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**‘In Front of the World’: Translating Beatriz Nascimento**

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## Introduction

There are cuts and deep cuts
In your skin and in your hair
And furrows on your face
That are the ways of the world
That are unreadable maps
In ancient cartography
You need a pirate
Good at piracy
Who’ll bust you out of savagery
And put you, once again,
In front of the world
Woman.

- Beatriz Nascimento, “Dream” (1989)

*“Recently, when I returned again to my studies, I found myself on the familiar soil of an obsolete territory. Obsolete not because this territory has ceased to exist, or has been surpassed – in truth it is continuously in flux – but because it has been reduced to a status of minority, with all that implies: the slight, the inferior, the preliminary, the impotent and the infantile. This territory is both the path already taken, and the one that lies ahead.”*
Beatriz Nascimento, For a (New) Existential and Physical Territory (1988)

This introduction briefly presents the life and thought of Black Brazilian poet, historian, Black radical intellectual and political organizer Beatriz Nascimento. We intend it to help guide your reading of the texts translated here: ‘Quilombo and Black Cultural Resistance’ and ‘For a (New) Existential and Physical Territory’, and two of her poems, ‘Sun and Blue’, and ‘Dream’. This dossier is a formal introduction of her work to the English-speaking audience. Although Beatriz Nascimento is relatively well-known in Brazil, this is the first English translation of a collection of her work. It is our hope that these texts —a brief sampling of her life’s work— provide a glimpse into her incredible intellectual contributions to the fields of geography, Black studies (specifically Black feminist geography) and philosophy. We draw not only on these texts but on Nascimento’s other writing, practice and interviews as well as her film, *Orí* (1989), directed by Raquel Gerber.

Beatriz Nascimento was a critical figure in Brazil's Black Movement from the 1970s until her tragic murder twenty-five years ago on January 28, 1995. Although she only published a limited number of articles before she died, her published and unpublished, variously recorded ideas about the symbolic relationship between quilombos (maroon societies), the Black experience and Black subjectivity in the Americas inspire us to reconsider the politics of race, gender, space and territoriality from a Latin American Black woman's perspective. Specifically, her theorization of quilombo not only as a fixed geographic space where enslaved Africans escaped bondage in the past, but also as an extant political practice alive in the everyday cultures and survival strategies of contemporary Black Brazilians, contributes to our conceptualizations of the material and immaterial dimensions of territoriality and the production of space. Alongside her poetic and creative practice, and read in close interconnection with it, her writing also reminds us of the need for us to expand our knowledge of how Black women uniquely experience and theorize space, geography, time, spirituality and subjectivity in the non-anglophone global South, and particularly the non-anglophone Americas.

Nascimento made key conceptual interventions to thinking Black transatlantic space. She argued that the quilombo was both a historical, physical space (the site to where escaped Africans fled and established autonomous communities during slavery), a social model, and a terrain of political potentiality. Her arguments hinge on her unique conceptualization of quilombo as a dynamic, spatial, political field, rather than a static political institution located in the past. In this way, her theorization of quilombo moves away from an understanding of territoriality as fixity towards a framing of territoriality as becoming. Nascimento's ideas about the spatialization of Blackness as it is defined and redefined through the experience of transcendental spirituality, diaspora, transmigration, rootedness and imagination, motivate us to consider the geographic-ness of Blackness without anchoring it in fixed times and places. Nascimento offers the possibility of a Black transatlantic space which flows across and with the Atlantic, back and forth, permeating, buoying and carrying, like water.

Black women's imaginative, intellectual and material lives unsettle the rendering of Black people as "ungeographic" (McKittrick 2006). Katherine McKittrick (2006) argues that, "black lives are necessarily geographic, but also struggle with discourses that erase and despatialize their sense of place" (2006, xiii). Colonial logics frame Black geographies as impossibilities—"dispossession is an important racial narrative" (2006, 5). Our conceptual understanding of space is uneven, intellectually unresolved and always already caught up in racial narratives. In thinking through the concept of Black women's geographies, Black women's relationship to diaspora is, by definition, both here and there, then and now, simultaneous and contiguous. Our existence throughout the Americas re-defines space, time, territory and identity through the very nature by which we move through and experience the world. Since slavery, we have been uprooted and replanted, violently and freely, through time. Beatriz Nascimento's writing maps the cartographies of Black women's geographies in the Americas from the perspective of Brazil, focusing on the unique experience of Brazilian Blackness as it relates to the body, culture, nation, spirituality and ancestrality.

The fact that Beatriz Nascimento is relatively unknown outside of Brazil can be tied to familiar structures of academic power that have contributed to limiting Nascimento's international (and, indeed, Brazilian) impact on political and intellectual canon. Along with the ongoing structural racism of knowledge production, the hegemony of the English language, which remains the dominant linguistic cartography of 'international' knowledge production, certainly in geography (Araújo and Germes 2016; Bański and Ferenc 2013; Curiel 2016), has contributed to the lack of knowledge and circulation of her ideas.[1] This short collection therefore takes up the task of translation to insert some of Nascimento's key philosophical, poetic and political interventions into the discourse of space and territoriality. Our hope is not only to make her ideas known to the anglophone audience but also, through this, to encourage engagement within radical geography with a broader field of Black women's experiences and intellectual practice from luso-, hispano- and anglophone southern Americas, such as the work of Andaiye (2020), Sueli Carneiro (2018), Ochy Curiel (2016), Lélia Gonzalez (2018), Conceição Evaristo (2011) Sylvia Wynter (1989) and many others, which can offer rich new geographical and theoretical perspectives on space, freedom, territoriality, subjectivity and diaspora.

*Biography*

Beatriz Nascimento was arguably one of the most influential Black intellectuals of Brazil's dictatorship period (1964-1985), and one of only a few Black women now remembered as part of the vanguard of modern Black political organizing in Brazilian history. Yet, to date, little has been published on her life and contributions. Her biographer, Alex Ratts, has written one book on her life and work, *Eu Sou Atlântica* (2007) and has edited a collection of her poetry with Beatriz Nascimento's only daughter, Bethânia Gomes, *Todas (as) distâncias: poemas, aforismos e ensaios de Beatriz Nascimento* (2015). Most recently, the União dos Coletivos Pan-Africanistas (a pan-Africanist collective including Abisogun Olatunji Oduduwa, Jéferson Jomo, Raquel Barreto and Lucimara Barbosa) has published *Beatriz Nascimento: Quilombola e Intelectual: Possibilidade nos dias de destruição* [Beatriz Nascimento: Quilombola and Intellectual: Possibility in the days of destruction] (2018). Their book selects texts and extracts from Nascimento's archive, alongside poems, aphorisms and photographs and compiles them into an anthology. Alongside this, a few theses have been, or are being, written about Beatriz Nascimento, notably Wagner Vinhas Batista's thesis at the Federal University of Bahia (Batista 2016; but see also Souza 2012; Reis 2019). These publications have helped increase awareness and recognition of Beatriz Nascimento's life's work in Brazil, and are key to our engagement with the work. Among these, Alex Ratts's scholarship is of particular note. His interventions in *Eu Sou Atlântica* inspired a generation of scholars (including ourselves) to read Beatriz

[1] It is important to note that Black women's intellectual contributions are often erased by academic canons, particularly those not written in English. This is the subject of ongoing debate around the politics of gender, race, sexuality and citation (e.g., Ahmed 2017; Collins 1991; Smith, forthcoming; Smith 2016). As Black Brazilian feminist Luiza Bairros (2000) argues, Black women's intellectual contributions are often lost when they go unpublished, left to languish on old computers and in old files in garages, closets and storage spaces. Moreover, Black women's intellectual work is often sidelined, ignored, appropriated or mis-attributed, leading to a general trend toward epistemic erasure (Ahmed 2017).

Nascimento as a cultural geographer, recognizing the uniqueness of her theories on quilombo and her original and early theorizing of Black transatlantic space (Ratts 2007; Smith 2016).

Beatriz Nascimento was born in Aracaju, Sergipe on July 12, 1942 to a mother who was a homemaker and a father who was a mason. At the age of seven she migrated with her family from the impoverished Northeast to Rio de Janeiro, where she grew up in the suburb of Cordovil. An historian by training, she graduated with her bachelor's degree from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) in 1971, interned at the National Archives in Rio de Janeiro, and completed graduate work at the Fluminense Federal University (UFF) in 1981. After ending her graduate studies at UFF, she pursued a master's degree in Communication from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, where her studies abruptly ended on January 28, 1995 when she was murdered while defending a friend against an abusive partner.

Throughout her adult life, Nascimento played a dynamic role in Black activism as a member of the Unified Black Movement (MNU-CDR, the Movimento Negro Unificado – Contra a Discriminação Racial, which later became the MNU/Movimento Negro Unificado)[2] and participated in, and helped organize, various Black student activist organizations. Her research incorporated a broad range of topics, including but not limited to African and African-Brazilian history, culture and social organization. However, her most substantive research was on what Alex Ratts poignantly summarizes as her exploration of "alternative Black social systems from quilombos to favelas" (Ratts 2007, 109). Her explorations took both scholarly and aesthetic forms. Nascimento's intellectual contributions are united by an empirical concern with quilombo as an historical and cultural site, and a political concern with Blackness (and Black women in particular) as a rich culture full of political possibility.

*A Social Critic with a Poetic Voice: Beatriz Nascimento's Thoughts on Race, Gender and Brazil*

Blue earth
Dark sky
Phantoms pass in the streets
Like me, a naked ghost
Walking

"Sun and Blue", Beatriz Nascimento (1990)

[2] The MNU continues to be an active political organization in Brazil today and is part of a longer, multi-valent history of Black political organizing in Brazil that can be traced back to the establishment of the *Frente Negra Brasileira* (Black Brazilian Front) in the 1930's. Covin, David. *The Unified Black Movement in Brazil, 1978-2002 / David Covin.* McFarland & Co., 2006; *1978-1988, 10 anos de luta contra o racismo : Movimento Negro Unificado.* O Movimento, 1988.

Much of Beatriz Nascimento's academic energy was devoted to historical analyses of Black cultural history, particularly the history of quilombos. At her death she was working on her M.A. in Communications at the Federal Fluminense University (UFF), but her contributions were diverse. She was a cultural critic who wrote with a sociological and anthropological overtone about Black culture and social processes in her contemporary world. Though not trained in philosophy, she was also an experimental philosopher who immersed herself in the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Walter Benjamin and Muniz Sodré.[3] She was also a poet who wrote prolifically in a lyric mode about love, death, life and political identity.

Nascimento took traditional Brazilian sociology to task, launching critiques of figures such as Gilberto Freyre and the racist mystifications of Brazil's intellectual mainstream. Her most important essays on contemporary Brazil included 'Por uma história do homem negro' [For a history of Black people] and 'Negro e racismo' [Black people and racism]. Both employ cultural critique to challenge both racism and its Brazilian institutional and ideological counterpart, racial democracy. She was not, of course, the only Black intellectual calling out and analysing anti-Black racism in Brazil in the period. We should put her ideas into conversation with contemporary Black Brazilian intellectuals such as Eduardo de Oliveira e Oliveira, Hamilton Cardoso, Clovis Moura and of course Black feminist anthropologist Lélia Gonzalez.[4] Nevertheless, Beatriz Nascimento's critique was distinctive. In "For a history of Black people," Nascimento writes of racism in Brazil, "We feel the racial prejudice with which we are constantly confronted. However, as it is dressed up in a kind of tolerance, it is not always possible to perceive to what extent there has been an intention to humiliate us." Nascimento refused to accept the myth of Brazil's racial democracy and performed her refusal boldly in her writing. She also spoke out ardently against the myth of Brazil's cordial racism, which was one of the many political platforms of Black Movement intellectuals in Brazil at the time.[5] In

[3] Some of her engagements with these writers – in particular around questions of epistemology and individual becoming and identity – can be found in the essay *For a New Territory,* translated here. In particular, she takes on and reworks Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'minority', as a means to think about Afro-Brazilian politics and culture.

[4] For example, Beatriz Nascimento was a prominent participant of the Quinzena do Negro da USP (University of São Paulo), May 22nd – June 8, 1977 organized by Eduardo de Oliveira e Oliveira. In 1968, Eduardo de Oliveira e Olivieira became the first self-identified Black student to matriculate into the Social Sciences graduate program at the University of São Paulo widely recognized as Brazil's most prestigious university. Oilveira e Oliveira organized the Quinzena in order to create a public, intellectual debate on racism in Brazilian society and, most pointedly, at the university. At the heart of the discussion was the unique question of Black citizenship and belonging within the Brazilian nation, and specifically the duplicity of Brazil's racial democracy. Participants were particularly concerned with the role the university plays as a conduit for the production of racism through the proliferation of racist ideas and discourses, and the absence (particularly at that time) of Black students and faculty on capus. Beatriz Nascimento was one of the few women to participate in this event. Her remarks are highlighted in the film *Ori*, discussed later in this article.

[5] There is an important genealogy of Black intellectual critiques of Brazil's racial democracy that date back before the Military Dictatorship (1964-1985). For example, Abdias do Nascimento dedicated much of his intellectual career, beginning in the 1940's, to critiquing Brazil's racial democracy (Nascimento 1989). Later, the emergency of the *Movimento Negro Unificado* (MNU) in Brazil in 1978, preceded by the establishment of the afro-carnival group *Ilê Aiyê* in 1974, renewed Black radical discourse around the question of cordial racism and the critique of Brazil's racial democracy (Fontaine 1985). *Ori* addresses this genealogy of thought and organizing explicitly.

this sense, we can locate Beatriz Nascimento in conversation with other contemporary Black political voices.[6]

Some of Nascimento's most significant, and theoretically generative, work, was poetic and artistic in form and content. While there are boxes of Beatriz Nascimento's notes, papers, articles and miscellania housed in the National Archives in Rio de Janeiro, a great portion of her intellectual legacy is archived in the documentary film she produced over ten years with filmmaker and director Raquel Gerber. *Orí*, released in 1989, is a dreamlike rumination on the Brazilian Black Atlantic. The hauntingly beautiful film, which Nascimento narrates, relies on her research on quilombos, her autobiography and her philosophical musings. Her voice is both pedagogical and reflective, weaving historical analysis in and out of laughter, music and poetry. The film allows a glimpse into the theoretical legacy of Beatriz Nascimento and the breadth and depth of her contributions to the Black radical tradition. It cuts a path through samba, the slave trade, landscape, dress, African religions, Brazilian urban space and more. *Orí* is, also, a formative archiving of Brazil's radical Black Movement of the 1970s and 1980s, and a theoretical tour-de-force that uses sound, image and words to tie together a vision of liberation. The sensibility that *Orí* displays, and the artistic practice that it emerges from, imbue her writing across her life.

It is important to note that Nascimento's praxis beyond writing was just as, or perhaps more significant than, her textual production. This is particularly true in relation to her work on Black women. Her status as a figure on the Brazilian Black radical scene comes across clearly in *Orí*, in which we see both her charisma and her intellectual fleetness at work in interviews and in recordings of seminars and discussions. This is an important dimension of her legacy, which contributes to the diverse ways in which her work can be put towards intellectual and political work. Sueli Carneiro, a leading Afro-Brazilian feminist theorist, testifies to the impact of Nascimento as a young scholar-activist:

> I had the privilege of attending Beatriz' famous presentation in the *Quinzena do Negro*[7] at the University of Sao Paulo, in 1977 [...] There she was, dressed head to foot in gold, looking like a manifestation of Oxum on earth. Her ideas were audacious, she was beautiful, she was haughty when questioned. It was a magical moment that affirmed the Black woman as the bearer of knowledge about her people. A magical moment of knowledge and seduction, of elegance and perspicacity. It was as if we were in a Yoruba ritual of feminine power (Carneiro in Ratts 2007, 11).

At that time, Nascimento was in her mid 30s, and had been a figure in the Black activist circles in Rio de Janeiro, particularly in its universities, since the beginning of the decade. Around that time, Nascimento was making important interventions about gender and Blackness. In 1976 she had written, for the journal *Última Hora* in Rio de Janeiro, a piece called 'A mulher negra

[6] Lélia Gonzalez is also often celebrated as one of the most influential Black women intellectuals and activists of her time alongside Nascimento.
[7] 'Black Fortnight', a fortnight-long conference in São Paulo that played an important role in the development of the relationship between Black intellectuals and Black activism in Brazil.

no mercado do trabalho' [The Black Woman in the Labour Market] in which she associated gender oppression with histories of colonialism. This was an important intervention at the time, and has recently been republished in an anthology of Brazilian feminism which seeks to establish the foundational texts of a contested field (Hollanda 2019). Other important texts on gender include 'A mulher negra e o Amor' [The Black woman and Love] (1990) and 'O Papel da Mulher nos Quilombos Brasileiros' [The Role of Women in Brazilian Quilombos] which directly connects her research on quilombos with gender. She also wrote on African politics, for instance, in her (unpublished) essay on Angolan nativism in the post-revolutionary moment. As the second essay translated here shows, she was also a keen reader of contemporary debates in psychiatry and psychoanalysis.

*Quilombo*

Underpinning this broad creative project was perhaps the most important, and prolific, strand of her writing (and the aspect of her work that most clearly ties her to the field of geography): on the concept of the quilombo. Quilombos have long been powerful symbols of political and territorial autonomy for the Black Brazilian community. They represent historical spaces of Black resistance, where enslaved Africans set up autonomous societies to escape bondage. They are the contemporary physical spaces of resistance where the descendants of maroons still reside. Finally, they are symbolic spaces of resistance that constitute metaphors for Black struggle, and cultural strength. Conceptually, quilombos connect Black Brazilians' fight for political recognition to the right to refuge.[8]

Since at least the 1970s, Black Brazilian scholar-activists have looked to quilombos as local liberation models for political inspiration. Understood as encampments of runaway enslaved Africans located inside the territory of Brazil throughout the period of slavery, quilombos became the popular symbol of the Black struggle in Brazil in the 1970s (Rodrigues 1968; Alberto 2011; Gonzalez 1982). During this time, Black organizers began to look to the history of quilombos in Brazil as an organic manifestation of Brazil's Black political legacy. In the 1970s the Black Movement used the history of quilombo resistance to promote the discourse of Black power and Black resistance, and popularize the celebration of November 20th--the anniversary of the execution the last leader of the great quilombo nation of Palmares, Zumbi--as Black Consciousness Day, later widely adopted as an official holiday.[9] Nascimento engaged actively in debates over *quilombo* up until her death.[10] The debates among movement organizers during the military dictatorship, and the subsequent participation of Black Movement organizers in the forging of Brazil's new constitution in 1988, led to the passage of Article 68 of the 1988 constitution, legally recognizing, for the first time, the "indigenous" rights of "remnant quilombo communities" (*comunidades remanescentes de quilombos*).

[8] It is important to note the clear connections to Black fugitivity studies here. Indeed, we can locate Beatriz Nascimento as part of a genealogy of thought on Black fugitivity and Black liberation in the Americas. See for example (e.g., Bey 2019; Hesse 2014; Gumbs 2016; Hartman 1997; Harman 2019)

[9] For more detailed histories of this period, and the debates within the Black movement, see (Treece and Treece 2018; Contins 2005; Hanchard 1998)

[10] For a discussion of her exchanges with, for instance, Lélia Gonzalez and Abdias do Nascimento, see (Batista 2016, 61–69)

Article 68 opened a legal path for descendants of quilombolas (quilombo settlers) to demand rights to land and resources from the state.[11] What began as a utopic political vision wrapped in myth, reality and hope became a material basis for Black claims to land, and one of the most important theoretical contributions to the Black radical tradition in the Americas from Brazil.

Beatriz Nascimento's research and writing on quilombo was particularly important to the debates about quilombo in the 1970s and 1980s. However, her contributions have been undervalued and understudied. As Alex Ratts (Ratts 2007) observes, for approximately twenty years (1976-1994), Beatriz Nascimento theorized and developed the concept of quilombo around the themes of territoriality, toponymy, memory, space, and time. She was, without a doubt, one of the foremost early theorizers of quilombo as a socio-political (and not just historical) concept of Black space and Black liberation, and a critical voice in a political dialogue around this subject among Black activists beginning in the 1970s. To date, the most famous and widely read academic discussion of quilombo as liberation model is Black scholar and activist Abdias do Nascimento, who in 1980 published a piece entitled "Quilombismo." However, at minimum, Beatriz Nascimento equally contributed to the development of this concept as a Black radical political intervention.

Beatriz Nascimento championed the notion of the quilombo as a multi-sited territorialisation of Black space from the favela, to the *baile Blacks* (Black dance parties), to the *terreiro* (*candomblé* ritual house), and actual "remnant quilombo communities." She suggests that the idea of the quilombo as an ideological front against oppression inspired enslaved Africans as early as the 19th century, when rumours and myths about utopic independent African encampments motivated insurrection and resistance among the enslaved. Embedded in her interpretation was the notion of the Black body as an extension of the land – the subject of Black migration, escape and liberation. The spiritual dimension is central here. The Black body is not de-humanized, un-feeling flesh, but an extension of the spiritual terrain of the earth as it is defined by Afro-Brazilian cosmological understandings of the relationship between the orixás, nkisi and vodum (Afro-Brazilian spiritual entities).[12]

The most innovative aspects of Beatriz Nascimento's discussion of quilombo is her definition of quilombo as a quintessentially corporeal (located in the Black body), transcendent (anchored in the spiritual simultaneity of the here and there of Black life between the Americas and Africa) and transatlantic (born out of a new spatial zone of being that was created by the transatlantic slave trade) space of resistance. She saw it as a site at which Black collective, transnational experiences with violence through time and space construct and deconstruct, make and unmake the world. Christen Smith (2016) argues that Nascimento's theorization frames quilombo as the physical, symbolic and metaphysical space of retreat that we require on a journey of healing to reconstitute the body that has been broken. Thus, we can put Beatriz Nascimento's conceptualizations of quilombo into dialogue with Katherine McKittrick and

[11] For the extensive debates over contemporary quilombos, quilombola rights, their relationship with indigenous struggles and more see for instance Arruti, 1997, Farfán-Santos, 2016 and French, 2009

[12] There is a significant body of scholarship on Braziilan candomblé. See for example (Carneiro 1961, Lopes 2004).

Clyde Woods's theorizations of Black geographies (McKittrick 2006, McKittrick and Woods 2007). This discussion of Black geographies also returns us to the centrality of the flesh to Black women's experiences in the Americas (Spillers 1987). McKittrick (2006), following Dionne Brand, writes, "humanness is always geographic–blood, bones, hands, lips, wrists, this is your land, your planet, your road, your sea" (2006, ix). She goes on to say, "there exists a terrain through which different geographic stories can be told" (McKittrick 2006, ix–x). Black women's flesh is memory: an archive of violence, and a space of potential internal escape—a concept presents the unique perspective of Black women on the possibilities for escape and freedom.[13] This perspective is quite clear in Nascimento's work.

Through a vision of quilombo as a space of resistance, Nascimento territorializes the Black body as the site of home (rather than dislocation) in the African Diaspora. This configuration locates displacement from the homeland not as rupture from the land but as continuum. As mentioned previously, Nascimento's understanding of quilombo as territorialized home located in the Black body relies heavily on candomblé (African-Brazilian religious) cosmology. The orixás (African gods) travelled with enslaved Africans across the ocean – tangibly rooting the body of displaced Africans to the earth of Africa and the Americas. Thus, the body, as flesh, is not the materialization of the Black experience of abjection and alienation, but rather a space of relative freedom where the Black diaspora subject (here located in Brazil) has bodily ties to both the ancestral home-space of Africa and the Americas simultaneously, and this connection, located in the flesh, is mediated through the connections between the natural world (forests and rivers) and the orixás, nkisi and voduns. This vision of quilombo comes out most clearly in her narration of *Orí*, where she walks us through the flows between Africa and the Americas that created quilombo as a contemporary practice of fugitivity. To do this, she uses her body and the bodies of other Black Brazilians to show quilombo as an embodied practice of refuge and retreat: the spiritual practice of trance in candomblé, dancing at black dance parties and during carnival, contemplating the ocean through poetry, traveling through time to the coasts of Senegal.

Beatriz Nascimento's privileging of the body as a political site and her theoretical engagement with the politics of trance and spirituality, place her in dialogue with Black feminist discussions, both inside and outside radical geography, of the body as political space, territorial homeland, and transcendental possibility (Alexander 2005; Butler 1986; McKittrick 2006). Nascimento's work is in direct dialogue with the insights and observations of Black women across the African Diaspora, and an age-old question for African Diaspora scholars: in what

[13] In *Demonic Grounds*, McKittrick (2006) discusses the autobiography of Harriet Jacobs and the garret as a space of refuge. The interiority of that space of escape is one unique aspect of Black women's geographies—space-making, meaning-making, freedom dreams. To extend Smith's (2016) argument here, Nascimento's conceptualization of quilombo also signals a fugitive imaginary that imagines the possibility of Black geographies anchored in the flesh/interiority—fugitivity through transcendence, where the body is located within a geography of oppression but at the same time constitutes a space of escape. This bending of time and space is intimately linked to candomblé cosmology. Jacqui Alexander (2005)'s reflection on trance in the context of recovering memory as Black feminist praxis echoes this epistemic engagement with African religious practice in the Americas as a portal for understanding Black women's relationships to space and hemispheric geographies.

ways does the body become the primary territorial homeland for dislocated, "Atlantic" African peoples in the Americas, and how do concepts of ancestry and the spiritual complicate our ideas of home? In the uniquely Afro-Atlantic experience of trance, within the tradition of African-religious practice in the Americas, the Black body can exceed its geographic boundaries, and the territorialized boundaries of place, to become something that defies both space and time.

*Reading Beatriz Nascimento*

In this small collection of Beatriz Nascimento's work, we present two translated texts and two poems: "Quilombo and Black Cultural Resistance", "For a (New) Existential and Physical Territory", "Sun and Blue" and "Dream." The essays represent two starkly different voices for Beatriz Nascimento. "Quilombo and Black Cultural Resistance" is deceptively simple: a straightforward, linear historical account of the evolution of the concept of quilombo from its practice in Angola to its elevation as symbol of Black liberation during the Military Dictatorship. Yet, this narrative represents one of the primary contributions of Beatriz Nascimento's early musings on quilombo--a clear conceptual understanding of quilombo as an organic Black political model for liberation that is not solely located in the long historical past of slavery but evolved through time. It is important to note that this concept of quilombo as living practice is one that was solidifying within the discourse of Black politics in Brazil at this moment--a discourse that Nascimento contributed to constructing. Thus, this narrative is representative of her contributions to the collective political articulation of quilombo as a symbol of Black liberation in Brazil in the 1970s and 1980s. In its subtlety, this text presents many of Beatriz Nascimento's primary theses about quilombo: that it is a Black political praxis of resistance and self-determination and that it is enacted and re-enacted through time and space. She writes:

> "By the end of the 19th century the quilombo had come to be an ideological instrument against oppression. *Often through abolitionist discourse, its magic nourished the dreams of freedom of thousands of slaves on the plantations of São Paulo* [our emphasis]."

Nascimento lays out how the quilombo moves from being an institution as such to becoming also a symbol of resistance. For her, the emergence of the quilombo of Jabaquara (the community where Beatriz Nascimento conducted her field research for her master's thesis) is the best example. Black fugitives from the plantations of São Paulo migrated to Santos and founded a quilombo that was declared by the followers of Antonio Bento.[14] This quilombo later became a favela, and 'both frustrated the ideal of a free territory dedicated to African cultural practices and, at the same time, enacted armed resistance to the slavocratic regime'.

Here, Nascimento clearly gestures toward her intervention that Black autonomous spaces post-slavery are an extension of the practices of fugitivity forged during slavery. She would go on

[14] Bento was a leading abolitionist in 1880s São Paulo (See Azevedo 2007)

to elaborate this argument in other texts and in *Orí*, arguing that spaces like Black dance parties (*baile Blacks*), *terreiros* and favelas are contemporary quilombos that embody Black politics of fugitivity.

"For a New Territory" is an entangled, complex text that presents Beatriz Nascimento in multiple voices. It was originally a term paper written for a class on 'Urban Space-Time: Cities, Territory and Conduct.' It represents Nascimento's intellectual largesse in motion, in particular through its rumination on Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze's work, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1975). It was written in the years following Guattari's influential trip to Brazil, and the publication of *Molecular Revolution in Brazil* (Guattari 1981), a selection of texts and interviews from that trip (including, famously, a lengthy exchange between Guattari and former president Luiz Inácio "Lula" da Silva). Nascimento picks up key concepts from these French theorists, and brings them to bear in a reflection on becoming Black and processes of territorialization. It is an unfinished and experimental paper that shows the range of her reading as well as her interest in cultural critique. Though she does not reference his work, readers of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* will find much of interest in her distinctive approach to Black identity and minority. The essay is a window into her mind at work, and as such is at times frustratingly unfinished and at other times excitingly filled with possibility. This possibility becomes particularly salient toward the end of the text when she brings Guattari and Deleuze into a new set of dialogues as she begins to unpack intricate, cosmological reflections on the relationship between White, Black and Red blood in the spiritual traditions of *candomblé*. Her discussion of Vital Force and Guattari's ecosophy gestures towards a more elaborate, nascent theoretical frame of which Nascimento seems to have been on the brink. The end of the essay seems to announce a new beginning.

The two poems in this collection offer another dimension of her perspective--her affectual engagement with the world. Both, "Dream" and "Sun and Blue" offer insight into Nascimento's abstract and speculative thoughts on life, death, subjectivity and emotion. Neither of these poems should be read as separate from the broader themes of her academic work--there are consistencies throughout that remind us of the themes that haunted her: embodiment, transcendence, materiality and spirituality, and the intersections between the metaphysical realm and the material experience of the social world.

Not least because of the conditions of her access to academic institutions and the racist structures of Brazilian intellectual life, her work (particularly her social scientific work) is incomplete and fragmentary. The case for reading fragments and traces of archives holistically, particularly to recover the theoretical productions of Black women is well established (on the historiographical and methodological questions here see, for instance, Bairros 2000; Boyce Davies 1994; Boyce Davies 2007; Guha, Arnold, and Hardiman 1994; Fuentes 2016; Hartman 2019; Perry and Sotero 2020). Creative modes of reading are crucial to assessing the place of Nascimento's work in the broadly conceived history of geographical ideas. The importance of 'reconfigur[ing] [...] our understandings of traditional modes of expression for ideas' (Bay et al. 2015, 5) when reading Black women's intellectual history informs our selection of texts here, as well as our approach to Nascimento's archive more broadly. Certainly, in the case of

Nascimento, it is crucial to read her work actively, transversally and contextually: she did not produce traditionally formal, academic, shelf-ready *Theory*. The texts presented here will, necessarily, be read and interpreted through the structure and context in which they are presented -- on screens, in translation, mediated by the form of the academic journal. We hope, however, that they are also read as traces of praxis that went through and beyond writing. They are also records and archives of Nascimento's radical geographical praxis of artistic creation, political organizing and intellectual debate aimed at forging materially, aesthetically and psychologically liberated spaces for Black people in Brazil. In this sense, we can read Nascimento's work through what Michelle Daigle and Margaret Marietta Ramírez have recently defined as 'decolonial geographies' which are situated 'within embodied theories and praxes of liberation to elucidate the connective fabric of various decolonial struggles' (Daigle and Ramírez 2019, 79).

As recent work in this journal and beyond has emphasized, the task of challenging, unravelling, and expanding the geographical canon remains pressing (see for instance Clayton and Kumar 2019; Theodore et al. 2019; Craggs and Neate 2019). It therefore remains vitally important to make the voices and arguments of those historically cast as outside the hegemonic, white, male discourse of academia more prominent. Nascimento had no apparent interest in defining her work as 'Geography'. The academic debates she engaged in were in Brazilian historiography, and to some extent historical sociology and film, as well, of course, in questions of Brazilian racial politics. Yet it offers a vision of 'space [that] is perceived and produced differentially' (Daigle and Ramírez 2019, 80). Her work, taken holistically (and to quote the *Antipode* mission statement), 'pushes at the boundaries of radical geographical thinking', and strengthens 'a Left politics broadly defined'. We are convinced that her work contributes deeply to that mission.

In translating these pieces we hope to encourage wider debate and interpretation of her work within English-speaking circles. Doing so is to suggest that there are great possibilities in widening the field of Black geographies. More broadly, this raises two interconnected questions: firstly, of the place of women in Black radical feminist traditions of the Americas and the Atlantic world, and secondly of the role of translation in expanding our understanding of Black radical thought. Although Beatriz Nascimento distanced herself from feminism during her lifetime, we believe that we can situate her within a genealogy of Black feminist thought in the Americas that has also always critiqued traditional feminism anchored in white supremacy. For example, Nascimento's contemporary Lélia Gonzalez fiercely critiqued white Brazilian feminism specifically and (white) Latin American feminisms more broadly (Gonzalez 1988). In similar fashion, Black feminist Sueli Carneiro (2018) has dedicated much of her intellectual career to critiquing the white supremacist underpinnings of traditional Brazilian feminism. These critiques echo those of The Combahee River Collective (1977), Gloria Hull, Patricia Bell Scott and Barbara Smith (1982), Alice Walker (1983) and Audre Lorde (1984) who all launched fierce critiques of feminism, distancing themselves from it its mainstream ties to white supremacy while also creating a new articulation of Black women's epistemic and political determination. We should also read Beatriz Nascimento as part of the literature around Black geographies. Clyde Woods and Katherine McKittrick's (2007) *Black Geographies* remains a crucial reference point for thinking through Black geographies as a

conceptual frame. The authors included in *Black Geographies* open up terrain for expanding thinking about space through Black women's thought and practice (see also Bailey and Shabazz 2014; Figueroa 2020; Hawthorne 2019; Mollett and Faria 2018; Perry 2013). The field of reference for Black geographies, though, has remained largely Anglophone (as evidenced, for instance, in Bledsoe and Wright 2019). Bringing Nascimento's work into English here seeks to provide new and expanded resources for continuing the paths that McKittrick and others have laid out. The texts translated here contribute to this process of weaving, as Nascimento engages with and reflects on the politics of liberation in Brazil and their intersection with anti-colonial movements in South Africa, particularly the figure of Steve Biko.

*A note on editing and translation*

Translating the work of a figure in the Brazilian Black radical movement into English raises a number of practical, epistemological and political questions, not all of which we can explore here. But we will briefly discuss some of them.

In practical terms, the work of editing and translating Nascimento's work has been made exponentially easier in the last decade thanks to the work of Alex Ratts, Bethânia Gomes, and the União dos Coletivos Pan-Africanistas. For the texts published here we have consulted Nascimento's archive. In particular, 'For a (New) Physical and Existential Territory' raises editorial problems. The text was submitted as a dissertation, and the referencing is irregular and incomplete. For some of the references used by Nascimento we could not find the source material. As readers will observe, the text also becomes fragmentary towards the end. It is not possible to assert whether this is a deliberate choice or the result of being an early, uncompleted draft. However, the archival document itself suggests the former, that the text itself was not destined to be rewritten, but rather to constitute early thoughts for a potentially much larger project. (This is common to much of the archival material that remains.) Nascimento's untimely death in 1995 seems to have interrupted the intellectual trajectory that this text suggests. At a lexical and syntactical level Nascimento's prose texts are lucid. They nevertheless raise unique challenges of translation. For instance, the choice of how to translate 'negro' and 'negra' positions the texts in certain ways within English-language debates. So too does our decision to translate 'homem negro' as 'Black people', a decision we make both to reflect our own linguistic positioning in English, and to best translate our interpretation of Nascimento's semantic intentions. Such translations necessarily lose the historical and philological texture of these terms in Lusophone (and indeed Hispanic) debates. The decision, also, as to whether to translate the term quilombo is an important one. We have decided not to, mainly because Nascimento and others have emphasised and discussed the density of the word's own trajectory and history. Keeping the term quilombo hopefully does not foreground its unfamiliarity in English, but rather its transatlantic etymology (On 'quilombo' see Lira 1999; Schwartz 1970).

The broader epistemological and political questions raised by this translation are weighty, and can only be hinted at here. A few scattered texts cannot attest to an embodied intellectual and political project which was lived as struggle and contingency. There are distinct risks in translating and publishing the work of a Black liberation activist like Nascimento in the austere pages of an academic journal, which serves to control and domesticate organic intellectual work like hers through its reproduction in a particular form. An unavoidable violence is done to Nascimento's work by both translating it, and by putting it into circulation within the framework of an anglophone academic culture which she never herself negotiated or engaged with. Presenting Nascimento's work in this way, it is important also to recognize that the body of work that exists is marked by unfinished projects and fragmentary texts. There are only unsatisfactory answers to the questions which we have begun to address in this introduction. Nevertheless, working as a collective which includes Nascimento's only daughter, Bethânia Gomes, we hope that our future, broader projects of translating and curating Nascimento's work will help draw out these complex dynamics, and present a fuller picture of her achievements. We hope that this first translation will both serve as a catalyst to discussion, and open Nascimento's work to others in order to develop and respond to such questions more fully, and enable a deeper exchange across diverse but deeply interconnected traditions of thinking about space, race and nature.

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**The concept of *quilombo* and Black cultural resistance.**
**Beatriz Nascimento**

***Afrodiáspora.* 1985. Year 3. Nos. 6 & 7. Pp.41-49[15]**

**Objectives:**

1) To outline the pre-diasporic history of quilombo as an African institution of Angolan origin.
2) To describe the connotations of this institution in the colonial and imperial periods in Brazil.
3) To delineate the role of the institution of quilombo in how ideological principles become cultural resistance.
4) To historicize that ideology within the Black consciousness movement and Brazilian society in the 20th century.

## Introduction

The Western world constructed an image of Africa as an isolated and strange continent, where History began with the arrival of Europeans. The History of Black people, like that of the territory they came from, is only allowed to exist in the context of the major events of Western civilization. This is a serious failing: historians risk rupturing the identity of Black people and their descendants both in relation to their African past, and to their historical role in the countries they were forcibly relocated to in the slave trade.

In the long, hard struggle to defend personal and historical identities, Black people's resistance has taken many forms. We could make a long list of such social and political movements in Brazil. One, the Quilombo (or Kilombo), is the object of my study. It is a key milestone in the history of our people's capacity for resistance and organization. All these forms of resistance can be understood as the history of Black people in Brazil.

## Quilombo as an African Institution

[15] Nascimento published two versions of this essay. The text here is the earlier, shorter, version. A second, expanded text appeared in 1994 as 'O conceito de quilombo e a resistência afro-brasileira', in *Sankofa: Resgate da cultura afro-brasileira*, vol 1. Ed. Nascimento, Elisa Larkin. 1994. Rio de Janeiro: SEAFRO / Governo do Estado. There are two main additions in the later text. Firstly, an extended discussion of the political and territorial disposition of West and Central Africa during the slave trade. Secondly, a section entitled 'Brazilian quilombos and the Revolutions of the 19th century', which expands on the history of quilombos in Brazil. That version adds historical depth, but does not fundamentally alter Nascimento's argument. --TN

Unlike other Europeans, the Portuguese settled on the African continent and established a colony in Angola. Two initial incentives led them to do so: the first was to repeat what they had done in Brazil, to acquire lands and establish a colony. The second, soon frustrated, was to find precious minerals.

As early as the 15th century, the Europeans discovered that the slave trade was the true source of wealth. Brazil became the major recipient of such 'merchandise' in the middle of the 16th century. As demand grew, penetration into the African interior intensified, often co-ordinated by the king of the Congo, who aided and abetted the Portuguese attacks.

The preferred "hunting ground" was the ethnic region of mbundu, in the south of Angola. It was in the 17th century that the Portuguese definitively settled on the trade in humans, more than any other activity, as the best way to serve colonial interests. Three principle methods proved effective. The first was using traffickers, who purchased slaves in far-flung markets along the borders of Congo and Angola. The Mpunbu people, located near Lake Stanley, famously called these traffickers *pombeiros*. The second method was to impose tribute on conquered mbundu chiefs, to be paid in young adult slaves known as '*peça da Índia*' [a piece of India]. The third method was to take slaves directly through war. For the Portuguese governors this last method was most appealing; many had interests in Brazil and needed to supply slaves for their own lands there.

When they arrived on the African continent, the Europeans found many forms of societies. Indeed, in that period these societies were undergoing processes of redefinition, with the emergence of state forms in some places. As in the Kingdom of the Congo, these clashed with traditional structures such as the lineage-based mode of production of the mbundu.

David Birmingham (1973) gives a full account of the conflicts within the bantu societies of central west Africa at the moment of the Portuguese incursion. Many ethnic groups overlapped in the same spaces, and came into conflict with one another, whether while succumbing to the new conjuncture, or resisting European invasion. Among these were the Imbangalas (also known as the Jagas). They were hunter-gatherers who came from the east. Around 1560 they invaded the Kingdom of the Congo and, by 1569, had succeeded in expelling the king and the Portuguese from the capital, forcing them to hide on an island in the river. Between 1571 and 1574, thanks to their access to firearms, the Europeans managed to force this belligerent people to retreat.

Ten years later, the Imbangalas fought alongside the mbundu against Portuguese incursion. Their entry into mbundu territory, however, had been preceded by a fierce struggle between the mbundu leader, Ngola, and Kingui, leader of the Imbangala.

The Imbangala who dominated Angola were considered to be particularly fearsome. Living entirely from pillage, they did not raise livestock or plant crops. Unlike other ethnic groups, they did not raise children, to avoid disruption to their lifestyle of continuous movement. They killed their children at birth and adopted the youth of the groups that they defeated. They were

anthropophagic, and ornaments, tattooing and palm wine held special cultural significance for them.

The Imbangala's nomadic character, and the specificities of their social formation, can be seen in the institution of the Kilombo. The warlike Imbangala society was open to foreigners, once they were initiated. Initiation replaced the rites of passage of lineage-based systems. Partly because they did not live with their children, but adopted youth from other groups, the Imbangalas had an important role in this period of Angolan history, often resisting the Portuguese and controlling the vast regions which supplied slaves. The Kilombo disrupted lineage structures and, in the face of other institutions in Angola, established a new centrality of power.

Initiation rites were based on the practice of circumcision, by which young people of different lineages were incorporated into one warrior society. Here is where the Kilombo got its meaning. Individuals would become Kilombo once they incorporated themselves into Imbangala society.

Kilombo also meant the territory or field of struggle, the *jaga* and the sacred place where initiation rites took place. When some Imbangalas were involved in the slave trade with the Portuguese, the encampment of escaped slaves was referred to as Kilombo, and so were 19th century Angolan trading caravans.

The slave trade brought Brazil and Angola into close interrelation, so it is not hard to connect the history of this institution in Africa (Angola) and Brazil. The difficulty is to establish direct lines of contact, such as quilombos in Brazil which had territorial or ethnic origins in Angola, members of quilombos in Brazil who were direct descendants of members of Kilombos in Africa, or direct links between the struggles of quilombos in Brazil and those on the other side of the Atlantic.

**Quilombo as an institution in the colonial and Imperial periods in Brazil**

The first reference to a quilombo in an official Portuguese document appears in 1559. After the wars in the Northeast of Brazil in the 17th century – including the destruction of the *Quilombo* of Palmares, and its consequences – pockets of Black populations re-emerged living free from colonial rule. This re-emergence frightened the Portuguese authorities. In a document of the 2nd of December 1740, they gave their own definition of what quilombo meant: 'all habitations of Black fugitives in groups of more than five, even if destitute or lacking buildings, tools or cultivation'.

Among the Brazilian quilombos in the 17th century, the great state of Palmares was beyond compare. Its dismantling was a seminal moment in the History of Brazil. The historical evidence suggests that the spread of quilombos at the time was directly related to it.

The dates of these events are noteworthy. The Quilombo of Palmares paralleled what was taking place in Angola in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Indeed, Palmares is perhaps the only quilombo through which we can directly associate the Kilombo as an Angolan institution with the quilombo of colonial Brazil.

Jaga resistance peaked between 1584 and the middle of the next century, after which the group allied itself with the Portuguese slave trade. At that very moment, Angola-Janga was being built: the quilombo known as Palmares in Brazil.

Palmares is linked to Angola in other ways. Firstly, the name of its African leader Ganga Zumba recalls the similar title of the king of the Imbangala, 'Gaga'. Secondly, the records of the hair-piece that Ganga Zumba wore in Recife during the Palmarino truce recall the Imbangala king Calando, who wore his hair in long braids adorned with shells as a sign of authority. Thirdly, the mode of warfare based on opposing probable enemies on multiple fronts. Just as the Angolan kilombo cut through the vertical power-structures of the lineage-based system and established a new centre of power in relation to other institutions. Palmares, too, made a horizontal cut through the colonial regime, and confronted it too with a new kind of centrality. In Brazil Palmares was, after all, also known as Angola-Janga.

The name of the colonial territory 'Angola' is derived from the mbundu king N'gola, who passed it on to his many descendants and successors. It is very possible that some members of this African dynasty were transported to Brazil during the slave trade, and indeed may have become leaders of the resistance movement. The surname Janga is a variation of jaga, and probably demonstrates that these two lineages - the Ngola and the Jaga - were linked in the leadership of the Quilombo of Palmares. Both names connect Palmares to mbundu territories in Angola.

Thinking about this Quilombo in Brazil allows us to assess the extent of interaction between Brazil and Angola at that time. Other quilombos, though, distanced themselves from the African model. They adapted to their needs inside Brazilian territory. But the historiographical task of studying quilombos in Brazil, and analysing them according to their form and structure across time remains unfulfilled. In general, quilombos are described as if throughout history they were African villages where the Black population took refuge to pine after their motherland.

In the colonial period, quilombos were characterized by the formation of large States, such as that of Comarca in the Rio das Mortes in Minas Gerais, dismantled in 1750. Like Palmares, this quilombo responded to the structural and economic conditions of Brazilian economic "cycles" in Brazil: from sugar in Pernambuco to gold in Minas Gerais.

It is possible, from this perspective, to describe quilombos as alternative social systems, or, in the words of Ciro Flamarion: breaches in the slavocratic system.

An important, and controversial, element, is to account for the position of large quilombos precisely in relation to the regime of slavery. The African is no more a "good savage" than Africa is a strange paradise.

The institution of slavery was known and used since African antiquity. What it lacked was colonial slavery's *proprietary* quality. A free person could end up in the condition of slavery in many ways, whether through war, political instability, being the child of an enslaved person, as a punishment for breaking group norms, or in response to internal threats that could lead individuals to seek protection from other lineages (so-called 'voluntary slavery').

This final factor is relevant to quilombo as an institution formed by people who had either been subject to, or threatened with, colonial slavery. Quilombo, as a social group founded in extraordinary conditions, bore these traditional forms and practices of slavery within it.

The great quilombos were spatially and temporally linked to the social system of slavery. They could not be entirely economically isolated from it. Their interaction with the slavocratic system can be seen, for instance, in Ganga-Zumba's willingness at the treaty of Recife to allow unincorporated palmarinos to become colonial slaves.

It's important to remember that when joining the quilombo, people who had been enslaved under the colonial system often put themselves in the position of voluntary slavery. That this practice was widely used in Africa makes this easier to understand.

Nevertheless, the quilombos of the 17th century were distinctive as groups and ethnicities in particular territories and economies that posed a threat to the colonial system. We can argue that it was faced with these quilombos that Brazil identified itself for the first time as a centralized State.

With the dismantling of the quilombos of Tijuco and Comarco do Rio das Mortes in the 18th century, the geographical area, official repression and ethnic diversity of quilombo all changed. Ethnic diversity became more and more common thanks to colonial slavery's policy of mixing people of diverse origins.

In the 18th century, quilombos proliferated across the territory of the colonial capitancies. Unlike the large quilombos of the previous century each institution could not itself be said to have been a threat to the system. If the 17th century quilombo was a wholescale breach in the slavocratic system, these were cracks. Seen as a whole across territorial space and historical time, while they often co-existed peacefully with it, the institution of quilombo produced an inherent instability in the system of slavery. Changing economic activities in different regions often led to loosening ties between slaves and masters. This colonial fragility led to the growth of the practice of escape. It became integral to the structure of quilombo. Looting, plundering and banditry were key to the survival of these agglomerations.

The Penal Code of 1835 defined quilombo as a refuge for bandits and distinguished it from other forms of resistance by enslaved people. But it was, nevertheless, a threat to the stability and integrity of the Empire. The punishment for being a member of a quilombo was the same as for being part of an insurrection: beheading.

In this period quilombo became wrapped up with the so-called 'black danger' of the wars in Bahia and Maranhão. Police suspicions increased. Powerful religious practices developed in some quilombos in this period, for example in Nossa Senhora dos Mares e Cabula in Salvador.

Significantly, at that time large quilombos were founded on the slopes and peripheries of important urban centres. In imperial Rio de Janeiro, for instance, there were quilombos in Catumbi, Corcovado and Manuoel Congo. Many of these organized themselves within a single ideological framework: flight as a reaction to colonialism. We can see this not only in literary references, but in the oral tradition that sprang up at this time.

**The quilombo as a guide towards ideological principles**

By the end of the 19th century quilombo had come to be an ideological instrument against oppression. Often through abolitionist discourse, its magic nourished the dreams of freedom of thousands of enslaved people on the plantations of São Paulo.

Quilombo's transition from institution as such to symbol of resistance transformed it once again. The emergence of the quilombo of Jabaquara is the best example. Black fugitives from the plantations of São Paulo migrated to Santos and founded a quilombo that was declared by the followers of Antonio Bento. This quilombo became a huge favela. It both frustrated the ideal of a free territory dedicated to African cultural practices and, at the same time, enacted armed resistance to the slavocratic regime.

However, it is principally as an ideological form that quilombo enters the 20th century. The old slavocratic regime having come to an end, with it went quilombo as an institutional resistance to slavery. However, precisely because it had been, for three centuries, a concrete, free institution existing in parallel to the dominant system, its aura continued to nourish yearnings for freedom in the national conscience. In the wake of the São Paulo Modern Art Week of 1922, the Brazilian publisher *Editora Nacional* published three books on quilombo, by Nina Rodrigues, Ernesto Enne and Edison Carneiro. It's also worth referencing the work of Artur Ramos and Guerreiro Ramos, as well as Felício dos Santos' slightly earlier novels.

This key moment in Brazilian national identity elicited intellectual production on quilombo. It sought to emphasize quilombo's positive aspects in order to reinforce a historical Brazilian identity. Quilombo is remembered as a form of utopian desire. In this period, works on quilombo, including in samba lyrics and academic contexts, showed varying levels of familiarity with theories of popular resistance. Up to 1964 it was common to find the official historical narrative of quilombos in school textbooks. Even into the 1970s quilombo played an ideological role of threading popular resistance to oppression into narratives of Brazilian

nationality. It provided material for participative fiction, such as in the theatrical work Arena Contra Zumbi. The territory of Palmares came to signify the hope of a fairer Brazil of liberty, unity and equality.

In analysing the meanings of quilombo, we cannot overlook the question of heroism, which is intrinsically connected to the history of quilombo. The hero figure, particularly Zumbi, is inescapably central. More than any other element in the history of quilombos, the image of Zumbi retains representational force as part of a new national soul.

Between 1888 and 1970, in the struggle for recognition of their role in Brazilian society, Black Brazilians could not, with few exceptions, express themselves in their own voices. It is remarkable, therefore, that just when the country was suffocating under a profound repression of freedom of thought and freedom of assembly, such an expression became possible. The 1970s were that moment of possibility.

Perhaps by virtue of being an extremely oppressed group which did not pose an immediate threat to institutional power, Black people were able to inaugurate a social movement founded on a discourse of self-affirmation and the recovery of cultural identity.

It was the rhetoric of quilombo, and the analysis of this alternative system, that served as the principal symbol for the trajectory of this movement. We could call this a correction of nationality. The absence of full citizenship and effective means of reparation, and the fragility of a popular Brazilian consciousness, led to a rejection of the national, and within the movement, to the identification of a heroic past.

Just as before it had served as a reaction to actually existing colonialism, in the 1970s quilombo returned as a form of reaction to cultural colonialism. It reaffirmed African heritage and sought a Brazilian model that fortified ethnic identity.

All the literary and oral history of quilombos helped drive this movement to overhaul hackneyed historical concepts.

In November 1974, *Palmares do Rio Grande do Sul*, a group which included the poet Oliveira Silveira, suggested in the *Jornal do Brasil* that celebrations should mark the date of the 20th of November, to commemorate the murder of Zumbi and the fall of the Quilombo of Palmares, rather than the 13th of May, the date of the abolition of slavery. Memorializing an event that emphasized the capacity of our ancestors to resist had a greater positive significance, they argued, than abolition, often characterized as handed down from above by the slavocratic and imperial system.

Their suggestion was immediately well received. The search for greater clarity about the history of resistance led to workshops, debates, research and projects that fed young people's longing for liberty through institutions, schools, universities and the media. Quilombo came to be synonymous with Black people, their conduct, and the hope for a better society. It became

an internal and external crux for all forms of cultural resistance. In the search for greater recognition of Black inheritance, everything, from attitude to association, became quilombo. Today the 20th of November is enshrined in the national calendar as Black Consciousness Day.

**Final Considerations**

This brief study has sought to put quilombo into a singular temporal framework. Because the diversity of quilombo has previously been underplayed, this has necessarily been descriptive. An analytical project is needed to understand the persistence of quilombo in Brazilian thought and in the collective unconscious of Black people.

During its existence, the quilombo has served as a symbol for ethnic and political resistance. As an institution it retains unique characteristics from its African model. As political practice it proclaims liberal, emancipatory ideas which resist the distortions imposed by hegemony at moments of national crisis. For Black people, often figured as docile and subservient, the figure of heroism fortifies everyday struggles against oppression and social inequality.

Quilombo is a powerful tool in the process of recognizing a Black Brazilian identity, and moving towards deeper self-affirmation as Black and Brazilian. Alongside other practices which strengthen cultural identity, the history of quilombo as an actually existing breach in the system of oppression of Black people offers hope that similar institutions can have the same effect today.

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## For a (New) Existential and Physical Territory[1]

**Beatriz Nascimento**

**"Black Danger"**
Miracle of nightfall
dark and invisible
myth, not glory.
No bats make history.

6th August 1988, MB Nascimento

Recently, when I returned again to my studies, I found myself on the familiar soil of an obsolete territory. Obsolete not because this territory has ceased to exist, or has been surpassed – in truth it is continuously in flux – but because it has been reduced to a status of minority, with all that implies: the slight, the inferior, the preliminary, the impotent and the infantile. This territory is both the path already taken, and the one that lies ahead.

Reading, analysing and interpreting certain authors – Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's 'minor literature' – has led me to a particular turning on this path. At the beginning of the eighties I began to sense something, encoded in the little poem above. Would we get the "vampire's revenge" that Janice spoke of in class?[2] In 1988, three months after the centenary of the Abolition of Slavery in Brazil I saw that for us to survive this hostile world we would need – like animals need – to seek out more volatile, weightless and mysterious routes through life. If we are to have an influence, our own "violence" - born of resentment, repression, and a fruitless desire for revenge - must not merely reproduce the processes that lead Humanity forward. It would be better, then and now, for us to be serious, grim and nocturnal; to be sinister, to be vampire. Like them, we do not suck out the sap of power through confrontation, but by moving past the obstacles put in our way by the perverse visage and oppressive regime of Capital. It was like coming to a conclusion: What use do we have for History? If I am powerless, I have no need of it. History serves those who tell it. Over time, it becomes one with power. In this country, my life is not power, but that is not the end of it. A *Rock* cannot dismantle the structure of power. The task is not merely to exist, but to make life more beautiful, and happier. History is the field and territory of the victors, but it would be futile to replace it with a history of the defeated – we have not yet been defeated. Those who have been called beaten are individuals, full of stories. Their stories may be small, but they are rich and captivating.

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[1] TN: This text was originally written as a course paper in 1992 for a class on *Urban Space-Time: Cities, Territory and Conduct* in the department of Theory of Communication at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro. The course appears to have been led by the anthropologist, and translator of Deleuze and Guattari, Janice Caiafa.

[2] TN: This reference to a class discussion during her course is also a reference to Deleuze and Guattari's essay 'Kafka, Towards a Minor Literature' (1985) in which they refer to Kafka's writing which 'distinguishes two series of technical inventions: those which tend to restore "natural communication" [...] and those which represent the vampirelike revenge of the phantom or reintroduce "the ghostly element between people" (post, telegraph, telephone, wireless)' (p.593)

But yet we leave it to the *other* to tell the stories of our journeys. We are always lamenting that we are subjected to the *other*. Will it always be so? Is there no history of viruses, of birds, of bats, of insects? Are we merely putting on rituals without understanding their – our – true strength? Do these histories only need to be activated? Who were Zarathustra and Zumbi if not the same *Homo Sapiens*? Who were they if not, primordially, ourselves? *Sueka*, one of the names used by Zumbi and his followers in Palmares, came from an African language. It meant invisible, mysterious; what you become when war is waged. I believe that up to now we have not understood or practiced our difference. Worse, we have not respected it. Our discourse is replete with binaries, flowing in an interminable sequence: we are Black / they are white (vice-versa)… we are poor / they are rich (vice-versa) … we are bad / they are good (vice-versa)…. This endlessly sabotages our reality. It is repetitive, unsustainable and unbearable. In *Words and Things* – "Man and his doubles" - Michel Foucault, referring to the disappearance of Discourse, writes at one point: "What is language, how can we find a way round it in order to make it appear in itself, in all its plenitude?"[3]. Foucault's text glosses the poem that introduced this text; in what follows I will think through how.

**Introduction as Justification**

In getting this final piece of work onto the page I have come up against a series of obstacles. Some have come from outside, others from within. They are:

1. First, the return to University after ten years, and to the rhythm of academic life. My critical attitude to them led me to abandon the study of discourse and literature. I worked instead through cinema, poetry, prose and the essay. I produced around a thousand poems and other unpublished extracts. A small part of this material went into the film *Orí*, directed by Raquel Gerber. The film emerged from my involvement in Black political and cultural movements and my personal trajectory through the History of Brazil as a woman, and as a Black woman. The film was shown internationally and received various global prizes, most recently the 33rd Golden Gate Award in San Francisco, USA. It is being distributed on video in Brazil.

   Dedicating myself once again to academic work, I have felt trapped by the literary form necessary for this ritualization of knowledge. It has meant overturning my own mode of expression. It has provoked a physical repulsion to the written word.
2. The origin of this repulsion lies in a personal negation of the Western rationalist thought that for so long has been part of my intellectual training. After years of research, and as an expression of twenty years of activism, I have come to a radical rejection of everything that could seem European or erudite. This has accompanied a desire for a rupture with strictly scientific thought. This puts me in an ambivalent position: even as this thought fascinates me (I have been socialized in it, I cannot escape it), I reject it as being premised on colonization. I turn to Clarice Lispector's words – an author who has influenced me a great deal–: "To write is my freedom".
3. The concepts of linguistics, well covered in the course, are unexpectedly new to me in the current context. As I have always been a repository for the Great History of the

[3] TN: Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. Vintage Books. 1970 (1994)

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, I would require a greater familiarity with linguistics to write with perfection. This has paralysed me with timidity.

4. The commitment to turn the text in on time and the need to do a great job have impeded the fruition of a dialogue between the paper and the pen and/or the professor. I understand, though, the urgency of discipline to do what is necessary. So I accept the challenge. I hope to deliver a text in a "minor tongue". I free myself from any blame for pretense that this could contain.

On this point I return to Foucault to respond to the question of language:

> 'In a sense, this question takes up from those other questions that, in the 19th century, were concerned with life or labour. But the status of this inquiry and of all the questions into which it breaks down is not perfectly clear.'[4]

I want to decipher Foucault's enigmatic words through the idea that language is the most technologically advanced instrument that human beings have for well-being. It is the key, even, to happiness.

Foucault continues:

> 'Is it a sign of the approaching birth, or, even less than that, of the very first glow, low in the sky, of a day scarcely even heralded as yet, but in which we can already divine that thought - the thought that has been speaking for thousands of years without knowing what speaking is or even that it is speaking - is about to re-apprehend itself in its entirety, and to illumine itself once more in the lightning flash of being? Is that not what Nietzsche was paving the way for when, in the interior space of his language, he killed man and God both at the same time, and thereby promised with the Return the multiple and re-illuminated light of the Gods?'[5]

I believe this is the best that has been thought in the West. I don't want to discuss it, because I am not concerned with merely opposing an opposition. On the contrary, I want to approach a Black machine-of-thought, a minoritarian machine-of-thought.[6] I do not know if it will be possible here, but, for example, I would like to contribute with a vision of the minoritarian a little different from Félix Guattari's. I will come back to this. I will say, first, that I am speaking from my own location, within the exterior of my own ethnicity.

**The Text**

Although I don't want to dwell on History, I will return to a fact that is exactly twenty-four years old. In Rio in 1968 the moment was June, not May. June saw the great marches of the Student Movement, as well as the anti-racist mobilizations and anti-war movement in the United States of America. In August, a single moment at the Olympic games in Mexico captured the attention of the world's press. The gold medal winning athlete (American, Black) and his team-mate, the bronze medalist, took to the podium and raised their left fists, in the symbol of the Black Panthers. With this gesture they refused to receive their prizes. It was a

[4] *ibid*, p.306
[5] *ibid*, p.306
[6] TN: Nascimento is here referring again to Deleuze and Guattari's essay on Kafka, in which they write of 'literary machines' 'machines of writing' and 'machines of expression'

negation of North American nationality. It was the most searing image I had ever seen. I stopped in the street when I saw it in my hands, on the cover of the magazine *Fatos e Fotos* [Facts and Photos].

At that moment I abandoned all my bourgeois projects. It was as if I had found an imaginary *Exit*[7] from the March of the One Hundred Thousand.[8] At that moment I became conscious of my Blackness and the extent to which I could really start all over again. My political activism began then, with the militancy of the Black Movement. In truth, these were the first stirrings towards a social change that was beginning to crystallize in every continent of the world, no longer in the *Imaginary*, but in the *Real*. There were other moments, such as in the film *Cry Freedom*, the history of South African militant leader Steve Biko's life. In one scene Biko is on the way to Johannesburg. He was under a banning order – a common tool used against leaders and intellectuals in the fight against apartheid – that confined him to his territory of ethnic origin. In the film, the lights of the police cars fall on his dark face. The police officers don't recognize him, they see just another Black man. They call out to him: "*What is your name?*". Biko responds, slowly, firmly and calmly: "*I am Bantu Stephen Biko*". He declares his own death with extreme dignity.

These images can be placed alongside evolving conceptualisations of the territorialization / deterritorialization of the Black minority, and its process of collective change. This collective change is set off by the individual as the protagonist of a technology exercised by thought and by the human mind: the actor offstage, with little knowledge of the script, that Walter Benjamin reminds us of. What Félix Guattari, and Deleuze and Guattari, demonstrate about the secondary characteristics of minor literature appeals to me here. It seems to offer a clear explanation. They write: In minor literatures, "everything is political [...] their cramped space forces each individual case [to be] immediately connected to politics".[9] It is this possibility of individuation that this text will seek to discuss.

My re-entry into the University is subsumed within an attempt to be minoritarian. If "everything takes on a collective value", to believe in language, and to speak, would be micropolitical actions. "The conditions are not there for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that 'master' and that could be separated from a collective enunciation"[10]. I always feel that I am writing about myself, but that this *myself* contains many others. I write, therefore, from a collective, about and for collectivization. If I am left without someone else as

[7] TN: 'Exit' is in English in the original. We should note the implicit reference to Deleuze and Guattari's concept of *line of flight*.
[8] TN: This is a reference to the *Passeata dos Cem Mil*, a march led by the Brazilian student movement that took place on June 26th 1968 and constituted an early high point of resistance to dictatorship in Brazil, shortly before the crackdown that began with Institutional Act No. 5 on December 13th, 1968. That act increased the dictatorship's violent and repressive tenor, and limited freedom of association, press and protest. Nascimento's reference to an 'exit' from the March is an indication of the fractures between the radical Black movement and the largely white student and leftist movements. This schism is played out on camera in Nascimento and Gerber's film *Ori*.
[9] *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, Chapter 3, p.17, translated by Dana Polan, University of Minnesota Press.
[10] *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, Chapter 3, p.17, translated by Dana Polan, University of Minnesota Press.

an interlocutor, this desire sometimes paralyzes production. It is a moment of otherness, imbued with utter solidity. The solidity of the Black Panthers or of Biko. It is also like the tension described by Félix Guattari / Guattari and Deleuze: "to speak, and above all to write, is to fast".[11] All the difficulty of this text, like that of what came before, comes from an "overwhelming" desire to detach myself from the masters, to invent a language inside this one in which I write. "I want an invented truth" (Clarice Lispector in *Água Viva*). At times I feel in me the restlessness that unsettles Kafka in one of his Letters to Felice: "Fundamentally my life consists, and has always consisted, of attempts to write, and more often, of abandoned attempts."[12] He describes "the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German; the impossibility of writing otherwise".[13] I remember that during the course, in a discussion on how to express yourself, the question arose of whether it would be different according to your background. This question crystallizes in how to write, and in how to write the becoming minoritarian of the minority.

The opposition of majority-minority was created by 19th century European thought. It is part of a sequence that progresses towards the infinite. However, in the sociology of this century, which still dominates our own discourse, the opposition has been transformed into two apparently fixed blocks. Yet, to speak of minority as a monolithic block risks homogenizing different minorities (women, children, homosexuals, proletariat and ethnicities) and not looking more closely for the differences which lie at the heart of each particular minority. This becomes even more misleading when you consider these questions from a material and economic perspective. Thus, all Black people in Brazil are seen as poor, needy, wretched, incompetent and so on, in an endless enunciation of stereotypes which serves to reinstate the domination and subordination of place and territory. I think, then, that the concept of minority needs further reflection. Guattari argues that a minority may definitively desire to be minoritarian. I would have my doubts about this perspective of becoming… "Marginality calls for recentring and recuperation."[14] (Here it has a conservative meaning, along the lines of the idea of "home"[15]: the return to tradition, to the point of departure, to the centre, to control).

The North American gay movement, for example, "are minoritarians who refuse to be marginalized"[16]. This is a typically Seventies idea of American citizenship (North Americans do not encompass all homosexual people born in, or with citizenship of America). America is a name (an enunciation) of the geographical space in which these people exercise their conduct as homosexual. That is, the physical space of the individual: their sexuality. There are homosexual people in America of all variations and stripes of ethnicities and nationalities: Hispanics, whites, Blacks. Multiple differences can occur within a single minority, so the space they occupy is much bigger than we might imagine. An enormous cartographic endeavour

[11] *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, Chapter 3, p.20, translated by Dana Polan, University of Minnesota Press.
[12] Kafka. Letters to Felice. P.38, Rio de Janeiro, 2nd edition
[13] Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, Chapter 3, p.16, translated by Dana Polan, University of Minnesota Press.
[14] Guattari, F. 'Gangs in New York.' in *Chaosophy* (ed. Sylvère Lotringer. (p.291)
[15] TN: In English in the original
[16] Guattari, F. 'Gangs in New York.' in *Chaosophy* (ed. Sylvère Lotringer. (p.291)

would be needed to understand the individuals within the great blocks referred to as minorities. Black women, for example, Black homosexuals, and a great unfolding sequence of differences. Félix Guattari in a passage of another book, reiterates what was affirmed above, "Minorities are something different; you can be in a minority because you *want* to be. For example, there are sexual minorities that champion their nonparticipation in the values and modes of expression of the majority"[17]. The fundamental *difference* that I perceive emerges from the origin of the minority. Up to a certain point, sexuality and ethnic origin have a common characteristic: they are both biological. However, ethnicity has a territory, full of women, children and so on. The case of the street children in big cities for example. They are, in general, Black.

And Guattari continues:

> "We can imagine a minority being treated as marginal, or a marginal group wanting to have the subjective consistency and recognition of a minority. And there we would have a dialectical combination of minority and marginality"[18].

I do not understand this expression, *dialectical combination*. I imagine that to be marginal may be a circumstantial characterization, while to be minority is a permanent condition. The "consistency of subjectivities" can change as much in a minority group as in a marginal one. Transience is a constant (space/time relation) always producing deterritorialization, so there is an intra-minority singularity. I disagree that there is a *definitive desire* to *be* minoritarian. While North American homosexuals refuse to be marginalized within the minority, others are the majority. Or, better, they are in *the place of the majority.* This reveals an interaction across flows of chronological time which functions as a frequency and not as *a dialectical combination*. Minority is not harmony. It is constantly being dislocated, including for the majority. To be the majority is also a becoming. For some within minorities being the majority would be a reterritorialization, emerging from impulses fomented in the discontent of being out of power, excluded, impoverished and oppressed.

One of the Black movements of the Seventies enacted this type of agency to the nth degree, based in the concept of Black cultural and racial identity. Lévi-Strauss, at a UNESCO conference, announced that, unless we were careful, the concept of cultural identity could come to be a new racism. On the basis of a Marxist dialectic we believed for years that consciousness would lead to liberation. That this would result in a new conduct in relation to white people:

> "Cultural identity constitutes a level of subjectivity: the level of subjective territorialization… It is a means of self-identification in a specific group that conjugates its modes of subjectivation in relations of social segmentarity… The idea of 'cultural identity' has a coefficient of deterritorialization. The idea of "cultural identity" has disastrous political and micropolitical implications, because what it fails to grasp is

[17] TN: BN cites 'another' Guattari book here, and the quotation she gives is unreferenced. It is in fact a reference to *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, Félix Guattari / Suely Rolnik, 2008. Translated by Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes. Semiotext(e) Los Angeles, p.173 (originally published as *Micropolítica: Cartografias do desejo*, Petrópolis: Vozes. 1986)

[18] *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, Félix Guattari / Suely Rolnik, 2008. Translated by Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes. Semiotext(e) Los Angeles, p.100 (originally published as *Micropolítica: Cartografias do desejo*, Petrópolis: Vozes. 1986)

> precisely the whole wealth of the semiotic production of an ethnic or social group, or a society."[19]

Black cultural identity would deny singularity and processes of singularization. It would impose a dictatorship of conducts and a fixed set of models. This would be impossible to achieve when dealing with differentiated and dissimilar individuals. It would – after Guattari, citing Rimbaud in *Illuminations* – get in the way of becoming Black.

Could there be a Black nature? A racial nature? Is there a nature that can adhere to the colour of the skin, as it adheres to an idea, a political party, a union or some apparatus of State? Could there be a space today for such aberration, for such repression of flows?... To think like this would be to deny the anthropological principle of cultural exchange. This brings me to Neusa Santos Souza, and her work *Tornar-se negro* [Becoming Black]. It is a psychiatric study, whose central thesis points to the social ascension of Black people, and the so-called whitening / loss of a Black race, which were the results of an *ideal of the white ego*.[20] In the years 1980-1984 there was an idea that spread across the humanities of rejecting any thinking about the potential for social change that began from an analysis of the individual. This paradigm privileged the role of the colonized and dispossessed masses as the unique and only possible machine of change. The masses constituted the social.

This idea was theoretically backed up by both Marxist and non-Marxist intellectual heritages. There was a consensus in which the unconscious was only portrayed by art. Beyond this was the terrain of ghosts, inhabited by human fantasies. It could only be narrated as a pathological space. This idea was premised on the dislocation of the ideal ego. It began from the ideology of lack and not from the mapping of desire. George Groddeck writes:

> I hold the view that man is animated by the Unknown, that there is within him an "Es," an "It," some wondrous force which directs both what he himself does, and what happens to him. The affirmation "I live" is only conditionally correct, it expresses only a small and superficial part of the fundamental principle, "Man is lived by the It." (Groddeck, p.11)

However, exterior/interior, minority/majority, white/black are nothing more than contacts between the unconscious and the field of space/time that it creates. In this field there are various kinds of language, including the other's gaze on the body.

Hence this supposed ideal of the white ego, which is nothing more than a transference – through affect, through desire – between two or more individuals. Whitening was just an ideology captured by the apparatus of the State, institutions and groups of people committed to the maintenance of denomination. The ego does not accept limits. Can the ego not desire anything,

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[19] *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, Félix Guattari / Suely Rolnik, 2008. Translated by Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes. Semiotext(e) Los Angeles, p.173 (originally published as *Micropolítica: Cartografias do desejo*, Petrópolis: Vozes. 1986)

[20] *Ideal Ego*. A phase used by Freud in the framework of his second great psychic theory: the instantiation of the personality resulting from the convergence of narcissism (the idealization of the ego) and identifications with the parents, with their substitutes and with collective ideas. While instantiated differently, the ideal ego constitutes a model to which the individual seeks to conform. *Vocabulário de Psicanálise*, J. Laplanche / JB Pontalis, pág. 298. Martins Fontes, Lisboa, 1970.

not be anything? What is there that is pathological in desiring to be black, white, yellow, man, woman, child, gay, asexual…?

In the mid-1980s a lightning bolt struck Black consciousnesses. Michael Jackson began to appear with light skin and a "*white*" phenotype. As Black people who wanted to deepen their identity, to become more and more Black, how were we to deal with this phenomenon? The single most successful Black person was "becoming white". Michael Jackson lived his talent, invention, happiness and success without being imprisoned by his genealogy. Isn't it possible to explore a Black becoming in this, too? Perhaps. In the lyrics of *Black or white* Jackson sang: "I am not going to spend my life being a colour".[21]

This thought points towards a social "exit". Everyone was bound to their archaisms, standardized and dogmatised into a singular conduct: Black conduct. To accept this, or not to, was a zero-sum game for affective human and social status. A unique, closed and controlled territory was decreed for the individual by inverting a racial marking within the minority itself. Such conservatism requires a deterritorialization / reterritorialization if we are to avoid fixing a minoritarian hegemony based on an eternal relationship of oppressor and victim.

It occurs to me to illustrate what *becoming minoritarian* means, in my understanding. I want to do so through Dilma Lóes' audio-visual piece *Quando o crioulo dança [When the creole dances]*. In it, among other testimonies of betrayal and suffering, a militant declares: "*I began to love myself when I became an adult*". Knowing the speaker and their life's trajectory, I glimpsed for the first time the resolution of *racism* inside another individual. Political activism had led this person to value themselves and to effectively break with their external image. Announcing "*love me*", *amo-me*, molecularly, I am no longer divided between the desire of the other and my own desire. Here I want to open a parenthesis in the meaning of the micropolitical war-machine. The *racists* would never think that hidden in the occult, inside the Black person, is affect. Though the world outside may be painful and set against them…

The effect of this affirmation quickly emerges: image, sound, colour and speech establish a collective enunciation. As singularized individuals we can understand that it is the difference between lack and need that causes racism. In the same way, a deep unease is forced upon the individual by discrimination – *complicity* in the face of what *oppresses* in the relationship oppressor/oppressed. The autonomy of desire points towards Black becoming, that is not restricted to "all those systems of punishment which develop as if they were chosen, profitable activities and attitudes of a particular system of social hierarchy … this way of trapping the processes of singularization by specialists who immediately categorize them within the affective and theoretical tools of the institutional equipment of segregation".[22]

[21] TN: Nascimento cites the line in English, but mis-cites the end of the lyric as "being a coloured".
[22] George Groddeck, *ibid*. TN: Nascimento does not give a page reference, and we have been unable to identify the original text in published translations of Groddeck.

Recently, during a formal discussion about demographic politics in government institutions, a Black woman, a former student of mine, said to me:

> "Our task in the face of institutions is not to reinforce discriminatory types or models, but to make them more human. To recover the humanity lost in the years of colonization and discrimination. The postulates of social and political theories are simulacra, put forward by the petty bourgeoisie. I want to be something that is more human."

This postulate in the voice of a Black woman can be found translated in the poem below by Éle Semog, dated June 1992, whose title is "It's not enough to be Black":

> … Today my son dreamed
> That the planet Earth
> Wanted to come in at our window
> And I kissed him and said:
> Good morning little one
> The bad world is not going to catch us
> It's not enough to be Black…
> I want to impale the racist
> And their harassed philosophers
> At the end of nothing
> After that, I could be happy
> But today I am Black
> I am no utopia.[23]

This becoming-utopian is the production of "territorialized subjectivities in myself, in the physical body".[24] It means being free of the ethics of production and accumulation which divide man up according to the order of Capital. This would be to build another system, based on an African territory understood no longer as a place of the past, but of the modern. No longer the slave, but the quilombola.

A new force for struggle and restructuring. In Muniz Sodré we can find a design for this becoming:

> The Black Arkhé is not the result of a 'telluric biologism', but is part of the everyday History of African descendants in the Americas as a 'counter-place'… a concrete construction of group identity, penetrating the interstices of the dominant bloc."[25]

Negritude, therefore, is not hegemonic in either space or time. It is not inside *To Be*, neither is it in the word *black*. Its realization takes place on many dynamic levels. In dealing with Black Brazilians, there is also a becoming white and a becoming Amerindian and many inter-lacings in an endless process of serialization…

The principal of Vital Force, like *Axé*, has similar meanings. Vital Force is the bantu linguistic and philosophical principle contained in the phoneme *ntu*. The *ntu* refers to the individual themselves and the *muntu* to the other / other individuals.

[23] Editor of the *Jornal Maioria Falante*, Rio de Janeiro
[24] TN: Nascimento does not give a citation for this reference.
[25] Sodré, Muniz. O Terreiro e a Cidade. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1988.

The *muntu*, therefore, exists as a reflection, and in animals, minerals, plants and human beings (both living and dead), but not as something immanent: the contact of two beings is needed to form it.[26]

The *ntu* is only complete and only acquires force by recognising the other. For the bantus, the unity does not exist, because it recognizes itself in the presence of the other *ntu*. Like a mirror. It is not a principle of equality, but of self-recognition by that which is similar in form or being. For Muniz:

> As force, it maintains, grows, diminishes and is transmitted as a function of the (ontological) relation of the individual with cosmic principles (supernatural entities, ancestors and all invisible beings) and with the descendants.[27]

When, today, in some African ethnic groups the individual becomes weak, or dies, it does not simply mean illness, but the loss of the Vital Force. *The whole group* dedicates itself to the practice of care so that the collectivity itself does not weaken and die. This supposes a principle of complicity. If the individual dies, they come to their end in contact with the *Earth* such that it can be restored and re-constitute *Life*. The *Vital Force*, therefore, is not paralysed. Muniz Sodré writes:

> The Bantus consider the *muntu* to have '*the power of knowing*'. The Vital Force is human genetics engendered in the physical architecture of the individual. It is a philosophical concept in an African scientific style. And it incorporates the principle dynamic of *Axé*. That which is structure, from which all departs or returns. The home of all *Knowledge*.

This Vital Force can be understood as a kind of vigour, or what in the West corresponds to physical health. We should, I think, put the ecosophical principle of Félix Guattari alongside a deeper study of the diverse substances which connect and combine in the chain of humanist forces.

**Axé**

This Vital Force, or *axé*, is contained and transmitted through substantial elements of matter. The elements that carry *axé* can be put into three categories:

1. 'Red blood'
2. 'White blood'
3. 'Black blood'

**The Red Blood Encompasses:**

a) Of the animal kingdom: menstrual blood, human or animal blood;
b) Red blood of the vegetable kingdom: dendê oil, tree bark, honey, the blood of flowers.

**The White Blood Encompasses:**

[26] Sodré, Muniz. *A Verdade seduzida*. Rio de Janeiro: Codecri, 1983, p. 129-130
[27] Santos, Juana Elbein dos. *Os nagô e a morte*. Petrópolis: Vozes 1976.

a) Of the animal kingdom: semen, saliva, breath, secretions, plasma (of the snail);
b) Of the vegetable kingdom: sap, juice, alcohol, white drinks mainly from palm trees, the white powders of some vegetables, *the ori*[28], vegetable butter;
c) Of the mineral kingdom: salts, chalk, silver, lead.

**The Black Blood Encompasses:**

a) Of the animal kingdom: ashes of animals;
b) Of the vegetable kingdom: the dark juice of some vegetables; the *ilú*,[29] indigo, the extract of some types of trees;
c) Of the mineral kingdom: coal, iron, etc.[30]

[28] TN: Literally 'head', a Yoruba metaphysical concept relating to that which guides individual spirituality.
[29] TN:A Yoruba term for a wooden drum used in the Northeast of Brazil.
[30] TN: Nascimento includes the following 'observation' after her bibliography: "The word sueka was one of Sylvia's kindnesses which she used while speaking to us during the course. Various students of Black culture and linguistics helped clarify some of the reflections in this text."

**Sun and Blue**
[17.02.1990]

Blue earth
Dark sky
Ghosts pass in the streets
Like me, a naked ghost
Walking

Who am I looking for?
In what body do I want to be?
In what bed does such an uneasy spirit lie?
In the notes of the sun in Rhythm and Blues

In the backwater past
In closed futures
In furious silence

**Dream**
**Beatriz Nascimento**

[To all the black women scattered across the world.
to all the other women,
and to Isabel Nascimento, Regina Timbó and Marlene Cunha/1989]

Her name was pain
Her smile laceration
Her arms and legs, wings
Her sex her shield
Her mind freedom
Nothing satisfies her drive
To plunge into pleasure
Against all the currents
In one stream
Who makes you who you are?
Woman!...
Solitary, solid
Engaging and defying
Who stops you from screaming
From the back of your throat
The only cry that reaches
That delimits you
Woman!
Mark of a blunt myth
A mystery that announces all of its secrets
And exposes itself, daily
When you should be protected
Your rites of joy
Your veins crisscrossed with old trinkets
Of the strange radiant tradition
Woman!
There are cuts and deep cuts
On your skin and in your hair
And furrows on your face
They are the ways of the world
They are unreadable maps
In ancient cartography
You need a pirate
Good at piracy
Who'll bust you out of savagery
And put you, once again,
In front of the world
Woman.