

SACRED CELLS, DIVINE FORCES AND THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION IN ERNESTO CARDENAL'S *CÁNTICO CÓSMICO*¹

DOI: DOI.ORG/10.31641/ZDYX9226

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Abstract: Beginning at the very beginning with the Big Bang, *Cántico cósmico* (1989) written by Nicaraguan priest and poet Ernesto Cardenal, celebrates the universe. This ambitious work, encompassing cosmic time uses a wide range of discourses, from scientific to historical and theological, in its description of the coming into being of the universe, the shaping of planet Earth and the evolution of humanity until its inevitable end. Throughout the text, Cardenal also celebrates the triumph of the Sandinista Revolution which he links to the process of evolution in an ever-expanding universe. Inspired by the ideas of Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), Cardenal believed the divine infused all elements of the cosmos, from natural forces to the composition of cells. I therefore posit that spiritual ecology permeates Cardenal's poetry in its consideration of the divine as a present force in all levels of existence and implores us to reconsider our place on the planet. In this article, I analyze how the poem explores the interrelationships between parts forming a harmonious whole, how the verses consider consciousness to be present in all elements of existence and, finally, I focus on the representation of cosmogenesis where God is a force pulling creation into the future towards its inevitable but harmonious end. Through this Utopic conceptualization of existence, the verses give readers an alternative and hopeful vision of a joyous future; one much needed in this current moment of crisis.

Key Words: *Cántico cósmico*, Ernesto Cardenal, Nicaragua, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Sandinista Revolution, Spiritual Ecology

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Spiritual atoms and sacred cells perform a celestial dance in Ernesto Cardenal's epic poem *Cántico cósmico* (1989), expanding outwards to create the universe and life on earth. This scientific and spiritual conceptualization of existence arises from the text composed of forty-three *cantigas* or canticles by the Nicaraguan revolutionary priest and poet (1925-2020), who sought to celebrate the victory of the 1979 Sandinista Revolution which followed decades of oppression by the Somoza dictatorship. The poem constructs a space where the Revolution acquires cosmological dimensions, connecting material processes to social and spiritual ones. In this article, I argue that Cardenal, fascinated by physics and heavily influenced by thinkers such as French Jesuit priest Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), created a text suffused with spiritual ecology. This movement, only recently named by scholars such as Leslie Sponsel and Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee, stems from the idea that all of creation, both human and nonhuman, is sacred. Bringing together science and spirituality in the broadest sense, the movement implores us to reconsider our relationship with nature and each other in light of the deepening climate crisis. While *Cántico cósmico* was published at a time before the broader public was aware of the looming climate crisis, it condemns the contamination of the planet and the disrespect shown to the natural world specifically by capitalist systems and authoritarian governments. The *cantigas* seek to uncover what unites all of creation from the most minute molecule to the awesome expansive galaxies, thus constructing a holistic picture of the cosmos where each individual component contributes to a magnificent whole. Although the hopeful period during which the poem was written came to a dramatic end shortly after its publication and Nicaragua today continues to be a troubled country oppressed by another authoritarian government, *Cántico cósmico* continues to inspire in its grandiose vision of the universe and encourages readers to create their own Utopian imaginary of a better world. My reading is guided by Teilhard de Chardin's influence on Cardenal's poetry and delves into how the text presents ecological themes and imagery in order to explore the poet's conception of the Sandinista Revolution as an important event in a constantly evolving and expanding universe.

In the Beginning: Methodology and Historical Overview

In this article, I will analyze the poem through an ecocritical lens, with a focus on spiritual ecology. My analysis will underscore how the text is suffused with an ecological spirituality which highlights all interconnected elements of creation. Accordingly, the poem brings to bear how a revolution in a country as small as Nicaragua plays an important role in the cosmological processes of an ever-expanding universe. I posit that this exploration of the universe reveals ecological ideologies, highlighting the interrelated nature of creation spun through a web of interdisciplinary discourses including science, theology and the human everyday experience. First, I explore how the poem depicts the linkages between the various parts that make up the whole, eliminating distances and hierarchies between all forms of existence. The imagery developed in this aspect contains an ecological understanding of the world, since ecology focuses on the interconnected web of life. This holistic view of the world also positions Cardenal to expand physical processes to include social ones like the Sandinista Revolution. Secondly, I examine how Cardenal incorporates the ideas of Teilhard de Chardin and British chemist James Lovelock to theorize on the existence of a conscience in each level of creation. I observe that the poem converts all objects into subjects deserving of respect and transforms the earth into a space actively commemorating the fallen martyrs of the Sandinista Revolution. Finally, I focus on the representation of forces in the poem as Cardenal reflects on how creation continues to be pulled into the future. Through a combined reading with the ideas of Teilhard de Chardin concerning love and cosmogenesis, I explore how Cardenal brings together scientific and social discourses to show how the forces of gravity and love unite the cosmos from the humble atom to human

1. To my Opa, Danker L.N. Vink, whose lengthy and passionate discussions on the Big Bang at the dinner table still circle in my mind and whose fascination with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin unexpectedly resurfaced in my own research.

bodies, ultimately reuniting all of existence in the love of God. In the end, all these ideas coalesce in the Sandinista Revolution, portrayed as a crucial moment in this slow process towards the final reunion with God, also known as the Omega Point.

Split by rugged mountain chains, dotted by volcanos and great lakes, the nation known today as Nicaragua was a land divided for centuries, its Atlantic coast practically cut off from the Pacific coast. Given the challenging geography, a series of foreign powers occupied different regions at different times. While the Pacific coast remained a Spanish colony until Nicaragua's independence in 1838, the Atlantic coast traded hands until finally the Miskito, a new ethnic group formed by escaped slaves who intermarried with the local Indigenous people, became the dominant power. Nicaragua eventually received the formal support of England, which was interested in the country's primary resources and its location on the Caribbean coast. In this complex sociopolitical context with so many competing political interests, the country was far from united when it gained independence. In *Sandino's Nation* (2018), Stephen Henighan describes the situation as follows:

Nicaraguan independence in 1838 occurred in an atmosphere of economic crisis and continuing violence between the Liberals, based in León, and Conservatives, based in Granada. Both groups saw an opportunity for profit and prosperity in building a maritime transportation route across the country, extending the thoroughfare offered by the San Juan River and Lake Nicaragua to the Pacific Ocean. (24)

The divisions between political parties, both geographic and ideological, made it easy for foreign powers to play opposing factions against one another and press their own agendas. In need of foreign investment to make the idea of an intercontinental channel viable, the Nicaraguan elite looked abroad for investors. European nations in turn saw the opportunity for great financial return and increased control over Nicaragua. At first, Britain was the most serious contender as an investor, but when it became occupied with the Crimean War (1853-1856), it was forced to leave Nicaragua. The United States of America (US) saw this as an opportunity to step into the power vacuum. From that moment on, the US gained increasing political and economical power over the country. Cornelius Vanderbilt, an American business magnate, secured the backing of the conservative Nicaraguan government to develop the cross-continental route which proved so lucrative that other American financiers took note and tried to secure their share of the gains by supporting the liberals. This led to further tensions between the Liberals and the Conservatives and caused a string of conflicts with a series of American governments supporting either one or the other.

As the US tightened its grip on the country in the early decades of the 20th century, forcing increasing concessions on land use and gaining influence in national politics, Nicaraguans began to protest. The most prominent among them was Augusto César Sandino (1895-1934) who organized an uprising in the Segovia mountains in the 1920s and successfully held this territory for a decade, creating a self-sustaining society where people worked the land communally. Sandino also developed his own ideas about a new Nicaraguan identity. Henighan explains that the "Sandinista ideology was nationalist, Panamerican, and egalitarian... Influenced by the Mexican Revolution's resuscitation of the indigenous past, Sandino, the illegitimate son of a minor landowner and his Indigenous servant, became the first prominent Nicaraguan in centuries to acknowledge with pride his indigenous heritage" (31). Although Sandino was brutally murdered in 1934 by the head of the National Guard Anastasio Somoza García (1896-1956), his legacy would live on and resurface in the 1960s with the formation of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (Frente Sandinista de

Liberación Nacional, FSLN). For his part, Somoza would come to power in 1937, beginning a US supported dictatorial dynasty marked by increasing levels of corruption, socioeconomic inequality and environmental degradation which lasted until the Sandinista Revolution in 1979.

Frustrated by decades of corrupt rule, Carlos Fonseca founded the FSLN in the 1960s. This movement, inspired by Sandino's earlier resistance and ideas, drew on Marxism, the Cuban Revolution, and Liberation Theology (Chomsky 100). Furthermore, the Sandinistas considered themselves a unifying force in a historically divided nation, bringing together the conservative and liberal elite as well as the rural poor with the common goal of deposing Somoza. Consequently, the Sandinista movement created an opportunity for Nicaraguans to envision and create a new unified national identity. As the resistance spread and the situation in Nicaragua grew more desperate, more people joined the ranks, including priest and poet Ernesto Cardenal. Hesitant at first, Cardenal became increasingly convinced of the need for radical change. In his memoirs, *Las islas extrañas* (2002), he describes the founding of Solentiname, his commune on an island in the vast inland Lake Nicaragua. He writes that over the course of many years,

la preocupación social y política había sido una inclinación natural mía, y una especie de vocación. Y el contacto con la pobreza de los campesinos en Solentiname, y la realidad nacional cada vez peor, también contribuyeron a que yo y nuestra pequeña comunidad nos fuéramos politizando y radicalizando. Nos íbamos haciendo más de izquierda, pues (206)

[I was naturally inclined to be concerned with society and politics, it was a kind of vocation. The contact with poverty and the campesinos in Solentiname, and the worsening national reality, also contributed to the increased politicization and radicalization of myself and our small community. We began to lean increasingly towards the left].²

Gradually, as the situation worsened and the oppression increased, Cardenal witnessed the suffering of the rural poor and decided it was time to act. He openly joined the Sandinista movement in 1977 when the Somoza regime destroyed Solentiname.

Born in 1925, Cardenal grew up in the elite circles of Granada, Nicaragua. Family connections enabled him to study in Mexico City and at Columbia University in New York. Always drawn to the Christian faith, he decided to become a priest in 1956. He began his training at a Trappist monastery in Kentucky under the tutelage of Thomas Merton and later completed it in Mexico and Colombia. Upon his return to Nicaragua, he was ordained and founded Solentiname in 1966. This commune, an idea Cardenal had often discussed with Merton and now put into practice, was a self-sustaining community growing its own food and selling its own artisanal crafts and paintings. Inspired by liberation theology, which encourages community involvement in the reading of the Gospel, Cardenal had all congregants participate in the sermon, commenting on the Bible as they were learning to read it. With the destruction of the commune, Cardenal was forced into exile in Costa Rica. After the Sandinista victory on July 19, 1979, he returned and was appointed Minister of Culture. In this position, while he frequently traveled all over the world, he also helped organize literacy campaigns where teachers visited remote areas of rural Nicaragua with the goal of teaching people how to read. As part of this literacy campaign, Cardenal organized poetry workshops where people were encouraged to write. He also continued to develop a poetic style he had already been working on in Solentiname called *exteriorismo*. Below, I will expand on how this style influenced the thematic development in Cardenal's

2. All the translations from Spanish into English are mine except for the excerpts from *Cántico cósmico* which are from the edition translated by John Lyons.

poetry. *Cántico Cósmico*, written over the course of several decades, represents a good example of this style. When Cardenal's position as Minister of Culture was dissolved in 1988, he unexpectedly had more time to write, and he completed the work in 1989.

ISSN: 1523-1720
NUMERO/NUMBER 55
Julio / July 2026

***Cántico cósmico*, Exteriorismo and the Critic's Response**

All-encompassing in scale, the epic poem *Cántico cósmico* endeavours to embrace all of creation from beginning to end, becoming a textual representation of the universe folded around the events of the Sandinista Revolution. Consisting of forty-three canticles, the epic engages in a multitude of discourses, including theology, history, anthropology, politics, and science. This broad approach reflects Cardenal's personal interests, his revolutionary ideology, and his literary style which he called *exteriorismo*. Initially inspired by the poetic style of Ezra Pound, who wrote his verse in a narrative style combining political and historical discourses, Cardenal adapted this literary approach to the Nicaraguan context. For him it was paramount that his poetry could be understood by a large public with varying levels of education. This is why *exteriorismo* has a narrative character. In "*Cántico cósmico* de Cardenal: un texto interdisciplinario," Ivan Carrasco explains that the style includes "los elementos de la vida cotidiana ... una escritura abierta a todos los temas y tipos de discurso" (3), [elements of daily life ... a writing style open to all themes and types of discourse]. By including elements of daily life in his work, the poet seeks to produce poetry accessible to the masses while also contributing to the shaping of a new Nicaraguan cultural identity in the wake of the Revolution's triumph and efforts to rebuild the country. In his memoirs, Cardenal describes *exteriorismo* as an authentically Nicaraguan style. He writes, "[n]osotros hemos tenido en Nicaragua una poesía, que hemos llamado exteriorista —de la realidad concreta, exterior, objetiva, y con un lenguaje claro y directo, a menudo conversacional" (IE 331). [In Nicaragua we have poetry that we call exteriorist —of a concrete reality, exterior, objective, and with a clear and direct language, often conversational]. Poetry written in the exteriorist style strives to portray the everyday reality in Nicaragua, becoming a voice for the poor from the poor. Furthermore, it seeks to unify readers and writers in its interdisciplinary approach.

The inclusive and flexible form of *exteriorismo* provided Cardenal with the space necessary to develop his holistic perspective of the universe. Combining and interweaving interdisciplinary ideas, the poem highlights how all disciplines, scientific, political and theological, ultimately concern themselves with the same big questions regarding beginnings, endings, and everything that occurs in between. Inherently ecological, this interconnectedness and convergence of disciplines in the poem naturally lends itself to an ecocritical framework of analysis. Carrasco comments on the predominantly scientific tone of the poem but goes on to describe the aesthetic elements of the poem with its "ritmo característico, el del verso libre: cada línea es una unidad rítmica y no siempre de sentido, es decir; un verso" (5), [characteristic rhythm of free verse: every line is a rhythmic unit and doesn't always make sense, in other words; a verse]. The poem harnesses the rhythm and aesthetics of verse on the page to translate cosmic processes into planetary ones, which the poet then connects to human and social processes. This web enables the poet to connect the social processes of revolution with the developing forces of evolution.

Critics frequently remark on the ecological component of Cardenal's work either in passing or in connection with politics. In "The Poetic Politics of Ecological Inhabitation in Neruda's *Canto General* and Cardenal's *Cosmic Canticle*," Patrick Murphy undertakes a comparative reading of Neruda and Cardenal's respective texts from an ecological and postcolonial perspective. He explains that Cardenal displays a

“scientific based ecological perspective at the same time that he is spiritually driven in his quest for environmental justice. And he places his perspective on ecology within a much larger cosmology of universal matter” (215). While this description encompasses the scope of Cardenal’s work, Murphy’s analysis focuses mainly on his anti-imperial message and his ideas on communism. In “Landscapes of Hope and Destruction: Ecological Poetry in Spanish America,” Nial Binns observes that *Cosmic Canticle* is a “vast work which combines physics, politics, biology and religion [which] returns to the idea of a new world announced at the end of ‘Apocalipsis’” (115). Both Murphy and Binns underscore the interplay between disciplines, drawing attention to the combined presence of ecology and politics in Cardenal’s verse. They acknowledge the ecological and spiritual elements in the text but do not bring the two into direct conversation with one another in their analysis. Yet, both spiritual and ecological energies pulse at the heart of the poem and, when taken together, they urge the reader to reconsider humanity’s position on the earth and the place of our planet within the greater forces of the cosmos. In their focus on interactions and interdependencies between terrestrial and cosmic forces, the verses weave a web of wonder and inspire awe in the reader, thus presenting a view that is both spiritual and ecological.

Spiritual Ecology

Spiritual ecology is a concept both old and new. In *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution*, Leslie Sponsel explains that spiritual ecology has existed for thousands of years (xix) and is only more recently known under the formal designation of spiritual ecology.³ According to Sponsel, advocates of the contemporary movement see the climate crisis as resulting,

from human alienation from nature combined with the disenchantment, objectification, and commodification of nature. Increasingly nature is considered as simply a warehouse of resources to be extracted in order to not only meet basic human needs, but also to try to satisfy the apparently unlimited greed for profit of rampant predatory capitalism coupled with the associated modern fixation of many people and societies on materialism and consumerism. (xv-xvi)

Spiritual ecology arises out of a concern for environmental degradation and how it will affect future generations as the crisis continues to escalate. The movement proposes a rethinking of humanity’s place on the planet, urging a greater focus on the human spiritual experience and development instead of the current models of thinking focused on market forces and economic growth (xvi). Along the same lines, in the foreword to *Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth*, editor Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee describes it as the study of the “spiritual dimension of life—the connection between our soul and the soul of the world, the knowing that we are all part of one living, spiritual being” (vi). Vaughan-Lee directly invites the reader to listen to

this wholeness that is calling to us now, that needs our response. It needs us to return to our own root and rootedness: our relationship to the sacred within creation. Only from the place of sacred wholeness and reverence can we begin the work of healing, of bringing the world back into balance. (vi)

Spiritual ecology calls for empathy, reverence, and wholeness, encouraging people to respect the planet and recognize it as a living entity. The movement seeks to foster an increasing awareness in the general public of the linkages between planetary and social wellbeing, highlighting the spiritual ruptures caused by modern structures and

3. There are a series of terms used to describe the same concept such as ecospirituality, green religion, green spirituality, nature mysticism, religious environmentalism, etc. (Sponsel xiv).

positivist thinking which consider the planet and nature as objects to be used by humanity. Cardenal's work contains these ideas as well, critiquing the damaging affects of capitalism on humanity and by extension the planet, while also endeavouring to awaken a sense of wonder in the reader.

In its holistic description of creation, from the most minute to the utmost grandiose, *Cántico cósmico* expresses awe at the complexity of life. From the poem's opening lines onward, a reverence for creation radiates off the page, describing the Big Bang and how a single particle explodes into a multitude of atoms blasted through space:

En el principio no había nada
 ni espacio
 ni tiempo.
 El universo entero concentrado
 en el espacio del núcleo de un átomo,
 y antes aún menos, mucho menor que un protón,
 y aun menos todavía, un infinitamente denso punto
 matemático.
 Y fue el Big Bang. (9)

[In the beginning there was nothing
 neither space
 nor time.
 The entire universe concentrated
 in the space of the nucleus of an atom,
 and before that even less, much less, than a proton,
 and even less still, an infinitely dense mathematical point.
 And that was the Big Bang.]
 (Lyons 1)

The first words, "en el principio no había nada," recall the opening lines of the Book of Genesis and then go on to describe how the "denso punto matemático" explodes in what we know as the Big Bang. The verse harmonically combines religious and scientific thought to create a more comprehensive understanding of existence and show that both discourses seek to explain the defining moment when the universe came into being. There is also a source of underlying tension as the biblical line poses that there was "nada," but physics posits that all of existence was contained in the single "denso punto," thus rendering nothingness impossible. The poem does not try to resolve these contradictions, establishing instead that nothing, not even God or science, is perfect in this ever-changing cosmos. Perfection can only be achieved at the end of creation when everything converges into the Omega Point. However, in the opening lines the poem concerns itself with how the first tiny particle of the stuff of the universe, or matter, exists unified at a zero-dimensional point. This isolated point breaks apart to become a multitude of dust particles with The Big Bang or "La Gran Explosión," (9) pushing neutrons, protons, and electrons outward and forward. From this point onwards, unity has burst asunder into a series of tiny particles which will reunite at different points in the expanding universe to form planets, and eventually life. The poem circles around these ongoing transformations, contemplating how the parts interact with the whole and vice versa.

Some critics find the interweaving of scientific and religious ideas in the poem both unconvincing and uncomfortable. Steven White, for example, observes tensions between Cardenal's Christian beliefs and his ideas derived from materialists Darwin and Marx. He posits that it is "preferible leer el *Cántico* como la representación de todo lo que nos rodea escrita por un poeta con una conciencia ecológica muy desarrollada y también como un vivo reflejo de las ideas materialistas de Darwin y Marx" (357), ["preferable to the read of Canticum as a representation of all that

surrounds us written by a poet with a deeply developed ecological conscious and also a vivid reflection of the materialist ideas of Darwin and Marx”]. For White, it is better to read the text as a poetic reflection on Darwin and Marx because the connections that it establishes between science, particularly the concept of evolution, with theological discourses are problematic (356). Yet these conclusions ignore the fact that Cardenal did not consider the theory of evolution to be incompatible with theology. Rather, by adopting the thinking and ideas proposed by Teilhard de Chardin, among others, *Cántico cósmico* brings to light how the two discourses connect in trying to answer life’s big questions.

Biographically and theologically, Teilhard de Chardin and Cardenal have many things in common. Both came from well-to-do families and were ordained as priests, interested in science among a wide range of topics, and both tested the patience of the senior levels of the Roman Catholic Church. As an ordained priest of the Jesuit order, Teilhard de Chardin was deeply committed to his faith, but he also lectured on geology at the Catholic University of Paris, was fascinated by Darwin’s theory of evolution and worked as a paleontologist. Over the course of his lifetime, he endeavoured to persuade the Catholic Church that the theory of evolution did not pose a threat to religion but was a strong indication of the presence of a divine force, pulling creation along in the ongoing processes of an expanding universe. He called this concept cosmogenesis, an idea I will return to later in the article. His essay *The Human Phenomenon* is a thought experiment where he brings the theory of evolution into direct conversation with theology, reflecting on science’s capacity to measure the material elements of the cosmos and its shortcomings in being able to explain the “inside” or the consciousness in things. Appalled by Teilhard de Chardin’s ideas, both the Jesuit order and the Catholic Church denied him the right to publish his work and exiled him to China in the 1920s. As a result, Teilhard de Chardin’s essays only became available to the general public after his death in 1955 when they were received to wide acclaim. Similarly, Cardenal would also rouse the ire of the Catholic Church for his continuing role in the Sandinista government. In 1985, Pope John Paul II suspended Cardenal’s right to administer the sacraments during mass. This ban would not be lifted until shortly before his death in 2020.

Through his writings, Cardenal, like Teilhard de Chardin, sought to connect themes and ideas across disciplines through his use of *exteriorismo* and as a politically active spiritual leader. While Teilhard de Chardin marries physics, chemistry, biology, and theology in his text, Cardenal, as shown above, linked many disciplines together in his poem *Cántico cósmico*. In doing so, he emulates ideas proposed by Teilhard de Chardin whose life’s work consisted of joining the supposedly antagonist discourses of science and theology together to create a new conceptualization of the universe. Additionally, both texts anticipate the concerns of the spiritual ecologist movement in upholding the place of the spiritual in an age marked by increasingly materialistic and positivist perspectives on life. I explore how these ideas are represented in *Cántico cósmico* where the poem interweaves cosmological processes with historical and social developments, namely the Sandinista Revolution, creating the sense that these forces pull creation along to meet at the eventual point of convergence, Omega or God. From this perspective the reader can appreciate how a seemingly local event, such as the Sandinista Revolution, acquires cosmological proportions.

Unity/Plurality and Interconnection

From the moment the Big Bang blasts unity asunder, forces seek to consolidate the loose particles into new formations to regain the harmony that was lost by the explosion. *Cántico cósmico* follows these oscillations, philosophizing on how parts make up a collective whole

and vice versa, thus bringing to bear the interconnected nature of existence. The text reminds the reader that isolation and independence are illusions in this interdependent web of life. The poem incorporates the principles of physics and the composition of matter to explore the interconnections of the physical world. In *The Human Phenomenon*, Teilhard de Chardin writes that “plurality, unity, and energy are the three aspects of matter” (12), explaining how atoms, and its components of protons, neutrons and electrons, appear to be random when studied up close but form a cohesive whole when considered on a larger scale. Cardenal’s cantigas echo these movements in its description of the coming into being of the universe where

El espacio lleno de electrones
que no dejaban pasar la luz.
Hasta que los electrones se unieron con los protones
y el espacio se volvió transparente
y corrió la luz. (10)

[Space full of electrons
which let no light through.
Until electrons united with protons
and space became transparent
and light flowed] (Lyon 2)

The isolated electrons block out the light until they unite with the protons and light can shine into the cosmos. This depiction connects with a recurring thematic imagery where darkness, found in isolation and chaos, is defeated by unity and the resulting light. As the poem unfolds, the verses also explore how mechanical processes influence spiritual developments and vice versa. Thus, for Cardenal, the gathering of elements to form more sophisticated celestial bodies, organisms or revolutions, enable the ongoing expansion of the universe towards a moment of perfection or the Omega Point.

Just as the text harnesses principles of physics to explore the separation and ultimate unification of the universe, it also brings supposedly incompatible discourses into dialogue with one another to demonstrate that a more holistic understanding of existence can only become a reality when different voices interact. The text shows the power of poetry in creating an imaginary around material processes such as the melding of electrons and protons otherwise invisible to the naked eye. In this way, the reader can experience aspects of existence not accessible in everyday life. Furthermore, by fusing scientific and theological discourses, the poet strives to depict a profound and comprehensive vision of the cosmos and its inner workings. For example, in “Cantiga 15”, “Nostalgia del paraíso,” the lines read:

La unidad en la diversidad
Es porque toda la creación es de un solo creador.
La teoría de la relatividad de Einstein es
que distintos observadores ven una cosa distinta
pero que la cosa es la misma
y la ley que gobierna esa cosa es universal.
...
De todos modos, hay un propósito.
En el universo, una energía
dirigida a una concentración progresiva. (104)

[The unity in the diversity
is because the whole creation stems from a single creator.
Einstein’s theory of relativity is
that different observers see a different thing
but the thing is the same
and the law which governs that thing is universal.

...
In any case, there's a purpose.
In the universe, an energy
directed towards a progressive concentration.]
(Lyons 113)

The verses liken God to the theory of relativity, arguing that although reality can seem relative depending on the observer, universals ultimately guide creation to converge towards a common point and its end. This unifying energy is God. Here, Cardenal's view coincides with that of Teilhard de Chardin who theorizes about the presence of God in the cosmos in *The Human Phenomenon*. He concludes that God is an evolving force pulling along the expanding universe and through its increasing power it will draw all of existence into one unifying moment. Passages like these reveal a spiritual ecological awareness because they depict a universe consolidated by a divine power, where scientific and sacred laws dictate ever evolving processes that drive cosmological and earthly evolution onward. In the ongoing dialogue between all the disciplines, a non-hierarchical web emerges where the knowledge of one discipline complements the other, demonstrating that a holistic understanding of creation requires a consolidation of all areas of human knowledge.

The sweeping cosmological images that unfold throughout the poem all unite in the singular event of the Sandinista Revolution. In my view the poem compares the divine force unifying the cosmos and the gathering of cells to create life with the Revolution bringing everyone together to form a new society:

La multiplicación de la vida por división
y de pronto al revés: la unión. No sabemos
cuándo ni cómo, en qué microscópico, casi invisible
paraíso
se unieron dos células cualquiera
entre miles de millones de otras.
La revolución más grande ocurrida en la tierra. (105)

[The multiplication of life by division
and suddenly in reverse: union. We don't know
when or how, in which microscopic, nigh invisible
paradise
two ordinary cells came together
amid thousands of millions of others.
Greatest revolution the earth has seen.]

(Lyons 115)

These verses begin by describing the multiplication of cells which then rejoin to create new life forms and express wonder at an event in cosmological history that we still do not completely understand. The poet calls this minute scene a paradise where the union of two cells made the rest of life possible, comparing this decisive moment in the evolution of the planet to a human revolution, a moment of ground-breaking change facilitated by the blending of several separate parts into a harmonious whole.

The images analyzed above, among many others found in the text, establish a connection between cosmological and social processes, thus eliminating any distance between the evolving universe and the Sandinista Revolution. The poem considers the Sandinista Revolution as the ultimate example of multiple separate entities coalescing to form a cohesive whole. With the common goal shared by everyone and everything, social hierarchies collapse, and people come together in harmony to overthrow their oppressor. What is more, the cosmos joins the people in their demands for change. In "Cantiga 8," "la creación

entera / pedía, pedía a gritos / Revolución" (61). ["The whole of creation/was clamoring, clamoring in full cry for/the Revolution"] (Lyon 65). All of creation clamors for the Revolution and the poem traces the long evolutionary line that culminates in Revolution. As life flourishes on earth, organisms become increasingly complex, evolving from single-celled to multicellular organisms such as plants and animals. These evolving levels of complexity lead to more sophisticated levels of organization, and according to the poem ultimately result in biological and social revolutions. The poem documents all these steps and tells the reader in Cantiga 13, "El árbol de la vida," that it all began millions of years ago:

Parte de un proceso que empezó en algún charco arcaico...
En el umbral de una nueva evolución
como cuando de la materia surgió la vida.
De lo más simple a lo más complejo,
de menor a mayor organización.
Las leyes de la evolución social son las mismas del cosmos. (96)

[Part of a process that began in some archaic pool...
On the threshold of a new evolution
like when life emerged for matter.
From the most simple to the most complex,
from lesser to greater organization.
The laws of evolution are the same as the cosmic ones.]
(Lyons 103)

The verses portray the evolution of life, illustrating that the increasing levels of organization accompanied the higher levels of sophistication in organisms. The text then connects these concrete processes to the social realm, claiming that the laws of social evolution mirror those of the cosmos. This natural progression leads to the Revolution which is celebrated in the last stanza, where "este amanecer del 19 de Julio, ... con la Plaza 19 de Julio repleta de pueblo bajo el sol / todos los colores en ella como repleta de flores" (96). ["this daybreak of July 19...with the July 19 Square crammed with people under the sun/all the colors in it as though teeming with flowers"] (Lyon 103). As atoms and cells gather, their sum total giving birth to life, people gather to celebrate the victory of the Revolution and unite to bring about a new beginning for their country. In this holistic representation of existence, the spiritual ecological piece gains clarity: the poem depicts a universe with agency participating in our social processes. It thereby follows that an active cosmos is both composed of material elements and contains an inside or a consciousness, a spirit.

Conscious Cells

A spiritual conceptualization of the universe is not only visible in the interdependent web of discourses and themes created in Cardenal's verses but also in the exploration of the presence of a consciousness at all levels of creation. The poem relates how all beings, sentient and non-sentient, contain a psyche, thus opening the conversation to participants located outside of humanity. This inclusive approach connects the microscopic with the cosmic and biological processes with social ones such as the Sandinista Revolution. These meditations on the consciousness are reminiscent of the preoccupations and school of thought developed by Teilhard de Chardin. In "Ecological Spirituality in Teilhard de Chardin," Evelyn Tucker explains that:

One of Teilhard's greatest contributions to modern religious thought is his conception of reality as composed of both spirit and matter. This is what he called the psychic and the physical components of reality, the within and the without of things. To demonstrate that the numinous dimension of life was present

from the beginning was Teilhard's aim in the early chapters of *The Human Phenomenon*. This radically alters our perspective of matter itself. No longer is matter seen as dead and inert. Consequently, the divine is no longer to be sought only in a transcendent union with a merciful God. (8)

Teilhard de Chardin was convinced that science lacked the tools to adequately explain the spiritual element present in life. He noted that while science is very good at measuring exterior elements, the "without" or the exterior of existence, it fails in its ability to calculate the "within." This is where a spiritual conception of the universe can fill the void, creating a sense of purpose in the cosmos where matter is not simply an inert series of particles, but contains a spiritual essence. Teilhard de Chardin argues that the spirit is expressed in consciousness and posited that all matter from the single atom to the Earth as a whole has a certain level of consciousness. He understands consciousness "in its broadest sense to designate every kind of psyche, from the most rudimentary forms of interior perception conceivable to the human phenomenon of reflective consciousness" (25). According to Teilhard de Chardin, all levels of existence contain a consciousness that aids in binding creation together. He expands on this idea to include the merging of individual human thought into a collective which he calls the superconscious and the beginning of the noosphere. The evolutionary development of the planet led to the formation of the biosphere, a "living membrane formed by the plant and animal matter of the globe" (123), making way for the noosphere or thinking layer to envelop the earth.

Cántico cósmico follows similar currents of thought in that it raises questions concerning the place of the soul and the divine within creation. The text demonstrates poetry's capacity to be inclusive, exploring not only the human soul, but the soul of the world, lending a voice to both human and nonhuman beings. Cantiga 13, "El árbol de la vida," illustrates this idea, proclaiming:

Colectividad armonizada de conciencias,
o superconciencia de Chardin.
El planeta con una sola envoltura pensante.
la pluralidad de reflexiones individuales,
en una sola reflexión unánime a escala sideral (94)

[Harmonized collectivity of consciousnesses,
or Chardin's super-consciousness.
The planet with a single thinking envelope.
The plurality of individual reflections
in a single unanimous reflection on a sidereal scale.] (Lyon 100-101)

In this formulation where Cardenal cites Teilhard de Chardin, the collective consciousness creates a harmonious whole, visible from space. This movement towards a merging of disparate elements hints at the inevitable reunion at the end of the universe, when all of creation will be fused together into a harmonic unit.⁴ For Cardenal, the representation of the planet as a superorganism becomes a dominant poetic image.

Through this exploration of the relationship between molecular and cosmic components, *Cántico cósmico* presents both the outside and the inside of things. In this way, Cardenal builds on Teilhard de Chardin's essay in its connection between disciplines, establishing unorthodox interrelations while also resorting to theology and poetry respectively to imagine what the "inside," the consciousness or the soul, looks like. In addition, the poem links Teilhard de Chardin's ideas to those of British chemist James Lovelock who developed the Gaia Hypothesis in the 1960s, using the name of Gaia the Greek earth goddess.⁵ In *Dazzle*

4. This stanza echoes Teilhard de Chardin's words in poetic form. De Chardin writes: "A harmonized collectivity of consciousness, equivalent to a kind of superconsciousness. With the Earth not only covered by myriads of grains of thought, but wrapped in a single thinking envelope until it functionally forms but a single vast grain of thought on the sidereal scale. The plurality of individual reflections being grouped and reinforced in a single unanimous act of reflection" (178).

Gradually (2007), Lynn Margulis and Dorian Sagan explain the hypothesis as follows: “the Gaia hypothesis in its most general form states that the temperature and composites of Earth’s atmosphere are actively regulated by the sum of life on the planet” (172). According to this hypothesis, the planet is a living being maintaining stable conditions through the regulation and interaction of gasses and micro-organisms. The interactions between microbes and solar energy create a negative feedback loop enabling the planet to maintain its homeostatic state. Margulis adds that the idea of a system united in maintaining life implies that “there may be a strong biogeological precedent for the time-honored political and mystical goal of peaceful existence and world unity” (182). I suggest that these ideas connect with ecological spirituality in that they strive to recognize the earth as a living organism, which should be respected. *Cántico cósmico* extends the conceptualization of a living earth to encompass the Sandinista Revolution, positing that a conscious earth can preserve the memory of the Revolution.

Cantiga 11, “Gaia,” describes the hypothesis and the formation of the planet in this way:

se hizo redondo para girar.
Ser vivo que no necesitaba piernas ni brazos ni boca ni ano
sino sólo ser redondo y girar y girar en derredor del sol...
Se creó a si mismo condiciones para tener organismos
y después organismos con conciencia, personas; y después
un organismo que es a la vez comunidad y personas. (78)

[it became round in order to spin.
Living being that needed neither legs nor arms nor mouth nor
anus
but merely to be round and spin and spin around the sun...
By itself it created conditions for supporting organisms
and later organisms with consciousness, people; and later
an organism which is both community and individuals.]

(Lyon 82-83)

The poem describes the planet as a community, signaling the interwoven connections between humanity and the Earth. At the same time, it suggests that the Earth is a living being:

Es una Tierra viva toda ella, palpitante.
La piedra también vibra aunque lentamente.
El planeta late en su interior.
Un cuerpo vivo el que camina por el cielo entre las estrellas.
(79)

[It is a living Earth, all of it, palpitating.
Stone also vibrates although slowly.
In its core the plant palpates.
A living body which wanders through the sky among the stars.]
(Lyon 84)

The words “palpitante” and “late” evoke the heart with its regular and calming beat. The poem repositions humanity, making it an integral part of earthly processes when it postulates that “somos, como especie, su sistema nervioso” (81) and that the planet is an “extensión de nuestro cuerpo” (79). The earth, as an active participant in the Sandinista Revolution, transmits energy from its core to all living things. Concurrently, these processes nourish the collective memory since Cantiga 11 ends recalling the young men who died in the Revolution, recording their names for posterity and recognizing their sacrifices.

The poem emphasizes that the memory of the Revolution is both a human and a terrestrial act. Repeatedly, the verses reflect on both the

5. James Lovelock himself affirms that “para mí, Gaia es un concepto religioso y científico a la vez, y es manejable en ambas esferas” (Pou 129), [“for me, Gaia was simultaneously a religious and scientific concept, manipulated in and can be both spheres”]. Analogously, Cardenal states that “Lovelock, el inventor de la teoría de Gaia se pregunta / si otro nombre de Gaia no podría ser María” (82) [“Lovelock, the inventor of the Gaia theory wonders/whether another name for Gaia might not be Mary”] (Lyon 88).

human and earthly experience of remembering. Cantiga 18, “Vuelos de victoria,” refers to the Revolution itself, beginning with stories about the individuals who took part in the conflict. The poem reads:

Fue una tarea de todos.
 Los que se fueron sin besar a su mamá
 para que no supiera que se iban.
 El que besó por última vez a su novia. (133)

[It was a task for everyone.
 Those who left without kissing their mother
 so she wouldn't know they were going.
 He who kissed his girlfriend for the last time.]
 (Lyon 148-149)

This passage recognizes the sacrifices made by the participants and emphasizes the collective nature of the conflict. *Cántico cósmico* converts into a testimony of the Revolution, documenting a multitude of voices and memories of the Nicaraguan people. In particular, it commemorates the martyrs of the Revolution. A close bond developed between Cardenal and the martyrs, a group of young men who joined the commune in Solentiname and went on to fight with the FSLN. Henighan writes that

Cardenal's impassioned description of these young men arises in part from the legitimacy that his association with them lends his poetry in the context of the revolutionary nation, and partly, one may hypothesize, from a sense of guilt or obligation towards his young companions whom he indoctrinated as future guerrillas in the knowledge they would die. (421)

The text, in its detailed description of the men and by documenting their individual names, seeks to immortalize them. Henighan explains that the dead “are not a mere phantasmagoric memory: they are ugly, brutalized corpses. The symmetry of the lines urging the reader to remember the dead” (424). The verses remind the reader that the dead are not an abstract force, but real flesh and blood individuals who sacrificed everything in their fight against the dictatorship. The poetic voice reflects on the human cost, thinking about

nuestros muertos,
 en las montañas, en zanjas comunes, en tumba solitaria,
 en cementerio, a la vera de caminos,
 cerca de este aeropuerto, por todo el territorio nacional,
 con monumentos, anónimos sin ningún monumento,
 todos hechos esta tierra, haciendo más sagrada esta tierra,
 (150-151)

[our dead,
 in the mountains, in common ditches, in lonely graves,
 in cemeteries, at the side of the road,
 close to this airport, throughout the national territory,
 with monuments, anonymous without any monument,
 all transformed into this earth, making this earth more sacred.]
 (Lyon 170)

Here, memory acquires a materialistic component, smelling of mud, while the martyrs return to the earth, nourishing it just like their sacrifice feeds collective memory. The cantiga ends with a list of names of the guerrillas who perished in the conflict, forming a solid block of text, affirming that victory is achieved thanks to the sacrifices of all those involved. Simultaneously, the text echoes the processes of the Gaia hypothesis: just as gasses and microbes interact to create a harmonious life, the guerrillas united to bring justice and peace to Nicaragua.

Cantiga 36, "La tumba del guerrillero," broadens the connections established between collective memory, the planet and outer space. It portrays the Revolution as a cosmic event never to be forgotten. The canticle imagines how the events of the Revolution will reverberate into the future, uniting the martyr with the earth and the cosmos.

Pienso en tu cuerpo que se ha ido desbaratando bajo la tierra
 haciéndose suave tierra, humus otra vez
 junto con el humus de todos los demás humanos
 que han existido y existirán en la bolita del mundo
 haciéndose todo juntos tierra fértil del planeta Tierra.
 y cuando los cosmonautas miren esta bola azul y rosa
 en la noche negra
 lo que estarán mirando, lejos, es tu luminosa tumba (321).

[I think of your body which has been decomposing
 under the earth
 becoming soft earth, humus once again
 together with the humus of all the other human beings
 that have existed and will exist on the tiny globe of the world
 all of us together producing fertile earth on planet Earth.
 And when cosmonauts gaze at this blue and pink globe
 in the black night
 what they are gazing at, from afar, is your luminous grave]
 (Lyon 373)

The martyr's love for his homeland transforms into a light visible from outer space. Even astronauts will be able to see this "luminosa tumba." Later the poem describes the decomposition of the bodies and how, in accordance with the first law of metaphysics, the decomposed bodies once again form part of the chemical processes which will eventually ripple out into space. In this way, it perpetuates the memory of the Revolution in social and ecological terms. Within these processes, the text has its own role to play, feeding the collective memory and ensuring the future of the Revolution, inspiring future generations to remember the past and to continue the fight in the present.

Cosmological and Divine Forces

From contemplating interrelationships between the whole and its individual parts to musing on the possibilities of a conscious planet and the cosmos, *Cántico cósmico* ultimately reflects on how forces both cosmological and divine unify all elements of existence. Through evolutionary processes, these forces will eventually converge in what Teilhard de Chardin calls the Omega Point. The poem dances around this concept, exploring the nature of forces from the physical force of gravity to forces of attraction and love. The text oscillates between the laws of physics and the raw emotion of love to explain how celestial bodies, terrestrial cells, and flora and fauna fuse to form the universe and earthly life. In these meditations, the poet wonders what keeps life from drifting apart into nothingness, marrying concepts of astrophysics, physics, and affect. All these elements are brought into play in Cantiga 41, "El cántico de los cánticos:"

El sex-appeal ya estaba en las estrellas.
 La implacable atracción de la materia hacia otra materia,
 o GRAVEDAD que mantiene unido al universo.
 La gravedad era una inclinación natural, encontró Copérnico.
 En nuestros cuerpos y en el sol y los planetas.
 La gravedad que solo actúa para juntar.
 No conocemos gravedad que separe. (372)

[Sex-appeal was already in the stars.
 The implacable attraction of matter to other matter,
 or GRAVITY which sustains the unity of the universe.
 Gravity was a natural inclination, Copernicus discovered.
 In our bodies and in the sun and the planets.
 Gravity which acts solely to bring together.
 A gravity which separates the unknown.] (Lyon 433)

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Gravity is the overarching unifying force. The poem considers the role of gravity in holding all elements together from abstract and chemical processes to emotional states. Playfully describing the stars as having sex-appeal, the stanza metaphorically closes the gap between outer space and the human everyday experience. The verse also plays with aesthetics, writing the word GRAVEDAD in capital letters, thus drawing the eye of the reader to the single word, mimicking the function the word represents. Moreover, the text implies that just as gravity is part of the natural order of things, so is sex, rejecting any notion that it might be a taboo subject. Over the course of the cantiga, this idea is reinforced by a myriad of images of molecules and multi-celled organisms copulating and propagating life. Ultimately, the poem tells us that “[l]a gravedad es el amor” (376). In other words, they are inseparable.

With these images, the poem asserts that gravity and love coalesce to unify creation. For example, in Cantiga 8, “Condensaciones y visión de San José de Costa Rica,” the text reads, “[E]l universo está hecho de unión. / El universo es condensación. / Condensación es unión, y es calor. (Amor) / El universo es amor” (57). [“The universe is made of union. / The universe is condensation. / Condensation is union, and it is heat. (Love.) / The universe is love.”] (Lyon 60). The canticle, replete with scientific imagery accompanied by the poet’s memories and his visions of a revolutionary future, postulates that processes of condensation helped form the planets, a concept which can be extended to include the unifying power of love. Expanding on this idea, the verse concludes that the cosmos, in its eventual unification, is love aligning with Teilhard de Chardin. In *The Cosmic Vision of Teilhard de Chardin*, John Haught explains the priest’s thinking as follows:

Since the cosmos is always subject to drifting back toward the past state of physical dispersal, its emerging unity can be sustained only if it allows itself to be further created, that is, brought into deeper communion with God, the Center and goal of all things. Theologically, Infinite Love is the vital energy of this movement toward a new future for the universe. Love is the means by which the Power of the Future holds all things together even now, opening up for each person, for each living community, and for the whole cosmos, the prospect of deeper consistence and richer coherence up ahead. (13)

Viewed through this lens, love is more than a personal emotion, it is elevated to the divine and cosmological planes of existence, transforming into the force unifying all of creation. Teilhard de Chardin emphasizes that love is “not unique to the human being. It represents a general property of all life, and as such it embraces all the varieties and degrees of every form successively taken by organized matter” (188). The priest proposes that love, not restricted to the human experience, is in fact the key to the continuing formation of the universe. He reinforces this idea by reasoning that “[i]f some internal propensity to unite did not exist, even in the molecule, in probably some incredibly rudimentary yet already nascent state, it would be physically impossible for love to appear higher up, in ourselves, in the hominized state” (188). According to Teilhard de Chardin, love can only exist in more complex beings and organisms because of its presence at the molecular level.

Furthermore, in his view, this overarching presence of love is a manifestation of divine love ultimately pulling along the cosmos. Teilhard de Chardin calls this force cosmogenesis, "the process by which the universe is still coming into being... We live in an always nascent, always ongoing process of cosmic movement. God is creating, therefore, not from "up above" but from "up ahead" (Haught 16). In an ever-evolving universe where change is constant, forces are the only element keeping the universe from dispersing until everything eventually converges at what Teilhard de Chardin calls the Omega Point or the end of existence. Cardenal plays with this idea in his poem, connecting it with the Nicaraguan Revolution. In the last cantiga, "Omega," he writes:

¡Centro de convergencia del universo,
 no me excluyas de tus besos y tus abrazos!
 Misterio de ser más el otro mientras más el mismo.
 Centro de centros, irradiando desde el centro de un sistema
 de centros
 Como un punto solo. Punto Omega. (409)

[Center of convergence of the universe,
 do not exclude me from your kisses and your embraces!
 Mystery of being more the other while more the same.
 Center of centers, irradiating from the center of a system of
 centers
 like a single point. Omega point.] (Lyon 480)

The poet calls for the eventual reunion with God in the Omega Point, where the universe will converge and fully enfold upon itself. Filled with desire, the text yearns for this moment when all will be resolved and all of creation will be reduced to a single point, similar to the place where the universe began. This conceptualization of the cosmos as a space in constant flux enables the Sandinista Revolution to become the social manifestation of an evolving universe. Through these developing connections the poet reasons that the forces of gravity transcend into the attracting forces of love which help unite societies to rise up against oppression. Revolutions thus become a metaphor for creation evolving toward ultimate perfection.

From the beginning, *Cántico cósmico* uses metaphors comparing cosmological forces with social processes. For example, Cantiga 8 likens the increasing force of condensation, drawing together more cosmic components to form the first celestial bodies, to "los fenómenos que llamamos socializaciones, y así es/la Revolución" (59) ["Such are the phenomena that we call/ socializations, and such is/ the Revolution"] (Lyon 63). Placing "la Revolución" on its own at the bottom of the stanza draws attention to how evolutionary processes will culminate in the Revolution. In this context, where the Revolution becomes the social manifestation of an evolving universe, Cardenal described martyrdom as: "el martirio: es evolucionario" (355) ["Martyrdom: is evolutionary"] (Lyon 414). This simple phrase brings the concept of evolution together with the theological idea of the resurrection of Christ, reminding the reader of the sacrifice of the revolutionary martyrs while also pointing to the important role played by these men in bringing people together for a common cause. The poem elevates the Revolution, considering it a social manifestation of cosmological processes. Thus, in the concluding Cantiga, "Omega," Cardenal envisions the end of the universe, where all of creation is reunited,

interwoven with a speech by Sandino calling for unity:
 Todas las cosas tienden ardorosas hacia un centro común.
 ¡Punto Omega!
 "Aquí nos ha reunido esa voluntad suprema
 Para conseguir la Libertad de Nicaragua." (405)

[All things tend ardently towards a common center.
Omega Point!
"That supreme will has brought us together here
to obtain the freedom of Nicaragua."] (Lyon 474)

ISSN: 1523-1720
NUMERO/NUMBER 55
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The Revolution evolves towards a shared centre based in love and rallying under a common goal. Yet, the poem ends by returning to "Cuando no había nada. / En el principio..." (410) ["When there was nothing./ In the beginning..."] (Lyon 481) hinting at the possibility of resurrection, that out of the ashes of the old galaxy a new one will rise to begin the processes anew. Thus, no end is ever final, there is always the possibility of rebirth and new beginnings. There is always hope.

In conclusion, the holistic representation of existence portrayed in *Cántico cósmico* provides the reader with an ecologically spiritual image of creation where every particle and every being are sacred, gathering in the spirit of love. This vision, inspired by contemporary scientific developments and the theological thought of religious figures such as Teilhard de Chardin, offers a utopian conceptualization of the universe. The harmonic nature of the interrelationships between multiple parts and the whole, the idea of conscious cells and planet, and finally the sacred force of God pulling creation along with the expansion of the universe, converge to celebrate the power of cooperation and eventual unity between all human and nonhuman beings. One might wonder if this vision of a revolutionary utopia remains pertinent given the failure of the Sandinista experiment with their electoral loss in 1990, barely a year after the publication of *Cántico cósmico*. However, it is often said that utopias are needed in times of crisis. Given the current moment where crises abound, utopian imaginaries provide humanity with a space where alternative better futures can be constructed. I suggest that *Cántico cósmico* occupies this space and that its pages give the reader a place to reflect on how to construct and strive for a better tomorrow.

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