
BODY, CARE, AND RESISTANCE IN TEACHING: AN ECOFEMINIST AND AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC READING**CORPO, CUIDADO E RESISTÊNCIA NA DOCÊNCIA: UMA LEITURA ECOFEMINISTA E AUTOETNOGRÁFICA**Tatiane Viana Figueiró¹ , Eliane Regina Crestani Tortola¹¹ Federal University of Paraná, Matinhos-PR, Brazil.**SUMMARY**

This text, an excerpt from a dissertation constructed through an autoethnographic narrative, revisits personal and professional experiences marked by symbolic and explicit violence, emotional overload, institutional silences, and practices of resistance in the context of teaching. The objective is to understand how body, care, and leisure are neglected dimensions in the teaching career, revealing tensions between daily school life and the social conditions that permeate women's lives. Autoethnography was used as a tool for critical analysis, articulating lived experience and reflection. The results indicate that teaching is traversed by patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial structures that naturalize female self-sacrifice, render suffering invisible, and devalue care as a pedagogical practice. The subjective reconstruction, based on confronting domestic violence, reveals that education can be a space for transformation, provided it is sustained by affective, critical, and liberating practices. It is concluded that autoethnographic writing is a tool for understanding teaching as a situated, political, and sensitive practice.

Keywords: Body. Domestic violence; Teaching; Care; Ecofeminism.**ABSTRACT**

This text, an excerpt from a dissertation constructed through an autoethnographic narrative, revisits personal and professional experiences marked by symbolic and explicit violence, emotional overload, institutional silencing, and practices of resistance in the context of teaching. The objective is to understand how body, self-care, and leisure are neglected dimensions in the teaching trajectory, revealing tensions between the school routine and the social constraints that permeate women's lives. Autoethnography was used as both material and method, serving as a tool for critical analysis and connecting lived experience with reflection. The results indicate that teaching is permeated by patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial structures that naturalize female self-abnegation, render suffering invisible, and devalue care as a pedagogical practice. Subjective reconstruction, stemming from the confrontation of domestic violence, reveals that education can be a space for transformation, provided it is sustained by affective, critical, and liberating practices. It is concluded that autoethnographic writing is a tool for understanding teaching as a situated, political, and sensitive practice.

Keywords: Body. Domestic violence; Teaching; Self-care; Ecofeminism.**Introduction**

In revisiting my teaching experiences (lived and narrated by the first author) through autoethnographic writing, memories emerge that are permeated by affections, institutional tensions, and silent strategies of resistance. As Miranda¹ proposes understanding teaching as a situated and politicized practice requires articulating subjective memory with the social conditions of the profession, revealing that teaching is also about confronting structures that silence, overburden, and render invisible. Between lesson plans, old notebooks, and personal records, I recognize that my trajectory was marked by hegemonic practices that reinforced gender stereotypes, devalued care, limited the female body, and denied leisure as a right^{2 3}.

Misogynistic and sexist practices are reproduced from childhood, even among the children themselves, because of a culture that originates in the family environment and is reinforced by the school. Girls learn early on that they should care, be quiet, and please, while boys are encouraged towards autonomy, strength, and leadership. As Yannoulas et al.⁴ point out, public space has historically been considered male territory, discouraging girls from

running, playing with toy cars, or expressing tastes that do not align with the expected feminine standard. This early socialization shapes female subjectivities marked by the renunciation of the body, leisure, and self-care, highlighting the denial of this possibility of ethical constitution of the female subject⁵, aspects that are reflected, in the future, in the overload faced by many women, especially in the exercise of teaching.

Women's bodies, historically disciplined, are marked by expectations of self-sacrifice and service. Gilligan⁶ points out that the female moral sense is guided by empathy and responsibility towards others, but this care needs to include the "self" so as not to become exhaustion. Butler⁷ contributes by highlighting that such patterns are not natural, but reiterated social constructions, influencing the formation and professional trajectories of women. In ecofeminism, Warren⁸ argues that care should not be a female obligation, but an ethical choice that confronts structures of domination, shifting it from renunciation to active resistance based on empathy, interdependence, and mutual respect. In teaching, this care becomes an ethical stance capable of transforming educational relationships and challenging oppressive models. Intersectionality, as Missagia⁹ highlights, shows that race, class, and territory deepen inequalities, shaping teaching experiences in a complex way.

These practices affect all environments that women frequent, whether personal or professional, impacting everything from relationships between colleagues to how teaching work is recognized (or devalued). The precariousness of time, excessive bureaucracy, lack of listening from management, and the stigmas against female teachers who dare to innovate are concrete expressions of these structures. In many cases, these symbolic violences coexist with physical and emotional aggressions experienced by women in their family and social contexts, revealing how patriarchy operates in various dimensions. As Freire¹⁰ points out, teaching requires courage to confront oppressive practices, and this courage often manifests itself in discreet gestures that affirm the dignity of the act of educating.

As a woman raised on the coast of Paraná, I lived alongside the reality of women workers who, amidst the mangroves, dealt with arduous tasks, from crab harvesting to domestic work, often marked by violence. This experience shaped my choice of education and the pursuit of development opportunities that integrated care for territory and the environment into daily school life, as a form of resistance to social oppression and environmental degradation. In this journey, Warren's ecofeminist perspective⁸ offers a key to understanding how educational practices articulate body, territory, and environment, recognizing connections, listening, and experience as legitimate ways of producing knowledge. This approach highlights that caring, feeling, and resisting also constitute ways of teaching and learning in contexts of inequality and erasure.

Working in Elementary School I, I was able to perceive that the absence of environmental practices in classrooms reveals a disconnect between scientific knowledge and the daily lives of children, particularly those living in coastal areas. Therefore, I understand that environmental education should be part of a transformative pedagogical project, expanded by ecofeminism and the ethics of care as theoretical tools that reflect the relationship between the exploitation of women and environmental degradation, analyzing how respect for the body, nature, and human relationships can be neglected or made invisible in educational practice^{6 11-14}.

Autoethnographic writing was chosen for this study as a methodology that values lived experience as a legitimate source of knowledge, highlighting that teaching transcends technical aspects and constitutes a political, affective, and creative act¹. According to Sá et al.¹⁵, autoethnography connects personal experiences to social and cultural contexts, allowing for critical reflections on trajectories in education. In addition to narrating experiences, it

denounces inequalities and reveals the limitations of traditional models. The body is seen as a space for the inscription of identities and social marks, articulating the individual with the collective in the educational field. Amidst bureaucratic demands, the importance of subtle practices, listening, manual activities, and pedagogical improvisation is highlighted, valuing the dignity of the educational process. These actions, often not formally recognized, represent a pedagogy of care and challenge the supposed neutrality of school knowledge, promoting a proposal for emancipatory education.

Based on autoethnography, I propose reflections that allow for an understanding of how my teaching practice was shaped, considering the experiences that underpinned this narrative, preserved not only in memory but also in class diaries, photographs, messages exchanged with colleagues, among others. Thus, I seek to present insights into my trajectory in Elementary School I, organized into three topics designed to deepen the discussion from different perspectives: a) first forays into teaching; b) pedagogical experiences developed over 11 years in a Municipal School on the Paraná coast; c) aspects of a local reality experienced specifically in the city of Paranaguá.

Therefore, the objective of this text is to present preliminary analyses of a professional master's dissertation in Environmental Sciences¹⁶, linked to the *National Network Graduate Program for Teaching Environmental Sciences (PROFICIAMB/UFPR)*. Using autoethnographic writing, the study addresses personal and professional memories related to sexist and misogynistic practices and the overload on women, identifying tensions in the teaching career. The work highlights body, care, and leisure as frequently neglected dimensions, but relevant for understanding teaching from a critical and politicized perspective.

The text is organized around three axes. The first analyzes how global capitalism and patriarchy deepen social, racial, and gender inequalities, degrade ecosystems, and marginalize coastal communities, advocating ecofeminism as a way to reconnect women, nature, and socio-environmental justice. The second discusses how patriarchy shapes women's bodies and subjectivities, limiting the right to leisure, self-care, and autonomy, and proposes, based on hooks¹⁷, Haraway¹⁸, Matos¹⁹, and Scott²⁰, to understand care as a political and collective practice that challenges exclusionary paradigms. Finally, it presents personal narratives of domestic, institutional, and symbolic violence, highlighting their impacts on the teaching trajectory and the path to feminism, especially ecofeminism, as a tool for resistance, transformation, and strengthening of a critical, affective, and liberating education.

In narrating my journey, I understand that it is not merely an individual experience, but part of a collective process of social construction within the teaching staff. Butler²¹ shows that bodies are not simply something given by nature but are constructed by social norms and discourses that define which lives can be recognized as legitimate. Thus, the "I" that writes opens itself to the "we" of the teachers who, according to the author, have their bodies produced by norms that define which lives matter, naturalizing self-cancellation and rendering everyday suffering invisible.

Coloniality, patriarchy, and environmental degradation: a critical essay.

Global capitalism promised universal progress, but it has generated inequalities, as seen on the coast of Paraná, where there are environmental degradation, increased poverty, and marginalization of communities²². The dominant logic prioritizes the accumulation of capital over the environment and social justice, perpetuating itself since colonialism with the exploitation of natural resources. According to Mies and Shiva¹², this process is an extension of coloniality aimed at generating wealth from the perspective of modern Western patriarchy.

This logic manifests itself concretely in coastal preservation areas, where the advance of capital modifies landscapes and imposes challenges on communities that depend on the environment for their subsistence. Fishers, crab gatherers, and local workers face the loss of natural resources, which compromises their food, income, and dignity. The scarcity of natural foods leads to dependence on industrialized products, contributing to malnutrition and the emergence of diseases. As Mies and Shiva¹² point out, “patriarchal systems preferred to maintain silence around these toxic substances”, highlighting the disregard for public health and the environment.

The human paradox of exploiting nature while simultaneously seeking to reconnect with it becomes evident in coastal tourism, where the excessive consumption of natural resources, waste generation, and insufficient infrastructure demonstrate how urban growth neglects the needs of local communities. Mies and Shiva¹² argue that “the exodus from cities to the countryside during the holidays is a manifestation of rootlessness”, indicating that this displacement does not represent a genuine reconnection with the environment, but rather a symptom of people's disconnection from their own territories and social relations. This logic reveals not only environmental and social impacts, but also structural inequalities that mark labor in Brazil. Many workers remain subjected to conditions inherited from slavery. Gonzalez²³ explains that, even outside factories, labor is controlled by the logic of capital, especially through commerce. Thus, both the exploitation of nature and the exploitation of labor expose a model that weakens bonds, territories, and rights, preventing truly emancipatory leisure or life experiences.

This exclusion disproportionately affects women and the Black population, revealing a structural pattern of marginalization that transcends the economic. Racism in Brazil is deeply rooted in culture and social structure, shaping access to work, education, and power. Gonzalez²³ identifies three theoretical approaches to race relations: the first blames Black people for their condition; the second, orthodox Marxist, reduces racism to the division of the working class; and the third, critical, highlights the racial privilege that favors the white group materially and symbolically. Even with equality of class or schooling, racial hierarchy persists. For the author, the white subject is favored “from their competitive advantage in filling the positions that, in the class structure, imply the most desired material and symbolic rewards”²³.

The commodification of nature ignores sustainable alternatives and weakens traditional knowledge. In Paranaguá-PR, port development has intensified air and water pollution, deforestation, and the degradation of mangroves. According to the Federal University of Paraná's *Jornal Comunicação [Communication Journal]*²⁴, investments are directed towards port modernization, ignoring better living conditions for the local population. The port administration does not prioritize job creation for residents, exacerbating the socioeconomic challenges of the region. Observing neighborhoods near the area where I teach, I saw destroyed mangroves, irregular housing, and families in at-risk areas. This experience reinforces Mies and Shiva's analysis¹² of how global capitalism destroys ecosystems and makes women's lives more precarious, perpetuating structural inequalities.

The oppression of women is intertwined with the exploitation of nature, historically reducing them to exploitable resources, ignoring their complexities and importance for life. Ecofeminism has its primary condition of existence as a resistance movement against patriarchal and capitalist logic, proposing a reconnection between women and nature, based on sustainability and the valuing of ancestral knowledge, in which both should be seen as living systems, deserving of respect¹². Barragán et al.²⁵ highlight that ecofeminism denounces the absence of an ecological approach in traditional progressive discourses, proposing concrete alternatives for a sustainable and cooperative development model. Mies and Shiva¹² reinforce

that this resistance must include the revaluation of indigenous and feminine knowledge, promoting more just and balanced societies.

Ecofeminism, by proposing a reconnection between women and nature, offers a concrete and transformative alternative. Incorporating this perspective into daily life and social struggles is essential to promote changes that respect diversity and strengthen environmental and gender justice. Aymoré²⁶ highlights that ecofeminism resists patriarchy by valuing this reconnection, recognizing the importance of the biosphere and women's experiences. Integrating these reflections into pedagogical work means building educational pathways that promote environmental awareness and confront the oppressions that permeate our lives and territories. As a woman and educator, I realize that our struggle also involves critical environmental education, valuing diversity and promoting social justice.

Feminism, body and care

Understanding how patriarchy and sexism shape the school environment and other social spheres requires a deep feminist awareness, as it is a system of domination that manifests itself subtly in everyday life, often going unnoticed, but shaping our relationships, including our own bodies¹⁷. Structural inequality directly affects women's right to care, leisure, and health. Many face double shifts, low wages, and the overload of invisible domestic work, added to formal work. In many cases, the domestic space, which should be one of protection and rest, becomes a place of violence that, still naturalized in many cultures, imposes on women a routine of fear, silencing, and emotional exhaustion, further hindering access to self-care¹⁴. For hooks¹⁷, "what happened most was that [women] realized they were working long hours at home and long hours at work".

Throughout history, the female body has been regulated by social norms that restrict the expression of pleasure and associate women with motherhood and service provision. Female sexuality, especially that of Black women and marginalized groups, is marked by invisibility, exploitation, and stigmatization²³. This is reflected both in social controls and in media representations, where the female body appears as an object in music and advertising, for example, reinforcing traditional patterns and limiting their autonomy²⁷.

Leisure, in this context, is seen as a privilege, not a right. Many women lack the time, space, or autonomy to care for themselves, engage in physical activities, or simply rest. The culture of productivity and domestic servitude reinforces the idea that the female body exists to serve, not to be lived freely. Claiming self-care, pleasure, and rest is, therefore, a political and feminist act. As Matos¹⁹ points out, it is necessary to reconstruct the paradigms of knowledge so that practices such as self-care and leisure are recognized as legitimate dimensions of women's lives.

Haraway¹⁸ suggests political alliances based on affinities and common goals, questioning fixed identities and proposing inclusive policies by recognizing differences. Care should be seen as a collective practice that challenges normative patterns of well-being. Gender studies propose an emancipatory science, valuing the deconstruction of traditional paradigms. Matos¹⁹ defends critical multiculturalism to promote diversity and make science more plural, which leads me to consider care, body, and leisure as central dimensions of social life.

Scott²⁰ argues that gender is intertwined with power structures, and that the body is a political territory where meanings and rights are contested. The author proposes that gender be used as an analytical tool to understand how sexual differences are organized and hierarchized in society, influencing institutions, discourses, and social practices. This perspective reinforces the importance of considering care and leisure as a right^{2,3}, which must be guaranteed by public

policies sensitive to gender inequalities.

Connecting these theoretical perspectives makes me realize that the feminist struggle is not just about formal equality, but about the right to care, pleasure, and bodily dignity. As a teacher/researcher, I see how these discussions challenge traditional scientific paradigms and drive concrete social transformations. The recognition of diversity and the social construction of identities is a fundamental part of my practice, whether in the classroom or in the exchanges that emerge from daily challenges^{17 19}.

The need for strategic alliances, as Haraway¹⁸ argues, is reflected in my trajectory. Feminism needs to constantly reinvent itself to include all women and ensure that self-care and leisure are not a luxury, but a right. The barriers I faced, both academic and social, exemplify the struggle for a more democratic science, which demands more than theoretical recognition; it requires active engagement in the deconstruction of exclusionary patterns. I understood that it is not enough to observe discussions about gender and power from the outside; it is necessary to live them, question them, and transform them. It is in these spaces that a feminism is built that represents the multiplicity of voices and bodies that make up our society.

Memory, body and teaching: a journey from oppression to ecofeminist resistance.

Throughout my journey as a woman and educator, I have faced violence that was not restricted to the professional environment. These were aggressions that affected my body, my subjectivity, and my ability to exist with dignity. These experiences affected me physically, emotionally, and psychologically, revealing how much self-care and leisure are rights denied to women, whose bodies obey standards and performativities, while care needs to include the "self" so as not to turn into exhaustion, which shows that the violence experienced is not only personal, but structural⁶.

This denial also extends to leisure, which, when gendered, shows how sexual differences structure power relations, and its absence, especially in motherhood, reveals that free time is not recognized as a dimension of citizenship, revealing social norms that impose self-sacrifice on women²⁰. In this context, self-care and leisure are only recognized when connected to women's material conditions, as Matos¹⁹ argues, when proposing new paradigms to legitimize these dimensions neglected by patriarchal and capitalist structures. Thus, motherhood also influences teaching practice and exposes the struggle over the bodies and time of female teachers, an experience reflected in my family life, where care was learned through shared practice.

My teaching career began at home, learning from my mother, also a teacher, helping her create playful activities, in a time without internet and with few financial resources. Those were days and nights of mutual help, where I learned that care is not just in theory, but manifests itself in shared, silent, and creative practice. Care, therefore, is a relational ethic, built on attention to the other and mutual responsibility, far from being merely a feminine obligation, but an ethical and pedagogical practice capable of transforming educational relationships.

In my teacher training, I had teachers who sparked my desire to learn, others not so much. Through numerous, though unpaid, internships, I was led to various schools in Paranaguá, including islands and colonies, where classes were composed of children of different age groups. Even with theoretical teachings, practice demanded more than technique: it required presence, listening, and improvisation, dimensions that permeate the body of the teacher, understood as a political territory, a result of social construction and traversed by norms that regulate it, being disciplined and available, but also capable of resisting and reconfiguring these same norms²¹. One experience that marked my teaching career occurred at the *Social*

Service of Commerce (SESC) in Paranaguá, when I participated in a play as a white woman, in a role intended for enslaved Black women, because no one else wanted to take it. This episode made me reflect on the roots of structural racism and the colonial legacy that influence attitudes and everyday situations.

Racism shapes even the most subtle gestures, especially in Paraná, marked by a strong racial hierarchy and where the teaching experience cannot be universalized. hooks¹⁷ highlights patriarchy operating in multiple dimensions, but it is fundamental to consider the racial and territorial differences that increase the vulnerability of certain groups. Gonzalez²³ shows that the pact of whiteness maintains privileges even without explicit recognition, while the myth of racial democracy hides exclusionary practices that render Black women invisible. Revising my social position is part of the ecofeminist ethic, which values interdependence and recognizes historical inequalities, articulating body, nature, and care in a critical way. My racial privilege protects me from the marks of racism, while the school reaffirms the centrality of whiteness.

Although teaching had its positive aspects, I chose to work in retail to avoid the overload and low salaries of private schools. I maintained my dream of attending university, studying at irregular hours while facing prejudice, long hours, insecurity, and adverse conditions. In customer service, I experienced rudeness, disrespect, and invisibility, which deeply marked this period. Considering ecofeminism, these experiences express what Mies and Shiva¹² denounce: the capitalist-patriarchal logic that exploits women and nature as inexhaustible resources, producing illnesses and violence that become normalized in everyday life.

I felt prejudice from some colleagues who considered working in commerce as an inferior profession, but I can affirm that it is not. I learned that classism is a persistent trait of the coloniality of power²⁸. As Gonzalez²³ and Mies and Shiva¹² point out, the Western capitalist logic, deeply patriarchal, hierarchizes bodies, knowledge, and occupations, devaluing women's work in spaces considered peripheral. For these authors, the system not only exploits but also silences and renders invisible women who work outside the centers of power, reinforcing structural inequalities that cut across race, class, and gender.

These experiences made me think about what it means to care in vulnerable contexts. Warren's ecofeminist philosophy⁸ helps to understand care as something that involves the body, the place where we live, and the knowledge we build. She proposes an ethics based on listening and connection between people, showing that knowledge also arises from experiences, bonds, and daily life. This way of thinking is very important when we talk about teaching in peripheral regions close to nature, such as the coast. Caring, in this context, is also resistance: it is valuing local knowledge, practices that are often ignored, and the bodies that sustain the school with simple but powerful gestures.

Another question I began to reflect on: how much time did I have for leisure, for self-care? The answer is simple, none. Women, especially in vulnerable contexts, are socially conditioned to 'manage everything'; in this sense, caregiving (as a domestic task) is configured as something imposed, a silent obligation that transforms into an overload. The female body, in this context, is demanded, exploited, and neglected. Leisure and rest are superfluous, and care is restricted to the family environment (motherhood, marriage) and not to care as self-recognition and part of the network of relationships that sustains life⁸.

During college, when I depended on the bus, I would get off in a dark and dangerous port area, marked by warehouses, nightclubs, and a strong male presence. One night, I was chased by a man and a woman who hurled sexist insults, a situation that left me trapped and scared, close to midnight. Luckily, my father picked me up that day, and the people who were chasing me ran away. But the question that kept echoing in my mind was: if it had been a man getting off the bus, would he have been chased? From Warren's ecofeminist perspective⁸, this

experience reveals how structures of gender domination organize territories and produce specific vulnerabilities for women, who need to exercise self-care to survive in these spaces marked by violence. I realized, based on Mies and Shiva¹², that the female body and nature are living systems exploited by patriarchy. And public space, which should belong to everyone, becomes a territory of threat for women, especially when they are alone, vulnerable and invisible⁸.

In 2013, married and experiencing motherhood, I returned to work as a temporary teacher for the state of Paraná. My marital life was not going well; I lived with an abusive husband and needed something to occupy my mind and distance me from family conflicts. I remember the milk leaking from my breast and the pain I felt from being away from my son. Even today I still dream about it. Like so many working mothers, I was forced to wean, not by choice, but for survival. As Vivas²⁹ points out, the experience of motherhood is often traversed by social and economic pressures that limit women's autonomy, imposing painful decisions that conflict with the affection and care we wish to offer.

In 2014, after passing a public exam to become a teacher in Paranaguá, I fulfilled a dream, but I soon faced institutional silencing. From my arrival, I perceived prejudices related to my previous experiences and a different treatment compared to other newcomers, in an environment that valued conformity and discouraged creative proposals, isolating those who differed. As Scott²⁰ analyzes, institutions reinforce rigid hierarchies and control behaviors, excluding dissenting voices. Amidst demands and episodes of verbal violence from the administration, there were days when I couldn't even enter the classroom; I cried, my body trembling, overwhelmed by frustration. In this context, the support of two colleagues (one taking over my class and the other remaining with me) represented a breath of fresh air within a system that demands but cares little. This gesture confirms Gilligan's⁶ reflection on the power of care among women as a force for reconstruction.

This episode made me understand that a teacher's body is not just a work tool, it is also a space of affection, vulnerability, and resistance. The school, which should be a territory of transformation, often becomes a place of pain. But it is also there that alliances, listening, and gestures that sustain the journey arise. However, the biggest conflict was not at school, it was at home. Even though I heard accounts from other teachers about the violence they suffered at the hands of their husbands, I just thought it was pointless to tell anyone. I felt that no one could do anything for me. Silence was a form of protection, but also of imprisonment. As hooks¹⁷ points out, patriarchy teaches women to endure, to remain silent, to take responsibility for pain that does not belong to them.

I remember one day when my son was sick and, as usual, my spouse blamed me. That morning, close to the time to leave for work, I had to run around the yard, circling the car, as if the movement could protect me from the blame being imposed on me. I don't remember how many times I ran, but the person caught up with me and managed to hit me. I went to work crying. I arrived at school and washed my face, but it was still red. A classmate, curious, came to joke with me and laughed. Without me saying anything, looking down, she commented that all couples fight and that it was normal, in a sarcastic tone. I didn't say anything, but I wanted to scream and say that it wasn't normal; it was something that left me very distressed. I just washed my face again and went to the classroom. The colleague's reaction, in saying that "every couple fight" reveals how social norms normalize violence, regulate behaviors⁷, showing that gender organizes power relations, evidence that this violence is not only personal, but structural²⁰.

Today I reflect: how could I be a cheerful teacher if I myself wasn't well? How could I conduct a lighthearted class if my body carried invisible marks? That's how I lived, quiet,

worried. hooks¹⁷ explains that "patriarchal violence at home is based on the belief that it is acceptable for a more powerful individual to control others through various forms of coercive force". The school often doesn't perceive what goes on behind the red eyes. The teacher's body is not limited to being a work tool, but also constitutes a space of affection and resilience. Even in the face of adversity, pedagogical work continues with the commitment to teach, resist, and promote transformation.

Another situation involving the school also deeply affected me. After a conflict between parents at the institution, I conducted a class with playful and reflective activities aimed at discussing the sexist care patterns imposed by society, based on what hooks¹⁷ argues: that feminism should permeate all spaces of daily life, including the school, as a practice of collective transformation. A student recorded part of the class on video and, later, her mother took this recording to the Department of Education. I was summoned to provide explanations, and this left me quite shaken, even though everything was resolved after the presentation of the lesson plan.

However, what affected me most happened outside of school: I asked my spouse for a ride, which irritated him. During the meeting, I noticed his anger through the window and got out nervously. I was greeted in the car with shouts, shoves, and insults. I didn't cry to avoid making the situation worse, remaining silent, overwhelmed by sadness and lack of support. The verbal and physical violence deeply affected me. I felt guilty, even without reason, and when I got home, I continued my routine as if nothing had happened; after all, women have to 'take care' of everything, because, according to patriarchal thinking, that is their task. This logic naturalizes control and domination in the domestic environment, causing many women to live under subtle or explicit forms of coercion, enduring violence as part of their role, as stated by hooks¹⁷. This structure imposes silence as a survival strategy, transforming the home, which should be a space of care, into a territory of fear and submission.

In October 2014, while I was busy preparing gifts for Children's Day at school, my personal life was in turmoil. My son's father, claiming depression, stopped working, and after a conversation with his mother, I became the target of a series of verbal and physical assaults. On the 10th, while at work, I received a series of threatening phone calls. When I left school, I encountered him on the way and was chased in my car. I stopped in an open parking lot and was assaulted inside the vehicle. I was almost strangled; I couldn't start the car because I was trembling and my legs and arms were weak, my voice wouldn't come out, I could only think quickly and managed to honk the horn. My son was screaming in despair beside me. People looked at the car but did nothing. I only managed to escape thanks to the intervention of two municipal guards.

Even though I was injured, I went to work the next day, hiding the physical and emotional scars. It was Children's Day, and I needed to bring the presents. I remained silent. My colleagues just watched me from afar, worried. I spoke with my supervisor, I was comforted, we cried together. Gilligan⁶ warns that care needs to include the 'self' so it doesn't turn into exhaustion. The experience of hiding physical and emotional scars to meet professional demands shows how social patterns encourage silence in the face of pain. I then began a process of emotional reconstruction with medical, legal, and psychological help. Reflecting on this episode, I question to what extent dedication to teaching and to others prevails over personal care. Although I was emotionally fragile, I maintained my focus on professional demands, aligning myself with patterns that encourage silence in the face of pain and prioritize the well-being of others over one's own. This account highlights the need to review self-care practices, recognizing it as a fundamental right.

Freire¹⁰ states that educational practice is an act of freedom and humanization, and breaking silence in the face of pain, as I experienced, constitutes both a denunciation of oppression and an announcement of new possibilities. Considering ecofeminism and the ethics of care proposed by Warren⁸, I understood that self-care is also a pedagogical and political gesture, since the teaching staff cannot be reduced to a mere instrument of labor. This perception resonates with hooks¹⁷, for whom feminism invites women to recognize their value and place themselves at the center of their lives. The narrated episode marked my rupture: I left an abusive relationship, went through the pandemic, and returned to a school transformed by exhaustion, bureaucracies, inequalities, and vulnerabilities of gender and race²³. Colleagues sometimes expressed concern, sometimes used my story as inspiration, leading me to transform pain into strength and to recognize, in the ecofeminist ethics of interdependence, paths to empower women and girls.

Over time, I realized that my experiences impacted my teaching approach. After breaking free from the abusive relationship, I became more open to children, recognizing how suffering had closed me off from the world. During my master's degree, while studying feminism and ecofeminism, I understood that female silencing stems from patriarchal structures, not individual failings. Inspired by hooks¹⁷ and Warren⁸, transforming pain into voice became an ethical and political act, strengthening my autonomy and creating networks of solidarity with students and colleagues. Resuming travel, live music, physical activities, playing the double bass, and reconnecting with loved ones brought me closer to what Bertollo and Schwengber³ call the "pre-politics of sport and leisure", reaffirming leisure as a right and a space for autonomy. Thus, I recognize that, as a teacher, I can be an agent of transformation, because teaching, as hooks¹⁷ states, is a political-affective act that makes the classroom a territory of resistance, acceptance, and freedom.

In this process of reconstruction, ecofeminism began to make even more sense to me, challenging all forms of domination and valuing an ethics of care based on interdependence, empathy, and listening⁸. I understood that care, when chosen and recognized as an ethical practice, can be a form of resistance and transformation, and leisure as a right, without guilt. The classroom, then, became for me a space where body, territory, and knowledge meet. Teaching also became caring for myself, for the children, for the environment, and for relationships. This perspective helped me legitimize my history, my affections, and my daily gestures as part of who I am as a woman and as a teacher.

Conclusions

In revisiting my journey as a woman, mother, educator, and *caicara* – a term referring to the natives of the Paraná coast – through autoethnographic writing, I recognize that my memories are traversed by affections, institutional tensions, and silent strategies of resistance. I understood that recognizing teaching as a critical practice requires intertwining personal experiences with the social and territorial contexts that shape the profession, revealing that teaching is also about confronting structures that silence and overburden.

Through feminist studies, especially ecofeminist studies, I understood that women's suffering is structural and that feminism calls us to recognize our value and break the silence in the face of the patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial logic that simultaneously exploits women and nature. This understanding revealed that my pain was not individual, but an expression of a larger system. Autoethnography also revealed that body, care, and leisure, often neglected in the lives of women, especially teachers, are fundamental dimensions for a liberating education.

Thus, teaching also becomes an act of courage, present in the daily gestures of resistance and care.

Today I move forward with courage, because every gesture of trust, every hug, and every shared story reminds me that my presence matters. And that, by transforming my pain into a voice, I can help other women and girls find theirs. As Lorde^{30;1} says, “when women’s words cry out to be heard, each of us must recognize our responsibility to bring those words out, read them, share them, and examine them in their relevance to life”. This text is for me, for them, and for all those who still live in silence or who can no longer speak.

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Tatiane Viana Figueiró: Data curation, Formal analysis, Project administration, Resources, Software, Validation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing;

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