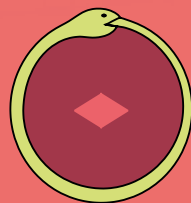


MEMORY DEMARCATES

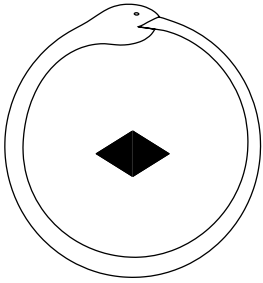
OUR BODY

Sandra Benites

Body-Territory 3



notebooks  
SELVAGEM



## MEMORY DEMARCATES OUR BODY

### BODY-TERRITORY 3

Sandra Benites

*“Corpo-território” [body-territory] is a series of Selvagem Notebooks.*

*The result of an online course offered by the “Papo de Bruxa”*

*[Witch’s chat] platform, which invited curator Sandra Benites*

*Guarani Nhandewa to meet with the women enrolled*

*over four Sundays in November 2020.*

*Each of the notebooks corresponds to one of the meetings,*

*following the order of events. This third notebook is the*

*transcript of class 3, “Waking up the memory,*

*remembering the path, drawing the footsteps”.*

Narrative is a body, it’s the body’s process. That’s why it’s important to question when we don’t see ourselves in it. Why don’t we see ourselves? Why do we see ourselves? And how do we see ourselves? That’s why I bring this narrative of *Nhandesy*’s story from the *Guarani* perspective. This is a provocation that I brought, and many things flowed according to the paths we began to walk together.

First we talked about the narrative, the story; the story of *Nhandesy*, the story of *Nhanderu*; how is the process of understanding brought by the narrative, what does it bring to us, how the process of the body is. And I think that the narrative explains a lot about this process of the body; and the narrative often brings us face to face with what we don’t or we do fit into.

Secondly we talked more specifically about process. The process in which each one is included, in other words, in which each body begins to develop, as if it were producing its own body. So the body, in my understanding, is collective, but it is also individual. Individuality is im-

portant. This individuality comes often from the collective; sometimes it's for the collective; and sometimes it's from the collective to the individual. And so on, and vice versa.

On our journey, I realised that the body-territory process is complex, and it's not just this one that we carry. Regardless of the form, it is from the world, from our surroundings, from the way we include ourselves, as I said. In order for us to discuss it further, to delve deeper, I often say that our references are ourselves. So what is this "We are our own references"?

I think it's important to highlight and quote other authors who do research, who work as scientists. But I think it's also important to know our own self, so that we can also make practical references, which are ourselves; and, speaking of academia, academia sometimes doesn't allow us to explore our self.

It's not that we're selfish, but it's important that we bring this being of ours, this process of our self, together with our own struggle, because everyone knows why they're fighting. I think I first observed these issues by doing activities of this kind with my students in the village. Firstly, it is about waking up memory. What does waking up memory mean? The memory told or narrated is the narrative itself, it's our ancestral memory. What is our ancestral memory? Ancestral memory is what people tell us, and what we believed and believe in. There are people who no longer believe, and there's a reason for that – we don't believe – but it remains in our memory. Good things stay in your memory.

What is it? This memory is ancestral memory, and it will emerge in various ways: it can emerge in childhood, it can emerge in the family, it can emerge in us, or it can emerge as a woman, or because we are women. This ancestral memory that I'm talking about will emerge in various ways. That's why I say... it has a mark, our memory has a mark; that's why it's important to demarcate our memory. This memory will demarcate our body. So, good things, bad things, they will demarcate it. That's why I often say this about *teko*. *TeKo* is the way of being, the way of living, the way of being in the world. So *teko* also has to do with memory.

This memory defines the boundaries of our body. Sometimes it provokes a reaction from the body itself; that's why each one of us is here

today. Some of us are teachers, others are artists, others are housewives. Regardless of the place we occupy, there is a reason. So that reason is the question of demarcating the body. That's why we're not going to talk about the demarcation of territory. The territory is our own body.

And why this demarcation of the body? Sometimes it's due to ancestry, which leads us down another path, or sometimes it's a matter of provoking your own body. I wanted to talk about this provocation of the body or the provocation of sensuality. It doesn't matter how we got to where we are today, it's always important to think about memory and that memory is the *teko* itself, it's the body itself, it's the territory itself. And then, about *teko*: I'd like to leave you with two things, three things, in fact, that are important: *teko*, which is the way of being, the way of being in the world.

From the *teko*, we also have paths. *Teko* is also a path. What is a path? A path is what we've been facing, going through, and these paths we call *tape*. *Tape* is movement. What we can build from the *teko*, from memory, thinking towards the future – which is *tenonde*, which means “forwards” – for us it's forwards and it's the future. So, in other words, looking ahead.

What is looking ahead? In order to look forward, you need to understand what your memory is. From this memory – good or bad – we can select something that is important to us, that is for the future, which the *juruá*<sup>1</sup> call “legacy”. Maybe it's a legacy, I don't know if it's that or not. We *Guarani* talk a lot about *ta'anga*, which is the design, the way we draw our thoughts. I propose that we all draw our memory and our path. The *teko*, the way of being in the world, the way of living in the world, the way of being. This is very individual, and it will awaken your memory, which has marked you, demarcated your body. It may be good, it may be bad, but that doesn't stop you from drawing something you want to draw.

Then, from memory, we can develop something that is movement. What is this movement? I don't know. So that we can find the process that led us to be in this space, which would be the *tape*, which would be the

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1. *Juruá* is the *Guarani* word for non-indigenous person. It literally means ‘bearded’ and is used in general to refer to habits and culture of urban (white) people.

path. What is this path? You're in the city, you're in the village... Regardless of where you are, you're either an artist or you work from home... Regardless of what you do. So this is the path that will perhaps lead you to another path, to make your own journey, your own trajectory. And it's from there that you'll realise what you want to leave for the future. In other words, what you want for the future, how you want the future.

## INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE JOURNEY

We *Guarani* have this idea of the collective and the individual. I learnt that individuality is very important. The collective is also important. But there's this vice versa thing, from the collective to the individual, from the individual to the collective, and there's always this crossing over. We just don't realise it sometimes. We will find ourselves on the way. What does it mean to find ourselves on the way? Because for us, various things are prevented. It's because I'm white, I'm black, I'm Indigenous, yes, there are these things, but there are also things in common: that we're seen as gossipers, or as this, as that; sometimes it's bad, in other words, it's dangerous or it's not normal for some people. And why is that? Because we are women.

So on this path, in various aspects, we will find ourselves. And from that, we can think and we can identify what and where these impediments are – from us being in the way we are, being in a certain place... And we know that. We go through various situations because we're women. That's why we'll meet ourselves several times along the way.

I want each of you to take the heritage of memory with you: it's what each of you will take with you, what each of you understand, and have been able to think about. We are making this journey, everyone has this journey, regardless of where they come from. Each of us has started walking. And I think this is very important: we draw our steps. We create from the drawing of our steps and we'll understand how far we've travelled, what we've faced. Why are we like this? Why are we in this space today?

## LISTENING TO YOURSELF

I remember a student who wrote and drew his steps. He said this: "I drew my steps". At the end he said to me: "I don't see anything, I see air and this air has no future, I don't see anything". He drew this air, in fact, he drew this grey air, but in this grey air you don't see anything, it's all just floating around, like air, like a grey smoke above, like a cloud; it's just that nobody can stay there, they can't see anything. When he said that, I started talking to the group. I said: "Guys, it's not that you're not seeing things". And I said to him: "Look, I'm very grateful to you, because you said something very important". This air, in which he can't see anything, is a warning to us: we're losing our young people. And then I said to him: "You're seeing things we don't see, but that doesn't mean you're not seeing anything. You're seeing things we don't see.

And we started discussing it. This was quite recent. I recall how much the young people are warning us: that the world we present to them, with no perspective, doesn't bear this concern. We often talk so much, so much, but we forget about these young people, we forget that they are trying to understand what is happening, and they are warning us. I got very emotional afterwards. I said to him: "Write poetry", and he wrote poetry. And today he does incredible work, but that's it, there is no space for him to express his thoughts, his way of being in the world. From not seeing anything, something else emerged so he could see it. The person draws a cloud, and explains why he has drawn a cloud. This work was very important, and now he writes poetry.

It really makes you emotional. That's more or less what I suggest for anyone who wants to do it. I suggest that the references should be ourselves.

I'm not saying that you should not refer to authors who do this kind of incredible work, regardless of the area in which you work, but it's important to refer to yourself. The body-territory emerged from this point. I speak from the *teko*, which is the way of being, the way of being in the world, the way of seeing the world. These are things that I bring from my gaze. I bring these things for all of us to think about together. As I said at the beginning, we need to build together, we need to do things together, we need to think together.

TeKo is the way of being, of being in the world, of living in the world or seeing the world; the way you are, as a body: teko. But this body has various relationships. This body is a relationship. TeKo does not develop, that is, it does not produce the way of being, the way of being in the world on your own. It comes from your relationships. And these relationships, what they imply, which, in truth, could be good things or could be bad things; this is what we acquire in our thoughts, in our way of viewing things, in our reasoning, all of this.

TeKoha would be the place where we produce our way of being. Let's think about the Guaraní. What do the Guaraní need to continue being Guaraní? You need to have an environment. What is the environment? The environment may be the river, it may be the forest, the animals, the air, the silence, the things of nature, which are different from other peoples. So, for us to continue to be healthy, to have health and education in the Guaraní way, we need all these elements around us. This is the basis for creating their knowledge, their know-how. Their knowledge is related to, is associated with the forest, the spirit of nature, the spirit of the river, the spirit of the tree, the spirit of the animals. Why is this so? Because when, for example, men go fishing, hunting, killing, when they kill an animal to consume, they ask the spirit. Before they go hunting, they'll perform a ritual to ask the spirit of the animal they're going to hunt. Why? To avoid doing harm, we ask permission to enter this place; we don't just arrive and kill.

So this means the production of knowledge. This is the Guaraní way of being, but the majority of Indigenous people also have this knowledge, this wisdom.

Davi Kopenawa, the Yanomami, talks about the xapiri. In his book *The Falling Sky*<sup>2</sup>, he talks about xapiri. Xapiri, for us Guaraní, in our Guaraní language, is idjara. What is idjara? It's like a guardian, in other words, the spirit of that animal, the spirit of nature, which I call the "spirit of nature", or the spirit of the river, the spirit of the tree, the spirit of the

2. KOPENAWA, Davi; ALBERT, Bruce. *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*. Translators: Nicholas Elliott and Alison Dundy. Cambridge, Massachusetts: HUP, Belknap Press, 2013.

stone; everything for us has its spirits, which is why we ask permission to take something that is important. That's what *tekoha* is all about.

So when we want to produce *teko*, which is the *Guarani* way of being, just to summarise, the way of thinking about the world, the way of being in the world, the *Guarani* way of being requires these elements, all these elements around. As soon as there are no longer these elements around, we get sick. We lose our point of reference. Then these tragedies happen, several times, various forms of violence that we Indigenous people are experiencing. All of this has to do with *teko* and *tekoha* – which are together, in fact, they're not separate; it's just that the process is different.

The *tape* is the path. I use this metaphor: the path is a constant process, movement. We don't stand still in the same place. I use *tape* as if it were a process, and movement is also a process. Then I say, for example: I'm *Guarani*, I'm a *Guarani* woman; because I'm a *Guarani* woman, there are many things I've had to follow the rules for, but in order to study, I've sometimes had to break those rules. One of the things is menstruation. When a woman menstruates, she can't study, she can't go out, she can't eat certain things, and then she has to stay in a corner. I've broken this since I started working. But why? Because I wanted to do something in favour of these issues, which is why I kept studying.

I need to talk about my concerns, because my way of being is not respected. When I started, I began by disrespecting myself, but for a good cause, in this case. When I menstruate, I go to class, it doesn't matter, but I go. Then I submit to this vision of the *juruá*. At university, the system is *juruá*, we don't discuss menstruation, we don't discuss mothers' bodies, we don't discuss anything. But then I have to go in there to provoke these questions. I went in, nobody listened to me, but I went in and talked about it. Today I'm talking about it all the time. Then what happens? I submit to these things. And that's why, for better or worse, I've learned to dialogue with other women who aren't *Guarani*. And that's where we start to meet harmoniously, with affection.

I know that *juruá* women don't have this habit but that's also why I'm bringing the narrative. Why the narrative? Women don't have their own narrative. The *juruá* don't give women a chance to have their narrative, in other words, to tell their narratives. *Juruá* men tell their



narratives, but from the perspective of men, as the only God, as the only perfect God, and they erase all *juruá* women. These women are often unable to tell their own narratives, which is why their bodies feel as if they're not there, as if they have been erased.

I had to submit myself in order to understand and discuss this issue. And then I went back to my village and my relatives often said to me: "Oh, Sandra talks a lot, Sandra sounds like *juruá*." I was a bit upset at first, but then I realised that it wasn't true. I said: no, I'm not going to be upset, because I do look a bit like *juruá*, but it's not because I wanted to. In fact, I had to submit to it.

I'm no longer Sandra Guarani, who used to live in the village. I'm already another Sandra, I mean, the same Sandra, but there are several other things... It's been expanding. It's this experience of mine which is expanding that will help bring me more information to discuss. And it's this information that I bring, from various places, that also puts me in conflict with myself. But I'm happy, because I'm with you, because I learn and here I feel and here I cry, I understand. All the women who have welcomed me, regardless of where they come from, those women who have welcomed me, who have dialogued with me, who have listened to me, who have exchanged words with me, have brought more information, and this is a constant movement. That's what I call *tape*.

This *tape* is also conflicting, and you have to prepare yourself for when you come up against it – like, for example, when I came up against the academia, which doesn't let women rest when they're menstruating. Of course, for me it was disrespectful, but I had to submit, and I have my limits for that. I know how to deal with it. It's a provocative encounter that will arise from this. That's why it's very important, and although it's conflictual, it's very pleasant to be provoked, to keep questioning yourself all the time, trying to understand where you are, that sometimes you need to do more research. That's why the other day I remembered my uncle saying that *juruás* get crazier the more they study. Then I said: "I'm in this situation too". It's not that we're crazy, it's just that it's a question of conflict. This is the path, which has to do with *teko* and *tekoha*. The *teko* is the result of this movement. I repeat: I'm no longer the Sandra Guarani I was when I lived in the village. Now I'm Sandra, perhaps, who is between the *juruá* and the *Guarani*. It's a very complex

thing, but it's very important. That's why it's important for us to see ourselves, and then serve as a reference for ourselves.

**Tape** is movement. You don't know what you're going to find. I also remember a friend who said that when she was doing this work, she was thinking of drawing a person, her grandmother, who stayed in her memory. She started to draw this grandmother and various things came to mind. She said that when she was eight she went to live with her grandmother who knew how to pick beans, how to separate the little pebbles from the beans, and how to cook. Today she has a daughter who doesn't know what it's like to pick beans, and doesn't even know where the beans come from. She wanted to remember that, she wanted to talk about it. And how important is that? It's important because it brings a memory, which is the *teko*, which is your own being, and then the *tekoha*, which produces this place where sometimes one doesn't know how to pick beans, for example. It also has to do with *tekoha*. The path where you find things is the journey itself.

## TIME ON THE BODY

Menstruation is very important to us *Guarani* because women's periods have a lot to do with their health. According to older women, when a girl's first period comes, she is taken care of. All parents need to know that when there's a girl at home, she needs to be cared for, empowered, in fact, during her period, so that she feels cared for and respected. The girl retreats, she is protected, she has her own moment.

And it also has to do with the question of narrative. Boys have other moments, their own moments. It's when their voices thicken that they do these activities, which are different from girls. During the menstrual period, girls stay silent and usually do something that involves their hands. They braid, they sew... Why? Firstly because older women don't want us to go out in the wind, to go out in the hot sun, to go out like this... We can't eat salty food, very oily or greasy food, we can't even eat sweets. There's this whole aspect of taking care during menstruation because they say it's for life. In fact, when women reach the age of 70, in

the menopause period, which they talk about, they will have another period of empowerment of feminine strength, of care, of a healthy body. Taking care of your body is not taking care of your hair. Taking care of your hair is precisely taking care of your period – hair loss, forgetfulness, they always said it had to do with not taking care of your body's menstrual period, that you might be stressed.

The excess of things becomes like foam. With each period, your body absorbs things, and that may even increase the risk of cancer. I realised that cancer has a lot to do with the body. Sometimes cancer comes through emotional issues. They say that our blood is closely linked to our emotions, even in men. Men's warm blood is very much associated with their emotions. That's why men have to be patient and careful at all times, during the period of voice thickening. People say that men don't bleed or menstruate, but they do that every day. You have to know how to handle and control your hot blood, which is called *tuguy haku*. Hot blood is having control of yourself, so it has to do with the emotional issue. They say that when men get angry, their blood goes to their heads. And it's also funny that we women, when the blood goes to our heads, according to the older women, we can die of sadness, die of depression. They used to say that a lot. It's a very complex thing. And our blood can not be thrown anywhere. We have to put it in a certain place, where there are big plants, banana trees or palm trees. We threw it as if we were watering the plant. And you can't put things on that, on our blood, where we collect our blood.

*Tuguy* to us is blood. *Haku* means hot. Hot blood. Men have to be on the move all the time, it's like cooling their bodies down. They have to dance, they have to weed, they have to mow, they have to swim, they have to do all kinds of gross movements. Not the girls. The girls are softer, because they have to be in silence, they have to do small things, they have to braid, during their menstrual period, to concentrate; in fact, it requires concentration on oneself. The older women say that in the narrative, in *Nhandesy's* story, she went after *Nhanderu*, who was the children's father, because she was insecure, because, in fact, she had waited for a long time and so she went looking for *Nhanderu*. She became very insecure and, when she died, she was devoured by jaguars on the way.

Going back to *Nhandesy's* relationship, she was very sad, she felt alone. That's why she went in search of *Nhanderu*, and she took a different path. It's different from men. For us women, our blood is about having the strength to balance, to not feel alone, and to always feel good about yourself, so that you don't just take any path. I mean, that depends a lot on you as a woman. And it seems that it's the same with men, except that they need to control their blood in order to know how to live with others, with the group. Men need to know how to live with the other, with the group, and not with themselves. That's why they say that women need to rest their minds during their periods, so that they can feel solitude. That is, knowing how to feel solitude, knowing how to face solitude. So, in this period of menstruation, it's very important to know how to feel loneliness. That's more or less it. And men, it seems that all the time they depend on the group, and not on themselves.

## BETWEEN WORLDS

I'm also trying to understand the intersections of gender in *Guarani* culture, because I'm not in this place and I believe it's a very important thing to understand. Trans women, for example, from the moment they come out, they live among women. For example, once, in the village of Porto Lindo, where my parents live, there was a young woman who, after getting 17 years old, began to say that she no longer wanted to be called by her baptismal name, she chose her name herself.

And then she started staying with the women, like a sister. This little sister – when we say *kyry'y*, it means my little sister, she's our sister – this little sister we have, knows how to straddle two worlds: symbolically, she doesn't bleed, but there are other aspects that she brings, as strength. I remember that she was the one who gave our friends advice on how to resist a boyfriend, how to ignore him. So the girls began to place a lot of trust in her as a sister. She's the one who wields the power there, and she'd say to the girls: "Oh, no, that's not cool" – and I remember that. The other girls began to have this power, it was our little sister who brought it to them; and then all the women began to exchange a lot of

knowledge. So I'd say that's knowledge. Now, in relation to blood, blood control, this really has to be controlled, regardless of whether you've made this transit or not, because this is something that is very important, to have this issue of control, because they are different periods, and, symbolically, there are trans women who bleed, right?

That's why I often say that when we talk about the importance of women, of women's blood, trans women are there too, they can help us to say that. It's not because they don't bleed that we're going to exclude them; on the contrary, they're already part of our group, there's no need to exclude them. The person who transitions to male is also the same thing.

I think the only difference in the menstrual period is the importance of having your moment of rest. In the village the girls play football, there are lots who play, who like to play, but during the menstrual period they always respect this moment of rest. So they respect themselves, that's the only difference.

Bleeding is problematic for the *juruá*, which is why women aren't the focus of society; it's easier to accept the other body that doesn't bleed. That's the point. That's why the question of pain is important. And when you go out of your mind, how many women are considered crazy, insane, for not being able to bear that emotion during their period? It's a sad story to say that women who struggle are considered crazy. I've heard that a lot, even from women themselves. I think it's sad and sometimes I think about it. And this is where I get even stronger with these crazy women, because I think there are these women who bring revolution to all of us. They're all different, but that's where their creativity comes in.

## THE BREASTS AND THE KISS

I once said this to a girl. I painted myself all over and went out into the street to demonstrate. There was a women's demonstration going on, and afterwards, on the way back, I went to have my nails done. Then a woman asked me why I was painting myself. I said: "I'm Indigenous,

I went to the street to demonstrate with the women”. She said: “God forbid. I would never join in with those crazy women who take their clothes off and do that, stick their chests out”. I was horrified by this, and I said: “Okay, everyone has their own opinion, but I really admire those brave women who take their clothes off and stick their chests out – I really admire them. You are really right. I wouldn’t do that, I don’t have the courage, but they do. If there weren’t these crazy women on the streets, who knows if we’d ever get to the point where we’d have our salaries, our jobs? And you know that we didn’t even vote, we couldn’t vote, right? And many women were murdered.”

And then she kept talking to me, and today she has become my friend. I started talking to her about it. I told her how moved I was to see these women taking off their clothes, doing all kinds of things that are courageous – because that’s a strength, a courage, that also draws the attention of other women, for example. I told her that I was very shy, and that day I was there together with them. Then I said: “I still don’t have the courage to take my clothes off, but I admire it, I stand there with them”. So I think there are a lot of misconceptions that sometimes arise from these things. I’m not saying that only white people talk like this. Indigenous people also sometimes have this impact, because they have different trajectories, different strengths, different struggles. It’s important that we respect and strengthen each other’s struggles.

For us *Guarani*, until recently, the oldest woman, who is the matriarch – that would be, for example, in my house, my mum, who is older – would normally take off her blouse and stand like this, with her chest out, cooking and doing various things. And I remember that. And then, today, I see that there’s a lot of sexualisation of the breast.

For us, a kiss on the mouth is a kiss from a son, not a kiss from a boyfriend or husband. For example, [the difficulty to] kissing on the mouth is very difficult to break, even among us *Guarani*. Today, the younger ones, the teenagers, they kiss each other, they know how to kiss and so on. I’m not so old, but most people from my time have this difficulty.

I have my partner *juruá*, and sometimes, even if I want to walk down the street with him holding hands, for example, I’m afraid, I find it difficult to relate in this sense. And then the breast, the kiss and the breast

actually have a lot to do with this relationship with the child. In fact, it's not a bad thing for us, it's funny. And women breastfeed their children anywhere. You can see that *Guarani* women breastfeed anywhere. And then I remember, recently, that they wanted to ban women from breastfeeding in public. I was very indignant about these things, because women's breasts were labelled as something... bad. I don't remember seeing the breast as bad. I see that in *Juruá* society there's a lot of this: the issue of women's breasts, of exposing women, as if to see women as objects, with that desire to consume.

I'm talking about my village, I've never really had this problem. Today, I see that the younger boys and girls are worried about being ashamed, ashamed of us, even among the women. That day I went to bathe in the village, then we went to the waterfall, several girls, most of them girls. Then the boys went too. We got to the river and everyone took off their blouses and threw themselves into the water in shorts. And that was something natural.

When a girl's breasts started to grow, there was a little medicine that was actually a bug that you put on the tip of the nipple. Older women said it was medicine so that she wouldn't get an infection or something when she grew up. So that's why that medicine was given. Today, I don't think it even exists anymore. Now, boys, unlike girls, for example, had to look after the girl. I remember that when I was a child, I was already a girl, I started playing football with my cousins and sometimes I fell, sometimes we ran and hit each other, and they talked to themselves to take care, especially of the girl's breasts, so as not to hit their arm on our breasts, because they said that this wound could become infected over time. So the breast is well looked after too. A woman's chest has to be a place you can't hit, it can't be bruised. The boys played football with us and pushed us with their arms, and they had to be careful not to hit our breasts, because the breasts are very sensitive places that could not be hurt. I remember that, because we were orientated like that too.

In our culture, it's forbidden to have sex while menstruating. In fact, we can't even walk through the woods or places because they say we smell. They talk about *djepota* – *djepota* means that you can be

smelled by things. It's a way of avoiding being smelled by the animal world. Because you can attract them and get sick.

## TERRITORIALISING THE TEKŌ

What is our struggle for territory, for space? It's precisely to guarantee our *tekŌ*, our way of being. Space is what gives us continuity in our way of being. Our way of being is actually our body. We demarcate our territory, which is our ancestral memory. Our ancestral memory is in our own trajectory, in our way of being in the world – but this ancestral memory requires the *tekoha*, which is the place where we produce our way of being. That's why each Indigenous person demarcates their territory, because the struggle for territory is about guaranteeing and continuing to guarantee their process of knowledge, which has to do with space-territory. Their relationship, their body, their *tekŌ*, their body-territory.

That's why it's important for us to think, as I said at the beginning, that the girl said: "Oh, my grandmother used to tell us to pick beans, there were pebbles, we would pick them and it was so delicious, we would get together, the children would get together to pick the beans". But it was the grandparents, in fact, the parents, who planted the beans; and planting beans requires space. If we want to continue harvesting beans, we need space. And what if there are no more beans – since today there are no more beans and she lives in a flat – and my son and daughter don't even know what it's like to pick beans anymore? Why don't they? Because all the relationships through which they could produce their knowledge have been taken away. That's why you demarcate your territory, which is your own body; and the territory, space, which is your surroundings, is exactly your relationship, what you believe, what you are or the way you were.

That's why memory is important, because memory doesn't stand alone. Memory also requires several things together. *TekŌ* and *tekoha*. The production of knowledge is the path itself, the *tape*, which is the movement you face. So, if the young man who is my student, who said



he couldn't see anything for the future, drew clouds and said he couldn't see anything, he actually saw something: he saw that it's very impossible for him to have a future. Why can't he see anything in the future? It's because he's already in a space that makes it impossible for him to have a relationship with his ancestry, with his ancestor, with the spirit of nature; how will he know? So that's when we, as humans, start to get sick. Our hands are tied and, on top of that, we're criminalised, which happens a lot in the periphery. Because space is limited, you can't move, you can't do anything, and how are you going to produce and continue your ancestral memory?

I have a friend who used to say: "Oh, the banana tree is very important to us, I'm a *jongueira*<sup>3</sup>, we need a banana tree". I mean, how are you going to ground the *jongo* in a space that doesn't have this relationship with the banana tree? We can create groups, dance, sing... But the relationship, in fact, will need this space. I think we can talk about territorialising (grounding) our *teko*. This will depend a lot on who and what each person carries. Territorialising the *teko* means territorialising the *jongo*, territorialising the woman's body, territorialising the ritual process of the boys and girls.

I'm in my flat, I'm distressed and sometimes I want to drink mate tea, I want to make my fire, I want to teach like this, talking to you. If I had a big space, I'd build a fire, we'd bake potatoes and put up some stools... Everyone would chat, drink mate. Class, for us, is conversation. And it's very enjoyable, each person has their own narrative, each person listens to the other, this requires more time, the space is different. So all this is another logic. I think that's what territorialisation is about, really. It's also a process of searching. And that's how we keep our hearts happy to move forward.

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3. *Jongueira* is the person who dances and sings the *jongo*. The *jongo*, also known as *caxambu* and *corimá* or *tambu*, *batuque* or *tambor*, is a Brazilian dance of African origin that is practised to the sound of drums, such as the *caxambu*. It is essentially rural. It is part of Afro-Brazilian culture. Source: <<https://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jongo>>. Vizualized in March, 26th 2024.

## SANDRA BENITES

Born in the Porto Lindo Indigenous Land, in the municipality of Japorã (MS), in 1975, Sandra Benites is a *Guarani* mother, researcher and activist. A descendant of the *Guarani Nhandeva* people, she works as an anthropologist, researcher, art curator and educator. She is also the Director of Visual Arts at the National Arts Foundation (Funarte), the first Indigenous person to hold a directorship at the foundation. Sandra stands out for her struggles in defence of the rights of Indigenous peoples, especially the demarcation of territories and *Guarani* education.

## BODY-TERRITORY COURSE

**Curator and Teacher:** Sandra Benites

**Idealiser:** Romina Lindemann

**Participants:** Aline Bernardi, Izabel Goudart, Tatiana Jardim, Tainá Veríssimo, Fernanda Cristall, Camila Durães, Gilsamara Moura, Dalmoni Lydijusse, Dasha Lavrennikova, Karlla Giroto, Carla Gamba, Julia Sá Earp, Lívia Barroso de Moura, Jaya Paula Pravaz, Juliana Nardin and Lau Veríssimo.

## **KARLA GIROTTO**

Artist, teacher, researcher and writer. Her artistic practice has been marked by a plurality of actions – performance, text, object, installation, video, photography and, especially, by the creation and opening up of processes of experimentation and production. She has a Master's degree and a PhD from the Centre for the Study of Subjectivity at PUC/SP in Clinical Psychology course, and has been awarded CAPES (2013-2015) and CNPq (2019-2022) scholarships.

## **ALINE BERNARDI**

Artist, researcher and teacher of the arts of the body and the stage, with an interest in the transits between dance and writing in the creative process. Artistic Director of Celeiro Moebius. Creator and Proponent of Lab Corpo Palavra. Author of the book *Performance Decopulagem*. Master's in Dance from the PPGD/UFRJ programme and Postgraduate from the PCA/FAV. Further training in Performance through the F.I.A. Programme at the c.e.m. in Lisbon. Graduated with a Full Licence from FAV. Technical training in Contemporary Dance at the Angel Vianna School. Certified in the Introductory and CS1 Modules of Cranio-Sacral Therapy Techniques by Upledger Brasil. Training in the Bertazzo Movement Reeducation Method. Substitute Dance Teacher at Colégio Pedro II - Realengo II Unit (2018-2019), founder and member of the NACE - Performing Arts Centre team. Founder of the website Contato Improvisação Brasil [Contact Improvisation Brazil]. Curator, artist and manager of the *Entre Serras: Residências Artísticas e Poéticas da Sustentabilidade programme* [Between Mountains: Artist Residencies and Poetics of Sustainability].

## **TATIANA JARDIM**

Researcher and artistic and cultural producer. She has a Master's degree in Visual Anthropology from the New University of Lisbon (Nova FCSH) and researches decolonial feminism, memory and heritage, focusing on visual and shared anthropology methodologies. She has a degree in Social Communication, specialising in Advertising, from ESPM-SP. Born in Santos (São Paulo, Brazil), she lived for four years in

Lisbon (Portugal), where she worked in the management of audiovisual cultural projects. In São Paulo, she works in event production and artist agency.

#### **TAINÁ VERÍSSIMO**

She has been a member of the *Totem Group* since 2004, collectively developing a scenic language based on performance and rituality, where she works as an actress-performer, producer and art educator. Together with the members of the group, she teaches the *Corpo Ritual Workshop*; she has also been a researcher for the *RecorDança Collection* since 2010, which aims to safeguard, disseminate and produce knowledge about Pernambuco dances. She researches the dialogue between art, healing and spirituality in the performing arts and audiovisual media. She is a postgraduate student in Educational Dance – CENSUPEG, a Yoga Instructor – ANYI, and has a degree in Artistic Education/Scenic Arts – UFPE.

#### **IZABEL GOUDART**

Alchemist, artist, curator and researcher of collaborative learning processes and methodologies in networks and of affective and poetic weavings. With a degree in Chemistry from UERJ (1989), she has been composing a multidisciplinary score by mixing and hybridising the natural sciences, the arts and contemporary and ancestral technologies. The intimacy and conflicts of a dissident lesbian body are part of her poetics, based on the autobiography of her body and relationships. The geometric and fractal patterns of nature and the connection with ancestry and spirituality dialogue with the poetics and delicacy of life and other existences. The power of the collective is present in her collaborative art proposals. She combines various techniques and practices such as photography, video, installations, sound art, objects and performance to give materiality to the body of her work. She is the curator and manager of the Somas residency. She has a Master's degree in Education (UERJ), a PhD in Communication and Semiotics (PUC/SP) with a post-doctorate in Interactive Media (UFG) and is currently studying Visual Arts (UERJ).

## DALMONI LYDIJUSSE

From Minas Gerais, she has a degree in Fine Arts from FAAP, a BA in Fine Arts from UFMG and a specialisation in Integrative Art from Anhembi Morumbi University. She has also taken courses in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, New York and Canada. Since 2003 she has managed and maintained *Arte Ziriguidum*, teaching classes and courses, promoting various initiatives with other professionals, curating projects, offering the space for cultural activities, and solo and group exhibitions. As an artist, she has participated in solo and group exhibitions.

The editorial production work of the Selvagem Notebooks is carried out collectively with the Selvagem community. The editorial direction is by Anna Dantes, and the coordination is by Alice Alberti Faria. The design is by Tania Grillo. In this series of notebooks by Sandra Benites, we had the special collaboration of Karlla Giroto, Aline Bernardi, Tatiana Jardim, Tainá Veríssimo and Izabel Goudart in organising, transcribing and revising the speeches from the Body-Territory course, which gave rise to the materials. We would also like to thank Dalmoni Lydijusse for the illustration and Daniel Grimoni for the final revision of the notebook in Portuguese. The coordinator of English translations is Marina Matheus.

More information at [selvagemciclo.com.br/en/](http://selvagemciclo.com.br/en/)

All Selvagem activities and materials are shared free of charge. For those who wish to give something back, we invite you to financially support the Living Schools, a network of five educational centres for the transmission of indigenous culture and knowledge.

Find out more at [selvagemciclo.com.br/en/apoie/](http://selvagemciclo.com.br/en/apoie/)

**TRANSLATION**  
**MARCOS MORAES**

Dancer and choreographer, Marcos Moraes works as artist, teacher and cultural producer. He has created and directs, since 2013, The Performing Kitchen - Collaborative Platform for Artistic Research and Creation. Graduated in Languages - English by FFLCH-USP translates books and texts and takes part in Comunidade Selvagem since its beginning. He currently lives and works between São Paulo and Lisbon.

**TRANSLATION REVISION**  
**MARY HATAKEYAMA**

Mother, gardener, teacher, translator. Graduated in languages and pedagogy. Born in São Paulo, Brazil. Since 2022 participates in the Comunidade Selvagem, collaborating in the Spanish and English text translation groups, reading, translating, and revising texts collectively and artisanally.

SELVAGEM Notebooks  
digital publication by  
Dantes Editora  
Biosfera, 2023  
English translation, 2024

