

# “WHAT I’VE DONE”: LINKIN PARK’S ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

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## ABSTRACT

No doubt all the members of the American rock band Linkin Park have always demonstrated an abiding interest in nature and, at the same time, they have made clear their profound love of the natural universe. They are aware the world we inhabit is gradually being destroyed by harmful effects in the environment. The following text will evince, through an ecocritical stance, how the band feels the need to claim that we should take care of our environment and take action to help the victims of natural disasters. Analyzing the band’s lyrics will lead us to realize that the planet is in danger and, consequently, we must do something to avoid its devastation.

KEYWORDS: Ecocriticism, Environmental Justice, Popular Culture, Linkin Park.

## “LO QUE HE HECHO”: LA SENSIBILIDAD AMBIENTAL DE LINKIN PARK

## RESUMEN

Sin duda alguna, los miembros de la banda americana de rock Linkin Park han demostrado en todo momento un enorme interés en la naturaleza. Siempre han dejado patente el profundo amor que sienten por el universo natural y son conscientes de que el mundo en el que habitamos está siendo destruido por efectos dañinos. El presente artículo mostrará, a través de una perspectiva ecocrítica, cómo la banda reclama el cuidado del medioambiente y la necesidad de ayudar a las víctimas de desastres naturales. Al analizar las letras del grupo, observaremos que nuestro planeta está en peligro y por eso debemos actuar para evitar su ruina.

PALABRAS CLAVE: ecocrítica, justicia medioambiental, cultura popular, Linkin Park.

“We believe in something different:  
in the person standing next to us.”  
(Chester Bennington)



The twenty-first century has brought remarkable changes in the social and political scene. Most of these changes are not completely positive for both human beings and the environment. Technological and other advances have improved our world and our daily life; however, they have also damaged our natural universe and generated social differences and tensions; certain advances have even originated racial conflicts, as the poorest groups tend to be subjugated by the richest. If human beings are constantly destroying our natural world, the fact that the world belongs to all of us should be considered and, for that reason, the environment must be protected. Furthermore, our conception of the world has evolved and fluctuated too due to induced changes and progress in society. “[W]e [a]re touching on a period big with the most important changes, changes that would[,] in some measure[,] be decisive of the future fate of mankind” (Malthus 1). But, the question that arises now is if our world constitutes a safe and fair place to inhabit.

It has been said that the great question is now at issue, whether man shall henceforth start forwards with accelerated velocity towards illimitable, and hitherto unconceived improvement, or be condemned to a perpetual oscillation between happiness and misery, and after every effort remain still at an immeasurable distance from the wished-for goal. (Malthus 1)

Bearing in mind these premises, the following paper aims to scrutinize the American rock band Linkin Park’s lyrics and the messages they convey. By providing examples included in their songs and also in certain interviews, we will evince how the lyrics encapsulate social, political and, above all, environmental messages and elucidations. The six members of the band have always demonstrated profound environmental awareness and have tried to transmit the idea that human beings are destroying and damaging nature. Subsequently, the paper will study the lyrics from an ecocritical stance and it will emphasize how the band not only focuses on raising their voice to denounce the destruction of our natural world, but also on criticizing the oppression of power and stating that we must act to help those needing economic resources. Nevertheless, despite their music being highly original, their inclusion in the hall of fame was not an easy one, as the frontman’s fears and insecurities can be glimpsed in many of the songs.

Philip Sidney (1554-1586) defended, in his Pragmatic Theory, that “a work of Art is an instrument for getting something done” (Abrams 15). Music, as a way of communication, provides one with the power of being able to be heard and to send messages that can be obeyed, or, at least, understood. According to Timothy Garton Ash, “(...) the way to live together well in this world-as-city is to have more and better free speech” (2). The right of free speech dates back to ancient traditions and philosophers though we should learn how to deal with it and to make proper use of it, “[s]ince free speech has never meant unlimited speech” (Garton Ash 4):

The philosopher Michael Foucault tells us that the Epicurean thinker Philodemus (himself reporting the lectures of Zeno of Sidon) argued that the use of free speech should be taught as a skill, like medicine or navigation. I don’t know how much of that is Zeno or Philodemus and how much Foucault, but it seems to me a vital



thought for our time. In this crowded world, we must learn to navigate by speech, as ancient mariners taught themselves to sail across the Aegean Sea. We can never learn if we are not allowed to take the boat out. (Garton Ash 4)

In this sense, denouncing the abuses of power or the destruction of our natural environment is present today. The damage being caused to nature is palpable and it constitutes a fact which can be demonstrated. “Facts are the cobblestones from which we build roads of analysis, mosaic tiles that we fit together to compose pictures of past and present” (Garton Ash xiii). Although, an action without any reaction does not imply anything and, so, it is necessary to take part actively and avoid “encouraging people to remain in a state of quietism and despair. For if all solutions are barred, we have to regard any action in this world as futile (...). (Sartre 17) “In our time, the sources of fact-fixing are mainly to be found at the frontier between politics and the media” (Garton Ash xiv). As a consequence, the media and music can convey references to social and natural oppression and injuries. Judith Butler adheres to the belief that:

To be injured means that one has the chance to reflect upon injury, to find out the mechanisms of distribution, to find out who else suffers from permeable borders, unexpected violence, dispossession, and in what ways. If national sovereignty is challenged, that does not mean it must be shored up at all costs, if that results in suspending civil liberties and suppressing political dissent. (xii)

In light of this, music dispatches messages that can have an effect upon the public to change our behaviour and our actions, especially those regarding our environment. Considering the previous assumption, we may admit that human beings are not alone and, when it comes to solidarity, there is still hope. Some critics declare that the distinctive face of Ecocriticism is that it has an “ecocentric face” (Buell 98) and, as Darwin attested, human beings and nature must coexist:

To Darwin, literary and critical ecocentrism owes the definition of *homo sapiens* as an order of being not created providentially but by a “natural” process that cares no more for whether humans survive than for the welfare of any other species, even if humans happen to be the highest stage of evolution. (Buell 100)

The discipline of Ecocriticism deals with the representation of nature in the Arts and, obviously, music can be included in the Arts. In this paper, one of its currents—that is called environmental justice—will be used to analyze the lyrics. In 1991, Washington took in the First National People of Colour Environmental Leadership Summit, where the delegates established the principles of Environmental Justice and whose main objective was to abhor and condemn the destruction of nature by harmful practices and their adverse effects on the environment. The first clause of the principles is the following: “Environmental justice affirms the sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity and the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction” (Buell 114). Furthermore, environmental justice is also focused on denouncing the oppression and the deprived conditions of certain



social groups, “as environmental problems cannot be clearly divorced from things more usually defined as social problems such as poor housing or lack of clean water” (Garrad 29). As stated by Joni Adamson, Mei Mei Evans and Rachel Stein, “[i]n the last decades, environmental justice movements around the world have grown out of convergences between civil right movements, antiwar and antinuclear movements, women’s movements and grassroots organizing around environmental issues” (4).

Popular culture “[w]hether framed as environmental communication, ‘sustainable media’, ‘eco-media’, or ‘green popular culture’ environmental media and cultural studies constitutes an embryonic but rapidly developing body of research” (Chang 1). In the case of the rock band Linkin Park, it is patent that they have always made use of their power to be listened to by millions of fans all around the world. One of their two charismatic leaders, Mike Shinoda (1977-), sends messages continuously asserting that oppression should disappear and justice should prevail, both in the social panorama and in our environment. The songs included on their two first albums, *Hybrid Theory* (2000) and *Meteora* (2003), refer to complicated relationships and mental health owing to drug abuse and alcohol; however, the launch of *Minutes to Midnight* (2007) meant a crucial point in the band’s lyrics, as they began to worry about nature and the way human beings are destroying it. Subsequently, certain notions of Ecocriticism will be applied in this piece of research to examine and comprehend the way the band talks about the destruction of our environment and how they have found possible solutions to it

Born in Agoura Hills, California, in 1996, the alternative rock band was able to win a permanent and honoured place in the rock music scene. Lead vocals, Chester Bennington (1976–2017), would join the band –first called Xero– in 1999, just as they published their globally famous and award-winning album *Hybrid Theory*. The evolution, both in the lyrics and in the sound, the band experienced when *Minutes to Midnight* (2007) was released was nothing less than remarkable. For the first time, the band began to get involved in social and environmental issues and projects. They have always had a clear idea in mind of what they were sure they could do, but, sometimes, helping people or the environment is not an easy task. For the expert on environmental justice, Joni Adamson, “the most heated battles fought by environmental justice groups still almost inevitably begin with the struggle to redefine social justice, local economical sustainability, health, and community governance as “environmental issues” (77). Probably, the band’s conviction that they were able to reach the audience with their messages and their fears that our world was being destroyed helped them change their direction in the pursuit of making the world a better place in which to inhabit. So, in 2005 they founded the organization Music for Relief, whose purpose was “to raise money and awareness and provide direct help with disaster relief and environmental protection.” (Blatt 2015) By 2015, “Music for Relief ha[d] already raised more than \$6 million for survivors of natural disasters and has planted 1 million trees to help reduce global warming” (Blatt 2015). “Since its inception, Music for Relief has raised \$11 million to assist survivors of more than 30 natural disasters” (Newman 2018). “But more than awareness, the band sees Music for Relief as infrastructure to engage people who want to use their skills to



provide physical help. To that end, they organize tree plantings, park cleanups and construction projects for their fans and crew” (Blatt 2015).

*Minutes to Midnight* owes its title to Bennington’s inspiration. He admitted that such a title came to his mind while watching a History Channel documentary about the Doomsday Clock—which symbolizes the possibility of a global catastrophe or a nuclear war—in which the phrase “five minutes to midnight” was repeated all the time. According to the frontman, “the idea of midnight [was] being the ultimate—like the end of our time— or it could be—like with the band— the end of one era and the beginning of something new” (Bennington 2011). Currently, the timeline in *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* sustains that 5 minutes means:

The challenges to rid the world of nuclear weapons, harness nuclear power, and meet the nearly inexorable climate disruptions from global warming are complex and interconnected. In the face of such complex problems, it is difficult to see where the capacity lies to address these challenges. (Mecklin 2018)

Basically, the song “What I’ve done?” encapsulates the thesis of destroying our world, specially our natural world. Human beings are eager to improve technologically and they forget what is really important. Dehumanization can be felt throughout the lyrics and it seems that the band tries to convince people that this is not the correct behavior to protect and conserve the natural universe. The song suggests that there is no blood or alibi and not even a physical fight, but the planet is vanishing owing to our harmful actions. And this is a fact.

In this farewell  
There’s no blood, there’s no alibi  
'Cause I’ve drawn regret  
From the truth of a thousand lies  
So let mercy come and wash away  
What I’ve done

I’ll face myself to cross out what I’ve become  
Erase myself  
And let go of what I’ve done

The song distills a sense of regret, as if the band is transmitting the idea of “redeeming our sins”, not in a religious sense but in a metaphorical sense, although the idea of a divinity who chastises and exonerates us remains here. Human beings are demolishing the world and they urge us to recover it. Then, mercy and redemption will come.

Put to rest what you thought of me  
While I clean this slate  
With the hands of uncertainty  
So let mercy come and wash away  
What I’ve done



It is worth making mention of the use of the personal pronoun “I”. This implies that the band is aware of how guilty we, as human beings, are. In fact, the song can be interpreted as a call on humanity to avoid destruction, war and conflicts and to forgive itself: “And whatever pain may come / Today this ends / I’m forgiving what I’ve done”. The scenario illustrated in the video is the same as “a series of ‘end-of-the-world books’, particularly in German post war literature” (Dürbeck 1) including “atomic war and nuclear devastation (...) environmental pollution, the ‘population bomb’, the limits to growth, climate change, the loss of biodiversity and the extinction of the human race as a result of dangerous technologies getting out of control” (Dürbeck 1). Such a scenario underlines a plethora of social and political issues which affect us. Therefore, it is evident that the band deploys all these visual motifs to make us aware of the environmental apocalypse the world is about to suffer if humans do not impede harmful and pernicious practices due to globalization. By this time, Linkin Park was completely involved in social projects to help those victims of natural disasters who needed economic and emotional resources. Natural disasters and catastrophes, pollution, toxic waste or climate change were part of the band’s main concerns. Regarding climate change, if human beings are able to understand that the world must be shared, then, the irreparable damage to all other species will ensue.

Essentially, climate change is the ultimate object in an object-oriented ontology, the main thrust of which is that we are not, as we so comfortably assume, the planet’s top dog—or top priority. In fact, ecosystems, whether perfectly functioning or not, churn on without any concern whatsoever for us; while humans continue to make a vast and multivalent impact, many factors are at play in the lives of everything on the planet, and we Westerners are only beginning to realize what Eastern philosophies have espoused for a very long time: we are neither alone nor special in this world. (Woolbright 89-90)

Thus, it was with the publication of the album *A Thousand Suns* (2010) when they claimed that our world is in danger. They created projects and organizations and encouraged fans to enroll on them or donate funds to alleviate those who were suffering or to increase awareness about the injustices in the world. On December 26<sup>th</sup> 2004 the Indian Ocean tsunami hit. When Linkin Park contemplated the huge devastation, they decided to take part actively. One of the members, David “Phoenix” Farrell assured that such disaster unified their perspective and pushed them to react to transform their grief for those in need: “We saw the devastation and felt like we might be able to help mobilize not only our community of fans, but also the music industry in general” (Blatt 2015). Moreover, the following years they continued with donations and actions to provide vital and basic needs, since the band was overwhelmed with gratitude.

In the years 2004-2005[,] Linkin Park donated funds to the Hurricane Charlie, Katrina, and Rita disaster victims. The band’s ability to mobilize and quickly assess the impact of these natural disasters has helped to provide speedy relief from the financial burdens for those charities who received the donations. They have



also been actively collecting donations for all of the countries that are being hit and devastated by major earthquakes and tsunami's in order to make sure that the medical, emotional, and physical needs of the affected people are being provided for. (Rose 2012)

Due to the hard social or political criticism of some lyrics, *A Thousand Suns* is the band's first album containing Parental Advisory. In spite of the fact that Mike Shinoda, vocals and composer, maintained in an interview that he did not feel "it was a political record" (Shinoda, Delson, Bennington and Bourdon 2010), some political connotations are included. On the other hand, in Bennington's view they "were just becoming confident enough to write socially charged lyrics (...) to write about what happens in the world" (Shinoda, Delson, Bennington and Bourdon 2010). The album could be summarized in the sentence Chester asked himself in the same interview: "Where's the humanity gone?" (Shinoda, Delson, Bennington and Bourdon 2010). The title alludes to chapter eleven, section twelve, of the famous Hindu Sanskrit scripture *The Bhagavad Gita*, which "was considered to embody the essential spirit and deepest truth of Hinduism" (Fosse x) and the sentence is that which follows: "If the radiance of a thousand suns were to burst forth at once in the sky, that would be like the splendour of the Mighty One." (The Library of Congress 28). However, the sentence was made popular by American theoretical physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967), who "was appointed the leader of a theoretical effort to design the atomic bomb" (Bethe 187). The title implies the idea of war and the explosion of the atomic bomb. In the album's liner notes, the band adds that the words echo today due to our personal disintegration as emotional human beings and the wrecking of the world in which we live; however, there is still a gleam of hope in humanity:

Oppenheimer's words resonate today not only for their historical significance, but for their emotional gravity. So, too, *A Thousand Suns* grapples with the personal cycle of pride, destruction and regret. In life, like in dreams, this sequence is not always linear. And, sometimes, true remorse penetrates the devastating cycle. The hope, of course, springs from the notion that the possibility of change is born in our most harrowing moments. (Linkin Park 2010)

After the detonation of the first atomic bomb in Los Álamos (New México) –Known as the Trinity test– on July 16, 1945, Oppenheimer himself remarked: "If the radiance of a thousand suns / were to burst into the sky / that would be like / the splendor of the Mighty One and I am become Death, the shatterer of worlds" (The Library Congress 28). As mentioned above, this was taken from *The Bhagavad Gita*, but Oppenheimer changed the last words. In the Hindu Sanskrit scripture, chapter 11 section 32, we can read: "I am mighty, world-destroying Time". In fact, the concepts of annihilation, death and power are exactly the same in both the Hindu text and the speech and this prevails in *A Thousand Suns*. One of the words contained in Oppenheimer's remark, "radiance", is precisely the title of the second song included on the album, "The Radiance", which consists of another extract from an Oppenheimer interview:



We knew the world would not be the same  
A few people laughed, a few people cried, most people were silent  
I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita  
Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty  
And to impress him takes on his multi-armed form and says  
Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds  
I suppose we all thought that, one way or another  
(Linkin Park 2010)

What the band emphasizes, by using these words in one of their songs, is that humans are authoritative and, at the same time, responsible for their own actions. Detonating an atomic bomb involves destroying human lives and our environment and, sadly, this is something that has not changed today. Nevertheless, Linkin Park insists on how we should stop annihilating everything, since if we start doing that, there will be hope and confidence in humanity. According to the critics, Oppenheimer's speech still echoes in the twenty-first century, for he was able to question the use of force without measuring its consequences:

Oppenheimer had raised questions far more profound than those contained within a policy debate, or even a debate about the merits or dangers of a particular weapon system –he had asked questions that brought that debate itself into question. He had questioned an entire system of thinking and understanding whose purpose was to constrain the activity of thought itself –and which, in particular, constrained the possibility of thinking ethically about the use and politics of force, outside the iron walls of calculation and prudence. (Burke 188)

The first single they released was “The Catalyst”, which was included in the soundtrack of the videogame of the series entitled *Medal of Honor: Warfighter* (2010), conceived by Steven Spielberg and was inspired by the Second World War. Furthermore, the official video recreates an atmosphere of war where people are running, surrounded by asphyxiating smoke. The song condenses the hypothesis of nuclear warfare in which, for Shinoda, the main feelings of human beings are “fear, regret and hope” (2010). It is noticeable, as reported by the band, that we are living in a world dominated by weapons, in particular nuclear weapons. The beginning of the song appeals to God and, albeit we do not know if the word “God” here is attributed to the Christian one, they plead for his blessing and mercy.

God bless us everyone  
We're a broken people living under loaded gun  
And it can't be outfought  
It can't be outdone  
It can't be outmatched  
It can't be outrun, no!

When I close my eyes tonight  
To symphonies of blinding light!



God bless us everyone  
We're a broken people living under loaded gun

In all likelihood, there is no hope for human beings, for they are ruining themselves and their world. Greed is eradicating human relationships and the desire for power is what remains and predominates. These “loaded guns” symbolize the quantity of nuclear weapons governments accumulate and which can be detonated at any time. The fear of a nuclear attack with its resounding flashes dismays the band. After the explosion, humans will burn in their own fire, caused by their own sins –caused by our tongues, our fathers and our young or, what is the same, the present, the past and the future– and only a merciful god could save and redeem us.

God save us everyone  
Will we burn inside the fires of a thousand suns?  
For the sins of our hands  
The sins of our tongues  
The sins of our fathers  
The sins of our young? No!

In addition, Oppenheimer’s allusion is not the only one on the album, as the band also incorporated into *A Thousand Suns* the words of Mario Savio and Martin Luther King. American activist Mario Savio (1942-1996) was one of the leaders of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement. Savio criticized how the working class was being exploited by a corrupted upper class and he never ceased fighting for people’s rights, particularly those of oppressed people who were victims of the social and political system. In his study *Ecocriticism*, Greg Garrad declares that there exists a relationship between Eco-Marxists and social ecologists as “[i]t gives these positions a clear affinity with environmental justice movements that protest the common association of acute environmental degradation and pollution with poverty” (29). For Garrad, the main postulates of eco-Marxists are that: “In line with traditional Marxist thought, eco-Marxists argue that there is a structural conflict between workers and the owners of the means of production, in which the latter cream off the surplus value created by the labour of the proletariat” (29). The opening of the song “Wretches and Kings” comprises a portion of the discourse entitled “The Operation of the Machine” given by Savio at Sproul Hall, in the University of California (Berkeley), on December 2, 1964.

There’s a time, when the operation of the machine becomes so odious  
Makes you so sick at heart, that you can’t take part  
You can’t even passively take part  
And you’ve got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels  
Upon the levers, upon all the apparatus  
And you’ve got to make it stop

In accordance with the aforementioned speech, Linkin Park composed a song expressing the demands of the working class and those socially oppressed towards



a struggle which provides them with their own fundamental rights and freedoms. However hard the lyrics may be, the band believes in the power to change the world through their music as they can reach millions of people around the planet. Their principal message here is that some people or groups are oppressed but we do nothing to avoid it –apparently because if they just obey, they will not be punished– but if they fight back and stand up for their right, they will have a possibility to succeed and defeat the rulers of this world.

To save face, how low can you go?  
Talk a lotta game, but yet you don't know  
Static on the wind, makes us all say whoa  
The people up top push the people down low  
Get down, and obey every word  
Steady, get in line if you haven't yet heard  
Wanna take what I got, don't be absurd  
Don't fight the power, nobody gets hurt  
If you haven't heard yet, then I'm lettin' you know  
There ain't shit we don't run when the guns unload  
And no one make a move, unless my people say so  
Got everything outta control, now everybody go

Definitely, due to its lyrics, this song may be one of the hardest they have ever created. There is an explicit social and political criticism which denounces the abuses of power and speculation by certain groups who are only interested in enriching themselves at the expense of the lower classes.

The front of the attack is exactly where I'm at  
Somewhere in between the kick and the hi-hat  
The pen and the contract, the pitch and the contact  
So get with the combat, I'm lettin' them know

Power, influence, hierarchy and greed for wealth dehumanize us and, as a consequence, we use our natural instinct and attack to stop the subjugation of the weakest groups. Guided by the need for a moral rebellion to avoid injustices, albeit one with no weapons, the band heartens the audience to make them realize what is happening:

Steel unload, final blow  
We, the animals, take control  
Hear us now, clear and tall  
Wretches and kings, we come for you  
Still alone, fight our blow  
Filthy animals beat down low  
Steel and bone, black and blue  
Run at the sunshine, we come for you



And yet, when it seems that there is no hope and we are surrounded by riots and war, the figure of Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929-1968) emerges as the hope that is required in order to continue. We are becoming ruthless and emotionless; however, his words are there to remind us that there is still a light at the end of the tunnel. The song “Wisdom, Justice, and Love” adds a touch of positivity which is complemented with the fragment of April 4, 1967 antiwar speech “Beyond Vietnam: A Time for Breaking Silence”. The American pastor transmits to the world the idea that wisdom, justice and love can be reached through peace, for war is “filling our nation’s homes with orphans and widows”. So, it was necessary to stop the madness of war.

I come to this magnificent house of worship tonight  
Because my conscience leaves me no other choice  
A true revolution of values will lay hands on the world order and say of war  
This way of settling difference is, is not just  
This business of burning human beings with napalm  
Filling our nation’s homes with orphans and widows  
Of injecting poisonous drugs of hate into veins of peoples normally humane  
Of sending men home from the dark and bloody battlefields  
Physically handicapped and psychologically deranged  
Cannot be reconciled with wisdom, justice and love

In an interview that took place in 2010, Mike Shinoda claimed that “humanity was destroying itself” and, as musicians their intention was to make clear that people heard about expectation and anger. He also alleged: “You talk to your friends, you see things on the news, you read things online and all this stuff just happens, and we wanted to find a way to kind of put all that stuff together” (Associate Press 2010).

Moved by the 2010 Haiti earthquake, the band decided to raise awareness of the natural disasters threatening our lives and our environment and wrote the composition “Not Alone”, which they complemented with a video displaying images of the results of the earthquake and the people who lost everything. The song embraces people who lost family, friends, memories and homes and reminds them that they “are not alone”. The band “realized it could make the greatest impact by providing its own compassion triggers for others” (Blatt 2015).

The Secretary General of the United Nation was so pleased by the response (more than 9 million YouTube views at the time), that he asked the band to support his Sustainable Energy for All initiative, promoting universal access to electricity. The resulting collaboration is called Power the World, which has been providing solar electricity systems to health clinics in Uganda, biogas cookstoves for households in Nepal and soccer balls that are also portable generators to communities in South America. (Blatt 2015)

Obviously, “[t]alking about the pain of others and asking for help easing that pain is a natural extension of Linkin Park’s relationship with fans, which is already



based on the intense emotional content of their music” (Blatt 2015). Thanks to the help they provide and the funds they donate, it could be affirmed that the band is highly interested in environmental justice. In fact, “[e]nvironmental justice movements call attention to the ways disparate distribution of wealth and power often leads to correlative social upheaval and the unequal distribution of environmental degradation and/or toxicity” (Adamson, Evan and Stein 5). No doubt their work and interaction with those who are affected by natural disasters or poverty is one of their greatest tasks and they have never abandoned the idea of donating or collaborating with the care of our environment. One of the examples of such collaboration is represented by planting trees in 2012 in South Africa in an elementary school. “It was *the* best day,” said Missy Allgood, “It was so sweet. These little kids in uniforms in 80-degree weather, and it was beautiful. They were singing and every person had a tear in their eye” (Blatt 2015). This led to new initiatives “such as collecting soaps and shampoos from hotels on the road and donating them to a women’s shelter” (Blatt 2015). Another example of collaboration took place in Japan, when “they visited schools that suffered from damage following the 2011 tsunami and even jammed with kids receiving music therapy to help deal with the loss of friends or family. They also visited refugee camps in Haiti to get a first-hand perspective of life in a refugee camp with no electricity” (Blatt 2015).

The work they published under the title *Living Things* (2012) contains a song, “Burn it down”, that can be analyzed from the point of view of a planet which is being destroyed and burnt and whose ashes we have to collect in order for a new one to spring up. “Burn it down” conveys and mixes images of the destruction of the world and personal relationships, as, in both cases, we destroy and create. The elements of nature are used here as a metaphor of how a relationship concludes and is initiated again. So, this “explosion broke in the sky” can be related to demolition or even to an affair in which everything will be built up after being devastated.

The cycle repeated  
 As explosions broke in the sky  
 All that I needed  
 Was the one thing I couldn't find  
 And you were there at the turn  
 Waiting to let me know

We're building it up  
 To burn it down  
 We can't wait  
 To burn it to the ground

*The Hunting Party* was released in 2014 and it meant a total change in their style again; an evolution and, of course, it incorporates more social or political criticism. From this album, which comprises more metal songs, we will highlight “Guilty All the Same”, “Rebellion” and “Wastelands”. The first one, “Guilty All the Same”, entails sin devouring sensibility and humanity begging for salvation from its fall into wreck and disgrace.



Show us all again  
That our hands are unclean  
That we're unprepared  
That you have what we need  
Show us all again  
'Cause we cannot be saved  
Cause the end is near  
Now there's no other way  
And oh, you will know  
You're guilty all the same  
Too sick to be ashamed  
You want to point your finger  
But there's no one else to blame

In essence, hostility does not allow humans to acknowledge that we are guilty and we do not censor our actions or behavior, since we only “point our finger” at someone else. Definitely, the message the band is sending here is that we should look at our “unclean hands” and accept our own faults when it comes to the idea of destroying our world and ourselves; a world which is being transformed into a wasteland. And this is exactly the title of another song, “Wastelands”, whose first part of the rap exhorts the public to act: “This is war with no weapons, / Marching with no stepping, / Murder with no killing”. Shinoda’s rap states that “Every rap is made in fact / To act as a delayed attack / Every phrase a razor blade” and, then, in the previous lines, he admits that music is a tool to denounce certain situations and can be charged with social or political meaning. From an analysis of the song, it can be deduced that the earth is a wasteland where hope does not exist and tomorrow will never come. The war must be fought without weapons and, so, human beings will recover themselves.

In the wastelands of today  
Where tomorrow disappears  
While the future slips away  
And your hope turns into fear  
In the wastelands of today

In the song “Rebellion”, the band confesses how fortunate those of us who never felt oppression are. For this reason, we should not forget that there are others who possess nothing and suffer the consequences of war. Here, they use the personal pronoun “I” to emphasize that sometimes our self-indulgence is stronger than our necessity to contemplate the whole world and to collaborate with its preservation.

I've seen the blood  
I've seen the broken  
The lost and the sights unseen  
I want a flood  
I want an ocean  
To wash my confusion clean



In the next verses, the use of the personal pronoun “we” prevails, which indicates a change and the inclusion of all human beings to realize that we are blessed just for not being surrounded by a warlike and threatening atmosphere.

We act it out  
We wear the colors  
Defined by the things we own  
We're not without  
We're like each other  
Pretending we're here alone  
And far away, they burn their buildings  
Right in the face of the damage done  
We are the fortunate ones  
Who've never faced oppression's gun  
We are the fortunate ones  
Imitations of rebellion

As previously mentioned, Linkin Park's charity projects have always been devoted to collecting money for those suffering the effects of natural disasters and to raising awareness on global warming. Pollution, tsunamis, earthquakes and nuclear weapons and wars are gradually devastating our world and our forests and, consequently, life on earth is becoming stifled.

Linkin Park has been a long time advocate for awakening the world's awareness of the disasters that we are creating by polluting the world in which we live in. Their messages are simple enough that all should be able to impact the world by doing little things everyday to remove the effects of stress that human pollution has on our Earth. (Rose, 2012)

Their last studio album, *One more Light* (2017), was released just two months after Chester Bennington ceased living. Their music took a new direction, as the album contained less rock and more pop and, what is more, the lyrics were related to personal emotions and feelings. In his last Australian interview, Bennington avowed: “I also like the challenge of singing in a way that's emotional on another level. You hear a different element of us on this record” (Adams 2017). This new element was referred to the sound, the lyrics and the messages. It was about hard and dark times, anxiety and how to overcome depression; the same depression and inner demons that took Chester's life two months later. With this album, the circle started with *Hybrid Theory* and *Meteora* was completed.

The evidence gained from studying Linkin Park and their connection with the environment indicates that it is obvious that the band maintains a close relationship with nature and tries to raise awareness on how global warming, pollution or natural disasters are ravaging our world. If the messages they send through music can be reached all over the planet and people collaborate with them by donating funds, this will make sure the affected people are being provided with all the necessary resources. Music is a powerful weapon when used properly. A band with a



world-wide reputation can touch many hearts and move all these hearts to provoke a reaction; however, they do not ignore the fact that they still require more help. For David Farrell, “[t]he biggest challenge is reaching out, figuring out ways to be involved with other artists and other sectors of the music industry as a whole” (Blatt 2015). Farrell added it was “great that artists feel passionate about different kinds of projects, (...) but it would be really cool for those different things to cooperate and join forces and to make more noise.” (Blatt 2015). Indeed, the band is absolutely committed to making this world a better place where humanity must take responsibility for its care and preservation for us and for future generations.

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