The Quilombo as a Regime of Conviviality
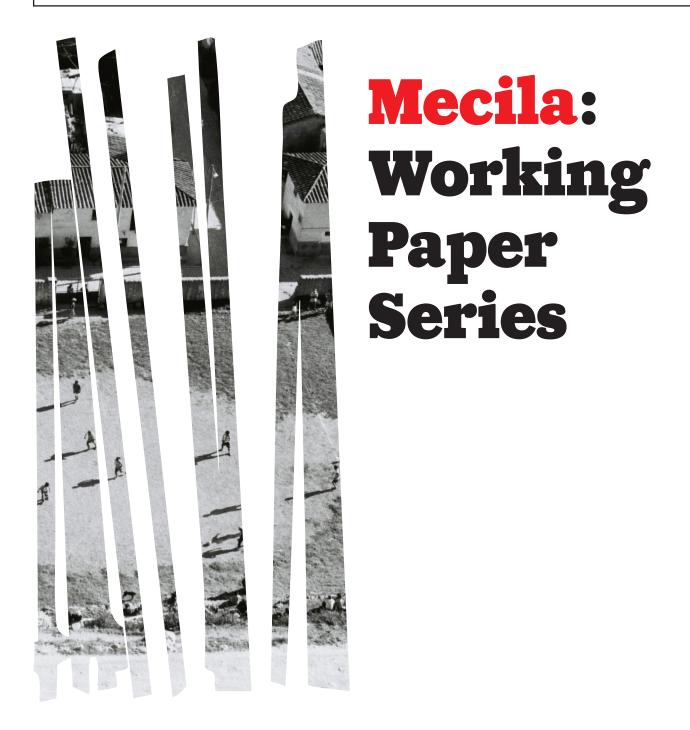
Sentipensando Memory Politics with Beatriz Nascimento

Léa Tosold

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The Quilombo as a Regime of Conviviality: *Sentipensando* Memory Politics with Beatriz Nascimento

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Abstract

Aiming at (re)thinking memory politics in contexts of ongoing total violence against non-white bodies, I propose, in this working paper, to engage with Maria Beatriz Nascimento's multifaceted notion of quilombo. Once understood as alternative regimes of conviviality that entail existential (beyond material) aspects, Nascimento's notion of quilombo enables critical access to the onto-epistemological basis on which memory politics generally takes place. After primary considerations about violence and the archives, I highlight three main aspects of Nascimento's notion of quilombo to (re) think memory politics: (1) the introduction of a temporality that displaces underlying analytical assumptions of a linear, progressive and sequential time; (2) the idea of *paz quilombola*, which allows analytical space for "opacity" in the generation of knowledge; (3) the link between personal and collective intergenerational memory that, for Nascimento, requires the fostering of spaces of body encounters.

About the Author:

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1.   (Im)Possible Memories

In contexts in which the killings of racialized bodies do not unleash an ethical crisis (Da Silva 2007, 2009), how can memory politics be (un)done otherwise? When violence is so naturalized and ongoing, the very attempt to memorialize the deaths is confronted with archives that are generally configured in order to (re)produce total violence, in a way that non-white lives become "visible only in the moment of their disappearance" (Hartman 2008: 12). How to speak of the violent deaths and, at the same time, honour the lives of the dead (Smith 2016: 14) in the midst of continued terror?

My pursuit here, then, is to strive for (im)possible ways of (un)doing a memory politics[1] that, as the writer and cultural geographer Katherine McKittrick puts it, does not merely "embrace a bitter return to the scourged back, breathe a sigh of [allegedly] presently emancipated post-race relief, or find comfort in the dismal dance of authenticity" (McKittrick 2014: 25):[2]

> O quilombo é um avanço, é produzir ou reproduzir um momento de paz. Quilombo é um guerreiro quando precisa ser um guerreiro. E também é o recuo se a luta não é necessária. É uma sapiência, uma sabedoria. A continuidade da vida, o ato de criar um momento feliz, mesmo quando o inimigo é poderoso, e mesmo quando ele quer matar você. A resistência. Uma possibilidade nos dias de destruição (Nascimento 2018e: 190).[3]

Uma possibilidade nos dias de destruição. Aiming at contributing to the task of *sentipensar* such complex and challenging issues related to the *configuring* of memory politics, I propose, in this working paper, to engage with Maria Beatriz Nascimento's multifaceted notion of quilombo. Once quilombos may be understood as alternative regimes of conviviality (Costa 2019) that, according to Nascimento, entail existential – not only material – aspects, I suggest that the notion of quilombo opens up analytical space to articulate a memory politics beyond a necessary but reactive critique to structural inequalities and forms of oppression, allowing for the emergence of "a modality of ethical knowledge that does not depend on the concepts and formulations [the onto-

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1   Memory politics, in this working paper, has a broader meaning than state policies: I refer mainly to ongoing interpretational disputes and remembrance practices in the social and political realm.

2   Or, as McKittrick puts it, the very act of denouncing and depicting violence can be even more complicated: "For the researcher, the scourged back is commonplace and in some instances predictable. And, if we are not very careful, the image becomes so ordinary that the pleasures of looking, again and again, incite a second order of violence" (McKittrick 2014: 21).

3   "The quilombo is an advancement. It entails producing or reproducing a moment of peace. Quilombo is a warrior when it must be a warrior. And it is also a retreat if the struggle is unnecessary. It is sapience, wisdom. It is the continuity of life, the act of creating a happy moment, even when the enemy is powerful, even when he wants to kill you. Resistance. A possibility in days of destruction". (Unless otherwise noted, all translations in the footnotes are the author's.)

epistemological basis] of modern thought" (Guedes and Silva 2020)[4]. *A história que a história não conta. O avesso do mesmo lugar*.[5]

In what follows, I start with some primary considerations on violence and the archives. Afterwards, I highlight three aspects of Nascimento's notion of quilombo in order to *sentipensar* memory politics: (1) the introduction of a temporality that displaces underlying analytical assumptions of a linear, progressive and sequential time, which enables the establishment of meaningful connections between past, present, and future convivial configurations shaped by various entangled histories; (2) the idea of *paz quilombola*, which allows analytical space both for "opacity" (Glissant [1990] 2010) in the generation of knowledge and critical reflection on the relation between form and content in academic scholarship; (3) the link between personal and collective intergenerational memory through the fostering of spaces of body encounters, which calls for the relevance of engaged and implicated research once actors and knowledge may emerge through interaction.[6]

2.   The Violence of the Archives: Onto-Epistemological Remarks

In the film *Ôrí* (Gerber and Nascimento 1989), Nascimento states:

> Quando cheguei na universidade, a coisa que mais me chocava era o eterno estudo sobre o escravo. Como se nós [Black people] só tivéssemos existido dentro da nação como mão de obra escrava, como mão de obra para fazendas e para mineração" (Gerber and Nascimento 1989).[7]

In 1977, in an interview, she also discusses in detail the implications of the fact that the history of Brazil had, until then, been written "por mãos brancas" (Neto and Netto 1977)[8] – by the hands of a white elite that held the monopoly of access to the legitimate means of knowledge production.

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4   In a similar vein, Juliana Streva (Streva 2021) also works with Nascimento's notion of quilombo in order to delineate "fugitive routes" in the current global crisis.

5   "The history that history dismisses. The inside out of an already known place". The reference, here, is to an excerpt of the 2019 samba-enredo of the escola de samba Estação Primeira de Mangueira, "Histórias para ninar gente grande" (Miranda et al. 2019).

6   I rely on feminist anti-racist epistemologies, which sustain that all knowledge production is situated, in support of an engaged and implicated — instead of a distanced, supposedly neutral — research. For an account on the issue of situatedness and objectivity in the production of knowledge, see Haraway 1988.

7   "When I arrived at the university, what shocked me the most was the eternal study of slavery. As if we [Black people] had only existed within the nation as slave labour, as labor for farming and mining".

8   "[B]y white hands".

However, for Nascimento, the problem with the historiography at her time was not simply about the missing (Neto and Netto 1977) "informações sobre o negro livre" (Nascimento 2018e: 192),[9] as if she would be indicating a mere lapse or lack of information about Black people that needed to be added, in an inclusive way, to what already existed in the archives. Nascimento's critique goes further: she called into question the very basis on which historiographical work was conducted.

In a 1976 interview, Nascimento points out: "não bast[a] apenas um número maior de informações sobre o assunto: é necessário que a história seja reescrita de uma nova perspectiva crítica, reformista, que se avalie tudo o que se tem sobre história e sociologia do negro" (Nascimento 2018c: 97–98).[10] This means that the mode of knowledge production she claims – the one that departs, as she states, "da perspectiva do negro, enquanto sujeito da História" (Nascimento 2018c: 98)[11] – requires the critical re-examination of the onto-epistemological basis on which the (re)production of knowledge takes place. This means that "o vazio muito grande em termos de conhecimento […] sobre o papel do negro na história brasileira" (Nascimento 2018c: 97)[12] she identifies at her time can be considered arbitrary and intentional. In her own words, "[the university] negligencia fatos muito importantes e deforma muito a história do negro" (Neto and Netto 1977, emphasis added).[13] The very way historiography and the archives are constituted end up (re)producing the erasure of both Black history and Black life. Nascimento, therefore, is engaged in what the literary and historical critic Saidiya Hartman would identify as the important task of "interrogating the production of our knowledge about the past" (Hartman 2008: 14), taking into account that total violence against non-white bodies is far from being over.

The work of the historian, in particular, but also of all academic scholarship concerned with fleshing out the erased memory of (still ongoing) violent events, is mainly based on written documents and images that are themselves, as Nascimento puts it, archives of the "polícia colonial":[14] "Neles [in the archives], o negro aparece quando há necessidade de reprimi-lo" (Nascimento 2018c: 98):[15]

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9 "[I]nformation about the Black free person".

10 "[I]t is not enough just to have more information on the subject: it is necessary that history be rewritten from a new critical, reformist perspective that evaluates everything we have about history and sociology of the Black".

11 "[F]rom the perspective of the Black person as subject of History".

12 "[T]he very great void in terms of knowledge […] regarding the role of the Black person in Brazilian history".

13 "[The university] neglects very important facts and greatly deforms the history of the Black person" (emphasis added).

14 "[C]olonial police".

15 "Black people appear [in the archives] only in the context of their repression".

> [O] quilombo, ele foi realmente reprimido, sempre. *Mas ele não se esgota somente na história de repressão.* Como a documentação que a gente tem, quer dizer, o negro não deixou nada escrito, foi o branco que escreveu […]. Então até eu mesma, nós mesmos, temos de recorrer à documentação da polícia, das autoridades portuguesas, dos mestres de campo, desse negócio todo […] que foram os documentos basicamente de repressão. Quando você trata de história do Brasil, ou história de um modo geral, dentro da metodologia da história, você tem que fazer uma crítica muito severa a respeito desses documentos, que são documentos daqueles que reprimiram, e só viram aquilo que achavam que era negativo, entende? (Neto and Netto 1977).[16]

When we try to deal with the memory of past violent events – the "unspeakable things unspoken" (Morrison 1989) – we are confronted with sources that (re)iterate violence, in which the quilombos appear only at the moment of their repression, or their supposed destruction. As Hartman puts it, the archives emerge, therefore, as true "tombs" or "death sentences" (Hartman 2008: 2). Is it (im)possible, when dealing with such archives, not to (re)inscribe the very violence on which they are constituted? How (im)possible is it "to exceed or negotiate the constitutive limits of the archive"? (Hartman 2008: 11).

Mas ele [the quilombo] *não se esgota somente na história de repressão*. If the modes of knowledge production in academia (Sharpe 2016: 12–13) "often means adhering to research methods that are 'drafted into the service of a larger destructive force'" (Saunders 2008: 67), we must access both the archives and other sources and forms of knowledge production from different existing onto-epistemological basis, so that we are able to activate "our own capacities to read, think, and imagine otherwise" (Sharpe 2016: 12–13). Nascimento's imaging of the quilombo, as I suggest in the following, is powerful in envisaging this mode of (re)working memory politics.

2.1   Past Continuous

The use of the notion of quilombo to *sentipensar* memory politics implies a change in the relationship between past, present, and future in the access to the archives and the elaboration of historical memory more broadly. For Nascimento, the quilombo is not something lost in the past, or a mere remnant. It is a historical continuum, which

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16 "[The] quilombo was really repressed, always. But it was not exhausted by the history of its repression. The Black person left nothing written in the available documentation, it was mainly the white man who wrote everything […] So I, we, must resort to the documentation of the police, of the Portuguese authorities, military officers, and all […]. [These] were basically documents of repression. When you deal with the history of Brazil, or history in general, one must make a very severe methodological critique of these documents, which are the documents of those who repressed and only saw what they thought was negative, you know?".

neither begins nor ends with repression: "o que eu quero não é narrar acontecimentos do passado, mas estabelecer o que há de continuidade entre o passado e o presente do negro no Brasil" (Nascimento 2018c: 98).[17] This means going beyond trying to do justice to the past, as if it were disconnected from the present, calling attention to the underlying mode of temporality we work with, as well as the ways we find ourselves entangled in both violence and the possibility of *(r)existência* – of existence as resistance.

The very notion of a progressive time, which grounds modern thought (Fabian [1983] 2014; McClintock 1995), evokes a separability between past, present, and future, precluding the establishment of other meaningful (not sequential or developmental) connections between different *tempos*, timings and temporalities – for instance, to realize the presence of the past in the present, or to grasp an *imaging* of the future already projected both in the present and in the past. Once understood as a historical continuum, Nascimento's notion of quilombo suggests temporal juxtapositions instead of temporal discontinuities: the quilombo operates simultaneously in the past, in the present, and in the future. In the very same territoriality, we may encounter multiple temporalities at once (Almeida et al. 2020).

Nascimento notes, referring to racialized body violence: "não era um passado, era uma realidade […] uma realidade fria e agressiva" (Nascimento 2018b: 245).[18] Nascimento's notion of quilombo entails a temporal modus that opens space for the recognition of ongoing racial violence, on the one hand, and to *(r)existência*, existence as resistance, despite everything, on the other: "uma possibilidade em dias de destruição" (Nascimento 2018e: 190). "Ainda não fomos vencidos" (Nascimento 2018d: 414).[19]

These considerations foster analytical perspectives regarding a memory politics that, while doing the necessary work of memorializing violence and death, also make the effort to flesh out what remains alive despite everything in terms that are not apprehensible by hegemonic modes of representation. It refers to the existence of those who "were never meant to survive" (Lorde [1978] 2000: 256): the lives that persist in an existence of their own, which can neither be exclusively defined by violence nor reduced to a mere reaction to it. By providing space for alternative ways of (un)doing memory politics with, contra and beyond the archives, the approach Nascimento's notion of quilombo inspires can contribute to a work that does not bypass violence but does more than denounce (and reiterate) it.

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17 "[I] do not seek to narrate events of the past, but to establish the continuity between the past and the present of Black people in Brazil".

18 "It was not a past; it was a reality […] a cold and aggressive reality".

19 "We are not yet defeated".

Furthermore, the connections enabled by other temporalities may raise what the critical philosopher and practicing artist Denise Ferreira da Silva calls difference without separability (Silva 2007). Once we are encouraged by the notion of quilombo as historical continuum to situate ourselves in the work of (re)memory (Morrison [1987] 2004), we also become be aware of how deeply we are implicated with the ones that *(r)existem* – that exist and, therefore, resist. Though in various entangled ways, we all share certain convivial configurations. By substantively recognizing our (personal and collective) implication in relation to what the past actively informs about our present situation, we may be able to glimpse how much our very existence, and not only the existence of the "other", is put into question by the afterlife of slavery and property and the ongoing violence against non-white bodies. A work of (re)memory is thus far from merely contemplative: it impels us into action.

The work of (re)memory demands that we recognize how much "those existences relegated to the non-historical or deemed waste" actively exercise "a claim on the present and demand us to imagine a future in which the afterlife of slavery has ended" (Hartman 2008: 13) – or, as we will see afterwards, to be able to realize how this past and future of possibilities remain present and alive (and not only a potentiality), as Nascimento calls our attention to. *Ainda não fomos vencidos*.

2.2   Present Tense

The second aspect I want to highlight regarding the contributions of the notion of quilombo in Nascimento to *sentipensar* memory politics refers to a particular unfolding of her non-reactive perspective in the research of the quilombos. She states:

> O Quilombo não foi uma tentativa de rebelião pura e simples contra o sistema escravocrata. Foi também uma forma de organização política e social com implicações ideológicas muito fortes na vida do negro no passado e que se projeta, após a abolição, no século XX. […] Não foi apenas a necessidade de fugir que permitiu o estabelecimento da sociedade quilombola. Foi, isso sim, a capacidade de criar uma sociedade alternativa, com valores próprios, diferentes dos valores dominantes na sociedade em que os negros foram integrados à força. […] Por isso, eu me preocupo mais em desvendar os aspectos relativos

à paz quilombola, pouco conhecidos, do que com a rebelião em si (Nascimento 2018c: 98–99).[20]

Instead of focusing on battles and the slavery system as such, Nascimento wants to dedicate her research to what she calls *paz quilombola* [Quilombola Peace], its everyday convivial life, its alternative and complex ways of organizing collective life, allowing her to grasp its continuity in the present. In this sense, she is interested in studying what is not in the archives. *A história que a história não conta. O avesso do mesmo lugar.*

How to read what is not meant to be in the archives, escapes the confining logic of violence (slavery and destruction), and has a life of its own? As Hartman would put it, Nascimento's task then seems to be not exactly "to give voice to the slave, but rather to imagine what cannot be verified" (Hartman 2008: 12). Instead of restraining herself to the lines of the archives, to its explicit content and reasoning, or restricting herself to the denouncement of its silenced voices, Nascimento increasingly engages in "uma verdade imaginada" (Nascimento 2018a: 374)[21] or what Hartman would call a "critical fabulation" (Hartman 2008: 11): a form of producing knowledge from, contra and beyond the archives of violence that confers access to a history that was not "to pass on" (Morrison [1987] 2004: 274) without trying to fix and limit what cannot be known. *Faremos Palmares de novo!*[22]

Nascimento's reflections, therefore, imply more than conferring legitimacy to other sources of knowledge regarding memory politics – such as orality and testimonies. Form, in her argument, is as important as content, and both are deeply intertwined. To confer attention to *paz quilombola* leads also to the search for possibilities of knowing otherwise, of producing knowledge otherwise: in the attempt of accessing the *unspoken* that is also *unspeakable*, how to open a space to the multiple aspects of what cannot be completely known, to what is alive precisely because it could not be completely known or apprehended, i.e., discursively represented? How do we avoid limiting or shortening what we cannot completely grasp? Some considerations Nascimento makes about the ways the form can constrain the content of what is (im)possible to comprehend in its totality are significant:

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20 "The quilombo was not an attempt at a mere and simple rebellion against slavery. It was also a form of political and social organization with very strong ideological implications for the life of the Black person in the past and which is projected, after abolition, into the 20th century. […] It was not only the need to flee that allowed the establishment of the quilombola society. It was the capacity to create an alternative society, with its own values, that differed from the dominant values of the society into which Black persons were forcibly integrated […]. For this reason, I am more concerned with revealing the lesser-known aspects of the quilombola peace than with rebellion itself".

21 "[A]n imagined truth".

22 "We will make Palmares anew!". This is a memorable verse from the poems "Notícias" and "Insônias", by José Carlos Limeira, which refers to the iconic quilombo of Palmares (Limeira 2011: 197).

> Neste momento minhas duas alegrias, uma que está no passado, outra que eu posso ter no futuro. Mas como vou escrever um livro se há tantas regras? Eu queria escrever um livro de guerreiros e palmeiras… mas me exigem uma tese, uma verdade a ser defendida. […] O retorno, após dez anos, à Universidade e ao ritual acadêmico. Devido a uma atitude crítica, também tinha abandonado o discurso e a literatura específica. Enveredei por esses anos pelo cinema, pela literatura e pelo exercício da poesia, da prosa e do ensaio. […] Ao dedicar-me novamente à área acadêmica, sinto-me aprisionada pela forma literária necessária a esta ritualização do conhecimento. Significa dar uma enorme volta na expressão, provocando-me uma rejeição física ao material escrito (Nascimento 2018a: 373–374, 2018d: 415–416).[23]

After devoting herself to different forms of expression (poetry, literature, cinema), Nascimento perceives the traditional academic framework to be so confining that she puts it into question, as if its form would entail (re)producing violence not so differently from the archives themselves. Thus, the challenge Nascimento faces is the need of tensioning the form of academic writing in order to allow the unspeakable to operate in its proper way – a task in which several scholars in academia have also been concerned with (Baldraia 2020; Cho 2008; McKittrick 2014; Sharpe 2016). Nascimento urges and is in the search for a form of writing, of producing knowledge (also beyond writing) that does not constrain what remains alive to the violence it suffered: she is looking for an inscription of knowledge that enables the work of "opacity", as the writer, poet, philosopher, and literary critic Édouard Glissant would put it – or, in the words of Nascimento herself, that allows more "volabilidade, leveza e mistério",[24] that makes room for the "soturno, o noturno" (Nascimento 2018d: 414),[25] that reveals itself precisely by the possibility of maintaining "intimismo" (intimacy) by strategically "se nega[r] a fornecer as chaves de compreensão" (Nascimento 2018c: 102).[26]

This "right to opacity", to use Glissant's terms, is of great importance, because opening up space to what lives in spite of violence, but cannot be known in its totality, displaces

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23 "At this moment I have two joys, one that is in the past, and one that I might have in the future. But how am I going to write a book if there are so many rules? I wanted to write a book about warriors and palm trees… but I was demanded to write a thesis, a truth to be defended. […] [T]he return to the 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 through cinema, poetry, prose, and the essay. […] 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".

24 "[V]olatile, weightless and mysterious".

25 "[G]rim and nocturnal".

26 "[R]efusing to provide the keys to its [total] comprehension".

binary thinking and the idealizations it fosters – and, therefore, provides analytical and perceptive space for complexity. As Nascimento puts it:

> Muito menos a fuga para o mato tem o caráter de vida ociosa em contato com a natureza, com base em uma liberdade idealizada e na saudade da pátria antiga. […] O quilombo está longe de ser o lugar de felicidade, a sociedade ideal, a utopia. […] Considero mesmo reacionária essa concepção, pois mostra apenas um aspecto: o negro frágil, perseguido, sofredor, bonzinho. O quilombo, como qualquer sociedade humana, tinha suas próprias contradições (Nascimento 2018f: 74).[27]

An attempt to strive for total knowledge in relation to what cannot be completely known would lead to idealization and hinder more complex forms of *sentipensar*. Idealization or claims of authenticity, as another expression of binary thinking, (re)inscribes violence (as it reduces the complexity of what cannot be known) and hinders the possibility of establishing meaningful connections between past and present convivial regimes, of realizing how the past continues to inhabit the present – both in terms of ongoing violence and in terms of *(r)existência* – of existence as resistance. Only a form of knowledge production that permits complexity to emerge would enable us to understand that the quilombo, as Nascimento suggests, "talvez na 'paz' ameaçasse muito mais o regime escravocrata do que na guerra" (Nascimento 2018f: 76).[28] *Ainda não fomos vencidos*.

2.3 Future Anterior Continuous

The third and last aspect I aim at highlighting in this working paper is, in my view, a major contribution of Nascimento's work on quilombos to *sentipensar* memory politics. It derives from her understanding that the racialized body *is* quilombo, and, as such, "*o corpo é* o *documento histórico*" (Gerber and Nascimento 1989, original emphasis).[29] As notably articulated by the social and cultural anthropologist Christen Smith, for Nascimento "o corpo é poesia e territorialização da memória" (Smith 2015: 147).[30]

On the one hand, to confer centrality to the body as a historical document implies that not traditional written archives, but the ability to recognize, in the body, a knowledge that we are not straightforwardly aware of, is the main source of knowledge. As the

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27 "The flight into the woods has nothing to do with the search for an idle life in contact with nature, based on an idealized freedom and the longing for the ancient homeland. […] The quilombo is far from being a place of happiness, an ideal society, an utopia. […] I consider this very conception reactionary, because it shows only one aspect: the Black person as fragile, persecuted, suffering, good-natured. The quilombo, like any other human society, had its own contradictions".

28 "[P]erhaps at 'peace' would threaten the slavery regime much more than at war".

29 "[T]he body is the historical document par excellence".

30 "The body is poetry and territorialization of memory".

philosopher and Black movement activist Lélia Gonzalez would put it, the body is a "lugar de restituição […] [dessa] história que não foi escrita" (Gonzalez 1984: 226),[31] the history that enabled the life of those who "were never meant to survive", as the poet and intellectual Audre Lorde puts it (Lorde [1978] 2000: 256), to flourish – *flor-e-s(c)er* – in spite of everything. *A história que a história não conta. O avesso do mesmo lugar.*

On the other hand, however, the recognition of the non-white body as quilombo under a system of past and ongoing violence is, for Nascimento, neither self-evident nor already given. This observation marks a major difference of Nascimento's thought to great part of the academic scholarship concerned with an embodied memory politics: the link between personal and collective memory demands the fostering of collective spaces of conviviality. These spaces are *conditio sine qua non* of the emergence of the body as quilombo. Such understanding encourages collective engagement to flesh out memory – a memory that remains alive, operates, and reveals itself precisely by being contextually and collectively (re)activated and transmuted as part of an ongoing intergenerational struggle. For, according to Nascimento, it is only collectively that it is possible to realize what, in the body, *(r)existe* – what exists and, as such, resists – beyond the violence that forges a subjectivity. "Porque o rosto de um é o reflexo do outro, o corpo de um é o reflexo do outro e em cada um o reflexo de todos os corpos" (Gerber and Nascimento 1989).[32] Her focus, then, is not on individual histories *per se*, but on how they are contextually intertwined, transmuted, and potentiated as part of an ongoing collective history of *(r)existência* – of existence as resistance. *Faremos Palmares de novo!*

In my view, such remarks entail implications for knowledge production in academia regarding memory politics as well. The notion of quilombo proposed by Nascimento incites a production of knowledge about the past that is in intimate relation with the fostering of present collective spaces of conviviality and its everyday life,[33] in which the researcher is urged to take an active part and stance.

The continuum of the quilombo in the present, which Nascimento recognizes in shanty towns and poor neighbourhoods, in *escolas de samba* and Afro-Brazilian religious spaces, among many others, evokes the memory of past and ongoing violences through situated collective elaboration and transformation. By embodying and territorializing the work of memory, the mere (re)inscription of violence is avoided, for the main goal

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31 "[P]lace of reinscriptions that restitute […] [a] history that was not written".

32 "For one's face is the reflection of the other face, one's body is the reflection of the other body, and in each body is the reflection of all bodies".

33 By spaces of conviviality, I refer to those organized by the participants in their own terms. For a more detailed account on the modus operandi of such spaces, cf. Tosold (2018: 57–92).

is to realize and cultivate survival and *(r)existência* – existence as resistance – despite everything.

In such convivial *configurings* envisaged by Nascimento, then, we find a spacial convergence between past, present, and future. Nascimento's notion of the body as quilombo politicizes memory by establishing meaningful temporal entanglements that emerge through the territorialization of memory work. She does not only locate memory politics in the racialized body but does so through the fostering of collective spaces of conviviality, conjoining past and present. Moreover, instead of conditioning the present work of critical fabulation exclusively to an (im)possible-future-to-come; in Hartman's words, "to imagine a future in which the afterlife of slavery has ended" (Hartman 2008: 13), Nascimento opens analytical space to sense another (future) (im)possible worlds already operating collectively both in the past and in the present. *Uma possibilidade em dias de destruição*.

The convivial spaces that (re)activate the quilombo in the non-white bodies are territories of temporal entanglement of already existing "best resources" (Benjamin [1940] 2010: 229) in spite of so much violence, which can then be cherished, transmuted and nurtured. In this sense, the otherwise-worlds-we-want-to-live-in do not constitute a mere *devir*, as if we had to start to build them from the scratch. And the system that (re)produces and naturalizes violence does not appear to be so powerful and totalizing anymore. Nascimento's thought suggests that we already have the knowledge we need to strive for nothing less than "the end of the world as we know it" (Silva 2014: 84). *Faremos Palmares de novo!*

3. Oceanic Territorialities and the (Re)Work of Memory

"Estou sempre em busca de um território não terra" (Nascimento 2018a: 374),[34] states Nascimento. It is not a coincidence that she refers to the imaging of the ocean – of the "sensação de oceano" (Gerber and Nascimento 1989)[35] – to make her notion of quilombo graspable. For Nascimento, the quilombo is, to be sure, a "espaço geográfico" (Gerber and Nascimento 1989).[36] However, its *modus operandi* relies mainly on different onto-epistemological basis than the one underlying modern and colonial thought. The *imaging* of the ocean, in my view, is precisely helpful in making such complex analytical distinction in Nascimento's thought.

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34 "I am always in search of a territory without land".

35 "[S]ense of ocean".

36 "[A] geographical space".

In consonance with the arguments raised in this working paper, to propose the *imaging* of the ocean as key to the access of the quilombo unsettles binary thinking: it puts into question the very idea of territorial borders and, consequently, of alleged claims to authenticity, which are only possible through the maintenance of the hegemonic norm as exclusive referent. In this sense, the *imaging* of the ocean not only requires analytical space for complexity, contributing to approaches regarding memory politics that do more than merely denounce (and reiterate) violence without bypassing it, enabling the addressing of violence and *(r)existência* at once, without mutual exclusion. The ocean as *imaging*, therefore, also opens an analytical and perceptive space for the possibility of multiple existing *modi operandi* on different onto-epistemological basis, even if we do not have the analytical tools to comprehend them.

Moreover, the *imaging* of the ocean unsettles the progressive notion of time, for it invokes transmutation though the mystery and the depth of a living and entangling memory. "Tinha que ser no mar, ser vivo que torna as coisas perenes" (Nascimento 2018a: 375).[37] Past, present and future converge in the timeless transmutation of the ocean. As Silva (Guedes and Silva 2020) suggests, what would mean to undertake a (re)work of memory from the stance of those who jumped or were thrown overboard from the slave ships into the ocean, in the Middle Passage – an oceanic (re)work of memory, as a radically singular territory in which any attempt of tracing a particular origin or fixed location would be from the very beginning precluded?

> [*Those who*] did not survive the holding and the sea, they, like us, are alive in hydrogen, in oxygen; in carbon, in phosphorous, and iron; in sodium and chlorine. This is what we know about those Africans thrown, jumped, dumped overboard in Middle Passage; they are with us still, in the time of the wake, known as residence time. […] They *said with wonder and admiration, you are still alive, like hydrogen, like oxygen* (Brand 2016 in Sharpe 2016, original emphasis).

As I have suggested in and between these lines, Nascimento's notion of quilombo emerges as powerful regarding the urgent task of radically (re)thinking memory politics and its unforeseen (im)possibilities – as a seaquake – in times of ongoing violence and destruction. *Ainda não fomos vencidos.*

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37 "It had to be in the sea, a living being that makes things perennial".

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