Literatures, Cultures, and the Environment

Ursula K. Heise, University of California, Los Angeles

Literatures, Cultures, and the Environment focuses on new research in the Environmental Humanities, particularly work with a rhetorical or literary dimension. Books in this series seek to explore how ideas of nature and environmental concerns are expressed in different cultural contexts and at different historical moments. They investigate how cultural assumptions and practices as well as social structures and institutions shape conceptions of nature, the natural, species boundaries, uses of plants, animals, and natural resources, the human body in its environmental dimensions, environmental health and illness, and relations between nature and technology. In turn, the series aims to make visible how concepts of nature and forms of environmentalist thought and representation arise from the confluence of a community's ecological and social conditions with its cultural assumptions, perceptions, and institutions. Such assumptions and institutions help to make some environmental crises visible and conceal others, confer social and cultural significance on certain ecological changes and risk scenarios, and shape possible responses to them.

Across a wide range of historical moments and cultural communities, the verbal, visual, and performing arts have helped to give expression to such concerns, but cultural assumptions also underlie legal, medical, religious, technological, and media-based engagements with environmental issues. Books in this series will analyze how literatures and cultures of nature form and dissolve; how cultures map nature, literally and metaphorically; how cultures of nature rooted in particular places develop dimensions beyond that place (e.g., in the virtual realm); and what practical differences such literatures and cultures make for human uses of the environment and for historical reshapings of nature. The core of the series lies in literary and cultural studies, but it also embraces work that reaches out from that core to establish connections to related research in art history, anthropology, communication, history, philosophy, environmental psychology, media studies, and cultural geography.

A great deal of work in the Environmental Humanities to date has focused on the United States and Britain and on the last two centuries. *Literatures, Cultures, and the Environment* seeks to build on new research in these areas, but also and in particular aims to make visible projects that address the relationship between culture and environmentalism from a comparative perspective, or that engage with regions, cultures, or historical moments beyond the modern period in Britain and the United States. The series also includes work that, reaching beyond national and majority cultures, focuses on emergent cultures, subcultures, and minority cultures in their engagements with environmental issues. In some cases, such work was originally written in a language other than English and subsequently translated for publication in the

series, so as to encourage multiple perspectives and intercultural dialogue on environmental issues and their representation.

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The Environmental Imaginary in Brazilian Poetry and Art

By Malcolm K. McNee

THE ENVIRONMENTAL
IMAGINARY IN BRAZILIAN
POETRY AND ART

Malcolm K. McNee

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMAGINARY IN BRAZILIAN POETRY AND ART

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has its most immediate origins in a trajectory of work as a scholar of Brazilian literary and cultural studies. As I began the project, it unfolded out of a series of published studies of expressions of rural place and identity, migrations, and landlessness in Brazilian literature, music, performance, and visual culture. The path it took, setting forth new parameters for exploring artistic responses to the environment and to environmental change writ large, should be credited to the draw of the poets and artists whose work I discovered, often by chance, over the course of my research and stays in Brazil. The draw of their work, pulling me toward questions of environmental representation and philosophy, ultimately points to deeper origins for this book that should also be acknowledged. It reflects my experience growing up among the pine-forested peaks, high mountain desert, sage-covered bentonite hills, and steep river canyons of central Idaho, the son of two talented landscape and wildlife artists—my father a professional photographer, my mother his assistant and a photographer and painter in her own right. My parents gave me the freedom to explore my surroundings as a child, encouraged me to look closely at the beauty to be found there, and passed on to me a deep sense of connection to the more-than-human world. My first debt of gratitude is to them.

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