

Metaphors of Power, Extractivism, and Justice in Puerto Rico: Environmental Racism and the Struggle for Environmental Justice

Puerto Rico, an unincorporated territory of the United States, has a long history of environmental degradation and injustice. The island has been subjected to centuries of colonialism and exploitation, which have left a lasting legacy of environmental racism and social inequality. In recent years, there has been a growing movement for environmental justice in Puerto Rico, led by grassroots organizations and community activists. This movement has sought to challenge the dominant metaphors of power and extractivism that have shaped the island's environmental history and to promote a more just and sustainable future.

One of the most powerful metaphors used to describe the relationship between Puerto Rico and the United States is that of a "colony." This metaphor has been used to justify centuries of economic and political exploitation, as well as the environmental degradation that has accompanied it. The term "colony" implies that Puerto Rico is a possession of the United States, and that its people are not entitled to the same rights and protections as citizens of the mainland. This metaphor has been used to justify a wide range of policies that have had a devastating impact on the island's environment, including the construction of military bases, the development of tourist resorts, and the exploitation of natural resources.

Energy Islands: Metaphors of Power, Extractivism, and Justice in Puerto Rico (Environmental Communication, Power, and Culture Book 1) by Catalina M de Onís



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Another common metaphor used to describe Puerto Rico's environmental problems is that of "extractivism." This metaphor refers to the process of extracting natural resources from a territory, often without regard for the environmental or social consequences. In Puerto Rico, extractivism has a long history, dating back to the Spanish colonial period. The island has been a source of sugar, coffee, tobacco, and other commodities for centuries, and this has led to widespread deforestation, soil erosion, and water pollution. In recent years, extractivism has taken new forms, such as the development of large-scale mining projects and the construction of oil pipelines. These projects have had a devastating impact on the island's environment and have contributed to the displacement of local communities.

The metaphors of colony and extractivism have been used to justify the environmental degradation and injustice that has occurred in Puerto Rico. These metaphors have created a narrative that portrays Puerto Rico as a place that is destined to be exploited and that its people are not capable of managing their own resources. This narrative has been used to justify a wide range of policies that have had a negative impact on the island's environment and its people.

The movement for environmental justice in Puerto Rico has challenged the dominant metaphors of power and extractivism. This movement has sought to replace these metaphors with more just and sustainable ones. One of the most important metaphors that has emerged from the environmental justice movement is that of "resilience." This metaphor refers to the ability of a community to withstand and recover from adversity. The resilience of Puerto Rican communities has been tested time and time again, from the devastating hurricanes that have hit the island to the ongoing economic crisis. Despite these challenges, Puerto Rican communities have continued to fight for their right to a clean and healthy environment.

The environmental justice movement in Puerto Rico has achieved a number of important victories in recent years. These victories include the closure of a coal-fired power plant, the cancellation of a proposed oil pipeline, and the establishment of a new environmental protection agency. These victories have been hard-fought, but they represent a significant step forward in the struggle for environmental justice on the island. The environmental justice movement in Puerto Rico is a powerful example of how communities can come together to challenge injustice and fight for a more just and sustainable future.

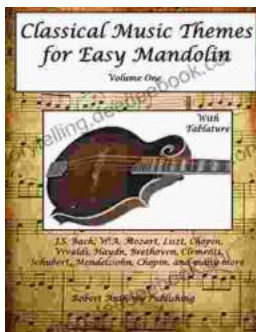
The metaphors of power, extractivism, and justice are powerful tools that can be used to shape our understanding of the world. In Puerto Rico, these metaphors have been used to justify centuries of environmental degradation and injustice. However, the environmental justice movement has challenged these dominant metaphors and has put forward new ones that are more just and sustainable. The struggle for environmental justice in Puerto Rico is an ongoing one, but the progress that has been made is a testament to the power of community organizing and activism.



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