



## WEAVING TEXTS, OPENING TRAILS: CONTEMPORARY INDIGENOUS WOMEN WRITERS

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We are here,  
despite these dark times.  
Here we are  
For the right to be  
different and live  
because we are the same  
in the difference.

Graça Graúna, in “Around the Fires”

The opening lines of Graça Graúna’s poem illuminate this dossier on indigenous literature by women. Women, men, children, elders gather together around the fire. One passes on to the other what he/she hears from the other in these dark times of indifference, casting luminous sparks on the yearning for equality in differences. There are those who know more because they are older. There are those who accomplish more because they are younger. In the current context of the movement to affirm cultures of original peoples observed in the Americas, sparks remind us that indigenous literature by female authors occupies a prominent place in the process of overcoming ethnic invisibilization.

Sparkling, the essays, interviews and reviews that make up this dossier propose to focus on a *corpus* of works written by indigenous women in their tense relations with institutionalized national cultures. This tension is inscribed in the linguistic tissue itself, since the authors resort to a cannibalistic strategy that consists of appropriating the colonizing European languages to

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represent themselves, produce a new imaginary, recreate worlds and cosmovisions, in order to subvert the paradigms of coloniality perpetuated in contemporary times.

In fact, the studies published here address issues related to this production, crossed by the female subjectivity and the desire for literary and social emancipation. Decoloniality and depatriarchalization outline the perspective. Among other clues offered for reflection, we highlight the contextualization of the voices of indigenous female writers; the relationship between writing and political praxis; the recovery of ancestral memory and its intergenerational transmission; the representation of space historical dimension; the exploitation of indigenous territories; the intersection between memory of the autochthonous territory and urban landscapes; the sensory experience of space; the erotic sensitivity; the original forms of artistic expression; the linguistic and cultural friction.

From an inter-American perspective, the main objective is to assemble a critical anthology on indigenous female voices that stand out in the contemporary literary space of the Americas. Auritha Tabajara, Eliane Potiguara, Graça Graúna, Márcia Kambeba, Mariela Tulián, Sony Ferseck, Terese Marie Mailhot are some of these voices – some sparks that promote dialogue beyond national borders, as well as beyond a world that wants to prevent indigenous and non-indigenous from sharing the same fires.

*Coração na Aldeia, Pés no Mundo*, de Auritha Tabajara, is the *leitmotif* for the essay by Ana Maria de Carvalho, which opens the dossier. Her objective is to discuss indigenous writing by women as a form of resisting and breaking the silencing inflicted on indigenous history. For the essayist, Auritha Tabajara understands literary writing as a self-expression of her values and experiences, as well as a way of uniting the forces and voices of all indigenous women, in search of respect and preservation of their rights.

In the following essay, Débora Francisca de Lima reflects on how the category of silencing is intertwined with violence. Selecting poems from *Metade Cara, Metade Máscara*, by Eliane Potiguara, she demonstrates how Potiguara's poetry deconstructs the eurocentric idea of indigenous submission and conformism, by poetically telling the story of the diaspora of native peoples and making the traces of memories of their ancestors present in their lines. The emphasis here is on the importance of the construction of narratives by indigenous women, so that they are protagonists of their own stories, in such a way as to highlight their voices in the action of retelling the stories of their people.

The restorytelling process also feeds Fernanda Vieira de Sant'Anna's essay on indigenous autobiogeography *Heart Berries: a Memoir*, by Terese Marie Mailhot (Seabird Island Band). To construct her text, Sant'Anna starts from a *metodología fronteriza*, in which her knowledge as a researcher, writer and female subject of research meets together in an individual and collective identity, in order to corroborate a decolonial praxis guided by the respect for ancestors and the millennial word. According to the indigenous essayist, the autobiogeography of indigenous

women consists of the (re)writing of themselves, bringing to focus personal and transgenerational traumas and memories. In these terms, Terese Marie Mailhot's work is an example of how (re) telling personal and collective stories rewrites and creates worlds other than the colonial project with its monoculture of thinking and being.

Maria do Carmo Moreira de Carvalho and Algemira de Macêdo Mendes study the poems "O Segredo das Mulheres" and "Mulher!", from *Metade Cara, Metade Máscara*, by Eliane Potiguara. Their aim is to evidence the strength and significance of the indigenous woman for the tradition and culture of their group, showing her under the light of affirmation, identity and liberation, both cultural and ancestral. The central idea is to denationalize the abstraction of Brazil as a colony.

Márcia Kambeba, a member of the Omágua/Kambeba people, is studied by Paulo Marcelino dos Santos and Elizabeth Gonzaga de Lima. Word and image, poetry and photography record, disseminate, value, present and display other ways of narrating the history of her people. Their analysis of the poems "O Tempo do Clima", "Gota Pequena" and "Aldeia Tururucari-Uka", by Márcia Kambeba, shows the connection established by the indigenous multiartist and her people with the pace of nature, the cultural memory and history, in order to promote an opening to the diversity of knowledges and the historical self-determination of native peoples.

The comparative reading of *Criaturas de Ñanderu*, by the Potiguara Brazilian author Graça Graúna, and *La Pequeña Francisca*, by the writer Mariela Tulián (people of Comechingón/ Argentina), made by Randra Kevelyn Barbosa Barros, enriches this dossier. Two stories created by two authors located in two different spaces of Abya Yala take as their motto a fundamental aspect of the *auto-histórias*, to quote Graça Graúna, and their cosmological perspectives: grandmother characters narrate stories and transmit their knowledge.

If the representation of nature is a recurring theme in the poetry for children produced in Brazil, why are studies on this theme, from the perspective of indigenous literature, still scarce? And what role does the school play in this discussion? In an attempt to expand this debate, Rinah de Araújo Souto and José Hélder Pinheiro Alves write about the possibilities of reading indigenous poetry in the classroom and its contribution to form a multicultural reader, while analyzing the book *Flor da Mata*, by Graça Graúna. The elements of nature poetically evoked in the book's haiku constitute exercises in alterity, since the encounter with the poetic text allows both awareness of indigenous textualities and recognition of the plurality of knowledge in the world.

Two interviews also compose the dossier. In the first one, Auritha Tabajara talked to Janda Montenegro about her creative and literary process, emphasizing the decisive influence of her grandmother for her initiation in writing. Author of cordel literature, she explains how she was chosen by this literary universe mostly occupied by men. Concerned about expanding

this horizon, she earnestly defends, in her production, the identity valorization of indigenous peoples and the respect for LGBTQIAP+ people, especially among the female population.

Graça Graúna is interviewed by Marta Passos Pinheiro, Guilherme Trielli Ribeiro and Viviane de Cássia Maia Trindade. In this interview, Graúna answers questions regarding the conception and publication of indigenous literature, its specificities in Brazil, the role of indigenous women writers, the practice of *escreviver* (life-writing), the indigenous presence in modernist literature, and her most recent publication: *Fios do Tempo (quase Haicais)*. The poet draws attention to the collective, ancestral character of resistance and resilience of indigenous literature, recognizing it as a set of oral and written productions. The high contribution of indigenous women to the fields of education, politics and the arts is also underlined. In her work, Graça Graúna acknowledges the strong presence of social issues related to human rights and the environment, as well as the responsibility of writing about the indigenous universe.

Two reviews close this dossier. *Fios do Tempo (quase Haicais)*, by Graça Graúna, published in 2021, receives the attention of José André Souza Silva and Rosivânia dos Santos, who make a productive reading of the book comparing it with the author's essayistic production and her earlier books. In addition, they point out the specificity of Graça Graúna's haiku and the original format of the book in cartonera publication.

*Weiyamî – Mulheres que Fazem Sol*, by Sony Ferseck, is presented by Rita Olivieri-Godet, one of the most important researchers of indigenous literature by women and disseminator of this literature abroad. Also a member of the organization of this dossier, Olivieri-Godet offers the readers of *Diadorim* a succinct but perceptive study of the Makuxi imaginary in Sony Ferseck's poetry. The exuberance of the colors of Georgina Ars' embroidery and the oral poetics of the Makuxi people, in Ferseck's work, dance and sing about healing, resilience and identity resistance. The act of writing thus becomes a ritual. Sony Ferseck's book is also a ritual – the poetic ritual of the path of enchanted women who make sun/Wei.

Finally, a record. This presentation was written on the day the President of Brazil vetoed the law project that would change the nomenclature “Indian Day” to “Indigenous Peoples Day”. The change is not at all of small importance, as his excellency seems to spread. Indigenous means autochthone, first born in the land in which they live. Furthermore, replacing a word that came from the outside – with the appearance that it was always an inside word, as taught during years and years of monocultural schooling – for the indigenous plural stresses the fact that the fire may be one, but the sparks are infinite. The fire of language claims what power and the established order want to extinguish in silence.

Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), Rennes (France), June 2, 2022.