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THE SYMPOIETIC JOURNALISM OF THE REDE WAYURI:

a make-with from the edges of the planet



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ABSTRACT – The aim of this paper is to investigate the modes of production of the Rede Wayuri, a network of interconnected indigenous communicators from 23 ethnic groups from the upper part of the Negro River, in the state of Amazonas, Brazil. We call as journalistic network the connection between all human and non-human beings that makes it possible to produce a translation of the world. We present net-activism as an approach to thinking about the narratives from the edges of the planet and, finally, use the concept of sympoiesis to define the production of the Rede Wayuri as sympoietic journalism.

Key words: Journalism. Sympoiesis. Digital networks. Ancestral technologies. Amazon rainforest.

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O JORNALISMO SIMPOIÉTICO DA REDE WAYURI: um fazer-com das bordas do planeta

RESUMO – O objetivo deste artigo é investigar os modos de produção da Rede Wayuri, formada por comunicadores indígenas de 23 etnias do Alto Rio Negro, no estado do Amazonas, no Brasil. Denominamos rede jornalística a conexão entre todos os seres humanos e não-humanos que possibilitam a produção de uma tradução do mundo. Apresentamos o net-ativismo como uma abordagem para pensar as narrativas das bordas do planeta e, por fim, acionamos o conceito de simpoiese para definir a produção da Rede Wayuri como um jornalismo simpoiético.

Palavras-chave: Jornalismo. Simpoiese. Redes digitais. Tecnologias ancestrais. Floresta Amazônica.

EL PERIODISMO SIMPOIÉTICO DE REDE WAYURI: un hacer-con desde los bordes del planeta

RESUMEN – El objetivo de este artículo es investigar los modos de producción de la Rede Wayuri, formada por comunicadores indígenas del Alto Río Negro, en el estado de Amazonas, Brasil. Llamamos red periodística a la conexión entre todos los seres humanos y no humanos que hace posible producir una traducción del mundo. Presentamos el net-activismo como un enfoque para pensar las narrativas desde los bordes del planeta e, finalmente, utilizamos el concepto de simpoiesis para definir la producción de la Rede Wayuri como un periodismo simpoiético.

Palabras clave: Periodismo. Simpoiesis. Redes digitales. Tecnologías ancestrales. Selva amazónica.

1 Introduction

Indigenous peoples in Brazil are increasingly connecting to digital social networks. It started with the dissemination of public connectivity policies in cities and villages (Pereira, 2023) but has since been accelerated with the emergence of mobile devices and internet connections. These peoples are now appropriating technologies and expanding their territorial networks. This has changed their living conditions, as stated by Massimo Di Felice and Eliete Pereira (2017, p. 42), and has further interwoven an ecology that was already well connected, even before the arrival of the internet, by linking “the peoples, their cultures, their territories, and their biodiversity to digital information circuits through a unique techno-communicative-habitational dynamism”. This process has created new ways of translating and making local cultures and knowledge visible, paving the way for innovative experiences of net-activism (Di Felice, 2017).

Recent data from the 2022 Census¹ (Secretaria, 2023)

shows a sharp increase in Brazil's indigenous population: there are currently more than 1.69 million indigenous peoples, 88% more than recorded in the previous survey (in 2010). The 2022 Census included more indigenous peoples in its data collection process and began to share monitoring with the National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (Funai)². There was also an increase in the number of legally demarcated Indigenous Lands³, from 505 in 2010 to 573 in 2022. This increase is also the result of an ongoing process of indigenous self-recognition and the resurgence of ethnic groups once considered to be extinct. This is due to an excess of folklore interpretations from emerging indigenous voices within and outside the contemporary media scene (Laia & Guimarães, 2022), fostered by the production of autonomous narratives (Laia, 2023) on digital platforms, which have scheduled media discussions.

We recognize platforms as “digital infrastructures fed by data, organized by algorithms and governed by property relations” whose affordances are closely linked to the logic of capital (Grohmann & Salvagni, 2023, p. 31), yet we also understand that digital platforms and social practices are not mutually exclusive (Van Dick, 2016). Despite several contradictions, digital platforms reverberate voices that, up until that time, were not being produced and disseminated in the media and, precisely for this reason, were translated only by those who traditionally occupied the positions of mediators in the media. This reductive experience created an image of people who were on the outside of the “club of humanity”, in the words of the Brazilian indigenous thinker Ailton Krenak (2019, p. 14). They were excluded from the mass media space.

Based on these contributions, we observed the work conducted by the Rede Wayuri of indigenous communicators, a network which operates in the upper part of the Rio Negro⁴, in the Brazilian state of Amazonas. The initiative gained momentum through its work in combating disinformation in villages during the covid-19 pandemic. The network produces communication about the forest from a non-anthropocentric perspective, from the gaps of the digital platforms, the interests of big tech, and the algorithmic management of information flows, oriented towards capitalization. Based on this experience, we mapped strategies for appropriating and using ancestral technologies and digital networks in the construction and circulation of a possible journalism from the edges of the planet, or, in other words, a sympoetic journalism, whose mode of production

is marked by a certain make-with (Haraway, 2016). This experience considers journalism more as a production network that involves humans and non-humans than as the result of the action of one or a few human subjects.

In this sense, this research follows Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's suggestion that "we are obliged to unconditionally respect what the indians⁵ and all the other 'minor' peoples of the planet say, the extranational minorities that still resist total dissolution by the modernizing blender of the West" (Kopenawa & Albert, 2015, p. 15). In other words: overcoming the folkloric interpretations of emerging indigenous voices within and outside the contemporary intellectual scene, "taking their words not as metaphors, but as concepts or analogues of concepts, as we prefer to call these thought operators that have not gone through the modernizing blender of academia" (Laia & Guimarães, 2022, p. 3). For this study, we looked to the interconnected network of indigenous communicators in the interior of the Amazon for inspiration to consider and produce conditions for creating journalism networks that take on less of a human focus and more of a forest-based perspective produced by the networks that inhabit it.

2 Possible journalisms based on net-activism

On June 11, 2021, 17-year-old Darnella Frazier won a special Pulitzer Prize citation, one of the most important journalism awards in the United States and the world (Portal, 2021). She is not a journalist by trade, but with her smartphone, she recorded the police actions that resulted in the death of George Floyd, in Minneapolis, U.S., at the height of the covid-19 pandemic. Floyd was approached by white police officer, Derek Chauvin, who proceeded to restrain him on the ground, kneeling on his neck until he ultimately died of asphyxiation. This story of racism became known worldwide after Frazier's video was used extensively in the press and ended up being used as evidence of human rights violations in court that found the former police officer guilty of the death.

The Pulitzer Prize recognized Darnella's role in recording George Floyd's murder, but this gesture does not appear to be unique or even pioneering. The need to understand journalistic activity in a broader way, as a network of connections, or even as a constellation of possible journalisms, gains urgency from the "networks of

indignation and hope” (Castells, 2013) inaugurated by the Arab Spring, when mobile devices, particularly smartphones, became tools for recording evidence and protecting oneself in protests. This led the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), an international organization for the protection of journalists based in New York City, to begin considering not only the protection of journalists themselves, but also the entire production network, as former CPJ researcher Sarah Rafsky explained in 2015:

In the early days of the revolution in Syria, a lot of the videos were being sent by taxi drivers who were recording on their phones. If a taxi driver was recording and a sniper from Assad's army saw him and shot him because he saw him taking newsworthy recordings, we counted that case as violence against the press. (...) We look at who the person is, what they were doing, what happened, and then we decide on a case-by-case basis, but in general, we do not discriminate between a professional journalist and a non-professional journalist. (Medeiros, 2022, pp. 92-93).

In other words, if the actor is involved in recording or disseminating the image, he or she is a part of the network. It is a definition that considers the connections that produce journalism, rather than considering this action as coming from a stable, identifiable place that builds up the journalist's profession. The digitalization of communication and the spread of mobile devices that can produce narratives that “break through the media blockade” (Castells, 2013) are important factors behind the decentralization of the journalist's role. This decentralization, which intensified between the Arab Spring in 2011 and June 2013 in Brazil, has continued to this day and fits into the third phase of net-activism (Di Felice, 2017). This concept was defined by Di Felice (2013) as a new form of digital activism that develops in and on the network, maximizing the possibilities of autonomy, sustainability, and creativity within the scope of new global movements.

These are characterized not by opposition to globalization, but by the advent of a global citizen identity, an inhabitant of digital networks, which does not deny local diversity and whose demands and global action agendas advance in the direction of meeting common needs, such as democracy, equity, conscious consumption, and sustainability. (Di Felice, 2013, p. 10).

Since the first internet connections, when the World Wide Web was still pioneering the way, there were already experiences resulting from the synergy between people, movements, and

digital technologies that belonged to the first phase of net-activism known as preparatory (Di Felice, 2017). At the time, this involved the dissemination of information among members, the exchange of electronic messages, and the organization of debates via forums, discussions, and teleconferences (Magalhães, 2018).

On a less instrumental and more synergistic level between people, movements, and digital technologies, the Mexican Zapatism emerged in the mid-1990s and represented a second phase of experimentation with the first forms of social conflicts, disseminated across the internet (Di Felice, 2017). This Mexican indigenous movement has taken advantage of the possibilities opened up by digital not only as a medium, but as a new form of social participation. The Zapatistas broadcast their meetings from their territories and spread their narratives, not only about their struggles, but about their worldviews, and gathered support from entities and movements throughout the country and abroad.

Since the 2000s, the third phase of net-activism (web 2.0 and social media platforms) has been marked by an increase in the number of protests, networked actions, subversions of various kinds, and the formation of effective distributed networks of interaction between people, connection devices, databases, and territories (Di Felice, 2017). The turning point for these movements came about through the creation of pages and profiles, both personal and collective, on hyperconnected networks such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram.

Net-activist actions are organic and shaped by current technological resources, which are always being updated. Although they have their insecurities and uncertainties, these experiences have precipitated our idea of journalism from the edges of the planet as opposed to journalism from the select club of humanity (Krenak, 2020), that is, the result of an objectivist mode of knowledge production. This idea seems to have gained more importance after the following two landmark events: the rise of networked social movements in subsequent years (15-M in Spain, Occupy Wall Street in the United States, June 2013 in Brazil, just to name a few), and the accelerated process of platformization and datafication of life (Lemos, 2021) since the covid-19 pandemic. This led to an excessive advance in techno-surveillance and also the possibility of net-activism occurring outside the major city centers, with journalism produced by and for those that Ailton Krenak (2019, p. 21) called peoples “from the edges of the planet”, “those who are half forgotten (...) on the banks of

rivers, on the shores of oceans, in Africa, Asia or Latin America. They are caíçaras, indigenous, quilombolas, aboriginals⁶ – sub-humanity”.

The understanding that net-activism by indigenous peoples is a type of journalism from the edges of the planet is based on the claim that journalism is a production network based on relationships between humans and non-humans. There are other forms of ‘journalisms’. *Ciro Marcondes Filho* (2000) defined four moments in the history of journalism and their way of translating the world. The first form was invented during the French Revolution, at the end of the 18th century, based on Enlightenment ideals and all their contradictions. “Consequently, knowledge and power, which until then had been under the control of the Church and universities, began to be seen as a right. Freedom, equality and fraternity, non-negotiable values of the revolution, became universal” (Medeiros, 2022, p. 146). The right to information gives rise to the figure of the journalist, who is responsible for “searching, exploring, scrutinizing, disrupting, and even disrespecting, in the interest of the news. From this arises a practice that is unique to the journalist, the myth of transparency” (Marcondes Filho, 2000, p. 11).

The 19th century is when the second journalism began, and saw the activity become professional with editorial offices created as spaces in which to produce this type of work. Publications began to use advertisements as a source of income. The dichotomy between “opinion and fact” was established, and journalists began to be seen as mediators between the public and the State. *Nelson Traquina* (2005) notes that, at this time, the figure of the reporter was created, and its function was to simply report facts objectively. However, it ended up disregarding an entire network of connections before and after the reporting had been done.

“The progressive transformation of news into a business is what definitively led to the invention of the concept of objectivity in journalism. Facts replaced comments, in the confidence that the word would reflect the observed reality as it presents itself” (Medeiros, 2022, p. 148). This represents the third journalism, created in the 20th century with the formation of large media conglomerates. Journalists have become individuals who avoid expressing personal opinions and report with the greatest amount of impartiality possible, which is why texts and articles must obey a set of rules and narrative procedures that adhere to a specific format and avoid subjectivity. “In this new journalism in the era of positivism, there is a cult of facts”

(Traquina, 2005, p. 52). Journalists are thus considered the legitimate translators of reality.

Marcondes Filho's view of the fourth journalism, from the computer age, seems more like an apocalyptic view to us. However, this particular glance, which is marked by time and permeated by the understanding of an era, does not make it impossible to approach our proposal. By classifying journalism into four stages, Marcondes Filho (2000) expresses the essence of journalism-making. Thus, what interests us is the disruption of a unified idea of journalism, which allows us to understand this activity beyond the configuration with which it has presented itself in recent decades and to bet on new possible arrangements for what we call journalism. For instance, indigenous digital communication, as highlighted in this article, represents a significant example of narratives emerging from the edges of the planet.

3 Indigenous communication and ancestral technologies

Eliete Pereira (2023) proposed outlining a genealogy of indigenous digital communication in Brazil since the emergence of the internet. Initiatives such as Rede Povos da Floresta, Índios Online, Rádio Yandê, Mapa Cultural Suruí, Centro de Documentação Digital Ikpeng, #SomosTodosGuaraniKaioiwás, Escuta da Floresta, and Portal Muká Mukau are examples of reports and stories that reach territories beyond the places where they were conceived, as a result of digital technologies. In different geographic and connective landscapes, these experiences led to the cultural strengthening, in addition to "indigenous protagonism, visibility, symbiosis, cyberactivism, net-activism, the strengthening and expansion of alliances and support networks, and the digitalization of the locality" (Pereira, 2023, p. 145). These experiences are alliances between digital and ancestral technologies for the preservation and dissemination of territories and knowledge.

One example of this occurred in 2012, when indigenous people from the Guarani-Kaiowá Pyelito Kue/Mbarakay community, living in a territory near the city of Iguatemi, in Mato Grosso do Sul, released a public declaration of a collective suicide by 170 men, women, and children after they received an eviction order.

Shortly after disseminating the declaration on the internet, a spontaneous movement was spawned on digital networks. The #SomosTodosGuaranikaíowás and #GenocídioGuarani movements on Twitter and internet pages, and the adoption of the ethnonym “Guarani Kaiowá” by Facebook users and public figures, went viral on the networks, leading to public demonstrations in several cities in the country and abroad. This action caused unprecedented pressure on the government and Funai to mediate the conflict. (Pereira, 2023, p. 141).

The creation of blogs, websites, pages, and profiles on social media, audio and video channels on YouTube, and streaming platforms gave voices to the Guarani-Kaiowá and their autonomous narratives. These reports, although diverse, are marked by three common characteristics (Laia, 2023): 1) the use of streaming and large free access platforms; 2) the production of autonomous narratives that break through the media blockade and make up part of traditional media outlet agendas; and 3) the potential to produce less simplistic translations of differences.

One of the ways of communicating in this environment is to produce platformized narratives by groups outside the public media agenda, particularly those whose existence is linked to their territories and includes the indigenous experience on the internet, as recorded by Pereira (2023). At the same time, internet connections give non-indigenous people a closer look at life in the forest beyond the antiquated Western idea marked by the exoticism of these peoples and, in particular, of the Amazon (Rodrigues et al., 2018). With the increase in digital information and communication technologies, indigenous peoples have been able to adopt better forest protection practices by incorporating said practices into traditional communication systems (Di Felice & Pereira, 2017). We understand this constitution of things (that is, this new environment) as a concept of net-activism, an ecological or interwoven manifestation that,

In some cases, arises as an involuntary association, a cyber protest that emerges in the form of a network on digital networks, generally in the name of a cause, and can take to the streets under multiple banners. It occurs regardless of political position. It is related to a practice and behavior that involves technologies, algorithms, cyber intelligence, humans, and non-humans, in the use and context of protesting actors. (Magalhães & Franco, 2023, p. 16).

From the perspective of net-activism, narratives from the edges of the planet are complex, interwoven interactions with collaborative actions where information is exchanged between humans, connection

devices, and data. This is the case for indigenous communication and resistance projects that are expanding in the Amazon, such as the Rede Wayuri (Lozovei, 2021). In partnership with the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of Rio Negro (Foirn), the network defines itself as “a popular media collective formed by approximately 30 communicators from the Baré, Baniwa, Desana, Tariana, Tuyuka, Piratapuaia, Tukano, Wanano, Hup’dah, Yanomami and Yeba Masã ethnic groups” (Rede, 2024). Through net-activism and the circulation of autonomous narratives on digital platforms, a new ecology is being conceived with all sorts of entities, both human and non-human, in an interweaving of digital networks and ancestral technologies.

The ways of living and communicating (writing, orality, rituals, handling of herbs, healing processes) of the people who came before us are what we call ancestral technologies. “The technologies of indigenous communities and the technologies that African communities brought [to Brazil] during slavery are loaded with meanings and senses, and are abundant sources of worldviews, ritualistic knowledge, and responsible approaches to Pachamama⁷”, states Fellner et al. (2020, p. 328). To ignore this legacy is to erase a part of history and value only one type of knowledge: the Western, hegemonic, colonial, and Eurocentric one. In a similar vein, Oliveira et al. (2021) state that the demonstrations, resistance movements, and communication practices that thrive among indigenous peoples and the most diverse experiences of affirmation of African origin,

(...) offer not only inventive ways of breaking from the biopolitical power of large media corporations and structural racism, but also inventive forms of existential affirmation (linguistic, territorial, cultural, religious, scientific, philosophical, poetic) and self-repair of historical traumas and injustices in the field of rights. (Oliveira et al., 2021, p. 3).

Continuing this idea, when reporting on the Territórios Livres, Tecnologias Livres⁸ project (Territórios, 2024), researcher Tâmara Terso (2023) reminds us of the importance of thinking about digital activism from the edges of the planet, remembering that “there were other very interesting ways of doing digital activism that dialogue a lot with our local reality, with our reality as Brazilian people, and with the reality of the traditional territories of black and indigenous peoples” (Terso, 2023, p. 64).

When mapping the internet, information technologies, communication and socio-environmental justice conducted in

quilombos and rural communities in the Northeast Region of Brazil (Territórios, 2024), researchers have also looked at the difficulty of accessing the internet – 28% of participants had no access at all – in addition to the fact that, of those who did have access, 71% did so only via smartphone. However, this lack of internet access (with quality signals and adequate devices) is especially prevalent in rural, isolated communities marked by what Massimo Di Felice (2019) called the connection of all things, in reference to the typically complex and connective indigenous cosmologies. The experience of hyperconnection is a phenomenon that we are still trying to theorize adequately; however, for some peoples on the edges of the planet, particularly indigenous peoples, who are able to connect and communicate in a trans-specific way⁹, things are alive and subjectivities have been a possibility beyond the human species since immemorial time.

At the beginning of this third millennium, when we discovered that we inhabit an infected and connected world, we witnessed an epistemic rupture that forced us to rethink our idea of humans, society, communication, and economy based on the networks of networks that constitute and inhabit the forest: the networks of rivers, the networks of trees, the networks of plants, the networks of animals, the networks of peoples, the networks of fungi and mosses, the networks of sensors, the networks of radio waves, the networks of satellite signals, the networks of big data. (...) A blockchain, a digital interaction platform, a rainforest, or a pandemic do not make up a systemic complexity, made up of separate and communicating parts that we can see before us. They express another type of complexity, reticular and connective, characterized by a set of transformations that, in addition to continually changing, produce changes in us. (Di Felice, 2023, pp. 34-35).

It is the connective ambiance of the original cosmologies that contributes to an important point observed by the researchers, which was precisely what the people interviewed understood by technologies. The researchers realized that digital technology mixes with other technologies historically present in the territory, such as soil management and healthcare, through traditional medicine and communication technologies – such as sharing experiences in circles, mysticism, and creole and coconut drums. “All these technologies are named and are typified by Mãe Beth de Oxum, who is a communications activist for the democratization of communications in Pernambuco, as ancestral technologies” (Terso, 2023, p. 80). Mãe Beth de Oxum is an ialorixá¹⁰, percussionist, activist, and communicator from Pernambuco who, according to Terso (2023),

believes in the coexistence between ancestral technologies and digital technologies, very similar to Di Felice's (2023) idea of connecting all things, depending on relationships of solidarity that can protect and foster networks of networks. "These are territorial networks that expand through digital networks and interconnect through digital networks" (Terso, 2023, p. 82).

In the web of this new interwoven ecology, the contemporary idea of citizenship is constructed in communion with digital, leading to digital citizenship which is "the expansion of rights and parliamentary participatory forms" (Di Felice, 2019, p. 7) through the advent of this "new type of common, connected and interactive". In collaboration with digital platforms, the construction of this new form of citizenship represents

(...) the transition from subjective and humanistic forms of interaction and citizenship to digital, algorithmic, and infoecological forms of participation and life. It is necessary to change our conception of the social and prepare ourselves to inhabit the infoecologies and networks of the world to come. (Di Felice, 2019, p. 181).

This path has been taken through the development of social technologies designed to overcome the difficulty of internet access in the interweaving of ancestral knowledge and digital networks. Communicators for the Rede Wayuri predominantly produce news bulletins as reliable internet access for distributing other formats is still lacking. This initial information, obtained from a mapping of the connectivity of riverside communities in the power part of the Amazon River (Magalhães & Nascimento, 2024), led us to conduct exploratory research on the Rede Wayuri. Our contact with the communicators, including two interviews with one of the network's founders (Ferraz & Melo, 2024; Coletivo, 2024) and observation of the network's production on digital platforms constitute the second stage of our research and is the basis of what we present in this case study.

4 The make-with of the Rede Wayuri

We approach the case of the Rede Wayuri from a notion of interwoven ecology (Di Felice, 2017), which includes the platformed media environment, but also expands on it to include the notion of networks of networks (Terso, 2023) and the connection of all things (Di

Felice, 2023). We can look to the most widely spoken native languages in the Rio Negro upper region – such as Baniwa, Iantú, Tukano, and Yanomami – used in online news and podcasts as an example of networks of networks, integrating digital webs that expand territorial networks based on native languages, ancestral communication technologies that have connected these territories since immemorial time. The media ecology of the Wayuri web also articulates with networks of networks by integrating the group's digital production, from its base in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, 1) to the analog radio broadcast system via antenna transmission in three municipalities, 2) to streaming on digital platforms such as Spotify, 3) and to remote territories which have no internet and radio transmission via antenna does not reach. This is done via flash drives which are transported by boat, mostly by the Federation of Indigenous Organizations of Rio Negro (Foirn) and the Socioenvironmental Institute (ISA), partners who closely support the Rede Wayuri.

According to Cláudia Ferraz (Coletivo, 2024) from the Wanano ethnic group, one of the founders of the network, the Wayuri podcast (considered the group's most important product) is a summary of the radio program *Papo da Maloca*. The content is provided by communicators who send information either over the internet or on devices transported by boat. The collective offers training and qualification workshops for members who remain in their territories and communities for most of the time.

Every Friday at 9 am, a meeting is held at Foirn, where a team from the Federation's Communications Department collaborates on institutional production, which includes content for Instagram, the website, the blog, and the Wayuri Bulletin distributed throughout the communities. During this meeting, the most relevant topics for *Papo da Maloca* are discussed, including the interviewees and the urgent matters to be addressed. (Ferraz & Melo, 2024, p. 192).

Although production is digital, distribution can be done both digitally and analogically from the group's headquarters on flash drives that are sent by boat to remote areas on the map and then played on the Foirn radio station as well as over car speakers (Lozovei, 2021). The network is typical of a net-activist movement in terms of its connection networks between humans (communicators) and non-humans (digital social networks, connectivity devices, streaming product distribution platforms, multiplatform instant messaging, and voice call applications for smartphones such as WhatsApp and

others). It is also seen as an exercise in digital citizenship through its new ecological and social morphology (Di Felice, 2019) and its interactivity with the forest, trees, rivers, and software to encourage participation and governance in territories that have been forgotten both politically and by the media.

For indigenous journalist Ariane (Susui) dos Santos Lima (2023, as cited in Ferraz & Melo, 2024, p. 187), from the Wapichana people, communication from indigenous people (represented by resistance movements led by indigenous communicators and journalists) is the bow and arrow of the 21st century. “These agents of change seek not only to tell but to rewrite their own narratives, thus aiming to reaffirm their cultural identities and challenge historically imposed hegemony”. The Rede Wayuri’s collective work and solidarity efforts (the meaning of *wayuri* in the Nheengatu language) within the informational desert of the Rio Negro region – whether due to the absence of its own mass media outlets or the lack of coverage of its agendas by the hegemonic media – has appropriated journalistic logic to build reports, narratives and struggles in its search of representing its world from the edges of the planet. Its *modus operandi* even bears a resemblance to the work of a journalistic team. Cláudia Ferraz describes the editorial meeting:

It is divided into two parts: one more institutional with information from Foirn, and the other focused on civil society with representatives from schools, departments, and local associations. At the same time, the WhatsApp group of communicators at the bases is used to request information and suggestions for topics and news that can be included in the program. As the person responsible for audio editing, I receive this content on Mondays or Tuesdays, edit it, and prepare it to be broadcast on both Papo da Maloca and the Wayuri podcast. The edited materials are then sent to the radio, where they are inserted into the live program, allowing the community to hear the information from local communicators. (Ferraz & Melo, 2024, p. 192).

One of the differences between the Rede Wayuri and the logic of corporate media is the decentralization of the narrative construction process in search of participatory production, a characteristic of net-activist movements (Magalhães, 2018). In addition to engaging in issues related to community interests, the group places importance on producing special content in the native language of relatives from different ethnicities in order to facilitate their understanding. The idea is to adapt the issues to the reality of each community. It was essential for the initial work during the

covid-19 pandemic, facilitating the exchange of information between health professionals and indigenous communities. The translation of discourses – scientific, political, and academic – is also another premise of journalism adopted by the collective: “It was gratifying to see people saying ‘I get it now’ or ‘now I understand’ in their native languages, as this meant that we were achieving our goal of making information accessible and understandable to everyone, especially on such important and sensitive topics” (Ferraz & Melo, 2024, p. 198).

It is important to note that our objective is not to make an inventory of the appropriations and possible uses of autonomous net-activist narratives by journalism but rather to think about these other ways of translating the world into an interwoven ecology, such as that of the Rede Wayuri. The question we pose here is not to think about how journalism can adapt to such changes, but to consider this new environment as another possible form of journalism, or even as an analogue to journalism as we know it. This proposal echoes the idea of not taking the words of the people on the margins as metaphors but as analogs of concepts (Laia & Guimarães, 2022).

The example of the Rede Wayuri also leads us to think about the place of journalism in this complex interwoven ecology, which involves networks of networks. To address this phenomenon, we use the notion of what Donna Haraway (2016) called *make-with*, the way in which she understands collective, responsible creation based on what is available in a world in ruins. Haraway understands the Anthropocene as a limit event in which the Earth’s reserves are in the process of exhaustion, in which the destruction of space-times of refuge for beings prevails so that our work is to make this limit event as short as possible, based on the multispecies alliance, intending to (re)creating spaces of shelter for life. Haraway’s effort is part of a broader one to advance the understanding that the *Homo sapiens* species represents just one link among various connections essential for the maintenance and stability of life.

Ailton Krenak gives the name of civilizing abstraction to a certain understanding contrary to the notion of connection of all things, which alienates us from the Earth, this organism from which we have divorced ourselves mainly based on the postulates of what has been conventionally called modernity. “The idea of us, humans, detaching ourselves from the Earth, living in a civilizing abstraction, is absurd. It suppresses diversity, denies the plurality of forms of life, existence and habits” (Krenak, 2019, pp. 22-23). So, it makes

even more sense to understand the ways of existence of non-Western peoples in order to think not only about our world, but about the coexistence of possible worlds on our planet and, consequently, about ways of narrating these worlds, about possible forms of journalism. This is the notion of make-with, which Haraway (2016, p. 48) also refers to as sympoiesis, the coming together of existing things towards the construction of refuges in a world in ruins.

The term sympoiesis refers to collectively-producing systems that have no self-defined spatial or temporal boundaries, in which information and control are distributed among components. Systems are evolutionary and have the potential for autonomous and surprising changes. This proposal arises in contrast to and also in complement to the already recognized and valuable concept of autopoiesis, which initially defined the ability of living beings to create themselves, but later came to be used to refer to autonomous, self-producing systems, especially with the emergence of digital technologies and the developments of machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Autopoietic systems are hugely interesting – witness the history of cybernetics and information sciences; but they are not good models for living and dying worlds and their critters. Autopoietic systems are not closed, spherical, deterministic, or teleological; but they are not quite good enough models for the mortal sf world. Poiesis is symchthonic, sympoietic, always partnered all the way down, with no starting and subsequently interacting “units”. (Haraway, 2016, p. 33).

The communicators of the Rede Wayuri, who live in communities that are distant from each other and only accessible via the Rio Negro and its tributaries, went through an unprecedented expansion starting in 2020 with the bulletins they produced to inform and combat misinformation about the pandemic. Some of these communities have internet access, while others have to travel to find an internet signal. Foirn's radio service is also valuable to the Rede Wayuri, but it is not enough, so in this context, territorial networks are fundamental and formed from other technologies: boats and rivers.

In our region, the Rio Negro is very important because there are no roads here. So, the river is our main highway, a path we travel to convey information. Our communicators, who are at the bases, use the river to move between their communities, facing obstacles such as rapids and waterfalls. They often face challenges in conveying information, especially when there is no internet signal in a given community. In situations like this, they use their canoes and outboard motors to travel to

neighboring communities, conveying information through oral communication when no other means are available. (Ferraz & Melo, 2024, pp. 196-197).

Cláudia Ferraz (Coletivo, 2024) highlights the fact that the territory in which the Rede Wayuri operates is quite complex, not only from a geographical point of view, but mostly from a cultural and linguistic one, as it extends over 750 communities, 23 indigenous peoples, and three municipalities: São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Barcelos, and Santa Isabel do Rio Negro. When asked how it is possible to organize all the information, to make and distribute a podcast with so many obstacles and so many people and communities involved and collaborating, Ferraz's response supports a *make-with*, a *sympoietic action*: "The name Rede Wayuri already carries this meaning because 'wayuri', in the Nheengatu language, means collective work. So, it is a collective effort, a collective work, we do everything in a collaborative way, bringing people together and putting everything together collectively" (Coletivo, 2024).

5 Final considerations

In this paper, we started with a brief discussion about the possibility of acting in the gaps of digital platforms and then went on to present *net-activism* (especially in its third phase) as a fruitful approach to thinking about producing narratives from the edges of the planet in the form of indigenous digital communication. In our opinion, this experience is analogous to journalism, or *journalisms* in the plural, based on the historicity of this form for translating the world. It is at this point that we presented the Rede Wayuri of indigenous communicators and their experiences. We observed that discussions mostly based on the imaginary of digital networks are closely related to the ancestral experiences and technologies from which the network's intertwining emerges: challenges of connection, cooperation, and sharing are just some of the examples. It is often stated that "words such as interaction, collaboration, exchange, recombination and sharing began not only to organize the grammar of networks, but also to influence the social dynamics themselves" (Grohmann & Salvagni, 2023, p. 7), and as such, it is also true that, under another linguistic repertoire, indigenous people have always

been aware of the strength of this action, and their unorganized grammar under the colonizing logic shows that these sensitizing elements already existed.

There is a sense of collectivity that flows through this network which likens it to net-activism, such as recording the murder of George Floyd, but it goes further, as it is only possible through the arrangement between digital network platforms and ancestral technologies, whose presence on the web creates the necessary configurations for what we call the journalistic network: the connection between human and non-human beings that make it possible to produce a translation of the world. Therefore, we consider journalism as a web composed of all types of existences. We referred to Donna Haraway (2016) to name the productions of the Rede Wayuri as sympoietic journalism, which we define as an analog of journalism, a translation of the world produced in a platformed environment but which, based on the notion of interwoven ecology (Di Felice, 2017), expands this understanding based on the notion of networks of networks (Terso, 2023) and the connection of all things (Di Felice, 2023). Sympoietic journalism is the result of the web of digital networks and ancestral technologies that integrate fiber optic systems, satellites, human beings, the climate, trees, boats, flash drives, and all types of forests, resulting in something substantially different from the translations of the world produced in newsrooms.

The case of the Rede Wayuri triggers a series of actions and forms of habitation and communication that serve as a basis for us in which to think about journalism. While it is true that this practice faces a number of crises in contemporary times, journalism developed on the edges of the planet is capable of pointing out possible paths that make sense in the territories of origin, from where it should be approached. Therefore, in addition to the initial exploration and observation phase of production and interviews, this research moves on to an ethnographic experience with the network's communicators in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, in the state of Amazonas, in addition to conducting new interviews and systematic analysis of the group's production. We believe that the notion of sympoietic journalism can contribute not only to the progress of this research but also to other studies that concern net-activist narratives from the edges of the planet, from the perspective of make-with, of (re)building shelters in a world in ruins.

NOTES

- 1 The statistical survey on the Brazilian population is usually conducted every ten years. However, the 2020 Census was delayed until 2022 due to the covid-19 pandemic (and other reasons), which was officially recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) on March 18, 2020.
- 2 Funai, created in 1967, was called the National Indian Foundation until 2023. The new name, more appropriate and respectful of the diversity of indigenous peoples, was adopted when the agency became part of the newly created Ministry of Indigenous Peoples and had, for the first time in its history, an indigenous president: lawyer and former federal deputy, Joenia Wapichana.
- 3 In Brazil, the demarcation of Indigenous Lands (Terras Indígenas – TI) is the guarantee of indigenous peoples' territorial rights, provided for under the Federal Constitution of 1988. The demarcation of Indigenous Lands is the responsibility of the National Foundation for Indigenous Peoples (Funai) and aims to protect their territories from invasions and occupations, alleviating historical conflicts that involve profiting over traditional territories in the country.
- 4 We use the name Rio Negro, with its Portuguese spelling, throughout this article, instead of the translation Negro River. A large part of the territory in this region is made up of the Rio Negro Indigenous Land, but the Rede Wayuri also operates in the Yanomami Indigenous Land.
- 5 Viveiros de Castro used the word *índios* in his original Portuguese text. This term – indians, translated to the English – may be the result of an error on the part of the colonizers, who thought they had reached India when they arrived on the current Brazilian coast. In any case, the word *índio* (or indian, whatever) is the result of a colonial abstraction that generalizes a constellation of ethnicities and cosmologies that are very different from each other. For this reason, the scholars are currently using terms such as “indigenous peoples” or “original peoples” in an attempt to create a new, more respectful and less reductive vocabulary.
- 6 Ailton Krenak refers, at this point, to the diversity of peoples on the fringes of major political decisions and public discussions. *Quilombolas* are inhabitants of *quilombos*, ancestral communities formed by enslaved Africans to live in freedom after escaping from their enslavers.

Quilombola communities throughout Brazil have the right to ownership of their lands, as defined by the 1998 Federal Constitution, and the recognition and demarcation of these lands are the responsibility of the Palmares Foundation, an agency linked to the Ministry of Racial Equality. Finally, the term *aboriginal* is commonly used to refer to the indigenous inhabitants of Australia and Tasmania, but can also be used to refer to the original population of a particular territory.

- 7 Pacha Mama or Pachamama is the supreme deity of the indigenous peoples of the central Andes, in South America. The term is also used, contemporarily, to refer to the cosmopolitics of indigenous America in which nature is a subject of rights (La Cadena, 2024) and, beyond that, a web of nodes that connects all things.
- 8 Territórios Livres, Tecnologias Livres – Free Territories, Free Technologies, in a direct translation – is a project led by Intervozes – Coletivo Brasil de Comunicação, a non-governmental organization that works to guarantee the right to communication in Brazil. Check it out at: intervozes.org.br.
- 9 For Di Felice (2017, p. 13), an important contribution to theoretical studies of communication, even under the name of multinaturalism, was “trans-specificism”, that is, the possibility, in Yanomami shamanic practices, of the shaman – a political and spiritual leadership – moving between different species, a connective interwoven condition through which it is possible to modify oneself without altering the original form. Fernanda Moreira (2017) explains that shamans establish trans-specific alliances, that is, they are able to move between different worlds and communicate with beings of other species through a kind of general language, in many ways similar to what computers do through binary code.
- 10 A simplifying definition of *ialorixá* would be: the priestess in religions of African origin. However, the role of an *ialorixá* in the *terreiros* (sacred spaces of Afro-Brazilian religions) is much broader and without defined borders, like all the sociability of native peoples.

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