EDUCAÇÃO EM FOCO
PROGRAMA DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO EM EDUCAÇÃO | UNIVERSIDADE DO ESTADO DE MINAS GERAIS

Como sobreviver à quentura? Feminismos e estéticas contracoloniais em tempos distópicos

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RESUMO
Este artigo parte da constatação de que estamos vivendo um momento crítico, nomeado por especialistas de crise climática. A partir da metodologia do pensamento especulativo (HARAWAY, 2016), o texto faz uma breve genealogia do debate entre feminismos e consciência ambiental, articulando os debates e estéticas feministas antirracistas e anticoloniais, em curso no cinema, na academia e nas lutas feministas contemporâneas. Duas narrativas fílmicas, Quentura (CORRÊA, 2018) e Arpilleras (2017) foram mobilizadas para conduzirem as costuras entre os debates. Ao longo do artigo, argumentamos que o uso estético audiovisual de contação de histórias foi, e ainda é, um importante dispositivo feminista de crítica e enfrentamento da governamentalidade racial (ALMEIDA, 2019) e extrativista, que marcam as dinâmicas culturais neoliberais do mundo atual. Concluímos, portanto, que tais dinâmicas demandam a produção de contranarrativas e imaginários compatíveis com os valores ecosoficos-feministas de justiça social, racial e ambiental.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Documentários feitos por mulheres. Ecofeminismo. Educação. Feminismo. Justiça Social.

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How to Survive the Heatwave? Feminisms and countercolonial aesthetics in dystopian times

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ABSTRACT
This article addresses the critical moment we are experiencing, widely recognized by experts as the climate crisis. Drawing on the speculative thinking methodology proposed by Haraway (2016), the text outlines a brief genealogy of the intersection between feminist perspectives and environmental awareness. It connects ongoing feminist, antiracist, and anticolonial debates and aesthetics within cinema, academia, and contemporary feminist movements. Two film narratives, Quentura (CORRÊA, 2018) and Arpilleras (2017), serve as central threads in weaving these discussions together. The analysis highlights how the audiovisual storytelling aesthetic has historically functioned—and continues to function—as a crucial feminist tool for critiquing and resisting the racial (ALMEIDA, 2019) and extractivist governmentalities that shape today's neoliberal cultural dynamics. The article concludes that these dynamics urgently require the creation of counter-narratives and imaginaries aligned with ecosophical feminist values of social, racial, and environmental justice

KEYWORDS: Documentaries made by women. Ecofeminism. Education. Feminism. Social Justice.

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¿Cómo sobrevivir al calor? Feminismos y estéticas contracoloniales en tiempos distópicos

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RESUMEN
Este artículo aborda el momento crítico que atravesamos, ampliamente reconocido como la crisis climática. Basándose en la metodología del pensamiento especulativo propuesta por Haraway (2016), traza una breve genealogía de la intersección entre perspectivas feministas y conciencia ambiental. Vincula los debates y estéticas feministas, antirracistas y anticoloniales presentes en el cine, la academia y los movimientos feministas contemporáneos. Dos narrativas fílmicas, Quentura (CORRÊA, 2018) y Arpilleras (2017), sirven como ejes para articular estas discusiones. El análisis destaca cómo la estética del relato audiovisual ha sido—y sigue siendo—una herramienta feminista clave para criticar y resistir las gubernamentalidades raciales (ALMEIDA, 2019) y extractivistas que caracterizan las dinámicas culturales neoliberales actuales. El artículo concluye que estas dinámicas exigen la creación de contranarrativas e imaginarios alineados con los valores ecosóficos y feministas de justicia social, racial y ambiental.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Documentales realizados por mujeres. Ecofeminismo. Educación. Feminismo. Justicia Social.

Introduction

In the opening scenes of *Quentura* (Corrêa, 2018), we observe, through everyday details, the impacts of the climate crisis. Indigenous women from various generations speak about how their mothers, aunts, and grandmothers taught them the star, agriculture, and river calendars—"we no longer see the Piracemas, they come, but we don't see them anymore." All this ancestral knowledge is now out of sync because the soil, the animals, and the seasons have changed so drastically that they can no longer organize planting and harvesting as they once did. Their descriptions of these transformations point to food scarcity, children constantly suffering from colds, malaria, and malnutrition. They recount increasingly complex conditions for surviving in the forest and along the rivers. The Indigenous women gathered there, from different ethnic groups and states in northern Brazil, name this phenomenon *quentura* (scorching heat), and it is clear—through each gesture and word addressed to us, the viewers that they are announcing how vulnerable they feel in the face of what is to come, as their way of life (agriculture, fishing, hunting, and other vital practices) is under threat.

Figure 1 - Film still [3]

Source: Quentura (Corrêa, 2018)

[3] A film still is an image capture from a single frame of a film that allows the image to be fixed in order to highlight or analyze it both aesthetically and narratively. It enables us to closely observe details of something that, in its original context, is in motion.

In the testimonies of these Amazonian women, in their cosmoperceptions of the world (Oyěwùmí, 2021), and in Mari Corrêa's cinematic gesture of delivering this narrative to us, we find several connecting threads the first of which is the social and epistemological urgency imposed by these times of *quentura*[4]. From this convergence of urgencies emerges the central question of this text/reflection: among the many inflections of feminism, particularly in its decolonial dimensions, which one brings us closer to the pressing issues that haunt our present? What are the conceptual and political challenges feminist in nature that we must confront as scholars engaged in research within the humanities? How can we raise awareness, educate, and engage studies, research, and pedagogies in ways that promote the (formal and multimedia) education of future generations to deal with increasingly intense crises[5]? In other words, what is our political-epistemological urgency, from the standpoint of the humanities, in the face of the contagious lethargy of various governments and nations around the world those that choose to invest in armed conflicts over geopolitically strategic territories rich in resources, rather than investing in policies of buen vivir, in productive deceleration, and in breaking away from the technologicist logic of speed and productivity that sustains an unattainable ideal of development? How can we destabilize the extractivist, consumerist, individualistic, and phallo-technocratic paradigm in a world increasingly driven toward the extinction of life? Is there still a form of humanism to which we can hold on? Is feminism still a humanism?

Clearly, we do not have ready-made answers to these questions. What we propose in this text is a speculative exercise (Haraway, 2016): a dialogue among authors, texts, images, and narratives a kind of conceptual experiment and imaginative practice aimed at both sharpening our tools for understanding the scale of the crisis in which we are immersed and, at the same time, envisioning with proper attention to movement the becomings of other verdant worlds we are in the process of sowing.

In the first part of this article, we present a dialogue with authors who have highlighted the interrelations and connections between feminist struggles, environmental issues, and critiques of the

[4] The issue of the climate crisis (referred to here as *quentura*) was discussed at the Conference of the Parties (COP), which promotes protocols and agreements among participating nations to address the global urgency of confronting this problem. The government translated and made available the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – https://cetesb.sp.gov.br/proclima/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2014/08/convencaomudancadoclima.pdf. Accessed on: February 15, 2024.

[5] In the book *How to Stop the Doomsday Clock*, the title of a lecture by linguist and essayist Noam Chomsky, published by ICS in 2022, the author discusses the reasoning behind the group of scientists responsible for the "Doomsday Clock" report, initiated during World War II. According to Chomsky, the scientists point to three alarming factors that have brought the clock to 100 seconds before midnight: (1) nuclear war; (2) environmental destruction; and (3) the deterioration of rational discourse (deliberate disinformation). Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Amdyr2odpjg. Accessed on: November 29, 2024.

capitalist machinic mode of subjectivity. Our aim is not to provide an exhaustive genealogy of the global debate, but rather to point out some of its key inflections those that continue to guide our conceptual choices and allow for non-linear paths of reflection, reaching back to the 1970s and revisiting the new appropriations of what was initially termed ecofeminism.

hroughout this text, we seek to understand the images and narratives mobilized not only for diagnosis but also for intervention, projection, and disruption of the prevailing order—highlighting those that we regard as counter-narratives. These counter-narratives operate in a dual sense: as *anti*—anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-colonialist, anti-heterocisnormative, anti-disciplinary, anti-speciesist, anti-technocratic; and as *against* apocalyptic and disengaging narratives that undermine the pursuit of solutions those that hinder our capacity to imagine another possible world. In other words, they stand in opposition to narratives that preach the fatalism of late capitalism and the totalizing exploitation of neoliberalism. In this regard, we align our perspective with Freire's pedagogy of hope (esperançar) and, attuned to what is being woven on and by the margins (rural/urban/regional), we chose to focus this article on dialogue with short and medium-length films created by Brazilian Amefrican feminist[6], nd/or collective authorship. These films embrace an aesthetic that is both pedagogical and poetic, committed to disseminating narratives (storytelling) of resistance, mobilization, and the reorganization of life's vitality amid the neoliberal chaos that continues to operate through extractivist and developmentalist logics of planetary destruction.

We are interested in reaffirming both the originality and the epistemic-political strength of the category *Amefricanidade* (Amefricanity), because as Lélia Gonzalez (2020) explains it translates, or at the very least acknowledges, the abundant creativity of diasporic peoples who have made the Americas what they are. Therefore, more than merely preserving a legacy, our aim is to reflect on the inventive gestures of this culture of resistance one that has taken shape in quilombola, Indigenous, riverside, and peasant communities.

[6] Amefricanidade Ladina (Ladino Amefricanity) is a concept mobilized by Lélia Gonzalez to refer to the organic presence of African culture throughout the Americas, while simultaneously questioning the violence, foreclosures, and denials of African languages, religions, and heritage more broadly. It is a way of simultaneously confronting the racist, colonialist, and imperialist practices embedded in Brazil's social problems—practices that reinforce the inferiorization of what has been ethnocentrically labeled as "cultural manifestations of savage peoples "(Gonzalez, 2020, p.127-138).

Spiders, Strings, and Agoutis: Storytelling as an Aesthetic-Political Pedagogy

" Thinking Is a Complex Materialist Practice " (Donna Haraway)

Few people in the country are familiar with the trajectory of Luz Del Fuego (1917–1967) as a defender of nature, animals, nudity, or, as she put it, naturism. She may have been the first in Brazil to link environmental care to a libertarian politics regarding the female body/subjectivity (conceived in the singular), including autonomy over one's sexuality. Although she recorded her poetic-philosophical thoughts in a book, the removal of this work from circulation and her violent death preceded by her isolation on an island erased her from the spotlight (Bessa, 2020). Like Fuego, we will certainly find other activists and even self-identified feminists who questioned the oppressions and limitations imposed on femininity within the extractivist and colonialist logic carried out by successive forms of modern social organization and state power namely anthropocentric, or rather, androcentric, since women have rarely led these modes of exercising power, which does not mean some have not benefited from or been complicit in them. However, although isolated cases of what we now understand as ecofeminism can be identified, the literature reviewed (Gaard, 1993; Taylor, 1997; Herrero, 2007; Ferreira, 2022) points to a pioneering reference text: *Feminisme ou la mort* (Feminism or Death) by Françoise d'Eaubonne (2022)[7].

According to the research, D'Eaubonne was likely the first author to use the term ecofeminism, within a line of French philosophical argumentation known as materialism—not necessarily Marxist, but materialist contrasting with idealist and rationalist perspectives. Grounded in a critique of the nature/culture dichotomy, D'Eaubonne links the anti-patriarchal struggle with the environmental movement, which was beginning to take shape in the 1960s and expanded in subsequent decades across various fields of knowledge. For example, in Anthropology, notable figures include Wagner (1981), Viveiros de Castro (1996), Ingold (2000), and Latour (1994). She was highly critical of consumer society and the arms policy that fostered armed conflicts, with "nuclear force" governing and to a large extent still governing the balance of power among nations. These movements gained visibility through Hippie communities, popular movements, labor unions, leftist political parties, and student movements, playing a fundamental role in the Women's Liberation Movement (in the USA and France), of which D'Eaubonne was a part. Like Luz Del Fuego,

[7] O livro foi primeiramente publicado em 1974, em Francês, e em 2022 saiu a primeira publicação em inglês, versão que utilizamos para este texto. A retomada do debate sobre ecofeminismo é bastante oportuna e se fez sentir também no Brasil, como se pode ver nos artigos de pesquisadoras feministas brasileiras como Costa (2020), e Barragán *et.al.* (2020), publicadas na coletânea organizada por Holanda (2020).

D'Eaubonne held positions considered quite radical, such as her anti-Nazi activism, participation in the Communist Party, and involvement with the Homosexual Front for Revolutionary Action (FHAR). According to Bahaffou & Gorecki (2022), her activist stance perhaps explains why her poetry and philosophy remained marginalized within French intellectual circles until being reclaimed in the 21st century precisely at this imminent moment of an unprecedented climate crisis that threatens our extinction, as the author already warned in *Feminism or Death*.

Although D'Eaubonne's book mentions reflections from Cuban, Brazilian, Argentine, and Ecuadorian feminist thinkers, demonstrating an attentive perspective on the global and unequal nature of what we now call environmental injustice and racism, their appropriations of the ecofeminist teachings developed therein partly in the form of a manifesto lack a more thorough work of decolonizing the issues and solutions, that is, they require an update of the debates. However, before delving more specifically into our Amefrican context, there is another contribution we would like to bring to the dialogue.

In the late 1980s, the book *The Three Ecologies* (Guattari, 1980) offered an important critique of modern developmentalist science, which, according to the author, was marked by the technocratic dominance of politics and society itself. His analysis pointed to what was already perceived at the time as an accelerated and sometimes unethical pace of technoscientific development. Among the effects of this technoscience are increased unemployment, loneliness, marginalization, wealth concentration, the globalization of food insecurity, and the proliferation of mental illnesses. More than forty-four years since Félix Guattari's work, his arguments remain shockingly relevant today.

The Three Ecologies was written in the simple language of a manifesto, whose aesthetic mimicked the *Communist Manifesto* (Marx, 1848/2010) of the Age of Enlightenment; that is, a text created with and from issues brought by popular and labor movements (including the Brazilian one), denouncing the gulf between science and life. However, at the time, the Marxist labor/popular movement was more concerned with labor and human rights issues, which, according to Guattari, overshadowed the fact that the deterioration of human living conditions and quality of life occurs alongside and provokes the decline of other non-human lives, which are seriously threatened. Hence the need to think in triads, rather than adopting an ecological vision almost always treated dichotomously (nature/culture, humans/environment). For Guattari, there are three ecological registers to be connected: the environmental, the social relations, and human subjectivity; therefore, he proposed not just ecology, but *ecosophy* as another concept(Guattari, 1989, p. 06).

Our intention in re-reading Guattari's text is not to engage in an uncritical or neo-colonial assimilation, especially since we do not believe that being a French author automatically places someone in the position of a colonizing thinker. On the contrary, many authors from various regions of the world are self-critical of their own intellectual formations and of the colonial foundations and structures embedded in modern epistemes. Nevertheless, Guattari's radical critique can and should be confronted with other legacies and knowledges. In our case, we juxtapose and integrate Félix Guattari's ecosophical thought with contemporary feminist imaginaries and debates, as well as with the work of Latin American and Brazilian thinkers both academic and non-academic from the diaspora.

One of the feminist authors aligned with our purpose is Donna Haraway (2016). Her interventions in the trajectory of essentialist feminism in the 1970s and 1980s, the way she disrupted dichotomous boundaries between humans and machines (notably in her famous *Cyborg Manifesto*), and, more recently, her sharp critique of speciesism and anthropocentrism, call for a theory more attuned to three-dimensional dynamics, connections, couplings, knots, and junctions in short, another kind of science. A type of knowledge that the author terms *String Theory*, whose references are imagined both in spider webs and in the game known as "cat's cradle[8]". Haraway was one of the authors who faced significant pressure in the 1980s to incorporate into her feminist thought a conception of difference and power attentive to Black, Latinx, Indian, and Indigenous feminisms in short, to subalternized subjectivities. Her critique of universalized essences and, simultaneously, of absolute relativism marks an important epistemological strategy extended throughout her works.

In *Staying with the Trouble* (2016), the author manages, through a profound shift away from identity-centered vocabulary (strategic or not), to weave an innovative conceptual fabulation that simultaneously points to the climatic and environmental calamity in which we are immersed, the neoliberal social chaos, and clearly proposes that something can be done beginning with the strengthening of interwoven bonds. Haraway leverages the multiplicity of meanings attached to the letters SF (string figures) in English (science fact, science fiction, speculative feminism, speculative fabulation) to propose a link between a type of tentacular knowledge (speculative fabulation), a feminism that admits instability (due to the field of tensions and expectations that envelops it), and the capacity to create unlikely kinships to face the challenges of our time.

[8] The game consists of two people using a string and their hands to create shapes in an interactive play involving various possible combinations.

Donna Haraway appears to engage in a form of academic feminist thought that deals with an ethical and aesthetic repertoire, to some extent inaugurated by several pioneering Chicana and Latin American thinkers such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Julieta Paredes, Beatriz Nascimento, Sueli Carneiro, and Lélia Gonzalez, among many others. Elizabeth Beltrán (2019), in her explanation of the legacy of ecofeminism an early framework analyzing the interconnection between the exploitation of nature and the subjugation of women by patriarchy points to the uniqueness of Southern ecofeminism's critique (Beltrán, p. 123), which has its roots in many foremothers who gave their lives fighting deforestation and has returned as an inspiration for Vandana Shiva's thought (1988). Shiva considers a "maldevelopment" what the "scientific revolution has done to Mother Nature" (pp. 1–14).

A major challenge for theories like Shiva's is the essentialist notion that only women, by virtue of being life-givers, bear the responsibility for the transformation and valorization of nature. In the Global South, Beltrán also highlights that in Latin America, conflicts over land, territorial defense and demarcation, and struggles against mining and agrotoxics that is, resistance against predatory extractivism have been central themes of Indigenous and quilombola struggles, which often do not self-identify within the ecofeminist vocabulary nor distinguish between human culture and nature.

In this sense, if we bring closer the thought-action of Indigenous and quilombola women to ecofeminism, we might ask: is all ecofeminism essentialist? Elizabeth Beltrán (2019) seems to suggest not; often these feminisms are radical, given that many women have sacrificed their lives in confrontations, resisting various forms of repression and violation, fighting with their bodies for their territories and forests. The author does not address in this text possible convergences between Southern feminisms and socialist ecofeminism which also marks the second half of the 20th century as exemplified by Australian author Ariel Salleh (1997), who offers harsh critiques of capitalism and its maneuvers to dismantle rights, steal lands, and produce sterile (transgenic) seeds.

For Salleh (1997), ecofeminism must be materialist and revolutionary. A critique we can make of how Marxist materialist authors, including Salleh herself, read ecofeminism is that they often base their analyses on forms of government that claim to be popular but frequently become authoritarian and undemocratic. Therefore, we have increasingly invested in the contribution that the combination of ecosophy and feminism can offer us as a tool for critical thinking allied with the imaginaries of Brazilian Indigenous women, whether academic or not; Black and decolonial authors; anti-racist and anti-capitalist feminists; feminists of radical democracy in other words, those who fight for social, racial, and environmental justice without losing sight of the need for solid and democratic foundations.

A controversial author who has offered us important reflections including the term "countercolonial", is the quilombola poet and writer Antônio Bispo dos Santos, known as Nêgo Bispo. Those who had the opportunity to witness, live, his sharp critiques of academic colonial thought perceive the difficulty in understanding his anguish and rejection of a knowledge system that systematizes, hierarchizes, homogenizes, forms categories, and classifies the practices of both rural and urban contexts with vocabularies alien to the ways of quilombola and Indigenous peoples.

In the writer's view, decolonial thought is the critical academic knowledge that has been colonized and shaped by uncritical Eurocentric categories. As a quilombola, he proposed that quilombola and Indigenous peoples practice countercoloniality (Bispo dos Santos, 2023) that is, persistence, insubordination, and resistance throughout centuries of attempts at submission. Following the line of what we will address further in this text, Nêgo Bispo suggests the primacy of orality in the formulation and transmission of knowledge and technologies. In his words: "Our oral masters and teachers were considered unnecessary by the system" (p. 12). As he affirmed, "I am not human, I am quilombola" (p. 16). Returning to the question of whether feminism is a humanism, critiques of the coloniality of our notions of justice and rights imply that countercolonial feminism, by principle, is non-humanist (in the androcentric and anthropocentric sense).

Therefore, let us return to tentacular thought, which did not originate in the North nor with Haraway, but nonetheless continues to inspire us. There is something of unlikely and fabulous kinships in our imaginary, especially when we engage with populations of women more connected to the countryside such as riverside women, quilombolas, and Indigenous women. Their knowledge did not follow academic forms of systematization and transmission, but the recent and still incomplete impacts of ethnic-racial inclusion in universities may be one of the most significant and sensitive changes of our time, as it fosters an important conceptual and epistemological revision in research by feminists attentive to the secular teachings and technologies of Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples now, finally, written together with or by themselves.

One of the first Indigenous fictional films, created by a collective of Indigenous women from the Xingu region through audiovisual workshops offered by the Instituto Catitu, led by Mari Corrêa and guest Tata Amaral, is based on a lullaby from Kawaiweté mythology. The story features one of the unlikely kinships: a tale of a couple of agoutis [9], where the male goes hunting and the female

[9] *The Story of the Agouti and the Monkey* (Directed by Wisio Kayabi and the Xingu Filmmakers Collective, produced by Instituto Catitu, 2011). The film is publicly available on the Internet Archive. Link: https://ia803205.us.archive.org/18/items/donna-haraway-story-telling-for-earthly-survival/Donna%20Haraway_%20Story%20Telling%20for%20Earthly%20Survival.mp4. Acesso em: 15 fev. 2024

agouti encounters a monkey. From this encounter between the Agouti and the Monkey, a new being is born. The drama revolves around what the agouti father will do when he realizes that the child is not his. In other words, from our non-Indigenous perspective, the film's main theme is extramarital relations and the supposed betrayal by the woman. However, the film contains layers that, inspired by the notion of unlikely kinships, invite us to delve deeper.

The film begins with an Indigenous elder telling this story to children as they weave a cotton thread, which by the end of the narrative becomes a ball of yarn.

Figures 2 and 3- Film stills

Source: The Story of the Monkey and the Agouti (2011)[10]

Storytelling is present in countless cultures as a communal strategy for sharing knowledge. Donna Haraway is not inaugurating this practice; on the contrary, she points to the possibility of thinking (philosophically) through storytelling, and by doing so, activating a field of actions and pedagogical practices (such as the story of the Agouti and the Monkey) that, in Haraway's terms, as well as in the fabulation of this first Indigenous women's film from the Xingu, reinvigorate cosmological performances (Haraway, 2016, p. 14).

The ethics present in the Agouti's relationship with another species is that kinships exist; fears of rupture in this exploration of alterity (between the agouti and the monkey) are part of the story, yet the fable's ending which might have been expected to be tragic was neither violent (killing the "other's" child or the mother or the monkey) nor accepting (raising the newborn), but rather a returning of the fruit of this unusual encounter back to the forest world. There is no punitive logic woven into the "mistake" of the female agouti if we think of punishment in terms of fatal physical violence (femicide or infanticide). However, the ending clearly circumscribes an ethical boundary for the couple and their future descendants, suggesting mutual relations of care: the husband caring for the wife (providing food), and the wife caring for the husband (providing offspring).

[10] The film is available on the Instituto Catitu website. Link: https://institutocatitu.org.br/producoes/. Accessed on: November 29, 2024.

The little monkey was taken from his mother's arms and released into the forest. The mother asks him not to cry and to go find his father. Could this fable contain an ethic of kinship relations that grants greater power to the father over the control of offspring? Traces of a patriarchal structure? We do not intend to ethnograph the film from a non-Indigenous feminist perspective, nor is it our place to interpret the mythology recreated there in fictional form. What draws us is the fact that this story was chosen by Indigenous women, Kawaiwete and Kaiabi, to be told in their first experience with audiovisual production. The emphasis of the film's visual grammar is on the act of storytelling as a practice of memory and knowledge transmission.

The thesis of Susana Belfort (2023), the first Indigenous woman to earn a doctorate in Education from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS), reinforces the importance of oral tradition in Indigenous cultures a practice the author considers part of the intercultural traits of Kaingáng knowledge. By revisiting the story of her mother, an Indigenous leader and educator, she also reevaluates the colonial foundations of Brazilian education, criticizing the hegemony of writing and adopting an oral history methodology closer to what orality represents for her community. Likewise, in the academic discourse led by an Indigenous woman, the cinematic discourse of the Xingu women records that the appropriation of audiovisual technology brings to them the mark of the pedagogical gesture of storytelling of themselves, their group, and their mythologies[11].

Lines, Knots, Links, and Crossings of Cosmoperceptions and Struggles

The image of Indigenous warriors has always been present in our imagination. Typically portrayed in the masculine, including the exoticization of male rites of passage, these depictions have consistently emphasized tests of strength, bravery, and the endurance of pain and hardship. It is not that images of Indigenous peoples produced by non-Indigenous media lacked the presence of women, but within Brazilian media itself, rural women such as the "Margaridas," some landless movement leaders, and seasonal agricultural workers emerged, bringing rural women to the forefront as protagonists. The emergence of Indigenous female protagonism was far from obvious, and neither was a white-European feminist protagonism, as historian Denise Riley has clearly highlighted (2003).

[11] The creation of crafts using seeds, straw, coconuts, and other forest products, as well as the graphic designs, suggest a rich visual culture present in many ethnic groups, with a prominent female role. This is exemplified by Prof. Iraildes Torres in her article on Sataré-Mawé craftswomen in the Amazon. TORRES, Iraildes Caldas; DIAS, Naia Maria Guerreiro | Between Weavings, Clay, and Graphic Designs: The Identity Expression of Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Women in Amazonian Handicrafts| TESSITURAS V10 N2 JUL-DEZ 2022 | Pelotas | RS.

Tracing the genealogy of this protagonism is beyond the scope of this article, but it is important to highlight the growing significance of audiovisual production in struggles for visibility. Vídeo nas Aldeias, as well as productions by the Instituto Catitu in collaboration with Indigenous filmmakers and leaders, and later collectives and some Indigenous women filmmakers, suggest that Indigenous and Indigenous women's protagonism in audiovisual media is gradually emerging to tell their own stories. The Indigenous appropriation of these digital media technologies has enabled (among many other things) this transformative shift in perspective, which continues to evolve and culminates in the recent Indigenous Women Filmmakers Network, Katahirin[12].

As an example of this aesthetic and political protagonism, we highlight the documentary *Body Territory* (*Corpo Território*), which follows from preparation to arrival in Brasília the realization of the 1st Indigenous Women's March held in August 2019, bringing together around 2,000 women from more than 100 ethnic groups. While participating in the historic event in the federal capital, activists Célia Xacriabá, Sônia Guajajara, and Watatakalu Yawalapiti speak in front of the cameras about the escalation of violence against Indigenous peoples and emphasize the importance of defending their territories for the self-preservation of their peoples, cultures, and other beings who share the forest world (trees, rivers, fish, birds, cassava, pepper plants, and more). The march also had an international character, mobilizing Indigenous women from several other Latin American countries.

[12] Rede Katahirine- Rede audiovisual das Mulheres Indígenas (lançada em 2023), disponível em: https://katahirine.org.br/a-rede/. Acesso e: 20 fev. 2024. Katahirine é uma palavra da etnia Manchineri que significa constelação.

Figure 4 - Film still

Source: Corpo e Território (2019)

Figure 05 - Film still

Source: Corpo Território (2019)

They speak of vulnerability, and at the same time, the images frame the strength of cohesion—the fearless gesture of standing together before the federal government palace, united and ready for political confrontation. In the movements of their body-territories, they affirm their ethno-regional

difference through the chanting of their protest songs and the colors that paint and compose the graphic designs on their bodies. In the words of Sônia Guajajara: "It is the first time that women arrive in a march, but we have been marching for 519 years, marching in defense of territories, in defense of waters, in defense of our existence." In this sense, we propose a closer examination of the ambiguities of the term "social vulnerability," in order to engage in dialogue with the social interpreters of this vulnerability, articulating with the images and self-representations being produced by those considered "vulnerable".

Social Vulnerability

We invoke the term vulnerability for reflection and at the same time activate its particular meaning, which refers to a state of fragility—"a quality of being vulnerable," according to the exact explanation from the online Portuguese language dictionary. In this sense, we can say that something or someone is vulnerable. Who? The environment, the planet, society, me... you... us? That is, the concept of vulnerability can point to various factors that demand an understanding of a complex process, both on an individual and existential level, as well as on a collective and social level (Porto, 2011). We observe that the use of this term is present in numerous social studies[13] and frequently appears when certain groups in society are more exposed to risks whether economic, cultural, and/or social than others. Analytical approaches to social vulnerability, especially from the 2000s onward, have moved toward deeper exploration "regarding the limitations of studies on poverty and the limited results of associated policies in Latin Americ" (Abramovay, 2002, p. 28)

Nevertheless, we can observe that the concept of vulnerability encompasses a plurality of themes that require inter- and transdisciplinary analyses, such as "development and sustainability, poverty and food security, natural and technological disasters, global climate change, and public health issues, among others" (Porto, 2011, p. 32). Miriam Abramovay (2002), for example, situates her analysis and reflection on social vulnerability "as the negative outcome of the relationship between the availability of material or symbolic resources of actors—whether individuals or groups—and access to the structure of social, economic, and cultural opportunities provided by the state, the market, and society" (p. 29).

Therefore, and aligned with Miriam Abramovay's notion of access to the structure of social opportunities, we emphasize the importance of disentangling the analysis of social vulnerability from

[13] Miriam Abramovay (2002) offers some analyses of these studies, including those by Moser (1996, 1997, and 1998); CEPAL (2000a); Filgueiras (2001); Busso (2001); and Vignoli (2001).

solely poverty conditions or marginalized populations, since "... vulnerability is not restricted to the economic category but involves political organizations of race, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity" (Guareschi et al., 2007, p. 22). In other words, symbolic dimensions are deeply intertwined with the concept's focus, as well as with the opportunity structures promoted by the state, the market, and society (Abramovay, 2002). Reviewing the literature, we observe that some researchers (Acserald, Mello, Bezerra, 2009; Porto, 2007) have approached the concept's complexity by considering its social and political nature to theoretically discuss what lies behind social vulnerabilities, acknowledging that the choice of a location for constructing a dam or installing polluting industries is often based on the socioeconomic and/or racial conditions of the people. All this has led us to environmental justice movement organizations.

In this regard, we emphasize the importance of the struggles of women and men for their lands, waters, and rubber plantations, which predate the current environmental issues and the announced climate crisis. These struggles date back to colonial times, to the exploitation of natural resources and the occupation of Indigenous lands by colonizers (Acserald, Mello, Bezerra, 2009). Many battles have been fought, throughout history, to keep the free peoples of this country alive and dignified. The prior framing of Indigenous, quilombola, and riverside peoples as vulnerable was a way to create a stigmatization process that calls for a rethinking of this historical process. The mobilization of diverse ethnic groups in Brazil demonstrates that these are active collective subjects demanding their rights.

Thus, we seek to understand the images and narratives mobilized not only for diagnoses but also for interventions, projections, and disruptions of the prevailing order. We emphasize that, for us, these serve as counter-narratives in a dual sense: as anti anti-capitalist, anti-racist, anti-colonialist, anti-heterocisnormative, anti-disciplinary, anti-speciesist, anti-technocratic and as narratives opposing apocalyptic and disengaging discourses, while simultaneously connecting with the ecological registers of the environment, social relations, and human subjectivity (Guattari, 1989).

Latin America, for example, as a region comprising a number of countries that could benefit from plans aimed at reducing poverty and ending drought, has suffered under the purposes of capitalist accumulation and expansion, especially through the

> (...) use of water resources in favor of large hydroelectric plants and major irrigation projects, the restriction of access to mineral-rich regions for large mining projects, and the incorporation of vast frontier land areas by speculative fronts. (...) Riverbanks began to be deforested, water bodies silted up, and a sequence of large dams was constructed in favor of a certain type of

> accumulation, justified by the need to respond to particular demands for progress and well-being (Acselrad, Mello, Bezerra, 2009, p. 122).

Contrary to the notions of well-being or *buen vivir*, what we observe in the films is the predominance especially over women of the impact of macropolitics that deepen the precarization of entire communities, imposing conditions of subalternization and impoverishment of life's vital forces. Thus, the films we bring into this dialogue present a mixture of denunciation of abusive forms of life deterioration and, no less importantly, uprisings, fronts of struggle, or simply the act of rising again. These are survival strategies that Luana Kumaruara describes so well in her research on Indigenous women of the Lower Tapajós. There is a growing organization of Indigenous women into networks and gatherings. Luana Kumaruara narrates her own militant becoming, in her words: "I am Indigenous, a woman, a student, a leader, because I represent my Kumaruara people in the Tapajós Arapiuns Indigenous Council (CITA)." The author tells us about the protagonism of Indigenous women occupying "space in the field of cacicazgo as well as in universities" (Kumaruara, 2021, p. 114).

At the regional gatherings in the Lower Tapajós alone, approximately 250 women participated. From this attentive perspective on the mobilization of women during the major national event of Indigenous leaders and peoples the Free Land Camp (Acampamento Terra Livre, ATL) Kumaruara comments on the brutality with which former president Jair Bolsonaro received the event in Brasília in 2019, concluding the description of violence with the following statement: "But we remained steadfast in caravans from all regions to confront the fascist policies that threaten us and try to stop us*"*.

Such consideration brings us back to the ecofeminist debate, as we in the tropics have come to understand the relationship between woman, land, care, and nature. According to Ivone Gebara:

> We are not what we are without water, without air, without the complexity of forests. We are not without the Earth. Our body is also the body of the Earth that dies and is reborn every moment until the final end occurs […]. We are earthly beings first and foremost, and this Earth is our body, our food, and our dream. Therefore, salvific processes or processes of liberation cannot exclude respect for ecosystems (2017, p.79).

When did women take on the task of caring for the home, the family, and the land? What home, what family, and what land are we talking about?

The literature reviewed informs us that families in many rural areas of Brazil are held captive by a perverse representation though perhaps not less true that care is based on collective solidarity.

However, what we observe is that such solidarity is insufficient to reduce the heavy burden placed on their shoulders, let alone their impoverishment. It is a perverse idea because we are talking about a collective conception of care looking at rural communities or peripheral neighborhoods (where a significant portion of Black, Indigenous, and poor women live), assuming that if the state fails these people will help each other.

Since the 1988 Federal Constitution of the Republic of Brazil (CF/1988), the notion of social care has become a public duty, particularly leading to the recognition of new subjects of rights, expanding social citizenship rights, while also positioning the family as the foundation of society and, therefore, central in the development of social policies and institutional projects (Trad, 2010). This collective notion of care is revealed in a complex equation when combined with that of social protection, exposing its tensions when operationalized in public and private spaces. The state, the family (Scott, 2005; Sarti, 2010), and society are co-participants in this process. Therefore, it may be necessary to understand the different meanings that care can assume in everyday life. This is the case when we think about the situation of many women "head of households" who are on the streets fighting to have a roof, a home, a place to live.

Today, it is not difficult to find the various banners of struggle of women organized in the fight for housing and secure, dignified living conditions. Black women, for the most part, taking the lead in a historical dynamic that condemns them to stigma and segregation. Mariléia de Almeida speaks to us about the Quilombola Becoming in the fight against racist governmentality (Almeida, 2019, p. 269). From bureaucratic delays in accessing quilombola territories to the exoticization of quilombola cultural practices, racist governmentality is present at every step of their achievements, even when these are supported by left-wing governments, as was the case with quilombola rights under the Lula and Dilma administrations, and the setbacks under neoliberal and conservative governments after the 2016 parliamentary coup. In this field of confrontation, Almeida recounts the community dimension of quilombola feminism as a counter-conduct (in the Foucauldian sense), as they organize in collectives (Women's Collective of CONAQ), within a relational perspective that links bodily memories to ancestry and reconnects humanity and nature.

Territory for some, housing for others, are fundamental axes of struggle. An important example is the short film *[D]elas – Mulheres Pretas e Direito de Ocupar* (Them – Black Women and the Right to Occupy), directed by Bruna Lazari Antonio, which was exhibited and awarded at the Ecofalante Film Festival in São Paulo in 2023. A 21-minute film that speaks to the organization of women for the consolidation of urban occupations. Although this struggle is narrated in Brazilian

territory, the issue of housing is today a global phenomenon affecting peripheral women, Black women, single mothers, with low levels of education, often due to teenage pregnancy and the lack of access to legal abortion.

In other words, the fight for housing, for a home, is never just about a place in the sun, but always about a way of life. Antonádia Borges (2013), in an article analyzing how women—from Brazil and South Africa relate imaginatively to their homes "from a modernist urbanism ideal," draws our attention to the deceptive dichotomies between the public and the private, the home and the street, the feminine and the masculine. In Antonádia Borges' (2013) article, we understand that "the home refers to family organization, political organization, economic organization, and the standards of intervention in space" (p.218).

The gendered marks of what we understand as "family organization" soon become apparent, as in this organization, who is responsible for care? Garcia et al. (2007) highlight the elevation of the maternal representation and the care it provides, considered essential for child development. The centrality of family care in motherhood is observed as a reinforcement of traditional understandings of binary and heteronormative social differences, which assign care as a feminine activity.

Antonádia's (2013) study echoes another of her works with a community called Arcano, in the interior of Paraná state, which in 1992 had its lands flooded to build a reservoir for a Hydroelectric Power Plant, forcing the families in that area to be relocated (Borges, 1999). With this perspective on people, women who were forcibly displaced from their homes, we ask: how can we continue to speak of family organization when one is a woman affected by a dam? How can one live with a sense of impermanence? What does it mean to be a woman affected by a dam?

The *Arpilleras*

Figure 6 - Film still

Source: Arpilleras: Women Affected by Dams Stitching Resistance (2017)

The film Arpilleras: Women Affected by Dams Stitching Resistance[14], tells the story of ten women—representing five regions of Brazil: South, Southeast, North, Midwest, and Northeast—whose homes were impacted by dams. The lives of these women are told through a Chilean embroidery technique that emerged during the military dictatorship, where their stories of pain, struggle, and resilience in the face of the violations suffered in their daily lives were sewn together. The act of stitching was transformed into a powerful gesture of resistance, denunciation, and female empowerment. Each woman wove her story, both singular and collective, from her region on the map of Brazil, and also wrote a letter that was passed on to the other women who make up the narrative. By the end of the film, we see a multifaceted mosaic of stories of pain and overcoming; a way they found to reorganize their flooded lives, to fight, resist, and continue stitching dreams. As Kindzu, a character in Mia Couto's *Terra Sonâmbula* (Sleeping Land), tells us, "Dreaming is the eye of life" (2015, p. 16). Therefore, and perhaps, if we do not dream, we are blind.

The arpilleras are women who have been active from the beginning in an important resistance and struggle movement of populations affected by dams (MAB). This movement dates back to the

[14] **Direction**: *Women's Collective of MAB*. Available on YouTube, Link https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEu-AATb3TU. Accessed on: March 15, 2024.

1970s. Over the years, "the movement has affirmed the need to fight for the realization of human rights for the affected populations, thus establishing a banner of struggle"[15]. Women are often even more overlooked in their rights and are also the ones who face, day by day, all the difficulties of restarting their lives and rebuilding their homes. As we can read when visiting the Women's page on the MAB website, arpilleras serve as a way to invite women to organize, to denounce what they have experienced and continue to live, and to confront the violations.

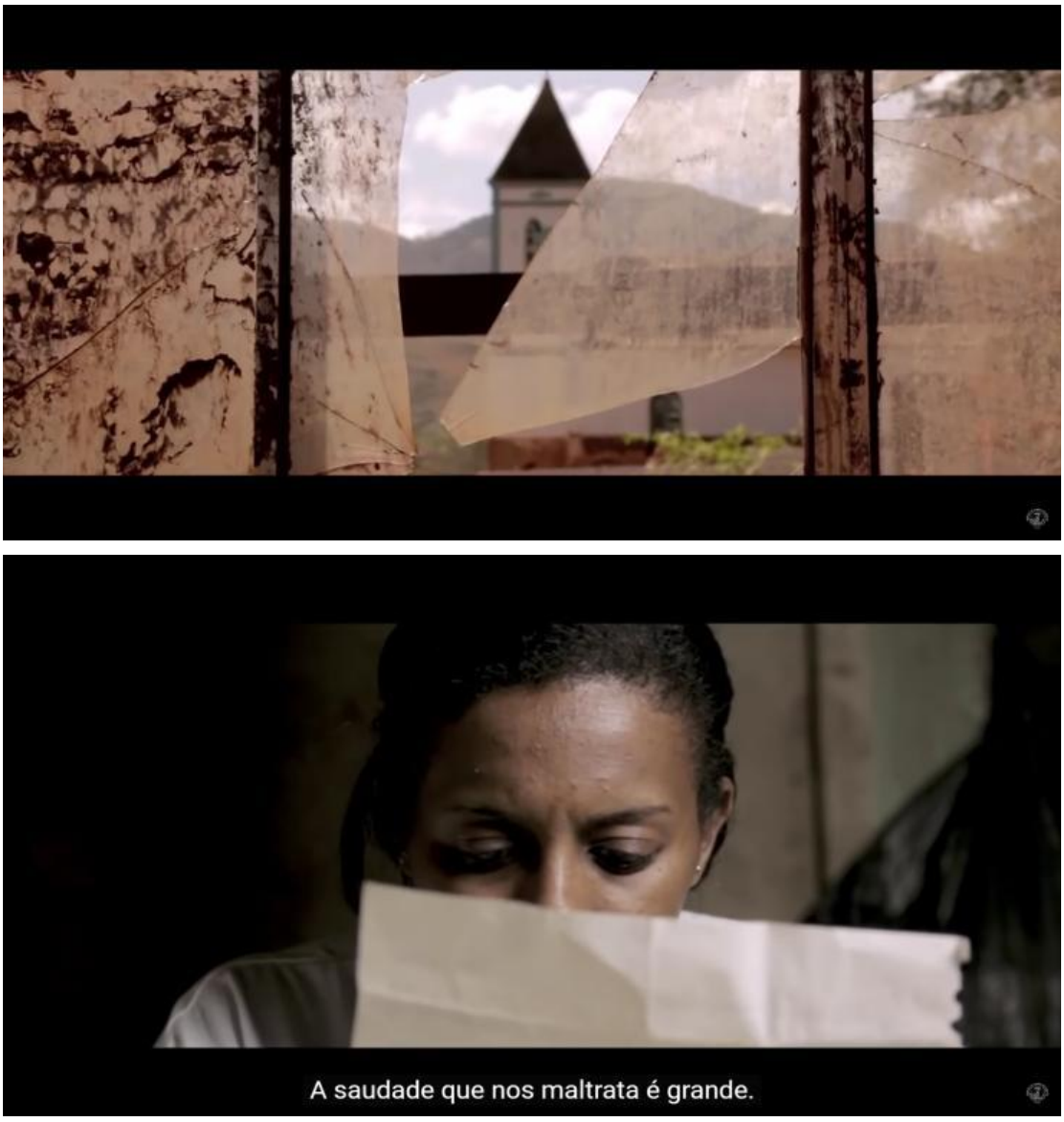
Revisiting some issues we have previously mentioned, such as the centrality of family care in motherhood, and based on the testimony of the first interviewee in the film, Claides, a representative from the South (from Marmeleiro, Paraná), we can observe that domestic life and participation in social movements were not easily reconciled, as there was an idealized role for women in the social and domestic spheres. Claides and her children recall the early days of the affected populations' movement, telling us that "women were not well seen; it seemed like we were taking the place of men." Back then, between the 1970s and 1980s, a man who allowed his wife to participate in the movement was said to have "lost his pants and had to wear a skirt." As one of Claides' sons recalls, his mother was discriminated against both in the movement and in the community: "…a woman in the movement, back then, was a slut." Claides' daughter says, "My mother was a fighter... because my mother went into struggles never thinking about herself. She was always thinking about others, the community."

In other words, Claides was swimming against the tide of the idea that a woman belonged in the private sphere, at home, caring for the children. However, when Claides saw her home in ruins, she recalls: "We built a house for the rest of our lives. We didn't intend to leave here." They had to fight for the right to be compensated, demand information about the plans to install a hydroelectric plant, and understand the implications of this on the community's life. They had to fight for emergency aid payments and for equal treatment between men and women. While driving her car and being filmed, Claides points out: "My husband admitted this, how I progressed, how I grew, I learned to drive, I learned to go to the city, do business, and everything. He also grew. Because he managed things at home, he started to learn where the bath towel was..." With this example, the interviewee indicates that if there were reversals or changes in gender roles within that household, these changes

[15] As per the MAB's history of struggles, available at: https://mab.org.br/lutas/ (consulted on March 15, 2024).

only strengthened shifts in sensitivity and imagination, provoked by the urgency of the life that had to be rebuilt, relocated, resettled in short, reterritorialized subjectivities.

Figures 7 e 8 - Film still



Source: Arpilleras: Women Affected by Dams Stitching Resistance (2017)

Nevertheless, when we see the images of what remained of the interviewees' homes, we are enveloped by the memories, always expressed through words that convey longing, pain, and outrage. Simone is the name of the representative from the Southeast region who tells us her story as someone affected by the dam. The interviewee is in Barra Longa (MG), and her testimony translates the impact and traumatic damage the dam caused to her well-being, mind, and body, as it destroyed the place

where she built her universe of symbolic relationships (Menestrino; Gomes Parente, 2011). As she walks through the debris of her home, she says:

> *I miss it a lot, really a lot. My heart tightens with longing. No matter how much I talk, I won't be able to convey how happy we were here. Because even though I build another place, other houses may be good... The memory goes, but the history doesn't. The history will stay here. The history ended here. I won't forget.*

The statements of other interviewees, the images of the ruins, and at the same time the stitches that connect them, guide us, as viewers, to the importance of a life based on relationships of solidarity, friendship, and the recognition of good community living. These are foundational principles of *Buen Vivir*, as Acosta (2017) emphasizes, there are values, experiences, and practices present in various social groups, even though we are often dominated by forms of Western and capitalist thinking that impose behaviors far removed from those mentioned. Maria Alacídia, a representative from the North region, who was affected by a dam and resettled in Altamira, a municipality in the State of Pará (PA), tells us about her friend, who has not yet been compensated or resettled and lives in a risk area: "It's shocking because of where I am and where she is. She suffers. Who doesn't suffer? Who doesn't suffer when you remove your neighbors, everyone, and you're left alone? Just you, in a risk zone*"*.

The debate on *Buen Vivir* draws our attention to the need to break the dichotomies that place nature and humanity in a state of disconnection. If we do not do so, we are at risk of extinction. As Alberto Acosta states, "This is what the Rights of Nature address, included in the Ecuadorian Constitution of 2008. The relationship with Nature is essential in the construction of *Buen Vivir*" (2017, p. 28). This is what Donna Haraway (2016) refers to with the cords and lines that connect us to other beings, both organic and inorganic, living and non-living. This is also the focus of one of the American activist-scientists in the 1960s, who said, "The human being is part of nature, and its war against it is inevitably a war against itself" (CARSON, 1962). In the same vein, there is also the struggle of Indigenous women in "defense of territories, defense of waters, defense of our existence" (Sônia Guajajara). This is what feminist countercolonial ecosophy addresses, which we are trying to articulate in this reading of the images-testimonies from the films mobilized for reflection here.

Final considerations

Figure 9: Film still

Source: Arpilleras: Women Affected by Dams Stitching Resistance (2017)

*"We resist because within us, there are you. And it is by being a collective that we will triumph in the struggle. We are strong, not only because of our strength but because of hope, this way of loving, caring, and believing." (*Excerpt from the letter by Margarida and Mariana, mother and daughter)

As we approach the end of this text/reflection, and far from seeking to conclude or offer definitive answers, we proceed from the reading of an essay by bell hooks (2022) — which gives the title to her book — about how to "write beyond race," beyond these reductionist structures, raising some questions: How do we decolonize our minds? How do we decolonize feminism? Is there a recognized Black mestiza feminist writing in Latin America? These questions join many others, coming from the Margaridas, the Xinguanas, quilombolas, riverside women, the Arpilleras, and from us, academic feminists from peripheral social spaces, who want to build knowledge that are lines, stories of unexpected kinships, possible coalitions between field/city, Black, community, quilombola, academic, queer, trans-inclusive, and anti-racist white feminisms.

We focused more on the film *Arpilleras* because, in addition to providing us with an opportunity to listen to diverse voices, some ancestral, it allows us to dare to propose a critical vigilance and, by refusing victimization, to produce an understanding of the pain and suffering arising from injustices and violences impregnated in racist governmentality.

If bell hooks begins her essay by telling us: "My home is the only place where there is no race" (2022, p. 279), at the end of the *Arpilleras* documentary, we hear from the voice of Margarida

and Marina, mother and daughter, an excerpt from the letter to other women and interviewees: “We know that patriarchy oppresses us, capitalism exploits us, and the energy and water model that sustains these dams dismantles our lives.” There is much connection between their existence as women, community, home, land, and their way of living, and in their words and those of many others, the spiderweb (a metaphor by Donna Haraway, 2016), the threads, the stitching, bring together the struggles in a fabric embroidered by many hands. *Arpilleras* also deals with the aesthetic pedagogy of storytelling, sharing a strategy common to *Quentura* and *Corpo Território* of audiovisual self-representation as a tool for mobilization, memory, and reinvention. This filmography, conceived under the influence of authors who articulate what we try to name as feminist ecosophy, keeps alive hooks' wager, which is to nourish the dream that it is possible to walk through liberatory, creative, and loving actions, and racialize the body and the mind. And to produce different imaginaries from the developmentalist civilizational model in other words, to produce systemic alternatives because, as the Bolivian ecofeminist thinker Elizabeth Peredo Beltrán asserts, "... we all need care and attention to survive. More than that, we need quality care to live a 'life worth living'" (2019, p. 113).

Therefore, we ask ourselves how we can activate sensitive elements to the alterities that challenge us, unsettle us, and take us out of our comfort zone? In this text, we argue that this action takes place through the aesthetic pedagogy of storytelling and representations of community and oneself as part of the territory in which they live. This is something Donna Haraway undertakes when she presents us with a type of feminist thought critical of the centrality of the human. A thought that, to some extent, many Latin American scholars and collective feminist practices, including those from Brazil, share. That is, if there is something of the unlikely and fabulous kinships in our imagination, especially when we engage with or listen to populations of women more connected to the countryside, perhaps we can reignite the ethics of liberatory and emancipatory practices that minimize the dystopian paralysis in the face of the vast crisis that overwhelms us.

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Recebido em: 26/03/2024
Aprovado em: 20/11/2024