



Marcha das Margaridas: Notes for a Latin American (Eco)Feminism¹

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ABSTRACT

This article presents reflections on the proposal of a Latin American feminism that starts from the experience of women from the Global South. The objective is to search the documents constructed by the Marcha das Margaridas (in English, March of the Daisies), which present the claims of this Brazilian movement of women from the countryside, the forest and the waters, some elements to think about a Latin American (eco)feminism. In order to do so, we resort to the theoretical framework of ecofeminisms that offer some parameters to think about intersectionality beyond elements that refer to the subordination and domination of human groups, including the problems arising from dualistic-hierarchical relations of exploitation of humans with other forms of life. Ecofeminist literature helps to realize that the intersection between gender and environmental issues are central to the feminist thinking and doing of women who are part of the Marcha das Margaridas. This movement constructs alternative paths for policies of colonization of life, based on confronting agribusiness and monocultures destined to the production of commodities, in the socioenvironmental preservation through agroecological practices and in the support of human and non-human forms of life and in the defense of the autonomy and diversity in the life of peasant women.

Keywords: Ecofeminisms, feminisms, movements of countryside women, Marcha das Margaridas.

¹ Part of the reflections present in this article have previous versions published in annals of events. (KUHNNEN, 2017 e KUHNNEN, 2017a).

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Resumo: Este artigo apresenta reflexões em torno da proposta de um feminismo latino-americano que parta da experiência de mulheres do Sul Global. O objetivo consiste em buscar nos documentos construídos pela Marcha das Margaridas, que apresentam as reivindicações desse movimento brasileiro de mulheres do campo, da floresta e das águas, alguns elementos para pensar um (eco)feminismo latino-americano. Para tanto, recorre-se ao arcabouço teórico dos ecofeminismos que oferecem alguns parâmetros para pensar a interseccionalidade para além de elementos que se referem à subalternização e dominação de grupos humanos, incluindo os problemas decorrentes das relações dualista-hierárquicas de exploração dos humanos com outras formas de vida. A literatura ecofeminista auxilia a perceber que a intersecção entre questões de gênero e ambientais são centrais no fazer e pensar feminista das mulheres que integram a Marcha das Margaridas. Tal movimento constrói caminhos alternativos para as políticas de colonização da vida, pautados no enfrentamento ao agronegócio e às monoculturas destinadas à produção de *commodities*, na preservação socioambiental por meio de práticas agroecológicas e de sustentação das formas de vida humanas e não humanas e na defesa da autonomia e da diversidade da vida das mulheres camponesas.

Palavras-chave: Ecofeminismos, feminismos, movimentos de mulheres rurais, Marcha das Margaridas.

Resumen: Este artículo presenta reflexiones sobre la propuesta de un feminismo latinoamericano que parte de la experiencia de las mujeres del Sur Global. El objetivo es buscar en los documentos construidos por la Marcha das Margaridas, que presentan las demandas de este movimiento brasileño de mujeres del campo, del bosque y de las aguas, algunos elementos para pensar en un (eco)feminismo latinoamericano. Para hacerlo, utilizamos el marco teórico de los ecofeminismos que ofrecen algunos parámetros para pensar sobre la interseccionalidad, además de elementos que se refieren a la subordinación y dominación de los grupos humanos, incluidos los problemas que surgen de las relaciones de explotación dualistas-jerárquicas de los humanos con otras formas. de vida. La literatura ecofeminista ayuda a darse cuenta de que la intersección entre cuestiones de género y ambientales es fundamental para el pensamiento y la actuación feminista de las mujeres de la Marcha de Margaritas. Este movimiento construye caminos alternativos para las políticas de colonización de la vida, basados en confrontar los agronegocios y los monocultivos para la producción de mercancías, en la preservación socioambiental a través de prácticas agroecológicas y en el mantenimiento de formas de vida humanas y no humanas y en defensa de autonomía y diversidad de vida de las campesinas.

Palabras-clave: Ecofeminismos, feminismos, movimientos de mujeres rurales, Marcha das Margaridas.

Introduction

By understanding feminisms as a struggle for liberation from hierarchical relationships that promote subalternity and “Otherness”³ through unequal access to power it is

³ When dealing with racism, Grada Kilomba (2019, p.38) highlights that 'Otherness' not only designates a

possible to perceive a common base that can unite, at least strategically, women in their different social positions, although separated by different social markers that may or may not intensify the situation of asymmetry and subjugation in which they find themselves – such as the markers of class, race, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, among others.

Beyond this possible common base, thinking about Latin feminisms presupposes starting from concrete South American women, contrasting the perspective of uniqueness around the abstract category of a universal woman still claimed many times by a mainstream feminism that reproduces colonial strategies. ⁴Women are and exist in many forms. Women are marginalized and oppressed by the inequality of access to power associated with different social markers beyond gender. Therefore, one cannot erase the individualities, subjectivities and identities of resistance of these women, who constitute themselves in the spaces of the “fractured locus” (LUGONES, 2014) to think about a single Latin feminism. In this sense, thinking about Latin American feminisms presupposes also looking at and embracing countryside women, their ways of living and resisting, with essential knowledge about food production and preparation, amid the full expansion of agricultural monocultures marked by the warlike position in relation to human and non-human life.

This article proposes to speak from the group of countryside women, although I recognize that I am not one of them at this moment. I start from a privileged position in relation to many other Latin American women, but I also affirm a place that is part of my history: before becoming an academic, feminist, vegan woman - elements that today centrally constitute my identity - I was a farmer woman. As a rural worker in childhood and adolescence, I planted and took care of many of the vegetables I ate and with which I fed the animals I helped to kill and then eat. I experienced the reality of family farming and the work of planting and counting on the hope of a good harvest, which did not always

subject different from the white person, but someone in relation to whom the white individual assigns all the characteristics that he/she does not want to be assigned to him/her. The black subject comes to personify all the repressive and dishonourable aspects of the hegemonic 'I' of the white person, becoming the external antagonism.

⁴ The idea of the 'concrete other', by Seyla Benhabib (1986), helps to think about women as diverse subjects, located amid networks of relationships, which are opposed to universalized fictitious entities. Often, what is claimed to be the universal point of view of the autonomous individual is just the reproduction of the experience of privilege and power of certain subjects. The author emphasizes the importance of overcoming epistemological blindness in relation to the concrete other: each self-constitutes its identity based on a body and relationships with distinct individualization experiences, with greater or lesser suffering, with greater or lesser autonomy. The concrete other, in addition to the commonalities with other selves, has specific talents and abilities, struggles, needs, motivations, quests and desires that need to be heard and taken into account in any ethical and political approach to justice.

materialize depending on the weather conditions. I also witnessed, over those years, the growing dependence of family farming on hybrid and transgenic seeds, the variation in the price of inputs taxed by the dollar despite the needs of the domestic market and the lack of more consistent public policies to support family farming, among other aspects.

The proposal in this text is to seek in countryside women and in their claims some elements to think about one, among many possible, Latin American feminism without the intention of exhausting the theme. These are initial reflections based on the experience of women from the global South, more specifically from the *Marcha das Margaridas* in Brazil, who place issues and problems in human relations with the environment as part of a feminist agenda, or, in other words, more precisely, an ecofeminist approach. It starts from the hypothesis that although such women do not call themselves that way, the ecofeminist literature helps to realize that the intersection between gender and environmental issues are central in the feminist doing and thinking of women who are part of the *Marcha das Margaridas*⁵.

The Movement of the *Marcha das Margaridas*

The *Marcha das Margaridas* (in English, *March of the Daisies*) is a Brazilian social movement of national scope that receives support from different civil society organizations. The name of the movement is inspired by the union leader from Paraíba, murdered in 1983, Margarida Alves, a precursor in the struggle for the rights of countryside workers. Held since 2000, the March has shown a significant capacity of mobilization for the causes of different women in the rural context: women from the countryside, the forest and the

⁵ It is worth noting that the history of protagonism of women in environmental movements dates back to the 60's and 70's, 20th century. Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993) point out that in the 1960s, women in Europe and the United States organized anti-nuclear movements; in India, women mobilized against logging and mining companies. In addition, women participated in movements against toxic waste, for peace and for animal rights. In the 1970s, the movement of women in Chipko, India, for the protection of forests, should be highlighted, which lasted more than a decade from the act of embracing the trees and not allowing the forest to be cut down. Maria da Graça Costa (2019) notes that women are always on the front line and in greater numbers in the struggles against the destruction of the environment, even though they are not always recognized as the main leaders in such groups. Especially in peripheral and countryside areas, amid traditional communities and indigenous peoples from the Global South, they build networks of social mobilization, which are fundamental in the struggle for socioenvironmental justice. In addition, Maristella Svampa (2015), when dealing with Southern feminisms and ecofeminisms, states that women from indigenous organizations and socio-environmental movements undoubtedly have a central place in the processes of "feminization of struggles" in the popular and middle sectors.

waters. A central feature of this movement of women is the holding of a march in the city of Brasília, which has already had six editions to date, with the last one in 2019 standing out, bringing together around 100 thousand women, between August 13 and 14, in Brasilia, under the motto “Margaridas in the struggle for a Brazil with popular sovereignty, democracy, justice, equality and free of violence”.

The documents that guided the 2019 Marcha das Margaridas, available on the website of the National Confederation of Rural Workers and Family Farmers (CONTAG), are the result of collective work and participation to identify the demands of the reality of the different women who make up the countryside scenario in Brazil. These documents take as a starting point the need to

(...) affirm the diversity of rural women, such as family farmers, peasants, landless, camped, settled, salaried, rural workers, artisans, extractivists, coconut breakers, rubber trees, fisherwomen, riverside dwellers, quilombolas, indigenous people and so many other identities built in the country. (MARCHA DAS MARGARIDAS, 2019, p.5).

These documents are made up of six thematic *cadernos* (notebooks), whose titles bring the motto and the ten central political axes around which the struggle of the Margaridas is organized:

- *Caderno 1* – Motto Margaridas in the struggle for a Brazil with popular sovereignty, democracy, justice, equality and free of violence, and the axis for democracy with equality and strengthening of the political participation of women;
- *Caderno 2* – For the self-determination of peoples with food and energy sovereignty and for the protection and conservation of sociobiodiversity and access to common goods;
- *Caderno 3* - For land, water, and agroecology and for economic autonomy, work and income;
- *Caderno 4* – For the autonomy and freedom of women over their bodies and their sexuality **and** for a life free from all forms of violence, without racism and sexism;
- *Caderno 5* – For social security and public, universal and solidary assistance and for public health and in defense of the Unified Health System.
- *Caderno 6* – For a non-sexist and anti-racist education and for the right to countryside education. (CADERNO 1, 2019, p.4).

Such documents place feminist principles as part of a society project. The document Plataforma Política/Marcha das Margaridas (2019) translates these principles into the ideas of autonomy and freedom for women, the need for the political participation of women for the realization of democracy, recognition of the articulation between forms of oppression, discrimination and inequality, appreciation of knowledge developed and accumulated by women from the countryside, the forest and the waters and, highlighting, the valorization of life, "linking the defense of agroecology, territories, common goods and the sovereignty and self-determination of peoples" (POLITICAL PLATFORM, 2019, p.11). The document Caderno 2, whose theme is the self-determination of peoples with food and energy sovereignty, deals precisely with the role of women in the preservation of sociobiodiversity, arguing that "women are at the forefront of the struggle for common goods as an alternative to neoliberalism and privatization and financialization of nature" (CADERNO 2, 2019, p.41). This document also highlights the relationship between food sovereignty, the rescue and preservation of Creole seeds, agroecological knowledge and practices as a way of confronting the submission of agriculture to the technological impositions of large transnational companies in the agrarian sector. Caderno 3, in turn, explains what a feminist economy consists of:

The feminist economy understands that the sustainability of life implies other forms of production and consumption and considers that all activities necessary for sustaining life are part of the economy and proposes that all the time and energy dedicated by women be considered work. That this work be shared among people who live in the same house, but also by associations and enterprises of solidarity economy. And more, that the State assumes part of these works, guaranteeing public politics, as day care centers, health centers, access to clean water. (CADERNO 3, 2019, p.7).

As can be seen, the feminist economy starts from the production of living, not from the market as an abstract entity, which necessarily involves confronting gender inequality in the division of domestic work and valuing the reproductive work performed by women as well as questioning the very division traditionally established between domestic and reproductive work *versus* market and productive work, since both are essential to the existence and security of life.

The Theoretical Contribution of Ecofeminisms

Ecofeminist authors can offer some theoretical parameters for thinking about intersectionality beyond elements that refer to the subordination and domination of human groups, including the problems arising from dualistic-hierarchical relationships of exploitation of humans with other forms of life. Ecofeminism makes explicit the existence of interconnections between different forms of oppression that constitute a society ordered in a patriarchal way, highlighting the fact that women and nature occupy the side of the dualism of lesser value in opposition to men and culture. The ecofeminist conception, argues Warren (2000), claims the existence of the same logic of domination behind the various 'isms' based on hierarchical dualisms of value: racism, male chauvinism, classism, capacitism, heterosexism, speciesism, colonialism and 'naturism'. Since all 'isms' are intertwined and mutually reinforcing in the patriarchal conceptual framework, which promotes the intensification of negative consequences on certain groups situated on the underside of hierarchical dualism, the opposition to all forms of devaluation and prejudice becomes important in order to overcome the structural model of the logic of domination.

With regard specifically to the oppositional culture-nature dualism, the logic of domination has allied itself with modern science, replacing an organic and holistic view of nature with a mechanistic perspective, which has become the predominant way of establishing relationships between human beings and the natural environment, authorizing those – especially the heterosexual white European man – to carry out any type of action that would expand its domain and control. For Merchant (1998), nature and women were brought together in this process by the feminization of nature concomitant with the naturalization of women through the idea of absence of rationality and a supposed female sensitivity and fragility. Nature is seen as a separate resource, external and inferior to human beings, who can exploit and dominate it to favor themselves, analogously to what men do with women and racial and ethnic minorities. Thus, patriarchy sustains the hierarchical-dualist view that places women and nature on the side of the subordinated and allowed group to be exploited.

With regard specifically to modern colonialism in Latin America, it is important to highlight, as Lugones (2014) points out, that native peoples were also associated with nature, since their ways of being that did not correspond to traditional gender roles, within the dichotomous and hierarchical logic of the colonizers. For the modern colonial gender

system, the indigenous peoples of the Americas and the enslaved Africans could not be understood as human because they were not 'civilized' men and women, therefore, they could only be on the other side of the dualism, the lower side of nature, of non-human species.

Ecofeminism offers theoretical tools to question the mechanistic view of nature, in addition to claiming the construction of new ways of interacting and relating to the natural environment that resists colonialism. In *Ecofeminismo*, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993) state that different movements of women around the world have denounced patriarchal and developmental capitalism as causes of social and environmental problems. Women were the first to protest against the environmental destruction of capitalist developmentalism and to organize themselves to promote alternative ways of sustaining life in its different formats as well as to resist in different parts of the world the destruction inherent to the industrialized agriculture system.

In Brazil, the movements of countryside women deserve to be highlighted in the struggle for autonomy, equality of rights and for more just and equitable ways of organizing rural life, which involves critical ways of thinking about the mostly dualistic relationship between human beings and nature. Agroecological practices, for example, have their main defenders and propagators in women. Emma Siliprandi (2018), an author who has given voice to peasant women who stand out in working with agroecology in different parts of the country, points out that many workers act as guardians of nature and have been fundamental in the implementation of agroforestry systems. These women face prejudice, including the male chauvinism of their partners, in order to experiment ways of producing a variety of healthy foods through practices that are more integrated into the cycles of natural life, which rescue stories of the special relationship of communities and families with the forest. Even so, they are not always recognized as builders of agroecological experiences, nor are they valued by the knowledge arising from the practices of an agriculture of resistance and preservation of biodiversity. Similarly, Maria das Graças Costa (2019) points out that the knowledge of non-white and peasant women has been silenced, placed at the margins of the memory of agroecology, even within movements that struggle for socioenvironmental justice. Therefore, it is essential to bring to light such knowledge, practices and political strategies that has been constructed by subordinate groups, such as indigenous,

peasant and quilombola women, in order to destabilize the hegemonic structures of power and knowledge.

With the force of a manifesto, the Margaridas express themselves about the importance of their knowledge:

Exploited and marginalized throughout history, we inhabit the most diverse territories, which in turn harbor different biomes, mosaics of life and diversity. We do family farming! We produce healthy food for our cities and for our population, guaranteeing food sovereignty and the preservation of our Creole seeds, our ecosystems and our sociobiodiversity. We are guardians of the popular knowledge that we have inherited from our ancestry! (PLATAFORMA POLÍTICA, 2019, p.4).

Despite the practices of confrontation and resistance of these women, ecofeminist thinkers highlight that a world has been constituted in which westernized and colonizing human activities are based on the exploitation of nature and non-human life forms, which additionally implies the exploitation and elimination of certain human ways of life that are more integrated to the natural world, such as indigenous and quilombolas. Therefore, the unbridled domination and exploitation of nature and non-human animals should also be a feminist issue. As Inestra King (1997), one of the first ecofeminist authors, points out, the conquest of rights by women does not guarantee them access to the social benefits of development, since the domination of nature is intensified by global deforestation accompanied by the exploitation and disappearance of plant and animal species, land concentration and food shortages as well as environmental disasters resulting from human activities. In this sense, the author asks, “what is the use of equally sharing a system that is killing us all?” (KING, 1997, p.126). It is about questioning a way of life based on capitalist and developmental patriarchy that understands the other as someone to be dominated and exploited, which affects not only human lives, but any form of life on Earth.

By questioning the objectification of nature and the transformation of its parts into mere resources to be expropriated by human beings for their own benefit, the notion of sustainable development appropriated by the interests of the market, the belief in technology and science as the only means of solving the damage to eminent local environmental problems caused by our exploratory way of life, the devaluation of the knowledge of local and original peoples and their ways of life more integrated into the natural environment, ecofeminist approaches have something to say about how to think on a Latin American intersectional feminism that confronts the different systems of domination.

It must be remembered that women farmers who depend on their knowledge of the life cycles of nature are the most affected by the unpredictability of the climate resulting from global warming. The intensification of dry and drought periods leads women to walk greater and greater distances in search of water. Indigenous people, quilombolas and their knowledge of the cycles of nature can be threatened by climate change and put into question the protection of their ways of life. The loss of land to the land-grabbing landowners and monoculture drive minority ethnic groups out of their traditional territories, leaving them without fair means to support themselves. The consumer way of life also threatens those forms of life that are directly dependent on the knowledge they have developed about life cycles in nature. Food increasingly limited by the standardized impositions of capitalist consumption and dependence on animalized food industry advertising interfere with the way of life of such communities, since deforestation is linked to the production of cereals for large-scale animal husbandry, either by extensive or intensive livestock, to provide the diet called by the Brazilian philosopher Sônia Felipe (2018) mortal *omnix vorax*. This standard diet implies the devastation of animal and environmental life directly influencing the promotion of global warming and being at the root of ecocide, that is, the extermination of entire natural ecosystems, either by their overthrow or by the uncontrolled use that humans make of toxins and poisons.

The Ecofeminism Present in the Marcha das Margaridas: The Preservation of the Environment, Life and Ways of Being of Peasant Women

The Marcha das Margaridas movement, even though the theoretical assumptions of ecofeminist approaches are not known, implicitly brings the concern with overcoming hierarchical dualisms and different forms of domination that permeate the relationships between humans and between humans and other forms of life. The political actions of the Margaridas represent the possibility of a change towards gender and environmental justice. In the construction of their claims and proposals, such women do not align themselves with the hierarchical and patriarchal vision ingrained in the Western world since when the witch hunt represented the attempt to destroy the knowledge produced by women and decreed the death of nature perpetrated by modern science by bringing its parts into

laboratories in an attempt to control and accelerate the processes of creation and reproduction of life.

When looking at the protagonism of these women, it is clear that they distance themselves from the developmental paradigm assumed by agribusiness as the only possibility of producing food, sustaining that there is no room for those who do not explore the natural environment in order to 'extract' all the 'resources' that it would have to offer to humans. From this perspective, non-human life forms are treated merely as objects with their value determined based on their usefulness for the life of certain hegemonic human groups. Contrary to this approach, women from rural movements show that food sovereignty and security depend on multiple work and the knowledge they have about production processes as well as a more harmonious coexistence with and integrated into the land and its diversity of forms of life, human and non-human. They seek to contribute to the recognition of the interdependent relationships that exist between humans and non-humans, overcoming, according to Phillips and Rumens (2016), relationships and systems that deny life and do not recognize the human debt to others on the planet.

The Western system that prioritizes economic 'progress', which damages human involvement with nature and does little to reduce hunger in the world, ends up affecting the food and nutrition security of traditional populations. Furthermore, as the ecofeminists Mies and Shiva (1993) recall, women and children are always the most vulnerable beings within the patriarchal developmental paradigm, since the unbridled exploitation of the environment by agribusiness activities intensifies the impoverishment and exploitation of women and children, which are not achieved by the promises of a good life contained in this model. The supposed development, which should create well-being and abundance for all, expropriates the natural environment and generates the loss of political control over the support base linked to nature. Thus, the authors argue, those who would need nature most end up suffering from the inequality of power behind the colonial and patriarchal processes of ecological degradation. As a result, women and children are kept at the margins of food systems, being more intensely affected by environmental problems such as lack of water and poor nutrition. The Margaridas point to neoliberal threats to Brazilian sovereignty as a problem, recognizing that the subordinate political position of Brazil penalizes "the most vulnerable populations in our society: women, black women, children,

young people, peasants, family farmers, quilombolas, indigenous peoples and other traditional peoples and communities, in all their diversity”. (PLATAFORMA POLÍTICA, 2019, p.6).

The document Plataforma Política (2019) presents a detailed description of the risks of agribusiness expansion for the sociobiodiversity characteristic of the different biomes of the Brazilian territory: Amazon, Caatinga, Cerrado, Atlantic Forest and Pampa. In the case of the Amazon, for example, the impacts of colonization on traditional ways of life and knowledge stand out, intensifying the exploitation, social exclusion and impoverishment of the different indigenous ethnic communities and remnants of quilombos that occupy the region. The expansion of monocultures, livestock and mining leads to the appropriation and territorial control by large national and foreign economic groups, which are not concerned with the sustainable management of common goods as they prioritize the production of commodities.

In the Cerrado, the growing devastation of monocultures threatens the preservation of waters, as this biome is responsible for the formation and feeding of large rivers, such as the São Francisco River. In this way, when looking at agribusiness in Western Bahia, a region located in the middle of the Cerrado biome, it is clear that the most favored are white men and their families, while traditional communities are expelled from their lands by the practices of land grabbing or have access to their conditions of survival denied when lands that were previously free community circulation are fenced off and turned into private property. In addition, a drought that extends due to climate change will not affect in the same way a landowner family that irrigates its production by capturing large amounts of water from rivers or wells on its property, whose exploitation is granted by the State in an uncontrolled way, and a family from a traditional community, whose seasonal production cycle is inserted within environmental conditions as part of sociobiodiversity. Such changes affect the knowledge of women and traditional peoples about production cycles in nature, increasing their vulnerability. According to the document Plataforma Política (2019,

p.8), the Cerrado has “a high rate of contamination of water, soil, air and also breast milk”. In this biome, many traditional communities of collective land use have resisted the culture of private land enclosures, such as the evergreen pickers in Minas Gerais.

Briefly, the claims of the Marcha das Margaridas can be grouped along two lines of confrontation with systems of domination: 1) recognition of the political and ethical

importance of conceiving less exploratory relationships with nature and local ecosystems and, based on that, rethinking the notion of development; and 2) the importance of assuring women and the environment the condition of overcoming hierarchical and oppressive dualisms in order to guarantee them adequate conditions for full individual and collective development and for the environment the possibility of a preserved existence.

With regard to ethical and political concern with nature, recognizing how the paradigm of developmentalism negatively affects the environment, the movement of the Marcha das Margaridas, especially in Cadernos 2 and 3 (2019), stands out for the defense of ecological practices of food production for self-consumption, the propagation of agroecology and the protection systems of Creole seeds, the guarantee of access to water and territories, the motivation for the creation of transgenic-free zones, the respect for traditional modes of production and the adoption of policies to reduce the use of pesticides. All these measures are part of the development of a society in which the protection of socio-biodiversity and common goods, the reduction of poverty and social inequalities, especially in countryside areas, are a priority as opposed to a system that merely privileges the economic elements. The agribusiness of generating commodities for export, which has food as a commodity and not as a human right that guarantees life, is being fought. As mentioned by the Margaridas, it is about agrarian capitalism that does not produce

[...] 'real' food, exacerbates the food problem, generating hunger, misery and degradation of nature. In this process, ancestral knowledge and food cultures, which are part of the history of the populations that inhabit the countryside areas and forests, have been disappearing.

The production of 'real food' fundamentally depends on family, peasant and indigenous agriculture, which is constantly threatened by the policies imposed by agribusiness. (CADERNO 2, 2019, p.13).

Regarding the second direction, especially in Cadernos 4, 5 and 6 (2019), the Margaridas seek to ensure measures to reduce violence against countryside women, accompanied by non-sexist sexual education, the implementation of reproductive rights, the promotion of political and economic autonomy of women through their inclusion as political subjects in the process of building rural development, and the promotion of health care for women from the specificities of women of different races, ethnicities and regions of the country. These are measures that together guarantee the protagonism of women in their own lives, including the constitution of their individual identities from the valorization of their practices, knowledge and work without, for that, having to oppose nature as normally

happens in construction of the patriarchal and dominant master identity. An identity that, emphasizes Val Plumwood (1993), denies women and nature their space of full existence through an appropriation and incorporation into the conquering way of being defined from multiple exclusions and the annihilation of other ways of existing.

The Margaridas perceive nature beyond an instrumental vision, that is, not as a resource to be consumed. Phillips and Rumens (2016) claim, due to instrumentalization, the value of nature in itself is denied, which creates risks not only for nature, but also threatens humanity. The growing neoliberal exploitation of nature with its technological promise of overcoming difficulties through market solutions, only increases inequality and deprives traditional peoples of their autonomy and ability to survive. In this context, the Margaridas reject colonization policies that only promote the death of nature inside laboratories to generate lifeless seeds with limited existence defined by agribusiness entrepreneurs. The Creole seeds that rural workers rescue and preserve, on the contrary, promote and sustain the cycles of life. These seeds are essential for the protection and maintenance of the genetic heritage as well as for guaranteeing food sovereignty based on the biodiversity of each region of Brazil. Therefore, they claim the creation and expansion of banks and houses of Creole seeds (PLATAFORMA POLÍTICA, 2019) and the valorization of the prominent role they have “in the preservation of ecosystems and traditional local and/or Creole seeds, as they hold a vast and traditional knowledge about biodiversity”. (CADERNO 3, 2019, p.14). As Mies and Shiva (1993) observe, they are seeds that maintain their inherent capacity for regeneration and multiplication, remaining free in the hands of women from traditional communities.

It is important to point out that the Margaridas also do not support an essentialist view of women, as they point out and value the diversity of being a woman in the countryside and the different forms of relationships with nature conceived by them. By presenting women from the countryside, the forest and the waters, including the specificities of the lives of women from the Amazon, the Cerrado, the Pantanal, from other regions of the Northeast, Southeast and South, the movement opens space for the different ways in which each of these groups of women constitutes their relationship with nature without an imposing view of what nature is and how it should be preserved, often assumed by legislation and environmental policies of national scope. There is also no imposition of what it is to be a woman. In Caderno 4 (2019), the Margaridas mention the importance of fighting

racism and sexism, guaranteeing autonomy over their own bodies for women, respecting the different ways of experiencing sexuality on the part of women and the different ways of constructing gender identities. But, beyond the distinctions, what unites the women is a vision that their lives and their knowledge depend on the integration with nature, their support space. This aspect is represented by the expression 'We, Margaridas', at the same time that each group of Margaridas has accepted its problems and is heard in the search for claims to be directed to the public power.

Unlike a holistic environmentalism, which generally does not look at the specificities and needs of human groups, treating everyone based on the criterion of contribution to the well-being and balance of biotic communities, women promote the valorization of traditional peoples and local knowledge rather than simply believing in the promises contained in technological and scientific environmental knowledge. The privileges of certain human groups and the devaluation of others that integrate themselves in a less exploratory way into natural spaces, but are not considered 'productive' from the capitalist point of view because they are centered on their own existence, are questioned. Survival economies do not gain space amid the capitalist economy. The Margaridas point out that the work they do in the backyard, producing food for self-consumption, is not valued, in a similar way to what happens with all the domestic and care work that they do (PLATAFORMA POLÍTICA, 2019). In this sense, the claim of the Marcha das Margaridas for valuing and recognizing the productive and reproductive activities of women stands out as well as the adequacy of health policy policies to the reality of family and artisanal production, promoting the valorization of the knowledge of women in the production of these foods. It is claimed to encourage “marketing groups and fairs of the solidarity and feminist economy, with an agroecological basis, so that women can market their products” (PLATAFORMA POLÍTICA, 2019, p.22). It should be often noted that the health policies of the State only express the interest of large food conglomerates to maintain control of markets, suppressing small farmers from production, or, as stated by Mies and Shiva (1993), continually marginalizing family and household food economies.

The Marcha das Margaridas presents itself as a movement aimed at sustainable development. In the presentation document of the Plataforma Política (2019), a sustainable development that has as one of the pillars the production of healthy food is affirmed, targeting the counterflow of neoliberalism that transforms nature into commodities.

Sustainability also depends on valuing the knowledge and productive work of women in family farming and in traditional communities. Without economic autonomy, work, income, pension rights and social assistance, public health, non-sexist and anti-racist education, there is no way for society to be sustainable for everyone, especially for the diversity of countryside women.

It is important to highlight that Mies and Shiva (1993) criticize the notion of sustainable development for presenting itself as a remedy with colonial characteristics created in the context of the disease itself responsible for the destruction of nature and the autonomous living conditions of human groups in different parts of the world, namely, a colonizing economic system based on the expropriation of nature for the accumulation of capital. For the authors, the meaning of sustainability is lost as expansive economic determinations and production and consumption markets prevail, even if painted green.

For Phillips and Rumens (2016), government and NGO policies aligned with a supposed sustainable development often end up sharing the belief that market mechanisms with the help of voluntary initiatives, corporations and industrial associations will provide the solutions to the challenges and impacts of climate change. However, this only results in what is called a 'climate capitalism' with its strategies to become 'green' and reduce carbon impacts that barely interfere with the patterns of expansion and global economic growth, simply constituting new opportunities for capital accumulation.

The Marcha das Margaridas, however, breaks with the rationality of this notion of capitalist-patriarchal development by deconstructing the colonial vision of rural space as a place of economic, political and social backwardness. It defends the rupture of the logic of overexploitation of nature by large-scale mechanized agriculture that expands monoculture production and results in the deterritorialization of countryside peoples. The Margaridas question the limits of large development projects financed with public resources that ignore the needs of traditional local peoples and overlap with their ways of life. In addition, the Margaridas claim the inclusion of women as working subjects who produce life based on the principles of feminist economics (CADERNO 3, 2019). It is a project to build a society based on collective, solidary interests, but also diverse and specific with regard to the multiplicities of work of women in the spheres of production and reproduction of life. Sustainable development cannot, therefore, exclude the diversity of the lives of women in

each region of the country, and it is essential to contemplate them with regional policies that support them in the promotion of their knowledge.

In short, the *Marcha das Margaridas* movement allows us to find several elements in line with ecofeminist proposals by affirming human ways of life that are built on the basis of more respectful relationships with other lives, human and non-human. Interdependent relationships with the natural environment are restored and strengthened in a non-destructive way, enriching the vision of the diversity of life of cultures and in general – socio-biodiversity. The *Marcha* represents a possibility to promote forms of connectivity, responsibility and socioenvironmental justice, dissolving hierarchies and structural divisions within human relationships and in human relationships with other forms of life that threaten biodiversity. Thus, progressive changes, or at least resistances, are promoted in the relations with nature and in terms of gender equality by countryside women without excluding and dominating each other. These are also elements of a popular ecofeminism characterized by Svampa (2015) as one in which interdependence with nature, or the recognition of 'ecodependence', is central, along with values such as cooperation, reciprocity and complementarity.

Furthermore, the *Margaridas* contribute to thinking about a Latin American feminism that comes from the base of society, from places of non-privilege. As the socialist ecofeminist Ariel Salleh (1994) points out, the possibility of transforming the dominating society comes from those who are situated in the dualistic part of lesser value, from those who occupy the silent space of the denial of their identity. It is in the occupation of the negative condition of a non-place, of the invisibility, that one can perceive the distortion of reality and actively move knowledge, that is, explore the potential of knowledge that comes from below and, thus, overcome the dualist separations of the dominant paradigm. This is what Lugones (2014) calls the 'fractured locus': the place of agency of the colonized subject, the resistance to oppression and hegemonic impositions that can take various forms. Therefore, learning how to make another society is not separated from the knowledge of those people who suffer the most from crossing systems of oppression. They are the ones who develop a sensitive force and a possible knowledge of moving power structures. They are the ones who construct experiences of networks of empathy, attention and care to allow the existence of the other through mutual strengthening and can teach how to think about an inclusive movement that does not make new victims.

The struggles of these countryside workers women based on solidarity and creativity, in addition to meeting the purposes of the broad ecofeminist paradigm, bring fundamental elements to think about a Latin American feminism: they seek to construct a new cosmology that recognizes that life in nature (including that of human beings) is maintained through mutual cooperation, care and love (MIES and SHIVA, 1993); they seek to contribute to the possibility of pleasant, meaningful and fairly treated lives for all people in the present without destroying the ecological foundations and the ability to sustain life in the future Perkins (apud PHILLIPS and RUMENS, 2016); they stimulate the preservation and construction of new human and social identities in relation to nature (PLUMWOOD, 1993).

The movements of rural women construct alternative paths for policies of colonization of life, seeking to reconstruct social symbioses and implement the idea of inclusion and integration, which is fundamental to thinking about being a woman in Latin America. The meeting between the 1st Marcha das Mulheres Indígenas (in English, March of Indigenous Women) and the 6th Marcha das Margaridas, in

Brasilia in August 2019, has translated this ideal. It is a way of constructing a collective commitment to recognize the existing interrelationships between the forms of life that understands that the existence of the life of a woman cannot be at the expense of the precariousness and death of other human and non-human beings.

Final Considerations

Environmental issues and conflicts are central points for women who occupy rural areas in Brazil and face the problem of soil impoverishment, water pollution, lack of access to land, the expansion of agribusiness and the monoculture of commodity production, the effects of global warming and indiscriminate deforestation. The death of nature implies the intensification of undervalued work and poverty for these women, as it makes it even more difficult to produce diversified foods to support the family based on their knowledge and knowledge about the cycles of the productive life of nature. Therefore, a Latin American feminism cannot ignore the needs and demands of women located in rural areas, especially in small, private and collective properties, which produce food, but also practice food extraction and collection activities.

In this sense, gender and environment/nature cannot be dealt separately in the reality of these women, as can be seen in the documents created by the Marcha das Margaridas movement; gender and environment/nature intersect and demand the construction of a specific look that can be receptive and sensitive to the complexities that arise from this intersection and that become different problems and demands for peasant women of different ethnicities and social groups located in geographical points marked by many differences around the country. The intersection then becomes more complex when, in addition to gender and environment, sexuality, ethnicity/race, location, among other social markers of exclusion that mark the diversity of women in the rural environment are taken into account. The Marcha das Margaridas has been a pioneering movement in the intersectional approach of the social markers of the countryside, the forest and the waters women, constituting a fundamental movement for a Latin American ecofeminism.

There is still a long way to go in the construction of a Latin American ecofeminism, which considers the leading role in the social and political struggles of rural women in the Global South committed to the sustainability of their practices of food production, the livelihood of their families, solidarity community relations, an inclusive economy and the support of human and non-human life. Also, in family farming based on agroecological practices, women face the overload of domestic work and occupy, in most cases, a subordinate role in productive decisions on the property, usually commanded by men, which makes them need a lot of courage to claim space for speech and have their voice, knowledge and experiences removed from the silenced place. The rural space is still a place for deep structural violence against women, which constantly erases the stories, knowledge and experiences of many of these people, who are not allowed to speak and transmit valid knowledge about themselves and about the relationships of care, existence and life support that they build with nature, contemplating environmental preservation and sustainability.

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