

Becoming Margarida: narratives of self in *experienceaffections**

Devir Margarida: narrativas de si em experienciamentos (resumo: p. 19)

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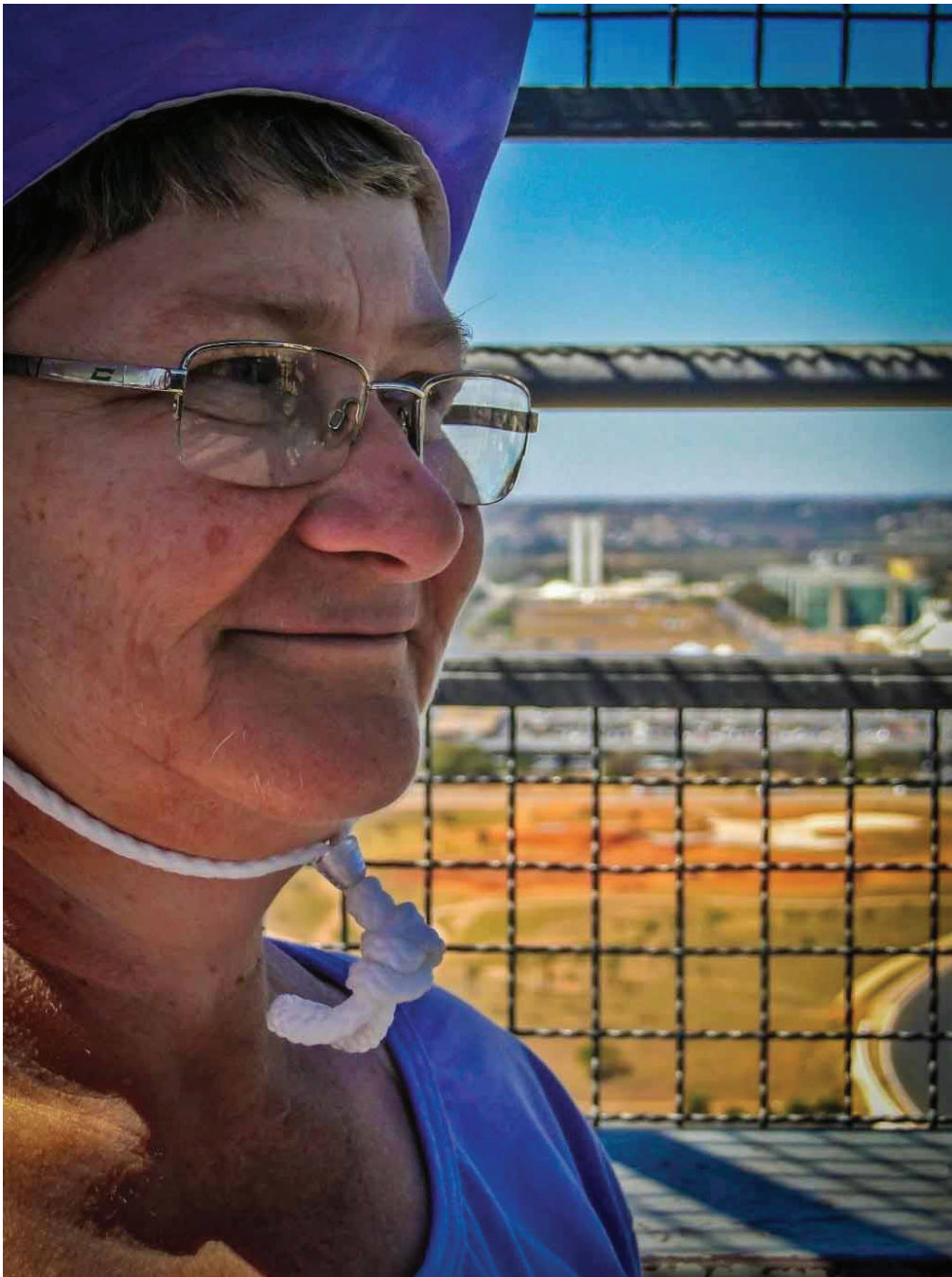
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In this rhizomatic essay, we evoke scenes, images and affections triggered by our participation, with rural women workers, in the 5th *Marcha das Margaridas*. Experience and narrative are powerful tools in the transmission of stories, in their uniqueness, difference and multiplicity. Writing demarcates a possible record, an aperture to be together in the production of an implicated and sensitive hearing of the effects produced by the experience of “becoming *Margarida*”. The traveled path bursts among fragments, discontinuous cuts, marked by *experienceaffections* in their ethical, aesthetical and political dimensions. With joy and multiple colors, women perform, in public, an act-manifesto in the fight against retrocessions and for the guarantee of rights. In their march, the *Margaridas* play a leading role in political actions for their communities’ welfare and question traditional gender stereotypes.

Keywords: Rural women workers. Political action. Social movement. Experience. Narrative.



August 2015. A bus. A trip. Travelling in highways during more than thirty-six hours from the point of departure – the city of Três de Maio – to the point of arrival: Brasília. What might seem a tiring trip due to the huge amount of hours, one day and one night, did not affect my decision in any way [...]. I didn't think twice about accepting a place on the bus and I confirmed my presence in the trip leading to the 5th *Marcha das Margaridas* straight away¹. (p. 147)

In this rhizomatic essay, we evoke scenes, images^(c) and affections triggered by our participation, with rural women workers, in the delegation of the northwestern region of the State of Rio Grande do Sul in the 5th *Marcha das Margaridas*, in Brasília – Brazil’s Federal District. The study is part of a larger project that resulted in the Doctoral dissertation entitled *Narratives of self in movement: a genealogy of the political action of rural women workers from the south of Brazil*¹ and in the audiovisual record *Margaridas, fighting and hitting the road*². When we evoke the territory produced by *Marcha das Margaridas* (2005), we count on experience and narrative as powerful tools “in the transmission of stories, in their uniqueness, difference and multiplicity”¹. (p. 22).

^(c) Image credits: the images were produced by the first author, Rita de Cássia Maciazeki-Gomes, at the V *Marcha das Margaridas*, in 2015.



Experience and narrative as other ways of speaking, listening, sharing and making the peripheral knowledge reverberate – knowledge that has been neglected by the official story. These minority existences, present in a daily oral tradition, begin to be forgotten when they cease to be told. Experience and narrative acquire political contours when they embody the fragments of a story that *is made by being*; a story that is non-linear, cut and (re)invented in the art of narrating, which makes it become an handicraft¹.



The testimony of the rural women workers' narratives produces a march-encounter-event^(d). In its nineteen years of existence, *Marcha das Margaridas* has consolidated itself as a broad struggle strategy that aggregates thousands of women from the countryside, from the waters and from the forests all over Brazil. With joy and multiple colors, the women perform⁴, in public, an act-manifesto based on agendas from the north to the south of Brazil in the fight against retrocessions and for the guarantee of rights. The March's political strength of mobilization breaks with the stereotypes of predictability, calmness, resignation and silence that are often attributed to women in society's mental imagery.

In the process of development and socialization of this record, there were countless challenges. Among them, how to transmit an experience and under what conditions⁵. And we state, here, our strategy of being available to accompany them, to be with them, to get moving, opening spaces for an implicated and sensitive hearing of the effects of narratives about the experience of "becoming *Margarida*", which constitutes these women's subjectivation process.

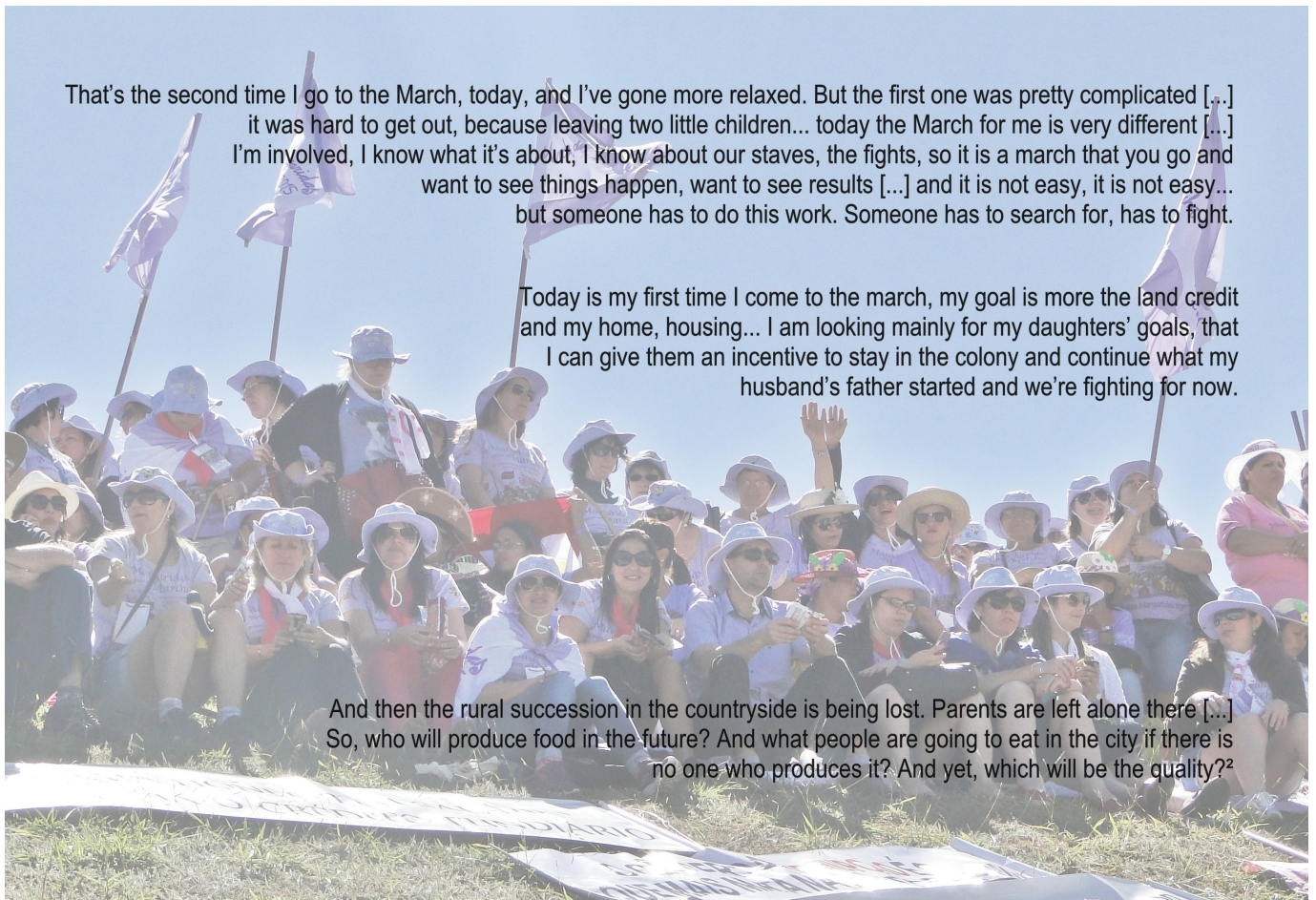
^(d) Encounter-event, in a Foucauldian inspiration of eventualization as an analytical movement in a genealogical perspective; historicization³.

Look, Brasília is blooming / Bold women are coming / Look, Brasília is blooming /
It's the will of the *Margaridas* / We come from all sorts of places / We have all types
of hair / Tall, short, our heads up high / We are the *Margaridas* / We who is always
sweating / This country is feeding / We are here to remember /
This country has to change!^(e).

^(e) Song: *O canto das Margaridas. Loucas de Pedra Lilás*. Theatrical Group of the Women of Recife/State of Pernambuco.



The articulation of writing-experience-narrative produced the need of a collective storytelling. The act of writing, like a sharpened blade for cutting and selecting a piece of reality, brings to the surface not one truth, but singular perspectives of a story.



Writing emerges as a rip, in (com)position, not dissociated from life in its most varied crossings¹. (p. 42)

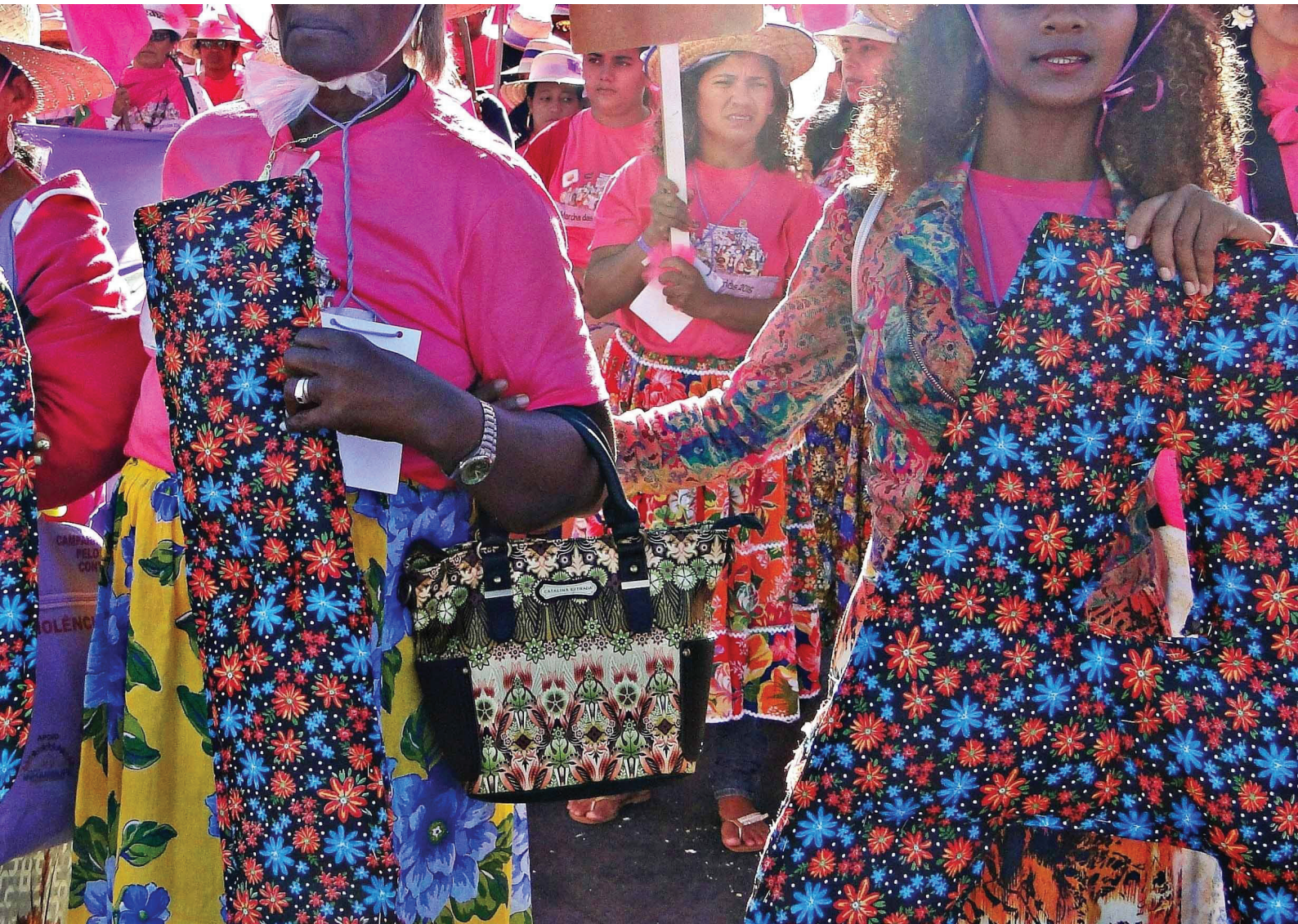
Writing-experience-narrative impregnated with affection, as a poetic-political inspiration distant from prescriptive manuals. The traveled path bursts among fragments, discontinuous cuts, impregnated with *experienceaffections* in their ethical, aesthetical and political dimensions. *Experienceaffection* connected with multiple, desiring, political, historical, economic and institutional inscriptions^{1,6}. *Experienceaffection* as the effect of a subjectivity production process crossed by collective intelligence and affectivities^{1,7}.

Writing as experience, or the experience of writing, in a Foucauldian perspective, [...] takes into account respect for the alterity of a becoming-with, in the idea that being one is becoming with many, in an attempt to unlearn who we are, breaking with self-centering as we hear different stories. Writing as an encounter-event, a strategy of resistance and creation, rupture with what is instituted. Writing-experience-narrative from which we emerge transformed. Writing-body, engendered in the construction of a collective plan of research that irradiates multiple experiences of us¹. (p. 28-9)



The *Margarida* flower knows that the seed / Generates the daily bread in the life of her people / But the seed must be planted / With no land, her people will always be slaves / We want lands because land is life [...] / In the ranks of her people she planted her flag / The oppressor laughed at her without fear / Who's seen nameless women face our power / One fine day there was a ghost / *Margarida* was one thousand, one thousand, one million [...] / With fresh blood she signed her name / She preferred to die in the fight instead of starving to death^(f).

^(f) Song *Ciranda para Margarida*, by Cida de Caiana dos Crioulos and Severina Luzia da Silva.



To celebrate, at this moment, above all, the strength and unity of the women who dare build this march, with much boldness, from our labor unions, our organizations, I'm sure that many women had to struggle with themselves, too, to say that it was possible, that we were going to arrive here with this amount of women².



I want to say here to all of you that accepted to face the challenge of being here, united, firm in the *Marcha das Margaridas*, that this won't end tomorrow when our march ends and we fold our flag and say the fifth march is over. No! We will continue to march until everyone has healthcare, until everyone has education, until everyone has a plot of land to produce. This is the desire of the rural women workers of Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná and Santa Catarina, and surely of the entire Brazil!²



Political action [...] as a potentiality for acting and interacting with the other, as part of life. Political action has begun to be understood as an intersubjective position; it is related to the conditions of appropriation and constitution of ways of life in different territories (countryside, forests, outback [sertão], desert, city, families, friends, fellow activists)¹. (p. 27)



It was very exciting, we didn't think it'd be like this, we didn't expect it'd be like this, the emotion is very strong [...] we feel something and we see that our fight is not in vain and it's worth it. We fight because people are united and fighting for what they want! ²





We don't want our conquests in this period to regress.

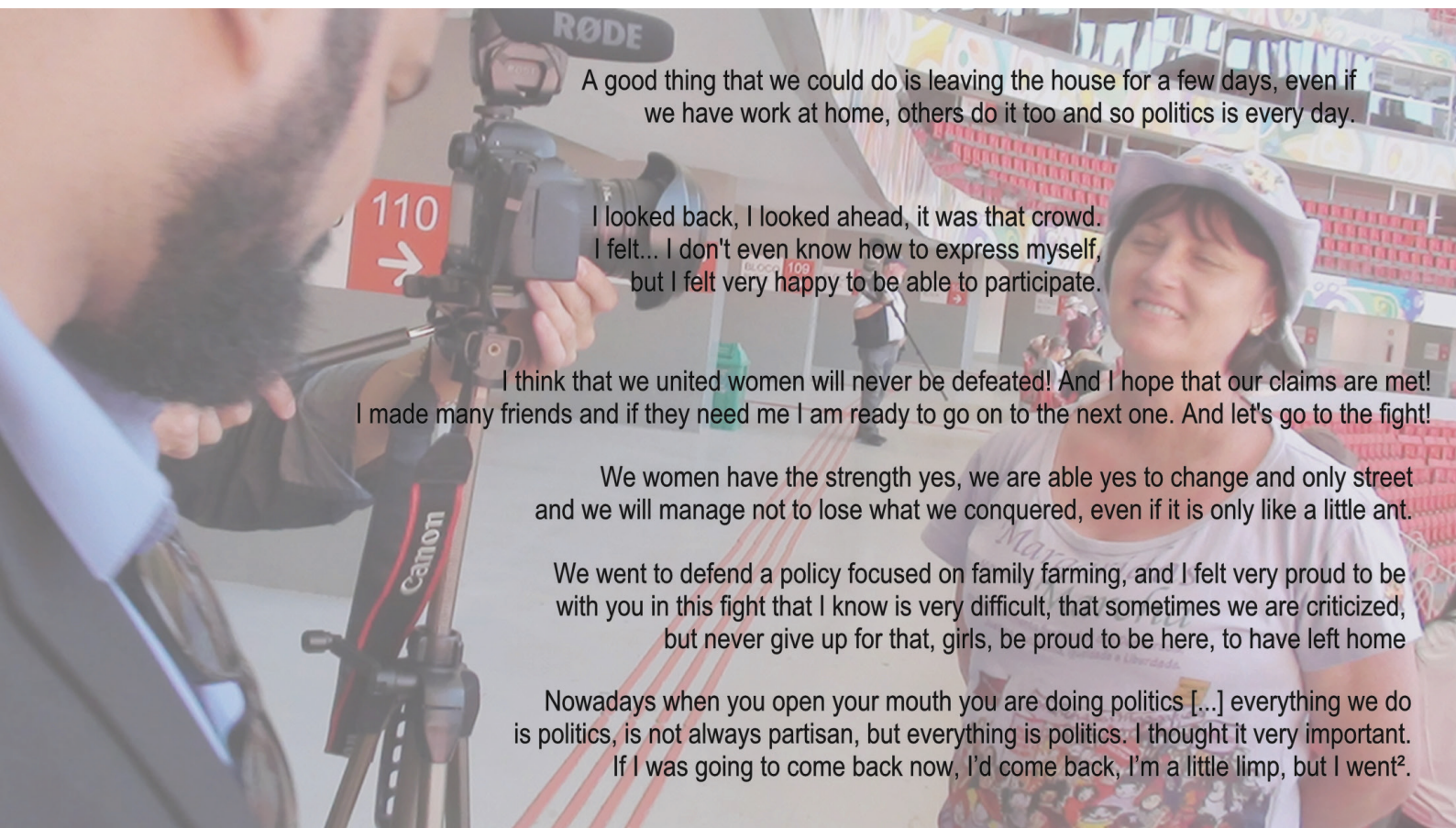
Like the rules for retirement, for example,
that they want to change: we don't want this!
Because it's something we've been struggling
for over a long way, and we don't want it to
stop and go back...²





[...] every action starts to be considered political, set up in an intersubjective position (self-already-being-with-the other), that is, the practice of self-care that takes into account the relationship with the other and triggers political subjectivation processes that constitute an ethos; practices pervaded by multiplicity, difference and singularity. Ways of interacting with oneself and with the other, grounded on restlessness and dissent and, even so, on the possibility of constituting a common place, a space for the recognition of alterity¹. (p. 27-8)





A good thing that we could do is leaving the house for a few days, even if we have work at home, others do it too and so politics is every day.

I looked back, I looked ahead, it was that crowd. I felt... I don't even know how to express myself, but I felt very happy to be able to participate.

I think that we united women will never be defeated! And I hope that our claims are met! I made many friends and if they need me I am ready to go on to the next one. And let's go to the fight!

We women have the strength yes, we are able yes to change and only street and we will manage not to lose what we conquered, even if it is only like a little ant.

We went to defend a policy focused on family farming, and I felt very proud to be with you in this fight that I know is very difficult, that sometimes we are criticized, but never give up for that, girls, be proud to be here, to have left home

Nowadays when you open your mouth you are doing politics [...] everything we do is politics, is not always partisan, but everything is politics. I thought it very important. If I was going to come back now, I'd come back, I'm a little limp, but I went?.

In August 2019, Brasília received the 6th *Marcha das Margaridas*, whose slogan is: “*Margaridas* in the struggle for a country with popular sovereignty, democracy, justice, equality and free from violence”. In a national political and economic scenario permeated by doubts, uncertainties and threats of retrocessions in historically conquered rights, we resume Nair’s message-invitation for mobilization: “My message: I want to invite... it’s worth participating in the movement of rural women workers and it is through them that we’ll conquer our space! Just struggle and hit the road!”²²



Authors' contributions

The two authors participated actively in all the stages of preparation of the manuscript.

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Neste ensaio rizomático, evocamos cenas, imagens e afetos acionados com a participação das mulheres trabalhadoras rurais da V Marcha das Margaridas. A experiência e a narração articulam ferramentas potentes na transmissão de histórias em sua singularidade, diferença e multiplicidade. A escrita demarca um registro possível, uma abertura para estar junto na produção de uma escuta implicada e sensível dos efeitos da experiência de um “devir Margarida”. O caminho percorrido irrompe entre fragmentos, recortes descontínuos, impregnado por experiênciafetos em sua dimensão ética, estética e política. Com alegria e colorido, as mulheres vêm à público performatizar um ato-manifesto na luta contra os retrocessos e pela garantia de direitos. Em marcha, as margaridas protagonizam ações políticas em prol do bem viver de suas comunidades e questionam os estereótipos tradicionais de gênero.

Palavras-chave: Mulheres trabalhadoras rurais. Ação política. Movimento social. Experiência. Narração.

En este ensayo rizomático evocamos escenas, imágenes y afectos accionados con la participación junto a mujeres trabajadoras rurales de la *V Marcha das Margaridas*. La experiencia y la narración constituyen herramientas potentes en la transmisión de historias en su singularidad, diferencia y multiplicidad. La escritura demarca un registro posible, una apertura para estar juntos en la producción de una escucha implicada y sensible de los efectos de la experiencia de un “devenir *Margarida*”. El camino recorrido irrumpe entre fragmentos, recortes discontinuos, impregnado por *experienciafectos* en su dimensión ética, estética y política. Con alegría y colorido, las mujeres vienen a público a performatizar un acto-manifesto en la lucha contra retrocesos y por la garantía de derechos. En marcha, las *margaridas* protagonizan acciones políticas para el bien vivir de sus comunidades y cuestionan los estereotipos tradicionales de género.

Palabras clave: Mujeres trabajadoras rurales. Acción política. Movimiento social. Experiencia. Narración.

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