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“We Are Nature That Defends Itself”:

Care Ethics and Politics Prefigured in the French environmental
activist movement *Les Soulèvements de la Terre*.

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Abstract

What would it mean to take Care Ethics as the organizing principle of environmental struggle? This thesis takes that question as its starting point, and *Les Soulèvements de la Terre* (LSDT), a French environmental activist movement that has made the defense of land and living beings its central political project, as its object of study. Using Hajer's (1995) argumentative discourse analysis with Joan Tronto's (1994) ethico-political framework of care, this thesis analyzes the *storylines* structuring LSDT's discourse. Across three storylines, the movement constructs a powerful counter-hegemonic narrative that, by naming capitalism as the structural cause of both ecological devastation and social precarity, stimulates the imagination of alternative social and ecological organizations. At the same time, LSDT's discourse reemphasizes the need for a political responsibility grounded in practice, for instance, care-giving practices. To face the institutional inefficacy to overcome the ecological crisis, the movement acts, resists, protects, and reframes blocking, disarming, and occupying as acts of caregiving rather than acts of violence. The thesis positions LSDT's discourse and practices in the ecofeminist tradition as it revalues forms of labor, knowledge, and relational practice that patriarchal capitalism systematically devalues. Ultimately, LSDT does not merely demand a different world but already begins to build it within its organization, and care practices which represent a form of prefigurative politics: a strategic tool to regain hope in the future and collective power.

Key Words: Care ethics. Prefigurative politics. Environmental activism. Ecofeminism. Argumentative Discourse Analysis. Storylines.

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Introduction

“Care is omnipresent, even through the effects of its absence.”

- Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care*, 2017, p.1.

“The impact of human activity on earth’s geology and ecosystems is now so profound that we have entered a new geological epoch, the Anthropocene, in which human activity is the dominant influence on the environment and climate” (Carter, 2018, pp.2-3). Far from being neutral, this “influence on the environment and climate” extinguishes life at rates that rival the great extinction events of geological prehistory (Nicholson & Jinnah, 2016) with one fundamental difference: this time there is no asteroid to blame. We—humans—are the asteroid.

Overcoming the ecological crisis is fundamentally a political task. “Environmental politics is therefore a complex and continuous struggle over the definition and the meaning of the crisis itself” (Hajer, 1995, p.15): actors disagree on the cause, on the seriousness of the crisis, on the solutions necessary, and on who is responsible for addressing it. The conflicts that characterize environmental politics are no longer focused on the question of whether there is an environmental crisis; it is essentially about its interpretation (Hajer, 1995). In that sense, environmental conflict has become a discursive conflict. To control how the crisis is discursively named, framed, and interpreted is to control the range of political responses that in turn appear possible, necessary, or legitimate: “the construction of reality becomes an important realm of power” (Hajer, 1995, p.21).

The dominant framing of the ecological crisis, which was “ecological modernization” in Hajer’s (1995) terms, is still dominant today. I term it “techno-solutionism” which frames the ecological crisis as manageable through technological innovation, compatible with infinite economic growth, with capitalism (Carter, 2018). This narrative is not only the framework of politics: it is the framework of our imagination. It constructs a particular *imaginary*: a shared sense of what is real, what is possible, and what is politically feasible (Levy & Spicer, 2013). This imaginary renders other ways of living, producing, and relating to the Earth unimaginable. Overcoming the ecological crisis, therefore also requires regaining a collective capacity to imagine other possible realities (Escobar, 2020).

This thesis takes a clear position: what is needed to overcome the ecological crisis is “a fundamental reassessment of our values systems and a restructuring of existing political, social and economic systems” (Carter, 2018, p.7). More specifically, the ecofeminist

perspective of Salleh (2017) constitutes the analytical background of my analysis. It follows the premise that the ecological crisis is rooted in entangled capitalist patriarchal and colonial logics of domination. Constructing hegemony around a new socioeconomic regime therefore requires a paradigm shift by reclaiming forms of knowledge and practice that have been systematically devalued, instead constructing, from ground up, another relationship to the living world (Salleh, 2017). This perspective led me to Tronto's (1994) Ethic of Care, extended by Puig de la Bellacasa (2017), because it offers a relevant alternative ontology—and with it, a political project—for imagining and building a different socioeconomic regime. I acknowledge that this is *a* perspective, there are others. Choosing a different framework would produce a different analysis, with equally legitimate insights. However, this thesis position itself as a contribution to the imagination of a new socioeconomic order based on an ontology grounded in care—interdependency, attentiveness and the maintenance of life—by looking for its concrete manifestations.

These manifestations cannot be found in traditional institutions; the ecological crisis cannot be resolved within the very framework that produced it (Clapp & Dauvergne, 2011). Which is why I turn to a *subpolicial arena*¹: environmental activism.

One such example is *Les Soulèvements de la Terre* (hereinafter referred to as LSDT), a French environmental activist movement born in January 2021 at the *Zone à Défendre* (ZAD; zone to defend) of Notre-Dame-des-Landes, that has become one of the most significant forces in French environmental politics (Article B², 2026). It has organized multiple national actions that led to the discontinuation of multiple environmentally detrimental projects (Article B, 2026), resisted a government attempt at dissolution (Cholez, 2023) and built durable networks and infrastructures of resistance across the country through their local committees (Article B, 2026).

It is a particularly relevant empirical case because LSDT is driven by the same motivations as this thesis. Constituted after the pandemic of COVID-19, the movement's founders were wondering “how to avoid slipping back into our old lives, into the reckless pursuit of a deadly capitalist mode of production that had brought us to edge of climate collapse, of the collapse of the living” (Manifesto A, n.d. p.2)

As such, this thesis explores the extent to which the alternative socioeconomic regime that LSDT imagines and participates in building is grounded in Tronto's (1994) care-based

¹ A space outside of formal institutions where political decisions are nevertheless being made (Hajer, 1995, p.39).

² See the Methodology Chapter for the complete explanation of my referencing to LSDT's material (Articles, Manifestos, Instagram Post); see Appendix for referred article.

ontology. Moreover, as Hajer (1995) argues, environmental politics is a discursive struggle, I employ a discourse analysis using his argumentative methodology to trace how care manifests in the movements' storylines. But discourse is, itself, a practice: naming another world is already part of building it. The boundary between what LSDT says and what it does is blurred; thus, I ultimately explore how the movement is prefiguring Tronto's (1994) care-based ontology. Drawing on prefigurative politics (Yates, 2021; Monticelli, 2021), I approach climate activism as a site where alternative socio-ecological relations are not only imagined but already enacted in the present. If overcoming the ecological crisis requires a different organization of relations between humans, non-humans, and forms of subsistence, then these relations cannot remain purely aspirational; they must also be experimented with through present political practices. This exploration is articulated through the following interrelated Research Questions:

RQ1: *What storylines emerge from LSDT's discourse, and how do they construct the ecological crisis?*

RQ2: *Read through Tronto's (1994) four phases of care, how do LSDT's storylines redefine ecological vulnerabilities, political responsibilities, and legitimate specific forms of political action?*

RQ3: *In what sense can LSDT's discourse and practices be understood as prefigurative?*

Scholars have taken seriously the idea that Care Ethics can ground alternative socio-economic and ecological futures, presenting both a diagnostic and a transformative lens for understanding how the capitalist system systematically neglects and destroys what sustains us (Bauhardt & Harcourt, 2018; Ewenson, 2026; Johns-Putra, 2013). Ecofeminism and Care Ethics have been brought into dialogue, revealing their shared critique of Western dualisms and a common commitment to a relational ontology as an alternative ethical and political foundation (Pettersen, 2020). Articulating Tronto's (1994) Care Ethic with Salleh's (2017) ecofeminist perspective follows the same logic in this thesis.

At the same time, concerns have been raised regarding the mobilization of Care Ethics in Environmental Politics. Care has been criticized for relying on essentializing gender differences (King, 1991); transnational feminist scholars have also pointed to its Western-centric assumptions, its tendency to universalize care as practiced in the Global North, and its insufficient engagement with intersectionality which risks reproducing paternalistic relations tied to colonial and imperial histories of care labor (Durmus, 2022). Other scholars have

shown that, in certain cases, care can reproduce exclusions when applied in practice, failing to challenge the structural inequalities it claims to address (Damgaard, McCauley & Reid, 2022). Muradian and Gomez-Baggethun (2021) further argue that Care Ethics often remains excessively human-centered and call for extending the community of justice to non-human entities.

These limitations are taken seriously in this thesis. Mobilizing Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) theoretically grounds the extension of care to more-than-human entities, while bringing ecofeminism (Salleh, 2017) and Tronto's (1994) into dialogue prevents essentializing care as an inherently feminine disposition. The Western-centrism critique is acknowledged rather than resolved: this thesis makes no claim to generalizability and deliberately limits itself to exploring how care operates within the specific discursive context of LSdT.

Moreover, there is an existing body of literature concerned with analyzing Care Ethics in relation to Environmental activism, demonstrating both the relevance of this connection and the need for more empirically grounded research. Laugier (2024) connects environmental civil disobedience to political care, arguing that the insistence on materiality and vulnerability that defines contemporary environmental struggles resonates with care ethics at its core. Whyte and Cuomo (2016), through their analysis of the Mother Earth Water Walk and Green Belt Movement, conceptualize ecological struggles as practices of care directed toward the living world, beyond interpersonal relations to include non-human communities. Leonardo, Esteves and Disterheft (2025) analyze anti-lithium mining resistance in Portugal as a practice of care capable of sustaining resistance while prefiguring alternative socio-ecological relations beyond dominant growth logics. Similar dynamics have been identified in young people's environmental activism in the UK, where care ethics structures both activist's relationship to the environment and to one another (Kapoor & Rishbeth, 2026). Wrigley (2026) states that the intersections between care and climate justice movements remain underexplored and calls for more empirical research. This thesis directly participates in that effort.

Another strand of scholarship is interested in prefiguration³ within environmental activism, sometimes mobilizing care practices as what prefigures an alternative future. A study on Extinction Rebellion's "regenerative culture" shows how climate movements prefigure Care Ethic within their own organization, cultivating practices of interdependence care, and collective resilience (Westwell & Bunting, 2020). At a different scale entirely, rural practices

³ The idea that the future we desire is enacted in our present practices (Yates, 2021).

of eco-social caretaking in Bhutan have been understood as prefigurative outside an activist context (Allison, 2023). Research on European grassroots climate justice organizations demonstrates how visions of futures beyond capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy shape the present organizational practices and alliance-building strategies of these movements (Lajarthe & Laigle, 2024). In France, urban civil society initiatives have been analyzed as sites of prefigurative socio-ecological experimentation (Blanc et al., 2024). School strike movements in Portugal also shows how climate activism functions as a space of democratic experimentation and collective imagining (Garcia et al., 2025). Together, these studies contribute to understanding environmental activism as a space where alternative social and political relations are enacted in the present.

This thesis participates in the exploration of how Care Ethics can be prefigured within LSDT as an additional local contribution. However, using Hajer's (1995) discourse analysis is original: while discourse analysis has been mobilized to study environmental activism before, its articulation with care ethics and prefigurative politics remains limited. Lapuente-Tiana (2025) for instance, applies poststructuralist discourse analysis to LSDT, but in an Environmental Justice framework, looking at how LSDT articulates spatially anchored justice claims, through the common referent of *the land*. Ullström (2024) examines Sweden's flight-free movement as a form of cultural and prefigurative environmental activism using Hajer (1995) discourse analysis. Yet, Care Ethics is absent from her framework.

This thesis therefore contributes to ongoing efforts to reveal how care operates within environmental activism, through a situated and original articulation of Care Ethics, prefigurative politics, and Hajer's discourse analysis.

Ultimately, this thesis is animated by the question posed by Tronto (1994) three decades ago and that remains more than relevant today: "What would it mean to take seriously, as part of the definition of a good society, the values of caring, attentiveness, responsibility, nurturance, compassion, meeting other's needs, traditionally associated with women and traditionally excluded from public consideration?" (Tronto, 1994, pp.2-3) This thesis asks this question in the concrete context of LSDT that is already—partially and imperfectly—attempting to answer it, in the fields it defends, in the food it grows, in the collective it builds, and in the world it is trying—against everything—to make possible.

This thesis will be organized in four Chapters. In Chapter 1, I build the theoretical framework of the thesis by articulating Ecofeminism (Salleh, 2017) and Escobar's (2020) Pluriversal politics. This establishes the ontological shift required by the ecological crisis and

affirms the necessity of reopening the realm of possibilities. I then present Tronto's (1994) Ethics of Care as embodying this ontological shift; and extend it to more than human entities through Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) work. Finally, I introduce the concept of prefigurative politics using Yates (2021) and Monticelli (2021). In Chapter 2, I present Hajer's (1995) argumentative discourse analysis methodology which I use to conduct a discourse analysis of LSDT. Finally, in Chapter 3, I carry out the discourse analysis in three parts: first, by identifying the main storylines structuring LSDT's discourse; second, by reading these storylines through the lens of Tronto's (1994) four phases of care; and third, by exploring their prefigurative dimensions. In Chapter 4, I summarize my major findings and engage in a discussion on how they participate in discursively reframing the Ecological Crisis; considering care as political practice; engaging with Ecofeminism and the revalorization of care work; and finally prefiguring another world.

Theory

According to Clapp and Dauvergne's (2011) typology, four environmental worldviews compete in the definition to the ecological crisis: the market liberals, institutionalists, bioenvironmentalists, and social greens. Each of these approaches offers a different diagnosis of the ecological crisis and a distinct set of solutions, grounded in different assumptions about nature, economy, and power (Clapp and Dauvergne, 2011).

This thesis situates itself in the radical social green tradition. *Social greens* believe that the ecological crisis is rooted in capitalism's logic of domination, overconsumption, and extractivism. They argue that environmental issues cannot be solved without social justice, and that addressing these issues requires deep systemic transformations toward local, self-reliant, small-scale economies that value marginalized situated (indigenous) knowledges and ecological interdependence (Clapp and Dauvergne, 2011).

More specifically, I embrace the ecofeminist perspective within this social green tradition as the background of my analysis. This is a situated and deliberate choice motivated by my positionality as a student in Social Studies of Gender, with a background in Political Philosophy. I recognize different dynamics of power (such as capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism) as entangled and co-constitutive in the development of the environmental crisis. Therefore, the ecofeminist arguments are the starting points orienting my analysis.

I. Ontological Foundations of the Ecological Crisis and the Need for a Paradigm Shift.

I.1 Ecofeminism and the Ontology of Capitalist Patriarchy.

The basic premise of Ecofeminism is that the “ecological crisis is the inevitable effect of a Eurocentric capitalist patriarchal culture built on the domination of Nature, and the domination of Woman ‘as nature’” (Salleh, 2017, p.48).

Let state from the start that this is different from essentializing women: it does not mean that women are “closer to nature” than men in any ontological sense. Rather, it is recognizing that both women and men are “in/with/of nature” (Salleh, 2017, p.49), but that, nevertheless, modern masculine identity is constructed through a symbolic and material distancing from this condition, meanwhile a systematic association of women with Nature seems to justify their subordination under patriarchy.

As Escobar (2020) explains, the domination and destruction of Nature has been made possible because “the entire edifice of modern Western civilization (with its particular forms of patriarchy, racism, and capitalist exploitation) is based on an objectivizing operation, or a dualist ontology, meaning on a strict separation between subject and object, reason and emotion, and many other dualisms” (2020, p.3). This led to the ethos of human domination over nature that forms the basis for patriarchal culture and capitalist societies. Salleh in *Ecofeminism as Politics* (2017) qualifies the capitalist/patriarchal ontology as based on the following:

An artificial distinction between History and Nature:

History, with the help of Science and Technology, is understood as the privileged domain of human agency and “progress”, while Nature is relegated to a passive background, a stock of raw materials and resources at our disposal to make this progress happen. Then, if Nature is merely an object, we can transform, discipline, and exploit it at will. Within a capitalist framework, living systems hold no intrinsic value; what matters is profit: living things are expendable for a capitalist patriarchy, which does not value what it does not itself produce (Salleh, 2017).

An assumption that men are active subjects and women passive objects:

Salleh talks about a 1/0 culture in which agency is distributed asymmetrically:

Eurocentric cultures are arranged discursively around what has standing (A) and what does not (notA). Such a logic gives identity to A expressed by the value of 1. NotA is merely defined by relation to A, having no identity of its own, and thus 0 value. [...] Psychoanalytically, the proposition reads: since only Man has 1, he is one. When you look at Woman, by contrast, you see only 0, a hole, zero. [Thus] A Woman is 'inferior', 'different', Other. (Salleh, 2017, p.68)

Women are characterized by passiveness and are objectified. The 1/0 binary does not just describe women as passive; it actively produces their passivity and then presents that production as a natural fact. Such objectification then justifies their control, exploitation, and domination by men. It is then what produces the valued production and devalued reproduction: men are “active”, they produce, production has value. Women are “passive”, they reproduce, reproduction is invisible and has no value. Nature is subjected to an identical operation: cast as passive background, it sustains the conditions of life; yet precisely because it does not *produce* in the capitalist sense, it is stripped of intrinsic value and made available for unlimited extraction.

An assumption that historical action is necessarily progressive and activities grounded in nature are necessarily regressive:

Industrial transformation and technological advancements are systematically equated with positive progress when subsistence practices are framed as “primitive practices” in need of “improvement”. This serves a capitalist, patriarchal, and colonial agenda. The discourses about the “wilderness” that needs to be tamed, or “underdeveloped populations” that need to be “modernized”, have been historically used to justify/legitimize Western interventionism/colonialism. If what is “natural” is by default what is deficient, then it must be improved, so exploitation, control, and violence can be reframed as “help” (Salleh, 2017).

An association of masculinity with historical order through Production and an association of femininity with the order of nature through Reproduction:

From religion to sociobiology, through political philosophy, for centuries, the wisdom has been that women's reproductive process necessarily confines their social, intellectual, and emotional functioning to nurturing and associated tasks. Based on this false consciousness, the social division of labor between men and women is thus considered inevitable and good because it protects women's supposed natural inferiority and vulnerability.

Men are therefore associated with productive, transformative labor located in the public sphere, oriented toward accumulation and growth. Women are confined to sustaining forms of labor, or "the care work": the daily maintenance of bodies, households, and communities (Salleh, 2017).

Valued Production and devalued Reproduction:

The result is a structural asymmetry between valued production and devalued reproduction. Because what "matters" in a capitalist society is "productive" work, as it generates exchange value and profit, this type of work is socially and economically valued and recognized. Care work, or "reproductive" work, is oriented toward the sustenance of life, which does not generate as much profit in the same way. It is thus "devalued" both socially and economically. Even if care work is becoming more and more commodified, it remains poorly paid and has little social value. Yet, we understand care work is mostly accomplished by women, but also by poor and racialized populations. Therefore, it creates this vicious cycle where already precarious people remain structurally disadvantaged through the practice of care work. As Salleh (2017) highlights, this devaluation or exploitation of care work is essential to the functioning of capitalism as "women's work makes accumulation possible for all kinds of men, and the economic surplus women generate is crucial to the operation of capitalist patriarchal relations" (p.120).

This ontology underpinning capitalist patriarchy is precisely what made possible the political and environmental crisis we are now facing. Thus, the Ecological crisis displaces modernist political analyses, it provokes us to "reframe our history, to inscribe a new understanding of ourselves in relation to Nature and to ask how can we get to live this new sensibility in practical ways." (Salleh, 2017, p.37). We need more than reform within the existing order; we need different, new assumptions about agency, value, and human-Earth relations. Ecofeminists ultimately argue for a paradigm shift that entails ways of meeting

human needs that do not further entrench instrumental rationality and extractivist growth but prioritize the maintenance of life.

I.2 Reopening the Realm of Possibilities.

We can further complement this ecofeminist call with Escobar's (2020) work. For him, modernity does not simply organize economies and institutions; it shapes imagination. In the sense that if only one model of reality (extractivist, productivist, dualist, etc.) is recognized as "real", then alternative ways of organizing social and ecological life are rendered unimaginable, utopian, impossible: "it is precisely because other possibilities have been turned into 'impossibles' that we find it so difficult to imagine other realities" (pp.4-5). The problem is that this singular reality, this lack of imagination:

Prevents and disempowers us from coexisting with the full range of human and non-human beings in a collaborative manner that is wiser in its relationship with the Earth and with the flow of life [...] thus profoundly limiting the scope of the political. (Escobar, 2020, p.3)

Reclaiming a political paradigm shift, therefore, requires reopening the field of possibilities by foregrounding "the relationality and interdependence of all that exists, which is in turn indispensable for imagining other possible worlds" (Escobar, 2020, p.5). In line with ecofeminism, this implies shifting from an ontology of separation, dualism, and domination toward one grounded in interdependence, life-sustaining relations and practices.

This is where I argue that Care ethics represents a concrete and relevant ethical and political framework in this sense. It offers both an ontological reconfiguration of the subject as relational and interdependent and a political organization of life accordingly. The strength of Care ethics relies on the fact that it not only describes an alternative paradigm: it begins to enact it, prefiguring forms of social and ecological organization grounded in interdependence.

II. Care as an Ethico-Political Framework.

II.1 The Relational Subject and the Practice of Care.

Tronto (1994) asks: "What would it mean to take seriously, as part of the definition of a good society, the values of caring, attentiveness, responsibility, nurturance, compassion,

meeting others' needs, traditionally associated with women and traditionally excluded from public consideration?" (pp.2-3). In other words, by putting care at the center of our preoccupations, she invites us to imagine a different world, a different social reality, precisely the kind of reopening of the possible for which Escobar (2020) calls.

Tronto (1994) argues in *Moral Boundaries* that it is a desirable future because she shares the observation that a world organized around autonomy, individuality, productivity, and progress generated an unprecedented crisis. Like the previous authors, she wishes for a new conception of human nature that shifts from the rigid opposition between autonomy and dependency toward a more sophisticated understanding of human interdependence. She also recognizes that dominant moral and political theories worked to preserve inequalities of power and privilege by systematically overlooking those who currently perform the caring work in our society and make care politically peripheral.

What she offers then, as a mean to move toward that future, is an "ethico-political" framework, to use Puig de la Bellacasa's words (2017). As morality and politics are deeply intertwined, she recognizes that:

Simply posting a moral ideal of caring will not suffice to make the world more caring; we need as well to be able to translate that moral ideal into practice. In this way, morality and politics must be interwoven to effect change. (Tronto, 1994, p.152)

First, as demonstrated, it requires rethinking the moral and ontological assumptions that guide our actions. If modern political theory and ethics presume an autonomous, self-sufficient subject, care ethics begins from the opposite premise: humans are fundamentally interdependent, oscillating throughout their lives between moments of autonomy and vulnerability. Dependency is not an exception to the norm of independence; it is a constitutive dimension of social existence. Moral judgments, therefore, cannot be made from a distant, abstract standpoint. It must be situated in a social, political, and personal context. Caring requires starting "from the standpoint of the one needing care or attention" (Tronto, 1994, p.137) and meeting the other morally by adopting that person's or group's perspective, looking at the world in their terms. This morality is relational and contextual rather than universalistic and abstract. This is the above-explained concrete form of the ontological shift: the subject is, for now on, imagined as embedded in networks of dependence that are social, material, and ecological. If we take this reorientation as the basis for action, what does it mean in practice?

Tronto (1994) provides a framework, a structured account of “caring” as a process composed of four interconnected phases: *caring about* or recognizing the existence of someone’s need and assessing that it should be met. Then, *taking care of*, which entails assuming responsibility for addressing that need. Third is *care-giving*, referring to the direct meeting of needs through concrete, often physical, labor. Finally, *care-receiving*, or being attentive to the response of the person who receives care, as it is the only way to know if the need has been met. These interconnected phases imply the moral dispositions of attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness, which must be integrated into a coherent whole. The four phases of care should not be understood as isolated moments but as a continuous process, or cycle, of interdependence and reciprocity, between subjects that alternately give and receive care.

At this point, it is important to emphasize that care must not be romanticized as a harmonious or consensual practice. As Tronto (1994) repeatedly points out, care is always embedded in relations of power: matters of care are never neutral. Caring practices can reproduce domination, for example, when responsibilities are unevenly distributed or when certain groups are expected to care without recognition or support. Care entails disagreement, negotiations, and struggle. It is precisely because care is somewhat conflictual and forces us to confront asymmetries of power and dependencies that it constitutes a relevant political framework. It is more than merely a “moral ideal of kindness”.

Tronto (1994) also provides a general definition of *care*:

On the most general level, we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ‘world’ so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web. (Tronto, 1994, p.103)

This definition is crucial for this thesis because it allows environmental activism to be considered as a relevant site to look for the incarnation of the care ethic. Indeed, LSdT activities are oriented towards maintaining, continuing and repairing our world so we can live in it as well as possible, at least better than today.

It also implies that care is not restricted to interpersonal relations but can extend to humans’ relationship with the non-human entities, which is also crucial to consider environmental activism as caring in Tronto’s (1994) terms.

II.2 Extending Care to more-than-human Worlds.

These “more than human” implications are developed further by Maria Puig de la Bellacasa. In *Matters of Care* (2017), she argues that care is an affective, ethical, and political obligation that binds us to *more-than-human* worlds. For her, care is inseparable from relational ontologies that recognize the entanglement of humans, nonhumans, technologies, and ecosystems. She broadens Tronto’s (1994) ontological, ethical, and political framework to establish interdependence within the framework of relationships between humans, but also between humans and nature, humans and non-humans. It ultimately allows us to care for everything that composes our environment. It makes ecological relations politically visible. If care is understood as the activity that maintains, continues, and repairs our world, this world including non-humans—or Nature—then environmental activism can be understood as a form of political care. “Caring for the planet” ceases to be a metaphorical slogan and becomes an ethico-political orientation: identifying ecological needs (*caring about*), assuming responsibility for them (*taking care of*), engaging in concrete practices of repair and transformation (*care-giving*), and remaining attentive to the responses of affected communities and ecosystems (*care-receiving*).

Admittedly, the phase of care-receiving appears less straightforward in the ecological context than in the interpersonal relations, since “the planet” cannot communicate its feedback in direct or unmediated ways. Yet, I believe it does not make responsiveness impossible. Some “ecological feedback” might be expressed through material signals as well as through the situated knowledge of communities taking care of the ecological entity or through scientific research.

Finally, extending care to more than human worlds does not eliminate conflict; on the contrary, it multiplies the sites of contestation since ecological needs are interpreted through situated, and sometimes competing, forms of knowledge.

Taken together, Tronto (1994) and Puig de la Bellacasa (2017) articulate care as an ethico-political framework. Its ethical dimension lies in a new ontology: humans are not autonomous individuals but fundamentally in relations of interdependency with each other, and with non-human entities. Therefore, it requires a corresponding political reconfiguration. Tronto (1994) frames this political dimension primarily in terms of traditional political institutions. Here, however, in keeping with the social green tradition (Clapp and Dauvergne, 2011), I argue that environmental activism constitutes a more relevant site to observe this framework in action.

Moreover, precisely because caring requires practicing care—the enactment of the forms of social and ecological relations it seeks to generalize— it contains a prefigurative potential.

III. Care as Prefigurative Politics in Climate Activism.

Prefigurative politics refers to a political logic oriented toward the present enactment of alternative futures. As Yates (2021) defines it, it concerns “the future-oriented construction of political alternatives” and “the attempt to reflect political goals and values within the very process of collective action” (p.1033). Etymologically derived from *praefigurare* (to anticipate or represent in advance), prefiguration seeks to actualize a vision of collective life in the “here and now” (Monticelli, 2021). It is motivated by a moral and political “mandate” to match means and ends. It envisions social and political change as a process that requires experimentation. It is ontologically and epistemologically distinct from conventional politics, yet, not necessarily opposed to it.

I argue that care, as theorized above, fits this logic and, thus, can be understood as a form of prefigurative politics. Indeed, it operates through an alignment of means and ends (the ethic and politic/practice ambivalence): if the desired future is one organized around interdependence, attentiveness, ecological sustainability, and the preservation of life, then these principles must already structure collective practices and discourses, for instance, LSdT’s practices and discourse. Care does not merely demand institutional reform; it requires the embodiment of alternative modes of thinking and “relationing” through the concrete practice of the four phases of caring. It aligns ontology, ethics, and practice in a way that I find intrinsically prefigurative.

As Monticelli (2021) notes, the ontological roots of prefiguration lie in radical feminist and ecological thought centered on “alternative modes of social reproduction and the preservation of life” (p.113), in other words, care, hence the relevance of linking them together in this project.

Bringing together care ethics and prefigurative politics is a coherent analytical move because they already complete and co-constitute each other. Care ethics provides ontological reorientation (redefining subjects as relational and vulnerable and centering maintenance of life at the core of social and political organization) as well as a structured and operational account of caring as practice (articulated through the four phases of caring).

Prefigurative politics provides a theory of how such reorientation can be enacted within ongoing collective practices. Combining the two allows me to conceptualize environmental activism as a potential site where alternative socio-ecological relations are articulated, experimented with, and ultimately enacted.

Taken together, these theories complete each other to articulate both a diagnosis and a solution to the ecological crisis. The ecological crisis is, at its root, an ontological crisis of care. Therefore, an Ethics and Politics of Care offers a new ontology that would in turn prevent the ecological crisis from getting worse. Now I turn to the methodology to look for this ontology in LSDT's discourse and enacted in its practices.

Methodology

I. Hajer's (1995) method: The argumentative approach to environmental discourse.

In this thesis, I use Hajer's (1995) argumentative discourse analysis as he developed it in *The Politics of Environmental Discourse*. He believes that environmental politics is fundamentally discursive: it is not about struggles over policy solutions to environmental problems, but about struggles over how environmental problems themselves are defined and interpreted. Policy-making is "the socially accepted set of practices through which we try to face what has become known as the ecological crisis" (Hajer, 1995, p.2). The way environmental problems are addressed in the political arena depends on how they are framed and articulated within discourse.

Hajer (1995) understands discourse as more than language or rhetoric. Discourse refers to a broader configuration of *ideas*, *concepts*, and *practices* that give meaning to reality: "discourse is a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that is produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities" (Hajer, 1995, p.60). Discourse analysis then does not only examine texts but investigates how meanings are stabilized through social practices, how actors are positioned within debates, and how certain interpretations become dominant. Discourse analysis seeks to understand "why a particular understanding of the environmental problem at some points gains dominance and is seen as authoritative, while other

understandings are discredited.” (Hajer, 1995, p.44). This methodological framework is particularly relevant for this thesis because it does not seek to evaluate the effectiveness of LSDT’s actions but rather to analyze how its discourse participates in the discursive struggle over environmental politics.

Hajer (1995) further argues that today, politically important decisions are increasingly taken outside traditional governmental institutions, in “subpolitical” arenas. In such arenas, actors such as social movements, activists, civil society organizations, etc., are participating in shaping public debates and redefining political issues. Movements such as LSDT operate within this subpolitical sphere, where competing interpretations of ecological crisis, responsibility, vulnerability and legitimate action are constructed and circulated. In this sense, their discourses should not be analyzed/understood as only “peripheral” or trying to simply influence traditional policy-making but rather as actively prefiguring alternative political possibilities.

Storylines

A central concept in Hajer’s (1995) methodological framework is *storylines*. He defines them as “narratives on social reality through which elements from many different domains are combined and that provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding.” (1995, p.62) They are condensed narratives that help actors interpret complex political problems; moreover, they are “essential political devices that allow the overcoming of fragmentation and the achievement of discursive closure” (Hajer, 1995, p.62). In other words, storylines, by linking different phenomena together in a specific combination, construct coherent interpretations of reality and, at the same time, make certain policies appear as natural or necessary responses. Storylines also position actors in the discourse and attribute responsibility. Through the different combinations of phenomena that create a specific storyline, the same actor may appear as the victim, the perpetrator or the problem-solver. Therefore, storylines play a central role in shaping environmental politics by defining who is responsible for ecological problems and what forms of action appear legitimate in response.

I want to specifically emphasize the potential for political transformation that storylines hold. Hajer (1995) argues that storylines are “the prime vehicle of change” (p.63) because

they enable new interpretations of reality to circulate. By linking together phenomena in a new way, new storylines are created, and they reshape how actors perceive environmental problems and their possible solutions. In doing so, they can reopen what appears politically thinkable and legitimate, joining Escobar's call. When a storyline becomes widely adopted, it allows different actors (scientists, policymakers, activists, citizens, etc.) to situate their own practices within a shared narrative framework (Hajer, 1995, p.63). This process facilitates the formation of discourses coalition and can gradually transform dominant understandings of environmental issues. As a new storyline gains resonance, it may reassign responsibility, redefine urgency, and open space for alternative political responses. Political change, therefore, does not necessarily occur through the immediate adoption of new policies, but through the gradual stabilization of new discursive interpretations that reshape the meaning of environmental problems and the range of legitimate actions available to address them.

Discourse Coalitions

Hajer (1995) adds the concept of discourse coalition to his methodological framework. He defines discourse coalitions as "the ensemble of a set of storylines, the actors who articulate them, and the practices in which these discursive activities are embedded." (p.65) In contrast to traditional political coalitions, discourse coalitions are not based on shared interests or formal alliances. Instead, they emerge when heterogeneous actors begin to mobilize similar storylines in their interpretations of political issues. Hajer (1995) challenges assumption that the political actors hold pre-formed interests when producing a discourse. Rather, he argues that interests are themselves shaped and defined through discursive interactions, suggesting that political alignments emerge through "shared interpretations rather than pre-existing preferences" (Hajer, 1995, p.59). This perspective allows discourse analysis to capture the dynamic and evolving character of policy-making. Hajer (1995) further distinguishes between discourse structuration and discourse institutionalization. Discourse structuration occurs when a particular discourse begins to dominate the way a problem is discussed, while discourse institutionalization occurs when that discourse becomes embedded in institutions and policy practices. When both occur simultaneously, a discourse is considered hegemonic.

II. Empirical materials and data collection.

My thesis analyzes the discourse of the French climate activist movement *Les Soulèvements de la Terre (LSDT)*. The analysis draws on a heterogeneous corpus of materials produced and circulated by the movement: mostly LSDT website publications such as manifestos and articles, but also social media posts (Instagram), and a recently released movie that includes testimonies of LSDT activists.

The authors of the Manifestos, Articles and Instagram Posts published by the movement are unknown. Therefore, for clarity purposes, I assigned a letter to each text and refer to it in this way intertext: Article A (date), Manifesto C (date) etc.⁴ Activists' names in the movie are also not disclosed, so I refer to them with numbers (Activist 1, 2 etc.). It is not ideal as it does not include the exact timestamps, but the numbers I attributed to each refer to their order of appearance and therefore can be used as reference to locate the quotes in the movie.

These materials were selected to reflect the diversity of formats through which the movement articulates and diffuses its discourse. This choice is methodologically grounded in Hajer's (1995) emphasis on the importance of sites and media of diffusion in discourse analysis. As he points out, discourse is not only produced through formal texts, but also through a variety of other channels that contribute to the circulation, visibility and stabilization of particular storylines. Different media formats may play different roles in shaping how narratives are constructed and simplified across different audiences. The data collection across these different materials proceeded until a point of "saturation" was reached. Following Hajer (1995), saturation is understood not as exhaustiveness but as closure: when additional materials start to repeat themselves and no longer significantly introduce new discursive elements. Moreover, I deliberately excluded the videos published on their website and Instagram, because, for most of them, they consist solely of images (no speech or text, just visuals). While I recognize images as a form of discourse, and believe that analyzing the storylines conveyed through visual material could be highly interesting, such an approach would require a different methodological framework and would constitute an entirely different thesis. In order to remain within the scope of this thesis, I therefore chose not to conduct a visual discourse analysis.

Finally, the discursive material produced by LSDT is predominantly in French. All excerpts cited in this thesis have therefore been translated in English by me (a French native

⁴ See Appendix for the complete list of LSDT material.

speaker). While every effort has been made to remain faithful to the original meaning and tone, I acknowledge that translation inevitably involves a degree of interpretative judgment. In cases where a French term carries specific discursive weight that risks being lost in translation, the original term has been retained and justified.

I take this opportunity to express my commitment to feminist methodologies that insist on positionality and reflexivity of the author. Drawing on Donna Haraway's (1998) critique of the "view from nowhere", her argument that all knowledge is situated, produced from a particular position rather than from a neutral, universal, disembodied standpoint, this thesis is based on, and produces a situated point of view. I am a white, young, French woman and student, privileged enough to pursue this research within the institutional setting of Lund University Social Studies of Gender Master. This position shapes what I know, what I see, what I ask and how I interpret it. Acknowledging this positionality does not compromise my analytical rigor; on the contrary, following Harding's (1991) notion of "strong objectivity" it is precisely this situated awareness that makes the research more accountable and transparent about what it claims to do and what it cannot.

III. Operationalization.

The discourse analysis will be conducted in three parts. To begin with, my first objective will be to display which storylines emerge from LSDT's discourse. To do so, I use four key points in Hajer's (1995) methodology that makes it possible to identify a storyline as such. First, a storyline condenses complex phenomena into a coherent, actionable political narrative. Thus, I start by searching for what complex phenomena are condensed into which coherent, common, and actionable political narratives surrounding specific ecological issues. Secondly, storylines do not exist in a vacuum; they exist in a discursive context. I will position the main storylines identified in opposition to or in addition to other existing narratives, to see how they interact, if their storylines are part of the hegemonic ecological narrative in the French context, or if they compete with it, to give an example. Thirdly, storylines identify and position actors in a specific way: I will examine who appear as victims, perpetrators, and problem-solvers. Finally, storylines circulate across formats to gain strength and legitimacy. I will identify how the identified storylines are distributed across these formats and whether particular formats serve specific functions in conveying certain storylines.

The aim of this first analytical part is not only to identify the storylines structuring LSDT's discourse, but also to show how they work politically: what ecological problems are constructed discursively, how they reorganize meaning and responsibility around these problems, leading to potentially new sets of appropriate political solutions.

In the second part, I mobilize Tronto's (1994) theory of care ethics, developed in the Theory Chapter, and analyze the storyline identified in the previous part through this lens. Circling back to my aim, concretely, if Tronto's four phases of care are applied as an analytical tool/lens to examine the storylines, which ecological needs, issues and responses are constructed, legitimized and how? This approach brings light to *how* the movement's storylines obey a "logic of care" even if not explicitly articulated as such.

Thanks to the first phase of care, *caring about*, I explore how the movement discursively identify what/who is in need of care, and what types of needs have to be met; paying attention to the ways environmental degradation is described, to the forms of vulnerability that are emphasized, to the actors whose needs are made visible/invisible.

Thanks to the second phase of care, *taking care of*, I explore how responsibility is distributed: across which actors, how these actors are positioned within discourse, and how the movement situates itself in relation to these responsibilities.

Thanks to the third phase, *care-giving*, I explore the forms of practices of care that are articulated, justified, and prioritized within the movement's discourse.

Finally, the fourth phase, *care-receiving*, empirically presents specific challenges, because the subject of care cannot provide direct feedback. However, I approach this dimension through the way LSDT themselves talk about the effects and outcomes of their caregiving actions. This includes looking at how they evaluate or reflect on it, analyzing if there is reflexivity regarding the limits, tensions, or unintended consequences of their caregiving actions.

In the final part of the analysis, my goal is to make explicit the prefigurative character of care within the movement. As argued in the Theory chapter, Tronto's (1994) care ethics is intrinsically prefigurative. If the future we want is a world based on a relational ontology, then practicing care in the present is prefiguring this future. It merges with Hajer's (1995) methodology, as I consider it also contains a prefigurative dimension. For Hajer (1995), storylines do not simply talk about the world, they participate in making thinkable, legitimate,

and feasible new and specific social, economic, and ecological organizations. In this way, a discourse producing a storyline is discursively prefiguring a specific desirable future.

Empirically, it means I explore how the movement's storylines articulate and legitimize alternative ways of organizing social, political, and ecological relations in their present practices.

Overall, this methodological framework enables an analysis that remains attentive to both the discursive and practical dimensions of environmental activism. By combining Hajer's (1995) argumentative discourse analysis with Tronto's (1994) ethico-political framework of care and prefigurative politics, this thesis develops an original analytical approach that brings feminist care theory into dialogue with environmental activism. It makes visible the role of care as a structuring dimension of environmental activism and contributes to the research on the ways in which alternative political imaginaries and socio-ecological relations are articulated and prefigured within these movements.

Analysis

I. Discursively constructing the ecological crisis through three main storylines.

Across the corpus of material selected from LSDT, three main storylines emerge. The movement has produced hundreds of articles, therefore a different selection of materials would have led to the identification of different storylines: however, using their manifestos as the primary analytical basis, these three storylines appear as the most structuring and recurrent narrative through which LSDT discursively constructs the ecological crisis, its causes, and the political responses it considers necessary. I have summarized these three storylines in the following table. This provides a clear reference point for the rest of the analysis. Whenever I refer to Storyline 1, 2 or 3, I am referring to these specific narrative constructions:

Table 1

Storyline 1: Land under attack, against capitalist devastation of the living.	Storyline 2: Reclaiming food autonomy, against capitalist dispossession.	Storyline 3: Rebuilding collective resistance and life through political care.
<i>Land is a living entity under systematic attack by capitalist modes of production. Through monopolization by agribusiness, artificialization of soil and chemical poisoning of ecosystems, capitalism is destroying the very conditions of the reproduction of life. Technical fixes and “green” transitions are not solutions; they are extensions of the same logic of extraction and accumulation. Protecting land from capitalist devastation is therefore a fundamental political struggle for the survival of the living, human and non-human.</i>	<i>Capitalism does not only destroy land and ecosystems; it cuts people off from the means of sustaining their own lives. Seven to eight million people in France depend on food aid not because of scarcity but because of dispossession. By dispossessing people of land, water, and the knowledge of how to produce food, capitalist modes of production impose a structural dependency on the market, resulting in the devastation of the living. Collectively reclaiming the means of subsistence is fundamental to overcome the ecological crisis.</i>	<i>The ecological crisis cannot be overcome through individual responsibility, isolated struggles, or asking governments to act against their interests. Strong and transversal collective movements, like LSDT, are necessary to resist capitalist ecological and social devastation as well as reconfigure alternative ways of living. Such a collective requires ongoing organizational work rooted in a political care perspective.</i>

The following section analyzes each storyline in greater detail through Hajer's (1995) key dimensions of what makes a storyline function as a storyline: (1) how it condenses complex phenomena into a coherent, political narrative; (2) how it positions itself in relation to other narratives; (3) how it positions actors; and (4) how it circulates across different formats.

I.1. Land Under Attack: Against Capitalist Devastation of the Living.

The first storyline that emerges across LSDT's corpus constructs land not as an inert resource to be exploited or a passive backdrop to human activity but as a living entity under systematic attack. Across the selected discursive material, the movement articulates a coherent narrative: ecological devastation is not an accident, not the "unintended side-effect" of otherwise legitimate economic development, but the direct and structural consequence of capitalist modes of production and their relationship to land.

I.1.1. Condensing complexity into a political narrative.

The storyline operates first and foremost through a work of condensation. The dynamic of "unrestrained *monopolization* by agribusiness, which exhausts it and squanders water resources" (Manifesto B, 2023); of "the increasing *artificialization* of the soil, its "concretization"⁵, by urban planning and by the economic activism of the building and public works giants" (Manifesto B, 2023) and of "the irreversible *destruction of soil life* by the fertilizers, pesticides, fungicides and herbicides dumped all over the world by the multinational petrochemical companies" (Manifesto B, 2023) are woven together throughout the corpus as three interconnected dynamics of destruction creating a single coherent narrative of capitalist devastation of the living.

These three dynamics are not presented as isolated environmental problems requiring separate technical fixes. They are all expressions of a single underlying relationship to the land, defined by extraction, accumulation, and the subordination of living systems to capitalist productivity and profit summarized as such in Manifesto A (n.d): "the mortiferous capitalist mode of production that has brought us to the wall of climate disruption, the collapse of the living, and social and health systems dismembered by predatory economic policies" (p.1).

⁵ I chose to translate *bétonisation* which means to "poor concrete" as "concretization", signifying overuse of concrete while gesturing towards a word play in English.

It is worth making an analytical distinction between the Manifestos and the Articles. Manifestos portray the structural articulation of the storyline (its general, systemic claims about capitalism and the devastation of the living) and Articles its “local expressions”, in which the same narrative logic is instantiated in specific, territorially grounded struggles. The opposition to the Seine Nord Canal (Article H, 2025), the mobilization against the microchips factories extension in Grenoble (Article C, 2025; Instagram post, 2025), the over-seeding operations against Limagrain’s hybrid corn (Article F, 2026), to name a few, are not separate storylines but local enactments of the same overarching narrative. Each local struggle functions as a concrete proof of the general claim: that capitalist industries are systematically devastating land, water, and living ecosystems. In this sense, the local examples perform a crucial discursive function: they anchor the storyline in verifiable, lived realities. This is consistent with Hajer’s (1995) understanding of how storylines build discourse coalitions: not by imposing a unified ideology but by offering a shared interpretative framework flexible enough to accommodate diverse local experiences within a common political diagnosis.

I.1.2. Refusing the dominant narrative.

A storyline, in Hajer’s framework (1995), always exists in tension with competing storylines. LSDT Storyline 1 (see **Table 1**) is partly defined by its systematic rejection of what might be called the *techno-solutionist narrative*: the dominant framing that presents ecological problems as manageable through technological innovation and “sustainable” development, without fundamentally questioning existing modes of production.

This refusal runs throughout the corpus: Manifesto A (n.d.) positions itself “against a new front of techno-solutionist modernization promising us salvation through a radicalization of capitalist acceleration and innovation—discourses on ‘energy transition’, on agri-tech, on the bioeconomy—which ultimately only reinforce new devastating forms of extractivism and exploitation” (p.6). Article D (2026) states that “the notion of transition rests on a fundamentally erroneous vision of the history of technology [...] There is no transition, only accumulation: of energies, infrastructures, of profit.” Activist 9 in the movie (Lacoste, 2026) criticizes the techno-solutionist installation project of a cable on a melting glacier as a way of “raising awareness about environmental degradation”: a project that “presents ‘solutions’ to the problems it itself created”.

This systematic refusal of the techno-solutionist storyline repositions the only legitimate responses to the ecological destruction as those who operate outside and against capitalist logics of production. In Escobar's (2020) terms, the techno-solutionist counter-narrative does not merely propose different solutions: it actively forecloses the imagination of alternatives by presenting capitalist modernity as the only viable reality. LSDT's systematic refusal of this narrative is therefore not only a political stance but an ontological one: it insists that other relationships to land, to production, and to the living are not only desirable but possible.

I.1.3. Positioning actors: victims, perpetrators and problem-solvers.

One other key function of a storyline, according to Hajer (1995), is the positioning of actors. Depending on the way certain phenomena are linked in a storyline, actors can be assigned very different subject positions, and in doing so, responsibility can be distributed differently, which will, in turn, legitimize particular forms of political agency. LSDT's Storyline 1 positions actors across these three roles (perpetrators, victims, and problem-solvers) in this way:

The perpetrators are specifically named, they are not abstract forces but identifiable actors: companies as, for example, Limagrain, BASF, Lafarge-Holcim, or Vinci Autoroutes, but also the French state that is presented as structurally complicit in their operations: “governmental policies are subordinated to the interest of industries—Lafarge, Bayer, Thales, Vinci, LVMH—which are criminal and make the world uninhabitable.” (Article B, 2026). The naming of specific corporate actors transforms an abstract systemic critique into concrete political antagonism and enables concrete actions against these actors.

The victims in this storyline include the land itself: described as “devastated, poisoned, paved, dried out” (Manifesto A, n.d.). But also the living beings that depend on the land: from farmers dispossessed of their lands and practices to local communities exposed to chemical contamination, going through non-human species whose habitats are destroyed. In Article E (2025), activists protesting BASF chemical company created a banner stating “BASF killers of peasants, children, and the living” linking human and non-human vulnerabilities within the same narrative of being under attack.

The problem-solvers are local communities, peasant communities, territorial activists, and the movement itself. In Manifesto C (2023), LSDT's committees are described as “essential spaces to support, co-construct convergent actions, conduct field investigations on ecological

or land monitoring in specific local contexts, open spaces for encounters, debates, and popular self-education.” This positioning shifts the focus of traditional understanding of legitimate political agency away from centralized institutions towards situated, collective, and territorially embedded actors.

I.1.4. Circulation across formats.

A final element in Hajer’s (1995) discourse analysis methodology refers to the way the storyline circulates across different discursive formats and what it says about its political function. As he emphasizes, the sites and media of diffusion are constitutive of how storylines are stabilized and succeed in reaching different audiences, which will give it more echo, a more important place in the discursive struggle around environmental politics.

Moreover, the format diversity used by LSDT is not accidental. The manifestos allow for the most explicit articulation of their systemic analysis, and the articles localize the narrative, grounding it in specific struggles that function as concrete illustrations of the broader storyline, as mentioned before. The Instagram posts simplify the narrative through the short and efficient constraint of the format. Lastly, the movie gives the storyline an emotional dimension through the personal testimonies of the activists who experience the destruction of ecosystems directly. Together they touch a large audience, and participate in stabilizing and reinforcing the storyline power in the discursive struggle around the ecological crisis.

I.2. Reclaiming Food Autonomy: Against Capitalist Dispossession.

If the first storyline establishes that land is under attack, the second (see **Table 1**) extends this diagnosis by insisting that the destruction of land is inseparable from the destruction of people’s food autonomy. LSDT does not frame food precarity as an isolated social issue nor as a problem of insufficient production. The problem is that the capitalist organization of food production deprives people of access to the material conditions of subsistence while simultaneously destroying the ecosystems that make subsistence possible.

This storyline condenses the concentration of land in the hands of agribusiness, the disappearance of peasant farming, the dependence of precarious populations on food aid, and the progressive loss of practical knowledge linked to subsistence into a coherent narrative of capitalist dispossession. In other words, these interconnected dynamics are different

expressions of the same process: capitalism organizes dependency on the agro-industry to eat, for profit, destroying the planet in the meantime.

Storyline 2 directly challenges dominant capitalist and productivist narratives that present dependence on the market as inevitable, normal, or desirable. Storyline 2 positions itself against the idea that food security can be achieved through more technical innovation or through change in individual behaviors. It positions itself against the dominant narrative that believes two agricultural models can coexist (agro-industrial agriculture with forms of small scale, agroecological agriculture). LSDT's storyline clearly asserts that small-scale peasant farming and agroecology are the only viable systemic models to achieve subsistence (Manifesto D, 2023).

The positioning of actors follows the same logic as in Storyline 1. The perpetrators are again agribusiness corporations and chemical industries, as well as large landowners and the French state that protects and enables these arrangements. The victims are precarious populations relying on food aid, small farmers losing their jobs or forced to join agribusiness, workers whose survival depends on exploitative wage labor, and more broadly everyone dispossessed from autonomous access to subsistence. The land itself remains a victim too, since food precarity and ecological devastation are treated as two dimensions of the same process. The problem-solvers are, therefore, the ones who enable and practice subsistence outside dependency on the market. Meaning the surviving small-scale farmers practicing agroecology, who sometimes are LSDT activists themselves, and the movement itself.

As in the first storyline, manifestos formulate the systemic critique while articles localize the subsistence struggles, depicting conflicts around land use (Greendock project, Article A, no date; Article G, 2026), agricultural land grabbing by chip factories (Article C, 2025; Instagram post A, 2025), or exposing harmful practices of cultivation (Article F, 2026; Instagram post D, 2026). The movie gives access to direct testimonies from the LSDT activists in charge of thinking and organizing the movement's food autonomy.

I.3. Rebuilding collective resistance and life through political care.

Storyline 3 (see **Table 1**) differs from the previous two because it is reflexive: it is the movement talking about itself, about its own organization, and about the conditions that make collective action possible. This storyline constructs the ecological crisis as also being a problem of fragmentation: the fragmentation of the collective capacities necessary to fight for the environment.

This storyline condenses a critique of the isolation of individuals and fragmentation of struggles under capitalism, together with the outrage against the criminalization of ecological resistance by the French state and dominant media, into a coherent political narrative centered on the power of collective organization rooted in political care; both as a mean to directly resist ecological devastation, and as a prefiguration of alternative ways of living. “The relative isolation of different initiatives of resistance, their fragmentation, condemns them to powerlessness” (Manifesto A, n.d, p.3): the issue, beyond ecological devastation, becomes about how to build a collective force capable of confronting it.

This storyline positions itself against the discourse on individual responsibility that asserts that changes in individual behaviors can solve the ecological crisis. Storyline 3 exposes the way this narrative is actively depoliticizing: locating the problem at the level of the individual obscures the structural and institutional causes of ecological devastation and leaves people isolated and feeling powerless. It also positions itself against the State and media discourses that seek to delegitimize LSDT’s discourse and collective actions by criminalizing them, describing them as violent, dangerous, or even terrorist, justifying their attempt to dissolve the movement.

Beyond opposing these narratives, this storyline positions itself within discourse coalitions with other climate movements, territorial collectives, peasant unions, and anti-racist and feminist associations. The aim is not mere juxtaposition of struggles but their active articulation into a shared real counter-power:

Actions are then shaped with a certain focus on what we will call composition, [...] attention to composition, as we understand it, therefore requires not only making room for a diversity of practices, modes of engagement, and sensibilities, but also not settling for their mere juxtaposition—which would leave them fragmented and isolated—and seeking to develop forms and situations that allow us to envision their mutual reinforcement and synergy. (Manifesto C, 2023)

In this way, Storyline 3 functions as an attempt to build a broad and transversal counter-hegemonic force through discourse coalition.

It completes Storylines 1 and 2 because it provides the organizational answer to the problems they identify. Storyline 3 asks how resistance to ecological devastation and dispossession can actually be sustained. It is the narrative that articulates care and prefiguration the most explicitly. Where storylines 1 and 2 gesture toward alternatives, Storyline 3 makes the claim that the movement itself, through its organization, already attempts to embody those alternatives. As Manifesto D (2023) states: “Opposing alone is not

sufficient. Each act of opposition must be organically mixed with a positive proposition”. Thus, LSDT discourse on the organization of a collective rooted in political care and committed to fighting systemic oppressions within its own ranks is not only a means to resist capitalism and exist in the discursive struggle around environmental politics. It is the enactment of this discourse in practice.

The perpetrators in this storyline include neoliberal ideologies of individual responsibility as well as the French state and dominant media that enforce them through the criminalization of LSDT activism. The victims are isolated individuals, fragmented communities, dispersed local struggles, and, more broadly, the social connections between people that make collective life possible. The problem solvers are the movement itself: activists, committees, those who organize collective actions and experience them. Caring for the internal life of the movement—thinking about how people meet, organize, and support one another—becomes inseparable from ecological struggle.

Across formats, this storyline circulates following the same logic as the other two. Manifestos carry the systemic critique of individualism and theorize the necessity and conditions of collective organization (Manifestos A, C, D, and E, 2023). Articles and Instagram posts often function as invitations: they call people to join committees, occupations, demonstrations, and local actions or are reflexive reports on previous actions (Article B, 2026; Instagram Post A, 2025; Article D, 2026; Instagram Post B, 2026). The movie gives, again, an emotional dimension by showing the lived experience of activists inside the movement: friendships, tensions, collective joy, and the refusal of isolation. It is through these testimonies that the storyline becomes fully embodied.

Together, these three storylines construct a coherent and layered critical frame that connects the ecological, social, and political dimensions of the ecological crisis through the transversal focus on soil that “links the ecological and peasant question of the reproduction of the conditions of life on earth, the social question of the distribution of agricultural, food, and water resources, and the political question of the capitalist structuring of production sectors” (Manifesto B, 2023).

This articulation also carries what Hajer (1995) calls a “generative” quality. A storyline does not merely describe a problem or a political position; it reorganizes the way a problem is perceived, how responsibilities are assigned, and opens a field of legitimate responses. By naming capitalist extractivism as the structural cause of ecological destruction, LSDT’s discourse delegitimizes the techno-solutionists’ fixes that remain inside the framework of

capitalism pushed by market liberals (Clapp and Dauvergne, 2011), and makes radical ecological responses appear as legitimate and necessary.

Ultimately, LSDT's articulation of the three storylines together offers both:

A genuine political perspective that distinguishes between a reformist position, which views capitalism as a legacy whose developmental goals must be maintained in a 'sustainable' form; and the revolutionary position of Les Soulèvements de la Terre, which asserts that capitalism is a legacy we must grieve, with which we must resolutely break.
(Manifesto A, n.d. p.5)

and more than a political perspective, it provides a concrete political strategy for breaking with capitalism: direct and collective forms of resistance that simultaneously confront ecological devastation and prefigure an alternative world organized around care.

Having identified the structural architecture of the three storylines, we can now turn to what it reveals when read through the lens of feminist Care Ethics. Tronto's (1994) ethico-political framework of care allows us to ask a deeper set of questions: what needs and vulnerabilities are identified by the movement, and how are these needs articulated (produced or ignored). Who bears the responsibility of addressing these needs? What caregiving practices are legitimate to genuinely address these needs? And finally, how does the movement organize itself around political care, building into its own structure attentiveness, responsibility, and reflexivity.

II. Storylines Through the Lens of Feminist Care Ethics.

II.1. A crisis of care.

Before diving into how LSDT operationalizes Tronto's (1994) four phases of care, I need to establish a more fundamental claim that grounds this analysis: that the movement's discourse operates within the ontological and ethical framework of Care Ethics.

While the movement does not systematically articulate its discourse in terms of care, I argue that its three interconnected storylines resonate strongly with Care Ethics and Ecofeminist Relational Ontology⁶.

⁶ For the detailed discussion on Care Ethics, its relational ontology and its relationship with Ecofeminism, see the Theory Chapter.

First because LSDT shares their diagnosis of the ecological crisis itself. As established in the Theory Chapter, these approaches (Ecofeminism and Care Ethic) converge on understanding modernity's ecological collapse as an ontological failure, as a "crisis of care": the effect of a civilization built on the systematic prioritization of exploitation over preservation, autonomy over relationality, domination over cooperation (Salleh, 2017; Tronto, 1994). The result of a dualist ontology that systematically separates subject from object, reason from emotions, Men⁷ from Nature (Escobar, 2020).

This diagnosis is explicitly echoed in LSDT's discourse:

There is for us a very clear link between the dispossession of our means of subsistence by the capitalist economy and the ecological devastation of the planet. Cut off from the land, water, animals, from seasons, we have not always been able to understand that we are Nature that defends itself. (Manifesto D, 2023)

The movement identifies the same underlying mechanism as the root cause of ecological devastation: a capitalist system that produces forms of systematic separation between humans and ecosystems while presenting this separation as natural, inevitable, and even desirable in the name of progress (Salleh, 2017).

This mechanism of separation also creates dispossession. A dualistic ontology distances populations from the conditions that allow them to sustain their own life, and deprives communities of the knowledge, practices, and infrastructures necessary for their subsistence, which forces them to sell their time and energy on the labor market to survive. This process, in turn, simultaneously produces ecological devastation and social precarity as "the actual structure of the capitalist economy forces 8 million people to rely on food aid" (Manifesto D, 2023) in France today. "Two hundred farms are disappearing every week in this country [France], to the benefit of ever larger agricultural infrastructures, cut off from the peasant link to the land and subordinated to industrial companies." (Manifesto B, 2023). The problem is, above all, ontological: with each (small-scale) farm that disappears, not only vanishes a livelihood but a form of relationship to the ecosystem, a way of knowing and taking care of

⁷ I use "Men" here, rather than "humans", because as the theory chapter makes clear, it is specifically the masculine subject of modernity that has been constructed through a symbolic and material distancing from nature and from the labor of sustaining life. That is actually echoed in LSDT discourse when they say: "The 'ideological trap' of bourgeois culture groups together servile labour, peasant labour, and the domestic work of modern housewives, rooted in the [Men] despising of natural processes of life." (Manifesto D, 2023) Also, in the French language, when talking about humanity, we say "Men", revealing that patriarchy is structuring linguistic as it uses Men as the universal referent.

this ecosystem in its specificities. According to LSDT, ecological devastation cannot be separated from the dismantling of social and material conditions of subsistence. Both are the result of the same systematic logic of separation at the core of the modern capitalist ontology.

Instead, LSDT embraces a relational understanding of the world, as it fully considers that we are, in fact, interdependent: “Nature is not this intact an immaculate place, but rather a space of cohabitation between humans and more-than-humans, between the living and other living beings” (Article A, n.d.). Humans are not external or superior to Nature, but embedded within it, embedded in networks of dependence that are social, material, and ecological. This interdependency being precisely at the core of Tronto’s (1994) and Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2017) relational ontology.

This ontological shift has political implications. In Manifesto C (2023), LSDT frames the question of land as inherently transversal: “the land, the questions of its uses and its sharing, the questions around the ways of caring for it and working it, are crucial political questions. These questions lie at the intersection of social, ecological, and colonial issues.” The entanglement of different power dynamics finds concrete material expressions in struggles over land: the devaluation of the labor of maintaining the land (socially and economically), the subordination of subsistence agriculture to the agro-industrial complex, the erasure of situated knowledge to name a few.

Ultimately, what is at stake in LSDT’s discourse is not only a critique of the ecological crisis’ causes, but the political articulation of an alternative ontological framework. They are calling for a reorganization of our relationships to the land and to the living, grounded in attentiveness, responsibility—grounded in care.

If the ecological crisis is understood as a crisis of care by the movement, then it necessarily raises questions about the way it identifies needs, who is recognized as vulnerable, and how responsibilities are distributed.

II.2. Caring about: attentiveness to the needs of the living.

In Tronto’s (1994) four phases of care, *caring about* refers to the recognition of needs through attentiveness: identifying who is vulnerable and what their needs are. What is named and constructed as legitimate needs worthy of political attention is never neutral but always

the result of a process shaped by existing power dynamics (Tronto, 1994). Then, the first important contribution of LSDT's storylines, read through the lens of Tronto (1994) four phases of care, lies in its capacity to make visible the needs of entities that dominant political and economic discourses make invisible, and therefore give these needs a place in the political agenda.

II.2.1. Caring about non-human entities' needs.

The first object of their attentiveness concerns non-humans' needs.

LSDT are *caring about* the needs of non-humans throughout the corpus by, first, discursively constructing the land as vulnerable because capable of suffering and being harmed. Specifically, they name the non-human entities that are vulnerable to capitalist and industrial damage in their articles or testimonies: a specific river (e.g., the Vieille Oise in Article H, 2025), a glacier (e.g., the Girose glacier in the testimony of activist 10), or a bird species (e.g., cormorants, kingfishers, terns, falcons in Article A, n.d.). Insisting on the particularity of each threatened entity allows the movement to refuse the abstraction of dominant environmental discourses (from techno-solutionists or the State), where ecological harm toward non-humans is reduced to statistics or collateral damage.

They repeatedly deploy the lexical field of violence and devastation to describe what capitalism and industrialization do to land and the non-human living beings inhabiting it: “*ravager, saccager, dévaster, empoisonner, tuer, assaciner*” (or, in English, respectively: “wreak, ransack, devastate, poison, kill, murder”). Here again, this vocabulary stands in direct opposition to (capitalist and agro-industry) framings that present the processes of extractivism, artificialization, and monopolization of the land as neutral, technical, even necessary forms of “development” or “management”. Through this linguistic shift, actions such as “*bétonner*” (“to pour concrete”), traditionally understood as simply technical operations, are re-signified as acts of violence that disrupt and suffocate living processes.

This way LSDT performs the very gesture of attentiveness associated with *caring about*: they insist that what is happening to land under capitalism is not a neutral transformation but harm, and that this harm demands moral and political recognition.

They also register experiences of grief in response to ecological destruction. Activist 5 in his testimony speaks of “a form of grief” (Lacoste, 2026) for people (like him) who live in ecologically devastated environments, where ecological destruction is irreversible. Activist 9,

when talking about the melting Girose glacier, argues that it is necessary to “respect the death of the glacier” by refusing further exploitation of its remains, “as a form of respect for the ecological benefits it gave to the living beings nearby for years.” The introduction of mourning also challenges dominant narratives that frame ecological destruction as an acceptable cost of progress. Instead, it acknowledges the existence, the value, and the irreplaceability of non-human entities. Mourning can, in this sense, be understood as a form of *caring about*: an acknowledgement of loss that affirms the existence, the vulnerability, and the significance of what has been destroyed.

The movement emphasizes that attentiveness to non-human needs is not a spontaneous disposition but a cultivated, embodied, and affective practice.

In the movie, Activist 10 describes himself as a naturalist. He doesn’t define naturalism, but according to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Naturalism current usage derives from debates between philosophers such as John Dewey, Ernest Nagel, Sidney Hook, and Roy Wood Sellars that aimed to ally philosophy more closely with Science. They urged that “reality is exhausted by nature, containing nothing ‘supernatural’, and that the scientific method should be used to investigate all areas of reality, including the ‘human spirit’” (Papineau, 2020). The activist argues that learning to name insects, animals, and plants, to recognize birdsongs, allows one to really “understand what it means when we say that places are inhabited by living beings”, he says: “it thickens existence” (Lacoste, 2026). Activist 9 also feels that inhabiting a place fosters a stronger attachment to it and makes you (in her own terms) “care more about” that place. It echoes Puig de la Bellacasa’s (2017) argument that care involves developing the situated forms of knowledge and relational capacities that enable the perception of non-human needs in the first place. LSDT starts “from the standpoint of the one needing care” (Tronto, 1994, p.137) to be able to identify these non-human living beings’ specific needs and address them correctly; it respects the necessary “situatedness” of care.

Finally, *caring about* is a disposition grounded in affection, in love. Activist 11 states that: (the movement’s) “revolt is motivated not just by a feeling of revenge, but by a feeling of love.” (Lacoste, 2026). And activist 9 elaborates later “in the *Soulèvements*, something very present is seeking to play not on the affect of fear of the end of the world, but rather on the love of territories and the strength it gives to defend them.” (Lacoste, 2026). Their attentiveness is rooted in specific, embodied connections to particular places and living beings. It makes attentiveness not a detached moral assessment but a situated “noticing” that comes from being in relation.

II.2.2. Caring about Humans' subsistence needs.

The second object of the movement's attentiveness concerns human subsistence needs. LSDT's Storyline 2⁸ makes visible different aspects of the vulnerability of human populations whose basic conditions of subsistence have been undermined under capitalism and agribusiness.

Eating is a vital need. Yet, seven to eight million French people depend on food aid (Manifesto D, 2023). In other terms, they struggle to fulfill this basic need, not because food is scarce but because the organization of capitalist food production is oriented toward profit rather than toward feeding people. The corpus frames food precarity as the direct product of structural dispossession: "The capitalist structuring of the economy cuts the majority of the population off from all means of self-subsistence" (Manifesto D, 2023). Food is produced for sale, most of the time for the global market, even though those who produce it remain unable to feed themselves, and at the expense of ecosystems: "We cover wetlands zones with storage and shopping facilities that serve only the needs of predatory capitalism, never of the local population" (Article D, 2026).

Article A (n.d.) illustrates this dynamic through the movement's opposition to the "Greendock project": a large logistics hub project planned along the Seine in Gennevilliers, within a protected Natura 2000 area. Designed to store and redistribute consumer goods circulating at a global scale, the project is qualified as an "ecological and social aberration" by LSDT because it "obeys a capitalist logic of globalization taken to the extreme, pushing toward delocalization rather than thinking through the city's supply chain, locally" (Article A, n.d.). In response, the movement advanced a counter-project: the preservation and cultivation of the fertile land of Gennevilliers to produce quality food, combined with the use of existing local infrastructure to distribute it to nearby populations, schools, hospitals, etc. in a virtuous local supply chain.

This example crystallizes competing visions of what needs and political responses are considered legitimate in matters of subsistence. It shows that unmet needs are rooted in specific spatial and material arrangements, meaning that hunger is not the product of individual behavior but of a particular organization of land, infrastructure, and production.

⁸ See Table 1

Caring about subsistence, in this sense, goes beyond identifying eating as a need and hunger as a problem. It is also about tracing food precarity back to the political and economic structures that produce it and about revealing how certain forms of land use and infrastructural development (such as the Greendock project) actively prevent the need to eat from being met.

The movement is equally attentive to the *quality* of the food produced under agro-industrial conditions. To define eating as a basic need is, implicitly, to assert the need for healthy and non-toxic food. Yet, food production under capitalism is oriented toward maximizing profit by maximizing yield, which requires the use of chemicals and other harmful agricultural practices. Agro-industry not only fails to feed everyone: it actively harms those it feeds, as Article F (2026) states: “[agroindustry] diverts us from a peasant agriculture that is actually respectful of the health of the population”. LSDT critique, for instance, the agricultural practices of corn producer Limagrain, whose selection of “a limited number of homogenous [corn] varieties, reduces genetic diversity and jeopardizes access to healthy eating.” (Article F, 2026).

Article E (2025) and Instagram Post D (2025) expose the role of pesticide factories in contaminating both food and the surrounding environments, affecting not only ecosystems but also the health of local populations. In this regard, LSDT’s discourse converges with other actors’, for instance, the movement *Cancer colère* discourse, forming what Hajer (1995) conceptualizes as a discourse coalition around the denunciation of chemical use.

This attentiveness to the conditions of food production opens onto a second discourse coalition, this time with Confédération Paysanne, which has been a major actor in French agricultural syndicalism since 1987. This coalition, grounded in a shared perspective on subsistence, helps to make specific farmers’ needs emerge. The Confédération Paysanne (CP) speaks out against “the relentless drive for competitiveness that is leading to the disappearance of entire production sectors” (Confédération Paysanne, 2012) within the agricultural sector. Directly echoing LSDT’s activists’ discourse, stating: “We need to get the farmers out of permanent competition where the only prospect is to devour each other to survive [...] to get out of this *mortifère* [death-bringing] logic.” (Activist 7, Lacoste, 2026). *Mortifère* is the same term the movement uses when describing what industrial agriculture does to the land. The farmers and the soil are subjected to the same deadly logic; their vulnerabilities are of the same nature and same origin. Confédération Paysanne continues

stating: “farmers have a mission that only they can fulfill: feeding people. Their work is valuable and should provide them with a fair income” (Confédération Paysanne, 2012). This statement simultaneously repositions the purpose of farming away from profit, toward subsistence, and names the farmers as subjects with unmet material needs. Farmers constitute a structurally vulnerable group within the food system: in 2020, 17.7% of French farmers lived below the poverty line (Givois & Apers, 2025), while agro-industrial multinationals continue to concentrate profits (Danone, to take one example, is part of the CAC40). LSdT also condemns the agro-industry that: “generates colossal profits only for multinationals of seeds, pesticides, and GMOs, and for large agricultural operators already shamefully benefiting from the majority of governmental subsidies” (Article F, 2026). The counterpoint being that those who actually tend the land, maintain its health, or produce food outside of the agro-industrial logic receive neither adequate income nor institutional recognition. *Caring about* subsistence, therefore, necessarily includes caring about those who enable it.

Taken together, these examples show that the need at stake, when talking about subsistence, is not simply the need to eat, but the need for food produced under conditions that do not harm those who cultivate it, consume it, or the ecosystems that make its production possible. Reading Storyline 2 through Tronto’s (1994) *caring about* phase is relevant because it forces the expansion of attentiveness from the immediate satisfaction of hunger to the web of relations that sustain life and make subsistence possible. It adds an analytical layer redefining the concept of “needs” itself: needs are no longer understood as isolated or individual but as emerging from, and dependent upon, these interconnected social and ecological relations.

LSdT produces a storyline that, again, starts “from the standpoint of the one needing care” (Tronto, 1994, p.137) and traces their vulnerability back to a specific agricultural model, specific actors, and political choices about land use and subsidy distribution. This storyline is then shared and reinforced through discourse coalitions. Each actor in this coalition brings a different situated standpoint, and together they construct a field of needs that no actor could make visible alone.

LSdT’s “simultaneous” attentiveness challenges the separation that the capitalist food system produces: the separation between production and consumption, between humans and ecosystems. Through the lens of Tronto (1994), these separations appear not as natural distinctions but as political constructions that obscure relations of interdependency. What becomes visible is that feeding, cultivating, caring for ecosystems, and sustaining livelihoods

are not separate issues. In this sense, *caring about* subsistence means refusing the capitalist fragmentation of life processes and instead recognizing the necessity to address subsistence needs as an interconnected whole.

II.2.3. Caring about Humans' need for social connections.

Beyond the human need of subsistence, LSDT's Storyline 3⁹ constructs another basic human need: social connections. The World Health Organization (2025) defines "social connection" as "how people relate to and interact with each other. It has three dimensions: structure, function, and quality". Social connection is the experience of feeling close and connected to others. It involves feeling loved, cared for, and valued (Eisenberg and Cole, 2012).

LSDT is a collective; it regroups thousands of activists in its actions, so coexistence is unavoidable; however, there is more to it than coexisting. Storyline 3 is an invitation to consider coexistence and social connection as a need, to care about our relationships and how we organize them. One activist reflects in a podcast about the events of Sainte Soline: "what I also love about going to the *Soulèvements* is being together, feeling that you are not isolated" (Arte Radio, 2023). Activist 2 in the movie notes that the movement "brings together different existences: the reality lived by a farmer is not the same as that of a young climate activist in the city [...] Everyone is a piece of the puzzle" (Lacoste, 2026). Storyline 3 brings light to a genuine human need for encounter, for being together, for connecting with other human beings. It is not articulated as a critic of capitalist society as explicitly as in the two other storylines. But Salleh (2017) and Tronto (1994), nevertheless, established that capitalist society produces an ontology of separation between people. The consequence, as reflected in LSDT's Storyline 3, is the apparition of a need to *reconnect*. Discursively, we see this through the choice of the vocabulary: if collective action "gives back" (joy, strength, the desire to fight for the environment, etc.), it implies that it has been lost at some point. LSDT insists on "reconnecting", "rebuilding", in Manifesto C (2023), they call on "intensifying our bonds": it presupposes already existent connections and bonds between people that have been weakened by the individualistic capitalist ontology. Therefore, LSDT considers conviviality as central to its organization (Manifesto E, 2023, p.9). Moments of conviviality (such as meeting outside the movement's official reunions or actions, commuting together, singing around a bonfire,

⁹ See Table 1

etc.) are essential because they “combat isolation, solidify the group, help to cope better with conflicts [...] and simply bring joy” (Manifesto E, 2023, p.9).

What emerges from the corpus is not only that humans need to (re)connect, but that these connections must be qualitative. Just like Storyline 2 insists that it is not simply eating that is needed, but eating healthy food, Storyline 3 extends attentiveness beyond the mere existence of social connections toward their quality. For instance, the movement is being particularly attentive to the risk of perpetuating systemic inequalities within its activists’ relations. It acknowledges that activists’ vulnerabilities and social positions in the group are unequal because of systemic inequalities. Racism, misogyny, and other forms of oppression are damaging the quality of our relationships; this is why the movement insists on the necessity of actively preventing the reproduction of these oppressions within its own organization (Manifesto E, 2023). Making these inequalities and differences visible rather than assuming that political subjects are abstract and universal is itself a part of the movement’s attentiveness. Storyline 3 does not offer an exhaustive list of activists’ needs that they intend to cover, because needs are different from one individual to another. Instead, the storyline insists on the importance of *thinking through*, of trying to anticipate these specific needs when organizing collective life, so coexisting with people remains a pleasure, and does not perpetuate systemic inequalities or violence. Doing so requires maintaining continuous dialogue between activists within spaces that the movement actively seeks to make safe, inclusive, and attentive to different vulnerabilities. (Manifesto E, 2023).

The necessity to form qualitative social connections in the group is both what enables the sustainability of the struggle, the condition that makes ecological resistance possible, meaningful, and effective, and what prefigures a world that takes seriously, as part of the definition of a good society, the values of caring, attentiveness, responsibility, nurturance, compassion, and meeting others’ needs.

Read through Tronto’s (1994) framework, what emerges from Storyline 3 is therefore not simply a recognition that humans need social connection, but that meaningful social relations can only exist through continuous practices of care. Without attentiveness to vulnerabilities, responsibility toward one another, concrete practices of support and responsiveness, social connections risk reproducing oppression, exclusion, and violence. Even if LSDT never explicitly mobilizes Tronto’s (1994) theory, they ultimately ground their internal collective organization in the four phases of care.

Taken together, these three storylines reveal that overcoming the ecological crisis requires a specific form of attentiveness: to the needs of non-human entities, to human needs of subsistence, and to human needs of social connections. LSDT brings into visibility forms of vulnerability that dominant narratives tend to obscure or depoliticize and rearticulate them as matters of care that demand recognition and adequate political response. This new attentiveness, this new sets of needs identifying, in turn call for a redistribution of responsibility for addressing these needs, which I now turn to.

II.3. Taking care of and care-giving: responsibility enacted.

The second and third phases of care, *taking care of* and *care-giving*, are concerned, respectively, with the distribution of responsibility for addressing the needs that attentiveness has identified and the concrete, often physical labor of care-giving. Treating them together in this section is a deliberate choice, as reading LSDT's discourse with Tronto (1994) reveals their interconnectedness.

II.3.1 Repositioning problem-solvers as perpetrators.

As previously established in section I.1.3, the dominant, institutional, techno-solutionist narrative positions the government as a problem-solver of the ecological crisis, working hand in hand with industries and corporations across multiple sectors toward "the ecological transition" (Elysée, 2024). President Emmanuel Macron's discourse consistently insists on the compatibility of economic growth and ecological transition thanks to techno-solutionism, explicitly rejecting degrowth as a viable path (Elysée, 2024). The government portrays itself as actively assuming responsibility for addressing environmental issues, displaying a wide range of measures and goals on its official website, Elysée (2024): creation of the Council on Ecological planning, 2021 Climate Resilience Act, nationalization of energy, funding of cycling paths, etc.

LSDT's storylines discursively reposition the government, the agro-industries, the concrete corporations, and the chemical factories as perpetrators of the ecological crisis rather than its solvers. Therefore, if capitalist accumulation and extractivism are precisely what causes environmental destruction, as argued by LSDT, the actors committed to perpetuating capitalist accumulation cannot simultaneously claim to be taking responsibility for addressing its

consequences. Read through the lens of Tronto's (1994) framework, this reframing exposes the perpetrators' failure to genuinely *take care of* the needs identified in section II. Needs that are produced by the very capitalist organization of society, that the perpetrators actively uphold. One telling example is Article H (2025) that exposes ecological (technical and institutional) "compensation" mechanisms as "ineffective and absurd" exemplified by the paradox of a river being "clogged and dried out first to then create a wetland". The discursive struggle is real, considering the government lists abandoned projects (such as the construction of Notre-Dame des Landes airport) as evidence of its ecological commitment on its website, when it was the one pushing the project in the first place, and that it was precisely the sustained pressure of climate activism that prevented it from materializing.

Institutional environmental responsibility operates through a self-defeating logic: the very actors who produce the conditions of ecological destruction are tasked with taking responsibility for addressing them, through solutions that are doomed to remain structurally disconnected from the harm they claim to address.

The proof is ultimately in the pudding: The very existence of LSDT, and of climate activism in general, is itself evidence of the institutional failure of being responsible for addressing the ecological crisis. The persistence of ecological devastation, food precarity, and environmental activism suggests that the needs identified in section II are not being adequately *taken care of* by the actors officially responsible for addressing them.

The movement does not only question *who* should hold responsibility, it also addresses the conditions under which that responsibility is currently exercised. Article F (2026) calls for "subsidies to help peasants for a dignified income from their work, to develop organic agriculture, to restore nature and the living". The language of dignity echoes Tronto's (1994) and Salleh's (2017) critique of the devaluation of care work as one of the central injustices of the capitalist order: those who perform the labor of maintaining the conditions of life are among the least economically compensated and least socially recognized. Making this connection visible is showing that the struggle over who is responsible for land is also, at a deeper level, a struggle over whose labor counts, whose knowledge matters, and whose relationship to the living world is recognized as politically significant.

Overall, throughout LSDT's storylines runs a recognition that the current political organization under capitalism is structurally inadequate for genuinely taking care of the needs

of living beings: the needs of the non-human entities, subsistence needs, and social connection needs alike.

II.3.2 LSDT takes its responsibilities

LSDT's discourse does not stop at critique. If the actors designated as responsible for taking care of ecological needs have proven incapable of doing so, then the responsibility must be assumed elsewhere. As Manifesto A (n.d.) expresses: "The traditional reformist means of protest have been exhausted and are powerless" (p.2), therefore "we [LSDT] firmly believe that it is high time we take control over ecological disasters and don't wait for permission to put a stop to them" (Manifesto C, 2023). Against the disqualified institutional ways of taking care of the ecological crisis, the movement positions itself as a problem-solver capable of assuming responsibility for addressing the needs identified in section II.

From violence to caregiving: blocking, disarming and occupying.

First, the movement *takes care of* by directly opposing and confronting institutional and technocratic projects judged ecologically devastating. If non-human entities have needs that institutional actors have failed to address, LSDT presents preventing, blocking, and dismantling the projects that actively harm them as a genuine assumption of care responsibility, enacted through physical, collective struggle.

In Article B (2026), the movement lists three types of direct interventions they practice: "blockade, land occupation, disarmament". Manifesto C (2023) develops: "blockade refers to the suspension of direct destructive activities". So, for example, in Article E (2025) suspending BASF (pesticide factory) activities, or Article F (2026), and Instagram post D (2026) over-seeding operations, refer to blockades. "Disarmament refers to the shutdown or dismantling of infrastructures of projects responsible for ecological devastation through actions that neutralize these systems" (Manifesto C, 2023). The categorization of what is a blockade action and a disarmament action can, in practice, be blurred, as a blockade can sometimes lead to disarmament. Still, the most famous example of LSDT's disarmament action would be the one that made the movement gain public attention: Sainte-Soline (in March 2023), where activists went to sabotage (or disarm) a giant water reservoir system, facing unprecedented police repression (Arte Radio, 2023). Finally, "land occupation consists in taking over areas threatened by urban development of agro-industrial land monopolization"

(Manifesto C, 2023). For example, the activists in the movie (Lacoste, 2026) often refer to the creation of *Zones à défendre* (ZAD)—in English: Zones to defend—in different places: La Cluzaz, on the Girose glacier, in a forest where the A69 highway was supposed to be built, etc. (Lacoste, 2026).

Manifesto A (n.d.) also identifies a paradoxical form of direct action which is: not acting. Or, to “take back the land in order to disengage with it, to leave it free, so that spontaneous wild ecological dynamics can unfold” (p.4). Here, caregiving takes the form of withdrawal. For LSDT, sometimes the most adequate response to the needs of the land is to step back and let it be, allowing it to regenerate autonomously.

All these examples of direct actions are not disruptive for the sake of being disruptive; they are concrete and direct responses to identified vulnerabilities. In this sense, they can be understood as forms of *caregiving* insofar as they participate in protecting and maintaining life.

Thus, these forms of direct political action can be understood as one of the most radical extensions of Tronto’s (1994) Care Ethic. Activist political action, in the form of direct resistance—blocking, disarming, occupying—is caring. Care is not confined to the domestic, interpersonal context; LSDT’s environmental activism is a way to care publicly, collectively, and sometimes “conflictually”. Tronto (1994) when considering care as a political practice means primarily within the traditional democratic political institutions. However, because of the repositioning of actors carried out in II.3.1., I argue that it is more relevant to consider care as a political practice in the context of climate activism, where activists directly confront what they perceive as institutional failure to genuinely take responsibility for the needs of the living.

This repositions LSDT’s discourse within the discursive struggle over what counts as legitimate political action (here in the context of environmental activism). Dominant institutional and media discourses frame occupations, blockades, and acts of sabotage as violent, extreme, unnecessary, and illegitimate actions disrupting public order (Darmanin, Decree of June 21st, 2023). The father of activist 8 in the movie regrets that the media discourse systematically portrays LSDT activists as violent: “dominant media demonize things [LSDT direct actions] and create fear” (Lacoste, 2026). He, who witnessed the creation of a ZAD firsthand, said he felt amazement: “The ZAD was built on the basis of listening,

sharing, and caring” (Lacoste, 2026). He reframes occupation as peaceful and rooted in care, rather than violence.

LSDT’s choice of the term “disarmament” itself is revealing. It discursively inverts the distribution of violence between actors. It simultaneously reframes industrial infrastructures as weapons producing ecological devastation, and LSDT’s political acts of sabotage as protective interventions aimed at defending living beings and ecosystems.

Therefore, LSDT’s discourse, read through Tronto (1994), reframes direct political actions of environmental activism as *acts of care*, rather than *acts of violence*, as assuming responsibility for protecting living beings (human and non-human) and concretely addressing their needs.

The movement’s attics: addressing subsistence needs.

The subsistence needs identified in section II.2.2. (the need to eat, to eat healthily, and to access food produced in conditions that respect both human and non-human lives) are addressed in LSDT’s discourse and practices. They assume responsibility, take care of those needs, concretely and materially, within their own organization.

Not only do they feed their activists, but they do so outside of the capitalist food system through auto-production, collective land use, and solidarity networks. Taking care of activists’ subsistence needs is inseparable from the caregiving labor through which these needs can be met.

Manifesto D (2023) asks: “How can we effectively feed social struggles?” Beneath this simple question lies the recognition that bodies need to eat, but that if eating remains dependent on the capitalist food system, the struggle remains subordinated to the very system it contests. The movement wants to be “self-sufficient in terms of subsistence” (Manifesto D, 2023). To do so, they created the *Réseau de ravitaillement des Luttés* (R2R)—in English the Struggle Supply Network—(Manifesto D, 2023), responsible for taking care of organizing the movement’s subsistence, outside of the food market. The movement works directly with local peasants without intermediaries; they collect surplus food from supermarket chains destined to be thrown away, they borrow patches of land to grow crops on, they practice urban “wild gardening”, etc. (Manifesto D, 2023; Manifesto A, n.d.).

The movement aims to create “attics” (*greniers*)—or local storehouses—all over France holding food reserves that can be mobilized whenever a local struggle demands it.

These practices enact the full arc of care: the movement identifies a subsistence need, assumes direct responsibility for addressing it, by organizing and performing the concrete, physical labor of growing and distributing food.

Activist 6 in the movie mentions that R2R distributed food (for free) to the railway workers on strike (Lacoste, 2026). Not only does this move address concretely the need of these railway workers: when on strike, they receive no income, so it can become a struggle to eat. They do it through agroecological practices that enable a high-quality food and respect the ecosystems: one of the strikers confessed to Activist 6 “he never ate as good as during the strike” (Lacoste, 2026). Interestingly, it also creates a crossover between struggles, bonds are created between railway workers and farmers, people that would otherwise, never have crossed paths. By taking care of subsistence needs, the movement transforms material support into political strength: it builds bridges between struggles, reinforcing the connections between people that will ultimately empower the collective capacity of resistance.

Building connections through political care

As established in section II.2.3, the social connection need that LSDT identifies is a need for qualitative social bonds, grounded in the mutual recognition of vulnerability and interdependency. Because qualitative social connection is precisely what the four phases of Tronto’s (1994) care framework produce, taking care of social connection needs is structurally different from the care practices examined in the two previous sections. It is not that the four phases are applied *to* social connection from the outside; it is that their enactment *is* social connection. To practice the phases of care toward one another is to produce exactly the kind of connection whose absence constitutes a need.

What LSDT’s discourse reveals is that the movement understands this and takes responsibility for creating the internal conditions under which such bonds can emerge. Manifesto E (2023), written by the movement's own care commission, is trying to articulate a reflections on these matters in the context of the organization of collective political actions. The movement suggests being attentive to people's availability, experience level, material needs, emotional states, mental load, and group dynamics. It emphasizes the importance of organizing moments of conviviality, taking time to understand why each person is present, and planning for the inclusion of newcomers (Manifesto E, 2023). These are not simple

concerns for the movement; they are intern “organizational policies” that allow for qualitative social connections. Here, attentiveness becomes a collective practice with concrete procedures, assumed as a shared responsibility.

The caregiving that follows from this assumption of responsibility takes multiple forms. Indeed, LSDT’s attentiveness is not confined to a written Manifesto. It then translates to practices of caregiving in their direct actions. Activist 4 (Lacoste, 2026) explains that during actions, the movement sets up a *base arrière* (English: a rear base) equipped with a nursery, a psychologist, doctors, lawyers, and people dedicated to informing about, and be attentive to, any form of sexual and sexist violence. The rear base is a caregiving infrastructure: it materializes the movement's recognition that protest generates specific vulnerabilities, and that those vulnerabilities demand a concrete, organized response. Attentiveness to needs, assumption of responsibility, and the labor of care are here simultaneous and indistinguishable.

It also takes the form of organizing events that are peripherals to the direct actions, events that are specifically oriented toward creating social connections between people. Article I (2025) describes a *Turboteuf* weekend explicitly organized around the goal of “taking care of ourselves, and of the existing or yet-to-be-built bonds that allow the struggle to continue”. Care is directed not only at individuals but at the relational fabric between them; the bonds themselves are identified as something that needs tending.

The movement applies the four phases of care to its own internal relations, and in doing so produces qualitative social connections. Each activist is simultaneously a subject of care and an agent of it, responsible for the vulnerability of others, and subjected to their care in return. LSDT does not only demand a different organization of care in the world; it enacts one within itself.

II.3.3 Taking care of and caregiving are inseparable.

What this previous section reveals is that, if in Tronto’s (1994) framework, the second and third phases of caring—*taking care of* and *caregiving*—are analytically distinct, ultimately, they are, and should be, inseparable. It suggests that one of the reasons why State institutions, corporations, and technocratic actors fail to take care of ecological and social needs is precisely because responsibility is separated from the concrete, material practices and relationships of caregiving.

The articles of the corpus represent different local struggles. Each is shaped by its own specific context and therefore requires tailored solutions. In response, the movement valorizes the situated knowledge of the local people who directly experience these issues because they consider knowledge produced through sustained, direct engagement to be more adequate in addressing the needs identified by them. It is an epistemological preference. But most importantly, a political one: by positioning local knowledge as the most legitimate basis for *taking care of* the land, the movement questions the legitimacy and capacity of state institutions to uphold this responsibility. Responsibility should be assumed directly by those in actual, ongoing relation with the living systems that need care instead.

This logic is best exemplified by the discursive transformation that operates in LSDT's Storylines 1 and 2¹⁰. The question of who holds responsibility for land needs should be inseparable from the question of who performs the labor of maintaining it. Therefore, when these storylines mention farming practices, thanks to Tronto's (1994) framework, they can be understood from now on as caregiving practices, in which responsibility and competence are inseparable and co-constitutive. Manifesto D (2023) explains:

Grappling with the very practical issues surrounding our food (its production and distribution) immediately brings us face-to-face with environmental and social challenges, allowing us to rebuild our understanding of them "from the ground up," while at the same time giving us the tools to take action.

This quote supports that caregiving is epistemically generative. The act of tending to needs, by dealing with the practical realities of food production and distribution is what produces the knowledge necessary to genuinely assume responsibility for them. Responsibility abstracted from the labor of care is structurally incapable of adequately responding to the needs it claims to address.

Read through Tronto's (1994) framework, LSDT's discourse therefore suggests that ecological irresponsibility is structurally produced through the separation between responsibility and practice. LSDT challenges this separation in its internal organization and direct actions. To take responsibility for ecological devastation means being directly involved in the practices required to respond to it. Taking responsibility is understood as a situated engagement. Political legitimacy comes not from speaking in the name of care, but from

¹⁰ See **Table 1**

participating in the concrete practices of care themselves. In this sense, the movement redefines responsibility as something collective, practical, and embodied: one is responsible because one takes part in the work of caregiving. This is where prefigurative politics comes into play. Because LSDT envisions a world where *taking care of* and *caregiving* are treated inseparably, *taking care of* and *caregiving* are inseparable in their present actions of resistance. Because they envision a world where relationships are organized around care, they presently organize their relationships around it.

II.4. Care-receiving: *La boucle est bouclée.*

Tronto's (1994) last phase of care, *care-receiving*, concerns reflexivity and accountability. This phase evaluates whether the needs previously identified have effectively been met. Needs have been identified in section II.2, responsibilities for caregiving practices have been redistributed in section II.3, time to evaluate if care has been successful: Has ecological devastation been prevented? Have the conditions of subsistence been restored? Have qualitative and caring social connections emerged? These criteria become the normative benchmarks against which LSDT's actions are assessed. As mentioned previously, it is a complex phase because not every entity (human and non-human) has the ability to express direct feedback.

Discursively, this phase translates through what the movement names as a "victory". Referring to the sociological study conducted by the association *Terres de Luites* (in English: Land of Struggles), the term victory refers to: "the abandonment of the imposed and polluting project that a collective is fighting against, and the collective's own acknowledgment that it constitutes a victory (even if it is temporary or partial)" (Renaud, Gerbier, and Vauquois, 2024, p.3). In this thesis, victory is now understood in terms of care. Victory not only designates the immediate success of an action, but the capacity to verify that care has actually produced its intended effects. Victory, then, is not reduced to institutional recognition or final resolution, but becomes a situated measure of whether we "maintained, continued, and repaired our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web" (Tronto, 1994, p.103).

Has ecological devastation been prevented?

For non-human entities, *care-receiving* appears through the material preservation of ecosystems themselves. A river, a forest, or a glacier cannot express whether care has been successful, but their condition provides a form of response. If a harmful industrial project has been stopped and an ecosystem is preserved, it can be said that non-human entities' needs have been, at least partially, met. The non-human entities "respond" through their continued existence.

The movement's direct actions of blockade, disarmament, and occupation become victories in terms of care because they indicate that ecological devastation has been interrupted and the relations of interdependence between humans and ecosystems have been respected. For example, the ZAD in La Cluzaz has succeeded in making the mega water tank project abandoned (Lacoste, 2026); the operation of over-seeding has contributed to soil restoration and to the interruption of harmful corn cultivation (Article F, 2026); the actions against the Greendock project have significantly slowed down its implementation (Article G, 2026), to recall just a few. The direct actions "are often successful: over the past ten years, local struggles have won more than 160 victories against multinational corporations and massive development projects!" (Article D, 2026).

This also ties back to the movement's strong critique of ecological compensation mechanisms. Compensation does not mean that care has succeeded, because the original need was not met. Care cannot be reduced to managing destruction after the fact. For LSDT, successful care means preventing devastation in the first place. It is not compensation, but preservation.

Have the conditions for subsistence been restored?

Unlike the protection of an ecosystem that can be addressed through direct blockades, disarmament, and occupations, LSDT cannot directly overcome the entirety of subsistence issues alone.

Because subsistence issues are the result of the organization of food production according to capitalist imperatives of profit, productivity, and market dependency, overcoming them requires institutional changes to reduce the dependency of food production on the logic of the market.

What the movement does, however, is demonstrate that another organization is possible by restoring the conditions of subsistence within its own practices. LSDT prefigures forms of collective food autonomy outside the capitalist market, where feeding the struggle becomes part of the struggle itself. And it works because now the movement is autonomously feeding its collective actions. People eat, people eat good food, produced by peasant agroecological work, in ways that respect the life of the land rather than exhaust it. These practices also create local solidarities and durable networks of reciprocity between activists, peasants, and local communities. Subsistence is no longer treated as a private problem to be solved individually through the market, but as a collective political responsibility.

Therefore, the answer to subsistence issues for LSDT lies in a subsistence model organized less around productivity and accumulation, and more around collective autonomy, shared access to land, and the political priority of maintaining life. In Tronto's (1994) terms, this is what successful *care-receiving* would look like: institutions and infrastructures arranged around the actual and direct satisfaction of subsistence needs rather than around profit. Care has been successful when people no longer structurally depend on the market to eat, but are able to participate collectively in the production of the conditions to sustain their lives.

Have people been reconnected?

If capitalism isolates individuals and fragments struggles, then successful care must be measured by the reconstruction of qualitative collective bonds. LSDT provides a fertile ground for creating these social connections and shows a strong attentiveness and reflexivity regarding the conditions of their possibility. The movement experiments with taking political care as its organizational basis; it actively thinks about the way the four phases of care can take place inside the collective.

The response of the *cared for*—here the activists—appears through verbal and emotional feedback and through their continued participation in the movement's actions. If they express feelings of belonging, support, and manifest the desire to remain involved, it means the needs for qualitative social connections have been met, and that the four phases of care were effectively implemented. Care is successful when people no longer experience themselves as isolated individuals facing ecological collapse alone, but as part of a powerful collective capable of acting together.

LSDT does not assume that collective life is automatically caring; it builds concrete measures to make it so. At the same time, LSDT does not pretend to have found the perfect

model of collective organization. The measures that make collective life “caring” are built through collective experimentation and reflection: trying, adjusting, learning from failures and continuously thinking about how to make their spaces safer, more inclusive, and supportive (Manifesto E, 2023). Care is understood as an ongoing process, an ideal, not an achieved state.

The movement’s articles on local struggles include a reflection, a feedback, on the organizations of these struggles. In article I (2025) the movement states: “The focus on care worked: several people highlighted the quality of the initiatives addressing racism, sexist and sexual violence, ableism and listening teams”. This feedback functions as care-receiving in Tronto’s (1994) sense: the cared-for themselves recognize that their needs for safety, recognition, and support were addressed. It also sometimes means acknowledging failure when an action did not fully succeed at practicing care. Reflecting on the violence of Sainte-Soline, one activist states in a podcast: “for the sake of those people [the ones who were injured], we shouldn’t have gone [where the police was]” (Arte Radio, 2023, min. 33:09). *Care-receiving*, therefore also includes the capacity for self-critique and accountability.

What emerges from this analysis is that care-receiving does not function as a “triumphant endpoint” but as a demanding reflexive moment. That LSDT was not dissolved but instead continues to grow is itself a form of *care-receiving* evidence that the movement's internal practices of care are reproducing the conditions necessary for continued struggle. *La boucle est bouclée* (the cycle is full) not because the ecological crisis has been resolved, but because a victory is only a victory if care was taken seriously throughout the process, if the tissue holding together attentiveness, responsibility, practice, and accountability is articulated as a coherent whole. As hinted throughout this analysis, the movement’s articulation of care gestures toward prefiguration because it is already being enacted through its own practices, modes of organization, and political actions. Care is not only what the movement fights for, but how it fights.

III. Prefiguring Care.

LSDT’s discourse does not stop at criticizing capitalist destruction or exposing institutional failures of care. One of its central political characteristics is that opposition is constantly articulated with the attempt to materially enact other ways of living, producing, and

organizing collective life. Prefigurative politics refers to the effort to build, in the present, social relations and institutions that embody the political horizon one seeks to achieve (Yates, 2021; Monticelli, 2021). The means must already reflect the ends. Rather than waiting for institutional transformation to come from above, political action itself becomes the site where alternative futures are experimented with.

This logic is explicit throughout the corpus. Manifesto D (2023) states that “opposing alone is not enough. It is essential that every gesture of opposition be organically mixed with a positive proposition, with the outline of the world we aspire to see emerge in place of theirs”. Resistance must, therefore, be inseparable from construction. Blocking a destructive project is not sufficient if no alternative relation to land, subsistence, and collective life is proposed alongside it. Similarly, Manifesto C (2023) argues for the urgent need to “reintroduce into political action forms of demonstrations/actions that have a direct impact on their objective with broad participation”.

This directly challenges what is understood as legitimate environmental politics or activism, traditionally reduced to demanding that governments govern better. Manifesto D (2023) explicitly criticizes environmental movements that remain “forced to rely on those who are the cause of the problem to solve it.” Instead, LSDT argues that “the construction of another relationship to what we call ‘nature’ will, in one way or another, pass through immersion, through a tactile relationship” (Manifesto D, 2023).

This is where care ethics and prefigurative politics meet. If care is understood, following Tronto (1994), as the activity of maintaining, continuing, and repairing our world so that life can be sustained, then prefigurative politics consists precisely in organizing collective life according to care principles rather than according to extraction, productivity, and accumulation. Care takes its full dimension: it becomes not only an ethical framework for critique, but an ideal to be materially prefigured.

This appears clearly in struggles around land and agriculture. Manifesto A (n.d.) announces that “a powerful social movement of taking back the land is called to be reborn, and its fertile ground is already here.” (p.3) Reclaiming land is a way of prefiguring another social order where land is treated as a shared condition of subsistence rather than a commodity for accumulation.

Similarly, Activist 1 defines non-industrial agriculture as the act of preserving land. If agriculture is reorganized around maintaining the fertility of the soil and the conditions of life

rather than maximizing extraction, then peasant practices themselves become prefigurative. They demonstrate, in the present, what a non-capitalist relation to land could look like.

The same logic structures the importance of ZADs. Every occupation of threatened land becomes both resistance and experimentation. A ZAD is not only a blockade against a highway, an airport, or a mega-basin; it is also a place where alternative forms of collective life are practiced. New ways of organizing decision-making, collective living, agriculture, care work, and political responsibility emerge there outside the dominant capitalist framework. Through shared infrastructures, assemblies, collective kitchens, mutual aid, and everyday cooperation, activists do not simply defend a territory; they attempt to inhabit it differently (Lacoste; 2026). The ZAD becomes a concrete space where care is organized as a principle of life.

This also explains why LSDT places such importance on conviviality, mutual aid, inclusion, and collective living inside the movement itself. These practices are not secondary supports for activism, nor merely strategic tools for mobilization. They are part of the political project itself. Manifesto E (2023) writes: “We dream of actions that pay attention to the process, that aim to empower the people who participate in them” (p.4). The way political action is organized matters as much as its objective. Building safe spaces, paying attention to sexist and sexual violence, distributing mental load differently, organizing rear bases: all these practices are forms of prefigurative care because they attempt to produce social relations grounded in interdependence rather than domination.

Activist 1 in the documentary insists that “practice allows us to never fix things ideologically, to constantly question our ways of doing.” Prefigurative politics is not the application of a finished model of the future, but an ongoing collective experimentation. Care itself remains open, revisable, and responsive. The movement does not claim to already embody the perfect ecological society; it insists on the necessity of constantly adjusting practices according to lived experience, vulnerabilities, and failures.

Finally, these prefigurative practices strengthen the credibility of LSDT’s discourse by demonstrating concretely that alternatives are materially possible.

Prefiguration therefore, gives coherence to the movement’s politics of care. It links critique with enactment, denunciation with construction, and resistance with imagination. If capitalist institutions are structurally incapable of organizing life around care, then waiting for them to solve the ecological crisis becomes politically incoherent. LSDT’s answer is to begin

elsewhere: in building their practices in a way that already reorganize land, subsistence, and collective relations according to Tronto's (1994) relational ontology of care.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Reframing the Ecological Crisis.

LSDT's discourse constitutes a politically coherent architecture of three interconnected storylines—Land under attack; Reclaiming food autonomy; Struggling together—forming a powerful counter-hegemony to the dominant framing of the ecological crisis in France.

The dominant framings of environmental politics—the techno-solutionist narrative that promises “green growth”, the individual responsibility narrative that individualizes what is structural; the belief in a possible coexistence of industrial and peasant agriculture—all share a common political function: they leave the logic of capitalist accumulation untouched. They reformulate the problems, so the answers are never a rupture with the existing order. LSDT's discourse comes in total opposition to these framings, naming capitalism as the structural cause of both ecological devastation and social precarity. In doing so, it forces the terms of the debate to shift, what Hajer (1995) calls discourse structuration: making previously marginal interpretations central and previously hegemonic ones suddenly visible as political choices rather than inevitable truths.

In that sense, LSDT's discourse is doing significant work in *reopening the realm of possibilities* (Escobar, 2020), in imagining that another world, grounded in another socio-economic order, is possible, and that political responses to reach it, exist.

Care as Political practice

The central argument of this thesis is that care ethico-political framework constitutes a structuring dimension of LSDT's discourse and practices, even when not explicitly named as such. Reading LSDT through Tronto's (1994) four phases of care makes visible something already present, but that dominant political vocabularies systematically render invisible.

This operation shows, first, that the movement specify Tronto's (1994) attentiveness as a cultivated, embodied and affective practice that requires sustained engagement within a

particular places and living beings. This attentiveness produces situated knowledges irreducible to technocratic expertise.

Secondly, it also rearticulates the concept of need itself: needs are not isolated, individual, or pre-given: they are relational, emerging from specific environments and political choices.

Thirdly, it allows for the most significant findings of this thesis concerning responsibility. LSDT's discourse exposes what Tronto (1994) calls "privileged irresponsibility" at the heart of contemporary ecological governance: the capacity of those most responsible for ecological harm to claim responsibility for addressing it, while being constitutively shielded from its burdens. Against privileged irresponsibility, LSDT anchors responsibility in relational proximity: those who perform the labor of caring for the land are those with both the competence and the legitimacy to determine its future. Responsibility should be assumed directly by those in actual, ongoing relationships with the entities needing care. Knowledge and responsibility are produced through practice. This means French representative democracy would have to be reconfigured toward something closer to participatory or even direct democracy, as an ontological necessity.

This led the movement to take responsibility itself, through direct action. Interestingly, direct action—blocking, disarming, occupying—is reframed as an act of care. It is not violence; it is caregiving. It is the concrete, often physical labor of protecting and maintaining life in the absence of any institutional actor willing to do so. Care ceases to be a private, domestic, interpersonal practice and become a radical, public, collective, and sometimes conflictual political one.

Ecofeminism and the revalorization of care work

Reading LSDT through Tronto (1994) reveals that the movement's politics is, in a sense, a feminist politics: not because it explicitly centers women, but because it revalues precisely the forms of labor, knowledge, and relational practice that patriarchal capitalism systematically devalues. The valorization of peasant farming, of situated knowledge, of subsistence practices, of food solidarity networks are all revaluations of what ecofeminists identify as the devalued, feminized, racialized work of sustaining life.

This has implications far beyond LSDT. It suggests that any environmental politics that does not address the gendered, racialized, and classed distribution of care work—that does not ask who performs the labor of ecological maintenance and subsistence, under what conditions, and with what recognition—remains structurally incomplete. The ecological

question and the care question are not parallel concerns: they are the same question, asked from different angles.

Prefiguring another World

LSDT is prefigurative not merely in the sense that it experiments with alternative forms of organization, but in the deeper sense that it understands the means of political action as constitutive of the ends being sought. The way you struggle is already the world you are trying to build. The solidary kitchens that feed protesters at Sainte-Soline, the inter-cantine networks that supply autonomous food to strikes, the attics under construction across French regions, the care Commission that thinks through the safety and wellbeing of activists, are practices that materialize, in the present, the relational organization of life that LSDT's discourse insists is both possible and necessary.

The ecological crisis is real, urgent, and deepening. The institutions nominally responsible for addressing it have demonstrated, decade after decade, their structural incapacity to do so. In this context, the work of movements like LSDT—imperfect, partial, conflictual, and relentlessly hopeful—is not peripheral to politics, it may be among the most important political work being done: the patient, embodied, often exhausting labor of imagining and enacting a world organized around the maintenance of life. To conclude, to the question that has driven us throughout this thesis: “what would it mean to take seriously, as part of the definition of a good society, the values of caring, attentiveness, responsibility, nurturance, compassion, and meeting others' needs?” (Tronto, 1994, pp.2-3) I answer it would mean doing what LSDT is doing: practicing, experimenting, failing but first and foremost caring.

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Appendix

Manifesto A, (no date). Comité 14 : Reprendre, démanteler, communiser : éléments pour une politique terrestre du soulèvement.
<i>Reclaim, Dismantle, Communize : elements for an earthly politic of uprising</i>
Manifesto B, (2023): “Les Soulèvements de la Terre” Composition of forces and new offensives in defence of land and water.
Manifesto C, (2023) Les comités passent à l'action
<i>The committees are taking action</i>
Manifesto D, (2023) Appel à constituer des greniers des Soulèvements – comité Rennais
<i>Call to constitute LSDT “attics” (or grain storage)— Rennes Committee</i>
Manifesto E, (2023) Commission soin des soulèvements de la terre : Organiser une action dans une perspective de soin politique.
<i>Care Comission of LSDT : Organizing an action from a perspective of political care</i>
Article A, (no date) Contre-projet Greendock : Planification citoyenne pour une logistique d’approvisionnement sur le port de Gennevilliers
<i>Greendock counter-proposal : Citizen-led planning for a supply chain logistic at Gennevilliers’ port.</i>
Article B, (2026) En complément du film "Soulèvements - Agir directement avec les Soulèvements de la terre !
<i>In addition to the film “Soulèvements - Taking Direct Action with LSDT!”</i>
Article C, (2025) 3000 personnes déterminées à stopper l'extension de l'industrie des puces à Grenoble
<i>3,000 people determined to stop the expansion of the microchip industry in Grenoble</i>
Article D, (2026) Le Printemps des luttes locales est lancé !
<i>The Spring of local struggles has begun!</i>

Article E, (2025) Récit - 500 paysannes et paysans, malades et soutiens mettent à l'arrêt une usine de pesticides et révèlent la présence de substances interdites
<i>Testimony – 500 farmers, patients, and supporters shut down a pesticide factory and expose the presence of banned substances</i>
Article F, (2026) Révélation d'une opération "sursemis" en Limagne : neutraliser le Maïs hybride, propager les semences paysannes.
<i>Revelation about a “surseeding” operation in Limagne: neutralizing hybrid corn, spreading peasants’ seeds</i>
Article G, (2026) Soulèvements de la Seine : Submergeons-les !
<i>Uprising on the Seine : Let’s flood them!</i>
Article H, (2026) Mega canal, accaparement de l’eau, Anatomie d’un enfumage partie 4
<i>Mega Canal, Water Grabbing: Anatomy of a Smokescreen, Part 4</i>
Article I, (2025) La Turboteuf plus forte que les turbokeufs
<i>The party, stronger than the cops</i>
Instagram Post A, (2025) Des Terres, de l’Eau, pas des puces
<i>Land, Water, No micro chips</i>
Instagram Post B, (2026) Le Printemps des luttes locales est lancé !
<i>The Spring of local struggles has begun!</i>
Instagram Post C, (2025) Récit - 500 paysannes et paysans, malades et soutiens mettent à l'arrêt une usine de pesticides et révèlent la présence de substances interdites
<i>Testimony – 500 farmers, patients, and supporters shut down a pesticide factory and expose the presence of banned substances</i>
Instagram Post D (2026) Semaines Résistantes : Dans le finistère contre les monocultures de fleurs aux pesticides Kaandorp
<i>Resilient Seeding: In Finistère, Fighting Against Kaandrop Pesticide in Flower Monocultures</i>
Instagram Post E, (2026) Mega canal, accaparement de l’eau, Anatomie d’un enfumage partie 4
<i>Mega Canal, Water Grabbing: Anatomy of a Smokescreen, Part 4</i>
Lacoste, T. (2026) Soulèvements (movie)

Uprisings