousand dollars a minute” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 255). Keeping all the machinery operating for more time than expected costs the company huge amounts of money, so the delay

caused by the peaceful resistance significantly hurts those trying to exploit nature. The more the environmentalists resist, the bigger the economic impact of their action. Therefore, resisting for a long time is the best way to harm the company, discourage it from further practices and preserve the bonds between living and non-living beings at the Neck. Nevertheless, the authorities manage to take the five women (Erika in the last place) out of the chain and as “the rest of Earth First! (...) had been hauled off to bail or jail about half an hour earlier” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 258), the resistance to protect the Neck finishes. The activists are arrested for trying to resist the destruction of the environment peacefully and, as all opposition is eliminated, the authorities and Syn-Fuels seem to be the winners in this fight in which the attempt at protecting a natural space is finally a failure. The defeat of the environmentalists is a strong enough reason for the authorities and company members for celebration and at the end of the day they eat, drink and rejoice in their victory. The triumph of ‘progress’ means a serious threat for the desert West and Bishop Love explains how the area will be transformed in the future. He states that “five years from now you’re gonna see a Holiday Inn on this Neck, and a eighteen-hole golf course on Eden Mesa” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 259), which means that the terrible plans of so-called development are expected to substitute desert wilderness for aspects of the capitalist society that do not provide humans with anything meaningful for existence. Therefore, the failure at protecting the Neck can imply not only the exploitation and destruction of nature, but also the elimination of bonds that unite living beings and the environment and the replacement of these bonds with superfluities of the industrial civilization.

However, Bishop Love’s plans will not be carried out because the Neck is finally protected by Hayduke, Sarvis, Abzug and Smith, who, this time, are accompanied by the mysterious ‘lone ranger’ called Jack. While the authorities and Syn-Fuel members are celebrating their victory Goliath starts moving, driven by someone unconnected to the celebration. These people react with the objective of stopping the machine, but a voice tells them, through the speakers of the dragline excavator, to listen and not to intervene. At the idea of shooting at Goliath, the authorities and company members realize that “even one of them lights cost several thousand bucks” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 264), a fact that gives an idea about the huge quantity of money the dragline excavator costs. Thus, the destruction of the machine can even imply the economic ruin for the company, which would mean that the threat for the desert West of nuclear development

and exploitation would disappear. Simply destroying Goliath means an economic catastrophe for those exploiting the desert, but as the power of the machine is tremendous, the driver of the mechanical monster decides to give it another utility. Goliath takes hold of two bulldozers, property of Bishop Love, and suspends them above a cliff with the intention of letting them fall. The destruction of the two bulldozers implies a huge loss for Love, especially in economic terms because what Goliath holds is “one-half million dollars’ worth of hostages” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 264). Thus, by using Goliath, the group of protagonists manages to destroy machines whose purpose is to destroy nature, in addition to cause serious economic losses to their enemy Bishop Love. The giant dragline excavator continues moving towards a cliff because the objective of the driver is to make it fall so as to completely destroy it. Love laments the imminent ‘death’ of Goliath due to the fact that it “cost Syn-Fuels thirty-seven million dollars” (Abbey, *Hayduke* 268), a fact that makes evident that the company will not be able to recover from the loss of the machine. Finally, Goliath reaches the edge of the cliff and, while the people inside of it manage to escape, it disastrously falls producing a mechanical massacre that means the end of Syn-Fuels’ plans of exploiting the desert. Therefore, the protagonists manage to disrupt the destructive relationships of nature-domination of industrial/capitalist forces by destroying all the machines in the area and, additionally, to produce an economic damage so huge that further practices by the exploiters of nature seem improbable.

The detailed actions and procedures carried out by the protagonists in order to destroy Goliath successfully are explained in the chapter called “How They Done It.” However, before focusing on these exact actions, there is a fact about this event worth mentioning. In order to try to stop Goliath, Love and the rest communicate through a radio system with the sub-station to ask them to shut the machine’s power off. Nevertheless, this is impossible because there are two masked people armed with guns in the sub-station, a fact that clearly means that the activists are resorting to even more extreme measures to stop Goliath. The guns are not expected to be used, but its mere presence implies breaking one of the norms of the previously mentioned code of the eco-warriors. The extreme situation created by Goliath’s presence leads the protagonists to act more radically and, as the machine’s advancement would mean an irreversible environmental disaster, they are even willing to carry weapons (just to intimidate, not to use them). The actions against Goliath are only part of the fiction of the novel and in

real-life actions weapons are not used. Therefore, Abbey portrays a really extreme situation in which, in order to protect nature successfully, radicalizing the methods of action is necessary, but still without hurting or killing anyone.

The complex procedure of Goliath's 'death' is explained in detail in the mentioned chapter ("How They Done It") and it includes interfering with the normal functioning of the machine in addition to controlling it so as to produce its fall. The first step of the plan is related to the aforementioned incident with guns. Abzug and Sarvis have the mission of entering the sub-station because the guard there is the only person inside their range of action and, therefore, he can frustrate their plans. The environmentalists carry guns due to the fact that the guard has one too, so these weapons are a kind of protection so as not to get arrested or hurt. Nevertheless, they have no intention of using them. In fact, Smith explains that the guns are only instruments for intimidation so as "to take his gun away and cuff his hands" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 273) and he emphasizes the following: "Don't hurt him" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 273). Thus, their weapons are only shown in order to take the guard's gun away and to avoid any serious confrontation that could harm or even kill people. Smith's wish of not hurting the guard makes the environmentalists' stance of not causing harm to living beings clear, so the situation's exceptionality is what leads to the presence of guns. The inability to stop Goliath would cause the death of innumerable living beings. That is why, having guns without using them is a necessary measure to end the destruction of the nature of the West.

Once the sub-station is taken by the activists and the guard cannot cause any trouble, Hayduke and Smith approach Goliath following "the new dirt freeway, the dusty smear of devastation" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 275). That is, they walk through the trail of destruction that results from the machine's movement. Considering that only the physical advancement of the dragline excavator is incredibly destructive for nature, the elimination of the machine is essential for the preservation of life in the West and, for that, all measures necessary are used. The two activists climb from a ladder and enter the engine room in the main deck of Goliath. There, the first step taken is finding the master switch in order "to turn on power to the engine room" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 276). This is a safety measure so as no one (in case someone enters the machine) can stop them while they are controlling Goliath. Besides, they lock some doors to make sure they are not caught, thus emphasizing the importance of the second rule of the code of the eco-warrior. This is probably the only real chance of protecting the desert from

Goliath's threat, because if they fail other environmentalists will not take their place and the owners of the machine will avoid any other action against it, so not getting caught is of vital importance. Therefore, it can be said that the future of life in the desert, of the interrelatedness of living beings and the environment and, all in all, of the true West, depends on the success of the action to destroy Goliath.

Next, Hayduke and Smith enter the control cabin and, although the former sits in order to control the pedals and grabs the levers, the latter warns him against this reckless behaviour, which can mean the failure of the mission. Smith explains that before starting Goliath it is better to wire up the levers in case their enemies start shooting. Thus, Hayduke proceeds in the following way:

Opened his pack and pulled out a coil of wire and a fencing tool. (...) they attached separate lengths of wire to each essential operating lever, including the horizontally moving foot pedals, and ran the wires back through the cab and onto the catwalk inside the engine room. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 279)

Wiring up the hand levers allows the two environmentalists to control the machine from the outside of the cabin and, thus, to continue with their actions in a safer way. Staying inside of the control cabin would mean being completely exposed to the attacks of their enemies, so, this way, they are protected. Besides, as the functioning of Goliath's controls is not complex (levers and pedals that make the machine move), controlling the mechanical monster from outside of the cabin does not imply any kind of difficulty.

After having prepared the system to control Goliath easily, Hayduke and Smith take all steps necessary to make their escape possible. As their intention is to make the machine fall from a cliff, staying inside would necessarily mean their death. Therefore, they take two long ropes and tie them to the catwalk with the intention of descending rappelling. Both activists have experience rappelling, thanks to their many explorations through the desert, so their escape from the machine can be accomplished without serious problems, even if there is obviously a danger in descending from a moving structure. Once everything is correctly arranged, Hayduke proceeds to talk with the enemy while Smith gets ready to turn the machine on. The idea is to use the speakers at the time of starting Goliath, because otherwise the noise would make their enemies take some action. While Hayduke intimidates and distracts those celebrating their apparent 'victory,' Smith "turned on the black "Excitation" switch" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 280).

Thus, Goliath becomes completely operative and the two environmentalists are able to control it according to their wishes before actually destroying it.

Hayduke is really enthusiastic about talking through Goliath's speakers and when Smith tells him to pick the two bulldozers up, he does not listen to his comrade. Smith, then, proceeds to use the wires connected to the foot pedals of the machine and it starts moving. Goliath's potential to destroy nature has already been made clear, however, with the two activists controlling the mechanical monster, its destructive power is used for other purposes. The fact that Smith makes Goliath advance "smashing a little ten-ton Schramm self-propelled drill rig, crushing a Chevy shit-green government pickup truck, and shoving a heavy-duty Caterpillar road-grading machine to the edge of the rim" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 280) is explained. This time, instead of to harm the desert nature, Goliath is used to destroy more machines that can cause serious environmental damages as a consequence of their power to transform and exploit the land. Thus, the destructive forces of the dragline excavator turn against those trying to profit from the exploitation of the desert and the activists manage to use it for purposes beneficial for the land of the West. Although this incident is incredibly positive for those struggling to protect the desert, Hayduke and Smith have the intention of continue using Goliath and, therefore, they proceed to pick Bishop Love's bulldozers up. The method used by Smith so as to take hold of the bulldozers is explained in detail as follows:

He unlocked the drag brake, pulled the wire on the right-hand control lever, and draglined the mighty bucket toward the first Mitsubishi, cradled the tractor like a toy in the bucket's outlandish jaws, pulled the HOIST lever and raised the bulldozer aloft. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 281)

The functioning of Goliath does not seem complex and thanks to some easy manoeuvres, Smith manages to pick one of Love's bulldozers. Then, he repeats this procedure and takes hold of the other machine. Finally, after hanging them above the cliff so as their enemies can contemplate their work, he throws them to the chasm and they finish completely destroyed. Therefore, the environmentalists' action has as a result the elimination of all machines (except Goliath, for the moment) from the area of the Neck, which means that the relationships of domination and exploitation industrial/capitalist powers wanted to establish with the desert do not materialize. Environmentally disastrous actions are avoided and, this way, life and the interrelatedness of beings in the desert West are preserved.

Somehow unexpectedly, Goliath seems to start falling from the cliff and, even if the activists' intention is to destroy it, this fall is not completely controlled or intentional. The fall is due to the fact that Goliath can move "in any direction but only in a forward-facing, reverse-advancing attitude" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 282). That is, in a way similar to a crab. The dragline excavator is not designed to move as fast and fluently as a car; its sole purpose is to destroy the earth, so mobility is not its strength. In fact, the poor mobility of the machine was never a preoccupation for its owners because what matters is its capacity "for digging open pits, pits the size, if desired, of Lake Erie. Of Lake Titicaca" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 282). The terribly destructive power of the dragline excavator is expressed even in the moments when it is about to disappear, making clear that its destruction implies an important victory for the environment. A machine with the capacity of producing huge holes in the surface of the Earth necessarily implies a threat to all living beings, natural formations and the landscape and its impact menaces ecosystems, life in general and the very future and essence of the land. Therefore, although not totally intentional, Goliath's fall from the cliff can mean the protection of the environment of the desert West, as well as the liberation (to a certain extent) of the land and of its living beings from industrial/capitalist colonization and domination. As soon as Hayduke and Smith realize that the machine is falling, they decide to escape and use the ropes to rappel and save their lives. Outside Goliath, they witness the fall of this giant mechanical monster that threatened to destroy the nature of the West by opening the Earth so as Syn-Fuels could exploit it to produce nuclear energy. Among noises, crashes and flames, Goliath "sank down and down into the deep time of geologic history" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 287), 'dying' and disappearing inside of the canyon. The gigantic machine that would have implied an environmental catastrophe in the desert is finally eliminated and the activists accomplish their mission of protecting a part of the wild West. Therefore, the use of radical direct action is presented as incredibly effective and successful and as the only way to truly stop the domination of nature. The more 'moderate' actions portrayed at the Neck could not stop the advancement of the machines due to the intervention of the authorities, but the clandestine actions carried out by the protagonists fulfil the dream of all environmentalists of stopping Goliath. Abbey, as a fervent defender of direct action, depicts these methods as the only way to defeat industrial/capitalist powers that profit from the exploitation of nature. Therefore, for him, the future of the planet and its living beings depends on the active resistance and direct action against the enemies of wilderness, freedom and, above all, life.

The elimination of Goliath is successfully achieved but, nevertheless, the situation around the 'death' of this machine is not completely perfect. Considering the huge size of the dragline excavator and the fact that only its movement brings destruction, it is not surprising that, during the process of falling from the cliff, it causes more deaths to the inhabitants of the desert. Goliath is connected to a power line that breaks and separates from the machine and that, consequently, "electrocuted a number of innocent desert shrubs, torched off a thicket of tangled sticks containing a family of pack rats and their guests the kissing bugs, burned up an eagles' nest" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 287). The power line, full of energy, kills several animals and plants and, even if the eagles survive, their home is burned. The violence of Goliath's death does not only leave a pile of destroyed metal and circuits, but it also means the end of the existence of living beings of the desert West that, once again, are innocent victims of the terrible power of industrial civilization.

However, there is another death that seems more noteworthy (although the eagles would not care) and that is especially important for the protagonists and in relation to the nature of radical environmentalism: the death of a man. When Hayduke and Smith are escaping from the place of their action, a man points at Hayduke with a gun and tells him to stop. Smith asks him to drop his gun and both face each other with their weapons in a moment of maximum tension. Voices of more men approaching are heard and, suddenly, there is a shot that kills the man who was stopping Hayduke. Jack, the 'lone ranger' who was accompanying the activists in their mission against Goliath, pulls the trigger and kills a man who could provoke their arrest, which would mean the inability to escape and, therefore, the loss of freedom. He expresses that he did not kill the man intentionally; his aim was to shoot at his hand so as to disarm him. So, the death of the man is partly an accident, not a cold-blooded murder. Anyway, Jack kills the man and he does not "feel too good about it. Nor too bad neither" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 289). He is not proud of his action, but he is fully aware of the fact that the group of activists is safe and sound (and free) thanks to his shot. The fact that radical environmentalists always avoid hurting or killing people has been mentioned several times and the fact that Jack is the one who shoots is quite interesting in that respect. Jack is not considered a radical environmentalist, but a true outlaw with a high environmental awareness, so his code is not exactly the one of the group of protagonists. Independently of considering the killing of the man an action carried out by radical environmentalists or not, it is an event

within Abbey's fiction and in real-life environmentalists have not killed anyone. Nevertheless, the opposite has actually happened and there is an example of the death of an activist during this struggle. Manes talks about an incident in which the French government's "secret service frogmen placed demolition charges on the hull" (201) of a Greenpeace ship. The consequence was that "the blast killed Fernando Pereira, a Greenpeace photographer" (Manes 201), which makes evident that governments or companies are always willing to attack life, in this case, by directly killing a human being. This fact sheds some light on the truth about this struggle to protect (or destroy, depending on the side) the environment and makes clear that those in power are the ones closer to terrorism by considering profits more important than any life. All in all, the death related to radical environmentalism portrayed by Abbey in the novel is not really illustrative of this type of activism. One of the basic tenets of radical environmentalism is not hurting or killing people, but the unexpected can always happen. So, Abbey can be trying to express that due to the complexity, severity and unpredictable consequences in the struggle between the opposing forces of nature and industrial civilization, anything can happen, even undesired deaths.

After the 'death' of Goliath, Sarvis, Abzug and Smith have the intention of going back to their normal lives and Hayduke separates from the rest of the group, apparently, without a clear objective or destination. With the victory of the activists, the desert West seems to be protected and preserved, at least for a time, but this does not mean, in any way, that the domination and exploitation of the environment has ceased. Atrocities against nature continue to be carried out everywhere in the planet and, this is why, Hayduke does not leave the struggle he is engaged in after the destruction of Goliath. He heads for the coast and, after successfully escaping from some people looking for him, he reaches a ship that is waiting for him. It is explained that "he read the name under the bow: *Sea Shepherd* (Abbey, *Hayduke* 305), which means that another real-life environmental group is included in the novel. Besides, when Hayduke arrives at the ship, he talks with a man called Paul who is, more than probably, Paul Watson, founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. Thus, by including real people and groups Abbey makes his fiction closer to reality, a fact that can make people identify with the struggle more easily and, therefore, become active in the defence of the environment. Hayduke joins a very active group that uses different direct action methods to protect the planet (especially the sea) and its forms of life. Indeed, the group "participated in a

variety of campaigns, from stopping seal hunts along the Labrador coast to interfering with British Columbia's wolf-eradication plans to chasing off Japanese fishing fleets, using highly destructive drift nets in the North Pacific" (Manes 112). The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society seriously struggles to maintain destructive industrial/capitalist powers away from the seas and, like Abbey, considers direct action the only effective method to protect life forms and the environment. Hayduke perfectly fits in the group and it allows him to develop his spirit of eco-warrior by offering him the opportunity of continuing carrying out direct actions in order to save nature. Taking this into consideration, it is evident that this character devotes his life to the struggle and that his lifestyle is the one of a true radical environmentalist. Despite the fact that Abbey did not write more about the adventures and actions of the group formed by Hayduke, Sarvis, Abzug and Smith, the ending in *Hayduke Lives!* suggests that, at least Hayduke, has no intention of leaving the struggle and that more actions like the ones told in this novel and in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* will continue being carried out so as to stop the industrial/capitalist domination of nature.

The very last chapter of the novel, called "Resurrection," starts with the portrayal of the environmental destruction caused by Goliath and the landscape of devastation described includes, but is not limited, to the following:

The former deerpath is gone, obliterated by the hundred-foot-wide trail of the late Super-G.E.M. Where once the wild ricegrass grew, vibrant in the breeze, and bunchgrass, yucca, redbud, scarlet penstemon and purple lupine, is now the broad roadway of nothing but stone, sand, and compacted soil churned to a fine floury dust. (Abbey, *Hayduke* 306)

Goliath's march brought the annihilation of innumerable plants and now the land is desolated and transformed into a wasteland that has nothing to do with the desert Abbey loved so much. The giant dragline excavator can be understood as a metaphor for the whole industrial civilization, whose advancement over nature implies the eradication of life forms and of their union with the environment. Despite the fact that the activists managed to stop Goliath, the trail of destruction it left seems to be irreparable, like the damage caused by industrial civilization. Nevertheless, not everything is lost. The turtle buried by the machine at the beginning of the novel "emerges from its grave. The desert tortoise resurrects himself. Covered with dust but unbroken, uncrushed" (Abbey, *Hayduke* 307). Although the destructive power of the industrial/capitalist forces is huge,

the regenerative power of nature seems to be even bigger. The turtle becomes a symbol, a metaphor for the nature that always tries to continue living and spreading life. As in the case of the grass that grows under (and opens cracks in) the concrete in the cities, the turtle rises from the domination that threatened its life and continues living while Goliath is only a pile of destroyed metal. Thus, Abbey ends the novel with a message of hope, a feeling that nature will always find its way to life, resisting the attacks of industrial civilization. The fact that Hayduke continues fighting against the enemy and that the turtle cannot be crushed by industrial/capitalist powers transmits a sense of victory in the struggle to protect and liberate nature and makes clear that, for Abbey, the resurrection of the wild in the West or everywhere else is still possible and that the fight for life is not lost or finished yet.

8. *Jokerman 8* (2004)

8.1. Introduction to *Jokerman 8* (2004)

Jokerman 8 was written by the author and book reviewer Richard Melo and published in 2004. Richard Emidio Melo was born in San Francisco in 1968, where he attended San Francisco State University. In the 1990s he spent two years serving the AmeriCorps in tasks related to environmental protection. Now he resides in Portland, Oregon, and this move from California to the green Northwest is also present in his novel *Jokerman 8*. It tells the story of a group of young students who engage in radical environmentalism, both related to the protection of the environment and to the liberation and wellbeing of animals. Their activism includes direct action methods like the ones depicted by Abbey (tree spiking, for example, is present in the novel), but also more ‘moderate’ actions like peaceful protest and resistance. Although most of the events happen in the United States, there is an important passage set in Iceland related to a whaling ship, which makes the international dimension of the struggle the characters are engaged in clear. The structure of the group, like that of the novel, is fragmentary and its members are not presented as a set group which takes action together. In fact, although they consider themselves a group with several members, they act in smaller and separated sub-groups. Not all characters (group members) have the same importance within it and, while some of them have a minor role in the story, TS, Willie, Jude and Eleanor are undoubtedly the main protagonists. The actions develop through the 80s and 90s (although there are passages of the past that include the 60s and 70s), so the novel offers a late 20th century image of the United States and of the radical environmental movement. *Jokerman 8* is also significant due to its representation of the environmental situation of the American West. Despite the fact that some events related to environmental issues are set in California, the situation of nature and, especially, of the old forests of the Northwest is portrayed in the novel. Thus, the American West, as the place that contains some of the last examples of wilderness in the country, is presented again (as Abbey did) as the land of resistance to the domination of nature by industrial/capitalist powers.

In addition to actions related to radical environmentalism, the novel is also dedicated to the past of the characters, especially focusing on their relationships with family members and, above all, the natural world. Nature is a key part of some of the characters' childhood and the close bonds developed with the environment in this stage of life open their path to environmental activism. Although Melo does not write about nature the way Abbey did (there is not so much emphasis and detail in the passages dedicated to natural spaces and forms of life), its presence during the novel is highly important and essential to understand the characters' will to protect and preserve it. Furthermore, the relationships that the activists establish and develop with the environment are really noteworthy and, as in Abbey's case, they can be related to aspects like freedom or spirituality and are very illustrative of the complex network of links that exist between humans and nature in the modern industrial society.

8.2. Nature and the Environment in *Jokerman 8* (2004)

Considering the role played by nature in Abbey's fiction, it is not surprising that an important part of *Jokerman 8* is dedicated to it and to the appreciation and love for it, especially if the unbreakable link between the love for nature and radical environmentalism is taken into account. In the novel, the portrayal of this love is arguably not as strong as in Abbey's case (whose true love and activism highly influenced his fiction), but, in spite of this, Melo's characters show a profound environmental awareness and respect and love for all forms of life and, even, non-life forms. The presence of nature and of the relationships that develop between the characters and the natural world, is what gives meaning to all the actions they carry out in the name of protecting the environment and its living beings. As in Abbey's novels, nature itself and the will for defending it are justifications for radical activism. As it has been mentioned, the actions are set in different places, including Iceland, but Melo dedicates the majority of his writing about nature to a part of the American West, more specifically, to the forests of the Northwest. Thus, one of the last examples of wilderness in the United States is again the main setting for radical environmental activism. In the case of Abbey, the wild space he loved and wanted to preserve was the desert of the Southwest and in Melo's case, the spectacular forests of the Northwest. Both authors show their wish for protecting the natural spaces and the life of the true and wild West and their appreciation through writing is not only aimed at transmitting beauty but also at trying to convey the need of preserving these spaces. Although Melo's writing about nature differs from that of Abbey and although in most cases he does not focus on the grandiosity and wildness of vast landscapes, some examples of this type are present in *Jokerman 8*. However, Melo normally writes about nature in another way, in a way in which the everyday life contact with nature gains prominence. Leaving California and moving to Oregon is a significant change for TS' family and nature in their new home implies a totally new life. After leaving aside the city life of San Francisco, the family is able to enjoy the following situation in contact with nature:

Dig the slowness, dig the stillness – the near silence except for an arousal of wind & leaves. Leaves in the creekside cottonwoods glimmer in the morning sun – dewy grass – a two-story farmhouse recently painted white. (Melo 30)

This sight of a new life in Oregon in a closer contact with nature presents, first of all, a quietude and a tranquillity impossible to find in cities. The actual (and metaphorical, signifying a new life) dawn portrayed in the passage is characterised by a peace in which wind and leaves are the only active agents, but their movement does not disrupt the calm, it only makes it more lively. The trees next to the creek give a sense of true nature and the sunlight shines thanks to the leaves and the grass, creating a quite idyllic scene. This is the image the family witnesses from the farmhouse in which they live after leaving San Francisco. It is clear that moving to another state and to a more rural ambience means a huge change for their lives and Melo usually depicts these everyday connections between humans and nature through his writing. It is also worth mentioning that moving to Oregon is due to Theo's (TS) father wish for living in "a place in the country where our baby child can run across meadows of tall grass" (Melo 20). TS' father wants a place for him to be born and grow in close contact with nature so, like the above passage, the family's move to Oregon can be considered to have characteristics of the pastoral, due to the retreat to nature it implies. Therefore, Melo's writing about nature is related to the human experience in contact with the natural environment and, despite the fact that descriptions of beautiful landscapes are also part of his writing, everyday life relationships with nature are highly valuable for him.

These experiences in contact with nature depicted by Melo include events of a big importance in the lives of the characters and they are not limited only to their childhood or to everyday life. TS', Jude's and Willie's journey to Iceland is incredibly significant for them, not only due to the fact that they visit a faraway land of unique beauty, but also because there they carry out one of their most powerful actions: the sinking of two ships. Although the characters are impressed by Iceland's nature, their journey through the sea, which some could consider a mere process to get to their destination, also offers the chance of experiencing nature in a very normal but special way. In this summer journey through the sea, the environmentalists are "blown by the wind under a blue sky sailing across the dolphin'd Atlantic" (Melo 48), in addition to the fact that "cottonball clouds sail along overhead" (Melo 48). The three characters feel the fresh sea wind of the Atlantic as a wind different from what they are accustomed to. This wind, not the one of the Pacific, seems a new and valuable experience for them and they advance through the waters of the ocean accompanied by several dolphins that make their journey more unique. Besides, the white cotton-like clouds do not seem to spoil the

clarity of the sky and they move along with the ship as if they shared a common trajectory and destination. Thus, the scene transmits the feeling that both the living (humans and dolphins) and the non-living (clouds), as part of nature, follow the same course and that all are together in a journey in which all beings are interrelated. Melo portrays a situation in which travelling by ship (independent of the destination) and having a direct experience with nature can become a very special moment. Therefore, nature and the contact with it are present in important events in the lives of the characters, but these contacts are not associated to the sublime, they are more related to the common and to everyday experience. However, this does not mean that these experiences do not have a special uniqueness; in fact, Melo gives common contacts with nature an incredible importance, a fact that shows a considerable appreciation for the natural world and for the place it has in human lives.

In spite of the fact that the everyday contacts with nature are highly significant in Melo's writing and for the union between the characters and the natural environment, there are also examples of writing dedicated to grandiose landscapes and to the descriptions of spaces not associated to common experience in the novel. Daphne's and Cy's (also members of the group of environmentalists) arrival for the first time in Oregon is a turning point in their lives and they feel captivated by the breathtaking sight they witness. The land they encounter is described as follows:

The wind is dry, you feel your skin cracking under it. The wind shapes the hardwood trees. They grow diagonally, their roots clawing the ground, holding on for dear life. (...) Lava flows in underground rivers along a chain of Cascade volcanoes, some of which are not entirely dormant. Steam & warm springs flow from fissures in some places, reminding the people who live here that Earth is made largely of fire. (Melo 256)

The Oregon the two characters witness is a wild and beautiful land that, nevertheless, can even seem hostile to human presence. The sharp wind that dominates in the area and that defines the outline of the forest is the first sign for Daphne and Cy to experience the wilderness that remains in the north of the American West. The forest is formed by innumerable trees that, being deeply rooted in their ancestral home, are not willing to give up life if industrial/capitalist powers threaten them. Besides, the description includes a very specific aspect of this wild land that makes the environmentalists' trip an unforgettable experience: the volcanic nature of Oregon. The many volcanoes of the

Cascade Range give the land a sense of untameable wilderness, especially considering that some of them can have a certain activity (the Mount St. Helens, for example, had a major eruption in the 1980 and minor eruptions in 2008). The presence of rivers of lava and fissures in the surface of the Earth create a feeling of danger that is somehow appeased thanks to the calm and wellbeing transmitted by warm flows of water. Fire and water, life and the potential for destruction make one in this unique land that is home to some of the last examples of wilderness left in the West. Thus, this untamed land offers contrasts and, while humans seem not to be welcome, the magnificence and beauty of Oregon captivates the two environmentalists, making their first visit to this state an incomparable experience. The charm of this place and the love Daphne and Cy feel towards it are strong justifications for using direct action methods to protect it. However, this fact does not belong exclusively to Melo's fiction and in real life the same happened to Daniel McGowan due to the beauty and power of the Oregonian nature. The visit to Oregon of this real-life environmentalist changed him forever and the nature and wilderness of the area fascinated him to an unthinkable point. Potter explains McGowan's experience as follows:

He had never seen anything like it. Trees like skyscrapers, forest canopy blocking out the sky. Seeing those old-growth forests marked for clear-cutting only solidified his renunciation of mainstream environmental groups and embrace of direct action. (86)

The wild nature of Oregon impressed the activist in an incredible way. The mere thought of seeing the trees being cut and killed by the logging industry made McGowan radicalize his methods of action, so that this land and its forms of life could be protected. This case resembles the one of Daphne and Cy a lot, so in Melo's fiction (like in the writings of Abbey) the line that separates reality and fiction is sometimes blurred due to the similarities between both and to the presence of real elements and people in the fiction. Furthermore, it has been made evident that the charm and power exerted by nature over humans and the creation of strong bonds between both can lead to the active defence of the environment, both in the fiction and in real life.

The predominance of vast and impressive forests in Oregon shows that nature retains an important place in the lands of the West and this is reflected in the fiction of *Jokerman* 8. However, in this state, there are spaces that are not only natural, but truly wild and Melo also dedicates a part of his writing to them. The Kalmiopsis Wilderness

is a wilderness area within the Siskiyou National Forest that comprises more than 179,000 acres and, in the novel, words of admiration and appreciation are dedicated to it. One of the last examples of the true wilderness of the American West is described as follows:

Abounding in canyons too rugged for even a trail, it is one of the most impenetrable and least explored mountain regions in the lower forty-eight – American Shangri-La. It is forest primeval; paleobotanists theorize that Earth's first trees evolved from this region. Over volcanic terrain with a unique geology and mix of soils in a climate that produces two-hundred inches of rainfall per year, plants that do not grow anywhere else in the world thrive here. The region's isolation creates ideal stomping grounds for a variety of people-shy animal species – the black bear, cougar, and osprey, among others. (Melo 167-168)

This wilderness of southwestern Oregon is somehow presented as a shelter from human activity for nature; it is impenetrable, isolated and unexplored. These qualities allow the thriving of life and the normal and natural development of relationships between living beings and their environment. The inaccessibility of the area, due to its many and irregular canyons, makes it a mysterious and almost mythical place that, being compared to Shangri-La, transmits a sense of harmony and spiritual peace that would be lost with the intervention of industrial/capitalist forces. Melo portrays the Kalmiopsis as an incredibly primitive and primordial area, which is considered the origin of many forms of life. In fact, as Manes explains, this wild space “represents the heart of a vast *Urwald*, or virgin forest, that once stretched from Alaska to central California and, according to some ecologists, may have been the place where coniferous trees first evolved” (84). The wilderness that characterises the Kalmiopsis extended north and south in the past and the American West was covered by majestic forests. In the present, this area remains the heart and (almost) only trace of the wilderness left from this primitive past. Besides, as both Melo and Manes point out, the Kalmiopsis is probably the place of origin of coniferous trees, which means that, in addition to being an area retaining primordial wilderness, it is also the place that gave birth to different forms of life. Melo also describes some of the special features that characterise this wild land, such as its volcanic nature and climate, which together create a unique ecosystem that is home to endemic plants and to an array of animals. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that the Kalmiopsis Wilderness has the “ability to assimilate greenhouse gases, stabilize the runoff from rainstorms, and provide habitat for anadromous fish” (Manes 85), facts that make it even more unique and worth preserving. Thus, Melo dedicates a part of his

writing to the uniqueness and magnificence of one of the last examples of wilderness in the American West. The description of the Kalmiopsis in *Jokerman 8* makes clear that this mysterious and beautiful area, which is full of life (some of it only found there), can only thrive naturally and remain wild with the absence of human activity. Isolation from the industrial civilization is what preserves the essence of the Kalmiopsis and, this is why, it is not surprising that the environmentalists are willing to protect the area actively if it is threatened by those trying to profit from the exploitation of nature.

Although the main setting of *Jokerman 8* is the American Northwest, with its magnificent forests, California and Iceland are also important places where actions develop and, especially the latter, a natural space worth of Melo's and his characters' admiration. Despite the fact that TS, Jude and Willie have already seen volcanic lands and formations, the landscape of Iceland totally mesmerizes them. The ambience of this island transmits newness and a powerful sense of renewal due to the fact that all that surrounds them "seems no more than two weeks old & new moss has not yet had time to find its way into crevices in the rock" (Melo 58). Everything the characters witness seems to have been recently formed and even moss looks like a new element in the astounding landscape of Iceland. Thus, their arrival in the island is like the encounter with a newly formed world with regenerative properties. Their journey can be considered a complete reversal of the myth of the West, because they travel East to find what, for them, is a new world of a unique nature. Besides, their objective there is to protect the environment and its life forms instead of dominating them, as promoted by the myth of the West. Once the three environmentalists leave behind the city and walk into natural areas, they get to know the real environment of the island. The sight of what surrounds them is described as follows:

Low-lying mist weighs heavily on the ground, gray air & no trees within sight, but light birds flicker & flaunt – there must be trees around here somewhere; terns & wild ducks – there must be lakes, too. We walk: rocks & more rocks, everything volcanic, an issue of steam from a cleft. Then at last: the trees – each in solitude – gargantuan distances between them. We see glimmering glaciers on the horizon, sterile mountains, clean air, clean sky, all the world seemingly steam cleaned. (Melo 59)

The landscape depicted in the excerpt seems to refer to a dream-like land where the fog and the air create a mysterious atmosphere that invites the characters to discover the secrets of Iceland. The different types of birds appear in the scene somehow breaking

the 'spell' of mystery and making evident that life abounds in such a characteristic environment. The possibility of the presence of trees and lakes is accompanied by the actual existence of a volcanic soil and its formations, all of which are evidence of the lava that lies underground. Finally, TS, Jude and Willie find the trees they are so eager to see, but these are not like the ones of the Northwest, they are lonely beings whose separation does not create any forest. They face a totally new scenery for them in which the trees do not form a whole, but are like individuals scattered all over a dreamy world they never thought of. Besides, in the distance, they behold the glaciers and the whole ambience fills the characters with a sense of cleanness and purity that only belongs to the wild. This description of the nature of Iceland does not only portray a beautiful and unique land, but a pure environment where artificiality is completely absent. Therefore, it is not surprising that the three environmentalists can feel connected to a land in which they are newcomers. However, the union of TS, Jude and Willie as a direct consequence of this very land is even more noteworthy. While contemplating the sight and in complete silence, that is, without using language to develop bonds, "we are deeply in touch with one another" (Melo 59). Thus, the connection between the three activists produced when being in contact with nature is a really profound and strong one. It transcends language, so it is somehow related to an ancient link developed between humans while having a sense of common belonging to the natural world. TS, Jude and Willie feel deeply connected to each other due to their shared vision of the Icelandic landscape, so, in addition to developing bonds with nature, they develop a close human relationship related to their very belonging to humanity as part of nature.

Therefore, it is clear that Melo's writing about nature does not only deal with everyday experiences in contact with it or with descriptions of landscapes, but also with profound relationships that can develop between humans and the natural environment. These relationships are usually linked to the interrelatedness of living beings, non-living beings and the environment that surrounds them and they are also associated to a belonging to the whole that is nature. The lonely trees encountered by some of the environmentalists in Iceland radically contrast with the forests of the American Northwest and the meanings and ideas derived from witnessing the latter are quite interesting in terms of belonging and natural interconnectedness. Barry and Wendy (two other members of the group of activists) reflect about the forests of the Northwest and the following thoughts are expressed:

These trees are what make us all Americans (...) The trees belong to a great, unbroken chain of being to which we are all connected. When trees touch other trees, branches brushing against each other in the wind, they become complete. Trees all get together to shade the ground from hard, falling rain & garish sun. The organism is no longer the tree – it is the forest itself. (Melo 133)

First of all, it is worth pointing out that the two environmentalists associate the forests of the Northwest to the national identity of the US. In a previous chapter, how the preservation of wilderness areas and the creation of National Parks and Forests shaped ‘American-ness’ and contributed to the definition of national identity has been explained. Wilderness and, especially, that of the West became a symbol of the American identity but, in this case, the environmentalists seem to identify more with wilderness itself and with the USA as a wild land than with the modern capitalist United States. The trees make them belong, not only to a specific place, but to the interconnectedness of all forms of life. These trees, far from being isolated beings, are the uninterrupted continuation of life, so Barry and Wendy can easily identify with and feel attached to them. Besides, trees merge into a higher being that works to protect the soil and that creates an ecosystem that is home to different forms of life. Thus, the forest itself becomes a whole, a natural entity that is the result of the interconnectedness of other life forms. Melo makes clear that the web of relationships of nature is so complex that, while humans belong to an entirety that is nature, the forest is at the same time a whole in itself and part of another whole, which includes everything. Therefore, some of the ideas expressed in *Jokerman* 8 are meaningful in terms of the links developed between natural beings (including humans) as entities depending on each other. The various ensembles of living beings that create collective forms of existence (trees and forests, bees and colonies) are evidence of the diverse and complex ways of relating in nature. These show that, despite the fact that all belong to an entirety, the natural world is structured in such a way that existence is, at the same time, independent from and dependent on the rest of life forms.

Melo gives a great importance to the interrelatedness of nature in his novel, especially focusing on the place of humans within this web of relationships. Willie is the perfect example of the interconnectedness of humans and nature, especially on the occasions when he does not attend university in order to hike and spend long periods in the wild. In relation to his stays in close contact with nature, he mentions the

‘wilderness gene,’ which he considers a biological unit some people possess and which drives humans into the wild. Some of the characteristics of this gene are explained that way:

The wilderness gene gives people a burning desire to sleep outside as if sleeping indoors would cause you to suffocate (...) The wilderness gene draws you outside, into the wild, where you can live. The wilderness gene also gives people a feeling when they are out in the wilderness that it is not the same as it once was. (Melo 53-54)

This gene makes people feel uneasy in closed spaces and drives them into wild nature, allowing them to live and sleep in the space and state they originally belong to. The biological unit Willie talks about gives humans a feeling of freedom equal to that of animals in their natural environment, which suggests that it somehow makes people recover their animal self. Besides, the wilderness gene makes people aware of the changes and transformations the wild has suffered through the history of human ‘development’ over nature. Thus, those possessing the gene realize that wilderness is not as it was and that the domination of nature (especially in its modern industrial/capitalist form) makes the very essence of the wild disappear. Willie, as a student of biology, presents this gene from a scientific perspective and manifests his view that humans and wild nature are strongly connected. In fact, the existence, for Willie, of this gene makes evident that wilderness is part of human beings and that, therefore, humans are part of wilderness. This connection between humans and the wild is presented from a biological point of view, but it can transcend the realm of this natural science. Realizing that humans do not exist outside nature and wilderness and that, indeed, they are strongly connected to them leads to an identification with the natural world that “entails developing a sense of *belonging to* or *community with* the more-than-human world, and, therefore, it can be called “identification-as-belonging”” (Diehm 20). This identification provokes a feeling of belonging that places humans together with the rest of living beings and the environment, so it gives human beings the sense of being part of a community of interconnected beings. This fact provides a meaning to human existence and a place within the complex web of natural relationships in which they also take part. Besides, “to achieve a sense of identification-as-belonging is to come to the lived awareness that we are a part of nature, and nature is a part of our Selves” (Diehm 21), a fact that is strongly related to Willie’s idea about the

wilderness gene. The gene makes the unity of humans and nature a biological matter, but this interconnectedness is also associated to aspects like the self and the human identity, as well as to the mentioned concept of belonging. Therefore, this union is what makes humans truly humans; it is an intrinsic part of themselves and of their identity as a being that originally belongs to the wild. Wilderness remains as the very essence of humans and, although it may lie hidden deep within the human self, it is not totally lost. It is also worth mentioning that “when millions of animals die because of human disruptions to their habitat, you feel ripples in the shape & spin” (Melo 54) as a consequence of the wilderness gene. This makes the interconnectedness of living beings evident once again. The identification with other animals as they suffer and die, produces negative feelings to those possessing the gene, because, as members of the same community, they are deeply connected and share a common path in the development of life. Therefore, in *Jokerman 8*, the interrelatedness of living beings is highly important, especially in relation to the human belonging to this network of relationships, because people are inseparably united to the rest of life forms and the environment.

The unbreakable union between human beings and the very natural environment, that is, a union between living beings and a higher non-living entity (which, at the same time, can include living beings) is also portrayed in the novel and it is highly illustrative of human-natural relationships in the time of industrial domination. TS’ walk to the Pacific Ocean is a very significant passage related to the union of humans with all that surrounds them in close contact with nature. The following is expressed about this experience:

When TS disappears, he walks away & keeps walking. Then he finds himself at the Pacific Ocean, the shore of northern California where there is no escaping misterioso (...) You look upon the waves rolling toward you; sunlight from above penetrates them; soft grey-green light shines through them. (Melo 304)

TS’ arrival in the shores of the Pacific Ocean makes him encounter a mysterious place characterised by a peerless tranquillity and a beauty created by the waves and the sun. The objective of his walk is to disappear from everyday problems and tensions and to appear in the middle of nature, in this case, facing the shiny waters of the ocean. The whole experience of leaving society temporarily, not only his contact with the Pacific, is a chance of establishing a deep contact with the environment and it starts when he

begins walking. His long walk away from society, without using a car or other technological intermediaries, is the first step for experiencing nature directly and, what is more, “walking is the only way to measure the rhythm of the body against the rhythm of the land” (Solnit 61). Walking, as a primordial action that links humans to the environment, is the basic way for feeling the land and being one with it; for being in equilibrium with the processes and rhythms of the Earth. Thus, the very walk that leads TS to the ocean is incredibly important in itself, because it connects him with the environment in a very close and deep way. However, the bond of union that develops between the environmentalist and the Pacific is even more noteworthy. In the presence of the immensity of the ocean, TS seems to perceive or realizes that it “calls out the word *us*, long & drawn out: *Usssss*” (Melo 304). The ocean waves seem to be trying to communicate with TS, to establish a certain kind of relationship. The word ‘us’ that is transmitted to TS puts the ocean and the activist at the same level, as if they were companions, together in the vastness of elements and living beings that form the Earth. The word uttered by the waters transmits a sense of union and belonging that makes TS be deeply connected to the environment. Both the human and the mass of water are a part of the same whole, they are inseparable. As a consequence of this reunion, TS is able to rest and he falls asleep in the sand, in a state of peace impossible to achieve in the society he escaped from.

In addition to the interconnectedness of living (an even non-living) beings and to the sense of belonging to the natural community, Melo also deals with other types of human-natural relationships in the novel, including aspects such as freedom or spirituality. Freedom is presented as intrinsic to wilderness and it is expressed that “wild lands know freedom (...) & American human beings seem to have lost their sense of it” (Melo 78). Wilderness and freedom go hand in hand, however, humans, estranged from wilderness, do no longer experience real freedom. Although the country and, more specifically, the American West were associated to the wild, the advancement of powers dominating nature (with industrial capitalism as the most modern example) significantly reduced and eliminated wilderness areas. Thus, the primordial freedom of human beings disappeared to give place to ‘progress’ and ‘development.’ The human-wilderness-freedom relationship existed long before the creation of civilizations and free humans belonged to the land, not the land to humans. These issues of freedom and of possession of the land are dealt with in *Jokerman 8* in relation to various thoughts about wolves.

This wild animal “reminds us that life & land are held in common, belonging to no one & to everyone” (Melo 78), because in spite of the existence of barbed wire or fencing, the wolf continues acting according to its place in the cycle of life. The wolf continues feeding on other animals without destabilizing the balance of nature (unlike those powers that dominate it), making the absurdity of the human possession of land clear. The wolf, as a wild and free creature, denies the ownership of land due to the fact that all the interrelated living and non-living beings belong together and should be free, consequently, acting wildly above those powers dominating nature. The environmentalists’ (especially Cy’s) appreciation and love for wolves comes from the fact that a kind of identification exists, due to the fact that both humans and wolves are originally wild creatures that know freedom. Nevertheless, although this love sees the wolf as an equal, it is not based on giving human qualities to the animal. As an idea belonging to the current of thought of deep ecology, “you respect the differences (...) love the wolf for its wolfness & nothing else, especially not its humanness” (Melo 79). Therefore, what makes the human and the wolf equal are their original wild and free nature. All other features that make each one what they are, are evidence of the differences between all forms of life. Despite these differences (humans are humans and wolves are wolves) these creatures are deeply connected and activists like Cy show a profound love for these wild and free animals worth of so much respect. The environmentalists’ love for the wolf and other species is what drives their attempts at protecting animals. However, there is another strong reason for the protection of these living beings: a deep spiritual bond. As it is explained, “the reasons we love & preserve species is spiritual & the spiritual defies tidy encapsulations in language” (Melo 79), a fact that means that, even if it transcends language, another significant connection exists between humans and animals. Humans and animals are united by a spiritual link that gives a somehow sacred meaning to human existence, as a being that belongs to a community of life. The spiritual dimension of human-animal relationships can lead to the knowledge and recognition of the human self and essence as inseparable from nature, a fact that could ultimately stop the domination and exploitation of other living beings and the environment. All in all, Melo offers interesting ideas about the freedom and spirituality of humans in relation to other animals, above all based on the fact that the essence of humans is originally wild. The wilderness that exists deep inside of humans and that makes them to be part of the natural whole allows an array of relationships with the environment and other living beings. Besides, unlike the

destructive forms of relating of industrial capitalism, these bonds can be positive and beneficial for other forms of life or, at least, harmless.

In addition to this type of human-natural relationships, in *Jokerman* 8, the bonds and associations of nature and childhood are very noteworthy. Throughout the novel, there are passages and memories of characters dedicated to a happy childhood in close contact with the natural world. Despite the fact that these early experiences with nature can be considered the origin of the environmentalists' activism, they are also important in terms of loss and belonging, meaning that these relationships and a peaceful state being a part of nature are lost as the characters grow up. When TS is just a baby in Oregon:

He is forever wallowing in dirt, covering his nose with filth & begriming his face (...) lies in the grass with his mouth gaping to catch who knows what & delights in chasing butterflies. His best friend is the family dog. (Melo 28)

Furthermore, in his early years, he does many other things in close contact with nature, for example, "he chases cows & goats in a nighbor's pasture" (Melo 29) and "falls asleep in tall grass" (Melo 29). It is clear, then, that TS' childhood is strongly connected to experiences with animals and the very natural environment that surrounds him. Living among grass and dirt and playing with animals makes TS learn a lot about the world he is growing in in a very natural way, a fact that allows the development of a deep bond with the natural environment. However, when he is no longer a child, passages like this one are sources of nostalgia for him. Becoming more adult implies for TS getting immersed in the complexity of the modern capitalist society, which means an estrangement from nature and the fact of no longer being a part of it the way he previously was. Thus, the loss of this early and life-defining relationship with nature leads to a kind of "nostalgia for "wildness", for nature not yet dissected, manipulated, tamed for man's utilitarian purposes" (Mies, *White Man's* 140). Despite the fact that it is not in wilderness, TS' early contact with nature is characterised by the chaotic and exploratory essence of childhood and it has nothing to do with dominating the environment to serve greedy purposes. The nature of TS' childhood is related to growing, learning and playing, that is, it is the source of true inner growth, and in the capitalist society he lives as a young-adult he can almost only struggle to protect it. His inability to experience the natural world like he did before has as a consequence a

nostalgia for the early stage of life when this was possible, that is, childhood. As Mies explains, it is a nostalgia “seeking for a simple, spontaneous, open and confidential relationship with our surroundings, with the natural world and with other human beings” (*White Man’s* 140). As a child, TS, who has only been in contact with his family and dog and with the surroundings of their house in Oregon, can relate to the environment and other living beings in a totally natural and spontaneous way. After getting in touch with the modern capitalist society, these connections are disrupted and relating in such a natural way with the environment and other beings (including humans) is no longer possible. Therefore, TS somehow wishes to go back to the stage of childhood in order to connect with the world around him with complete confidence and naturalness; in order to recover a lost relationship with the environment. However, TS is not the only character who looks at the past with nostalgia. Squirrel, at the presence of the sight and noises of the city, writes that “we miss our days in the wild & daydream about going back” (Melo 307). She also feels a profound nostalgia for the times when she could be in true and sincere contact with nature and her mind travels to the past so as to try to recover those moments. Childhood in nature is closely related to curiosity for everything surrounding the child, exploration and adventure and, above all, a basic freedom of acting without following any rule and being true to one’s own impulses. This freedom is repressed by the conventions and dictates of the modern capitalist society, which offers a false freedom in the form of purchasable goods. The attempt at recovering the freedom of a child in a comfortable and natural environment “is mainly a reaction to the total structural regimentation and ordering of everyday life by the industrial and bureaucratic society” (Mies, *White Man’s* 140). Therefore, the longing for a childhood that is gone can be associated to the dismantling and elimination of the structures and arrangements of the modern industrial/capitalist society, which dominate people’s behaviour by suppressing this kind of freedom and by disrupting relationships with nature. Thus, the link between nature and childhood portrayed in *Jokerman 8* is really interesting in terms of human-natural relationships. Childhood is strongly connected to a true human development by naturally and spontaneously relating with the environment and other living beings. Besides, it is associated to a freedom of acting and relating that seems to be impossible to adults in the modern capitalist society. Melo presents an incredibly significant bond between humans and nature that is disrupted and lost, consequently, producing a nostalgia that cannot be overcome due to the fact that

the bond cannot be recovered, at least in the conditions established by the industrial/capitalist society.

Although Melo's writing of passages dedicated to the natural world or to human-natural relationships are essential parts of *Jokerman 8*, there are also significant ideas and thoughts in the novel associated to the antagonism and totally opposed characteristics of the industrial civilization and nature. Despite the fact that these two 'worlds' are separated, firstly and in a basic form, by contrasting the life in the city (San Francisco) and in the countryside (Oregon), interesting and deeper perspectives about industrial civilization and about its domination of nature are suggested and presented throughout the novel. When some of the characters visit a ghost town in Oregon, they feel surprised by the emptiness of the place, which is completely abandoned. The town is an example of the expansion of civilization over the land through the elimination of original nature so as to build structures that, in the end, are not used or inhabited by anyone. Thus, the domination of the land for the creation of the town does not serve any meaningful purpose because, in a few years, the elimination of nature only leads to nothingness. At the sight of this void, the following reflection is expressed: "while a forest or desert or any free & wild space is in its splendor without other people, an empty city such as this one just seems out of place" (Melo 212). Natural and wild places are in their most magnificent state when no human beings are present, due to the fact that their purest form does not include humans; their essence includes wilderness and freedom, not humanity. Besides, the presence of people (depending on the attitudes towards nature) can imply a threat for the spaces and for other living beings, so these natural areas do not need humans, they already have a life and existence of their own. Nevertheless, cities without people are a terrible sight for the characters, because without humans, they are nothing but desolation and ruin. This suggests that emptiness is inherent to these lifeless spaces, which humans fill and make meaningful. Industrial civilization is, thus, an empty place to live in; without people, that is, the only life cities seem to admit, it is a void that cannot be perceived unless spaces like the town the environmentalists are in are abandoned. It is a fact that "up in Oregon, for example, the natural, original forest is virtually one hundred percent gone; the salmon are on the verge of extinction" (Zerzan, *Against technology* 4) as a consequence of so-called progress and development. Thus, the real-life majestic forests that are portrayed in *Jokerman 8* are eliminated by industrial/capitalist powers leading to the predominance

of more emptiness (as exemplified by the ghost town). Industrial civilization seems to expand the emptiness inherent to it by destroying wild and free spaces. Therefore, the industrial/capitalist domination of the environment means the transformation of nature into void. Industrial civilization, a power that creates and expands emptiness when dominating nature and living beings, only stands as an all-consuming void that threatens all that is wild and free, even the essence of humans. By contrasting the emptiness of cities (as examples of industrial civilization) with nature in its original form, Melo suggests the antagonism between these two 'worlds.' The life and interrelated existence of living and non-living beings that belong to nature are presented as highly positive and splendid for the characters, while the desolation transmitted by the abandoned town makes one think about the essence of industrial civilization, making clear that it is not as ideal as it is normally thought of.

Another example of this calling into question of the domination of nature by modern civilization is presented through some reflections related to the arrival of settlers (and of humans in general) to American lands and to the possible consequences and future of this domination of the environment. The antagonism (or rather violent attack of settlers against nature) of these two 'worlds' in the American continent is shown through the portrayal of the land as it should have been before the arrival of humans and after the colonization by settlers. Although in the novel, the very arrival of humans in the continent is mentioned, it has already been explained that the true catastrophe for the this land and its inhabitants came with the arrival of the settlers that wanted to establish a civilization and become wealthy through the exploitation of the environment. The American continent, before the presence of human beings is said to be "a wilderness teeming with wildlife, fertile & diverse – so many thousands of birds fly overhead (...) that they eclipse all but tiny slits of sky" (Melo 225). America is portrayed as a total wilderness before the arrival of humans in the continent: it is full of different species and it has the ability to give birth to innumerable living beings. The fact that the birds were so abundant that were able to block the sun and cover the sky gives an idea about the incredible presence of wildlife in this part of the planet. However, this complete wilderness seems to be disrupted by the arrival of humans in American lands. There is a reflection in the novel that presents humans as the cause of the end of such wilderness because they "leave a path of destruction in their wake" (Melo 225). Nevertheless, this idea is questionable due to the fact that not all humans

dominated the environment like the settlers who took the first step for the creation in America of what later became the nature-devouring industrial civilization. Despite the fact that some Native Americans practiced agriculture or exerted power over nature in other ways, they coexisted with wilderness until the arrival of settlers, which marked the beginning of an era of nature exploitation and domination. Thus, not all humans in America destroyed the environment because, otherwise, settlers would not have encountered the ‘new world’ of wilderness they so violently subjugated. Regardless of this questionable perspective, the final thought of this reflection in *Jokerman 8* is the most important and interesting one. Once the industrial civilization is established and developed in the continent the damage done to the land is immeasurable. The destruction of the environment is so huge that “dolphins sigh because they know monkeys will one day find their way here” (Melo 225). Therefore, the idea that the destruction caused by the industrial civilization will extend to the seas is presented. This thought is really interesting because, despite the fact that issues like overfishing or pollution of water are realities, it suggests a total domination of the sea by extending the power of the industrial civilization beyond solid ground. Completely colonizing the seas would mean the deaths and, probably, extinction of numerous species, the extreme exploitation of resources underwater and many other environmental disasters, such as a highly increased rate of pollution. Thus, in Melo’s passage, the antagonism between industrial civilization and nature is made evident again. However, these reflections also include a fear about the future and about the consequences of so-called development. The total domination of the seas would imply the colonization of the whole Earth, so nature and wilderness would almost disappear from the planet, leading to a terrible state of de-naturalization and technological domination that would also mean the disappearance of a vital part of the human essence and self.

All in all, Melo’s writing, dedicated to the natural world and to the relationships that develop between humans and it, is quite illustrative of the real-life situation. It portrays the state of nature in the late 20th century world (also applicable to the 21st century) that is dominated by the industrial/capitalist society. In *Jokerman 8* the appreciation and love for nature is portrayed either through the descriptions of beautiful and magnificent spaces or to every day experiences in contact with nature. The lands and forests of Oregon play a really important role in the novel and writing about them and about the bonds of the characters with the nature of the Northwest offers interesting

ideas about the remaining wilderness in the American West and about its meaning for humans. The activists of the novel do not only love their natural environment and the rest of living and non-living beings that form this community, but they feel part of it as a consequence of the interconnectedness of nature. The union and belonging they feel with respect to nature is also related to bonds of freedom and spirituality, but the connection with their childhood and with their 'inner child' inseparable from nature is also extremely significant. Considering the fact that the environmentalists are deeply connected to nature in different and meaningful ways, it is not surprising that they decide to use direct action in order to protect it. Throughout the novel the activists engage in a number of radical environmental actions with the aim of preserving living beings, their environment and the bonds that unite them all.

8.3. Environmental Exploitation/Destruction and Radical Environmentalism in *Jokerman 8* (2004)

As in the case of the two novels by Edward Abbey that have been analysed, the most characteristic aspect in *Jokerman 8* is the radical environmentalism the protagonists engage in so as to protect nature and living beings. In the novel, this activism is interdependent of the writing about the natural world and, especially, of the bonds that develop between humans and the environment, exactly as in real-life, because positive and profound relationships with nature are catalysts for direct action. The many threats to natural spaces and life forms, along with an unconditional love and a sense of belonging, lead the protagonists of the novel to various actions for the elimination of menaces like voracious logging or whale killings. Melo presents attacks against the natural world in a global scale, not only focusing on the United States. This is why, in the novel, radical environmental actions carried out in Oregon and California, but also in Canada and Iceland, are portrayed. Therefore, Melo makes clear that the struggle to protect the environment is a movement with a worldwide scope due to the fact that, as a consequence of the destructive practices of industrial capitalism, nature is dominated and exploited all over the Earth. Nevertheless, the fact that the main setting of *Jokerman 8* is the American Northwest is really noteworthy. In addition to offering a perspective of the environmental situation in the late 20th century, Melo depicts a modern American West whose wilderness is threatened by ‘development.’ The West Melo writes about is characterised by immense forests that are full of life, a wilderness where human presence is (almost) totally absent. However, this wilderness is in danger and, in order to protect some of the last wild spaces of the American West, the protagonists fight actively. The various and varied actions portrayed in the novel are very illustrative of the real radical environmental movement and some of them are clearly influenced by the depictions made by Abbey in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and in *Hayduke Lives!* Melo presents undercover sabotages along with more ‘mainstream’ actions like demonstrations, mostly through the most moderate character Eleanor Cooke. Some of the sabotages are described in a detailed way that remind of Abbey’s writing, a fact that shows Melo’s wish to portray the radical environmental movement with authenticity. Furthermore, *Jokerman 8* deals with a really important aspect of this movement, which

is not included in any of the two novels by Abbey: animal liberation and wellbeing. The novel shows various actions dedicated to the liberation and protection of animals that imply either freeing them from research facilities or frustrating the attempts at hunting them. Thus, Melo offers a quite complete image of radical environmentalism, as a really important movement and set of relationships concerned with the preservation, protection and wellbeing of natural/wild spaces and living beings in an industrially-dominated era.

The existence of the radical environmental group ‘Jokerman’ is introduced at the very beginning of the novel, but it is presented as an already consolidated collective formed long ago. In the fragmented and chronologically non-linear structure of the novel, 1991 is the year when the first information about ‘Jokerman’ is given. However, actions are carried out years before that date, a fact that suggests that the activists engage in a significant number of attempts at protecting nature for a long time. In this presentation of the environmentalists they are described as pranksters and as life-enjoying people and even their address in San Francisco is detailed. Nevertheless, the most important aspect of this introduction to the group are the reasons that led to its creation. ‘Jokerman’ is formed due to “the scraping of the flora & fauna off the planet’s surface by the masters of conspicuous consumption” (Melo 3), that is, the group is created because its members are aware of the fact that the environmental situation is dramatically worsening. Plants and animals disappear from the Earth as a consequence of industrial/capitalist practices and their objective is to put an end to that situation. Some of the negative impacts of the domination of and ‘development’ over nature are explained as illustrative examples of the environmental situation and the following is expressed:

We stand against those who for the sake of their own upward mobility have brought you dwindling fish counts & chemical rain, who are causing global frog populations to disappear, who have waved by-bye to one woodland species after another (...) who have poisoned children & adults alike who don’t know where their cancer comes from. (Melo 3)

The activists present themselves as fighters against those who profit from the exploitation of the Earth and from the deaths of innumerable living beings. Besides, they also oppose fiercely repercussions of ‘progress’ like chemical rain and pollution that leads to cancer. For ‘Jokerman,’ these environmental (and health) problems are the

terrible aftermath of the insane domination of the natural world and the objective of the group is to combat the exploiters that benefit from such destructive practices. Therefore, the group is manifestly formed as a direct response to attacks against the natural world. The real-life radical environmental movement developed precisely because of the atrocities committed against the environment and living beings. In Melo's novel this fact is made evident and, thus, it perfectly exemplifies the web of human-natural relationships that include the destruction of the environment and, consequently, its active and direct protection.

Throughout the novel, the colonization of nature is portrayed in various forms, especially in relation to the wild forests of the Northwest. Nevertheless, there are also cases in which a more 'subtle' colonization of the environment exists, as the following example manifests. Some of the environmentalists (the number and names are not specified) lie on their backs looking at the night sky and, although the sight is apparently beautiful, something is wrong with it. In relation to the sky the following is expressed:

Tonight you can see the stars, all the stars – the sky as seen by settlers & ancients alike. It's a John Muir kind of sky, but the moment loses its purity because among the stars you can see satellites, too, drifting along their way & ruining the enchantment. (Melo 39)

The sight of the characters is, at the beginning, that of a black mass full of shining points of light. It is a sky replete with stars that transmits a sense of wilderness and lack of human control. It retains much of its ancient essence and it is almost the same sky people from earlier times observed; seemingly it could even blur the line between past and present and include people from different epochs under its cover. However, this is not the case because the sky the characters look at proves to be a modern-day sky with a notable technological presence. The many satellites that move through the 'territory' of the stars invade it making it lose its true nature and purity. Besides, the charm transmitted by the sight disappears and the characters are unable to fully enjoy the night sky. Due to this kind of colonization of the space "the stars as seen from earth will never be the same. Our view of space will be forever obscured" (Melo 39). Thus, satellites in the sky eliminate its 'wilderness' by including some human/technological control in a place previously unconquered. In *Hayduke Lives!* the direct perception and experience of the sky is disrupted in the already analysed passage in which technology interferes

between Bishop Love's wife and the stars and the moon, a fact that eliminates the opportunity of being connected with the space in mystical terms. In this case the same happens and the activists are unable to connect profoundly with the sky due to the presence of disruptive technology. Despite the obvious fact that the stars are outside the Earth, they can be perceived in this planet as part of its environment (in Abbey's nature writing the sky is an intrinsic part of the desert West). So, the colonization of the space can be considered an extension of the domination of the environment in the planet, which makes clear that the intentions of 'development' of industrial/capitalist powers seem to know no limits and that invading and controlling as much of the world surrounding them is their objective.

Attacks against life appear constantly throughout the novel and a really dangerous consequence of 'progress' is presented in relation to one of Abbey's main concerns in *Hayduke Lives!*, that is, the nuclear industry and the toxic waste produced by it. Next to an Irish shore, a plant that produces uranium is filling the area with "a highly carcinogenic by product of plutonium production" (Melo 49), a fact that endangers significantly the lives of the local community. In fact, people living close to the toxic waste can only "bury their children who die of cancer" (Melo 49). The practices of the nuclear industry prove to be insane due to the fact that they are poisoning and killing people in order to obtain more profits and continue growing economically. Although opposition to this toxic waste is also strongly related to environmental issues (especially considering that it can easily end up in the sea), in this very case, the protection of human beings and, above all, of life is the main concern for activists. TS, Jude and Willie, aboard a Greenpeace ship, have the objective of participating in a toxic waste protest, which is the first action for the protection of life and the environment presented in *Jokerman* 8. In addition to the three characters, more Greenpeace activists and the music band U2 are intended to take part in the protest. The presence of the band does not only blur the line between reality and fiction, but, within the fiction of the story, it gives a notable strength to the protest, especially due to the presence of the media and of the broadcasting of the action. The protest would consist on making "a scene with toxic waste, dropping a number of cracked & leaching canisters" (Melo 49) next to the plutonium plant, so as the producers can see their waste close up. Thus, the protest can be considered a 'moderate' environmental action (compared to others, like undercover sabotage) with the aim of giving back the toxic waste to those who produced it. Its

symbolic power would force the plant to remove the carcinogenic substances and, consequently, avoid the further poisoning of the people from the local community. However, TS, Jude and Willie do not finally attend the protest because, as the ship stops in Iceland before going to Ireland, they decide to stay in the former so as to take more direct actions. The three characters consider that Greenpeace acts within the norms of a system they oppose to, so they have the aim of resorting to more radical methods to protect the environment. “Despite the spectacular image of Greenpeace dashing around in natty zodiacs, relatively little direct action has been carried out to protect the seas” (Do or die 141), a fact that makes the three environmentalists distance themselves from the organization in order to carry out their own actions. Although the toxic waste protest can be effective in its objective of eliminating the carcinogenic elements, the protection of the sea and its life forms through direct action is an extremely important issue for the protagonists. As Greenpeace seems ineffective in this mission, TS, Jude and Willie stay in Iceland to try to defend the sea directly.

In this country, the three activists encounter a terrible reality that disturbs them significantly. While walking through a dock, and aware of the fact that “a consortium of nations banned whaling worldwide” (Melo 60), they see various dead whales. They are horrified by the sight of workers who “load their bounty of five dead animals off two ships into trucks” (Melo 60), despite the existence of a prohibition against such activity. In this passage Melo introduces a serious issue that threatens life in the seas, namely, illegal whaling. As it is explained in the novel, this kind of animal killings is banned in real-life but, nevertheless, “three countries – Iceland, Japan, and Norway – continue their commercial whale hunts” (World Wildlife “Species, Whale”). Thus, these three countries break international laws for the protection of living beings in order to obtain economic profits. Despite the fact that some people could make a living and feed their families thanks to hunting, others only care about increasing their profits by trading with products obtained from whales. These break the law for hunting living beings (unlike environmentalists who break them to protect and preserve life) and, consequently, “over 1,000 whales a year are killed for such commercial purposes” (World Wildlife “Species, Whale”). An international attempt at protecting whales is neglected and the situation of an already endangered species worsens due to the greed of some humans. More than 1,000 deaths of whales as a consequence of illegal whaling is a terrible reality, especially considering the fact that more deaths of these mammals are added to those

caused by whaling in relation to causes like pollution and destruction of habitat. Thus, these animals are in a really critical situation and their survival is endangered by various and violent human practices against them and their environment. Besides, the killings of innumerable whales is not only dreadful for the species itself, but for the whole marine ecosystem and environment. This is due to the fact that “whales play a significant role in capturing carbon from the atmosphere; each great whale sequesters an estimated 33 tons of CO₂ on average, thus playing their part in the fight against climate change” (World Wildlife “Species, Whale”) and helping maintain the seas in a healthy state. Therefore, whale hunting is terribly negative for the whole interconnectedness of life in the sea and its consequences can be suffered all through the planet. Due to the severity of the situation, TS, Jude and Willie “believe that whales need us to leave them alone so they can keep on living” (Melo 60) and for that reason they engage in a direct action with the aim of protecting and preserving the lives of these animals.

Facing what is a terrible and critical threat for the whales, the three activists only think about responding to that menace in the most direct and effective way possible. They do not hesitate and the first thing that comes to their minds is sinking the two ships the dead animals were in so that they cannot be used to continue killing. As nothing seems to stop them from taking this radical measure, they only need a plan to carry out the action. They are convinced of the procedures they will follow for the sinking and the fact that “we will need flashlights, bolt cutters, two heavy wrenches” (Melo 61) is made clear. The mentioned tools remind of the sabotage actions carried out by Abbey’s characters, so the influence of his fiction seems notable in Melo’s novel. Besides, the use of such tools suggests a clandestine sabotage for making the ships totally unusable (or rather for destroying them) as an action for eliminating nature-dominating machines in the vein of Abbey’s characters. Nevertheless, the action TS, Jude and Willie want to carry out is closer to reality than to any novel by Abbey because it reminds of “Sea Shepherd’s most infamous action (...) a daring raid in 1986 that left half of Iceland’s whaling fleet at the bottom of a harbour and its major processing plant trashed” (Do or die 143). Thus, the line between reality and fiction is blurred again in *Jokerman* 8, a fact that seems quite illustrative of the fiction that deals with radical environmentalism. Before the detailed description of the sinking of the ships is given (that is, the first radical environmental action of the novel), the code followed by the activists is presented. As in *Hayduke Lives!*, the environmentalists act

following a code, which is composed of these three rules: “Avoid capture. Hurt no one. Detonate nothing” (Melo 61). Not harming anyone and not being captured in order to be able to continue defending the environment are universal rules for activists and both Melo and Abbey include them as the most basic tenets for radical environmentalism. However, for the activists in *Jokerman 8* not using explosives is also part of their code of action, unlike Hayduke, who used explosives when he considered it appropriate. Therefore, in order to sink the ships, they have to act following certain norms: they must sabotage them secretly and imperceptibly without using bombs and avoiding any possible harm to anyone.

The actions of sabotage begin in a whaling facility, which is not very close to the harbour. There, the dead whales are kept until they are used to serve economic purposes. The whaling industry’s intention is to commercialize the meat of the animals in Japan and, supposedly, to use it for scientific investigations (even if the activists seem to distrust this). Acting against this station can mean a hard blow for the industry because sabotaging it inevitably implies serious economic losses for those trying to profit from the deaths of whales. First of all, the activists start “smashing radios & pouring leftover coffee into computers” (Melo 84) to ruin any technological action that can be carried out in the station. The technological procedures required in the process of dealing with the meat and marketing it are, thus, disrupted and obtaining profits from the killings of whales is made more difficult. The whaling industry is forced to spend time and money to recover from the sabotage and it can endanger the whole business, which began with illegal hunting. In addition to the sabotage of machinery, the environmentalists carry out another crucial action when they find the refrigerated whale meat. They “turn off the power so that the meat will spoil” (Melo 84), the perfect move to avoid any economic profit from the killings. Ruining the meat means that it cannot be sold and, therefore, the whole plan of obtaining benefits from dead whales is frustrated. These actions in the whaling facility totally disrupt the greedy and destructive practices of the whaling industry and they similarly cause it significant economic losses. However, the activists do not stop at this point and, immediately after, they are prepared to destroy the two ships, which would cause more deaths of animals.

In the harbour, the first important concern to carry out the action is related to the security guard and to the surveillance cameras, due to the fact that not getting caught is of vital importance. TS has the duty of observing the moves of the guard while Jude and

Willie carry out the actual sabotage. The Icelandic fog of the night plays in their favour because the cameras cannot capture the images of what happens among the darkness properly. The activists know about the guards' movements after "spending five nights hanging out around the perimeter, watching for every shift change & nuance of security routine" (Melo 85). Thus, all precautions are taken in order to avoid getting caught and to carry out the sabotage in a safe way. The three characters even have a plan in case the guard makes unexpected movements, "TS is to blow a whistle & then run" (Melo 85). Once the dangers of the guard and the surveillance cameras are eliminated, Jude and Willie engage in the direct action against the ships. The fact that a ship can sink by opening the saltwater cooling valve is expressed as truly valuable information for anyone wanting to sabotage vessels. Even if Melo does not encourage people to take direct action like Abbey, in cases like this, he seems to have a significant knowledge about sabotage and offers simple explanations for actions that would have a big impact. Equipped with flashlights, the two environmentalists enter the engine room and the procedure of their actions in relation to the saltwater cooling valve is detailed in the following way:

Jude uses a ratchet to undo the bolts that hold the manhole-sized steel cover in place, then a bolt cutter to cut through the lock that keeps the valve from unauthorized or accidental opening. Willie turns the valve (...) water begins to fill in. (Melo 86)

The sabotage is carried out effectively with common tools and thanks to the combined work of the two activists (obviously the role played by TS is also indispensable). Making use of their knowledge of the inner functioning of ships, they act in a simple way that consists on opening a valve, a procedure that leads directly to the sinking of the vessel. The same method is used for the second ship and both disappear into the water in an unstoppable way. The operation finishes with a last measure in which "Willie uses the bolt cutters on the thick ropes that anchor the ships to the dock" (Melo 86) so as to make them completely disappear. Thanks to the action of the environmentalists the killing of more whales becomes impossible and those trying to profit from these deaths suffer serious economic losses. The sabotage is as successful as the one carried out by two members of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society who "scuttled two whaling vessels in Reykjavík harbour and ransacked a nearby whaling station with a fury appropriate to that Nordic country's Viking past" (Manes 16).

Therefore, like in real life, the actions of the activists disrupt the one-way destructive relationships of the whaling industry towards the sea environment and, specially, whales. This fact makes more than evident that TS, Jude and Willie are concerned with bonds of protection and preservation as opposed to the atrocities committed by those driven by greed.

After the sabotage, the three environmentalists are so excited and happy about the results of their work that they express their desire of taking more actions in defence of the sea. They make clear that they want to go to the Barrier Reef the following year to try to protect life there. The fact that “many coral reefs – are probably doomed thanks to climate change” (Do or die 147) is quite discouraging, nevertheless, they can possibly protect different forms of life from other direct attacks like pollution or overfishing. The hard blow of the activists to the whaling industry encourages them to continue taking direct actions, but the seriousness of their sabotage has other repercussions. Although the activists do not initially think about the media coverage of the action, it produces a significant stir not only in Iceland, but at an international scale. First of all, the reaction of Greenpeace to the sabotage is explained, because the organization is unhappy about it. In fact, Greenpeace “uncharacteristically condemned the action & vehemently denied all blame” (Melo 87), which makes evident why the activists distanced themselves from the organization previously. They considered it unable to really protect the environment and its life forms because Greenpeace is unwilling to resort to more radical direct methods of action like the ones used by ‘Jokerman’ members. Thus, the reaction by Greenpeace shows how mainstream and radical environmentalists do not completely agree in their ways for the protection of nature, a fact that implies an enfeeblement of the environmental movement. However, other people support the sabotage and are enthusiastic about it. Captain Paul Shepard (who resembles Paul Watson, founder of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society) suspects that ‘Jokerman’ members are responsible for the sabotage and visits them. He explains “how the scuttling was perceived in Europe (*favorably*)” (Melo 87) and how hard it affected the whaling industry. He shows his complete support for the action and laments not having been present in it. Furthermore, he tells the activists about news they have not heard of. He explains that the security guard entered one of the sinking ships and died. The activists are totally shocked and paralyzed because they never wanted or thought about killing anyone. Harming or killing people can never be an objective of radical environmentalists so they

are devastated by the news. Finally, Paul explains that he is joking and that the guard is alive and well. Therefore, no one is even injured during the sabotage, although the possibility of things going (terribly) wrong is presented as an undeniable part of the struggle to protect the environment.

The next radical environmental action is carried out in the magnificent (but threatened) forests of Oregon and it is an attempt at protecting some of the last vestiges of the wilderness of the West. The landscape the environmentalists encounter there is impressive and they can easily find themselves “peering down into the gorge at glacial land formations, coiling strings of rivers & a large, unbroken canopy of trees” (Melo 63). The beauty and characteristics of the nature of Oregon, with its volcanic and glacial elements, numerous rivers and immense forests, make this a very unique state, especially as it remains truly wild in some areas. However, although some of these wild spaces are included within the boundaries of National Parks and Forests they are still endangered. In fact, “in the big-tree state of Oregon (...) only 370,000 acres were proposed for Wilderness protection out of 4.5 million acres of roadless, uncut forest lands” (Foreman, *Ecodefense* 23), that is, a minimum amount of wilderness is protected. Only a little part of all the wild areas of Oregon is really safe from attacks and the rest are easy prey for the logging industry and other sectors that can benefit from their exploitation. In the novel, Louisiana-Pacific and Weyerhaeuser (companies that exist in real life) are clearing forest areas and leaving barren patches of earth that “spread like an incurable skin disease” (Melo 63). The activity of certain companies, whose objective is merely obtaining economic profits regardless of the situation of the wild West and its forms of life, affects the surface of the Earth terribly. The so-called progress these companies bring is like a sickness for the environment and it can only bring death and destruction. Clear cutting for the obtainment of wood implies obliterating habitats and the whole ecosystem that is formed, to a great extent, by the forest. Thus, all living beings that depend on it are threatened and probably doomed to perish. However, the companies are not only concerned about cutting trees, but also about reforesting the area with the trees that can serve their economic purposes, despite the fact that “newly planted seedlings are not an adequate replacement for old growth ecosystems” (Melo 63-64). Replacing ecosystems of innumerable years of history, development and life with plantations whose structure is planned beforehand not only means the end of wilderness, but the transformation of the environment into a mere

resource that can be exploited as wished. In the real-life Oregon, as in *Jokerman* 8, “the intricate living web of life the ancient forest represent was being replaced by tree plantations that were as unnatural and ecologically jejune as midwestern cornfields” (Manes 90). Therefore, reforesting with tree species that have the sole purpose of producing profits implies the disruption of the interrelatedness of living and non-living entities of the forest and the imposition of an environment with almost no ecological value. This kind of violent relationship of companies towards the environment is catastrophic and irremediably leads to the loss of “wildlife diversity, water purity, long-term soil productivity, and such unquantifiable qualities as beauty and solitude” (Manes 90). It is clear, then, that wild forests that abound with life and ‘prefabricated’ tree plantations are not comparable by any means. Due to this critical situation, and with the aim of not letting wilderness disappear so as unnatural plantations can develop, the activists resort to direct action as the only effective way to protect the wild.

The method they use in order to defend the forest was already introduced in *Hayduke Lives!* and it is a preventive measure to avoid the felling of trees, that is, tree spiking. The three environmentalists that carry out the action are again TS, Jude and Willie and they do it during a trip to a National Forest. When their trip is about to finish, they take some tools and nails and reach an area of old trees that are to be cut down. The explanation of how the action is carried out is very detailed and all the information given could easily make one’s action in real life succeed. The activists try to place the nails high in the trees so as these cannot be seen and to avoid any harm to loggers. Their procedure is explained as follows:

With a Leatherman tool, the top monkey scrapes a small circle of bark roughly four inches in diameter off of the tree. Then she uses a battery-powered Makita drill to pierce the tree’s soft, wet flank by six inches. Into the hole, the top monkey pushes a fifty penny nail in as far as it will go with her thumb, then hammers it in the rest of the way so that the head is nearly flush with the tree’s skin. Then she uses a small pair of bolt cutters to snip off the nail’s head. (Melo 65)

By using common tools, the three environmentalists introduce nails inside of the trees in a way that does not harm them, but that can effectively avoid their felling. The fact that their heads are cut makes them more difficult to be seen. Besides, as the metal nails are placed as deep as possible in the surface of the trees and covered with the bark scraped at the beginning of the process by using waterproof glue, they are practically invisible.

If they are finally found, removing them will require a lot of the loggers' time. Indeed, the activists' "idea is to delay the cut. Maybe if we delay it long enough, the cut will never happen" (Melo 65). Warning the companies about the spiking is essential to protect the loggers, but this does not necessarily mean that they will find the nails. The inability to find and remove the little objects secures the existence of the trees and, if this inability is prolonged, these living beings (and, consequently, all that depend on them) can finally be saved. However, tree spiking is not only a practice to make the logging industry lose time because it can also cause it significant economic losses. "Over the past few years major timber companies such as Weyerhaeuser and Louisiana-Pacific have suffered an estimated \$10 million in damages to road-building and timber equipment" (Manes 8), that is, the companies that try to exploit the forests of Oregon in *Jokerman* 8, have had incredible economic losses in real life due to radical environmental actions. Tree spiking can destroy logging equipment and damage the companies economically, in addition to stop the cutting down of trees. As Manes explains, "the average ecotage incident in Oregon causes about \$60,000 in damages, with many single incidents going as high as \$100,000" (9), which implies that the action carried out by TS, Jude and Willie can be terrible for companies. Thus, the activists can disrupt negative practices against the environment at the same time that they discourage companies from continuing with such attacks.

It is also worth mentioning that, at least Jude and Willie, engage in more tree spiking actions in the Siskiyou National Forest, a fact that means more protection of trees and more economic damage to nature-exploiters. Nevertheless, during one of these actions, Willie is caught, arrested and banned from National Forests in the US for ever. This is a hard punishment for him because it makes Willie unable to connect with the nature of these places he loves so much. His arrest is not only a personal defeat that makes the bonds between it and National Forests impossible, but a hard blow for the radical environmental movement. This fact implies that more destruction of the environment can easily happen, thus, making true and sincere human-natural relationships (in general terms, not only concerning the activists) more unlikely. While Willie is in jail, the rest of the activists reflect about the environmental situation, especially due to the fact that Jude's and Willie's failure at tree spiking has as a consequence the construction of a timber road "within six freakin inches of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness Boundary" (Melo 71). The inability to protect the trees of the

Siskiyou National Forest leads to a dramatic situation in which even an area considered wilderness, that is, supposedly protected from attacks, is invaded by those who try to profit from environmental exploitation. Therefore, not even protected areas (of the wild West, in this case) are respected and, seemingly, the obtainment of profits has preference over aspects like life, which are incredibly more important than money. Thinking about this example, the environmentalists realize that the planet is dying (or rather, being killed) due to an insane set of values characterized by greed and nonsensical material growth. For them, the fact that “we are one or two Ronald Reagans away from losing it all” (Melo 71) is a reality. Companies and governments are only concerned with so-called progress and as they see the domination of nature as a basic step to accomplish their goals, for ‘Jokerman,’ they are the ones killing the planet and its living beings. Therefore, politicians, government agencies and mainstream associations that promise to improve the environmental situation through sustainable policies cannot be trusted. Direct action outside their system and laws is the only way to protect effectively the natural world and, for that reason, the members of ‘Jokerman’ continue struggling to defend the planet and its living beings in spite of Willie’s arrest and of the defeat at the Siskiyou National Forest.

The characters’ wish to protect animals directly is shown for the first time when they engage in the sabotage of the two vessels in order to preserve the lives of whales. However, this is not their only attempt at saving animals. In a passage that is very important in terms of Willie’s relationships with nature, the activist, after his release from jail, deals with traps for hunting. Walking through forests, he usually encounters traps and, if there are no animals caught in them, he “can destroy it & bury its broken pieces where the trapper will never find them” (Melo 74) without much effort. Disabling or directly breaking traps can be a simple action with highly positive repercussions, due to the fact that it can preserve the lives of innumerable animals. Besides, by hiding the remains of traps, hunters will not know about the sabotage and, thus, the active protection of living beings can continue. The people who place traps through the forest only want “to make a few dollars off of pelts” (Melo 74), a quite disturbing fact that suggests that, for some humans, animals are worth no more than little amounts of money. Nevertheless, this fact is even more terrible than that because, for these people, only dead animals (that is, parts of them that can be used for capitalist purposes) have some value, not live ones. As a reaction to this complete disrespect for

life, Willie wishes/needs to sabotage all the traps he finds. However, what he encounters is a trapped fox about to die. Due to the agonizing situation of the animal, Willie cannot do anything to save its life and he takes the painful decision of killing it so as to avoid more suffering to the fox. Putting an end to the fox's life produces tremendous pain and sorrow to Willie and when he reunites with the rest of environmentalists "he is not the same" (Melo 74). The greed and contempt for life of others forces Willie to act against his own self; as someone struggling to protect nature, killing an animal is unthinkable for him until this very moment. The activist is compelled to destroy a bond that unites him with animals violently and, as a consequence, he suffers a significant change. Through the killing of the fox (as a way to avoid pain), a part of Willie also dies and the connection that exists between him and animals is eliminated because he somehow sees himself as a murderer. Therefore, practices that threaten the natural world (being trapping only an example) do not also negatively affect animals. Their impact on humans can also be terrible because, as in this passage, they can imply the destruction of human-natural relationships and the loss of a part of the self as a member of the interconnected web of life.

Hunting is one of the main menaces for living beings in the novel and, indeed, it "is one of the only legal blood sports left, and results in the death of 200 million animals yearly, and wounds and maims countless others" ("The Field Guide" 3). This fact means that an incredibly high amount of living beings perishes every year as a consequence of this activity and that, in addition to deaths and other damages, hunting destabilizes and endangers the balance of ecosystems. Not only whaling and trapping are presented as examples of this activity for killing animals in *Jokerman* 8 and an important part of the story deals with the hunting of wolves. A terrible wolf-hunt is expected to take place in British Columbia because hunters in this part of Canada are angry at and afraid of wolves that are killing other animals, thus, leaving less for them. The decision of the minister of environment to solve the situation of hunters is to allow the killing of wolves (half of the total population). Therefore, due to a fear of losing "hunting license revenues & tourist dollars" (Melo 75) innumerable wolves are expected to be killed. Economic intentions are behind attacks against this animal species, which makes clear that the powers promoting (economic) growth and development do not care about living beings. Hunting has always existed but the reality in hunting societies had nothing to do with this wolf-hunt driven by a wish for profits.

An “examination of human hunting societies suggests that formal relationships between hunter and hunted are part of the order of the universe” (Lopez 94), that is, deep bonds exist between these humans and their preys as part of a whole. Hunting societies respect the hunted and these are one of the fundamental pillars of the community. On the contrary, the novel presents not a hunting, but rather an extermination plan in which capitalist greed is the main driving force, a fact that implies that profound human-animal relationships are substituted by economic ones. Therefore, capitalism’s domination of the bonds between humans and animals leads to killing for money and, subsequently, to a threat to the “wolf population in British Columbia (...) one of the last remaining on the continent” (Melo 76). Considering the fact that the situation of wolves is not the best, for example, “they have been exterminated in the British Isles and Scandinavia and throughout most of Europe” (Lopez 13), the decision in the novel of killing half of the population of wolves is a terribly dramatic one. To respond to such a situation, Jude is willing to do whatever is at her hand to sabotage the hunting of wolves.

However, before focusing on the direct action undertaken to stop the killing of these animals, the nature of wolf-hunts is worth mentioning, due to the fact that, at some levels, it is significantly different from the hunting of other animals. Especially in the United States, wolf-hunts have truly been a way for extermination and huge numbers of wolves have been killed with a hate and cruelty absent from other animal killings. This is due to various reasons that have nothing to do with Native American perceptions of this animal, which were mostly positive and respectful. Since the Middle Ages, the wolf has been demonized by religious institutions considering that it “was the Devil in disguise” (Lopez 140). This led to a strong hatred towards the animal, which was deemed an agent of evil. This abhorrence of religious origin was accompanied by the economic losses that wolves could cause by attacking livestock. Furthermore, during the conquest and domination of nature by traveling West the wolf was considered synonymous with wilderness, which means that, in the mind of the colonists, it should be subjugated and violently eliminated. So, for those spreading ‘progress’ and ‘development’ in the US there were reasons strong enough to eliminate wolves, even though these can be summarized in pure hate, be it for religious, economic or anti-wilderness motives. Nevertheless, there is another important psychological reason

behind the brutal killings of wolves and it has to do with fear, more specifically, with theriophobia. Lopez explains that this type of fear is:

Fear of the beast. Fear of the beast as an irrational, violent, insatiable creature. Fear of the projected beast in oneself (...) At the heart of theriophobia is the fear of one's own nature. (140)

Thus, the killings of wolves had to do with fear of the animal itself, but, to a higher extent, to self-hatred and fear of one's inner beast. The wolf was turned into a symbol for all the human qualities that apparently did not fit into the description of 'civilization' and 'progress.' Therefore, eliminating these animals cruelly was an attempt at destroying the irrationality, lust and wildness of the human self, despite the fact that these are also present in civilized societies. Seemingly, aspects of the inner human beast like extreme violence are only tolerated if they serve the purposes of so-called progress. Thus, although in *Jokerman 8* the killing of the wolves of British Columbia is presented mainly driven by greedy reasons, relationships of hatred and fear towards these animals also lie behind the expected massacre. The decision of eliminating wolves in the novel is a modern example of the image of the wolf as something evil that has to be eradicated. However, the environmentalists do not only respect the animal because of its intrinsic value as a living being, but also appreciate and love it, which inevitably leads to direct action for protecting it.

Jude and other two women (who are not part of 'Jokerman') arrive in the Muskwa River Valley to sabotage the wolf-hunts. Their plan is "to remain in the forest until the BC government's Wolf Eradication Project ends" (Melo 76), that is, they have the aim of staying a time in the woods in order to act repeatedly and effectively and to protect as many wolves as they can. For that, they expect to receive food and gear supplies, which means that more environmentalists are contributing to the defence of the animals. The success of the action lies on the ability to stop the hunts, but for that, the activists need adequate conditions provided by other people engaged in the action indirectly. The three women hide in the forest so that hunters do not know about their presence and to be able to approach the area where a killing will be carried out. In this zone "piles of caribou meat lay steaming in a clearing covered in the fresh, white snow" (Melo 77) and all around the lure hunters wait with their rifles ready to shoot. The activists get close to the trap and, by using a starter's pistol, they fire to the air "scaring the wolves off" (Melo

77). Despite the fact that the wolves want to eat the caribou meat, the noise of Jude's pistol alerts them about the danger of doing so. The pistol is not a weapon, but a tool to make the wolves distance from the hunters, a fact that renders the trap useless and the hunt unlikely. This sabotage is a really risky action, not only because the environmentalists enter an area full of hunters ready to shoot, but due to the fact that they do it with a pistol. Even if it is a starter's pistol and not an actual weapon, hunters might not realize about it and attack the three activists for fear of being shot. However, no one is harmed and, in spite of the riskiness of the action, it is a complete success. Wolves escape uninjured and the activists have the intention of sabotaging more wolf-hunt attempts.

The wolves are protected thanks to the three women, but if the action did not succeed, the consequences would have been quite different. It is a fact that hunting not only kills animals but "also causes damage to the ecosystem by disrupting the natural balance of predator and prey" ("The Field Guide" 3). Therefore, the failure of the hunting sabotage would have caused severe disruptions in the web of relationships between wolves and animals that are their potential preys. Furthermore, as "species after species has been driven into extinction by human disruptions of natural processes" (Manes 24), the extermination of a big part of the wolves of British Columbia could ultimately lead to the total disappearance of certain living beings. Due to the interconnectedness of beings in the natural world, the plans for killing would not only threaten wolves. Indeed, other animals whose numbers are kept in balance thanks to predators would also be menaced. With less wolves other species would thrive, which could imply a decrease in the amount of food or in the numbers of other species. Taking this into account, the sabotage of the wolf-hunts is an appropriate method to preserve natural relationships from violent disruptions motivated by aspects like greed.

Nevertheless, the efforts made by Jude and the other two women are not the only ones to save the wolves. In fact, Eleanor Cookee, the member of the group who engages in mainstream activism, also travels to Canada to try to stop the wolf-hunts. Thus, the part of the novel related to the hunting of these animals presents two images of the environmental movement. On the one hand, Jude represents the radical approach and, on the other hand, Eleanor personifies the more moderate way of action. This two-way method for protecting wolves leads to interesting thoughts about the division/union of radical and mainstream environmentalism. First of all, it has to be pointed out that while

Jude has the objective of going to the forest to sabotage the hunts, Eleanor spends time “typing & sending out press releases, talking on the phone with every reporter who will answer her call” (Melo 81). She wants to give positive media coverage to the action of the three other women and to engage in legal proceedings that can stop the massacre. After witnessing the women’s action in the hunting area, the media exerts pressure on the minister of the environment so as he stops the killing activity while the activists remain in the woods. During the next days, while legal proceedings are taking place, “the media attention provides a flush of monetary support & public sympathy for the women. Then come hundreds of letters to the Parliament & the minister of environment’s office” (Melo 82). Thanks to Eleanor’s efforts, the population shows its support for the activists (both in immaterial and economic terms) and it even engages in showing its opposition about the killing of wolves. Finally, as court proceedings continue, a bureaucratic irregularity is discovered, which makes the decision of killing wolves illegal. As a consequence of this, there is “no wolf hunt, not this year” (Melo 82). Therefore, both the actions of sabotage and mainstream environmentalism come together and are successful in protecting the wolf population of British Columbia, as well as its ecosystem. In this very case, the union of direct and legal actions is completely effective and the environment is unharmed, first, through the hunting sabotage and, then, through legal measures against the slaughter. Especially concerning issues related to animals the “model of relentless protesting and unwavering support for both legal and illegal tactics, both bullhorns and black masks” (Potter 22) can be really the key for the preservation of lives. Despite the fact that in Abbey’s fiction only illegal direct action was effective, in *Jokerman* 8 the coming together of both methods proves to be successful. Furthermore, as Foreman explains: “to truly get the job done, we will also need to demonstrate, engage in mass nonviolent civil disobedience, and, frankly, illegally monkeywrench and sabotage wilderness-destroying projects” (Defending the Earth 87), a statement based on real-life experience. Therefore, the combined work of the two approaches to environmentalism can be truly the way for making significant changes. Nevertheless, as mainstream environmentalism is considered more ineffective than direct action, it can only be an additional help or support for the radical approach. Harming companies and government agencies economically is the best way to protect the environment; actions within the legal frame can reinforce the impact of direct action, but they alone cannot make real changes.

Throughout the novel, the group of activists thinks about pulling a prank and they decide that it should be related to the construction of a pyramid. However, they realize that this example of ‘development’ over the land goes against all they stand for. This situation leads to some reflections related to the human expansion over the natural world and its overall domination. For them, so-called development, that is, building structures (towns, roads, bridges, etc.) and spreading human communities that fill non-vital functions at the expense of the environment makes them only “think of the catastrophic impact on the ecosystem, the displaced wildlife, the soil erosion” (Melo 101). The activists consider that this development is intrinsic to the subjugation of nature, to environmental problems and to the disappearance of living beings. The very land and the ecosystems are violently attacked and the web of relationships between living and non-living beings is disrupted by human practices. By substituting nature for concrete or contaminant urban areas, animal and plant species are forcefully driven to death. Thus, human development (in the context of the modern industrial/capitalist society) can be considered intrinsic to the collapse of the rest of forms of life. Manes explains that the biological meltdown catastrophically perpetuated by industrial/capitalist development:

is most directly the result of values fundamental to what we have come to recognize as culture under the regime of technological society: economic growth, “progress,” property rights, consumerism, religious doctrines about humanity’s dominion over nature, technocratic notions about achieving an optimum human existence at the expense of all other life-forms. (28-29)

Certain values that are clearly anti-nature and anti-life are the ones that dominate in the mindset of industrial/capitalist societies and that allow the thriving of such communities. These ideas about humans as the centre of existence and about the human duty of dominating the environment and the rest of living beings are inevitably destructive. They bring the deaths and extinctions of innumerable species and are, consequently, a threat to life in the planet, a fact that is not related, by any means, to real growth. Furthermore, the environmentalists think about another aspect of this modern civilization, which is totally unnecessary for life (indeed it is opposite to it) and for true human growth: the military sector. They have in mind “those nuclear test sites where the kids all have leukemia & the dogs have no hair” (Melo 101), which are presented as one of the most terrible consequences of ‘development.’ Nuclear weapons,

technological 'advancements' created from wishes of power and money, are the perfect example of the insane values of the 'progress' associated to industrial/capitalist powers. Their ability to kill is so strong that, although they are not directly used against living beings, the repercussions of testing them leads to serious diseases and even death. Due to these realities about so-called development, the activists of the novel show a clear anti-development stance. They do not want to be part of a system that despises life at the same time that values money as the highest goal. They defend nature and living beings and this is why they struggle to protect them, even if for that they have to go against values deeply ingrained in the dominant current of thought.

The forests of the American Northwest continue under constant menace because there are plans of companies and of the Forest Service to reduce the overstory to zero in the area of the Blue Mountains. This implies "the elimination of canopy, the clearcutting of trees from an area, the ground scraped bare except for stumps & instant seedlings genetically designed" (Melo 130), that is, the forest ecosystem is planned to be destroyed. Government agencies and timber companies work together in order to exploit forests, so environmentalists cannot rely on them, which inevitably leads them to act outside the law. Such economic practices do not only bring the direct deaths of trees and of living beings that depend on them, because, in addition to habitat destruction, where clear-cutting has taken place the following happens: "rain erodes the slopes lain bare of topsoil (...) silt clouds rivers & streams" (Melo 130). The intervention of industrial/capitalist powers ruins the soil and erosion happens more easily and powerfully, thus, leaving totally worn areas. Besides, this destruction extends to rivers and aquatic beings are endangered, in addition to all those that drink that water. Those trying to profit from such exploitation do not care about the unique ecosystems developed over hundreds or thousands of years and think that by reforesting the obliterated forests all can continue its normal course. In fact, the only thing that can continue its course is their business due to the fact that, by planting fast-growth species, they can keep on obtaining economic profits. Therefore, the terrible environmental impact of these practices is not even considered because it means a lot of money for exploiters. For the activists, a sustainable alternative to reduce such negative impacts (while still logging) would be to cut trees in a responsible and intelligent way by taking "some trees while leaving most of them & you leave the oldest ones alone" (Melo 131). They consider that by cutting significantly less trees and by preserving the old-growth

ones, the ecosystem could be maintained and life could continue thriving. However, this is not the companies' and the Forest Service's method of action and they carry out an all-devouring policy of eliminating forests and replacing them by economically-profitable plantations.

The situation of the forests in the area of Oregon's Blue Mountains is dramatic and "no one will stand in the merciless vandals' way – unless we do" (Melo 131). The only people who can stop the clear-cutting are those who break the laws and act directly in defence of the trees. Thus, the activists manifest a sense of duty comparable to the one shown by Abbey's characters. The members of 'Jokerman' see themselves as the only real protectors of the forests, so they act following their duty because they owe it to the planet, which has given them so much. In this case, the environmentalists that take action are Barry Weathers and Wendy and their method of action is tree spiking. Their strategy is to "blaze their way up the mountain & drill & screw spikes into ancient trees that Eleanor Cooke has marked" (Melo 129). Eleanor gave them a map that indicates which ancient trees are to be cut down according to the plan of the Forest Service. Following her indications, Barry and Wendy intend to introduce nails inside the trees so as to prevent their felling. The action is, again, the combined work of mainstream and radical environmentalists, which can be the appropriate way to effectively protect forests. Despite the fact that, in the past, the group used tree spiking to protect any type of tree, now "we have gone to spiking only old growth trees" (Melo 131). This decision may be due to personal issues and to internal matters of the group (for example, Willie's death), but also to the fact that the activists give an incredible importance to these trees. For them, old growth trees are not only sources of life, but also of history. The history of the forest, of the whole ecosystem, is contained within these trees and life is maintained thanks to them. Preserving these living beings means preserving ancient vestiges of the true and wild West that remain in modern times. The result of the action is unknown, but it is more than probable that, at least a part of the forest can be saved thanks to the two activists' tree spiking.

In relation to Barry's and Wendy's mission to protect the forests of Oregon, it is noteworthy that the image of the real-life environmentalist 'The Fox' is introduced in the novel. This activist is included in the fiction of *Jokerman* 8 and, despite the fact that here it plays a minor role, in real-life its actions were noteworthy. As Manes explains, The Fox fought:

against Chicago-area polluters by plugging factory smokestacks, closing off industrial drains in rivers, and, (...) dumping jars of fetid industrial effluent on the plush carpets of executive suites of corporations like U.S. Steel. (185)

The Fox, one of the first individuals to take direct action against those who profit from the destruction of the environment, engaged in several actions to harm companies with highly polluting practices. The mere mention or presence of this activist in the novel blurs the line between reality and fiction again and it makes clear that the fiction dedicated to radical environmentalism always has (or is based on) a part of reality. Nevertheless, even if the presence of the environmentalist in the novel is not really significant, the importance of The Fox for Barry is incredible. In his childhood, he was obsessed with the image of the mysterious environmental-vigilante and he even “includes accounts of the Fox’s adventures among his earliest memories” (Melo 138). Barry’s early admiration and love for a person who fought the injustices committed against the environment made him engage in the direct defence of nature and its living beings. Thus, like his hero, he became a protector of the environment and, thanks to a person who fiercely disagreed with the polluting policies of companies in Chicago, the protection of trees in Oregon is possible. The Fox is a driving force for all the actions carried out by Barry, so the influence and interrelatedness of the radical environmental movement cannot be neglected. Seeing other people stand and take action against the exploitation and destruction of nature can be the catalyst for developing a strong movement, because, despite the fact that a lot of people are aware of the environmental situation, taking a step forward alone is really difficult. Without knowing it, Barry and Wendy talk with The Fox in a bar in Oregon. Although the activist sends a letter to them, they never read it and Barry never knows that he met his childhood hero. In *Jokerman* 8 The Fox is a woman called Nancy, while in reality it was a man called James F. Phillips, so in this case reality and fiction do not totally come together. Anyway, what really matters is not the identity of The Fox, but its image as a defender of the environment. This is especially true due to the fact that, as the next actions are carried out by Barry and Wendy, they are partly motivated by Barry’s childhood admiration for his mysterious hero.

The two activists engage in two actions related to animal liberation and wellbeing, a quite illustrative fact about their struggle. They are not only concerned with protecting natural spaces, but also with saving all animals possible from monstrous practices of

companies, which make living beings suffer and die in their experiments. In fact, “each year, US industrial laboratories slaughter an average of 63 million animals” (Salleh 88), a really dramatic fact that would, undoubtedly, drive activists to take action against them. Thus, the members of ‘Jokerman’ are fully engaged in all the dimensions of the radical environmental movement, both related to the liberation of the Earth and of animals from industrial-capitalist domination. The first of these two actions by Barry and Wendy consists on liberating kittens from a facility in California, that is, they set animals free in an American West that has totally dominated living beings and experiments with them. “After rescuing several kittens from an animal research facility in Palo Alto, they go about the process of finding each of the kittens homes” (Melo 142), so, in addition to liberating the animals, they also care about their future and try to find them a home so as they can continue living. However, the two environmentalists’ concern for the kittens ends in a defeat because they are taken to jail while the animals are returned to the research facility, so as scientists can continue experimenting with them. Therefore, the exploitation of the animals continues despite Barry and Wendy’s efforts. It is worth mentioning that actions for animal liberation and wellbeing do not only aim at facilities like the one in the novel and that “potential targets have now included fast food restaurants, fur shops, fighting cock farms, poultry-producing factory farms, circuses, racecourses, butcher shops and slaughterhouses” (Young 29). Environmentalists can act against any practice that benefits from the exploitation of animals, due to the fact that liberating all living beings whose freedom has been suppressed is one of their objectives. This includes humans who are also dominated by the industrial/capitalist complex, so activists try to directly free beings until this set of institutions and relationships disappears.

After being released from jail, Barry and Wendy decide to continue struggling for the wellbeing of animals and, in less than a month, they carry out the second of these two actions. It does not aim at a research facility, but at a dog farm in Oregon, which implies another action to free animals in the American West. In the farm, the dogs are solely raised to be subjects for scientific research. So, this farm has strong ties with another unspecified sector and both are part of the institutions obtaining profits from animal exploitation. As the activists want to give the dogs a better future, they liberate the animals and sabotage the farm in the following way:

They bring with them hand-sized sledge hammers to smash glass, computer screens, coffee makers whatever is within the radius of their swing. They pour sand & water into fuel tanks. Wendy & Barry smash & smash without fear, having severed the power lines that feed the security system before anything else. (Melo 142)

The first step for carrying out their sabotage is disabling the security system so they can act as they please without fear of getting caught. After that, Barry and Wendy start breaking everything inside the farm, including computers that can be used for any type of action related to the future of the dogs, like communicating with the people who will experiment with them. By smashing the properties inside the building, the two activists can cause terrible economic losses to the dog farm, a fact that can even bring the end of its activities. Besides, they use natural elements (sand and water) to sabotage fuel tanks, that is, in the style of Abbey's characters, they make a source of power unusable. However, the most important aspect of the action is the end of the dogs' imprisonment. Once they sabotage this building they "set free the seventy-five howling dogs in the adjacent kennel building" (Melo 142). A significant number of dogs is, thus, liberated and the plans of experimenting with them in the future are frustrated. Nevertheless, the possible results of the action are not necessarily positive for the animals. While some of the dogs will be able to survive by adapting to the world (or even by finding a home among humans), others will probably die. The situation is a really complicated one because, on the one hand, the dogs could live imprisoned until the time for experimentation came (which implies suffering and even death) and, on the other hand, they could die in a free state due to an inability to obtain food or adapt. The conditions for the animals in either case are tough, but the environmentalists follow their sense of duty and liberate the animals so they can, at least, be free from industrial/capitalist domination.

Barry's and Wendy's actions are mainly concerned with freeing animals and with causing some economic losses to the dog farm, but activism related to animal liberation and wellbeing can include other ways to stop the cruelty against these living beings. In a real-life action carried out in 1984 in a clinic belonging to the University of Pennsylvania, "activists stole thirty videotapes showing experimenters laughing and playing loud music as they slammed baboons' heads with a hydraulic device" (Potter 54). This fact shows, first of all, that the human cruelty and sadism related to animal

experimentation in the name of ‘development’ is insane and seems to have no limits. Nevertheless, it also makes clear that, thanks to the intervention of the activists, the sadism of the experimenters turned against them. By making the videotapes public and using them in campaigns against those profiting from suffering, the population could see how ruthless these were. This fact implies a considerable loss of public support and, consequently, of economic benefits, which means that activists started an important path that, thanks to a part of the population, could bring the end of inhuman practices against animals. In relation to the future of the dogs liberated by Barry and Wendy, it is also worth mentioning that a deadly fate does not await all the freed animals. Indeed, liberation can be completely positive in many cases. Potter explains that the ALF freed “about 260 animals, many with their eyes sewn shut or damaged, including one infant primate named Britches” (146) from a laboratory. Scientists shut the eyes of the primate, caged it and attached a device producing a shrill noise to its head. All this caused the animal severe neurological disorders. After its liberation, a lot of care was given to it and it recovered, “his eyes healing, his hair growing back, his neurotic episodes diminishing” (Potter 146). Thus, in this case, the liberation of animals was essential for preserving their lives and it also brought recoveries that made them be in a really positive state. Therefore, actions for the liberation of animals can be the only way for securing their wellbeing, far from the cruel practices of those promoting so-called development. Furthermore, sabotage against such sectors can mean serious economic losses for them, which can ultimately lead to the end of terrible and inhuman activities involving living beings.

The forests of the American Northwest are the target of the timber industry all through the novel and, as it has previously been mentioned, there is a plan to build a logging road right next to the protected Kalmiopsis. This is due to the fact that while this wilderness area is safe from attacks against it, the lands belonging to the Siskiyou National Forest around it are at the mercy of exploiters. The construction of the road implies a lot of activity of vehicles, pollution and noise, in addition to the cutting of trees that it will provoke. The impact of this industry in the forests is well-known (ecosystem destruction, deaths of living beings, etc.), but another aspect related to the cutting of the trees is mentioned in the novel: flooding. As it is explained, “a year from now a small town downstream from here will experience flooding directly related to the logging that takes place tomorrow” (Melo 171). As a consequence of clear-cutting,

rivers will not be able to contain waters and these will not follow their regular course. This will not only threaten the living beings of the forest, but also humans in towns next to the river. Flooding can be terrible for people because it can destroy houses and ruin lives, so it seems evident that the logging industry does not even care about the repercussions of its actions on humans; only money matters for those involved in it.

In order to protect the forest and its living beings (including humans who would also be affected by the felling of trees) a crowd of environmentalists gathers to engage in non-violent protest and resistance. Among the activists, there are unspecified members of 'Jokerman' who, this time, resort to more moderate methods than active sabotage. Their objective is to stand between the trees and the loggers in a non-violent way, so as to avoid the cutting down of the former. However, there is a woman (who turns out to be Jude) who goes one step further in her resistance and who engages in a tree-sitting to directly protect the trees of an area. "Having scaled the tree with rock-climbing equipment, she works diligently the next twenty minutes, securing the door to the trees, creating for herself a platform" (Melo 167) in order to stay there as many days as she can, living safely in an old-growth tree. This type of resistance is based on the fact that while the person is in the tree, loggers can neither cut it nor the ones around it. Besides, the presence of the rest of the environmentalists and of some photographers makes the work of loggers unlikely. Despite the fact that tree-sitting and non-violent resistance cannot destroy machines or working equipment, they can cause serious economic losses to companies and be almost as effective as direct action in this respect and context. In fact, in a real-life protest based on tree-sitting that took place in 1985, the result for the exploiters of nature was "a cost of several hundred thousand dollars in lost harvesting time and increased law enforcement" (Manes 14). Prolonged tree-sitting can effectively protect forests because while it frustrates the plans of the logging industry by preventing the cutting of trees, companies lose money due to their mere inability to follow their plans. Therefore, the environmentalists seem to be in the appropriate way to preserve the forests of the American Northwest.

Furthermore, another way of defending the area of the Kalmiopsis is presented through an action by Cy. He resorts to another method of non-violent resistance that is based on not allowing the exploiters to use their equipment. The following is explained about his way of resisting the destruction of the environment:

Cy handcuffed himself to a gate installed to protect the heavy equipment from the calculated wrenching of his wingnut tribe. For as long as he remained cuffed there, the heavy equipment could not pass through – no road could get built. (Melo 180)

In order to protect their bulldozers and other machines from the active sabotage of the environmentalists, those trying to exploit the forest set up a gate. Instead of getting inside and turning the equipment unusable, Cy decides to handcuff himself to the gate so that bulldozers cannot continue advancing. If the machines do not move, the road cannot be built, so having a handcuffed activist in the way of the bulldozers is like a barrier that stops the advancement of the powers promoting ‘development.’ As in the case of Jude and her tree-sitting, the longer the activist remains immovable the worse for the logging industry. Nevertheless, even if loggers are supposed to wait until the environmentalist disappears from their way to carry on with their works, this does not happen during Cy’s action of resistance. Indeed, an angry “bulldozer operator dropped a three-yard scoop of misting forest soil on top of him” (Melo 180), thus, burying Cy under a layer of earth. While radical environmentalists never aim at people, the driver of the bulldozer attacks the activist, putting his life directly in danger. In this case, the exploiters of nature act violently against people, making their disdain for life more than obvious. For them, economic relationships seem to be more valuable than the connections between living beings and the fact of burying Cy is a further example of the insanity of the values that dominate in the industrial/capitalist society. In spite of the terrible attack he suffers, Cy does not think about the worker, but about himself as a “freshly planted seed” (Melo 180) in the earth. Being buried by the bulldozer makes him identify with plants as living beings that belong to the earth, but also as victims of industrial/capitalist domination. This fact implies that Cy’s connection with nature is so strong that, although his life is threatened, having a close relationship with the natural world is a fundamental aspect of his life and of himself. In the end, the bulldozers are able to continue their way and the construction of the road begins. The defeat of the activists when trying to protect the trees will lead to a terrible situation for the forest and its inhabitants.

The incident of Cy’s burial by a bulldozer is really illustrative of the real-life struggle to protect the environment and it is not, by any means, unique to the fiction of *Jokerman* 8. In fact, during protests to stop the activities of the timber industry in

Oregon, “Diana Warren was knocked down and buried almost up to her neck in the mud dredged up by the bulldozer’s blade” (Manes 87). Therefore, activists have been attacked by exploiters of nature both in the fiction and in reality. Nevertheless, this is not the only example in which the timber industry has extended its violence to human beings. As Manes points out, “timber company personnel have fired guns at radical protesters at least twice, apparently more to intimidate than to injure” (15). The mere presence of guns during actions to protect the environment makes one think about who are really close to terrorism. Firing guns at people, even with the intention of causing fear, is a terrible action that can never be totally controlled and that can hurt or even kill humans. Thus, the use of violence against environmentalists, in order to secure economic profits, is an actual part of the attitude of the industrial/capitalist powers that profit from the exploitation of nature. However, there is an even more dramatic incident, where an activist died as a consequence of a logger. The logger threatened some activists saying that he would make a tree fall over them and “David “Gipsy” Chain, was crushed and killed” (Potter 84). Radical environmentalists only aim at property and never cross the line of attacking people, unlike the powers promoting ‘development,’ which have already harmed and, even, killed humans. Therefore, it is clear that environmentalists are concerned with the preservation of life and of the natural relationships between living beings without harming anyone, only by attacking inanimate objects. In addition to that, Cy’s burial and the real-life attacks against activists make evident that industrial and capitalist powers are totally anti-life and that any living being that threatens their economic profits can be a victim of their violence.

The impact of the activities of the logging industry in Oregon is devastating, but, in the novel, more attacks against the environment and the life-forms of the states of the American West are mentioned. The transformation of the hydrography of the arid parts of the West implied an inflexion point for the land, but dams were built and rivers were diverted throughout the whole country. Oregon, with its greenness and immense forests also suffered the consequences of the ‘fever’ for dam construction and, in *Jokerman* 8, one of these, the Bonneville Dam, is included as another agent of environmental destruction. It is explained that the huge concrete structure, which spans Oregon and Washington, has the aim of producing hydroelectric energy by using the waters of the Columbia River. This energy has to be obtained by restraining the waters of the river and by not allowing them to follow their natural course, which means that the

environment surrounding the Columbia River is totally modified for human purposes. Besides, the deaths of salmons due to the turbines of the dam are another significant repercussion of this construction. “Millions of salmon get squished anyway – to the point where now there are hardly any left” (Melo 257), that is, innumerable animals perish in the dam and they have almost disappeared from the river. Eliminating the population of a species almost completely in an area can have dramatic consequences for the balance of the ecosystem, not only because of the intrinsic value of the salmons, but also because other species depend on their existence. Thus, in addition to transforming the environment, the dam also disrupts the interconnection of species that inhabit the Columbia River and the zones surrounding it. Furthermore, another example of destructive ‘development’ that threatens life both in Oregon and Washington included in the novel is the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. A former nuclear production complex, this site in the state of Washington was (and still can be) a menace for life in the American West. It is explained that the complex:

is the beat up ol’ Ford on cinder blocks of nuclear reactors, the scene of a Chernobyl-like mishap or two (...) No wonder the wind has a metallic taste to it. You hope that your hair doesn’t fall out & that your children are born with five fingers on each hand. (Melo 257)

A nuclear site is always synonym of danger for living beings, but in this very case, as some accidents have happened, the threat can be terribly real. The pollution caused by radiation in the air is a fact, so merely breathing there implies a violent and risky insult to the environment and its living beings. In addition to that, the possibility of cancers and malformations is another consequence of the nuclear industry, which acts in the name of so-called progress. Therefore, these examples of ‘development’ in the American West prove to be mainly threats to life. Their economic implications are more than evident, however, in terms of true human and natural development, they are only dangerous obstacles. The wild lands that were associated to the West have been increasingly dominated by industrial/capitalist powers and, even if some wilderness still exists, the destruction/exploitation of the environment and of living beings is the most common practice now. Thus, as a consequence of ‘development,’ the wild West can only try to resist, in order to continue existing and in order to preserve nature and life in the middle of the industrial/capitalist madness.

While some of the members of 'Jokerman' engage in direct actions to stop the destruction of the environment and the deaths of living beings, Eleanor Cooke continues struggling by using more moderate methods. She distances from certain activities of the group and learns about "an old-growth timber sale on state land in Tillamook County near Oregon's Pacific Ocean beach access" (Melo 265). Instead of trying to frustrate the timber industry's plans by engaging in tree-spiking or tree-sitting, her objective is to mobilize a big number of people to show their discontent against its practices. She organizes "a march in Salem in protest against it" (Melo 265) and spends time writing placards and signs for the demonstration. Eleanor's aim is to force the companies to change their practices and stop environmental exploitation, with the support of the population. The activist alone seems to be the main driving force for environmental actions that do not include sabotage or economic losses of companies. She prepares every aspect of the protest and even "arranges speakers & gives us a prepared spiel for what she wants us to say if we are approached by media" (Melo 266). This means that, in addition to the fact that more members of the group will be present in the protest, Eleanor makes sure that the media impact of the demonstration is positive in order to stop the practices of the timber industry successfully. Although direct action can be more effective than a protest in terms of obtaining victories in the name of the environment, the combined work of both ways of action can really make a change in stopping the exploitation and destruction of nature. For Foreman, the union of radical and mainstream environmentalism "can be effective in stopping timber-cutting, road-building, overgrazing, oil and gas exploration, mining, dam building, powerline construction, off-road-vehicle use, trapping, ski area development" (Defending the Earth 87) and other aspects related to so-called 'development.' Therefore, practices like the one Eleanor opposes to in this very case, can be impeded if the radical and the mainstream currents of the environmental movement come together. Direct action remains as the main way for frustrating the plans of the exploiters of nature, but the opposition of the population in the form of a protest can also be an incredibly helpful weapon to defend the environment. All in all, protecting the planet and its living beings is in the hands of people, not of companies or government agencies, so every action that can favourably affect the environment contributes in the struggle.

The group of environmentalists finds itself in a really complicated situation after the demonstration organized by Eleanor in Salem and they are forced to hide so as not

to get arrested. An unexpected incident takes place during the protest and, as the members of 'Jokerman' are considered the main suspects, they have to escape from the authorities. Said event is, as the news call it, "an incident of domestic terrorism at the state capitol" (Melo 276). During the protests against the timber industry, a bomb explodes in a bathroom of the government building. The bathroom is destroyed, but no one is killed or even hurt in the explosion and all 'Jokerman' activists are innocent. Using explosive devices is not part of their way of action and even their code prevents them from detonating anything. Besides, an attack of this kind would not damage the timber industry or government agencies, it could only be considered a threat that would give a bad image to the environmentalists. These think that the bomb can be the work of the timber industry, but they "wouldn't be surprised if the FBI was in on it from go" (Melo 277). The innocence of all the group members makes them suspect about the exploiters of nature and, especially, about the authorities that want to portray them as terrorists so that they do not obtain the support of the population. The fact that radical environmentalists want to avoid any harm to living beings, makes the thought of attacking a crowded building unlikely. Nevertheless, considering that activists have being harmed and even killed in real-life, the possibility of the bomb being the work of the FBI or of the timber industry is feasible. In fact, in the already mentioned incident of the bomb in Judi Bari's car, the intervention of the FBI is the most accepted theory. Therefore, the explosion of the bomb in the bathroom is a mysterious event that does not harm anyone, but that can imply serious repercussions for the group. Although they do not get arrested, the label of terrorism can accompany the activists, thus, making them lose support and increasing the probability of being defeated and caught. This and the fragmentation of the group caused partly by it are some of the factors that bring the downfall of 'Jokerman.'

However, the passage in which TS and Jude hike the Pacific Crest trail (more exactly, in the area of Northern California) is the really decisive moment that brings the end of the group. Jude walks through the zone in order to experience the nature that surrounds her and to sabotage traps if she encounters any. Unexpectedly, she finds a dead wolf in a trap and, even if she is partly excited due to the fact that wolves are supposedly extinct in the area, the sight is terrible for her. The environmentalist, then, "frees the wolf from the trap, carries its body over her shoulders (...) & lays the wolf's body down on the ground where she intends to bury it" (Melo 299), far from where a

trapper can find it. Despite the fact that the animal is already dead, she does not want to give the trapper the satisfaction of getting it or the possible profits derived from the hunt. Nevertheless, a hunter sees her and shoots at her. TS hears the noise and rushes to see if something happened to Jude. He finds her, “lying there on the trail as if she were asleep” (Melo 299), killed by the hunter who probably also killed the last wolf seen in Northern California. This dramatic incident makes evident how easily the destructive practices of hunting can extend to human beings. Natural hunting for survival cannot be equalled to hunting for profits and, in this very case, the repercussions of the latter include a murdered human being. It is a fact that “thousands of people, hunters and hikers alike, die yearly in accidents involving falling from tree stands, shooting at objects believed to be “game animals”” (“The Field Guide” 3), so hunting is an obvious menace for all living beings. The profit-driven hunts, which are part of the industrial/capitalist society, disrupt all balance between species that exists in the natural world, in addition to cause deaths to innumerable beings, including humans. This hunting incident even disrupts the existence of ‘Jokerman,’ which cannot continue its course with the deaths of Willie and Jude. The core of the group, formed by these two activists and TS, no longer exists and, as a consequence, “the work we started is never complete” (Melo 300). The activists’ objective of protecting the environment and its living beings cannot be fulfilled without two of the pillars of the group. TS, devastated, disappears. For him, all seems to be over, although more members of the group still want to carry on struggling.

The last environmental actions in the novel are concerned, once again, with animal liberation and wellbeing, although only two members of ‘Jokerman,’ Eleanor and Squirrel, participate in them. A group called the Animal Liberation Collective (a clear reference to the real-life Animal Liberation Front) contacts Eleanor so ‘Jokerman’ members join and help them in an action they are about to carry out. Said action aims at the building of an animal research facility of the University of California. The activists’ plan is to delay the construction, “to cause cost overruns, so that, (...) the university regents will decide to scrap the plans altogether” (Melo 305). Thus, their objective is to cause the university economic losses until it abandons the efforts of building the facility to experiment with animals. Once the facility is built, the suffering caused to animals will not be noticed, due to the fact that they will be in a soundproof space, without windows and under ground level. For this reason, the situation of the animals has to be

made visible before the construction finishes, to gain the support of the population and the action has to be effective to avoid any harm to the living beings. In order to really damage the economy of the university, the environmentalists focus on a key element of the construction: the crane. Instead of sabotaging the equipment or the machinery of the construction site, they decide to occupy the crane and remain there as long as they can. As “cranes cost a fortune to rent” (Melo 306), they can cause serious economic losses by occupying it and, finally, bring the end of the project. Their method of action is like the non-violent resistance carried out by other activists in the forests of Oregon and, indeed, “it’s an urban tree sit” (Melo 306). In this case, they are not trying to avoid the felling of a tree, but they stay in the crane so that it cannot be used while it still costs the university incredible amounts of money.

Only two people ascend the crane with the aim of staying there and, as Eleanor does not take part in direct actions, she is not one of them. On the one hand, there is Squirrel, the only ‘Jokerman’ member Eleanor could convince and, on the other hand, Doggo DeSilva, an activist and experienced climber. Squirrel is an active environmentalist and has taken part in several sabotage actions. In fact, “she enjoys the dismantling of tractors & the disabling of heavy equipment at the sites of wilderness road construction” (Melo 254), that is, she has fiercely acted against examples of ‘development’ over wilderness. She has sabotaged machinery many times in the style of Abbey’s characters, in order to protect the natural world from violent attacks of the industrial/capitalist powers. With respect to Doggo DeSilva, he started as a graffiti artist writing political messages, but, then, he turned to toppling billboards. His way of action is explained as follows:

sawing almost all the way through the support beams with a handsaw & attaching ropes to the top of the billboard, then pulling the ugly thing over, knocking the corporate system back upon itself. (Melo 306)

The activist has engaged several times in the toppling of these signs of capitalist ‘development’ by using common tools like ropes and a saw. He uses direct action to attack the interests of companies and his target is the same as Dr Sarvis’ in Abbey’s fiction. Therefore, it is clear that the two activists have a lot of experience in sabotage and direct action. However, in this case, they ascend the crane and engage in an action of non-violent resistance. The actual economic damage they cause is unknown, but their

mere presence in the crane implies some delay in the construction and money losses for the university.

While the two activists are in the crane, Eleanor talks with the media in order to explain which their objectives are. In this new example of combined work between direct action and more mainstream methods, Eleanor expresses that there are no possible negotiations and that Squirrel and DeSilva will remain in the crane as long as they can, “each day pushing the cost in lost construction time skyward” (Melo 308). She makes clear to the media and, consequently, to a part of the population that economic sabotage in the form of a peaceful sit-in is their way to try to stop the construction of the animal research facility. In addition to that, the activist shows a box that contains kittens to the camera. She informs that the animals were liberated from another facility in San Jose earlier that day. Through the action further suffering to the kittens is avoided and Eleanor plans to give them to people with the condition that they love them. Thus, she intends to replace negative relationships that serve the purposes of ‘progress’ with positive affective bonds like care and love. In the context of animal liberation and wellbeing, “we need those out there spreading the word about animal suffering (...) to create an overall consciousness” (Schnell 5). Eleanor’s aim is to make the situation of the animals visible so that the population becomes conscious of the pain inflicted to these living beings, a fact that is intrinsic to the struggle for animal liberation. Besides, freeing animals and creating awareness has to be accompanied by legal actions “enforcing the acknowledgement of animals within the law and looking to ban such inhumane, legal events and practices such as the circus and racing” (Schnell 5). Therefore, although fighting in all fronts is the best way to avoid the further exploitation/destruction of the environment, in the case of animals, it is especially vital. Taking this into account, it seems that the action of Eleanor, Squirrel and DeSilva can be a complete success. However, while talking on TV, Eleanor discovers that the research facility is, in fact, a cloning research centre. The news leaves her speechless and, due to her inability to answer, a big part of the audience gets a negative image of her and of the action of the activists. Thus, despite the fact the repercussions of these final actions are not specified, it is evident that the activists do not fulfil all their objectives, because these do not lead to the creation of a strong consciousness of the population.

In the final passage of the novel, TS, desolated as a consequence of the deaths of both Willie and Jude, wanders aimlessly. The group of environmentalists that engaged in numerous actions to protect animals and the environment seems to no longer exist; 'Jokerman,' having lost its core and essence, seems to disappear. TS finds himself somewhere in the south of Oregon and walks into a forest. Apparently, the woods are the only place he has to go to. This is the only home that remains for him, a fact that shows how close his relationship with nature is. Without walking much from where he enters the forest, he arrives at a clear-cut. Although 'Jokerman' will not carry out more actions, the forests of Oregon are still threatened, which makes clear that the work of the activists is left unfinished. However, while advancing through the clear-cut, TS sees someone riding a bicycle with wings adhered to it. He follows the bicycle and finds a community of people established in the forest. These people are:

a rogue contingent of engineering students & cyclists from Oregon State University. They have given up their other pursuits to do this. It's a troupe just like the one TS has just left. (Melo 325)

TS encounters a community of people that has left 'normal life' behind in order to be in close contact with the forest. Besides, like 'Jokerman,' this community seems to be protective of the natural spaces of Oregon. The degree of action this group engages in is not specified, but it can be deduced that they are active, at least, in the defence of that very forest. The friendly and comfortable ambience of the community and the strong connections with nature that can be developed in it are reasons strong enough for TS to stay there for a time and, indeed, "it's home to him now" (Melo 326). Among these people and the trees, the sorrow and pain that afflict him lose power and he is able to start a new stage of his life in close contact with the forest. Thus, *Jokerman 8* ends with a feeling of hope, despite the fact that it is more related to TS than to the environmental situation of Oregon. Nevertheless, TS' return to nature and the fact of joining a new group suggests that the struggle to protect the nature of the American West will continue.

9. The Secret World of Terijian (2007)

9.1. Introduction to *The Secret World of Terijian (2007)*

The Secret World of Terijian is a short book for children written by an anonymous author and published for the first time in 2007. Since then, it has been edited several times and translated into Icelandic and Slovakian. The work was published by the anarchist collective CrimethInc., which operates in the United States since the mid-1990s writing and publishing books, articles and zines, in addition to releasing music records especially linked to the anarcho-punk scene. Besides, the collective engages in campaigns and actions related to anti-globalization and anti-capitalist causes. Taking this into account, it is clear that, despite the fact that *The Secret World of Terijian* is a work intended for children, it carries strong anarchist and anti-capitalist ideas. The book tells the story of two children, Connor and Moriko, who struggle for the protection of the forest next to where they live. This forest is not only the place in which they play, but, for them, also a fantastic world called Terijian. They have great adventures in this ‘magical’ place and encounter numerous of its inhabitants. While exploring the forest, they soon realize that there are some machines cutting the trees and destroying the area. They hope that the elves, magical creatures living in the forest, will help them protect that natural space, but they alone decide to take some action against industrial/capitalist powers anyway.

The Secret World of Terijian can be considered to include elements of fantasy and even epic, but it is, in essence, a children’s book whose fiction is very close to reality. In fact, it is noteworthy that while the two children think they are in the presence of elves, these are indeed activists, members of the ELF (Earth Liberation Front). So, the line between reality and fiction is blurred also in this work and the story gains obvious anarchist and radical environmentalist connotations that lead to reconsiderations about the true nature of the book. It is more than entertainment for children and in the back cover of some editions there is a quote by Kirk Engdall, US Attorney for the District of Oregon, saying the following:

The storyline of this children's book romanticizes the criminal activities of the Earth Liberation Front and encourages children to become involved in similar criminal conduct. (Engdall, *The Secret World* Back-cover)

This statement, and the fact of using it in the book as a positive review, make evident that the story has the aim of transmitting certain political and environmental ideas, in addition to functioning as an entertainment for children. Furthermore, although the setting of the story is unspecified, Engdall makes his fear of radical environmentalism gaining power in the American Northwest evident. Thus, even if the West is not necessarily the setting of the story, this can have an impact in the protection of the natural spaces of this part of the country. For these reasons, the fact that *The Secret World of Terijian* is a book for children does not mean that it cannot offer interesting perspectives regarding the radical environmental movement and the struggle for the defence of nature.

Furthermore, due to the point of view from which the story is told (a children's perspective is offered but also an adult one with a significant environmental concern) and to the support given to the ELF, it can be thought that the anonymous author is also a member of this group. At some points of the story, clear calls for action are made, for example, almost at the end of the book, when the following is expressed: "there's a time to cry, and a time to fight back" (*The Secret World* 45). This statement emphasizes the fact that while environmental destruction can be a source of pain and sorrow, there must also be an active response to it in the form of direct action. Thus, especially like in Abbey's works, in *The Secret World of Terijian* there are also attempts at making people engage in the struggle to protect the environment. For that, throughout the story, a certain consciousness wants to be created, so as to make readers aware of environmental problems, in this case, related to the industrial/capitalist domination of forests through the cutting of the trees and the construction of new structures. This environmental concern/struggle is one of the pillars of the work, but it has to be borne in mind that its publisher is an anarchist collective. Although CrimethInc.'s main concern is not the environmental struggle, it strongly supports actions like the ones that are depicted in the story. Therefore, topics related to anarchism like civil disobedience and direct action play a really significant role in *The Secret World of Terijian*, making evident the close ties between environmentalism and politics. In fact, the environmental and political dimensions that form the basis of the book are presented as inseparable, a

quite illustrative fact about the real-life movement that struggles to protect life in the planet.

9.2. Nature and the Environment in *The Secret World of Terijian* (2007)

The role the natural world plays in the story is obviously fundamental, especially taking into account that the plot develops around the intervention of industrial/capitalist powers in the forest. This natural space (the magical world of Terijian for the children) is being destroyed to build new structures such as houses and electric lines, that is, ‘development’ is violently taking the place of nature. Connor and Moriko are strongly tied to the forest and its living beings and, although the human-natural relationships presented in the story do not focus on aspects like spirituality or freedom, a profound need of defending this natural space is the consequence of the children’s ties with it. Thus, the positive and enriching bonds that unite humans and the forest are the catalyst for the children and the ELF members to take action for its defence. In order to know what these people are really fighting for, the forest, its trees and animals that are part of it are described. Accounts of the natural world are given, but, more especially, accounts of what the forest means for the children, that is, a magical world full of life and adventures. Unlike the previous novels, *The Secret World of Terijian* does not offer descriptions of vast and magnificent landscapes because the passages dedicated to nature focus on more specific aspects Connor and Moriko perceive, for example, on trees and on animals that inhabit them. However, even if the depictions of the environment seem to be less ‘elaborated’ than those in works like *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, they can be highly valuable in their objective of making children appreciate nature.

The descriptions of the forest that can be found throughout the story have different meanings and objectives and they are not only aimed at describing hills or trees physically. In fact, among the functions of these detailed explanations, there is that of presenting the magical world where Connor and Moriko enjoy playing and spending most of their time. In order to present Terijian, the following is expressed:

There were all kinds of secrets in this world. Magic did exist, and it flowed through everything that lived. Faeries flew through the air by day and at night their lights danced in the sky. And the best-kept secret was the elves that lived in the forest and protected it from harm. (*The Secret World 3*)

From the very beginning, the forest that industrial/capitalist powers want to destroy is presented as a magical and sacred place and, even if this is done in a context for children, it says a lot about the environmentalists' view of nature. The magic of the forest does not reside in the fantastic creatures Connor and Moriko think inhabit it, but in general terms, in every real plant and animal that can be found in this or any other forest. The appreciation and fascination for other living beings is made clear, a fact that recognizes the intrinsic value of animal and plant lives. Thus, the attempt of 'development' that takes place later in the story is presented as an attack against a different and unique world, as the end of magic and life for the only purpose of obtaining economic benefits. It is also noteworthy that this passage already introduces the elves, fantastic creatures that, in the presence of the children, become real. In Connor's and Moriko's view, elves have to protect the forest when this is endangered and this turns out to be true when they find these creatures at night, trying to stop the industrial threat.

Despite the fact that all that is magical for the two children has an explanation that eliminates all trace of magic, undoubtedly, Connor and Moriko relate with the forest in a very special way. As has previously been explained, children interact and relate with their environment, humans and other living beings in really sincere and spontaneous forms. Terijian is the result of such relationships. Although the forest has an existence of its own, Terijian is the creation and play of the children, which, unlike the creations of industrial/capitalist powers, does not harm the forest. Nature is not dominated in their relationship with Terijian and imagination, fantasy and the wish to explore are the main driving forces in their bonds with the forest. This way, Connor and Moriko learn and know the world that surrounds them in a very positive and imaginative way that leads to an important inner growth. This form of relating with the forest clearly contrasts with the industrial/capitalist approach, which only considers the forest an obstacle to dominate and a source of profits. Therefore, the children's links with the forest are incredibly sincerer and more beneficial, both for them and for the environment. Their deep bond with Terijian makes them try to protect the forest and this fact is not, in any way, unique to the fiction of the story. Indeed, "kids, nearly always the most rebellious section of any community, often with the most intimate relationship to the local environment" (Do or die 40) have been active in protests and activities in defence of the environment. Connor's and Moriko's profound bond with the magical world of Terijian

is, therefore, their most important relationship with their natural environment. It is really an essential part of their lives and of themselves and they are not willing to lose a world full of magic so as other people profit from its destruction.

In addition to the fantastic essence of Terijian, this forest is also characterised by the special relationship it has with the world outside it. It is not just like any other space of the ‘civilized world’ and this is made clear when “the leaves rustled in the wind, blocking out the busy noises of the rest of the world” (*The Secret World* 3). The soft sound of the leaves stands over the turmoil created by the industrial civilization. Thus, elements that are apparently insignificant (in terms of value for the industrial-capitalist mindset) like leaves in the wind gain a predominance that emphasizes the power and beauty of this natural space. Furthermore, the use of the word ‘busy’ suggests an evident contrast between the world from which the noises come and its way of life and the tranquillity and peace that the forest represents. Terijian becomes a kind of shelter from the industrial civilization for the children, a place where they can develop sincere and positive relationships between them, other beings and the environment far from the destructive values of industrial/capitalist powers. It has previously been explained how Marx pointed out the irruption of noises due to industrial ‘development’ in rural ambiances as disruptions of human-natural contacts. However, in this very case, the contrary happens. The forest does not allow any disruption from the outer world and, due to the lack of noises, it seems that Terijian is really a magical space that exists completely independently from the rest of the world. Taking this into consideration, it can be thought that in addition to a magical world, Terijian is also a world where different ways of life are possible, a world in which the appreciation of all life, adventure and imagination have predominance. The human-natural bonds in the forest have nothing to do with those outside of it, which are mainly concerned with domination and destruction. Nevertheless, terrible machines are finally able to irrupt into this world to threaten it and the connections that exist within it.

As has already been mentioned, descriptions of magnificent landscapes or of vast natural spaces are not present through the story and this is due to the fact that more attention is paid to details and to specific aspects or events of the natural world. For example, when the two children lie near a tree and look at it in wonder, it is said that as Connor “lay there appreciating the view of branches against a backdrop of leaves and sky, a tiny squirrel poked its head out from the branches above them” (*The Secret World*

5). The child's view is mainly formed by branches and leaves, natural elements that, differing from grandiose landscapes, would not be valued by everyone. However, these are really important for Connor and having the chance of lying and contemplating the trees is a valuable experience for him. He is able to connect with the natural environment that surrounds him and he appreciates even the smallest elements of the forest, a fact that explains his love for nature. Taking into account that the two protagonists of the story are children, it is not surprising that much attention is given to this kind of details. Exploring their surroundings and being amazed by every aspect of the world is normal in children and these characteristics contribute to the appreciation of nature that *The Secret World of Terijian* wants to transmit. Moreover, Connor's view includes the sudden appearance of a small animal, so the awe he feels is increased. The presence of the squirrel is a source of laugh and joy for the two children and just being together with the animal is an incredibly positive experience for them. While the powers promoting so-called development would try to destroy the squirrel's habitat, Connor and Moriko are closely linked to it as beings who live and grow in the forest. As a consequence of this, Moriko feels the urge of climbing the tree. She somehow identifies with the squirrel and climbing becomes not only a way of playing and exploring, but a continuation of her positive and enriching relationships with the forest.

The presence and descriptions of animals are highly important through the story and they suggest that the forest is an ecosystem full of a life that cannot be lost. Besides, in terms of the bonds that unite the children with the forest, animals mean for them more joy, amazement and appreciation of nature. In children's literature animals have traditionally been highly important and "children (...) have long been "aligned" with animals" (Jaques 13). In fact, the connection that exists between them makes "the child and the animal overlap, address and reflect one another" (Jaques 13), as Connor's and Moriko's identification and union with the animals of Terijian shows. The two children get into the forest in order to play and explore and their first important encounter with animals is described in the following way:

The children saw two young deer walking along a path through the trees. The children stopped their play and watched. One deer nuzzled its head against the other before galloping off through the woods. The other pranced quickly behind the first, and the two circled and chased each other into the forest. Little Moriko and Connor crouched together, looking after the two young deer in amazement. (*The Secret World* 3-4)

At the sight of the deer, the two children are overwhelmed by awe in a really positive way. Their exploration of the forest leads them to an encounter with animals that seem to be playing like them. Seeing animals is pleasant for Connor and Moriko, but seeing them act naturally and show affection in the middle of the forest implies a more powerful feeling for them. This feeling of appreciation and amazement contributes to their love for nature and to their subsequent effort at preserving the forest. Furthermore, when the deer move into the woods, the children laugh and try to emulate the animals; they run, jump and chase each other in a play of total joy. Therefore, the kids seem to identify with the deer and, through this game, they relate with each other and with the environment that surrounds them in a really natural way, as if they were deer themselves. Due to this identification and to the fact of acting like the animals, they become creatures that truly belong to the forest. At one point of the story, the two protagonists strive for the preservation of a tree that functions as the home of a hawk (its nest is there) and, this way, the vital importance of animals through the story is made evident. The relationships that develop between the children and the animals (as inhabitants of the forest) are really significant and they imply a love for the natural world completely opposite to the vision promoted by the powers of so-called progress. Despite the fact that in *The Secret World of Terijian* there exists no animal liberation actions like those portrayed in *Jokerman 8*, the protection of animals and of Terijian is one and the same and it means the preservation/liberation of a tiny but significant (especially for Connor and Moriko) part of the Earth.

The forest is not only a place where the children play, but a driving force for the development of the story and, even, a character in itself. What could be described (in really basic terms) as a group of trees, is indeed much more and it can even be considered another living entity. While Connor and Moriko explore it at night, the following is expressed: “The forest’s awakening broke the silence of the night. Were the trees moving and the forest alive?” (*The Secret World* 13). The forest seems to wake up from a kind of sleep and the noise it produces really makes one think about the awakening of a giant. Not in Terijian, not in the two children’s imagination, but in reality, the trees move and the forest itself becomes a higher form of living being. This makes clear that, despite the fact that it is formed by trees, the forest is another form of life, which results from the union and interconnectedness of different beings. Therefore, this forest that is truly alive exists thanks to the relationships that link animals, plants,

the soil, the rocks and any other living or non-living element that forms it. Taking this into account, it is evident that the world of Terijian is presented as a whole of interrelated beings. Thus, in this natural world everything is connected and life forms depend on each other. Even the two children become a part of the forest, due to the close relationships that they develop with the environment and to their 'creation' of Terijian. In this respect, Moriko and, especially, her name, are incredibly symbolic and noteworthy. This name of Japanese origin can be divided into two parts: 'mori,' which means forest and 'ko,' which means child. Therefore, her name literally means forest-child. She is, thus, united to the forest (and she is part of it) since birth. Apparently, she belongs to the forest even before exploring it for the first time, but Connor too has a place in this web of life. In fact, due to their appreciation of nature, love for animals, sincere relationships with the environment and the active defence of the forest, both children become part of the interconnected flow of life in the world they call Terijian.

Despite the fact that the two protagonists are small children, their perspective of the natural world can be really meaningful, especially due to the fact that their views seem not to be corrupted by those of the industrial civilization. Just the fact of interacting with the forest through positive exploration and games, instead of through exploitation and destruction implies a totally different set of values. Besides, the children's link with animals is related to an identification with these beings and with the environment as parts of a whole, which clearly shows that Connor and Moriko's view of the natural world is outside the nature-dominating conception of industrial capitalism. In addition to a true appreciation of the environment and its living beings, a deep understanding of the world that surrounds the children is shown. At the presence of a tree struck by a lightning, the following thoughts are presented:

Mother Nature had a way of destroying what was destructive, whether with fire or lightning. Moriko ran her fingers across the intricate patterns of the burnt wood, admiring Nature's destructive beauty. As she looked at the little blooming flowers, she wondered, or is it a creative beauty? (*The Secret World* 15-16)

First of all, the fact that nature is presented as a mother is noteworthy. It is the source of all life and it nurtures all her children. Nevertheless, it is also capable of destroying, in this case, a big tree. Moriko observes the aftermath of the lightning and finds beauty in the burnt tree. She loved the tree as it was, but she is also fascinated by nature's power of destruction and beauty at the same time. Furthermore, the sight of new plants and

flowers growing in the lightning-struck area produces her a new thought. She considers that along with the power to destroy, nature has an incredibly strong ability to create and this fact is also beautiful for Moriko. Thus, the child realizes about the cycle of life in nature. Some beings die while others are born and life always continues its path. She understands that renewal and beauty are part of the life provided by Mother Nature and its regenerative power fascinates Moriko. The child becomes aware of the complexity of the natural world and the fact of appreciating and loving its characteristics unites her even more closely with the environment. Thanks to the two protagonists' ideas and feelings about the forest, *The Secret World of Terijian* is able to transmit an important environmental consciousness to the youngest readers and to make them appreciate the world that surrounds them. However, despite the fact that Moriko understands the regenerative power of nature and its ability to create life, it seems not enough when industrial/capitalist powers irrupt violently into the forest. This is why, at the presence of so much destruction, Connor and Moriko (with the help of the elves) try to save the forest through direct action.

9.3. Environmental Exploitation/Destruction and Radical Environmentalism in *The Secret World of Terijian* (2007)

Despite the fact that *The Secret World of Terijian* is a book for children where the adventures of Connor and Moriko and the appreciation of nature are some of the most important elements, radical environmentalism is arguably a pillar of the story. The message of resistance to environmental destruction the book wants to transmit is key for the whole development of the story and the fact that it is intended for children makes this message even more noteworthy. The two protagonists develop various bonds with the forest and its living beings, but their engagement in the direct protection of the environment becomes the main relationship depicted in the book (even if it is based on other bonds like appreciation and love). While the two children want to protect the life of Terijian and this magical world itself because they value the animals and plants and enjoy playing and exploring the forest, the ELF members act in fierce opposition to industrial-capitalism and their values of nature-domination and destruction. Even if these two perspectives seem to be different (the one of the ELF more politically-laden), the bonds that unite them all to the forest are similar. So, both the children and the activists try to protect it from the violent industrial/capitalist intervention that threatens it. Due to the characteristics of the book (its number of pages or the fact that it is aimed at children), the number of actions and the accuracy of the methods depicted differ from the passages of, for example, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*. Nevertheless, the less than fifty pages that compose the book offer an interesting vision of the radical environmental movement and of the link between environmentalism and politics. The setting of the story is unspecified, so whether the actions take place in the American West or not is unknown. Anyway, as the rest of the works that have been analyzed, *The Secret World of Terijian* portrays a real-life situation in which the environment is critically endangered and in which people take action to protect nature in an industrially-dominated era.

Although Terijian is a full of living beings, beautiful place, Connor and Moriko realize, during one of their explorations, that something terrible is happening to the forest: it is being radically transformed (or rather destroyed) by bulldozers and workers.

This event is the one that triggers all the attempts by the two children and by the ELF members at protecting the forest. The situation of this natural space seems dramatic for the kids and the sight of the endangered forest significantly disturbs them. A part of Terijian loses its magic and life and, as a consequence of the industrial/capitalist intervention, it finishes as follows:

There was no life on the ground. There were no flowers or even grass. Instead, there was only dirt and caked mud. Ancient trees lay on their sides, naked and stripped of their branches. Giant entangling roots were severed from their trunks, still grasping uprooted soil. Where young trees had once stood, now there were only snapped and broken trunks. (*The Secret World* 7)

All the life in that part of the forest has been eliminated and the ground has become a wasteland. What once was a green area now appears as a massacre formed by two main shades of the colour brown: the one of the severed trees and the one of the spoiled earth without plants. The only things the children can see in that place are death and destruction and, in fact, they are not only witnessing the cutting of trees, but a complete transformation of the environment. The impact of this clear-cutting is considerable and it threatens the life of innumerable living beings, as well as the whole forest ecosystem. Besides, Connor and Moriko are aware of the fact that this process will continue and that more areas of the forest will be destroyed. The situation is terrible for the children, especially for Connor, who “could not help but let tears fill his eyes” (*The Secret World* 7), because he witnesses the disappearance of the magical world in which the two played and so many animals and plants lived. The kid feels a strong sorrow as his bond with the forest is disrupted and the world-view of the two children changes. From this moment, for Connor and Moriko, “development, which includes material self-interest, technology development, and nature transformation, are seen as unnatural and extremely destructive of nature” (Young 27), which means that, as radical environmentalists, they start questioning the values of the industrial civilization. Thus, this realization is the catalyst for the two children to protect the forest. They consider it is their duty to defend Terijian and think that the elves will be on their side trying to stop the advance of industrial/capitalist powers.

When Connor tells his mother about what is happening in the forest, more consequences of the violent intervention there are mentioned. The conversation between them presents nature and industrial civilization as antagonists and the supposed benefits

of the latter are questioned by the little kid. Although Connor's mother tries to persuade him that the destruction of the forest will bring positive results, he thinks that what is going on there is terrible. She tells him that the clearing of the forest is needed for "a new road so more people can move near this neighborhood" (*The Secret World* 10), so it is clear that a natural space wants to be replaced by new human structures and elements like roads, houses and cars. These, in turn, will have an impact on the environment, which implies that the negative relationships towards it will continue. Therefore, the destruction of the forest is merely a way for some companies to get economic benefits in the name of 'development.' The disappearance of a natural space is justified by the intention of building and selling houses, a fact that shows how opposite industrial civilization is to the natural world.

The intention of profiting from the exploitation of the forest is also made evident when Connor's mother explains that there are more 'positive' consequences. Some electric lines will be set up where trees stand and these will be, in her view, very helpful and beneficial for them. According to her, "not only will we have cheaper electricity, but we will also be able to get more channels on the television" (*The Secret World* 10). The destruction of the forest and its life forms would merely imply paying less money for electricity, so the forest would not be 'sacrificed' for a higher goal in any way. Furthermore, justifying the elimination of a natural space by the fact of having more television channels seems an insult and a catastrophe in terms of human-natural relationships. As Zerzan explains, "we're seeing the crisis of inner nature, the prospect of complete dehumanization, linking up with the crisis of outer nature, which is obviously ecological catastrophe" (*Against technology* 4). The crisis of the human essence and self is strongly linked to the destruction of the natural world. When breaking the bonds that exist between humans and nature, the former lose a part of themselves and consequences like depressions, anxiety or suicides become common aspects in life. Besides, thinking that the substitution of profound relationships with the forest and its inhabitants for more TV channels is positive (as Connor's mother does) suggests a system of values corrupted and denaturalized by the industrial/capitalist society. Giving more importance to, for example, television, which is the result of 'progress,' than to exploration, play or spontaneous links with the environment, illustrates the fact that "disillusionment, ennui, and boredom became central to life in the West" (Zerzan, *Industrialism* 8). Many of the so-called benefits brought by

‘development’ do not provide human lives with anything meaningful and they alienate them from nature, leading to a loss of contact with the world they originally belong to.

Finally, in the conversation between Connor and his mother, another significant result of the destruction of the forest is suggested when the protagonist asks “but what about the animals in the forest, mother?” (*The Secret World* 10). The answer given by her is extremely shocking, because she seems to completely disregard the fauna of the forest, not caring even a bit about the living beings his son appreciates and loves so much. She answers that a park is also going to be built where trees stand, which implies that slides and swings will take the place of the animals’ homes. The future of the animals is not a concern for her and she does not mention anything about it. However, it is more than probable that they will end up like their habitat: eliminated through actions driven by greed in the name of ‘development.’ The construction of a park for children might suggest that the companies working there want to fill all the space cleared (not only the space taken by the houses and the road), not leaving a trace of the world of Terijian. Their aim is to hide the earth under concrete completely, a fact that suggests an incredibly negative environmental impact. It can also be an attempt at buying the children’s acceptance and gratitude, to make them think that the industrial/capitalist expansion over the forest is the correct way of acting and relating with the environment. Nevertheless, after all the explanations given by his mother and, especially, due to the bonds that unite him with the forest and the animals, Connor comes to the conclusion that “he liked the forest more” (*The Secret World* 10).

Thus, as a consequence of the love they feel towards the forest and thanks to the encouragement that Moriko gives to Connor, the two children set out to protect the magical world of Terijian. The protagonists go to the working site at night to see if they can stop the destruction of the forest, which is provoked mainly by a bulldozer that “looked like a dingy yellow dragon of monstrous proportions” (*The Secret World* 7). The bulldozer, a machine continuously present in *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and a common target for radical environmentalists, is what the children must destroy in order to defend the forest. Nevertheless, in their first night visit to the working site, they do not take action against this mechanical monster. In fact, this visit is what really encourages them to act, because, while they are hiding in the dark, they witness the arrival of the ‘elves.’ A group of shadows emerges from the darkness and these start making some movements and noises in the working site. Then, the two kids see that a

message saying 'ELF' has been written on the machine. Spray painting serves as a way for signing the action and establishing a kind of communication with the exploiters of the forest. In this case, making clear that the Earth Liberation Front is responsible. The environmental and political intentions of the group are transmitted to the people working there through a simple message, but it also makes Connor and Moriko think that elves are real and they realize that they have to protect the forest along with these magical creatures.

The presence of a bulldozer destroying the forest justifies the arrival of the elves (or activists of the ELF) and taking into consideration that "actions taken by organizations such as ELF and ALF usually involve the sabotage of a specific inanimate object" (Miller, Rivera and Yelin 116) their plans are more than evident. The exact explanations about the environmentalists' procedures are not given, due to the fact that the focus is put on the children's point of view. Nevertheless, what Connor and Moriko see gives a clear idea about these elves' intention of rendering the machine unusable. The two protagonists witness the following:

One of the shadows stood near the edge of the forest peering down the barren strip. Two others moved across the site picking up chainsaws that lay scattered around the worksite. Another ran towards the machine and slid between its massive tracks. The last dropped a bag near the side of the machine. (*The Secret World* 13)

The group, formed by five activists, has a guard, a pair working on the chainsaws and another two of them taking care of the bulldozer. As not getting caught is vital for radical environmentalists, the role of the guard is essential. The first two activists' work is aimed at sabotaging the equipment used to cut trees and the second one's intention is to sabotage the inside of the mechanical monster by using different (but common) tools. Their exact methods are not detailed, but the sabotage of the chainsaws would probably suppose an easy task having the appropriate tools at hand. On the other hand, the action against the bulldozer would be done from its lower part and the engine and other essential parts that enable it to work would finish inoperative. Thus, the destructive machine would be stopped. Nevertheless, these direct actions are not carried out successfully, because the noise made by the children's excitement provokes the elves' escape. The activists think they are in danger of being caught and they leave the sabotage unfinished, which means that the destruction of the forest will continue the

next day. This fact makes clear that every action in defence of the environment is vital and that failing to protect natural spaces can imply the deaths of innumerable living beings.

The morning after, the children realize that although some of the chainsaws do not work, the bulldozer moves without any problem. The action by the ELF members is not a complete failure, because thanks to them, some chainsaws cannot be used, which also means economic losses to the logging company due to the need of repairing the equipment or buying more. However, the forest is still threatened because the bulldozer continues its destructive path. So, after scaring the elves away, the two protagonists look for other ways of protecting the magical world they love so much; their own methods, within their possibilities. The first idea that comes to their mind is to pile logs in front of the machine, so that it cannot continue advancing. They want to build a kind of barricade between the bulldozer and the trees in order to protect them, as environmental activists have also done in real life. The two kids spend a considerable part of the night piling branches and small logs due to the fact that they are not strong enough to take the big ones. They finish almost at sunrise and, as they are extremely tired, they need to go back home to rest. When they wake up and go to the working site they realize that “it only took a few men to undo all the work that had taken Connor and Moriko the entire night” (*The Secret World* 18). The first idea of the protagonists can be said to be a complete failure because their incredible effort does not have any impact on the industrial/capitalist powers destroying the forest. The children’s barricade fails to stop the bulldozer but, although it is not a radical environmental action like the one the ELF members wanted to carry out, it is the protagonists’ first step towards their attempt at liberating the forest.

The inability to stop the bulldozer makes them think about more extreme working methods and their second alternative in order to preserve life in the forest (and Terijian itself) is the direct destruction of the machine through the use of rocks. This idea, as well as the first one, is highly illustrative of the protagonists’ age and it shows that obvious differences exist between them and adult activists. So, again at night, the two children try to break the bulldozer’s glass by throwing numerous rocks at it. They throw them as hard as they can from different angles and distances in order to be effective. Although some would call this vandalism, Connor’s and Moriko’s intention of protecting the environment is their driving force and, thus, their action is close to actual

radical environmentalism. They are not really sure if this strategy will work, but as Connor states, “it’s worth a shot” (*The Secret World* 18). These words, in spite of being uttered by a kid, express that any attempt at protecting living beings and the environment is worth; even if they fail, any action against industrial/capitalist powers is welcome. The next morning, they see that “the glass of the yellow machine was completely cracked (...) The men at the worksite were trying to fix the window” (*The Secret World* 21), so, this time, their action has some impact. Despite the fact that it does not stop the machine, the workers spend a significant part of their work day (around half of it) repairing the glass. Thus, the advancement of the bulldozer that day is slowed down, some trees are able to live longer and the company is forced to spend money for the repair of the machine. The small action carried out by the kids has some success and they seem to be in the correct way for protecting the forest. Nevertheless, the action has a little impact and, for this reason, they see the need of acting again the next night; like real activists, they put all their effort and act as many nights as necessary to stop the mechanical monster.

Wondering about what they can try next, the two children think about what the elves were doing under the bulldozer and they understand that “the underbelly is the weakest part of the dragon” (*The Secret World* 23). With the mind-set of the magical world of Terijian, that is, using imagination and creativity, they discover that the machine can be stopped if they work correctly in its lower part. They place themselves under the yellow monster and with the help of some stones (unlike the ELF members, they do not have the appropriate tools for sabotage) they start destroying the machine. Their objective is to jam the bulldozer and, in order to do so, they introduce stones inside the wheels and the treads. Furthermore, Moriko finds an aperture and decides to take “handfuls of dirt and poured them down the hole” (*The Secret World* 24). As a response to this action, Connor “took a handful of tiny pebbles and dropped them down the hole” (*The Secret World* 24), a hole that, due to its smell, is more than probably the fuel tank. Therefore, the kids act like real activists and leave the inside of the machine full of rocks and dirt, a fact that can clearly affect its inner functioning. This time, they really carry out an action of sabotage in the vein of Abbey’s characters. Indeed, like these fictional activists, Connor and Moriko use natural elements like rocks and earth to render the bulldozer unusable. Elements that belong to the forest are on the side of the

kids in the struggle and, thanks to them, there seems to be a chance of stopping the industrial/capitalist ‘development’ over the natural world.

In fact, when Connor and Moriko go back to the working site the next day, they realize that the workers have some trouble starting the machine. Loud and disturbing noises start coming from the bulldozer and, suddenly, a sound similar to an explosion comes from the engine, followed by dark clouds of smoke. The mechanical monster ends up being completely inoperative and, as a consequence, the destruction of the forest that day becomes impossible. This time, the two children’s strategy is a complete success, because they are able to stop the machine by simply using stones and earth. Through their sabotage, Connor and Moriko act like real radical environmentalists and they are able to disrupt the destructive relationships of industrial/capitalist powers towards Terijian and its living beings. Their ability to protect the forest and the bonds that unite them with it makes the kids extremely happy, as Moriko’s statement suggests: “Connor, we did it! We stopped the dragon” (*The Secret World* 25). The evil monster seems to have been defeated and the consequences of their ‘small’ action can be considered highly significant. By stopping the industrial/capitalist intervention in the forest for several days, animals and plants can continue living and relating with their environment as a part of its interconnected web.

The protagonists’ victory brings tranquillity and peace to the forest and in this moment they can enjoy nature once again. The presence of animals, which fascinates the kids so much, gains predominance again and this is made evident in a passage dedicated to the appearance of the hawk:

When the sun was in the middle of the sky, the two little ones heard a screeching call off in the distance. Connor shot a look at Moriko and jumped to his feet: “It’s the hawk!” The little ones ran out into the valley to see the bird swoop low through the grass. It emerged with a small rodent in its talons and flew up to the trees (...) The two children made their way through the forest until they could make out the hawk’s nest above them. (*The Secret World* 26)

The scene depicts the magnificent flight of the hawk and her hunt of a rodent in order to feed her chicks, a fact that shows how life abounds in the forest. Connor and Moriko are mesmerized by the bird and their admiration makes them follow the hawk to its nest, as if they were answering to her call. The natural scene of the mother hawk feeding her children in the nest is only made possible due to the lack of the industrial/capitalist

destruction of the forest. If the two protagonists did not stop the advancement of the bulldozer, the tree where the hawk's nest is might have been destroyed. Nevertheless, as the machine that threatened the forest is inoperative, the two kids can enjoy the sight of the mother hawk and her children. Moriko tells Connor that the hawk "thanks us for making the forest safer for her children" (*The Secret World* 26) and Connor asks the bird for a feather. However, as will be explained later, the protagonists will have to continue working to protect the forest and Connor will have to strive harder to obtain the feather that would show the hawk's gratitude. Anyway, in this passage, the observation and appreciation of the hawk (and the apparent respect the bird feels towards the kids) lead to bonds with the animal that, later, develop into really close ties. Indeed, the protection of these birds is a main driving force and motivation for the children to continue struggling.

Several days after the sabotage of the bulldozer and after having played and had fun in the forest, the two children are shocked by horror at the sight of workers in the area. Along with these people, there is a new bulldozer or the one that the protagonists sabotaged (fixed in this case) destroying the land and the trees. Connor's and Moriko's victory only lasts a few days and it has positive consequences for the forest and negative ones for the logging company due to the fact that "repairs of damages (...) result in several costs, including downtime" (Hellenbach 29). Nevertheless, even if the action harms those trying to profit from the destruction of the forest, the return of the machine makes the kids feel a deep despair. The fact that the bonds that unite the children and the forest are threatened again is terrible for them, especially considering the devastating characteristics of the bulldozer. "The machine cut down the first tree, then a second, then a third" (*The Secret World* 30), which makes evident that the protagonists' enemy is fast and relentless. This monstrous machine is only a small example of the highly destructive potential of the industrial/capitalist powers and the fact that, on a greater scale, "the industrial growth model also produces ever-increasing mountains of waste, of toxic garbage, it destroys the ozone-layer and is responsible for the greenhouse effect" (Mies, *Liberating* 252) cannot be ignored. Thus, as the advancement of industrial/capitalist powers is synonymous with environmental destruction, the presence of the bulldozer means a serious menace for the forest. Witnessing the destructive power of the machine, Connor and Moriko feel nothing but hopelessness. They do not think that the forest can be protected by them alone because, as Moriko

expresses, “we tried everything, and it failed” (*The Secret World* 30). It seems that the two protagonists cannot do anything else to save the world of Terijian and all its living beings and that only the elves (that escaped for fear of getting caught) could be able to protect it.

In the moment when the children seem to be giving up, Connor stops to look around and observes the nature that surrounds him. The explanation of what he sees gives an account of how the forest is a place full of life that is about to disappear. It is expressed that:

He appreciated the life that moved around him. The squirrels running through the trees, and the branches swaying in the breeze. He knew that this might be the last time they would be there. (*The Secret World* 30)

All the animals and trees that form the magical forest are about to be eliminated and, considering that Terijian is bursting with life even near the working site, the advancement of machinery would imply an environmental catastrophe. Furthermore, the destruction of a forest the children appreciate and love so much would mean a personal drama for them and even the loss of a part of themselves, as a consequence of the disruption of relationships that unite them with the natural environment. Despite the fact that Connor and Moriko think they cannot do anything else to protect the forest, there is an event that makes them continue struggling for its preservation: the bulldozer’s intention to destroy the tree where the hawks live. Due to the special link that unites the children and the hawk, these consider that saving the bird, her children and their home is their duty. The fact that this tree is threatened is a kind of revelation for the kids; they realize that they have to continue doing all they can to protect Terijian and they recover the spirit and strength they lacked moments before. Thus, the struggle continues and, although protecting the whole forest seems impossible for them, they do all they are capable of so as, at least, a part of it remains in its natural state.

In order to save the tree, Connor and Moriko decide to climb it and to stay there as long as they can so that neither the bulldozer nor the workers can cut it down. Therefore, like in *Jokerman* 8 and as if they were actual environmental activists, the children act through a tree sit-in with the aim of protecting the hawk’s home. This action is a clear example of civil disobedience and peaceful resistance, so, in this case, they act directly against the destruction of the forest without attacking any machine or

object. The anarchist connotations of their action show clear similarities between the two kids and radical environmentalists and make the relationship between politics and environmentalism evident once again. Although the workers try to intimidate the children saying that the tree will be cut down with them on it, they do not give up because they cannot tolerate the hawk's home being destroyed. When the supervisor of the working site arrives he cannot believe that two children are giving such problems and instead of calling the police (due to the possible media repercussions) he decides to wait until Connor and Moriko descend from the tree. Thus, the exploitation of the forest that day is stopped and, as Moriko expresses, "Connor, we did it! We stopped them" (*The Secret World* 39). Those destroying the forest are unable to continue with their work and are economically harmed due to costs of delay. Besides, the inhabitants of Terijian can continue living in peace another day thanks to the two children's sit-in. In addition to that, Connor obtains a feather that shows the hawk's gratitude, not only for protecting her home and children, but also because he overcomes his fear to heights in order to save the tree. Therefore, the children's action is also significant because it reinforces the bond that unites them with the hawk; thanks to their sit-in they are in a more profound contact with the forest and the animals.

Being unable to continue with the destruction of the forest, the workers leave the place with the hope of resuming the work the day after. The two protagonists understand that they will have to stay the whole night in the tree and think about what to do the following day, which means that protecting the hawk's home will not be an easy task. Although the near future can bring problems and uncertainties to Connor and Moriko, they achieve an important victory over industrial/capitalist powers that allows them to spend "time singing songs and telling stories to one another" (*The Secret World* 40). In close contact with the tree and without the presence of those trying to profit from environmental destruction, the children can relate with each other and with the environment surrounding them in a really natural way. The songs and stories they share in the tree are a source of inner growth that is much more valuable than so-called development, which destroys relationships between humans and between them and nature. In fact, as Shiva explains:

'Development' has meant the ecological and cultural rupture of bonds with nature, and within society, it has meant the transformation of organic communities into groups of uprooted and alienated individuals searching for abstract identities. (*Homeless* 99)

While the children spend time in the tree, the threat of ‘development’ is absent and, this is why their connections with the forest are not disrupted. They can be themselves as a part of the web of nature and, as much of the forest remains in its natural state, Connor and Moriko do not experience the alienation produced by the industrial society. Tranquillity and peace are restored in the forest when the advancement of the logging company is stopped, even if not definitely. In order to avoid possible problems with the workers at night, the children decide to make turns: when one sleeps the other one acts as a lookout and the other way round. In a moment during the silent night when Moriko stares at the branches and leaves of the trees, “dark figures began to emerge near the edge of the clearing” (*The Secret World* 40) and, thus, the return of the elves is described. Moriko wakes Connor up and both wait in silence to see the elves’ actions.

Considering that the previous time these activists could not finish the work and that “the entire intention of the ELF is to bring about liberation through engaging in effective acts of sabotage against oppressive institutions” (Pickering 26), it is more than clear that they aim at the properties of the industrial/capitalist exploiters. Their arrival implies the end of the machines that are being used to destroy the forest. Like in their first attack to the working site, each activist of the group plays a specific role and some of them take care of different machines and tools while another member keeps watch for possible dangers. Indeed, their working procedure is exactly the same that they tried to use in the first sabotage attempt, due to the fact that this is the most simple and effective one. When the two children witness the return of the elves, the following is explained:

The pack of elves quickly rummaged through the site. Chainsaws were being disassembled and the pieces broken. Another elf worked underneath the monstrous machine. Like last time, the last elf stood guard, watching into the night. (*The Secret World* 41)

The environmentalists take care of the logging equipment and, by dismantling it first and then, breaking its parts, they complete the first part of their direct action. Thus, all the chainsaws and tools the workers use to cut trees are destroyed and the bulldozer becomes the only available machine to continue with the exploitation of the forest. Nevertheless, another activist is on the way of sabotaging this machine by interfering with the functioning in its lower parts. Therefore, when their attack ends the companies profiting from the destruction of Terijian will not have any means for carrying their work out. This time, there is not any kind of intervention from the part of the two

protagonists, so the elves do not have to escape and they are able to successfully complete their action. Further destruction of the forest is avoided and this is protected while significant economic losses are caused to those working in the name of so-called development.

While the rest of the environmentalists are sabotaging the machines and tools of the working site, the one who acts as a lookout sees Connor and Moriko and starts talking with them. She is surprised at the sight of two children on a tree in the middle of the night, so she asks them what they are doing there. Moriko answers that “we’re protecting the forest from the machines!” (*The Secret World* 41) and the activist says, with a smile in the face, that they are doing the same. The fact that both the children and the ELF activists are together in the struggle to protect the forest connects them in a very special and natural form, different from the ways in which people normally interact within the industrial society. They are all part of the web of natural relationships and of those actively resisting its destruction, so they are united by a really significant bond. Connor and Moriko tell the environmentalist about the incident that scared the elves away and about all they did to protect the forest. The activist considers that the children themselves have become elves (meaning that they belong to the ELF), which makes clear that Connor and Moriko are true defenders of nature and that anyone struggling actively for the protection of the environment has a place in groups like the ELF. Besides, the fact that both the elves’ and the children’s work is unrelated but successful, tells a lot about the organization and working methods of radical environmentalists. As Young points out, these activists’ “structure is non-hierarchical, individuals involved control their own activities. There is no centralized organization or leadership tying the anonymous cells together” (55). Neither the kids nor the elves knew about the others’ activities, so the fact that there are no formal ties between them is evident; what unites them is their will to protect the forest. The actions of radical environmental groups are anonymous and carried out by isolated and separated cells, making clear a non-hierarchical and leaderless nature that accounts for certain anarchist ideas that are strongly present in groups like the ELF. Therefore, Connor and Moriko and the environmentalists do not follow any kind of order, they act through cooperation and driven by a love for the forest and its living beings.

The activist continues talking with the children and tells them that they should get down from the tree, at least for a while, because being close to the bulldozer can be

dangerous. Finally, as a response to the children's concern for the tree's and the hawks' future, she adds that they will be fine. Connor and Moriko descend from the tree and, along with the other elves, get ready to watch what is about to happen to the monstrous machine. A spark appears in the middle of the darkness and, then, flames begin to spread under the bulldozer. What in the beginning seemed to be a normal sabotage turns out to be arson and its development is described as follows:

There was a burst that sounded like thunder, and the front of the machine was engulfed in fire. It spread across its body and consumed its menacing claws. It wasn't long before the entire machine had become a pyre burning in the moon's light. (*The Secret World* 43)

Thus, although no explanation on the procedure is provided (probably through the use of gasoline or of a small explosive device), the bulldozer ends up being burned and thus, completely inoperative. The two protagonists could do nothing else to stop the destruction of the forest but to stay in the tree and resist as long as possible. On the contrary, the activists, who are all adults and have more means and tools, complete their mission of destroying the machine. Like in real-life and in Hayduke's case, burning properties is the last resort, which, in this case, can be the only way to protect the forest. The advancement of industrial/capitalist powers is stopped again. This time, with a bigger impact and through more extreme methods. Therefore, in addition to the fact that the living beings of Terijian will be protected for a time, the arson can scare the companies working in the area and force them to definitely cease their environmental destruction. Furthermore, destroying two bulldozers (or one that has already been repaired) and all of the tools of the working site, implies significant economic losses to those trying to profit from exploitation. This can make them quit their projects or provoke changes in their minds, so the action carried out by the ELF is highly significant. As Pickering explains, "from the onset the direct actions of the ELF were causing millions in damages to corporations and government agencies that were profiting from destroying the Earth" (24), a fact that is really illustrative of the work done by this group. In the story, the arson of the bulldozer can be a hard blow for the logging company, but, in the real-life struggle for the preservation of nature, radical environmentalists are being successful in their aim of causing economic damages to their enemies, even if these do not always give up their destructive practices.

The next day, when the workers go back to the working site, feelings of surprise and anger predominate among them at the sight of the destruction of all their equipment and tools for exploiting the forest. Broken and disassembled chainsaws lay in the ground and, along with them, the workers can see that “black smoke billowed from the smoldering remains of the machine” (*The Secret World* 44). By destroying all the machines and tools of the exploiters, the environmentalists disrupt their totally negative links with the forest, which are based on nature domination. So, unable to continue with their work, they understand that the exploitation of the forest must be stopped, at least for some days. In spite of the possibility of resuming the work in the future, the forest and its living beings are protected for a time and they can continue living in their natural state. Furthermore, the action carried out by the activists includes something that really infuriates the supervisor of the work: a message in the ground. This time the message is written in the mud, so the environmentalists do not need spray paint and, unlike the previous message that simply said ELF, they write the following statement making the group’s intentions clear: “KEEP DESTROYING OUR FORESTS AND THE ELFS WILL STRIKE BACK!” (*The Secret World* 44). In addition to claiming responsibility for the action (stating that the ELF did it), the message shows that the struggle for the preservation of the environment does not end there. Every time a forest (or any other natural space) is endangered by industrial/capitalist powers, ELF activists will take action against them, as the message clearly expresses. Moreover, the message shows the impetus and conviction of the activists that will not give up in their struggle due to their belief that direct action is the only way for really protecting and preserving nature and the environment from industrial/capitalist exploiters. Pickering expresses the following in relation to these environmentalists:

The actions of the ELF have restored a hope in me that had otherwise been beaten into submission by the oppressive daily cycle of life within contemporary American civilization. (23)

The indefatigable work of the ELF in defence of nature is seen by him as a source of hope, as a way to preserve the bonds that unite humans with the natural world. Life within the modern industrial society is dull and oppressive, but these activists fight against these impositions on humans and stand for more profound relationships with nature. Thus, whether it is in real-life or in the fiction of the story, environmentalists try to protect the natural world as fiercely as they can, not only for the preservation of

living beings, but also to keep the essence of humans, due to the fact that industrial/capitalist powers are also a threat to the human nature and self.

However, in spite of all the work done by the two children and by the ELF activists, the last chapter implies that the industrial/capitalist powers (partly) win the battle and that Terijian ceases to exist as it previously did. Although the forest is not completely destroyed, “giant electric lines had been constructed, cutting across the forest” (*The Secret World* 45), which means that the companies working in the area are successful, to some degree, in their attempt at profiting from the exploitation of nature. Other initial projects of the companies included the construction of a new road and a park, but due to the intervention of Connor, Moriko and the ELF activists, only the electric lines are built. Therefore, they do not fail completely in their mission of protecting nature, as a part of the forest is still preserved and the environmental impact of industrial/capitalist powers is reduced, even if these are able to obtain some economic profits. Some would consider that the fact that electric lines cut across Terijian is not really catastrophic because it is only a forest, but, indeed, “pursued on a large scale, as is certainly happening today, the fragmentation of forests will increase global warming and inevitably lead to a higher rate of extinction” (Manes 178). Dividing forests into parts through the construction of electric lines is only one way of fragmenting them and it can have terrible consequences. Not only the inhabitants of the forests are threatened by these fragmentations, but the entire planet, including humans, is menaced by the consequences of the destruction of these natural spaces, a fact that illustrates the hazard to life inherent to the practices of industrial/capitalist powers. Nevertheless, along with the damage done to the environment, nature’s power for life and renewal is made evident. The space used for the electric lines starts recovering and, in addition to be covered by new grass, “wildflowers bloomed where he ran his hands across land that had once been barren” (*The Secret World* 45). So, although the forest suffers terrible and destructive transformations, the course of nature does not stop and a new hope of life appears in a place that was previously characterized by mud, cut trees and desolation. The new grass and flowers that grow after ‘development’ ravages the surface of the Earth are a sign of nature’s unstoppable will of continuing with the cycle of life. Thus, if this power of renewal is accompanied by environmental activism, there might be a chance of stopping industrial/capitalist powers from eliminating nature and life in the planet and of preserving the interconnectedness between living beings.

In the last passage of *The Secret World of Terijian*, nature continues striving for life, as the blooming of new flowers indicates, but activists also engage in a final action for the defence of the environment. The struggle is not abandoned and this action is carried out by the two protagonists but, this time, Connor and Moriko have grown up and it can be inferred that they have become actual ELF activists. The fact that the action is carried out some years later, gives an idea of the perseverance of environmental activists. This makes clear that direct actions can be taken also when the damage has already been done, in order to try to re-establish the natural order. In this final action, Connor and Moriko aim at the only signs of ‘development’ the companies were able to build, that is, the electric lines and pylons, with the objective of eliminating the industrial/capitalist presence in the forest completely. Destroying these elements implies the companies’ inability to further profit from the destruction of the natural space, as well as significant economic losses related to the very costs of the lines and pylons themselves. Once again, the exact methods used to carry out the action are not detailed, but it is noteworthy that it is done in the presence of the hawk, as if she commanded or supported the sabotage, as if nature was, thus, asking for action. Thus, the bonds that unite the protagonists and the hawk remain strong years later and they all seem to be together against the domination of nature. The destruction of the pylons seems to be quick and effective and it is described as follows: “with a flash like lightning, flames sprang up to engulf the electric pylons, and they collapsed to the ground one after another” (*The Secret World* 46). Through an aggressive action like arson (a method they could not resort to when they were small children), the protagonists make clear that the struggle for the defence of the environment does not end until the Earth is totally free from industrial/capitalist oppression. The electric lines and the pylons disappear thanks to the fire and all trace of so-called development is eliminated from the forest Connor and Moriko love so much. This can be considered a true victory that allows the thriving of life and relationships between the forest and its inhabitants. Furthermore, this final action also shows that hope must not be lost in this struggle and, for that reason, after burning all trace of the enemy, Connor and Moriko leave the place knowing that new life will appear.

10. Conclusions

In spite of the important tradition of nature writing in the USA, radical environmentalism is quite absent from its literary production. As a ground-breaking exception, Edward Abbey's *The Monkey Wrench Gang* and *Hayduke Lives!* should be highlighted, which recount the adventures of Hayduke, Dr Sarvis, Abzug and Smith. These activists engage in actions of sabotage in order to protect the desert of the American Southwest from the exploitation of industrial/capitalist powers. New threats to the desert lead to more resistance and activism, as the sequel to the work that popularized radical environmentalism (*The Monkey Wrench Gang*) makes clear. Abbey portrays a social movement which struggles to protect the environment. Thus, his contribution to 'nature writing' includes human-natural relationships which are very illustrative of the modern day situation. Similarly, Richard Melo's *Jokerman 8* depicts this social movement through the actions of activists like TS, Jude and Willie. They struggle to protect both natural spaces and animals at a global scale, but especially focusing on the American Northwest. The image transmitted by the novel is that of an already consolidated movement where the fight for the Earth and its living beings is one and the same. Finally, *The Secret World of Terijian* focuses on the struggle of Connor and Moriko (and of the ELF) to save the forest they love so much. This book includes the way children understand/experience nature, and thus, it emphasizes the bond between infants and the natural world.

The analysis of these four works leads to a variety of interesting thoughts and conclusions, not only related to literature and ecocriticism, but to aspects like the very nature of the industrial civilization or to real-life radical environmentalism. The four texts contribute importantly to the writing about nature and the environment ('nature writing'). They offer viewpoints that respond to a very specific time in history (the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st centuries) when the environment is dramatically threatened. Besides, they propose alternatives and solutions to environmental problems in unique ways, which makes them differ significantly from the rest of literature about nature but, which are, moreover, put into practice by real-life activists.

In general terms, an ecocritical analysis of the four works leads to ideas about the complex web of relationships between humans and nature in a time when, while life in the planet continues being destroyed, a segment of society is struggling for the defence and preservation of the natural world. The conclusions drawn from the analysis are related to the following issues: 1. The American West, 2. Nature writing and human-natural relationships, 3. Radical environmentalism, 4. The relationship between reality and fiction and 5. Hope in a time when the environmental situation is critical.

First, the analysis of the works leads to interesting thoughts and reflections about the American West, its nature and wilderness. Although all the actions in these works are not set in the West of the United States, this geographical space and the myths and ideas associated to it have an incredible weight in the fiction that has been analysed. Abbey's two novels are entirely dedicated to the nature of the American Southwest and to its preservation while *Jokerman* 8 deals, to a great extent, with the forests of the Northwest. Thus, the natural spaces of the West are the places where radical environmentalism takes place. This is due to the fact that the desert of the southwest and the magnificent forests of Oregon still possess truly wild spaces that have not yet been victims of industrial/capitalist 'development.' Environmental activists try to preserve the wilderness of this West so that it remains unpolluted and uncorrupted in its natural state, far from the threat of industrial civilization.

The Myth of the Frontier defined wilderness as an evil to be subjugated and dominated and the industrial/capitalist powers in these works (and in real-life) continue acting according to this mindset. Therefore, the destructive colonization of the environment through violence against nature has not ceased in the 20th and 21st centuries. As the American West was originally a wilderness teeming with life, radical activists act to end the violence against the environment and the so-called progress that tries to substitute the true Wild West for the modern capitalist USA. The works show that the history of the West is still a history of resistance against powers that want to dominate and exploit a unique land full of life. Furthermore, there is a reversal of the Myth of the West in them, which responds to the critical environmental situation of the planet. Those looking for wealth through the exploitation of nature are depicted as greedy monsters unaware of the consequences of their practices while the outlaws who fight against them are the true defenders of the wilderness and of the union between humans and nature. Thus, it can be concluded that these fiction writings, which deal

with radical environmentalism, offer a perspective of the American West where the only hope for its preservation is an inversion of values and ideas.

The analysis of the works allows us to draw a second set of conclusions related to nature writing. All of them present natural (and even wild) spaces that are essential, not only for the development of the stories, but for the works themselves. Without nature, all the literary works that have been analysed would be meaningless, incoherent and incomprehensible. Descriptions of natural spaces and landscapes, of animals and plants and of different natural phenomena (along with thoughts and feelings related to them) are constantly present through them and they give a meaning to the events, especially to the actions of radical environmentalism. In Abbey's novels, the desert itself can even be considered a character, a fact that shows its importance and the role it played in the author's life and fiction.

The texts propose different ways of writing about nature; sometimes grandiose descriptions of magnificent landscapes are found in them while, in other cases, the focus lies on common or everyday experiences with the natural world. Even the children's perception of nature is present in some cases, so the four writings together offer varied and thorough images of nature. Although this is sometimes portrayed as a dangerous or even violent force (which is not negative, but related to the sublime), nature is always depicted in highly positive ways. It is the source of all life and beauty and it is portrayed as incredibly valuable in itself, not as a resource for so-called development.

The passages dedicated to the natural world justify the appreciation and love of the characters towards it and can lead to the same feelings from the part of readers. In fact, an objective shared by all the works is making people aware of the environment that surrounds them and of the threats it faces. Furthermore, by contrasting natural spaces in their original (or almost original) state with spaces destroyed by industrial/capitalist powers, the idea of preserving the environment is reinforced. The works are full of positive descriptions of natural spaces and of reflections related to them. These are the first step for transmitting the overall idea that the natural world must be saved from industrial/capitalist 'development,' which is considered a terribly evil and greedy force.

The relationships that develop between humans and the natural world are intrinsically connected to the writing about nature in all these works and they are highly significant from an ecocritical point of view. In general terms, they show an

unprecedented dimension of awareness and love for nature from the part of humans. However, each writing portrays a variety of human-natural bonds that are very illustrative of the ways in which people can relate with the environment and think about it in modern times. In addition to that, in all of them, nature is inseparable from beauty. Furthermore, among other ways of relating with nature, spiritual bonds or those associated to freedom are really noteworthy. Nature can be considered a sanctuary for the spirit and the source of total and primordial freedom, which makes it highly meaningful and vital for true growth and the human self. Besides, these pieces of fiction show how profound the relationships between children and nature can be, due to the fact that these relate with their environment in very sincere and spontaneous ways. The interrelatedness of living (and even non-living beings) in the natural world is also made evident in the four literary works and they show that everything is connected in a complex web that forms a whole. Although industrial/capitalist powers try to separate humans from the natural world, the characters of the fiction identify with the latter and consider that they belong to it, a fact that unites them deeply with nature.

As a consequence of these strong bonds, the characters transgress certain laws and behaviours of their own societies to act in favour of nature. Alienation from the natural world is not an option for them, so they try everything so that nature does not end under industrial/capitalist domination. The relationships that unite them with the environment lead the activists to fight against so-called development and this is another way of relating with nature in the modern and destructive industrial society. So, radical environmentalists show that they want to live in and belong to a natural world that is full of life, instead of to a dehumanizing and anti-natural society seeking for supposed 'progress.' Their actions are justified by nature itself and by their connections with it and, thanks to the writing about the environment, this activism is made understandable as a necessary way to make human-natural coexistence and bonds possible.

The third set of conclusions that can be drawn after the analysis of the writings concerns radical environmentalism, which is central to all of them. Their analysis leads to reflections that are highly illustrative of a quite recent phenomenon and social movement striving to protect the environment. Firstly, it has been made evident that radical environmentalism is the result of an extreme situation in which the environment and the bonds that unite humans with nature are seriously threatened. The severity of the situation leads to radical direct action because this is considered the only effective

way for protecting nature. Therefore, the four works defend that this kind of activism is the only way for stopping the destructive practices of industrial/capitalist powers and of preserving positive human-natural relationships, a fact that is very illustrative of the real-life situation in the modern industrial society.

Radical environmentalism has the aim of sabotaging properties that belong to those trying to profit from the exploitation of the environment and causing them serious economic losses. This type of activism is concerned with the liberation of, both, the Earth and its life forms. The actions carried out to stop the destruction of the environment and its living beings are varied and have different degrees of complexity. Sabotages of, for example, bulldozers or other machines are carried out with common tools or even natural elements like water or stones and preventive methods like tree spiking directly protect the lives of trees. In addition to that, activists also strive for the liberation and wellbeing of animals by freeing them from facilities and by engaging in sabotages. These actions can be really extreme in some cases, explosives or arson are used when there is no other way of stopping environmental destruction, and, in other cases, more moderate methods like protest and peaceful resistance can be a support and an aid to direct actions.

Despite the fact that radical environmentalists resort to a wide range of methods to protect nature and its life forms, a common set of values, ideas and moral codes lies behind all of them. Environmental activists are ethical people who have nothing to do with actual terrorists. Their aim is to protect nature and living beings from highly destructive institutions, without killing or even harming any kind of life form; attacking humans is not part of their way of action. Radical environmentalists consider that industrial/capitalist powers are greedy, evil and intrinsic to the destruction of nature and their actions are intended to solve a terrible situation caused by a morally corrupt system and mindset. In fact, they follow a sense of duty that makes them struggle for what they think is right.

In addition to these values, the radical environmental movement is characterised by different ideas that, although they are not necessarily shared by all activists and groups, they are very illustrative of what lies behind the struggle to protect the environment. The strong relationship between environmentalism and politics is especially obvious in the radical movement. Anarchism, anti-capitalism and anti-industrialization are the

currents of thought more closely associated to it, a fact that makes evident that radical environmentalism is highly political. Nevertheless, in the fiction writings that have been analysed, ideas related to anti-civilization and, even, anti-colonialism are also present. Thus, they depict a complex and politically-laden social movement that aims at liberating nature and all its living beings, including humans, from the industrial/capitalist domination.

The struggle for the preservation of nature of radical environmentalists has significant consequences, not only in environmental terms, but also in social and economic ones. With respect to the environment, the activists of the works of fiction that have been analysed (as well as those of real-life) are able to stop or, at least, slow down the advancement of industrial/capitalist powers in certain natural spaces. Thus, the destruction and exploitation of nature they carry out is stopped thanks to the work of the environmentalists and life can continue its natural course. Destructive practices are disrupted and positive relationships within the natural world and between humans and the environment are preserved as a consequence of this type of activism. Besides, in areas that have already suffered the impact of 'development,' actions carried out by radical environmentalists can make companies or government agencies cease their activities and, thanks to the power of nature, make the recovery of the place possible. Therefore, the following conclusion can be drawn from the analysis in this dissertation: the exploitation of natural spaces and living beings can be prevented and environmental problems such as deforestation or habitat destruction can be avoided (to varying degrees) through the use of direct action. Sabotages and resistance actions by activists can have important results in a local scale (each group of people working in an area) making positive contributions to the preservation of the natural order, a fact that is really noteworthy in a time when industrial/capitalist powers threaten life in the planet more than ever.

In social and economic terms, radical environmental actions have other kinds of consequences, especially for companies and institutions that are not only their enemies, but enemies of the natural world. These industrial/capitalist powers imply terrible disruptions to the interrelatedness of nature. Their so-called development is intrinsic to the domination and destruction of the environment and this is made evident in the fiction through depictions of landscape transformations, clear-cuttings, pollution and other consequences of 'progress' that do not only belong to the fiction. For these

destroyers of nature, actions taken by radical environmentalists mean significant economic losses and the inability to continue working, which can have serious repercussions at a global scale if international corporations are affected. Thus, the struggle of these activists might make certain companies cease their nature-exploitation activities or provoke changes in their attitudes towards the environment.

As it has been observed, direct action can be the way for achieving positive changes (even if they are not always of a big scale) for the environment, but the awareness that motivates this activism can also be highly powerful in this struggle. The appreciation and love for nature shown in the four works not only justifies the actions taken by the activists, but can also make people aware of environmental problems. What is more, these positive feelings can even motivate readers to take action to try to solve attacks against nature, such as habitat destruction. Therefore, the environmental awareness transmitted by these works of fiction can have important consequences at a social level, because (as the impact of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* makes clear) it can lead to changes in the people's minds and attitudes.

A further conclusion points at the fact that the line between reality and fiction in these works is sometimes blurred, not only when writing about the natural world, but also concerning radical environmentalism. The appreciation and love (and, sometimes, exact locations) in passages dedicated to the natural world are, especially in Abbey's case, real from the part of the authors, even if they are captured into works of fiction. Nevertheless, the strong relationship between reality and fiction is noteworthy, above all, when dealing with radical environmentalism. The four writings and the actions they narrate can be considered responses to real and specific social and, mainly, environmental situations and they offer possible solutions that are to be put into practice in real life.

As it has been explained, the publishing of *The Monkey Wrench Gang* was an important driving force and key event in the creation and development of radical environmental groups, so its impact in real-life is more than obvious. However, this is not the only case where reality and fiction make one. *Hayduke Lives!*, *Jokerman* 8 and *The Secret World of Terijian* include real people and groups in their fiction, which makes the boundaries between it and reality blurred. Their depictions of the radical environmental movement are really illustrative of the ideas and working methods of

these activists and, in spite of being fiction, they deal with the incredibly important issue of harming or killing human beings in real-life. As explained, there are no human casualties after the actions of environmentalists outside the fiction and, in the texts, there is only one case in *Hayduke Lives!* when a man is killed in self-defence by a character who acts more as an outlaw than as an activist. Nonetheless, in *Jokerman* 8 activists are attacked by those trying to profit from the exploitation of nature and this has actually happened in reality. The reality-fiction relationship in these works does not necessarily make them unique, especially considering that the writing about nature is based on real experiences and contacts with the environment. However, their message of the need for taking direct action for nature's sake, despite the fact that it is written in the form of fiction, is nothing but real.

As a final conclusion, it must be pointed out that, in spite of all the atrocities committed against nature, a message of hope predominates in the end of each piece of fiction. The environmental situation in the 20th and 21st centuries is obviously difficult due to the destructive practices of the industrial/capitalist powers, but there seems to be a way of changing it, as the analysed works defend. Humans and their institutions threaten and destroy nature and solving these problems becomes a moral obligation for people. In addition to being the originators of environmental problems, they are the only ones that can put an end to them, so the direct action these works portray can be the only way to stop the destruction of nature and life in the planet. By directly attacking those who attack the environment there is a hope of avoiding the worsening of the situation of the planet and radical environmentalism is depicted as a positive force that is able to achieve important changes.

The awareness transmitted by the works and the potential impact they can have in making people take direct action shed some light to the real-life environmental situation. Therefore, the hope of change is not only present in the fiction and thus, protecting actual living beings and connections within the natural world (including human-natural ones) is possible. Furthermore, nature's power of renewal and its will for the continuation of life are signs of the fact that, if the violent domination of the environment is stopped, there is still a chance for the thriving of spaces and species. All in all, these works of fiction transmit a message of hope because, although the environmental situation is dramatic, it is necessary to carry on fighting for it. There is still a hope and, until industrial/capitalist powers disappear, the struggle to liberate

nature and living beings (including humans) from their domination will persist, in reality and fiction.

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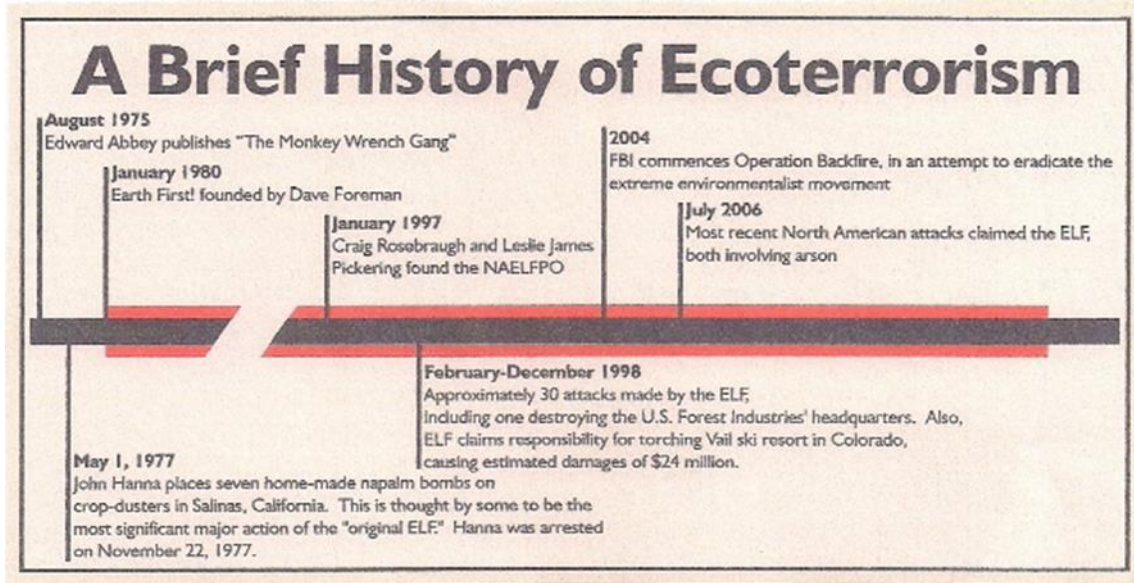
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Appendices

Appendix A



Appendix B

