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Rethinking memory, violence and environment in literature

Andressa Maia
University of New Mexico, amaia@unm.edu

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My research analyzes literature and cultural production as sites of memory where environmental discourses that have been silenced by official historiography materialize. Through two contemporary literature Brazilian novels: *De mim de já nem se lembra* (2016), from Luiz Ruffato and *Ainda estou aqui* (2016), from Marcelo Rubens Paiva, I examine the enactment of forgotten narratives that have been suppressed in institutional discourses and the physical and symbolical spaces from which they have been excluded in Brazilian history. My goal is to elucidate how the performativity of oral narratives interwoven in literary texts opens space for the representation of silenced voices and brings new discourses to the discussion of the forgotten atrocities committed by governments and powerful elites throughout the history of the New World since European colonization. A central argument in my work is that the enactment of memory functions as a form of restitution for the voiceless victims of environmental crimes and violence, and as a way of reimagining the environment.

My theoretical approach is grounded in the interdisciplinary field of environmental humanities for its attention to the decentralization of voices that have traditionally defined what constitutes the environment, culturally and politically. It draws on Rob Nixon’s (2018) theory of slow violence to study the difficulties of communicating profound damage that although diffused across time and space, is characterized by invisibility, absence of spectacle, and lack of theatrical or dramatic display. My methodological approach is enriched by the dialogue between different disciplines in the humanities—such as literature, critical theory, history, and anthropology—and applies discourse analysis to the investigation of the framing and (re)framing of environmental discourses.

1 “Nobody remembers about me anymore” and “I am still here”, both translated by researcher.