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Amazonian Ecocentrism as an Emerging Alternative in the Environmental Crisis: Contributions Related to Animal Otherness

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Abstract

This article explores some aspects of the ecocentric thinking implicit in the ancestral cosmovisions of Amazonian peoples with the intention of shedding light on the relationship between respect for animal otherness and ecosystem balance. The research is based on a review of anthropological texts that focus on the Amazonian cultures of Latin America, and on specific contributions of Latin American feminisms that represent a critique of anthropocentrism. Finally, it analyses the concept of reciprocity applied to the relationship between humans and nature. The essay is a critique of the reification of animals, not only from an ethical point of view, but also because of its impact on the environmental crisis, as it is functional to the economic system that has produced the current environmental and climate crisis.

Keywords: *Ancestral Cosmovisions, Animal Otherness, Anthropocentrism, Ecocentrism, Community feminism.*

Introduction

Although in recent years there seems to have been an increase in human awareness of the environment and non-human otherness (Valera, 2020), the anthropocentric interpretation of nature still forms part of the ideological underpinning that shapes our system of exploitation of non-human life, legitimising the appropriation and reification of animals.

Moreover, the animal question in our time is not a minor problem. It is at the very heart of the debate on the excesses of the capitalist system and the limits of our ethics, and of course, it raises practical challenges that cannot be resolved without ceasing to see the animal as a mere resource, such as in the need to reduce meat consumption or to renounce the appropriation of territories and resources that are necessary for the survival of other species. In this regard, we know that modern capitalism has deepened the oppression of animals and their suffering, and that this phenomenon is not only linked to socio-political aspects, but also to an anthropocentric belief system and the consequent normalisation of a series of irrational prejudices about nature and animality (Nibert, 2002). Such prejudices guarantee the cognitive distance that capitalist society needs to maintain a system of animal exploitation on an unprecedented scale (Littleton, Ford and Nibert, 2018), which is only possible thanks to the fact that non-human life is outside our moral consideration[2]. This kind of exploitation takes on a new dimension today as a factor that also influences climate change and thus impacts on human welfare.

In this sense, this essay adopts an anthropological perspective from which cultural symbols, as representations of reality, have the capacity to shape human cognitive experience (Ingold, 2011, 159-162). Thus, one of the aims of this essay is to link the denial of animal otherness to environmental problem, and to question its universality by examining some elements of Amazonian ecocentrism, as a reference to a cultural pattern in which human life is understood as part of a network of energy in balance, and in which respect for animal otherness is expressed in different ways. This is not to say that the ecocentric model described is currently practised by all Amazonian peoples, given that capitalist expansion into the rainforest has led to the large-scale destruction of indigenous territories and the defragmentation of peoples (Chávez,

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[2] In the food industry alone, 70 billion land animals are slaughtered every year. Most of these animals undergo mutilation, torture, overcrowding, inhumane practices that cause them unnecessary suffering throughout their lives (Littleton, Ford and Nibert, 2018, 38-39).

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2019). In order to understand the Amazonian cosmovision as a model of ecocentric thought, it is necessary to review its mythology, through which behavioural norms that define a people are transmitted.

On the other hand, this paper also explores some contributions coming from community feminisms and ecofeminisms in Latin America, which largely embody the ecocentric and relational values defended by Amazonian women and serve as a critique of the anthropocentric scheme, also focusing on the issue of gender otherness.

The worldview of Latin American indigenous peoples in the face of anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism has been part of the way in which Christian-based civilisations have understood progress (as overcoming nature), favouring a development based on human appropriation of the world and the beings that inhabit it. The idea that natural resources, and in particular animals, exist for the benefit of humans, functions, in fact, as a universal truth that has historically been ascribed a supposed 'ideological objectivity' (Estermann, 2015, 47).

In contrast to this model, indigenous peoples in Latin America have traditionally been portrayed as 'guardians of nature' because of the strong link between their culture and the territory, the conservation orientation of their techniques, and more recently, their recognised role in climate change debates. However, despite the value of their contribution to the climate debate, it is not easy for their vision to transcend public agendas (Carmona, 2023).

In fact, the anthropological literature on Amazonian societies shows that the anthropocentric vision is not universal (Descola, 2001; Ingold, 2011; Viveiros de Castro, 2004, Martínez, 2009). In particular, in Amazonian cosmologies, where balance is the value that has traditionally defined their social organisation, there is no antagonism in the concepts of human beings and nature. Human beings, animals and plants establish relationships of coexistence and alliance, and the differences between them do not allow them to be divided into radically different types (Descola, 2004, 26). Society and nature are not mutually exclusive concepts. They are part of the same ecosystem in which the various forms of interaction between all the beings that inhabit it take place on a daily basis, and this also influences the expression of Amazonian spirituality.

Non-human otherness in Amazonian cosmovisions

It has been noted that, in Amazonian cosmovisions, the world is governed by the circulation of flows, identities and substances between entities whose characteristics depend on the relative positions they occupy in relation to one other, rather than prior definitions of their essence (Descola, 2004, 31). This active and acknowledged presence of non-human alterities in everyday life is what Viveiros de Castro calls 'Amerindian perspectivism'. The concept alludes to a world (or society) inhabited by a number of different subjects, human and non-human, with a 'multiplicity of subjective positions' (Viveiros de Castro, 2004, 54), to whom will and intentionality are attributed, not as a metaphorical way of understanding human society, but as an expression of a real equivalence.

It is important to understand that in this worldview the physical differences between species do not place them in a hierarchical order. The physical represents a 'body wrap' that does not change the fact that all beings are similar on a spiritual level (Descola, 2004; Viveiros de Castro, 2004). Every being is endowed with a spiritual principle that makes relations between humans and non-humans inter-subjective (Descola, 2004, 31). This spiritual equality characteristic of Amazonian mythologies, is expressed, for example, in the stories of metamorphosis, in which some animals were originally human beings who eventually adopted an animal form (Karsten, 2000, 376; Santos, 2012, 19). Humanity, not animality, represents the original state of all beings, from which it follows that animals are seen as equal on a deep level.

In the Shuar cosmovision, a people whose territory extends across the Ecuadorian and Peruvian Amazon, the relativity of physical form is also present in the existence of spirits (of nature, the dead and shamans) who can incarnate different physical bodies, making them trans-specific beings. Various ethnographies of

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Amazonian peoples describe how shamans often connect with animals in order to be able to diagnose the sick person (Karsten, 2000, 305). This connection may involve the use of hallucinogenic plants, such as ayahuasca, but it may also take place through premonitory dreams (Descola, 1996, 356). Either way, it is accepted that humans and other beings in nature have the capacity to communicate with each other through a symbolic language that transcends linguistic barriers, through the discourse of the soul (Descola, 1996, 139).

Moreover, the recognition of animals' own interests requires, in fact, the establishment of a reciprocal relationship with them. In particular, the practice of hunting is governed by certain rules aimed at ensuring balance with nature and respect for the hunted animal (Descola, 1996, 349). This absence of a boundary that radically separates humans from nature is, in fact, characteristic of other indigenous cultures in Latin America. As in Amazonian cosmology, Andean cosmology does not deny the subjectivity of the non-human other either (Estermann, 2008). Human beings do not occupy a position of superiority over 'extra-human nature' (Estermann, 2008, 79) that legitimises their domination, nor is progress understood as the human capacity to overcome and become independent of nature[3]. Furthermore, both economies (Andean and Amazonian) were originally biocentric (Estermann, 2008, 153), i.e. developed on the basis of respect for natural cycles and focused on conservation, and both therefore both have immense potential to lead intercultural dialogue in times of socio-environmental crisis such as the present.

In short, from the perspective of cultures in which everything is alive, it is easier to see clearly that the capitalist development project has implied a reification of the world (Coba and Bayón, 2020, 157) and a 'commodification of nature' (Lang et al., 2019, 351). According to Lang et al. (2019), which is itself in a sense a process of dehumanisation, since the awareness of the physical and spiritual importance of nature for human beings can be seen as more than a historically situated cultural trait. It constitutes, according to this critique, an element of humanity lost or in the process of being lost in the environments transformed by the capitalist model of production and consumption.

Relationality and care within non-anthropocentric frameworks

Along with the spiritual connection between the human and the non-human and the absence of domination as the basis of the relationship between human beings and the environment, it is also possible to appreciate in non-anthropocentric cosmologies the predominance of symbols of femininity. In the Shuar cosmovision there is an identification of women with the earth based on maternity as a shared capacity to create and protect life, not forgetting that women's work in the vegetable garden establishes a relationship of cooperation between woman and nature. Furthermore, in the female *anent*[4], which generally allude to the fertility of the earth and of women, narratives are common that present identification with the animal and the alternation of subjects, as well as the linking of the vital phases of the human being with the cycles of nature (Napolitano, 1998, 110).

Josef Estermann has analysed the question of gender in the context of Andean philosophy, of which he also highlights its 'gynosophical' character. Estermann argues that Andean cosmology challenges both ethnocentrism and Western androcentrism in several ways. On the one hand, it reflects a thinking structured around 'relationality, complementarity, correspondence, reciprocity, integrality and cyclicality' (Estermann, 2008, 26) which is more suited to a feminine way of life and spirituality. On the other hand, Andean spirituality also challenges androcentric conceptions of the divine in Western thought by not stripping the feminine of the attributes of the sacred (Estermann, 2008, 262-263). In this context, Andean sexual complementarity does not represent a hierarchical scheme, but rather the idea of a whole composed of feminine and masculine elements that cuts across the entire cosmic order.

[3] The characteristics mentioned here are part of an ancestral cultural pattern. However, this does not mean that they are immutable characteristics. In fact, the transformation of culture and the loss of practices, beliefs and even language is a phenomenon that widely affects Amazonian communities.

[4] *Anent* are sacred songs that the Shuar use when carrying out productive activities and also in special situations where there may be a perceived need for some kind of help.

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In Shuar and Achuar spirituality, the set of moral references conveyed by the myths is also represented by a variety of male and female spirits. For example, Nunkui is a female spirit charged with the protecting agriculture and with transmitting to women the knowledge to cultivate, work clay, give birth and care for their offspring (Pellizaro et al., 2009, 17). Traditionally, Shuar and Achuar childbirth took place in the *chakra*[5], as an act of reciprocity with the land. 'The right of putative maternity exercised over cultivated plants is thus rooted in the very place where real maternity is inaugurated' (Descola 1996, 294-295).

However, relationship and care are not rigidly gendered aspects in animist cultures (those which, in anthropological terms, give different natural beings a recognised role in the human world); rather, they are values that involve all members of the community. Indeed, sexual identities are transmuted, like animal identities, in Shuar mythology. The myth that tells the story of how Nunkui taught women to give birth tells that it was once the men who had breasts and nursed babies, while the women were responsible for going to war (Pellizaro et al., 2009, 72-84).

The impact of Amazonian ecocentrism on the notion of the subject

Anthropology has referred to the concept of the 'ontological turn' to express the importance of the Amazonian worldview (Descola, 2004; Viveiros de Castro, 2004; Ingold, 2011; Santos, 2012) and its impact on the Western conceptions of the subject (Marín et al., 2019). This vision, in which subjectivity and agency are qualities of most non-human beings, inevitably entails a redefinition of the person that challenges traditional Western ethical and philosophical frameworks, and is also of fundamental importance for the understanding and resolution of the socio-environmental problems in the context of the Anthropocene[6] (Marín et al., 2019; Svampa, 2019).

In Ecuador, the ecocentric paradigm recovered from indigenous cosmovisions went beyond the national political agenda when the concept of *Sumak Kawsay* (typical of the Andean tradition and translated as Buen Vivir or Good Living) was incorporated into the Ecuadorian Constitution in 2008, making Ecuador the first country in the world to recognise the rights of nature. The concept, which conveys the idea of living in complete harmony with nature, soon became relevant in the international debate, as it offered an alternative to the hegemonic model of development, responding to the need to reconcile human well-being with respect for other forms of life on the planet and for future generations. However, although *Sumak Kawsay*'s concept was visualised in the development debate as the beginning of a paradigm shift that would provide a solution to the socio-environmental problem, it failed to materialise in the proposal that it originally represented.

Gender otherness

Historically, gender relations have been one of the main forms of otherness within the species. In Latin American feminist theory, generally with a decolonial, popular or community-based approach, gender is in fact the focus of great attention in relation to other categories associated with discrimination, as it structures a first form of oppression, or at least one that is coherent with and reinforces the other forms established by colonisation. The domination of women would represent a model of relationship with otherness that prevents any form of exploitation from being overcome[7]. Furthermore, much of current Latin American feminist theory explores the relationship between the exploitation of women and nature.

[5] *Chakra* is an ancestral agricultural production system practised in the Ecuadorian Amazon based on crop diversification.

[6] Philosopher Andreas Weber believes that this ontological turn, or epistemic paradigm shift, can be strengthened as a consequence of experiencing the consequences of our actions in the Anthropocene. He also draws on indigenous cultures that recognise the interrelationship between all beings to propose a change in our relationship with nature (Weber, 2019).

[7] "The various manifestations of domination, such as slavery, servitude, exploitation, alienation and colonisation, have been possible because there is a model that underlies them all: the domination of one sex over the other. If the inferiorisation of women does not disappear, it is possible that the forms of exploitation will continue to change, but they will not disappear, because domination continues to be installed in subjectivity" (Carosio, 2009, 246-247).

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The perspective of the so-called Feminisms of the South also includes the visions of indigenous women's collectives with firm positions against extractivism. They do not necessarily recognise themselves in Western feminism, although in their discourse there is a proposal for depatriarchalisation (Cabnal, 2010; Svampa, 2015). All these voices emerge from everyday struggles, as opposed to the 'expertization' of academic feminisms (Carosio, 2009, 245), and aim to build real alternatives to the logic of commerce, defending the sustainability of life based on values of cooperation, equity and interdependence between people, communities and nature.

The feminine as nature

In the same vein as classical ecofeminism, Latin American feminisms also contain a strong critique of the way in which modern society naturalises and sexualises care, seeing the capitalist-imperialist exploitation of territory within the global economy and violence against women as related phenomena stemming from patriarchal structures (Paredes, 2014; Cabnal, 2010; Aliaga, 2019; Gargallo, 2014). In this context, and from a decolonial approach, gender otherness acts as a tool at the service of colonial power, functioning for a patriarchal system that requires the subordination of women, thus representing a different logic from that of the dualism of the original peoples of Latin America, where the complementarity of the sexes did not imply hierarchy (Lugones, 2008).

From the perspective of community feminism, Lorena Cabnal also points out that the equation of woman and nature within the heteronormative order has a negative impact on women in several ways. The sexual complementarity in the indigenous Latin American cosmovisions, although less antagonistic and hierarchical than the Western gender model, reinforces a vision of femininity linked to obligatory maternity and subordination to the community through the performance of the role of caregiver, protector and ancestral guardian. Their leading role in social, biological and cultural reproduction means that women must assume greater responsibilities than men in order to guarantee balance within the community and in its relationship with nature (Cabnal, 2010, 14). This means that in many cases community feminism questions the sexual duality asserted in discourses defending ethnic identities, as it does not offer possibilities for women's liberation within total cosmic harmonisation.

Cabnal's critique is developed through the body-land concept, which establishes an analogy between rights to one's own body and energy and rights to territory, transferring the ideal of reciprocity between peoples to relations between men and women. Women's rights are thus seen in relation to the land, as the symbolic referent of the colonised and exploited body.

On the other hand, Julieta Paredes, a Bolivian community feminist, argues that gender relations in post-colonial indigenous contexts are particularly complex because they contain intertwined elements of both colonial and ancestral origin. Paredes focuses on the concept of 'patriarchal entanglement' to allude to the historical and cultural link between pre-colonial patriarchy and Western patriarchy, which has reinforced power relations between men and women and imposes the need to decolonise gender (Paredes, 2014). The female body is also seen here as a violated territory, the appropriation of which is indispensable for women to liberate themselves and restore balance, not only in the internal relations of peoples, but also between them and nature.

In order to contextualise these discourses, it is necessary to understand the particular vulnerability of subsistence economies, affected by the transformations imposed by a global market that destroys any social fabric based on non-market relations and values, such as those built on systems of reciprocity and balance between humans and nature. Within these economies, women often suffer a double impact due to the inherent 'repatriarcalisation' of territories, especially those affected by extractivist projects (Colectivo de Investigación y Acción Psicosocial Ecuador, 2017). Generally, these changes imply a strong masculinisation of work and public spaces.

This reality has already been analysed by classical ecofeminism. In the Indian context, Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies established a link between the expansion of capitalism in the rural South and the increase in sexism, noting that the same development paradigm that leads to the annihilation of the biological world

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in turn imposes an unequal and inferior treatment of women, since such development operates within an androcentric order based on relations of hierarchy rather than respect for diversity (Mies and Shiva, 1998, 13).

These conditions have also led to a high level of women's social participation, expressed in the strong female leadership in the defence of land and culture in the Latin American context. However, the processes of cultural empowerment do not necessarily produce an improvement in the quality of women's quality of life, but add a further layer of complexity. Rita Segato has suggested that, in these contexts, women's autonomy and equality can be perceived as something that weakens the group, since the female body is a pillar on which the ethnic group actualises its identity and on which it depends for its reproductive needs. 'It is in the female body and its control by the community that ethnic groups inscribe their mark of cohesion' (Segato, 2003, 10), which creates a conflict between the rights of women and those of the people. The former, of an individualistic order, 'seem to threaten the permanence of collective rights', such as community land rights, and of a 'household-based economy that depends on the gendered counterpart' (Segato, 2003, p. 11), that is, on the traditional sexual division of labour.

The place of nature in indigenous women's claims in Latin America

The discourse of indigenous women leaders in Latin America is mainly articulated through the rejection of the ethnocentric and anthropocentric logic that prevails in the processes of appropriation and exploitation of nature (Cabnal, 2010). In fact, the struggle of indigenous women to defend their territories does not necessarily translate into a feminist politicisation from a Western perspective, but is based on the fundamental role of the feminine as a reproductive element of life and community (Aliaga, 2019).

Lisset Coba and Manuel Bayón (2020) highlight the role of the women leaders of Sarayaku, the indigenous Kichwa people of the Ecuadorian Amazon, as 'translators of the forest'. This term alludes to their ability to bring the Amazonian worldview embodied in the Living Forest (*Kawsak Sacha*) proposal, into national politics. With this proposal, indigenous women's organisations are shifting the focus of the debate from the market and the state to a more holistic and interconnected vision of the world (Coba and Bayón, 2020), emphasising the need to care for and protect the habitat of all forest beings, with whom it is necessary to establish reciprocal relationships, in the context of the expansion of the oil industry in their territories[8]. In fact, the struggle of these women was fundamental in the creation of the ethno-political movement in the region, as well as in securing collective land titling rights and the declaration of plurinationality in Ecuador (Coba, 2020).

The conceptual contributions of indigenous women in Latin America are crucial to the debate on solutions and alternatives to be considered in the current international context. In 2010, a representation of Latin American community feminism spoke at the first World People's Conference on Climate Change held in Bolivia. This collective denounces that the interpretation of the concept of Pachamama as a synonym for Mother Earth is reductionist and sexist, since it only alludes to the fertility of women, thus distorting a concept that encompasses the totality of life and that originally referred to 'a whole that goes beyond visible nature' (Feminismo Comunitario, 2014, 425). This vision recovers the idea of a spirituality inherent to the whole of the living beings that make up 'the cosmos of which humanity is only a small part' (Feminismo Comunitario, 2014, 426), and shows a point of view from which it is inconceivable that the earth can be dominated, bought, destroyed and, in short, put at the service of the market.

In this way, human society is not conceived as something autonomous and opposed to nature, but as an integrated network of 'women, men, land, territory, animals, plants' (Feminismo Comunitario, 2014, 426). The community forms a space in which the principle of reciprocity prevails, derived from the perception of the other 'as worthy and equal'. A reciprocity derived from the perception of the other 'as worthy and equal', which is necessary to guarantee equilibrium. The disruption of this balance by the current

[8] In 2022, Sarayaku activist Patricia Gualinga won the Palme Human Rights Prize. Another of Ecuador's environmental leaders who has received international recognition is the Waorani Nemonte Nenquimo, who in 2020 was included in Time magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in the world.

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development model prevents life from taking place under the minimum necessary conditions, according to this perspective. In short, climate change is seen as a consequence of violence against nature. Furthermore, the discourse of community feminism at the World People's Conference on Climate Change also denounced community interference in the autonomy of women's bodies, alluding to compulsory heterosexuality and motherhood (2014, 429-430).

In short, these women's discourses and actions, mediated primarily by feminism, have been incorporated into the global struggle (Carosio, 2009, 249) in response to a planetary crisis that urgently requires radical change. It should be noted that these approaches are also echoed in Western feminist discourses in the debate about our relationship with nature. Alicia Puleo, a leading voice in critical ecofeminism, advocates a feminist interculturality as an act of redefining reality (Puleo, 2011), which implicitly includes the need to fundamentally transform our relationship with animals, understanding that the reification of animals within neoliberalism has taken on dramatic dimensions. In this sense, the philosopher and feminist Donna Haraway also calls for feminism to take more action in favour of what she calls a 'multispecies ecojustice' (Haraway, 2019, p. 157), alluding to the need to extend the bonds of kinship that unite us, not only to other generations, but also to other species[9].

Final reflection: the practice of an imperfect reciprocity

This paper foregrounds the question of respect for animal otherness as a necessary condition for facing today's global challenges, considering that the reification of animals is not a universal or timeless phenomenon, but responds to a specific cultural evolution. Let us recall that the reification of animals has been treated as a symbolic factor that allows human societies to exploit them on a massive scale, to subject them to the logic of the market like any other object, or to contribute to their extinction by appropriating the natural resources they need to survive. From this point of view, the reification of animals favours the dynamics of commodification of the world that has led to the current environmental and climate crisis.

In contrast to this reality, this analysis takes as its point of reference the ecocentrism of Amazonian cosmovisions, as it constitutes a system that demands the consideration of the point of view of the non-human other. First, it has been explored how the recognition of the multiplicity of subjects beyond human beings inevitably reconfigures the identity boundaries that serve to exclude the non-human from our sphere of moral action. This recognition includes, as in the Amazonian case analysed, the celebration of the spiritual condition of our relationship with nature through rituals, healings or activities in which the community symbolically interacts with natural beings as a way of restoring balance, whether with the environment or in the body itself.

When this happens, the interaction between the two parties is articulated around the value of reciprocity, forcing the human to recognise some kind of interest or need from the perspective of the non-human other. In the Amazonian cosmovision, reciprocity is not something that necessarily depends on the symmetry and capacity of both parties. In the indigenous ways analysed, reciprocity means giving equal attention to the demands of the other and is the main factor that guarantees balance in a community. Moreover, reciprocal relationships cover the whole ecosystem because every living being constitutes a 'subject' (or person) with a soul, in what is identical to a human being, and with its own will and needs.

This type of interaction differs significantly from the rationalist schema which states that the goal of exchanges is the pursuit of individual benefit. From the Western perspective, it would not be possible to put two beings on the same level if they do not have the same capacity to reciprocate the consideration received with their actions. According to this logic, reciprocity would only be possible under conditions of equality.

[9] Another interesting reference is the American Carol Adams, author of a book that explores the relationship between the objectification of women and animals. Adams observes that both reified images of women and images of animals in Western culture are representations that are characterised by the absence of a referent, a phenomenon that she sees as underpinnig the real domination of women and animals within the patriarchal power structure (Adams, 2010).

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However, from a non-anthropocentric point of view, interdependence and eco-dependence are conditions that cut across human existence (Svampa, 2015) and that should serve to question the cultural ideal of autonomy and rupture with nature. In this sense, the approach to the 'other' is also determined by the value of care.

By analysing the idea of reciprocity in some Amazonian societies, it has been possible to explore a model of coexistence with nature in which the inequality of forces does not imply control or exploitation, observing that the exploitation of the environment to satisfy the need for food is regulated by moderation and by various forms of gratitude and care.

At the same time, care connects us to another issue discussed in this article. Although care is part of worldviews that contain ecocentric principles, this is a value that remains to some extent feminised, a phenomenon that marks women's role in the community and prevents their own interests from being recognised. Gender, as a marker of otherness, is also revealed as a limiting factor in reciprocity, and leads to an approach to male-female relations from the perspective of community feminism as a phenomenon comparable to capitalist exploitation of the land. Gender, as a marker of otherness, is also revealed as a limiting factor of reciprocity, leading community feminism to address relations between men and women as a phenomenon comparable to the capitalist exploitation of land.

From this perspective, the feminine continues to constitute, at a symbolic level, another form of otherness from which a series of benefits are derived for the community, because although the relationship between men and women is understood in terms of complementarity, in practice the responsibility for the reproduction of life falls to the female population. The analogy between the female body and the land expresses the control that societies exercise over women's bodies.

In synthesis, it is of particular interest to explore the ecocentric thinking contained in Latin America's ancestral ways of feeling and thinking, not because they conform a perfect model of reciprocity, but because they contain a non-anthropocentric way of relating to animal otherness, which obliges us to develop certain acts of reciprocity or recognition, even in conditions of unequal forces.

In Amazonian cosmovisions, the condition of inequality that characterises biodiversity, while present in material life, does not constitute an issue that eliminates the obligation to recognise all the animal and plant beings that make up their world. These worldviews prioritise the egalitarian condition prevailing in the existence of all beings in the non-material world, which implies that these visions are closely linked to a very specific type of spirituality. Spirituality associated with ecocentric thinking is oriented towards well-being as an experience arising from a sense of belonging that transcends human boundaries.

This logic contrasts with a binary model that excludes humans from nature and reifies all forms of life that can be economically exploited, and is particularly important in the attempt to denaturalise the reification of animals.

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