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Ancestral Dramaturgies

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Ancestral Dramaturgies

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To my maternal grandmother Voinha (in memoriam),
whose love kept me alive throughout the years.

Research Statement

Ancestral Dramaturgies is a decolonial, practice-based methodology for investigating how personal, collective, and more-than-human histories can be activated, encountered, and transformed through dramaturgical and performative practice. The methodology emerged through my artistic trajectory as a diasporic, Queer non-binary artist and researcher, and through sustained experimentation with migration, expanded ancestry, memory, displacement, and belonging. It was not a pre-existing method applied to my life or artistic practice. Rather, it developed gradually through encounters, failures, repetitions, conversations, performances, and forms of embodied inquiry. This doctoral research constitutes the first sustained articulation and enactment of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* as a dramaturgical and performative methodology.

At its foundation is the proposition that artistic research can generate knowledge through processes in which embodied experience, identity formation, and theoretical inquiry remain interconnected. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* therefore does not separate the personal from the political, the embodied from the conceptual, or individual experience from broader historical and collective processes. It begins from an understanding of ancestry that exceeds biological descent and linear genealogy. I use the term expanded ancestry to describe the human, more-than-human, material, geographical, cultural, spiritual, and historical relations through which individuals come to understand themselves and their place in the world. Ancestry is consequently approached not as a fixed inheritance, but as a living and relational field that can be activated through listening, conversation, memory, movement, materiality, place, and performance.

The methodology was generated through a series of artistic experiments that progressively revealed its principles and processes. These included epistolary exchange, genealogical and ancestral investigation, conversations with relatives and other interlocutors, sonic and performative composition, site-specific practice, and collective regenerative processes. Through these experiments, two central performative and dramaturgical principles emerged: the crossroads, informed by Rufino's (2019) conception of the *encruzilhada* as a pedagogical and epistemological space of encounter, and spiral time, drawing on Martins (2021) understanding of time as non-linear, cyclical, and continually in transformation. Within *Ancestral Dramaturgies*, these concepts

are not simply theoretical references but are activated and reconfigured through artistic practice. The crossroads functions as a spatial and relational condition in which bodies, identities, histories, places, and forms of knowledge meet, overlap, and become unsettled. The spiral provides a temporal and compositional structure through which past, present, and future remain in relation, allowing histories to be revisited, reinterpreted, and transformed.

These principles are inseparable from my own situated history and positionality, including my experiences of migration, racialization, Queerness, and displacement, and my relationship to the colonial and diasporic histories of Brazil and Europe. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* does not, however, seek to universalize this experience or propose my own trajectory as a model for others. Its methodological contribution emerges through a movement between the singular and the transferable. The methodology is generated from one specific artistic and embodied trajectory, while its principles and processes offer possibilities for adaptation by other practitioners in relation to their own histories, bodies, communities, places, and contexts.

This distinction is central to the methodology's decolonial proposition. Rather than beginning from a universal method and applying it to a particular subject, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* begins from situated experience and allows methods of knowing to emerge through practice. Knowledge is therefore understood as embodied, relational, situated, experiential, and non-linear. Artistic practice is not simply a means of illustrating knowledge produced elsewhere; it becomes a site in which knowledge is generated, tested, transformed, and transmitted.

This research consequently operates across two interconnected dimensions: identity formation and knowledge formation. At the level of identity formation, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* creates conditions in which personal and ancestral histories can be revisited, reconfigured, and brought into new relations. This process does not seek to recover a singular or authentic origin. Instead, it attends to the fragments, absences, contradictions, displacements, and continuities through which belonging is negotiated. At the level of knowledge formation, the methodology contributes to decolonial artistic research by articulating how artistic practice can generate forms of knowledge that do not depend upon linearity, detachment, or the separation of subject and object.

The relationship between these dimensions produces the methodology's emancipatory and regenerative potential. Personal transformation becomes a site of knowledge production, while the knowledge generated through artistic practice can create new possibilities for individual and collective transformation. Here, regeneration refers not to a return to an imagined original state, but to the creation of new relations: between generations, bodies, places, histories, materials, and forms of knowing. The methodology therefore understands artistic research as a process through which disrupted or fragmented relations can be approached without necessarily being resolved or repaired into a singular narrative.

Through its engagement with migration, expanded ancestry, decoloniality, and regenerative practice, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* challenges universalizing and Eurocentric assumptions about how knowledge within the performing arts is produced and legitimized. It proposes dramaturgy as more than a means of organizing performance. Dramaturgy becomes a way of navigating relations: between bodies and histories, past and future, human and more-than-human worlds, memory and materiality, absence and presence. In this sense, dramaturgical practice becomes both an artistic and epistemological process.

This research ultimately asks how artistic practice can create conditions in which fragmented and displaced histories may be approached; in which suppressed, embodied, and relational knowledges can become audible and perceptible; and in which new forms of belonging and collective existence can be imagined. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* emerges from a singular artistic life while reaching beyond it. It is simultaneously a record of personal transformation, a methodology generated through artistic experimentation, and a contribution to decolonial artistic research. Its central proposition is that knowledge produced through one situated trajectory can become a point of departure—not a universal prescription—for other practitioners to investigate their own ancestral, embodied, and relational worlds.

Keywords: Decolonial artistic research; practice-based research; expanded ancestry; dramaturgy; embodied knowledge; more-than-human relations; regenerative practice; *encruzilhada*; spiral time.

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While composing this thesis, I realized it was interwoven with the many conversations I had with both human and more-than-human entities. It was not built alone, nor was it built only at the desk. It emerged from encounters, listening, walking, touching, observing, and being moved.

Nature played an immense role in the unfolding of the arguments I present here. Many of my realizations came during long walks along the coastlines of the island of Møn in Denmark. Many others arrived at the end of long days of writing, when, frustrated by my inability to express a certain idea, I would soak my feet in the salty waters of Råbylille Strand. There, I would listen to the voices of the waves, the sea, the sandbanks, and all the creatures inhabiting those ecosystems. Sometimes, when language failed me, the water seemed to offer another way of thinking.

I would also like to acknowledge the other ecologies I encountered along the creation of *Ancestral Dramaturgies*: the *Solimões* and *Negro* rivers, whose waters converge to form the vast Amazon River; *Praia de Ipanema* and *Praia Vermelha*, in Rio de Janeiro, the latter so close to the university where I initiated my work as an artist-researcher twenty-two years ago. I vividly remember, in 2004, looking out from the rehearsal rooms during class breaks and feeling mesmerized by the *Pão de Açúcar* (Sugarloaf Mountain), that immense rock sitting directly before my eyes. I acknowledge this great stone, but also the many smaller stones and tiny grains of sand that have held me standing on seashores in moments of doubt—moments when I did not know where to go, what to do, or how to continue. Stones have a way of remaining. Perhaps I needed their lesson.

I acknowledge the waters that crossed my path and calmed my accelerated thinking. They offered me their slow pace, a mirror in

which my ideas could settle, be reflected, and slowly digested. I acknowledge the sweet waters of the rivers of *minha mãe Oxum* and the salty waters of *Iemanjá* in the South Atlantic Ocean, bordering both the city where I was born, Rio de Janeiro, and the city of my childhood, Salvador, Bahia.

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I acknowledge the many trees and plants that offered me *um dedo de prosa* (a little chat), breaking the solitude of my own thinking. From the flamboyant tree in my childhood garden in São Pedro d'Aldeia, with its tiny, intensely red, delicate flowers, to the enormous palm trees of the Brazilian *Nordeste* that accompanied me in my youth.

And the flowers.

Always the flowers.

Their colors, their patterns, their petals, their odors. Their short lives and beautiful stillness. So many flowers in and around me and this research: dahlias, hibiscus, ranunculus, orchids, bromeliads, hyacinths, roses, daisies, lilies, hydrangeas, and so many others whose names I may not know, yet whose presence has contributed to the well-being of my mind and my writing.

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Perhaps this is what has kept me not only sane, but also patient and resilient.

And, above all, in a state of *felicidade*—happiness.

My gratitude also goes to the many human beings who supported me throughout these four years, especially my family: Ulrik, Bilu, and Kadu (Choula). We have come a long way together, moving between

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As discussed throughout this research, living far from the country where I was born has been an emotional, physical, and, at times, financial challenge in conducting out this inquiry. I am therefore deeply grateful to all my relatives who, despite decades of physical distance, welcomed me into their lives and generously agreed to participate in this study: *muito obrigade, tia Arlete, tio Josias, tia Naíza, tio Arlindo, and tia Nádia*. My deepest gratitude also goes to my mother, Neida, who welcomed me into her home and cared for me so lovingly during both periods of fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro.

Living between worlds that are geographically and culturally far apart for almost twenty years has also meant living at a distance from many of the people I love. Maintaining friendships across such distances is not always easy; time, language, and different rhythms of life can slowly create gaps between people. I am deeply grateful, therefore, to those friends who have chosen to keep those connections alive—to continue speaking with me in our Portuguese mother tongue, to listen to the particularities of the reality I inhabit, and to help me remain connected to the Brazilian context I left behind, but which, in many ways, has never left me. Mônica Teixeira, Fabiana Omena, Karen Coelho, Juliana Delgado, Eliana McFarland, Melissa McFarland, and Lilia Maria Vicentin, *muito obrigade pela amizade de longa data*. Thank you for the conversations, the memories, and for helping me feel that physical distance does not necessarily mean being apart.

During this doctoral trajectory, I have had the great joy of being part of the Agenda 2030 Graduate School, a remarkable initiative created by political scientist Kristina Jönsson and now under the leadership of lawyer Markus Gunneflo. This extraordinary cohort offered me great solace during moments of solitude in academia. Their diversity, intelligence, and gentleness were vital to my doctoral journey. All of this was carefully nurtured and managed by two wonderful professionals, Ylva Van Meeningen and Sara Håkansson, whose work made the Graduate School such a meaningful space for exchange and belonging. Amid those inspiring professional exchanges, I was also fortunate to form

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I am deeply grateful to those who made *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* possible, particularly LU Innovation, represented by Sophie Hydén Picasso. Thank you for the long conversations, for the curiosity, and for the interest in supporting artistic endeavors in academia.

The majority of the artistic experiments carried out during this research found a fertile ground to grow at the Inter Arts Center, this great interdisciplinary initiative created by Lund University. I am therefore thankful to the professional support of those sensitive working hands: Lili Nottrott, Sylvia Lysko, Jonas Jönsson, Magnus Pålsson, Margot Edström and Hedvig Jalhed.

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Belonging to a community was essential to the completion of this study. In the spring of 2022, after moving from Berlin back to Scandinavia, I reached out to a community of Black scholars and artists, the Black Feminist Fridays, who welcomed my Queerness and my, back then, emerging understanding of what it meant to be a person of colour, specifically within academia—and how it can actually be re-signified. This community opened doors to a whole new understanding of myself, and from there, the initial thoughts for *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* were born. I thank you for your warm welcome and continuous support. I also thank everyone who participated in the different forms that this coloured vessel took, but especially the small group of wonderful beings who participated in the yearly workshops in 2024, 2025, and 2026. Thank you for your presence, your knowledge, and your trust, dear Nana Osei-Kofi, Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo, Lucero Viktoria, Phyllis Akini, Efia Abu, Lucie Camara, Roze

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You saved my life.

Viva a vida!

A Note to the Reader

This doctoral thesis is polyphonic in both form and method. Each chapter begins with an image and/or a fragment from a conversation with a family member, an interlocutor, or a more-than-human entity encountered during the research. These voices are not supplementary to the research; they have actively shaped the artistic and methodological trajectory through which *Ancestral Dramaturgies* emerged.

The methodology presented in this thesis did not begin with a pre-determined theoretical framework. Its origins can be traced to 2016, ten years before the completion of this doctoral research, when I began to investigate the relationships between my personal and professional trajectories, migration, ancestry, identity, and artistic practice. The thesis therefore begins with the experiences, questions, and encounters that eventually led me to doctoral education at the Malmö Theatre Academy and the Agenda 2030 Graduate School at Lund University.

From there, the thesis moves through a series of encounters and artistic experiments developed across Malmö (Sweden), Rio de Janeiro, and Manaus (Brazil). Chapter by chapter, it traces how conversations, familial histories, migratory trajectories, more-than-human encounters, and artistic research practices became entangled in an ongoing process of inquiry. These experiments engage with questions of migration, identity formation, Queerness, displacement, gender-based discrimination, and the broader conditions through which individual and collective lives are shaped. Together, they constitute the artistic research trajectory through which I gradually came to recognize that I was developing a dramaturgical and performative methodology: *Ancestral Dramaturgies*.

The final section of the thesis turns toward this recognition. It articulates the principles and processes that emerged through the preceding experiments and examines how *Ancestral Dramaturgies* transformed my understanding of identity, ancestry, and artistic research practice. It also considers how the methodology might be adapted and activated by other practitioners, and how it may contribute to the decolonization of artistic research within European contexts.

The central chapters documenting the artistic experiments are accompanied by interludes containing scripts and other artistic materials, including performance scripts and documentation of works developed throughout the research. The reader may choose how to

navigate these materials. The interludes can be read alongside the chapters, allowing the artistic works to be encountered as they emerge within the broader research process, or they may be read separately after completing the main body of the thesis. The latter approach offers a more continuous passage through the analytical and reflective chapters, while returning to the interludes afterwards provides an opportunity to encounter the artistic works as a related but distinct body of material.

There is therefore no single prescribed way to read this thesis. Its structure invites movement between voices, images, encounters, analysis, and artistic research practice. Like the methodology it articulates, the thesis can be approached as a process of navigation: entering through different points, following different currents, and returning to earlier encounters from new positions. This note offers an entry point into what is necessarily a long reading process. It provides a map, but not a fixed route.

A visual map accompanying the thesis traces the migratory trajectories of my maternal grandmother, Voinha, in 1945, alongside my own movements across the twenty-first century. These trajectories constitute one of the foundations of the inquiry. The map is accompanied by a partial genealogical tree of my maternal family, including only the names of the uncles and aunts who participated in the research. It offers the reader a point of orientation without attempting to represent the entirety of the family lineage.

A central point of departure for this research is Voinha's flight from Belém in 1945. Her movement was shaped by the gender-based violence to which she was subjected by her first husband, Manoel, and by the necessity of leaving that situation behind. In fleeing Belém, Voinha left four of her children behind. Two remained with my great-grandmother, Maria dos Prazeres, in Belém, and were later brought to Rio de Janeiro by Voinha after she remarried my grandfather, Armando, with whom she had nine further children, including my mother. The other two children, Arlete and Josias, were taken by their father, Manoel, to Manaus, where they remained for the rest of their lives. In 2025, as part of this research, I was able to reconnect with and interview them for the first time.

This history of separation, movement, reunion, and delayed encounter constitutes one of the foundational trajectories through which the

research developed. The visual map and partial genealogy therefore function not simply as contextual information, but as an initial cartography of the relationships, displacements, continuities, and absences that the subsequent chapters investigate through artistic research practice.

The reader may therefore encounter this thesis not as a linear account of a research process whose destination was known in advance, but as a record of a methodology emerging through movement. The chapters, voices, images, artistic works, and archival fragments form different points within this movement. Some paths return to earlier encounters; others open onto questions that could not have been anticipated at the beginning of the research. What follows is thus both an account of the research and an invitation to navigate it.

FAMILY TREE AND MIGRATION JOURNEYS

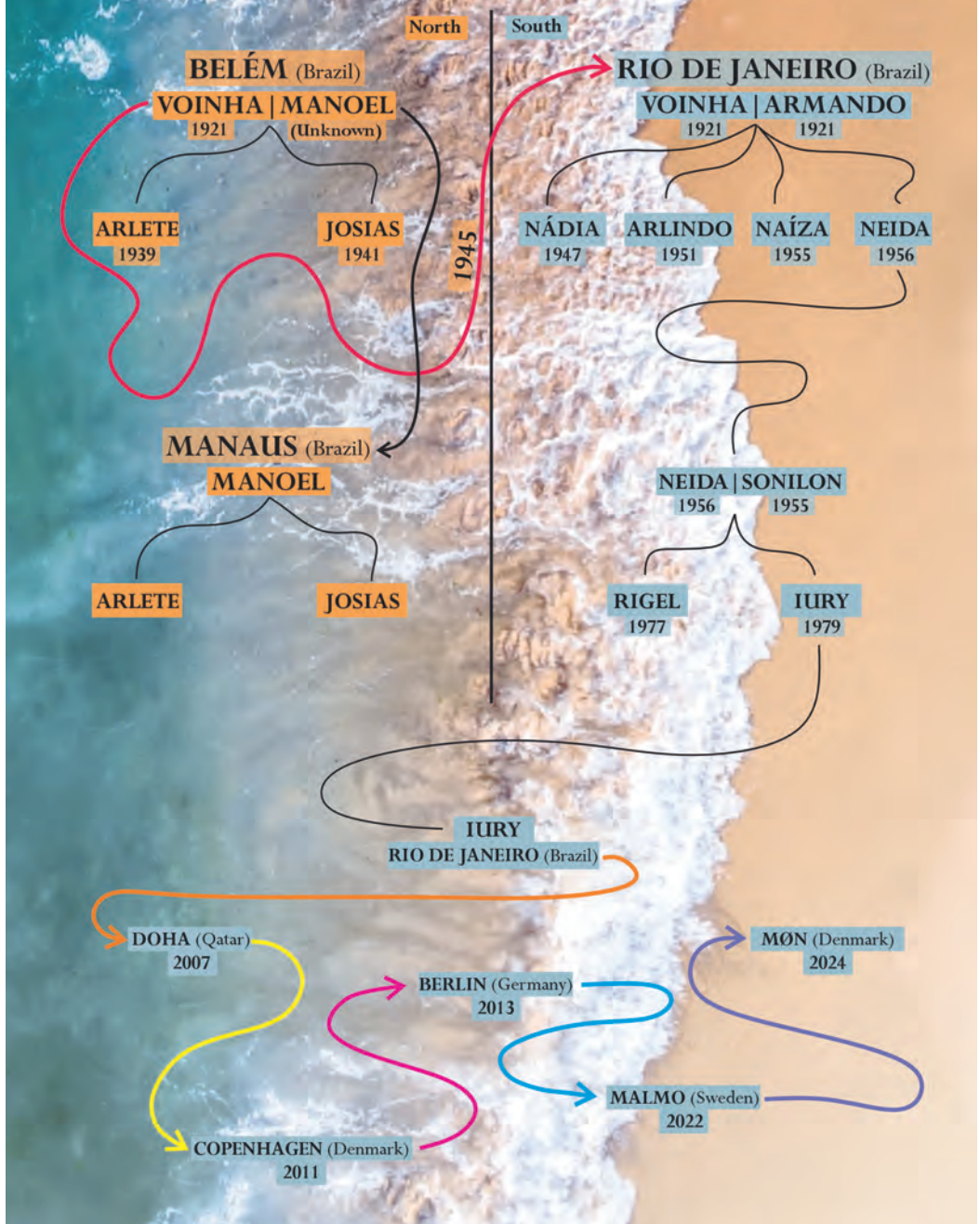


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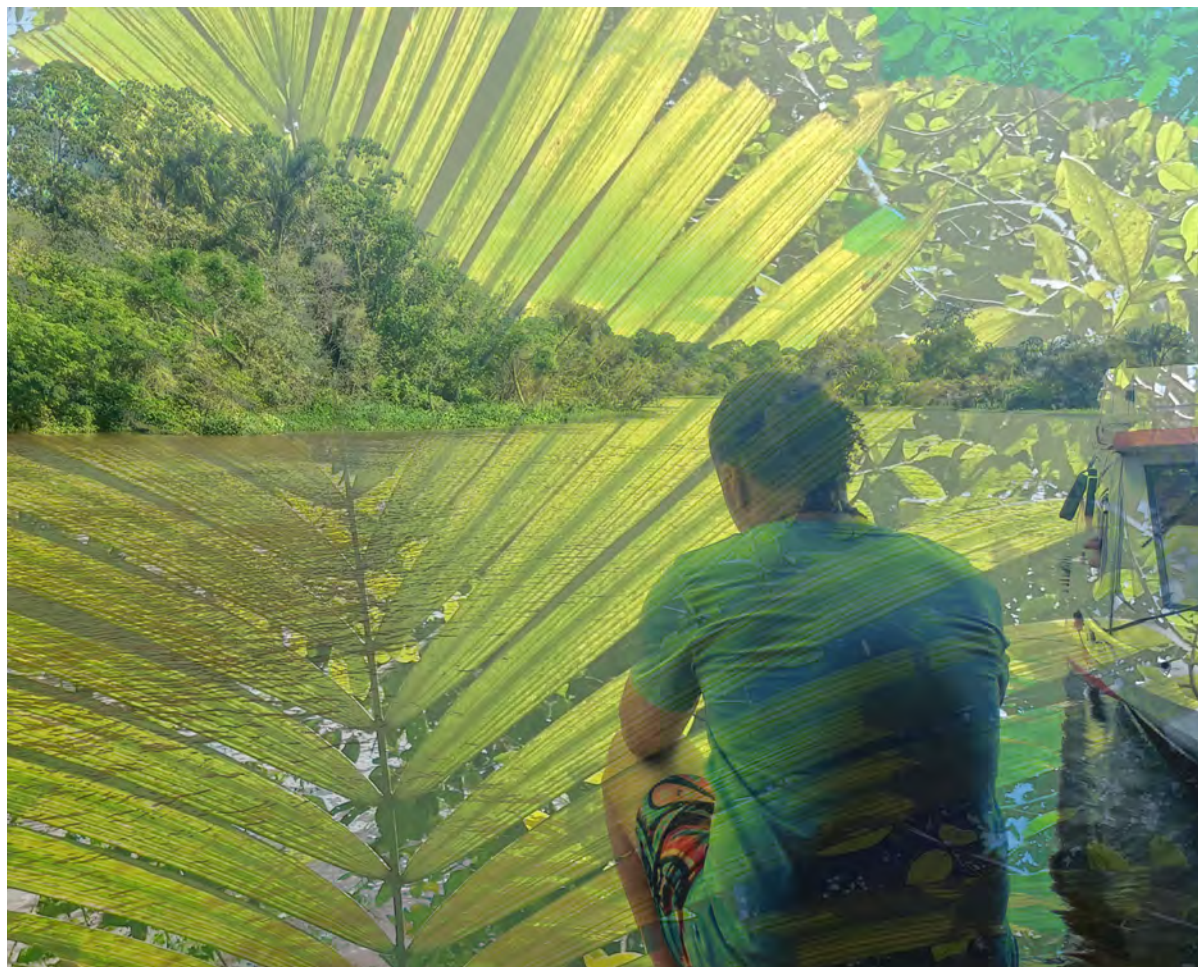
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PART I — INTRODUCTION

Entering the Waters: Context, Positionality, and Research Foundations



By the Riverbank. Original imagery: © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg and Joane Pacheco da Costa.
Photography, art and design: © Mariana Ribas Coimbra. Manaus, Brazil, June 15th, 2025.

Prologue: By the Riverbank

I sit by the riverbank, on the edge of myself, on the edge from where I can trace the beginnings of my ancestry lines. My view is partially blocked. I cannot see my ancestors, but I can hear them. I am blinded by the hot sun, sweat pouring down my skin. I am entirely soaked. *Molhada, completamente molhada*. I close my eyes, and I look down. Though lost in my own thoughts, I can still sense the water ever flowing. It never stops moving. What is the destination of this aquamarine domain?

Where does it arrive? *Onde ele desemboca?*

Amidst all the sounds that the forest produces, all those tiny living creatures in constant motion, I feel her presence. The mirror that the *senhora* holds up reflects the waters of the river. They lie so calmly now that, even with my eyes shut, I can recognize my own presence. Our own presence. Once a foreigner within this landscape, I slowly become part of it. I am because we are, as in the beliefs of the Ubuntu¹ philosophy. We cross and uncross both our arms and legs in a rhythmic *gingada* that sways our liquid bodies. We murmur the chants that we once learned together and, while singing them, our laughter rises in unison. *Nossa gargalhada mais bela e alta*.

Our joy attracts others who join us in an echo, all those womxn who dared to follow the once strong currents of the river, with no idea in which sea we would disembark. We dared to imagine new ways of existing. In the delta of the river, we rejoiced and communed. We are now covered in a golden light, sparkling in the sunlight and coloring the roots deeply planted in the muddy soil. Our faces beam in a deep yellow color. We have finally arrived.

But then suddenly my cousin calls me back to reality: “Iury!” I can barely recognize that name now. She is approaching from behind, the closer she comes, the more distant the laughter of the womxn becomes. “Iury!” I don’t want to depart from this land of enchantment, but I am left with no choice. “Iury!” She stops right behind me, her voice touching my shoulders. “Iury!” I turn around and while looking directly in my eyes, she asks: “Where were you?”

“I was here”, I reply calmly.

“I have been here all the time”.

1 *Ubuntu* is a philosophical concept found across several Bantu-speaking African contexts, emphasizing human interconnectedness, relationality, and the interdependence of individual and collective life. The term is commonly associated with the idea that one’s humanity is constituted through relationships with others, often expressed through the phrase “I am because we are.”

Chapter I: Navigating New Waters

The rivers, those beings that have always inhabited different worlds, are the ones that suggest to me that if there is a future to imagine, it is ancestral, because it is already present. (Krenak, 2020/2024, p. 1)



Conversation with Voinha. © Ulrik Trojaborg. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, September 26th, 2016.

VOINHA: You didn't know mum very well, because she lived in the countryside...

IURY: What was your mother's name?

VOINHA: Maria dos Prazeres.

IURY: Maria dos Prazeres. Was she a good mother?

VOINHA: Yes, she was.

IURY: Was she?

VOINHA: Yes, she was.

IURY: Was she pretty?

VOINHA: She was a hard worker, a seamstress.

IURY: A seamstress too? Ah, so sewing was already present in the family.

VOINHA: Yes, yes.

IURY: Did you learn how to sew from Maria dos Prazeres? Did she teach you? Did your mother teach you how to sew?

VOINHA: She taught me how to sew.

IURY: Oh, really? You never took a technical training course in sewing?

VOINHA: No, no.

IURY: Did you learn from your mother?

VOINHA: With my own hand. From my mother, but with my own hand, with my own good will.

(Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

The Feminine Presence

In my early childhood, the masculine presented itself as something traumatic. I was born Queer in 1979 in a southern country amidst a military dictatorship. Brazil remained immersed in this authoritarian regime for twenty-one years, from 1964 to 1985. During this long and dreadful period of history, men in uniform set the rules and totally quenched freedom of speech and any sort of political opposition. As the son of a navy commander whose own father was an army officer, my upbringing was a microcosmos of the dictatorship lived on the streets. Strict discipline and no space for questioning. Rules were there simply to be obeyed. I spent my childhood trying to figure myself out amongst blatant machismo and violent condemnation, while witnessing the political and social attempts at bringing the country out of political turmoil and violence into a process of redemocratization.

In my early childhood, my father prevented my mother from having a job or a profession, on the grounds that she should be the one caring for the children, creating a clear division and, in that way, introducing me to two categories: the masculine and the feminine. Within those categories, a man works and supports his family financially while a woman becomes a mother who stays at home raising the kids.

My maternal grandfather was an army sergeant, whose existence I did not know of until I was eight years old. He had abandoned my maternal grandmother Voinha and their nine children many years before I was born.

In 1988, my mother took my brother and me on our first airplane trip to Natal, a city located in the northeastern tip of Brazil, some twenty-five hundred kilometers away from our hometown, Rio de Janeiro. My mother wanted her children to get to know her father. I suspect that she also wanted to come to terms with the fact that her father had abandoned her and her siblings. This was the only time I met my maternal grandfather, the old Salu. I remember finding it strange calling him grandpa.

My older brother Rigel and I were born two years and four months apart. Back then, Rigel seemed to perfectly embody all the necessary masculine requirements. He was physically strong and able to master whatever sport he would venture into, from basketball to skateboarding and, most importantly, the Brazilian obsession: football. To be able

to play football and derive pleasure from what it seemed to me, back then, to be an innate Brazilian male gene. A gene that due to some system error, I did not possess. My inability at mastering something that came naturally for all the other boys around me, caused me shame, fear and anger. It was my first realization of the long path into Queerness I was just starting to tread.

On top of all the abilities my older brother naturally possessed, he was also very handsome. “He has those beautiful green eyes”, a recurring sentence said by my mother to this day Rigel’s green eyes are indeed very beautiful. As a kid, I just wished my mother would say the same of me. I spent my entire childhood and teenage years wanting to become my brother. Or, at least, anything other than the strange creature that, despite having been born as a male, identified with all the aspects of the feminine I had so far encountered. I was a sensitive child who, in school, enjoyed the gentle company of girls, instead of the aggressiveness of boys. With my skinny and fragile body type, my boring brown eyes and my complete inability to feel comfortable in the masculine, despite a great deal of effort, I felt ugly, inadequate and useless. I craved belonging. I hated the masculine so much and yet, I desperately desired to become part of it in order to gain some peace of mind, and to not feel so lonely.

At the age of seventeen, my father threw me out of the house for not fitting into his concept of masculinity. A loving family led by a bisexual, divorced woman offered me shelter for a couple of months until I could get back on my feet again. That family held dual citizenship (Brazilian/American), and their way of living was completely different from my family. Being in their care, I started realizing that feminine and masculine were categories that did not have to exist so far apart: a man could be sensitive, and a woman could be strong-minded. That gave me some hope. That very same year



My maternal great-grandmother, Maria dos Prazeres, in Belém, Pará, Brazil. Photographer unknown.

I got my first job and, with my first paycheck, I enrolled in a private English language class. I intuitively understood that acquiring knowledge during what were my confusing formative years, was the only possible tool to fight the violence I was constantly encountering for not fitting in, due to the dichotomic model, feminine vs masculine, I had been presented with by my family and the society at large. I began to think that I might need to leave my country of birth because life somewhere else could be different.

In my early memories, the feminine presented itself in the form of an affectionate and present mother who did make some effort at understanding me while also trying to grasp herself in a household where the rules were set by the masculine. I have a vague remembrance of my mother leaving home to attend college classes. I also have a fond memory of my mother being my first teacher at an English private school for first-grade pupils. I clearly remember feeling proud amidst my classmates for having my own mother standing up by the blackboard. Unfortunately, it did not last long.

The feminine also manifested as a household bustling with four expressive women: my mother, my maternal grandmother Voinha, and two domestic workers who collectively provided me with everything my father could not—true recognition and an empathetic understanding of my authentic self. Within this feminine sanctuary, my maternal grandmother emerged as a figure who only now, with the clarity of hindsight, I can truly name: Voinha was the first feminist I ever encountered.

She was the first person in my life who demonstrated that fulfillment and joy could exist entirely independent of a masculine presence. Unlike my mother, my paternal grandmother, and my aunts on both sides of the family, Voinha walked her path alone—and this solitude troubled her not at all. On the contrary, she radiated a profound sense of liberation and self-sovereignty, wholly unburdened by masculine subjugation. From a tender age, I quietly yearned for the very freedom she embodied. Her unique essence—a fierce, independent will seamlessly interwoven with a tender, nurturing presence—revealed to me that the masculine and the feminine could harmoniously inhabit the same body. In essence, Voinha was the first non-binary spirit I ever knew.

Muito obrigade, Voinha. Thank you for illuminating a path out of a simplistic, binary existence.

From Personal to Political: A Doctoral Journey

I moved with my family from Berlin, Germany to Malmö, Sweden in January 2022 to start a doctoral education. Prior to that, I worked for ten years as a dramaturg and freelance interdisciplinary artist in collaboration with the Maxim Gorki Theater, Hebbel am Ufer Theater (HAU) and Ballhaus Naunynstrasse after finishing my master's degree in Performing Arts. Those were times full of discoveries on both personal and professional levels: first, the color of my skin changed. In Brazil, I was perceived as a white person, while in Berlin, I learned what it meant to become a person of color. Secondly, it also altered my gender, as in Brazil I used to identify as a gay male, and in Berlin I started identifying as a non-binary individual. Finally, it made me realize how most stories I had been told were what Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie calls *single stories* (Adichie, 2009), stories repeatedly written and told from a single perspective: a white, cisgender male-dominated one. At that time, I had the opportunity to professionally engage in the Post-Migrant Theater Movement. Within this artistic and intellectual movement, I quickly came to understand my position as a subaltern individual (Morris, 2010; Spivak, 1988) and a colonized body within Western contexts. Some questions arose from this realization: How can I transform my own body, together with other migrant bodies, from objects into subjects of artistic research? How can I raise questions about the conditions of migrant life, my colonized ancestors and the European societies in which I now live? How can I play with notions of decoloniality in a performative setting? From where do I speak? To whom am I speaking? Who is willing to participate in sharing this knowledge? And finally: How can I develop an artistic research method that supports migrants from colonized countries in order to destabilize the stereotypical image the West imposes on us?

Living in Berlin also exposed me to a wide range of artistic practices that later became the foundations of my own. First and foremost, the Post-Migrant Movement, initiated by artistic director Shermin Langhoff at the Ballhaus Naunynstrasse in 2008, later moving to the state-owned Maxim Gorki Theater. The Post-Migrant Movement is an artistic, social and political movement initiated by the second generation of Turkish immigrants who fought for the establishment of a theatrical

scene that would acknowledge their presence and their capacity to produce art. Such an acknowledgment came in the form of performances that would tackle racialized individuals' and their ancestors' hardships of migration and "integration" within white European Western contexts. Initially working as a dramaturg for post-migrant artists' productions, I gradually felt the urge to develop my voice as a writer and as an interdisciplinary artist.

In 2016, together with Colombian artists Simon(e) Jaikiriuma Paetau and Jair Luna, I premiered *Frutas Afrodisíacas*, a co-production between Studio R of the Maxim Gorki Theatre and the Ballhaus Naunynstrasse. The performance delved into our own stories of migration and failed attempts at integrating into contemporary German society. The work also uncovered stories of German Queer activists who migrated from the German countryside to Berlin during the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. Our central question was: which stories are we, the migrants, allowed to tell? The research comprised in-person interviews and video recordings with the former activists, which were later interwoven with stories of migration developed during autobiographical writing workshops. The performance used multilingualism and other post-dramatic tools of political resistance to subvert stereotypes and re-construct memory.

Frutas Afrodisíacas, performed by black and brown subaltern queer subjects in a white society, has at its core an assemblage of strategies of resistance: by deploying a simultaneity of shifting voices, stories, and languages, by subverting the hegemonic structure of German verbal expression, and by re-appropriating and re-signifying theatrical space with allusions to subaltern history, the show articulates its own unique queer, postcolonial, and post-migrant social critique. (Sharifi, 2018, p. 339)

Still within the context of the Post-Migrant Movement, I conceived and co-directed the interdisciplinary performance *Feliz Aniversário* (Salustiano Trojaborg & de Paula, 2020) with choreographer Ricardo de Paula. On the centenary of my grandmother Voinha, we utilized her biography to interrogate the intersectional survival strategies of a single mother navigating the patriarchal hegemony of mid-20th-century Brazil. It was only through the diasporic lens of living in Northern

Europe that I was able to recontextualize her migration from the Amazon rainforest region to Rio de Janeiro as a radical act of liberation from structural chauvinism.

By synthesizing personal mnemonic traces, material culture (memorabilia), and video, we centered Voinha's agency, facilitating her self-narration. This performance further scrutinized the sociopolitical architectures of Ricardo's and my upbringing in Brazil during the military dictatorship, questioning the parameters of Black masculinity and Queer identity within a militarized, patriarchal society. A fundamental principle of this work was the concept of the living archive—the understanding that the body functions as a repository for both personal and ancestral knowledge. This approach served as a critical countermeasure to the epistemicide



Performance Feliz Aniversário (Happy Birthday). © Tito Casal. Hebbel am Ufer Theatre HAU4, Berlin, Germany, December 11th, 2020.

found in state archives, specifically addressing the deliberate erasure of the histories of the Black peoples violently brought to Brazil via the transatlantic slave trade and the Indigenous peoples in Brazil.

My current practice as an artist-researcher is a synthesis of distinct pedagogical trajectories, having completed a bachelor's degree in Acting at the Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro (UNIRIO) and a conjoint master's degree in Performing Arts as an Erasmus Mundus Fellow. The latter involved intensive connection with the concept of the Post Dramatic Theater at the Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main—within the department led by Professor Hans-Thies Lehmann—and at the University of Copenhagen. These educational paths were fundamentally informed by a resistance to rigid epistemological structures and an enduring search for methodologies that recognize the performative arena as a site of interrogation and investigation.

My work examines the friction between my positionality and the

diverse societal structures I have inhabited across Brazil, Austria, Qatar, Germany, Denmark and Sweden. I conceive the performative as a vehicle for embodied knowledge production, generated through the body's interaction with a network of diverse agents. In the last ten years, I have been searching for ways to dramatize and, in this way, retell my own and some of my ancestors' journeys, to offer a counterpart to the colonial stories told of my country of origin and its peoples. I position my practice within the regenerative potential of socially engaged arts, making use of the iterative nature of performance art as a mechanism for emancipation and restorative agency.

The works of interdisciplinary art practitioners, such as Rimini Protokoll, Lola Arias, Grada Kilomba, Simone Dede Ayivi, Susanne Kennedy, Hotel Pro Forma, Milo Rau, Ania Nowak, Selina Thompson, Xavier Le Roy, and Mariana Otero—experienced during my residency in Berlin and Copenhagen—constitute the aesthetic and conceptual constellation that informed my transition into doctoral education in Malmö. Their diverse methodologies—incorporating autobiographical data, mediated technology, post-dramatic textuality, and the participation of “experts of the everyday” (non-professional actors)—provided a framework for my future doctoral research.

My fellowship at Lund University, initiated in February 2022, was defined by a dual institutional affiliation: I conducted artistic research at the Malmö Theatre Academy while, at the same time, I was a member of the Agenda 2030 Graduate School. As part of this transdisciplinary cohort, I was situated alongside doctoral researchers working across diverse scientific fields, engaging with different perspectives on the multifaceted dimensions of global sustainability.

My practice focuses on the critical intersections of performance, migration, Queerness, decoloniality, and social sustainability, with a specialization in dramaturgical practice. It investigates dramaturgical and performative responses to such confluences. I am interested in examining dramaturgy and performance art as instruments to provoke socio-political change. I seek to reframe the narratives of migrants who, navigating historical colonial trajectories, have relocated to the European metropolises of their former colonizers.

A significant methodological pivot occurred two months into my doctoral studies, following the passing of my maternal grandmother Voinha in Rio de Janeiro. This turning point prompted a focused gene-

alogical inquiry into her migratory trajectory in 1945—from the Amazonian interior to the periphery of Brazil's then capital Rio de Janeiro. I am interested in analyzing how her historical displacement fundamentally informed and mirrored my own subsequent migration first to the Middle East and later to Europe and Scandinavia.

The dramaturgical and performative dimensions of my practice is centered on the following methodological elements:

Autobiographical Écriture: The development of a scenic language through the manipulation of personal memorabilia, alongside official and private archival documents.

Subversion of Clichés: The strategic deployment of stereotypes and cultural tropes as a methodology of empowerment and reclamation.

Mnemonic Reconstruction: The re-writing, re-telling and re-enactment of historical and personal events to synthesize and reconstruct fragmented individual and collective memories.

Mediated Presence: The establishment of a dialogic tension between live performance and digital avatars through the real-time manipulation of audio-visual media.

Filling the Void: Re-Mapping the Decolonial Gap in European Dramaturgy

For too long, the European performing arts context has neglected the heavy weight of its colonial history, failing to provide epistemological space for authentic migrant and ancestral voices' expression. I recognize the need to challenge this institutional omission. By bringing the salty waters of the South Atlantic and the fresh rivers the Amazon, the voices of my lineages, and the Afro-Brazilian concepts of the *crossroads* (Rufino, 2019) and the *spiral time* (Martins, 2021) into the heart of European and Scandinavian landscapes, this research reclaims vital structural space.

I believe there is a need to construct performative environments where narratives are actively reclaimed and reimagined by the colonized subject. Ultimately, what this research enacts is precisely the decolonization of these subjectivities. By transforming the performative arena into a space of epistemic reclamation, I hope to dismantle imposed Eurocentric structures, allowing marginalized individuals to re-center our own cosmogonies, languages, and histories. Performance, in this framework, ceases to be mere representation; it becomes an active, somatic tool for structural liberation.

This intervention directly addresses a critical decolonizing gap within contemporary European dramaturgy. Traditional European theatrical structures frequently relegate non-Western narratives to the margins, treating them as exotic artifacts rather than sovereign systems of knowledge. By intentionally placing the decolonized body at the *encruzilhada* (crossroads), it will be possible to disrupt such Eurocentric biases. My ambition is that this research will fill in this systemic vacuum by demonstrating how migratory, multilingual, and ancestral cosmogonies can radically restructure how performance is conceptualized, funded, and staged in European territories. While European institutions increasingly demand sustainability and diversity on paper, their underlying dramaturgical frameworks remain tethered to linear, Cartesian models of text and representation.

My intention is to actively bridge this gap by introducing non-linear temporalities, ancestral reciprocity, and post-dramatic, fragmented corporealities. I believe it is vital to expand the boundaries of contemporary European theater by delving into transcontinental models, where the structural fractures of migration become the very architecture of a decolonized performance practice.

Chapter II. Research Summary

Soy la que escribe y se escribe /

I am the one who writes and who is being written.

Últimamente es el escribir que me escribe /

It is the writing that 'writes' me. Writing is the site where I critique reality, identity, language, and dominant culture's representation and ideologic control. (Anzaldúa, 2015, p. 3)



My eldest aunt Arlete's 87th birthday party. © Naira Soares. Manaus, Brazil, June 16th, 2025.

AUNT ARLETE

I sent telegrams, I talked to her through telegrams. I went to the tavern, and I said, please, can you let me... then we paid. Then I said, look, I don't know how to talk, I said, I don't know how to talk here, can you talk for me? I'm talking to my mum, call my mum for me, please. Then she would call her, and I would talk to my mum. Then, mum, I'm like this, and so on, and so forth. Dad brought a very nice woman into the house, but I miss you.

My life was very sad, very sad, unfortunately, but even so, we have to go through everything in life. Since I was a child, I suffered. But now, thank God, I found a very good husband. He doesn't let me cook; he doesn't let me wash all the dishes. He is a sweetheart, a sweetheart of a husband. He never left me, this man. He will die in my arms. I have faith in God that he would like to die too. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

Purpose and aims

Is it possible to construct a genuine discourse on sustainability within the European performing arts context while evading the historical and economic debts of Europe's colonial past? This research is interested in interrogating this systemic omission by generating artistic experiments rooted in the raw, liminal realities of migration. Such performative *écriture* does not fit neatly into institutional matrices; instead, it thrives in the cracks—the fractured intervals separating migrants' native cultures from the European societies where we now reside. This practice operates within the foundational *borderlands* philosophy of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) alongside Ruth Behar's (1996) call for an affective, embodied ethnographical scholarship. By utilizing my own migratory and my interlocutors' positionalities as primary qualitative data, this methodology will interrogate whether true social sustainability can be achieved not through greenwash bureaucracy, but instead through the radical accountability of border-crossing narratives.

I am interested in creating artistic experiments that are fundamentally tethered to a process of continuous spatial transposition. They generate an active dialogue across divergent geographical axes, moving between the Nordic urban realities of Malmö, Sweden and Copenhagen, Denmark, and the equatorial and coastal landscapes of Manaus and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Navigating these specific environments allowed this practice to inhabit the exact in-between fissures of migrant life. Each city represents a critical coordinate in the research's positionality, where the institutional frameworks of Northern Europe directly confront the fluid, ancestral memory systems of the Amazonian and Rio de Janeiro regions.

The purpose of this research is to derive critical insights from the multifaceted temporalities—past, present and future—of ancestral experience. By investigating the lived struggles, achievements, and survival strategies emerging from particular migrant trajectories, this research generates a framework for addressing urgent contemporary issues, including decoloniality, xenophobia, Queerphobia, and systemic misogyny. The central aim is to establish a methodology that disrupts hegemonic narratives within theatre and performance. In doing so, it proposes radical imaginaries for the future that align with the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—specifi-

cally the objectives of achieving gender equality (SDG#5), reducing international inequalities (SDG#10), and promoting peace and justice (SDG#16).¹ This research posits that social sustainability within the European performing arts sector cannot be effectively addressed without a rigorous confrontation with the imperial legacies embedded in European national identities.

My inquiry is anchored in the principles of social justice, actively deconstructing power structures by viewing them through the analytical lens of social sustainability. This methodology seeks to systematically interrogate the status quo through targeted dramaturgical and performative interventions.

This research searches for answers to the following questions:

1. How can an inquiry into expanded ancestry enable the development of a decolonizing artistic research methodology grounded in embodied, situated and relational forms of knowledge?
2. In what ways can artistic research challenge dominant power relations and contribute to the imagination and achievement of more equitable forms of belonging, identity, and collective existence within the context of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development?

Methods

My artistic research practice explores how embodied, practice-led processes of experimentation and engagement with personal experience can generate meaningful, accessible, and evocative forms of knowledge and research beyond dominant modes of knowledge production. I seek to generate artistic research that would sensitize readers and viewers to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us (Ellis & Bochner 2000).

This research employs a triangulated mixed-method approach, synthesizing autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995), and situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988) to analyze migratory trajectories and ancestral stories. By integrating

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>. Accessed on June 13th, 2026.

Deep Listening (Oliveros, 2005), epistolary methodology (Pagès, 2017), participant observation (Malinowski, 1922), collaborative witnessing (Ellis & Rawicki, 2013) and interviewing (Ellis, 2017), this project facilitates a multi-dimensional inquiry into the lived experience of displacement.

Rather than functioning as a fixed methodological protocol, this study develops an iterative framework in which artistic research practice, oral history, dramaturgy, performance, creative-critical writing, and critical reflection continually inform one another. Influenced by Pauline Oliveros' (2005) practice of Deep Listening and Leda Maria Martins's (2021) concept of spiral time, the research approaches ancestry not as a static historical archive but as a living, relational process through which past, present, and future coexist within artistic practice. Throughout this study, performance, sound, dramaturgy, and creative writing function as interconnected research methods through which lived experience and ancestral narratives are transformed into embodied artistic knowledge. This understanding of listening extends beyond sound as a research object and becomes a methodological orientation toward movement, relation, and belonging. Reflecting on the role of Deep Listening within migratory experience, PhD Ximena Alarcón-Díaz and Ed McKeon observe:

For both of us, Deep Listening has become an essential resource to forgo the desires of returning “home” or “arrival” with its visa privileges and passports of legitimized status. Migration and movement are instead embraced for their potential to constitute another practice of centering and of balance without fixed and immovable boundaries. (Alarcón-Díaz & McKeon, 2023, Abstract section)

Their understanding closely resonates with this study. Rather than positioning migration as a journey toward a final destination or stable belonging, this research approaches displacement as an ongoing relational practice through which ancestral memory, artistic creation, and embodied knowledge continually emerge. Deep Listening therefore functions not simply as a listening technique, but as an ethical and methodological practice of remaining attentive to people, places, environments, and the more-than-human relations encountered throughout the research process.

This transformative orientation also aligns with the conception of artistic research advanced by artist-researcher Esa Kirkkopelto (2015), who argues that artistic research should not merely describe or interpret the world but intervene within it through practice. Rather than producing knowledge that remains confined to academic discourse, artistic research has the potential to generate concrete transformations in the lives of those who participate in it and in the social realities it encounters. This principle underpins the methodological orientation of the present study. The research is conceived not only as an inquiry into migration, ancestry, and artistic practice, but also as an intervention that seeks to cultivate new relationships, challenge inherited structures of knowledge, and create conditions through which individual and collective transformation may emerge.

Central to this methodological framework is the development of decolonial dramaturgies that interrogate the enduring legacies of the European colonial project. This process acknowledges the historical reciprocity of migration, as many subjects from the Global South return to European metropolises while confronting the structural forces that have historically shaped their worlds. Rather than documenting migration solely as historical experience, this research treats artistic practice as a speculative laboratory through which alternative, decolonial futures may be imagined.

Navigating the intricate matrix where the arts and the humanities converge demands a reflexive methodology; I have therefore prioritized autoethnography as a critical framework to destabilize dominant, Eurocentric research paradigms. This method is essential for its capacity to integrate subjectivity and affect as legitimate analytical categories. By centering the personal narrative, the aesthetic, and the corporeal, autoethnography addresses the ethical and political dimensions of representation, ensuring that the researcher's body and history remain visible and accountable throughout the inquiry (Adams et al., 2014).

This research utilizes qualitative methods to excavate the dimensions of the colonial project. It specifically centers the epistemic silence imposed upon the colonized, providing a framework to dismantle the perpetual structures of colonial violence that have suppressed these narratives for centuries. Through this approach, this research facili-

tates the emergence of counter-narratives that challenge the hegemony of colonial history.

Within this methodological framework, autoethnography offers a particularly relevant approach to addressing the relationship between knowledge production, personal experience, and the politics of representation. By foregrounding storytelling, affect, embodiment, subjectivity, and situated experience, autoethnography challenges the assumptions of detached and universal knowledge that have historically shaped dominant research practices. As Ellis and Adams (2020) explain:

... the disregard of stories and storytelling in social life; a bias against affect and emotion; and a neglect of the ways in which social positions (e.g., race, sex, age, sexuality) influence how people read, write and evaluate. This lack of emphasis on feelings, chaos, and nonrationality, as well as on personal involvement in research and the use of subjectivity and first-person voice, paved the way for the emergence of a greater appreciation for qualitative research. (...) autoethnography is a partial response to the crisis of representation; it emerged to dismiss any possibility of universal Truth; recognize the importance of storytelling (Bochner, 2014) and the existence of messy, emotional, and leaky bodies (Lindemann, 2010); and counter the use of colonialist and invasive ethnographic practices, such as going into and studying a culture, leaving to write about this culture, and disregarding what the representation might do or for cultural members. (Ellis & Adams, 2020, p. 7)

Within this autoethnographic inquiry, this research investigates how ancestral lineages can be transformed through dramaturgical and performative processes. Rather than reconstructing the past as a stable historical narrative, this study examines how inherited memories continue to shape present identities while opening speculative possibilities for future becomings. Through iterative cycles of ethnographic inquiry, artistic experimentation, dramaturgical reflection, and performance-making, migration becomes not only an object of investigation but also a method for understanding identity in continual transformation.

The methodological framework to be developed throughout this research is guided by four foundational principles:

Collective Reflexivity: Theatre and performance are understood as inherently collective practices through which specific temporal, spatial, and sociopolitical realities can be explored and transformed.

Applied Epistemology: Knowledge achieves its fullest potential when critical reflection is translated into artistic practice capable of generating broader social engagement.

Situated Knowledge: Following Haraway (1988), this research recognizes that all knowledge is partial, embodied, and shaped by the positionality of the researcher.

Transformative Dramaturgies: The research advocates dramaturgies grounded in social justice, care, and resistance (Malzacher, 2008), engaging the lived experiences of Queer communities and Global South diasporas navigating postcolonial migration.

Theoretical Framework

My artistic research practice seeks to question an allegedly social and cultural neutral point of view that actually obscures a very specific position, namely Western male, white and heterosexual. This supposedly impartial system enacts a gaze claimed to be immaterial while materializing what it embraces, especially the conditions of certain bodies and if or how they matter (Butler, 1993); their meanings and their capacity of producing knowledge. Such a gaze claims to have the capacity to see, but is itself unseen, to represent while escaping representation (Haraway, 1988). Turning to questioning and listening, I attempt to destabilize such supposedly neutral orders (Siegmund, 2006), and to create a performative setting that offers more presence than representation, more process than result, more manifestation than signification, more energetics than information (Lehmann, 2006).

The practice of autobiographical performance I have been developing for over a decade is based on reflexivity as a means to explicitly acknowledge the relation of art and science (and production of knowledge) to power, skillfully and artfully recreating the details of lived experiences and one's space or implication in control, contradiction and privilege (Calafell, 2013). This practice has led me to a broader understanding of the concepts of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989) and assemblage (Puar, 2011) as differentiated, but not oppositional. I

perceive the performative as a fruitful arena to experiment not what assemblages are but what assemblages do (Puar, 2011), following this way the critique on intersectionality, by foregrounding its spatial and temporal essentializations (Grosz, 1994). This research is theoretically informed by the concept of liminality, as theorized by anthropologist Victor Turner in his landmark essay *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage* (1967), who defines it as a space of ambiguity and transition where subjects exist outside established societal norms. I extend this through the lens of Chicana writer Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1987), whose exploration of borderlands and *nepantlas* situates liminality within the intersections of geographical, linguistic, and racialized boundaries. I am particularly drawn to Anzaldúa's critique of heteronormativity and her understanding of Queer existence as inhabiting a liminal space between imposed social norms and the possibility of more fluid, non-binary ways of inhabiting the world (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 40–43).

The Crossroads as Site of Epistemic Friction

The heterogeneity of the materials generated throughout this doctoral inquiry, and the divergent trajectories they manifest, evokes the symbolism of the crossroads, as conceptualized by Brazilian pedagogue Luiz Rufino (2019) in his work *Pedagogia das Encruzilhadas* (*Pedagogy of the Crossroads*). In this context, I interpret the crossroads' four vertices as a representation of methodological and thematic multidirectionality, requiring a strategic navigation of the diverse paths emerging from these artistic processes. I understand the crossroads as a site of epistemic friction—a spatiotemporal juncture where ancestral lineages, lived experiences, and future imaginaries intersect to generate novel modes of relational knowledge. Within this research, the crossroads functions as a decolonial listening practice, facilitating an attunement to ancestral and more-than-human vocalities. This site provides the necessary stillness for critical reflection, allowing for a profound ontological integration of this research's diverse artistic outcomes. *The crossroads* is not simply a site that exists prior to the performance; it is constituted through the performative encounter between the performative and the audience. As a shared, liminal space, it unsettles the boundaries between the staged performance and the performativity of everyday life. Within *the crossroads*, the distinction between

watching and participating, performing and being, becomes deliberately blurred. It is a site where both performer and audience members can locate themselves, bringing their own experiences and embodied presence into relation with one another. In this sense, *the crossroads* creates a space for critical reflection while allowing this study's diverse artistic outcomes to converge through a shared and ongoing process of encountering one another. Rufino (2019) describes the *encruzilhada* as

The notion of the crossroad emerges as the potential for new directions, poetics, a field of potential, a practice of invention and affirmation of life, a transgressive perspective on scarcity, disenchantment and the monologization of the world. The crossroad emerges as a power that allows us to go wild. In this sense, let's look at decolonization. An old black woman once whispered in my ear: "My son, if there is demand in this life, there is also win-demand." In this way, if coloniality emerges as a colonial burden that lurks around us and frightens and disenchants us, decolonization or decoloniality emerges as the actions to remove this bad luck. (p. 13, my translation)

Within this research, the triad of migration, decoloniality, and Queerness transcends thematic inquiry; these elements are intrinsically embodied as the primary drivers of my artistic praxis. Queer functions as an operational strategy—a process of performative subversion deployed to contest the heteronormative structures that regulate and constrain self-actualization.

By situating this investigation within the everyday as a primary site of inquiry, I directly address the structural mechanics of discrimination. In this context, migration is reframed as an ontological quest for sustainable modes of individual and collective existence. This quest constitutes a central concern and aim of this research, which explores how ancestral relations, histories, and forms of knowledge might contribute to imagining and negotiating ways of living together across time, place, and difference. Rather than treating ancestry as a fixed connection to the past, this study approaches it as an active and ongoing process through which alternative modes of individual and collective existence can be explored. This exploration necessitates the development of adaptive artistic methodologies designed to navigate the frictions of multicultural positioning. Each cultural system encountered presents a set of ethical values and normative constraints, within

which I must negotiate the parameters of my own agency and the restrictions imposed by systemic power. These negotiations are not merely conceptual or methodological; they are also lived and embodied experiences of occupying spaces between cultural worlds. Gloria Anzaldúa describes this condition as one in which cultural displacement and belonging are experienced through a fractured and unsettled sense of self:

Alienated from her mother culture, ‘alien’ in the dominant culture, the woman of colour does not feel safe within the inner life of her Self. Petrified, she can’t respond, her face caught between *los intersticios*, the spaces between the different worlds she inhabits. (Anzaldúa, 1999, p. 42)

This inquiry is also influenced by the scholarship of PhD and theatre-maker Rajni Shah (2021), with whom I engaged in sustained dialogic exchange during the initial phase of my doctoral studies. Central to this research is Shah’s proposition that the theatrical encounter should prioritize attentive structures over declarative ones. I specifically draw upon Shah’s conceptualization of “listening gatherings as both aesthetic and political interventions. By adopting the framework of “listening in and out,” this study analyzes the systemic factors that either facilitate or obstruct collective assembly. Furthermore, in *Experiments in Listening*, Shah implements an epistemic shift toward non-textual knowledge transmission, challenging the hegemony of the written word by validating aurality and performative listening as rigorous modes of academic inquiry.

Throughout this book, I pay attention to the relationships between form, content and process. I consider the ways in which contexts create meaning, and I celebrate the containers within which we listen to stories. (...) I ask what work needs to happen in order for a stage to appear, exploring the many factors that might allow or prevent a group of individuals to gather together and become “audience” or “performers”. And in some ways, I return to the question I originally posed, asking what happens when the word “radical” is taken in its original meaning, “going to the root”. I propose that in order to understand the word “radical” in a performance context, it is necessary to engage with the structures within which we gather, and which enable the performance as a whole to take place. (Shah, 2021, p. 4)

Finally, crucial to this study's decolonial framework is the conceptualization of non-linear temporality, or what Brazilian scholar Leda Maria Martins (2021) defines as spiral time. In her work *Performances do Tempo Espiral, Poéticas do Corpo-Tela* (*Performances of Spiral Time*), Martins posits a temporal movement in which the past is continuously reinscribed within the present to actively negotiate the future, an understanding that "time can be ontologically experienced as movements of reversibility, dilation and containment, non-linearity, discontinuity, contraction and relaxation, simultaneity of the present, past and future as ontological and cosmological experiences" (Martins, 2021, p. 23, my translation). This research adopts the spiral as a guiding ontological principle, acknowledging that ancestral histories are not static artifacts of the past, but living, recurring forces that shape contemporary performative identities.

In relation to this temporal understanding, the research also conceptualizes the crossroads as a spatial and performative structure. If the spiral provides a model for understanding how time moves—through recurrence, simultaneity, and the ongoing entanglement of past, present, and future—the crossroads provides a space in which different temporalities, identities, histories, and ways of knowing meet. The spiral and the crossroads therefore constitute two interconnected principles of my artistic research practice: the spiral as a mode of experiencing time, and the crossroads as a site of spatial and relational encounter. Together, they operate within the artistic experiments of this study, where the boundaries between past and present, performer and audience, stage and everyday life, and individual and collective experience become fluid. The performative can thus be understood as both spiral and crossroads: temporally, they activate the recurrence and re-inscription of ancestral histories; spatially, they create sites of encounter in which multiple trajectories and ways of being converge. These two structures provide the ontological and performative framework through which ancestral dramaturgy is developed and enacted.

This research adopts the spiral as a guiding ontological principle, acknowledging that ancestral histories are not static artifacts of the past, but living, recurring forces that shape contemporary performative identities.

Fluid Conduits of Memory: Activating Aquatic Terrains in Decolonial Artistic Research

This research seeks to expand qualitative methods by developing artistic and performative principles through which personal histories and migrant trajectories can be explored. At the center of this methodology are the crossroads and the spiral: the crossroads functions as a spatial and relational principle of encounter, while the spiral provides a temporal principle through which past, present, and future remain in continuous relation. These principles are activated through a range of material and metaphorical forms—including shifting bodies of water, genealogical trees, and other images emerging from the specific histories and experiences of the practitioners involved. By inviting practitioners to identify and develop internal metaphors, images, and material processes through which to structure the retelling of their lived experiences and ancestral lineages, this research transforms individual narratives into a broader socio-political methodology. In my own research, this process begins with the South Atlantic Ocean off the coastline of Rio de Janeiro, treating transoceanic displacement not as a static boundary but as a fluid conduit of memory. By linking this ocean to the labyrinthine river networks of the Amazon region associated with the birthplace of my grandmother Voinha, I challenge rigid colonial borders through an ancestral, hydropoetic flow that connects contemporary artistic practice with Brazilian Indigenous cosmogonies and vernacular forms of knowledge.

The aquatic pathways that emerge from this research therefore function not merely as metaphors, but as material and performative processes through which ancestral memory, migration, and geographical displacement can be explored. By tracing these fluid pathways, the research constructs a maternal cartography that activates aquatic terrains as living repositories of resilience and memory. In this way, the crossroads and spiral provide the overarching spatial and temporal principles of the research, while water, trees, and other emergent images become situated forms through which these principles are embodied and performed.

This investigation delves into metaphorical imagery concerning migration, displacement, and the crossing of concrete and abstract borders. The Øresund Bridge, physically connecting Malmö and Copen-

hagen—two urban geographies central to this research—functioned as a metaphor for the invisible cognitive and cultural thresholds every migrant traverses. It mirrors the friction of navigating a culture of origin while adapting to a new ecological and social habitat. Crossing this specific bridge—a movement iterated countless times throughout my doctoral studies—symbolized the necessity of spatial and psychological distancing. This research argues that one must create distance to oneself in order to calibrate one's perception and situate oneself within distinct worlds.

The study adopts a polyphonic structure, integrating both human and more-than-human agencies. Rather than speaking for these entities, the work facilitates a kaleidoscopic assemblage of collective memory, dreams, and lived experience. Ultimately, this inquiry aims at expanding the definition of dramaturgy, repositioning it as a critical social device equipped to address the urgent 21st-century challenges of migration, decoloniality, social sustainability, and intersectional discrimination.

The Geography of the Crossroads: Trauma, Ecology, and the Migrant Archive

For a sustained period, global migration has been heavily filtered through a lens of securitization. Moving bodies are routinely mischaracterized as destabilizing forces threatening the economic stability and socio-cultural values of Western European nation-states, including the ones where I lived, namely Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. This hostile reality has intensified since the 2015 European refugee crisis, fueled by a sharp ascent in nationalist politics and exclusionary, border-enforcing ideologies. In Sweden, this climate of systemic hostility reached a tragic, violent zenith on February 4th, 2025, in the city of Örebro, during what became the nation's deadliest mass shooting. The attack occurred at Campus Risbergsska—an adult education center providing essential language courses designed to assist newcomers in navigating their new society. A lone gunman murdered ten individuals, predominantly of migrant and refugee backgrounds, turning an institutional space of linguistic integration into a site of state-wide trauma.

TRANSLOCAL CRISIS NODE

Hostile Nationalist Discourses (Europe)



Securitized Border Policies (SE/DK/DE)



Somatic Fallout / Trauma (Örebro, Feb 2025)

This bleak socio-political landscape reveals deep systemic flaws in how human rights are structurally applied at the institutional level. As argued by legal scholar PhD Alezini Loxa of Lund University, the inherent limitations of migrants' rights at the European Union level are rooted in a foundational capitalist bias (Loxa, 2023). In her work, Loxa demonstrates that an undue legislative emphasis on economic growth, market utility, and meritocratic concepts of "equal opportunities" fails to secure a just or safe system. Under this hyper-capitalist framework, the most vulnerable individuals are frequently deemed economically unviable and, consequently, unworthy of legal, social, or physical protection.

This research directly responds to Loxa's critique, arguing that to reinstate the essential ethical principles of empathy and radical recognition, the migrant subject must be fundamentally reframed. Rather than viewing the migrant as an economic liability or a passive legal category, this study positions the displaced subject as a holder of unique epistemic knowledge. The physical and cultural presence of migrants facilitates a critical, necessary diversification of social values within host nations. To access these complex realities, academic and artistic inquiries must engage directly with lived, oral histories. By transforming these collective, marginalized narratives into curated artistic outcomes, one can actively challenge the institutional status quo, raise public awareness, and foster dialogues capable of improving both the psychosocial and material conditions of these diasporic communities.

Inter-Temporal Cartographies, Ancestral Knowledge, and the United Nations 2030 Agenda

Achieving the sustainable development objectives outlined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda requires critical and non-linear attention to the intertemporal relationships connecting past, present, and

future. This research is situated within these temporal relations. Rooted in the Amazonian bioregion of northern Brazil, my maternal ancestral lineage serves as a primary point of departure for this inquiry.

INTER-TEMPORAL LOOP

PAST: Amazonian Rivers] → [PRESENT: Nordic Diaspora]

→ [FUTURE: UN 2030 Agenda]

Over the past decade of my artistic research practice, I have engaged in oral-history processes and iterative, reflexive dialogues with my maternal grandmother Voinha, my extended kin, and diasporic communities in the European cities where I have lived, including Berlin, Copenhagen, and Malmö. These sustained exchanges have become a repository of ancestral testimony and a source for the dramaturgical processes developed throughout the research. They have been transformed through a portfolio of Practice-as-Research experiments encompassing live performance, documentary film, poetry, sonic installation, and scholarly writing.

This research connects these personal and familial histories to broader questions of migration, coloniality, ecological relations, and sustainability. Its inter-temporal and cross-continental movement connects the urban diasporas of Malmö and Copenhagen with the South Atlantic Ocean and the freshwater river networks of the Amazonian bioregion in northern Brazil. The movement between these locations is not understood as a linear passage between past and present, but as a continuing process through which ancestral histories become active within contemporary diasporic life and open possibilities for imagining future forms of collective existence.

Within this framework, this research enters into a critical dialogue with the United Nations 2030 Agenda. While the Agenda provides an important institutional framework for addressing global sustainability, this research questions the extent to which sustainability can be understood through universalizing, technocratic, and predominantly Western models of knowledge. It therefore asks what might become possible when questions of sustainability are approached through situated histories, ancestral knowledge, migration, embodied experience, and relationships between human and more-than-human worlds.

The research draws, in particular, on Indigenous Brazilian thinkers such as Ailton Krenak and Daniel Munduruku, whose work challenges the separation between human life and the more-than-human world and foregrounds relational forms of existence, collective responsibility, and ecological interdependence. Rather than treating Indigenous knowledge as a singular or homogeneous category, this research engages with specific Indigenous intellectual and artistic contributions as situated forms of knowledge that challenge dominant assumptions about humanity, nature, progress, and sustainability.

These perspectives offer a counternarrative to forms of Western hyper-individualism and capitalist models in which human and ecological life can become subordinated to productivity, accumulation, and market value. At the same time, this research does not propose Indigenous cosmologies as a universal alternative to Western thought. Rather, it explores how encounters between ancestral, Indigenous, migrant, and European contexts can unsettle dominant frameworks and generate other ways of thinking about sustainability, belonging, and collective survival.

This artistic research doctoral project therefore seeks to activate an inter-temporal and cross-continental methodology through which marginalized testimonies, ancestral memories, and situated forms of knowledge can enter contemporary performance spaces. By moving between Amazonian rivers, South Atlantic crossings, and Nordic diasporic contexts, *this study* investigates how the past can remain active in the present while contributing to the imagination of possible futures.

From this perspective, sustainability is not approached solely as a question of measurable environmental or developmental outcomes. It becomes a question of how human beings understand their relationships with one another, with place, with history, and with the more-than-human world. The research consequently asks how artistic practice might contribute to a broader reimagining of sustainability by bringing ancestral and migrant histories into dialogue with contemporary ecological and political concerns.

In this sense, the United Nations 2030 Agenda becomes not only an institutional framework but also a site of critical engagement. The research proposes that global sustainability cannot be addressed through bureaucratic metrics alone, but requires attention to the histories, relations, knowledges, and forms of life that such frameworks

may overlook. *This research* responds to this challenge by developing a dramaturgical methodology through which ancestral, embodied, and relational forms of knowledge can participate in imagining more sustainable and collectively grounded futures.

Positionality

My artistic practice is inseparable from my positionality within the geographical, cultural, and institutional contexts in which I live and work. It is shaped by the patriarchal and racialized structures through which power operates across the European and South American contexts I inhabit. My embodied identities are therefore not external to the research process; they are among the conditions through which the research emerges. Within academic and artistic environments, these identities have repeatedly become the subject of questions, assumptions, and negotiations that have shaped both my experience and my practice.

My positionality as a Queer, non-binary migrant from the Global South working within predominantly white European institutions provides a situated point of departure for this research. I do not understand this position as representative of migrant experience as a whole. Rather, it offers a particular perspective from which broader structures of racialization, marginalization, displacement, and institutional exclusion can be examined. The relationship between the singular and the transferable is therefore central to the research: my experiences constitute the specific conditions from which the inquiry emerges, while the questions they generate may resonate with wider experiences of migration and belonging.

This situatedness necessitates an approach grounded in autoethnography and critical reflexivity. These approaches enable me to examine not only the histories and social structures investigated through the research, but also my own position within them and the ways in which my body, memories, relationships, and experiences shape the production of knowledge. Positionality is consequently understood not as a statement that precedes the research, but as an ongoing methodological practice through which the conditions of knowing are continually examined.

This study is informed by the question: How can I generate narratives that focus on contested histories, asymmetrical power relations,

and legacies of racism, colonisation, and displacement? (Bhatia, 2011, p. 348). This question provides an important point of departure for the research and situates my artistic practice within a broader inquiry into how narratives are produced, whose histories become visible, and how artistic practice might create space for other forms of knowledge and belonging.

Considerations and Limitations

As established earlier in this chapter, this research examines intersecting structures of power and experiences of marginalisation, including racialisation, Queerphobia, xenophobia, and misogyny, as they shape my embodied experience and the encounters developed throughout the research. These experiences are situated within specific historical, social, and political contexts. The research therefore does not seek to establish a direct comparison between Brazil and Scandinavia, but rather attends to the distinct histories, power structures, and conditions of migration that shape experiences of displacement, belonging, identity, and agency within each context.

The methodology developed through this research is situated and adaptive rather than universally prescriptive. *It* emerges from my particular trajectory and cannot be separated from the histories, relationships, and contexts through which it was generated. Its principles and tools may nevertheless be adapted by other practitioners in relation to their own positionalities and circumstances. In this sense, the research understands transferability not as replication, but as the possibility of activating the methodology differently across contexts.

The concepts of expanded ancestry, the crossroads, the spiral, and regeneration also remain open to further development. They are not treated as fixed categories or completed theoretical propositions, but as concepts continually tested and transformed through artistic practice. In particular, my understanding of expanded ancestry has evolved through the research and remains subject to further critical interrogation. Regeneration is similarly understood not as the restoration of an imagined original state, but as the creation of new relations, forms of knowledge, and possibilities for collective existence.

This research does not claim to resolve the complex sociopolitical conditions it engages with, including gender-based violence, racism, xenophobia, and displacement. Rather, it positions artistic research as

a space in which these conditions can be encountered, questioned, and made perceptible through dramaturgical and performative practice. The research environment functions as an experimental space in which the relationships between the crossroads, the spiral, and flow can be explored through embodied, relational, and situated encounters.

This research also recognises the limitations of working from a singular artistic trajectory. While the experiences and relationships documented here provide the conditions from which the methodology emerges, they cannot represent the full diversity of migrant, Queer, racialized, or diasporic experiences. This research therefore avoids presenting its findings as universal solutions and instead proposes a situated contribution to artistic research: a set of dramaturgical principles and practices through which questions of ancestry, migration, displacement, belonging, and collective existence may be investigated in different contexts.

Ethical Considerations

The collection and processing of research data within this doctoral study were conducted in accordance with the relevant guidelines and procedures of Lund University. Particular attention was given to the ethical implications of collecting personal narratives and recording interviews, with members of my own family for the last artistic experiment of this research, namely the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025). While familial relationships provided an important context for accessing personal and ancestral stories, kinship was not understood as constituting consent. Participation in the research was therefore treated as voluntary and subject to the same principles of informed consent as any other research participation.

Before each interview, participants received a written information and consent document in their mother tongue Portuguese, titled *Carta de Consentimento Livre e Esclarecido* (Informed Consent Form). This document explained the purpose of the study, the artistic and research context of *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*, the nature of the interviews, the recording and use of audio material, data access and storage, and the participants' rights in relation to their personal data. Each participant had the opportunity to ask questions before deciding whether to par-

ticipate, and all participants signed the consent form prior to the collection of interview material. Participants were also informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without providing a reason or experiencing any consequences to their relationship with the researcher. They were also informed of their rights regarding access to, and where applicable, the rectification, deletion, restriction, or objection to the processing of their personal data.

The consent process was particularly important in the context of interviews with relatives. Although these conversations emerged from existing familial relationships, the research did not assume that personal or family histories were automatically available for artistic or academic use. The formal consent process therefore established a clear distinction between familial intimacy and research participation. It also provided participants with an opportunity to consider how their voices and experiences might be recorded, edited, and incorporated into an artistic work. Participants were informed of the intended artistic and research uses of the material, including its potential presentation in conferences, symposia, seminars, and other research contexts. They were also informed about the management, security, storage, and potential archiving of the research data.

The legal basis for the processing of personal data was of public interest, with Lund University acting as the data controller. Access to the collected data was limited to the principal researcher and the two collaborators identified in the consent documentation, namely the sound artist Kristian Hverring and set designer Mariana Ribas Coimbra. Data was collected and stored using equipment owned by Lund University and managed in accordance with the University's data security procedures. The consent form also informed participants about the planned period of data storage and the possibility of continued archival access to material associated with the project.

Beyond these formal procedures, the interviews required ongoing ethical consideration because they involved intimate relationships, shared histories, and the possibility that individual narratives could also implicate other family members. Consent was therefore understood not only as a one-time administrative procedure, but as part of a broader responsibility concerning how personal testimony is interpreted, edited, contextualized, and presented through artistic research.

This was particularly relevant to *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*, where the transformation of spoken testimony into a sonic installation involved artistic mediation and editing. The ethical responsibility of the research consequently extended beyond obtaining permission to record, encompassing the ways in which participants' voices were situated within the wider dramaturgical and conceptual structure of the work.

As this specific project was conducted as artistic research within the Malmö Theatre Academy at Lund University, I sought institutional guidance regarding the need for formal ethical review. Based on information provided by the management of the Malmö Theatre Academy and the Director of Studies, I was informed that the research did not require an application to the Swedish Ethical Review Authority. The project was therefore conducted without a formal application for ethical review to that authority. Nevertheless, ethical considerations remained central to the design and implementation of the research.

Research Overview

This study is situated in dialogue with European diasporic scholarship, including the work of PhD fellow and artist-researcher Deise Faria Nunes and PhD Azadeh Sharifi. Their structural analyses of migration, diaspora, and the conditions shaping racialized and diasporic subjectivities have been important points of reference and inspiration for this research. Building on these conversations, this study develops its inquiry through a live, polyphonic performing arts praxis, exploring how such questions can be approached through dramaturgical and performative practice. It develops its own methodological and conceptual architecture through the intersection of ancestral dramaturgy, expanded ancestry, decolonial artistic research, and regenerative practice. The critical exploration of institutional whiteness and the marginalization of Global South subjects within Western Europe aligns closely with Sharifi's foundational research carried out at Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in Munich, Germany. In her ongoing postdoctoral project and upcoming monograph *(Post)migrant Theatre in German Theatre History: (Dis)Continuities of Aesthetics and Narratives*, Sharifi (n.d.) examines how Eurocentric national identities have contributed to the fragmentation and marginalization of migrant theatre within German theatre history. This study bridges this precise historical void by drawing upon my decade of practice within Berlin's Post-Migrant Move-

ment—a community whose multilingual and resistant space-making practices Sharifi theorizes. Rather than limiting the inquiry to a structural or digital mapping of these theatrical exclusions, I am using autoethnography to actively assert creative agency, using the physical and cognitive friction of migration to challenge the colonial hierarchies embedded in European cultural institutions.

Furthermore, this thesis engages with spiritual, environmental, and ancestral paradigms explored by Nunes (2026) at the University of Agder, Norway. In *Estuaries: Black Feminism, Decolonial Unearthings and Mythical Ancestry in Afrodiasporic Performance Practices*, Nunes investigates performance as a site for mythical ancestry and decolonial unearthing, connecting environmental relations to liberation through an ecocritical, Black feminist lens. My framework connects precisely with Nunes' concept of a fluid, hydropoetic methodology that physically and metaphorically bridges European urban geographies with Brazilian Indigenous cosmogonies and vernacular wisdom. By linking the South Atlantic Ocean to the labyrinthine river networks of Manaus, I seek to revisit different bodies of water not just as sites of ecological intersection, but as a cross-temporal conduit where more-than-human entities, ancestral cartographies, and histories of gender-based violence, migration and displacement converge. This dialogue engages with Nunes' concept of decolonial unearthing by creating a kaleidoscopic assemblage of sound, memory, storytelling, and ritual.

The dialogical and sustainable imperatives of this research also intersect directly with the democratic and ecological frameworks developed by contemporary institutional peers at Lund University, specifically PhD Jörgen Dahlqvist and PhD Steinunn Knúts-Önnudóttir. In his doctoral thesis *In Dialogue with Society: Democratic Engagement through Theatre*, Dahlqvist (2025) explores how conversational theatre formats can function as tools for political deliberation, inclusion, and the practice of democracy. While Dahlqvist focuses on activating the agency of audience members to collectively deliberate on institutional and societal futures, this research explores dialogical space beyond the traditional boundaries of human civic assembly. By prioritizing polyphony and establishing communication with human and more-than-human entities alike, this research engages with Dahlqvist's concept of "conversational theatre" (Dahlqvist, 2025;

Dahlqvist & Haller, 2025) exploring the possibility of a cosmic and historical assembly. It brings voices from the Global South and ancestral lineages into the dialogue, opening the notion of inclusion beyond the boundaries of conventional democratic assembly. In doing so, this research approaches inclusion as a decolonial negotiation with histories, relations, and forms of knowledge that have been marginalized within dominant Eurocentric frameworks.

Concurrently, this research engages with the ecological and existential frameworks developed by PhD Steinunn Knúts-Önnudóttir. In her doctoral thesis, *How Little is Enough? Sustainable Methods of Performance for Transformative Encounters*, Knúts-Önnudóttir (2024) develops a “me-thod”—a situated autoethnographic approach focused on reducing material production while creating conditions for existential and environmental sustainability. Both Knúts-Önnudóttir and I were members of the Agenda 2030 Graduate School at Lund University during our doctoral education, and our inquiries share an engagement with questions of sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals. While Knúts-Önnudóttir explores minimalism as a means of creating intimate and transformative encounters, this research approaches sustainability through a hydropoetic lens, drawing on the South Atlantic Ocean and the labyrinthine river systems of the Amazon as structural and dramaturgical metaphors. These aquatic imaginaries provide ways of thinking through gender-based violence, inequality, social justice, ancestry, and displacement. Rather than relying on extensive institutional or material infrastructures, the methodology invites practitioners to engage ancestral histories and navigate cultural thresholds through embodied, relational, and situated artistic processes. In this way, the research enters into dialogue with Knúts-Önnudóttir’s exploration of existential sustainability while developing a distinct diasporic and decolonial approach grounded in ancestral and more-than-human relations.

PART II — IMMERSION

Artistic Experiments

Chapter III: Epistolary Method

Cultural identity belongs to the future as much as to the past. But, like everything which is historical, it undergoes constant transformation. Far from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall, 1990, p. 226)



Uncle Arlindo. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 19th, 2025.

UNCLE ARLINDO

My mother was a warrior, a fighter, always independent. I remember my mother cooking beans, rice, all kinds of food, on that wood stove we had at home. That's how I remember it. After the big house was finished... we called it a big house because it was so big. I think it had eight, seven, nine rooms, something like that... and the kitchen was in the back. I remember my mother, late at night, she was still cooking. We didn't have a refrigerator. A refrigerator was a luxury. My mother would put the meat in coconut fat or pork fat to preserve it. She would make that big pot of hot coconut fat, she would put the fat in there, then it would dry out, the fat would preserve the food. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

From Displacement to Relationality: The Emergence of the Epistolary Method

This chapter examines the emergence of epistolary methodology as one of the first significant methodological developments of my doctoral research. Its origins are inseparable from my experience of migration and relocation. When I moved from Berlin to Malmö in 2022, I did not simply enter a new geographical territory. I also entered a new institutional, social, linguistic, and epistemological environment. The displacement of my body across national borders produced a corresponding displacement within my artistic and academic practice. The networks of collaboration, belonging, and intellectual exchange that had sustained my work in Berlin were suddenly interrupted, leaving me to negotiate the unfamiliar structures of a new academic environment while attempting to continue an artistic inquiry concerned with migration, ancestry, and identity.

This experience of displacement became a methodological condition of this research. The initial question of how ancestral and migratory trajectories shape identity could no longer be approached solely as a thematic concern. Migration became an embodied and situated mode of inquiry through which I encountered the instability of belonging, the fragility of established relations, and the need to create new forms of connection. The methodological choices developed during this period therefore emerged not from a predetermined research design, but from the specific conditions in which the research was being conducted. The institutional and geographical displacement accompanying my move to Sweden consequently affected not only my personal sense of belonging but also the conditions through which I was able to think and create. The need to establish new relations became inseparable from the development of the research itself.

It was within this context that the conference *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between: Performing Journeys Across Liminal Spaces and Times* emerged as an initial intervention. The event created a translocal space of exchange between artist-researchers situated across different geographical and epistemological contexts, connecting Malmö with Rio de Janeiro and other sites within the Global North and South. The conference thus became more than an academic event: it functioned as a performative response to isolation and as an experiment in the creation of an alternative research ecology.

The encounters generated through this gathering subsequently developed into new methodological forms. The relationships established with Adriana Schneider Alcure and Ian Calvet led to an extended exchange of handwritten letters across the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea. The letter became both a material object and a relational practice through which distance, loneliness, migration, ancestry, and artistic research could be articulated. In this process, correspondence became more than a means of communication. It became a method for producing knowledge through temporal delay, material presence, vulnerability, and reciprocal attention.

This chapter therefore traces the development of the epistolary method as a response to displacement and as a means of transforming isolation into relationality. It examines how handwritten correspondence generated an archive that was simultaneously personal, collaborative, performative, and research-based. Through the exchange of letters, the boundaries between private and public, researcher and participant, archive and performance, and lived experience and artistic material became increasingly unstable.

The chapter also examines the translation of this correspondence into *In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea* (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2022), the first major artistic experiment of this doctoral research. The performance demonstrated how the epistolary archive could be transformed into a participatory and embodied event in which written correspondence became voice, movement, scenography, image, and collective inscription. In doing so, the artistic experiment established several methodological principles that would continue to shape the research: conversation as a method of inquiry, collaboration as a condition of knowledge production, materiality as a carrier of affective and historical meaning, and performance as a site in which knowledge is not merely communicated, but generated.

The epistolary method developed in this chapter therefore constitutes an important point of departure for the methodological trajectory of this thesis. It allowed me to understand ancestry and migration not as fixed objects of investigation but as relational processes continually reconfigured through acts of remembering, narrating, listening, and performing. The correspondence that began as a response to isolation would eventually become part of a broader investigation into the ways in which histories are transmitted and transformed across gen-

erations. This movement—from establishing relationships across geographical distance to investigating the fractured histories within familial relationships—provides the transition toward the next chapter. If the epistolary method enabled me to create connections across space, the following artistic investigation turns toward the complex and often contradictory genealogies through which identity is inherited, contested, and performed.

Liminal Spaces: Where Artmaking and Biography Merge

This investigation is informed by a multi-layered synergy between lived experience and artistic practice. My embodied history of migration functioned as a catalyst for a doctoral research inquiry focused on ancestral migrational journeys and their repercussions. Relocating to Sweden in 2022 with my family profoundly reconfigured the methodological choices I made throughout my doctoral trajectory. During the initial phase of this research, I maintained an epistemological reliance on the frameworks learned during my bachelor's and master's studies in Acting, Theatre Sciences and Dramaturgy. Consequently, the early artistic experiments of my PhD, namely the live performances *In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea* and *A Backyard of Affections* (Salustiano Trojaborg & Dahlqvist, 2023) were primarily text-based, prioritizing the narrative power of the written word and the traditional theatricalities of the black box environment.

However, moving into a new geographical territory involved the loss of established security networks. In response, the practice developed throughout my PhD has pivoted to investigate displacement and relocation not just as themes, but as situated modes of inquiry. Transitioning into a formal Swedish academic institution after a decade as a freelance artist in the Berlin independent and state-funded scenes introduced a significant institutional constraint to my creative process. Professionally, the sudden imposition of academic protocols functioned as a regulatory force that initially inhibited my creative-critical flow. This restriction extended into my personal life: moving from the liberatory Queer ecologies of Berlin to the social environment of Malmö resulted in a heightened sense of insecurity and isolation. I felt the spatial politics of the city limited my capacity to publicly embody Queerness—whether through aesthetic expression or physical presence—leading to a profound sense of affective dimin-

ishment. It is important to state though that, ultimately, the continuous development of this research through various artistic forms became the primary vehicle for navigating such challenging circumstances. If the institutional and social transition to Sweden had initially suppressed my creative and Queer expression, the regenerative framework of my research allowed me to reclaim that lost agency. If there is a definitive insight generated through this investigation, it is that the past is not a static artifact; rather, it is a dynamic, living force that remains persistently present and ontologically fluid. Through this research, I have come to understand the past as a site of transformative potential, where the act of re-telling and re-enacting allows us to negotiate and reconfigure its influence on our presents and futures.

The conference *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between: Performing Journeys Across Liminal Spaces and Times*, held in October 2022, emerged from this profound sense of epistemic isolation and personal malaise following the departure of my primary supervisor and the subsequent vacuum in departmental leadership at the Malmö Theatre Academy. This three-day event I curated and facilitated at the Inter Arts Center in Malmö, functioned as a critical intervention to bridge the gap between artistic scholarship from my site of origin—Rio de Janeiro—and the diasporic creative-critical voices active in the Northern European contexts of Oslo, Stockholm, and Berlin.

The program was designed to foster transdisciplinary knowledge production, featuring contributions from five artist-researchers: PhD fellow Deise Faria Nunes; PhD and Professor Adriana Schneider Alcure; PhD Ian Calvet; PhD and Professor John-Paul Zaccarini; and myself. The proceedings were intentionally diverse in format, encompassing keynote addresses, a lecture-performance, a performative writing workshop, and live performances, thereby creating a liminal space for shared inquiry and radical assembly. Inspired by Gloria Anzaldúa's scholarship on the state of *in-betweenness* (Anzaldúa, 2015), I facilitated dialogues designed to translate and bridge the disparate realities



Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between Brown: Performing Journeys across Liminal Spaces and Times. © Jörgen Dahlqvist.
Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, October 11–13th, 2022.

of the Global North and South. My objective was for these exchanges to function as a semiotic conduit—a vital lifeline designed to foster mutual empathy and, in doing so, expand the epistemological boundaries of artistic research methodologies.

The decision to integrate scholarship from Rio de Janeiro was a direct response to the pedagogical crisis at the Malmö Theatre Academy, where the departure of the head of department left the doctoral cohort without internal leadership. This institutional void necessitated an external search, leading to my partnership with artist-researcher Adriana Schneider Alcure, a professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), who subsequently became my primary supervisor. Through this alliance, I was integrated into a translocal community of practice, engaging with a diverse and colorful cohort of undergraduate and graduate researchers. This collaboration allowed for a robust exchange with practitioners navigating parallel challenges in the investigation of artistic processes, effectively breaking the isolation of my immediate academic environment.



Lecture-performance Estuaries: Decolonial, Feminist, Afro-Diaspora Perspectives. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, October 12th, 2022.

By the conclusion of 2022, this study underwent a significant methodological expansion. Originally conceived as a dramaturgical framework investigating how ancestral and migratory trajectories shape identity through performance, the method evolved to incorporate trans-hemispheric dialogues with artist-researchers across the Global South. This growth necessitated the integration of supplementary investigative modes,

most notably epistolary methodology and conversation as a method. The latter serves as a core methodological principle where dialogue—between individuals, diverse communities, and ancestral entities—is repositioned as the primary vehicle for generating knowledge and artistic material. This shift transformed the research from a singular inquiry into a collaborative site of knowledge production, where the act of conversation itself becomes a rigorous tool for exploring complex histories and identities.

Between June and October 2022, I delved into an intense exchange of handwritten letters with both my back then newly hired supervisor

Alcure, and Calvet, a PhD candidate from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, who, coincidentally, was carrying on fieldwork at the Freie Universität in Berlin, retracing the migration journey of his grandmother from Berlin to Rio de Janeiro while fleeing the Third Reich regime in Germany. The letters we exchanged became the foundation text material for the Letter-Performance *In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea* (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2022), presented as part of the *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* conference. The letters I wrote exposed the acute loneliness I found myself in after moving from Berlin to Malmö, the lack of a peer community of artist-researchers I could exchange with, besides a desire to connect on personal and professional levels with other racialized and/or Queer individuals.

Malmö, June 12th, 2022.

Dear Adriana,

I hope my words find you well.

Today is Sunday, Valentine's Day in Brazil. I have absolutely no idea if you have a valentine in Rio de Janeiro or beyond.

Something just occurred to me: Maybe this is a love letter, given the circumstances. The love I feel right now for being under your supervision. From where I stand, so far away and even if we haven't ever met in person, what I feel for you at this very moment is love. I have been feeling lonely these days. Vulnerable. Doing my best to keep calm in order not to slip into the stereotypical Latin American image northerners have of us, in Sweden and beyond. I feel a lot. Both for the good and the bad. I must, however, confess that nearly five months after having moved from Berlin with my family to this new country, I feel more in control. This eternal obsession of mine to be in control. Whatever happens, keep control. An attempt to escape madness. Since I was a child, I can still remember my young self dwelling: "Watch out for madness". The ways to escape the state of madness have always seemed to inhabit exclusively within myself. Madness, or in this case, escaping from it, was something that could only be initiated and terminated from within.

Since I moved, on January 17th, 2022, many things started happening beyond my control. Professors, new languages, accents, guidelines, timetables, organizational structures, plans and schemes. Even a war started not so

far away. All external to me. Then suddenly, madness, which always seemed to exist within, blurted out. It became visible, palpable: inside my own home, in the gym right across from my building with its constant incandescent lights, in the square in front of the shopping Mall in Triangeln, in the *Øresundstog*, always late in its journey towards Copenhagen, in the corridors of the Malmö Theatre Academy; everything, all of a sudden, appeared mad to me. Except one thing: Nature. Even in the first hard wintry months, there was that cold air that filled my lungs with life while I went and came by bike to and from the school. Slowly, the harsh cold air warmed slightly, the first buds were born, and without much ado, the most beautiful Spring took over Malmö. A rainbow full of colors and odors filled my heart and my life. Finally freed from that old madness, I could for a while breathe and calm myself down. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2022)

The letter reveals how displacement was becoming more than the subject of my research; it was actively shaping the conditions through which the research was conducted. Writing to Alcure transformed an individual experience of displacement into an act of reaching outward, establishing correspondence as a relational practice through which vulnerability could generate connection. In this sense, the letter marks an early methodological shift from solitary reflection toward the alliances that would become central to this research.

Affective Alliances

An analysis of the initial performative experiments carried out within this research reveal the foundational characteristics of this method: it is fundamentally rooted in collaboration and the construction of affective alliances. When Alcure, Calvet, and I initiated our correspondence, we were essentially strangers, united primarily by our shared positionality as artist-researchers navigating academic structures. Calvet was beginning a doctoral residency in Berlin—his inaugural experience abroad—and like mine, his inquiry centered on memory, ancestries, and migration, specifically regarding the migratory trajectories of our respective grandmothers.

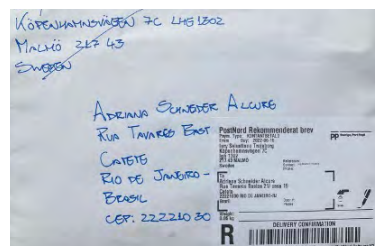
These thematic synergies catalyzed a dialogue that defied geographical distance through the adoption of an epistolary methodology. Our decision to utilize handwritten manuscripts was a deliberate act of temporal resistance—a desire to engage with time outside of digital

immediacy. This choice allowed us to attend to the materiality of the autograph manuscript, expanding our communication beyond textual content to include the sensory and semiotic signals of the physical page. As French scholar Alain Pagès (2017) explores in *A Materialidade Epistolar: O Que Nos Dizem os Manuscritos Autógrafos* (*The Epistolary Materiality: What the Autograph Manuscripts Tell Us*), the letter is not merely a container for written language; its material form participates in the production of meaning:

In the case of correspondence, this question is of utmost importance, for a letter communicates its message not only by the text it proposes, but also by the multiplicity of signs accompanying the text: the form of writing, the utilisation of space in the page, the number of leaves, the additions placed in the margins, the signature, etc. (Pagès, 2017, p. 107, my translation)

Pagès' emphasis on these material and visual dimensions of correspondence resonates with our own epistolary practice. The handwritten letter thus became more than a vehicle for exchanging ideas: its pauses, crossings-out, handwriting, spatial arrangements, and material traces became part of the dialogue itself, allowing the correspondence to carry forms of knowledge and affect that exceeded the written words.

The discontinuity of time is a fundamental component of the *in-betweenness state* (Anzaldúa, 1987) attached to this research. Utilizing traditional postal services introduced a deliberate asynchronicity into the research process: the two-week transit period that took for a letter to move between Malmö and Rio de Janeiro functioned as a temporal suspension. For instance, in a correspondence dated August 3rd, 2022, Calvet captured the poetic and psychological weight of this interval, describing the tension of anticipatory waiting and the inherent uncertainty of the letter's arrival. He emphasizes that the materiality of the autograph manuscript—its tactile and sensory properties—is inseparable from the message itself:



Autograph manuscript sent from Salustiano Trojaborg to Alcure. © Adriana Schneider Alcure. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, July 9th, 2022.

I thank you for the great experience to wait for the message that came slowly crossing the Atlantic and showed up on my door step as real paper and in green ink. It is real, not virtual. The waiting process brings me a healthy sensation of slowing down. I knew that your message had been coming, but everyday I thought... it is not here yet... not yet... not yet... I kept waiting and waiting. The expectation created by the time before the message arrives doesn't exist in the virtual world. The waiting time allowed me to contemplate the marvellousness of this letter exchange between you and me and to rehash ways to look at world through a different window, through a different time. (Calvet, 2022, pp. 1-2)

It is essential to correlate the inherent slowness of our epistolary exchange with scholar Leda Maria Martins' decolonial framework of spiral time (2021). While the two-week postal delay created a physical gap, it simultaneously facilitated a curvilinear temporality where past, present, and future could exist in a state of flux. In this context, our correspondence utilized the dilated time of the handwritten manuscript to summon the rhythms of our ancestors' migratory histories. Martins conceptualizes time as a series of folds and cadences—a theory mirrored in the physical act of writing by hand and the subsequent weeks of transit.

This handwritten process created a temporal dilation where the present of the sender has transformed into the past by the time of arrival, yet it retains the power to reconfigure the future of the recipient. The uncertainty Calvet articulated—the state of anticipatory waiting and the risk of loss—manifested the simultaneity of presence and absence central to the spiral.

Ancestry, in many cultures, is a founding concept, spread and imbued in all social practices, expressing an apprehension of the subject and the cosmos, in all its spheres, from the most intimate family relationships to the broadest and most diverse social and communal practices and expressions. In what ways, then, does this sophisticated experience of ancestry and the immanent presence of the ancestor in subjects' daily lives also inscribe a singular understanding and experience of temporality, like a *sophya*? How do the times and intervals of the calendars also mark and dilate the conception of a time that bends forward and backwards simultaneously, always in a process

of prospection and retrospection, of simultaneous remembrance and becoming? (Martins, 2021, p. 23, my translation)

As Martin suggests, the letter became a vessel where “what spirally still and already is” converges with “what can come to be,” carrying a voice from the recent past into a transformative present. By prioritizing the autograph manuscript in our correspondence, Alcure, Calvet, and I performed an act of epistemic disobedience against the linear, Eurocentric speed of contemporary research. We effectively decolonized our timeline, shifting away from a focus on rapid production toward a restitutive perspective that allowed ancestral memories to curve, return, and continuously fold in a temporal continuum. This research therefore operates as a subversive framework for decolonizing artistic research methodologies.

It was significant to return to the use of epistolary methodology at the conclusion of my doctoral journey. Replicating the logic of my initial experiment, I utilized the handwritten artifact to initiate contact with my aunts and uncles in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro in December 2024, while collecting data that would constitute part of the last artistic experiment of this research, the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025).¹ This choice to return to the manuscript was a deliberate attempt to establish a relational pace of care and intention, securing my relatives’ consent for the interviews that form the foundational oral histories I was interested in bringing forward.

I cannot overlook the fact that my communication with my maternal kin in Manaus—individuals with whom I shared no prior physical acquaintance—was fraught with profound affective anxiety and uncertainty. Unlike the Rio de Janeiro branch of the family, this northern lineage had experienced a lifelong deprivation of maternal care



Handwritten letters sent from Møn, Denmark, to Manaus and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg, December 31st, 2024.

¹ The handwritten letter sent to my maternal kin can be read in its entirety on page 106 of this thesis.

from my grandmother Voinha. I was acutely aware that their testimonies would introduce an entirely polarized, counter-narrative perspective to the history of my grandmother.

Approaching strangers with an inquiry of such emotional gravity, while requesting that they re-examine deeply submerged traumatic memories, was the primary ethical challenge carried by my correspondence. The strategic choice of the autograph manuscript served a dual purpose in this sensitive process: first, it functioned as an act of embodied introduction, offering a vulnerable, non-institutional presence to soften the weight of the inquiry. Second, it established a necessary methodological deceleration, granting the participants the temporal autonomy required to process the complex, painful affects involved in reviving a difficult past. I will continue examining the genesis of the final artistic outcome of my doctoral research, the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* later in chapters V and VI.

In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea

In the six-month exchange of letters that constituted the textual source for the Letter-Performance *In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea* Alcure, Calvet and I were aware that the sentiments articulated in our correspondence were not isolated experiences, but rather shared subjectivities echoed by generations of ancestors and migrants who preceded us. This affective resonance—the way personal grief and displacement align with a collective history—is explored by Brazilian scholar Ana Cândida Carneiro in her article *Playing and Writing Across Languages and Cultures*:

The psychology of the displaced in many instances oscillates across opposite poles: the need for recognition, assimilation, or the acquisition of a status like that of regular citizens and the need for preserving a connection to our roots. This intimate conflict is exasperated by discriminatory policies and behaviours. Immigrants are necessary, and yet are an undesirable element that forces individuals and communities to face the fact that the world is bigger than they had pictured before and their acquired certainties are just what they should be: temporary and relative. Like mice in a room, we can stay as long as we ‘keep in our place’ and do not disrupt the status quo. As long as we remain quiet, invisible and odourless. (Carneiro, 2020, p. 33)

Carneiro concludes by identifying a condition that resonated deeply with my own experience: the persistent affective friction of the migrant journey. This struggle serves as a conceptual catalyst, generating a series of contradictory sensations and ideas that strike at the very ontological essence of our practice as migrant artist-researchers:

I found my voice as an artist through immigration, by existing in the condition of otherness, by making foreign languages my own. Had I not crossed the line and reached other worlds, my poetics and even my aesthetic choices would have been much narrower and unidimensional. My life as a writer would have been easier for sure: I would have been more 'classifiable', more visible, more acceptable, more convenient; I would have avoided many forms of discrimination. However, could I have lived with myself by not pursuing my dreams? I don't think so. Re-routing my existence more than once became my fertile ground, my own artistic way of inhabiting the world – and I am very proud of it. (Carneiro, 2020, pp. 37–38)

In an effort to navigate the systemic pressures of relocating to Sweden and the isolation of my doctoral candidacy at the Malmö Theatre Academy, I used letter-writing to Alcure and Calvet as a deliberate site of refuge. This process demanded a level of patience, reflection, and affective labor that digital communication cannot afford; it required me to painstakingly translate complex, non-verbal emotions into a coherent narrative. In return, the materiality of the page provided a grounding concreteness. Staring at my own handwriting—character by character, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph—functioned as a form of excavation, an intricate movement of externalizing the internal. By transmuting these intimate struggles into material artifacts, namely handwritten letters, I shifted the burden of these emotions. Once shared, they were no longer internal pressures but became concrete words offered up for communal reflection and intersubjective appreciation.

The fact that the recipients of my correspondence were previously unknown to me, combined with the aesthetic intentionality of transforming these letters into performative material, rendered the writing process a unique methodological task. I operated within a dual consciousness: on one hand, I was authentically engaging with my own epistemic loneliness, seeking out interlocutors in Rio de Janeiro who might validate the profound challenges of doctoral initiation in a for-

eign territory. Simultaneously, my cognitive process functioned through a dramaturgical split between playwright and director. The act of externalizing words onto the page was immediately mediated by a scenic imagination: I was already contemplating how these narratives could be integrated into a larger performative architecture. The concepts articulated in the letters were instinctively accompanied by static and moving visual metaphors.

The Epistolary Archive: Autoethnography, Materiality, and Performance as Research

In writing letters to both my blood relatives and my artistic-research peers, I made conscious decisions about transitioning private intimacies into public performative material—a reflexive process that aligns with the core criteria of autoethnographic inquiry (Ellis & Adams, 2020). Within this framework, our shared mother tongue, Portuguese, and our common country of origin, Brazil, functioned as critical epistemological dimensions. This shared linguistic and spatial background served as the exact “insider knowledge” and “cultural experience” highlighted by Ellis and Adams (2020, p. 359) as necessary for breaking silences and maneuvering through complex emotional fields.

To construct the epistolary archive of this project, I draw upon Alain Pagès’ formulation of “the enchantment of writing.” This concept resonates with the material and affective states I experienced while consciously choosing handwritten letters to engage with my family and peers. Within a Practice-as-Research framework, the selection of this traditional artifact is a strategic intervention against digital alienation. The physical gesture of handwriting captures an affective, lived presence on the page. By embracing Pagès’ notion of enchantment, this methodology treats the resulting letters not merely as passive documentation, but as active, enchanted objects that carry the physical weight, rhythm, and emotional resonance of the bodies that authored them.

It is by the enchantment of its writing, even before it is deciphered, that a letter offers itself to the gaze. The beauty of an autograph manuscript lies, above all, in its scriptural appearance. Like a face that invites contemplation, this beauty is composed of various parameters: the regularity or irregularity

of the lines, the legibility or illegibility, the narrow or wider characters, the matt or clear ink, the color (black, red or blue)... The most remarkable auto-graph manuscripts are those which, despite the years that have passed, have retained some of their youth: they have kept all their freshness. (Pagès, 2017, p. 110, my translation)

Pagès' description of the manuscript as something that "offers itself to the gaze" helps articulate what is at stake in my own epistolary practice. The handwritten letters became sensorial encounters in which the traces of writing—the pressure, rhythm, spacing, and movement of the hand—were themselves part of the communication. In this sense, the archive produced through this practice preserves not only what was written, but also something of the embodied presence of those who wrote it.

The material composition of these handwritten letters operationalized what South African scholar Mark Fleishman (2012) describes in his article *The Difference of Performance as Research* as the principle of "compossibility"—an epistemic approach where "fleshes alongside images, sight alongside hearing and touching and feeling and moving — is called for" (Fleishman, 2012, p. 30). This multisensory principle materialized during the production of the letters, extended through their physical transoceanic trajectory across the South Atlantic to the Baltic Sea, and culminated when Calvet and I physically manipulated and translated them into an embodied letter-performance. Through this iterative cycle of epistolary writing, speculative staging, and live performance, our practice enacted Fleishman's definition of Performance as Research. By explicitly refusing traditional binaries—such as body-mind, theory-practice, space-time, and subject-object—this work embraced radical openness, multiplicity, and an inherent resistance to fixed determination (Fleishman, 2012, p. 32).



*Letter-performance In Transit Letters:
Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea.*
© Adriana Schneider Alcure. Inter Arts
Center, Malmö, Sweden, October 11th, 2022.

Enveloping the Performative Space: Vulnerability, Shared Presence, and the Paper Archive

Translating these letters into a performative event presented significant logistical and artistic challenges, most notably the requirement to inhabit a scenic space with a collaborator I had never physically encountered. Due to budgetary constraints, Calvet and I were unable to engage in traditional rehearsal periods. Instead, our first physical encounter took place within the performative arena—a space entirely enveloped in white paper. This environment allowed the audience to literally re-inscribe and co-author the narratives alongside us. Within this immersive setting, we sought a level of intimacy and affective resonance that would facilitate a real-time improvisation based on our previous written correspondence.

Methodologically, I constructed a performance text that hybridized the epistolary exchanges compiled between Calvet and myself. The foundational letter, originally dispatched to my supervisor Alcure, was pre-recorded to generate an acousmatic vocal track. This was juxtaposed against a first-person background video tracking my bicycle commute from my residence to the Malmö Theatre Academy, captured via a helmet-mounted camera to transmit my subjective, localized orientation to the Malmö landscape from a strict point-of-view perspective. This sequence marked a moment within the performance architecture where my voice was structurally detached from my physical body. Subsequently, Calvet and I transitioned into a live dialogical mode, mostly reading our exchanged correspondence across a linear temporal axis.

Actively bridging my roles as researcher, dramaturg, and director, I designed a situational presentation for each letter, deriving embodied knowledge from internal textual references such as landscape markers or musical scores. This was supported by multi-site video documentation recorded across key coordinates in Malmö, including *Ribbersborg* beach and *Pildammsparken*. Calvet received the suggested performance script one week prior, contributing structural suggestions for his own textual delivery. Crucially, because we had never met in person and never conducted a physical rehearsal of the final script, our performative vulnerability maximized our somatic attention and relational listening during the live event.

PARTICIPATORY SCENOGRAPHIC ARCHITECTURE

Blank White Paper Envelope (Walls & Floors as Canvas)



Spectator Intervention (Pens/Coloured Pencils)



Co-Authored Archive (Conjoint Letter of Shared Presence)

To materialize the concept of living within the correspondence itself, the scenography completely enveloped the performance space in blank white paper. Pens and colored pencils were distributed throughout the room, and spectators were explicitly invited at the threshold of the performance to co-author a conjoint letter. By dismantling the fourth wall and erasing the spatial bifurcation between performative action and spectatorship, we maintained direct, unmediated eye contact with the audience, effectively treating them as the direct addressees of the letters. This structural intimacy fostered a reciprocal state of immediate presence and comradeship. By the conclusion of the performance, the initial blank paper archive covering the floors and walls had been entirely transformed, filled with a dense, collective tapestry of drawings and written text generated by the spectators.

By anchoring the performance in this shared linguistic reality, this experiment transformed into a form of participatory theater. The audience is shifted from passive observers into active partners in situated, multilingual knowledge production.



Letter-performance In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea. © Adriana Schneider Alcure. Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, October 11th, 2022.

Correspondence, Materiality, and Relational Knowledge

The development of the epistolary method marked an important methodological shift in this doctoral research. Emerging from the conditions of geographical displacement, institutional isolation, and the interruption of established artistic communities, correspondence became a way of transforming distance into relation. The handwritten letter enabled me to sustain and develop encounters across geographi-

cal, cultural, and disciplinary borders, while creating a material archive through which artistic research could unfold.

The significance of this method, however, extended beyond the act of communication. Through the materiality of handwriting, the temporality of postal exchange, and the vulnerability of sharing personal and artistic reflections, correspondence became a mode of knowledge production. The letters created a space in which questions of migration, belonging, ancestry, and artistic practice could be explored through dialogue rather than isolation. Knowledge emerged through the relation between correspondents, through the circulation of material objects, and through the time and attention required to write, send, receive, and respond.

The translation of this correspondence into performance further demonstrated the potential of the epistolary archive as artistic material. In *In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea*, letters became voices, gestures, images, objects, and invitations to collective participation. The performance therefore extended the epistolary method beyond the private exchange between correspondents, transforming correspondence into a public and embodied encounter.

The epistolary method established several principles that would continue to inform the development of this research: that knowledge can emerge through relation; that material objects can carry affective and historical meaning; that distance can become a condition for dialogue rather than merely a form of separation; and that artistic practice can transform intimate encounters into shared spaces of inquiry.

The chapter has therefore established correspondence as more than a research technique. It has demonstrated its potential as a relational and performative methodology through which artistic knowledge is generated across distance, materiality, and embodied encounter. This methodological development became an important foundation for the subsequent trajectory of the research, in which the questions of relation, memory, and inheritance would continue to unfold through artistic practice.

Interlude I

Script of the Letter-Performance *In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea* (2022)

by Iury Salustiano Trojaborg and Ian Calvet

**BLUE LIGHT ON A SPACE ENVELOPED BY WHITE PAPER
COLOURED PENCILS LYING AROUND.**

LETTERS

A ROPE

SEA SHELLS

STONES

BOOKS

YELLOW ROSES

THREE YELLOW CANDLES

SOUND OF WAVES CRASHING.

**SONG “QUEM VEM PRA BEIRA DO MAR”, BY DORIVAL CAYMMI, ALBUM
“CANÇÕES PRAIEIRAS”.**

Quem vem pra beira do mar, ai
Nunca mais quer voltar, ai
Quem vem pra beira do mar, ai
Nunca mais quer voltar
Andei por andar, andei
E todo caminho deu no mar
Andei pelo mar, andei
Nas águas de Dona Janaína
A onda do mar leva
A onda do mar traz
Quem vem pra beira da praia, meu bem
Não volta nunca mais
Quem vem pra beira do mar, ai
Nunca mais quer voltar, ai
Quem vem pra beira do mar, ai
Nunca mais quer voltar
Andei por andar, andei

E todo caminho deu no mar
Andei pelo mar, andei
Nas águas de Dona Janaína
A onda do mar leva
A onda do mar traz
Quem vem pra beira da praia, meu bem
Não volta nunca mais
Quem vem pra beira do mar, ai
Nunca mais quer voltar, ai
Quem vem pra beira do mar, ai
Nunca mais quer voltar

/

Whoever comes to the seashore, oh
Never wants to go back, oh
Whoever comes to the seashore, oh
Never wants to go back
I walked just to walk, I walked
And every path led to the sea
I walked along the sea, I walked
In the waters of Dona Janaína
The ocean's waves carry away
The ocean's waves bring back
Whoever comes to the beach, my love
Never returns
Whoever comes to the seashore, oh
Never wants to return, oh
Whoever comes to the seashore, oh
Never wants to return
I walked just to walk, I walked
And every path led to the sea
I walked through the sea, I walked
In the waters of Dona Janaína
The ocean wave takes away
The ocean wave brings back
Whoever comes to the shore, my love
Never returns

Whoever comes to the seashore, oh
Never wants to return, oh
Whoever comes to the seashore, oh
Never wants to return. (my translation)

VIDEO: RIBERSBORGSTRANDEN

**IURY STARTS TO WRITE A LETTER
TO ADRIANA ON THE PAPER FLOOR.**



IURY (VOICE OFF):

Malmö, June 12th 2022

Dear Adriana,

I hope my words find you well.

Today is Sunday, Valentine's Day in Brazil. I have absolutely no idea if you have a valentine in Rio de Janeiro or beyond.

Something just occurred to me: Maybe this is a love letter given the circumstances. The love I right now feel for being under your supervision. From where I stand, so far away and even if we haven't ever met in person, what I feel for you at this very moment is love. I have been feeling lonely these days. Vulnerable. Doing my best to keep calm in order not to slip into the stereotypical Latin American image northerners have of us, in Sweden and beyond. I feel a lot. Both for the good and the bad. I must however confess that nearly five months after having moved from Berlin with my family to this new country, I feel more in control. This eternal obsession of mine to be in control. Whatever happens, keep control. An attempt to escape madness. Since I was a child, I can still remember my young self dwelling: "Watch out for madness". The ways to escape the state of madness have always seemed to inhabit exclusively within myself. Madness or in this case, escaping from it, was something that could only be initiated and terminated from within.

Since I moved, on January 17th 2022, many things started happening beyond my control. Professors, new languages, accents, guidelines, timetables, organisational structures, plans and schemes. Even a war started not so far away. All external to me. Then suddenly, madness,

which always seemed to exist within, blurted out. It became visible, palpable: inside my own home, in the gym right across from my building with its constant incandescent lights, in the square in front of the shopping Mall in Triangeln, in the Øresundstog, always late in its journey towards Copenhagen, in the corridors of the Malmö Theatre Academy; everything, all of a sudden, appeared mad to me. Except one thing: nature. Even in the first hard wintery months, there was that cold air that filled my lungs with life while going and coming by bike to and back from the school. Slowly, the harsh cold air warmed slightly, the first buds were born, and without much ado, the most beautiful Spring took over Malmö. A rainbow full of colours and odours filled my heart and my life. Finally freed from that old madness, I could for a while, breathe and calm myself down.

I matriculated myself in a yoga online course in Helsinki, something that my anxious mind has always denied me. My chest slowly opening up, filling with air and the sun of this initial summer that now illuminates the writing of this letter. Last night, sitting on my balcony, I discovered the moon. Huge, full of brilliance, power and light. I then finally understood the title of Anzaldúa's book that has been illuminating me these last weeks: "Luz en lo Oscuro". I, who have always been a solar creature, inadvertently discovered the power of the moon: the brilliance and the power that emanates from it, illuminating my darkest hour. There have been many dark nights when I would awake, as if electrified, lying in my bed unable to sleep. Now, however, I have the moon as my companion.

LIVE PRESENCE: IURY READING ANZALDÚA'S BOOK:

QUOTE PROJECTED: "When writing at night, I'm aware of la luna, Coyolxauhqui, hovering over my house. I envision her muerta y decapitada (dead and decapitated), una cabeza con los parpados cerrados (eyes closed). But then her eyes open y la miro dar luz a los lugares oscuros, I see her light the dark places"

- Anzaldúa, Gloria. "Luz en lo Oscuro: Rewriting identity, spirituality, reality"

VOICE OFF: IURY (CONT.)

Bilu and I send you many kisses and hope to meet you in person very soon. For now we look at the moon and greet you dearly from afar.

Yours,
Iury.

IURY STARTS TO WRITE A LETTER TO IAN ON THE PAPER FLOOR.

IURY (VOICE OFF):

Malmö, July 11th 2022

Dear Ian,

I hope you are fine and not too stressed about the preparations and all that bureaucracy involved in moving from Rio to Berlin.

Here in Malmö summer has fully arrived and it feels just good. It seems to me life has expanded itself. People, vegetables, animals, sky, fruits, flowers. Life feels, all of a sudden, abundant. I believe that's actually the theme of this letter: abundance. Which brings me back to a book I first read when I was still a teenager in Rio de Janeiro: Italo Calvino's "Six Memos for the Next Millenium". The book is composed by five lectures Calvino was supposed to give at Harvard University. Unfortunately he died before writing the sixth one. He divided the first five according to values and qualities he considered indispensable to literature: lightness, quickness, exactitude, visibility and multiplicity. The sixth one, on consistency, never got written though.

I remember not being able to grasp the whole book when I first read it, but I still felt taken aback by the power of Calvino's words:

LIVE PRESENCE: IURY READING CALVINO'S BOOK

QUOTE PROJECTED: "Whenever humanity seems condemned to heaviness, I think I should fly like Perseus into a different space, I don't mean escaping into dreams or the irrational. I mean that I have to change my approach, look at the world from a different perspective, with a different logic and with fresh methods of cognition and verification"

–Calvino, Italo. "Six Memos for the New Millennium"



VOICE OFF: IURY (CONT.)

To read Calvino at such young age made me think of life in terms of qualities too. This way of thinking is something that never left me. This is the reason I now decided to write this letter to you, querido Ian, on abundance.

The first signs of abundance I could visually identify happened In late spring, on May 25th, when I crossed the Øresund headed to Copenhagen to watch a co-production between the Pina Bausch Foundation, École des Sables and Sadler's Wells London's of "Le Sacre du Printemps".

I am enclosing here two postcards with images of the show, so you can better understand what we are dealing with: an abundance of black and brown bodies on the stage.

This was the first show I attended post-COVID, at the Østre Gasvaerk Teater in Copenhagen, a beautiful round building made out of stone with a magnificent cupola made out of wood.

The theatre accommodates 850 spectators and there was some sort of electricity in the audience once my husband and I reached our seats. To be surrounded by so many people in that round construction made me feel, for the first time since the pandemic started, unafraid. It made me feel, on the contrary, empowered by a collective desire to breathe art.

Once the show started though, my feelings of abundance were elevated to another level by witnessing an all black and brown ensemble of talented dancers performing the mind blowing choreography created by Pina Bausch for the dramatic music composed by Igor Stravinsky. That colourful abundance made me realize how much I have missed being around so many members of the BIPOC community.

The second experience of abundance I can now recall happened the following month, on June 29th, while attending the concert of nosso querido mestre Gilberto Gil and his family as part of the Copenhagen Jazz Festival. As you know, Gil just turned 80 years old and his European tour titled *Nós, a Gente* (We, the People) aims to celebrate this incredible milestone. Well, nothing could be more abundant than this celebration. Again the venue itself took my breath away: the incredible DR Koncerthuset.

The stage is surrounded by several levels of balconies accommodating the audience members. Everyone can see one another across the auditorium. The concert hall is a brilliant piece of architecture designed by Jean Nouvel and built in the Ørestad neighbourhood in 2009.

Here's what Nouvel said about the project:

“Building in emerging neighborhoods is a risk that has often proved fatal in recent years. When there is no built environment upon which to found our work, when we cannot evaluate a neighborhood's future potential, we have to turn the question around: what qualities can we bring to this future? We can respond positively to an uncertainty by using its most positive attribute, that is, mystery. Mystery is never far from seduction. When the surroundings are too neutral we must create a transition, a distance between them and us, not as a retreat into ourselves, but as a means to establish conditions that will allow a particular territory to blossom. In other words we need to bring value to the context, whatever it may be. For this we must establish a presence, an identity. I propose to materialize the context by creating an exceptional urban building respecting the planned layout of the site. It will be a volume, a mysterious parallelepiped that changes under the light of day and night whose interior can only be guessed at. At night the volume will come alive with images, colors, and lights expressing the life going on inside.” - Jean Nouvel

Gil and his musical family definitely filled Nouvel's creation with a lot of life and beauty in all senses. The beauty of witnessing a 80-year old man who dedicated his life to music and now looks back at the legacy he created by bringing his family along to the stage. And what a family! Thirteen talented musicians and singers accompanying their beloved ancestor on an abundant celebration of joy.

Gil, his daughters, sons, grand-daughters, grandsons and daughters-in-law enchanted the whole concert hall and brought me closer to my grandmother Voinha and her joy, her resistance and her capacity to seduce anyone around her with her big laughter.



SONG “AQUELE ABRAÇO”, BY GILBERTO GIL.

Alô, moça da favela
Aquele abraço
Todo mundo da Portela
Aquele abraço
Todo mês de fevereiro
Aquele passo
Alô Banda de Ipanema
Aquele abraço
Meu caminho pelo mundo
Eu mesmo traço
A Bahia já me deu
Régua e compasso
Quem sabe de mim sou eu
Aquele abraço
Pra você que me esqueceu
Aquele abraço
Alô Rio de Janeiro
Aquele abraço
Todo o povo brasileiro
Aquele abraço”

/

Hello, girl from the favela
That hug
Everyone from Portela
That hug
Every February
That step
Hello, Banda de Ipanema
That hug
My path through the world
I chart it myself
Bahia has already given me
A ruler and a compass
I’m the one who knows me best

That hug
To you who've forgotten me
That hug
Hello, Rio de Janeiro
That hug
All the Brazilian people
That hug

Finally, my third encounter with feelings of abundance happened just last Saturday, on July 09th during the Malmö Queer Pride Parade that took place in the streets of the city where I now live.

Having recently moved from Berlin, where the diversity of queerness' experiences is widely spread and visible, I found myself somewhat contained regarding my physical appearance here in Malmö. My old dresses and skirts have been slowly replaced by pants and button-down shirts in an attempt to look more serious in my new doctoral student position. Strange how the environment affects us in minimal and maximal ways. Somehow I wanted to become invisible, unnoticed, overlooked.

To find myself, together with my husband and dog, marching down Slottsgatan, accompanied by a bunch of colourful queer peers turned my attention to something I hadn't thought about until now: having the city center occupied by a queer parade made each one of us individually invisible. But at the same time it turned us, as a group, very much visible. This is the kind of visibility abundance can provide.

"Embodied practice as epistemic also constitutes a moral stance. It indicates respect toward those involved within the struggle for social justice; it reflects a valuing of the particular people and lives involved. Practice means we show up. We are there for the everyday, for the mundane, as well as for the extraordinary. Practice indicates that we will continue exploring, yearning, learning, and intervening upon



hegemonic structures. Practice requires an 'I' who is always unsettled by injustice and inherently engages Others in an embodied relationality. Utopian performatives are the practice of hope".

– Spry, Tamy. "Autoethnography and the Other: Performative Embodiment and a Bid for Utopia"

Meu querido Ian, we keep on fighting and we keep on smiling.
Muitos beijos carinhosos da sua,
Iury

LETTER#3: IAN TO IURY

Rio de Janeiro, August 3rd 2022

Dear Iury,

First of all, I want to thank you for your letter. Mainly, because it came from the post office. I thank you for the great experience of waiting for the message that came slowly, crossing the Atlantic Ocean, and showed up on my door step as real paper and words in blue ink. It is real, not virtual. The waiting process brings me a healthy sensation of slowing down. I knew that your message had been coming, but every day I thought is not here yet, not yet, not yet. I kept waiting and waiting. The expectation create by the time before the message arrives doesn't exist in the virtual world. The waiting time allowed me to contemplate the marvelousness of this letter exchange between you and me and to rehash ways to look at the world through a different window, through a different time.

Looking at the world between different times is something that I have tried before. I breathe and try to escape from the anxieties that pressure me in the present time. The anxieties produced by the task of daily life. I breathe and try to connect to the other things and other times that go through my mind now. It is when I find a glimpse of abundance.

Now, I am in Rio de Janeiro. It is 3 pm, the wind from the ocean blows cold in my window and the clouds look at me from far away. There is a book pile in front of me where I search for inspiration to put in this text. I am standing in my own silence. I take a deep breath. How many things and possibilities are there here and now? How many ways

can I chose to produce this letter? The answer is: infinity. In this sense, abundance can be found in the details, in something unnoticed. I have interest in small things, because, despite their apparent insignificance, indeed, they are infinite and abundant. Here is my point, abundance comes, not only from the wildness of nature, but the imperceptibility of things.

Now, I am looking at my wall. There is an old picture from my childhood. I was in this same room, closer to the same window, breathing the same cold ocean breeze. Since I was child, I have always lived here! It is crazy to think about my own immobility in face of the vastness of the world. Now, I am on the edge of the unknown, about to cross the ocean. The prospect of living in Berlin makes me feel happy, emotional, and, sometimes, afraid. I can see the past in the things that I keep with me. On my desk there is my grandmother's diary – the main object of my Ph.D. research. The diary was written in 1933 when my grandmother was only 10 years old. She flew to Brazil from Berlin during the Nazi regime. Her reports were written on the ship, in the middle of the ocean.

I have researched some narratives from the past and have found a kind of abundance. It is like a tangled web of timelines, many many timelines. Timelines of different measures, textures, and weights. Timelines that unravel, break, vanish reappear. I dance with these timelines. I pay attention to them and try to listen to their narratives. Why do I do this? Because we can't forget the past. Because it is essential to develop our memory and exercise our remembrance. To rebuild our past is to contribute to building a sense of justice in the present. Past, present and future are linked and mixed.

I felt ecstatic seeing the picture of the play in your letter, many black bodies occupying the stage. It is abundance! It is a breath of hope that in the future, we could see justice on our horizon. Black people occupying space, all spaces including the middle of Europe. Also, the LGBTQIA+ community occupying the streets, the cities, the work places, the politics. Also, disabled and indigenous everywhere. I want to scream out loud: we are different and that is beautiful.

Sometimes I try to feel optimistic but now, writing this letter from Brazil, my chest is heavy because of our pressing situation. I could write many pages about the harmful acts of the Brazilian president,

but I will focus only at the fact that 30% of people in Brazil voted for the current far-right president. 30%! How can we explain this? The Brazilians populations going through an identity crisis. Isn't Brazil known for its diversity and tolerance?

I don't know, but my intention is to continue doing my work, the best work that I can do, now! We have a lot of work, my dear Iury. This subject reminds me of the tragic day the last president election. In the middle of sadness and tears, suddenly I started listening to a song from my neighbor.

Se o mundo ficar pesado
Eu vou pedir emprestado
A palavra poesia
Se o mundo emburrecer
Eu vou rezar pra chover
A palavra sabedoria
Se o mundo andar pra trás
Vou escrever num cartaz
A palavra rebeldia
Se a gente desanimar
Eu vou colher no pomar
A palavra teimosia
Se acontecer afinal
De entrar em nosso quintal
A palavra tirania
Pegue o tambor e o ganzá
Vamos pra rua gritar
A palavra utopia

This song was sung by the actors of theatre company "Cia Tijolo" from São Paulo. It was a breath of hope and I understand that, despite everything, we can't stop! We will never stop! It is only the beginning.

Let's take the tambor and ganzá. Let's do together !

Um abraço forte, firme e longo!

Ian.

POSTCARD FROM IURY TO JAN

Oslo, 18 de Setembro de 2022

Querido Ian,

Enviando saudações marítimas desde Oslo, cidade inda, que eu tenho o prazer de visitar pela primeira vez.

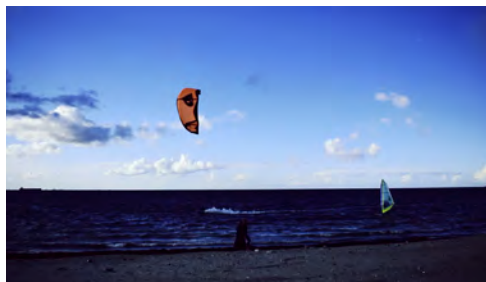
While here I had the great pleasure of watching two productions of the Australian theatre company Back to Back Theatre. They have just received the renowned Ibsen Award. In their productions, they deal with issues concerning structures of power. The company is composed of talented neuro-diverse actors.

Edward Munch's "Starry Night" kisses to you.

Yours,

Iury

**VIDEO: KITE SURFER IN RIBERS-
BORGSTRANDEN**



**SONG "A MULHER BARBADA", BY ADRIANA CALCANHOTTO AND LOS
HERMANOS. ALBUM: CANTADA, 2002.**

Com o que será que sonha
A mulher barbada?
Será que no sonho ela salta
Como a trapezista?
Será que sonhando se arrisca
Como o domador?
Vai ver ela só tira a máscara
Como o palhaço
O que será que tem
O que será que hein?
O que será que tem a perder
A mulher barbada?

/

What does the bearded woman
Dream about?
Does she leap in her dreams
Like a trapeze artist?
Does she take risks in her dreams
Like a lion tamer?
Maybe she just takes off her mask
Like a clown.
What could it be?
What could it be, huh?
What does the bearded woman
Have to lose?

**LIVE PRESENCE: IURY THROWING A ROPE ACROSS THE STAGE TO IAN.
BAREFOOT, THEY CROSS THE STAGE, BALANCING THEMSELVES ON
THE ROPE.**

**IURY READS FROM CLARICE LISPECTOR'S "CORRESPONDENCES"
LETTER: FROM CLARICE LISPECTOR TO LÚCIO CARDOSO
TRANSLATION PROJECTED:**

A Lúcio Cardoso
Berna, 13 de Agosto de 1947

Lúcio,
Realmente tem muita gente e muita coisa envelhecendo, isso me
assusta. Contanto que isso nunca suceda a você, caro Lúcio. E nunca
sucederá. Mesmo o Teatro de Câmera mostra que você está jovem do
mesmo jeito. E você tem bem razão de não querer sair do Brasil. Se sair,
que seja por pouco tempo, só para dar uma espiada, e voltar. É ruim
estar fora da terra onde a gente se criou, é horrível ouvir ao redor da
gente línguas estrangeiras, tudo parece sem raiz; o motivo maior das
coisas nunca se mostra a um estrangeiro, e os moradores de um lugar
também nos encaram como pessoas gratuitas. Para mim, se foi bom,
como um remédio é bom para a saúde, ver outros lugares e outras pes-
soas, já há muito está passando do bom, está no ruim nunca pensei ser
tao inadatável (*sic*), nunca pensei que precisava tanto das coisas que

posso. Embora agora mesmo esteja envergonhada de ser assim, porque enquanto escrevo a catedral está batendo os sinos; fico envergonhada de não viver bem em qualquer lugar onde uma catedral bata sinos, onde haja um rio, onde as pessoas trabalhem e façam compras; mas é assim mesmo.

(...)

Escreva, Lúcio, é muito bom. Aqui estou esperando, com muita saudade mesmo.

Clarice.

Acho que em setembro iremos em férias a Espanha e Portugal. Você quer alguma coisa de lá? Eu posso arranjar, e mandar com o primeiro portador.

To Lucio Cardoso

Bern, August 13th, 1947

Lucio,

There really are a lot of people and a lot of things getting old, it scares me. As long as it never happens to you, dear Lucio. And it never will. Even the Camera Theater shows that you are young just the same. And you are right not to want to leave Brazil. If you do, let it be for a short time, just to have a look around, and then come back. It feels weird to be outside the land where you grew up, it is horrible to hear foreign languages around you, everything seems rootless; the main reason for things to be they are is never shown to a foreigner, and the locals also see you as a useless person. For me, if it was good, like a medicine is good for health, to see other places and other people, it has long since passed the good, it feels bad now. I never thought I would be so unattainable (sic), I never thought I would need the things I own so much. Although right now I am ashamed of being this way, because as I write the cathedral is ringing its bells; I am ashamed that I don't live well in any place where a cathedral is ringing bells, where there is a river, where people work and shop; but that's the way it is.

(...)

Write, Lúcio, it feels very good. Here I am waiting, really missing you.

Clarice.

I think that in September we will go on vacation to Spain and Portugal.

Do you want anything from there? I can arrange it and send it with the first carrier.

**IURY AND IAN LIGHT THREE CANDLE. THEY WATCH THEM BURN.
YELLOW LIGHT**

MARIA BETHÂNIA (VOICE OFF)

**POEM “UMA PEQUENINA LUZ”, DE JORGE SENA, VERSÃO MARIA
BETHANIA, ALBUM NOTURNO, 2021.**

Uma pequenina luz bruxuleante
Não na distancia brilhando no extremo da estrada
Aqui no meio de nós
E a multidão em volta
Uma pequenina luz
Brilhando incerta mas brilhando
Aqui no meio de nós
Entre o bafo quente da multidão
E a ventania do cerros e a brisa dos mares
E o sopro azedo dos que não a vêem
Só a advinham e raivosamente assopram
Uma pequena luz
Que vacila exata, firme
Que não ilumina, apenas brilha
Silenciosa não crepita
Não consome, não custa dinheiro,
Apenas brilha, ondeia
Indefectível próxima dourada
Uma pequenina luz bruxuleante e muda
Como a exatidão, como a firmeza
Como a justiça, brilha
Não na distancia
Aqui no meio de nós
Brilha

/

A tiny flickering light
Not in the distance shining at the end of the road
Here among us
And the crowd around
One tiny light
Shining uncertain but shining
Here among us
Among the hot breath of the crowd
And the wind from the hills and the breeze from the seas
And the sour breath of those who don't see it
They only guess it and angrily blow it away (off?)
A little light
That wavers exact, firm
That does not illuminate, only shines
Silent, it does not crackle
Doesn't consume, doesn't cost
Just shines, wavers
Indubitable, close, golden
A tiny, flickering, muted light
Like accuracy, like firmness
Like justice, it shines
Not in the distance
Here among us
It shines

The End

Interlude II

Letter to my maternal kin in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro (2024)

Råbylille, island of Møn,
Denmark, December 31, 2024.

Dear Family,

Every investigation begins with a question.

Looking at cousin Ana Mary's photo on the social media platform, I deeply wanted to know: who is this person who physically resembles my beloved Voinha? How can it be that we look so much alike, yet we know nothing (or almost nothing) about each other? How and when did we lose sight of each other? Or have we ever actually seen each other? Which mirror is this that shows me someone so similar and, at the same time, so foreign? Could it be that the blood that flows in this voluminous river in the north of Voinha is the same one that breaks on the shore of this southeastern sea where I was born and raised?

It is from this standpoint that my boat sets sail. Sailing on these waters, I want to hear not only your voices and stories, but also the different sounds produced at this aquatic crossroads where we float.

"Within the sea a river."

What's within us?

On June 2nd, 2025, I leave Copenhagen, Denmark, for a 20-day trip to Rio de Janeiro and Manaus, Brazil. In both cities, I intend to become a little more familiar with the essence of our family. In these different geographies, I want to retrace the various parts of Voinha's migration story, a story that she gradually forgot in the last years of her physical existence due to dementia, before she passed away on April 6th, 2022, at the age of 100 years old.

A voyage to a known land and another unknown, to a region of Brazil located more than 4000 kilometers from Rio de Janeiro, my hometown. Both Belém, the capital of Pará, the city where Voinha was born and raised, and Manaus, the capital of the state of Amazonas, where you live, are very far removed from the reality of my childhood and adolescence in southeastern Brazil in the 1980s.

My aim is to travel back along our family's old migration route to discover something new about myself, about you, about our ancestry and, ultimately, about how to deal with the ever-present symptoms of violence, machismo, discrimination, misogyny, queerphobia, and classicism, symptoms that forced both Voinha's migration from Belém to Rio de Janeiro during the Second World War, and my own migration from Rio de Janeiro to Doha, Qatar, in the Middle East, and then to different cities in Germany, Denmark and Sweden in Europe at the beginning of the 21st century.

My research will focus mainly on the power of words and the sounds produced in these spaces of foreign intimacy. My aim is to create a sound installation composed of the voices of four uncles and aunts; two who were born in Belém before Voinha migrated: aunt Arlete and uncle Josias, and two born in Rio de Janeiro after Voinha migrated there: uncle Arlindo and aunt Iza. I will travel first to Rio de Janeiro and then to Manaus to interview a generation of our family deeply marked by my grandmother's migratory trajectory.

My intention is to create a space where some members of our blood family, represented by their voices and perspectives, can coexist, can start a conversation and, in this way, contribute to the regeneration of our relationships. As some of you were left behind in Belém when Voinha fled to Rio de Janeiro to escape the gender-based violence she suffered, I have the feeling that a divide has been established in our family genealogy. I want to contribute to creating a link, a bridge in our family tree, thus exploring the various perspectives that make up our origins. In connection with previous work carried out within and outside my doctoral studies at Lund University in Sweden, in which I delved into the history of Voinha, I will investigate a more complex and critical perspective of my maternal grandmother's migratory journey.

I would like to know if you, dear family, would be interested in participating in this investigation, to be carried out under the form of an informal interview that I would conduct with you during my stay in Manaus in June 2025. Please feel free to reply to this letter, expressing your desire to participate or not. Thank you in advance for your attention.

In any case, I am very happy to meet you soon.

Happy New Year!

Love and kisses,

Iury

/

Råbylille, ilha de Møn,
Dinamarca, 31 de dezembro de 2024.

Querida família,

Toda investigação se inicia com uma pergunta.

Ao olhar a fotografia da prima Ana Mary na plataforma de mídia social, eu quis profundamente saber: quem é essa pessoa que, fisicamente, tanto se assemelha com minha amada Voinha? Como pode ser que nos parecemos tanto, porém nada (ou quase nada) sabemos uma da outra? Como e quando foi que nos perdemos de vista? Ou será que de fato nunca nos vimos? Que espelho é esse que me mostra alguém tão similar e, ao mesmo tempo, tão estrangeiro? Será que o sangue que corre nesse rio volumoso do norte de Voinha é o mesmo que quebra na costa desse mar do sudeste onde nasci e fui criada?

É a partir desse ponto que parte o meu barco. Navegando nessas águas, eu desejo escutar não somente as vozes e histórias de vocês, mas também os diferentes sons produzidos nessa encruzilhada aquática onde flutuamos.

“Dentro do mar tem rio.”

Dentro de nós tem o quê?

No dia 02 de junho de 2025, parto de Copenhague, na Dinamarca, rumo a uma viagem de 20 dias para o Rio de Janeiro e Manaus, no Brasil. Em ambas as cidades, pretendo me familiarizar um pouco mais com a essência da nossa família. Nessas diferentes geografias, desejo remontar as diversas partes da história de migração de Voinha, história essa que ela gradualmente esqueceu nos últimos anos de sua existência física devido ao mal de demência, antes de falecer no dia 06 março de 2022, aos 100 anos de idade.

Uma viagem a uma terra conhecida e a outra desconhecida, a uma região do Brasil situada a mais de 4.000 quilômetros do Rio de Janeiro, minha cidade natal. Tanto Belém, capital do Pará, cidade onde Voinha nasceu e se criou, quanto Manaus, capital do estado do Amazonas, onde vocês vivem, estão muito distantes da realidade da minha infância e adolescência no sudeste brasileiro durante os idos de 1980.

Meu objetivo é viajar de volta ao longo da antiga rota de migração da nossa família para descobrir algo novo sobre mim mesma, sobre vocês, sobre nossa ancestralidade e, em última análise, sobre como lidar com os sintomas ainda presentes de violência, machismo, discriminação, misoginia e classicismo, sintomas esses que forçaram tanto a migração de Voinha de Belém para o Rio de Janeiro durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial, quanto a minha própria migração do Rio de Janeiro para Doha, Qatar, no Oriente Médio e, em seguida, para a Alemanha, Dinamarca e Suécia, na Europa, no início do século XXI.

Minha investigação se concentrará principalmente no poder das palavras e nos sons produzidos nesses espaços de intimidade estrangeira. Meu objetivo é criar uma instalação sonora composta pelas vozes de quatro tios e tias; dois nascidos em Belém antes da migração de Voinha: tia Arlete e tio Josias, e dois nascidos no Rio de Janeiro depois que Voinha migrou para essa cidade: tio Arlindo e tia Iza. Viajo primeiro para o Rio de Janeiro e depois para Manaus para entrevistar uma geração da nossa família profundamente marcada pela trajetória migratória da minha avó.

Minha intenção é criar um espaço onde alguns membros da nossa família de sangue, representados por suas vozes e perspectivas, possam coexistir, possam iniciar uma conversa e, dessa forma, contribuir para a regeneração de nossos relacionamentos. Como alguns de vocês foram deixados em Belém quando Voinha fugiu para o Rio de Janeiro tentando escapar da violência de gênero que ela sofria, tenho a sensação de que um corte se estabeleceu na genealogia da nossa família. Quero contribuir para criar uma ligação, uma ponte em nossa árvore genealógica, explorando assim as diversas perspectivas que formam nossa origem. Em conexão com trabalhos anteriores realizados dentro e fora de meus estudos de doutorado na Universidade de Lund na Suécia, nos quais me aprofundi na história da Voinha, investigarei uma perspectiva mais complexa e crítica da jornada migratória de minha avó materna.

Gostaria de saber se vocês, querida família, estariam interessados em participar dessa investigação, a ser realizada sob a forma de uma entrevista informal que eu realizaria com vocês durante minha estadia em Manaus em junho de 2025. Por favor, sintam-se à vontade para responder a essa carta, expressando o desejo de participar ou não.

Desde já agradeço a atenção de vocês.
De qualquer maneira, estou muito feliz por encontrar vocês nesse
novo ano que se inicia.

Feliz ano novo!

Um beijo carinhoso,

Iury

Chapter IV. Genealogies

What narratives have been historically pushed to a place of silence? How can we engage those gaps and be attuned to forms of silence or silencing that often correspond to colonial or repressive projects? A lot of our recent work has been attending to stories born from our family's experience of migration, which are also tethered to macro phenomena or politics. (Arteaga, 2025, p. 219)



Aunt Naíza. © Neida Salustiano Barbosa Leite. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 20th, 2025.

AUNT NAÍZA

Voinha was a very special person, our lady. I took care of her, all of us did, right? Of course. But since I'm very, how do you say it? Sentimental. Anything would make me cry about Voinha. And then, wow, I would hug her, squeeze her tight, tell her how much I loved her, that we did everything for her. She knows that. Even though she was in that nursing home, we would show up there by surprise to see if she was being treated well. So, I would say, stay here a little longer, Mum, with me. Give me some more affection and I'll give you more love too. I miss her, I miss her a lot, even though she passed away at practically 101 years old. But we have this thing about hugging, feeling. But the love remains the same, she's just in another stage. In another place, but the love remains the same. God willing, one day we'll meet again. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

From Ancestry to Fractured Genealogies: Embodied Memory and the Performance of Belonging

This chapter turns toward genealogy as a field of discontinuity, embodied memory, and affective inheritance. While the preceding chapter examined correspondence as a method for creating relations across distance, the present one moves toward the relations already embedded within familial, migratory, material, and spiritual histories. It asks how ancestral knowledge might be accessed when it does not present itself as a coherent narrative, a stable archive, or an uninterrupted line of descent.

The genealogical inquiry developed here begins with a recognition that ancestry cannot be reduced to biological inheritance. Within the framework of this investigation, ancestry expands beyond the strictly familial and becomes a multidirectional field of relations connecting bodies, places, objects, memories, more-than-human entities, and historical forces. Knowledge may be transmitted through oral testimony, bodily gesture, sonic vibration, material objects, ecological environments, and affective encounters. The ancestral therefore emerges not only from what has been consciously preserved, but also from what persists through the body, through silence, repetition, and through the material environments in which lives have unfolded.

This expanded understanding of ancestry is grounded in the scholarship of Martins (2021), whose theorization of corporeal knowledge and oral transmission provides an important framework for this research. In this context, the body is not merely an instrument through which knowledge is expressed. It is itself an archive: a site upon which histories are inscribed and through which knowledge is transmitted. Movement, voice, rhythm, ritual, and sensory experience consequently become forms of inscription that exceed the boundaries of conventional textual archives.

The chapter is also concerned with bodies and narratives that resist coherence. Across the artistic experiments discussed in this thesis, I encounter bodies affected by migration, violence, addiction, neurodivergence, dementia, illness, discrimination, abandonment, and memory loss. These bodies do not necessarily produce transparent or continuous accounts of themselves. They pause, repeat, disorient, forget, withdraw, contradict themselves, and refuse the demands of linear

representation. Their fractured narratives are therefore not treated as methodological failures but as forms of knowledge in their own right.

In this respect, the chapter enters into dialogue with Hans-Thies Lehmann's (1999/2006) theorization of corporeality within the Post Dramatic theatre. The body is approached not primarily as a vehicle for the transmission of a predetermined meaning, but as a material presence whose intensities, gestures, silences, and fractures generate meaning through their very resistance to transparency. The body becomes a site of knowledge precisely because it cannot always be fully translated into language.

The central theoretical framework for this genealogical investigation, however, is provided by Michel Foucault's (1977) distinction between *Herkunft* and *Entstehung*. Foucault's genealogy does not seek to recover an original, pure, or unified source. Instead, it attends to the dispersed marks, accidents, deviations, conflicts, and ruptures through which identities and histories emerge. This understanding is particularly significant for a research project concerned with migration and inheritance. My own genealogical trajectory cannot be traced as a stable line, extending from one origin to another. It is constituted by movements, displacements, ruptures, absences, and encounters across geographical and temporal distances.

The investigation into my grandmother Voinha's migration from the northern region of Brazil to Rio de Janeiro consequently became central to this inquiry. Her life exposed the fractures through which genealogy is transmitted: domestic violence, forced marriage, migration, separation from children, economic precarity, labor, resilience, and the formation of new familial bonds. Her history does not simply provide an ancestral origin story. Rather, it reveals a series of ruptures whose consequences continue to reverberate across generations.

The same genealogical tensions are also present in my relationship with my father, whose military career shaped the geography of my childhood and whose physical and emotional absences became formative experiences within my own development. The juxtaposition between these two figures—my father and my grandmother—generated the affective and dramaturgical architecture of *A Backyard of Affections*. The performance became a site in which contradictory forms of inheritance could be brought into contact: authority and tenderness, absence and presence, violence and care, repression and freedom.

This chapter therefore moves between theoretical investigation, autoethnographic research, performance, filmmaking, oral testimony, material culture, and more-than-human encounters. These different modes of inquiry are not presented as separate methodological stages. Rather, they constitute a constellation of practices through which genealogical knowledge becomes accessible. The investigation proceeds through questioning, listening, reenactment, embodied performance, interaction with objects, ecological attunement, and sonic and visual composition.

The chapter begins by establishing the conceptual framework of expanded and fractured genealogy. It then examines the performance *A Backyard of Affections*, in which the genealogical tensions between my father and Voinha were staged through reenactment, spatial mapping, multimedia projection, water, costume, voice, and autobiographical narrative. The inquiry subsequently moved toward the investigation of Voinha's migration history and the methodological role of questioning and active listening. Finally, through the short documentary film *Quintal de Voinha*, this research extended genealogical inquiry beyond the human interlocutor and toward the material and ecological environments that continue to hold traces of ancestral life.

Genealogy, in this chapter, is therefore not a return to an origin. It is an encounter with what remains unresolved. It is a practice of listening to the gaps, following the ruptures, and attending to the ways in which histories continue to move through bodies, objects, places, and relationships. The ancestral does not appear here as a stable past waiting to be recovered. It emerges as a living and fractured field of relations through which the present continues to be shaped.

Expanded Ancestry

A foundational pillar of this research is the conceptualization of research as the excavation of an immemorial past. This inquiry investigates ancestral temporalities, relationships, and bonds that may originate within familial lineages but, ultimately, transcend them, expanding into an infinite temporal horizon. The ancestral dimension of this methodology resides precisely in this radical expansion of what constitutes ancestry. At its core, the investigation establishes multidirectional dialogues with diverse ancestral lines—positioning the researcher to interrogate, listen, and engage in multi-media exchanges

that foster rhizomatic interconnections. Driven by a reflexive imperative to uncover deep internal issues, this practice catalyzes personal and collective transformation. Crucially, this transformation regenerates the subjects involved through kindred, reciprocal relations; reciprocity functions as the primary mechanism in this ancestral operation. Even during phases of solitary introspection, this study operates acoustically—as a voice echoing through space and time, or a vibration moving through the air. This focus on bodily and sonic movements correlates directly with Martins’ theorization of orality and the somatic transmission of knowledge among Indigenous populations in Brazil:

Just as with forest peoples, the production, inscription, and dissemination of knowledge took place primarily through bodily performances—rituals, songs, dances, and synesthetic and kinetic ceremonies. Through these, a wealth of knowledge was transmitted via the moving body and its vocal expressions, ranging from the simplest behaviors, practical expressions, and daily habits to the most sophisticated techniques, forms, cognitive processes, and abstract and sophisticated ways of thinking, including cosmological perception and philosophy. (Martins, 2021, p. 36, my translation)

Methodologically, this inquest emerges directly from the lived body and its deep, constitutive relations with the natural world. This anchoring treats the body not as a passive instrument, but as a site of historical inscription and ecological interrelations. Martins conceptualizes this somatic archive, concluding: “Do corpo advinha um saber aurático, uma caligrafia rítmica, corpora de conhecimento” [From the body stems an auric knowledge, a rhythmic calligraphy, a *corpora* of knowledge; my translation] (p. 36). By embedding the artistic experiments described in this thesis within this theoretical framework, the physical movements and vocal echoes of this method function as a kinetic, multimodal handwriting—a literal rhythmic calligraphy that materializes memory and transmits knowledge beyond the boundaries of Western textual archives.

Across the various artistic experiments created throughout the last four years, I present bodies that resist the demands of classical dramatic representation; the subjectivities I dealt with constitute a site of radical non-sense—a corporeal canvas explicitly affected by neurodivergence, substance dependency, violent discrimination, and the

degenerative decay of memory loss, Dementia, and Alzheimer's disease. Rather than staging an idealized subject, this research explored decaying processes in both mental and physical states: bodies who have lost sensory faculties like hearing, sight, or speech, or bodies that seek solace by retracting from a harsh socio-political reality into dream-states that circumvent the rational world. Here, we encounter the mother who abandons her children, the migrant who severs socio-cultural ties to embark on perilous transcontinental journeys, the addict who leaves his family behind, the wife surviving domestic violence, among others. These bodies are structurally traversed by painful fissures, yet they continue to move, transforming suffering into kinetic resistance and finding joyous, localized achievements in the dark. Consequently, the narratives they emit are intentionally fragmented, defined by structural gaps, spatial disorientation, temporal leaps, and folds. Because these bodies silence, pause, and explicitly refuse to offer a cohesive, transparent account of their trajectories, they manifest a profound correlation with the concept of corporeality outlined by scholar Hans-Thies Lehmann (1999/2006) in his seminal work *Post Dramatic Theatre*. Lehmann theorizes on a performance landscape where the body is liberated from the hegemony of the literary text (logos), presenting instead an autonomous, non-representational presence that signifies through its very fractures, weight, and gestural opacity.

The body comes to occupy the central point not as a bearer of meaning but in its physical substance and gesticulation. The central sign of theatre, the actor's body, refuses the role of the signifier. Generally speaking, postdramatic theatre presents itself as a theatre of a self-sufficient corporeality that is exposed in its intensities, its gestural potentials, its auratic presence and its internal or externally transmitted tensions. Added to this is the presence of the deviant body, which diverges from the norm due to illness, disability or deformation and provokes 'immoral' fascination, unease or fear. (Lehmann, 1999/2006, p. 150)

Lehmann's formulation offers a useful lens through which to understand the corporeal strategies emerging in this research. The bodies encountered here do not communicate through the delivery of complete or transparent narratives; rather, meaning emerges through

fragmentation, interruption, gesture, movement, and the refusal of narrative coherence. Their corporeality becomes a form of knowledge in itself, carrying histories that cannot always be articulated through language. In this sense, silence, disorientation, and fragmentation are not signs of absence or incompleteness, but active dramaturgical conditions through which these bodies resist normative demands for coherence, legibility, and representation.

Fractured Genealogies

The conceptualization of the genealogical aspect I seek to investigate directly refers to Michel Foucault's (1977) precise delineation of *Herkunft* (descent) and *Entstehung* (emergence) in his essay *Nietzsche, Genealogy, History*. Foucault isolates *Herkunft* not as the discovery of a pristine, undisturbed origin (*Ursprung*), but as the excavation of the numberless signs, errors, and faults that maintain a continuous state of historical fracture. This research directly references this understanding of descent by tracing the non-linear, conflicting tensions between my biological, migrational, and spiritual ancestries. It aligns with Foucault's assertion that descent is written on the body, explicitly rejecting a unified identity in order to expose the violent historical traumas—such as the transatlantic slave trade and Indigenous displacement—that formed the socio-historical fabric of Brazil.

Herkunft is the equivalent of stock or *descent*; it is the ancient affiliation to a group, sustained by the bonds of blood, tradition, or social class. The analysis of *Herkunft* often involves a consideration of race or social type. But the traits it attempts to identify are not the exclusive generic characteristics of an individual, a sentiment, or an idea, which permit us to qualify them as 'Greek' or 'English'; rather, it seeks the subtle, singular, and subindividual marks that might possibly intersect in them to form a network that is difficult to unravel. (Foucault, 1977, p. 145)

Furthermore, this research refers to Foucault's concept of *Entstehung* (emergence) as a field of forces and a place of confrontation. By staging these ancestral lineages within contemporary, white Western European contexts, my practice treats performance as the very site of emergence where these historical power struggles are actively confronted. By isolating these two Foucaultian dimensions, this inquiry

grounds its autoethnographic methodology within a rigorous critique of historical continuity. However, while Foucault locates *Herkunft* and *Entstehung* within the gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary analysis of textual archives, this research shifts these references into a somatic, hydro poetic repository. The excavation of descent moves away from written scrolls and refers instead to aquatic terrains—specifically the South Atlantic Ocean and the labyrinthine river networks of Manaus. This fluid framework translates Foucault’s body as the inscribed surface of events into a living conduit of memory, activated through polyphonic testimonies from my grandmother Voinha, my uncles and aunts, and the conversations established with the more-than-human entities. Ultimately, by referencing Foucault’s diagnostic tools of genealogy, the research frames these fragmented, displaced lineages not as static points of heritage, but as a dynamic field of friction.

Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form of all its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents. (Foucault, 1977, p. 146)

The lineage traced here is a Foucauldian field of historical trauma, ruptures, and colonial hegemony, mapped directly onto the displaced migratory body. This research pairs Foucault’s concepts of “counter-memory” with active, polyphonic oral testimonies. Ultimately, it utilizes Foucault’s diagnostic framing of genealogy to analyze past subjugation, while redirecting these fragmented lineages toward a live, regenerative instrument of social sustainability and speculative futures.

A Backyard of Affections

The aforementioned ancestral frictions theorized by Foucault provided the textual foundation for the performance *A Backyard of Affections* (Salustiano Trojaborg & Dahlqvist, 2023) which took the form of a monologue, written and performed by me, directed by PhD Jörgen Dahlqvist, and presented at the Inter Arts Center in Malmö during my 25% doctoral seminar. The work interrogated two polarized affective landscapes: narratives of radical acceptance, centered on my kinship with Voinha, and narratives of structural intolerance, exploring my rigid upbringing within a Navy commander's household.

The scenography of the performance was deliberately sparse, consisting primarily of a large screen that functioned both as a projection surface for video material and as a screen for costume changes. The performance opened with the re-enactment of a difficult message exchange I had had with my father in 2018. In this re-enactment, I recounted and embodied aspects of my father's strict military personality, including mimicking the uniform associated with his position as an admiral in the Brazilian Navy Force.

To translate autoethnographic data into a live performance framework, Dahlqvist and I structured a spatial taxonomy of temporal-localities. We assigned each city from my migratory history to a chair of distinct shape and color, transforming the stage into a physical map of my displaced subjectivity. At each station, I transitioned across multiple subject positions, channeling the voices of both my father Sonilon and my grandmother Voinha. This staging generated a dynamic cross-temporal scenography. By blending dramatic tension with comedic subversion, I re-enacted, among others, the fears of abandonment that shaped my childhood and adolescence. The first section of the performance functioned as an act of embodiment and inner exploration, driven by an ambition to step into my father's perspective and to embody his experiences from within.



Image created as part of the performance *A Backyard of Affections*. © Jörgen Dahlqvist. Malmö, Sweden, May 4th, 2023.

Story 1: Salvador, Bahia

I was born in July 1979 during the Brazilian military dictatorship in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, though my parents were not living in Rio at the time of my birth, but in Salvador, capital of the state of Bahia, a city located 1600 kilometers away from Rio. They were living there at that time because my father joined the Marine Corps at a young age, which meant he was often transferred from one city to another, as he moved up through the ranks over the course of his nearly lifelong navy career. That also meant that my father would spend a great deal of time joining military expeditions far away from home and his family. Sometimes for several months at a time.

My parents used to tell me this story: Right before my birth, my mother decided to travel to Rio so that I would be born in the same city where both my parents had been born, conferring, in this way, the proud citizenship of another carioca to the family. That's what Brazilians call people who are born in Rio de Janeiro: carioca, with a sense of central-southern pride. In order to make the story of my birth even more grandiose, they used to tell me that this was my first plane trip, crossing Brazilian skies some 35,000 feet above the ground in my mother's womb, just to become a carioca. I used to love this story when I was a kid and spread it widely among my friends in school. But many years later, I learned that this was a one-sided version of the story. Another version is that my mother flew to Rio so that she and I would be assisted by my grandmother and my aunts during the first weeks following my birth, rather than my mother being left alone in Salvador, a city she had just moved to where she didn't know anyone. (Salustiano Trojaborg & Dahlqvist, 2023)

In a multimedia layout in the second section of the performance, we positioned Voinha as an active, center-stage presence via video projection, underlying how her accepting presence throughout my life functioned as a counter point to the hardships I have faced in a lifetime relationship with a homophobic and abusive father. Exploring the material possibilities of an eco-scenography, Dahlqvist and I integrated literal water onto the stage to engineer a ritualistic bathing sequence, as a representation of the many ocean waters I have navigated during my migration journey. Within this performative watery architecture, I submerge myself in a bathtub while a concurrent multimedia projection displays a film of Voinha and me in her backyard in Rio de Janeiro.

This staging generated a cross-temporal and transoceanic juxtaposition. The physical immediacy of the cold northern waters in the theatre directly collides with the warm, projected digital archive of my grandmother's tropical landscape, effectively fusing my present geographic location with our shared maternal history. This scene culminated in an acoustic reclamation: it concluded with ancestral music played and sung live by my former capoeira master Thiago Samambaia and I—a lineage of knowledge I accessed through long-term engagement with capoeira in Berlin—thereby bridging my past training with the live, immediate present of the research outcome.



Image from *Interview with Voinha: I am the Owner of Myself*,
© Ulrik Trojaborg. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. September, 2018.

Through reenactment, storytelling, and the interplay between live performance and recorded material, the work investigated family relationships, inheritance, and the ways in which personal identity is shaped through encounters with significant others.

Questioning and Listening: An Attempt to Investigate Voinha's Migration Journey

While examining my own migratory trajectory, it became evident that my movement is characterized by a biographical continuity with the migration paths of my biological ancestors. This self-reflexive journey led me back to reflect on my time living in Rio de Janeiro, the city of my birth, and in Salvador, my earliest residence. At this juncture, I experienced an immediate realization: this was not the conclusion of my inquiry, but rather the threshold of a deeper genealogical investigation. This shift prompted a focused study into the migratory path of my maternal grandmother, Voinha, revealing that while her trajectory was singular, it was fundamentally shaped by the structural remnants of Brazil's transition from a violent colonial territory to a post-colonial republic.

Voinha's history embodies the exact painful holes and fractured narratives that the performance *A Backyard of Affections* sought to somatically stage. Her lived experience began with the childhood trauma of her father's fatal accident, followed by forced integration into a highly volatile household governed by an authoritarian stepfather. Refusing to subjugate herself to his absolute rule, she was punitively forced into an arranged marriage at the age of fourteen. This secondary domestic sphere replicated the initial violence; her husband weaponized alcohol, physical assaults, and sexual coercion, resulting in four pregnancies over four years of marriage. Voinha's response to this systematic entrapment was a profound rupture: in 1945, she enacted a clandestine flight. Sailing by steamship to Rio de Janeiro during World War II, she severed ties with her husband and her four children. This foundational displacement is the source of the intergenerational gaps, silences, and temporal folds that this study actively interrogates.

One of the foundational outcomes of this investigation was the essay *Questioning and Listening: An Attempt to Investigate Voinha's Migration Journey* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2023) where I analyzed how the methodological tools of questioning and active listening facilitated the excavation of the personal and geopolitical motivations behind my grandmother's 1945 migration from Ananindeua and Belém to Rio de Janeiro. Investigating the legacy of Voinha (1921–2022) clarifies that her life served as an ancestral compass, structurally shaping the fluid, diasporic path I would navigate across the South Atlantic decades later. In this scholarly contribution, the synthesis of critical questioning and radical listening functioned as a catalyst for reclaiming epistemic agency, allowing an oppressed subject to articulate her own narrative. This process fostered feminist dramaturgies that highlight self-empowerment as a subversive tool against the patriarchal and colonial frameworks through which Brazilian national identity has historically been constructed.

I consider it important here to offer some political context for a better comprehension of the migration path Voinha trailed. Following the premises imposed by the European colonial project, the construction of Brazil as a colony and its subsequent development into a nation-state was based on exploitation and discharge: the initial (failed)

attempt to enslave native peoples gave way to the Atlantic slave trade era (approximately from 1526 to 1867), where over four hundred years Brazil imported more enslaved African individuals than any other Western country (an estimated total of five million). The use of this human resource following an inhumane perspective, extracting all possible energy from a body, extenuating it and finally discharging it, is ingrained in the Brazilian structural concept of labour.

Once the enslavement of African individuals was officially abolished (1888), Brazilian elites required cheap workmanship to reassure the continuation of the colonial project. Important to mention is that there were no reparations provided for the newly emancipated slaves (on the contrary, those who received governmental economic reparations were the slave owners). This provoked a mass exodus of freed slaves and peasants from the north and northeast to the rapidly changing and industrializing southeast region of the country from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century and onwards, extending exploitation and subjugation by abusive working conditions to a national level. My maternal grandmother was only one among many individuals who got caught up in this abusive pattern, a pattern very much characterized by the usual contradictions embedded in the history of the formation of Brazil as a country. (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2023)

This historical context situates Voinha's migration within broader structures of coloniality, racialized labour, regional inequality, and gendered displacement. Her journey was therefore both a singular family history and part of longer trajectories of movement and survival shaped by Brazil's colonial and postcolonial formations. Bringing these histories into the research does not reduce Voinha's experience to a representation of a broader social condition; rather, it allows her particular trajectory to become a point of entry into the complex relations between ancestry, migration, gender, and belonging that *this study* investigates.

Quintal de Voinha

By the end of my first year of doctoral studies, I recognized the need to formulate a distinct dramaturgical framework. This method was conceived not as a static structure, but as an active, fluid operation of spa-

tio-temporal becoming that could accommodate the non-linear trajectories of ancestral memory. There is an undeniable ontological link between one's identities and the specific environments one inhabits. This conviction led me to return to Voinha's first residence in Rio de Janeiro, nine months after her passing. I sensed that if a liminal channel for communication with her still existed, it would be found within that specific geography—particularly in the backyard, a space defined by the botanical legacy of the plants and trees she had personally cultivated. In December 2022, upon returning to my maternal grandmother Voinha's foundational residence in Nova Iguaçu, Rio de Janeiro, the very specific site of our final in-person encounter in 2018, I initiated conversations with the more-than-human entities inhabiting that space, utilizing the garden's ecology as a translational medium to bridge the divide between our respective worlds.

In collaboration with filmmaker Hilnando Mendes and director of photography Lucas Vaz, the short documentary entitled *Quintal de Voinha* (Voinha's Backyard), which served as a visual record of my inquiry into ancestral spaces, came alive. The film premiered on September 23rd, 2023, at the Inter Arts Center as part of the Malmö Gallery Weekend (Malmö Theatre Academy, 2023). The production of the short film serves as a case study in navigating the material and emotional volatility of autoethnographic fieldwork. Operating with a single day shooting budget highlighted the immense financial chasm separating independent cinema from the performing arts. Beyond logistics, the project encountered severe ethical and emotional friction. Conducting this research only nine months after my grandmother's death required a rigorous negotiation of boundaries, as my scholarly objectives directly intersected with my family's immediate mourning. This tension materialized when access to Voinha's former home was restricted by my aunt until the eve of production. Denied the opportunity for spatial pre-planning, a pre-written script became impossible. Instead, the dramaturgy was generated through site-specific improvisation, adapting instantly to structural hazards: pervasive sonic pollution from the surrounding neighborhood and a sudden, torrential storm that disrupted the shooting. Within this high-stakes landscape, Mendes suggested a critical shift: placing my own body on screen, thereby forcing me to somatically embody the very displacement I was investigating.

Quintal de Voinha (Salustiano Trojaborg & Mendes, 2023) functioned as a phenomenological search for Voinha's presence, seeking to initiate an ancestral dialogue by attuning to the sonic and material environment of her former home. This inquiry into intergenerational exchange was grounded in the agency of the soil, the local flora, the wind, and a critical piece of material culture: Voinha's sewing machine, an object that served as a mnemonic anchor for her labor and lived experience. My autoethnographic filmmaking explored the agency of objects to bridge cognitive fractures caused by trauma and aging. In *Quintal de Voinha*, my interaction with my grandmother's vintage sewing machine demonstrates this material methodology.

Concerning the dramaturgy, the film is divided into three parts: the documentary opens with me establishing contact with the sewing machine that allowed my grandmother to become an independent industrial seamstress in the face of a challenging crossroads: having being abandoned by her husband with the task of raising eleven children on her own: nine from her most recent marriage with my grandfather Armando Salustiano in Rio de Janeiro, plus two children she managed to bring from her previous marriage in Belém. The cabinet where the sewing machine is inserted is opened up, and together with it, my grandmother's life is exposed, as if a box of Pandora is opened, exposing the most intimate secrets and intimacies.

Back in 2018, during our final interview, when Voinha was 97 years old and navigating the deep memory erasures of dementia, the machine served as a crucial repository of her life script. Because traditional oral history methods fail in the face of cognitive decline, this piece of memorabilia functioned as a structural prompt. The object triggered a profound activation: Voinha recognized it, stating that sewing had fundamentally changed her life, and began to unearth testimonies of the labor required to sustain her family. The machine was quite literally a prosthetic extension of her body, the industrial tool that enabled a single woman to raise eleven children independently. By 2022, in the posthumous phase of this research, the physical artifact transformed once more. In her absence, the machine became a site-specific archive, catalyzing my own performance of memory and artistic reclamation.

In the film's second act, the dramaturgy shifts toward a spiritual methodology. I deploy live singing to bridge the physical absence of my grandmother, utilizing the voice as an acoustic link to her memory.

Simultaneously, the backyard plants are activated as more-than-human collaborators—material portals that open up an ancestral geography. Water functions as the connective tissue of this act, manifesting across multiple registers: it is embedded in the lyrics of the song I sing, staged through a visceral somatic ritual where I submerge my head in a bucket, and expressed through an emotionally charged, frenzied watering of the pants. The fluid and acoustic elements engineered in this backyard served as the direct conceptual blueprint for my 2025 sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*, proving that site-specific film can function as a primary data source for future sound design.

The final act scales down to a delicate interaction with the machine's surface, introducing a single leaf to negotiate the boundary between the living and the dead. I utilize a concluding vocal sequence to perform a closing ritual, anchoring the spiritual portal while maintaining our relational bond. The film closes with Voinha's own words: an excerpt from her final living interview. When Voinha states that sewing changed her life, the film transcends personal mourning to become an official, political archive of matriarchal resilience. The sewing machine bridges two distinct methodological phases: my 2018 embodied dialogue with Voinha's living body, and my 2022 ritual engagement with her ancestral memory. This comparative narrative demonstrates the evolving agency of the physical artifact across time. The object serves as the core case study for my concept of material methodology, which I define as the fluid phenomenological transactions between a practitioner and a physical item, wherein the object acts as a co-performer capable of shifting its meaning based on its relational activation. My autoethnographic design encountered a stark material constraint when my aunts denied me permission to export the machine to the Malmö Theatre Academy. Rather than halting the project, this logistical refusal forced me to pivot. It demanded that I investigated the absence of the physical object, steering my creative methodology toward speculative, digital, or sonic forms of memory preservation.

A final reflection on the genesis of *Quintal de Voinha* centers on the methodological friction encountered while engaging with a medium I had never previously operationalized: film. Navigating this unfamiliar moving-image format yielded two critical realizations. First, it highlighted the absolute necessity of acquiring foundational technical literacies when adopting foreign media frameworks. The post-produc-

tion of this short documentary proved to be a Sisyphean endeavor, spanning six months of acute creative frustration. This strain was exacerbated by transcontinental logistical barriers, as the film editor and I resided on different continents, severely fracturing our collaborative narrative construction. I frequently experienced a sense of profound vulnerability and communicative paralysis; while I resisted certain editorial choices, I lacked the technical vocabulary and specialized knowledge required to articulate alternative formal propositions.

Second, it was precisely through this and arduous editing process that I recognized the transformative agency of sound within a narrative landscape. I realized that aural design does not merely support the image, but injects an entirely independent, multi-layered narrative dimension. This pivotal moment fundamentally redirected my doctoral trajectory: sound shifted from a secondary element to my primary site of artistic and epistemological inquiry. Ultimately, this paradigm shift catalyzed the development of the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*, the methodology and formal architecture of which are critically analyzed in chapters V and VI.



Quintal de Voinha © Hilnando Mendes. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. December, 2022.

IURY: For how long have you had this sewing machine?

VOINHA: For many years.

IURY: Is it almost part of yourself...

VOINHA: Yes. And if I could possess it again...

IURY: You would love it.

VOINHA: I would love it.

IURY: Really?

VOINHA: Yes, I would. I would even get rid of my ordinary life and start sewing professionally again.

IURY: You really enjoy sewing, don't you?

VOINHA: I do; I do.

IURY: Your whole life was about sewing...

VOINHA: I like it, I really like sewing.

CHRISTIAN: What do you think about when you are sewing?

VOINHA: Ah, I have no idea... I only think about changing my life...
get a better life. Sewing changed my life.

IURY: In which sense? How did sewing change your life?

VOINHA: It's because... I got stuck with that sewing machine. It was
exactly like this one.

(Salustiano Trojaborg & Mendes, 2023, my translation)

From Fractured Genealogies to Ancestral Practice

This chapter has examined genealogy as a fractured and embodied field rather than as a coherent line of descent. Through the theoretical framework of Michel Foucault, genealogy has been approached as an investigation into discontinuity, accident, conflict, and emergence. The histories traced throughout the chapter do not lead toward a unified origin. Instead, they reveal the dispersed forces, ruptures, migrations, silences, and affective inheritances through which subjectivities are formed.

The concept of expanded ancestry developed in this research extends genealogical inquiry beyond biological lineage. Through the work of Leda Maria Martins, the body has emerged as a site of rhythmic and embodied knowledge, capable of transmitting histories through movement, voice, ritual, and sensation. Through the work of Hans-Thies Lehmann, corporeality has been approached as a form of presence that does not require narrative coherence in order to produce meaning. Together, these perspectives have allowed me to understand ancestral knowledge as something that may be carried not only through stories, but through bodies, objects, landscapes, sounds, and affective relations.

The encounter with the histories of my grandmother Voinha and my father made this theoretical framework personally and artistically urgent. Their contrasting forms of presence within my life—my grandmother's radical acceptance and my father's authoritarian and frequently absent presence—became two poles within a larger investigation into inheritance. Yet these figures cannot be reduced to opposing symbols. The work of *A Backyard of Affections* revealed the complexity

of genealogical transmission: I carry traces of both, and my identity emerges through the unresolved tensions between them.

The performance consequently became more than an autobiographical account of family history. Through reenactment, spatial mapping, costume, multimedia projection, water, voice, and storytelling, it became a method for accessing the instability of inheritance. By moving between the perspectives of child, adult, daughter, granddaughter, father, and grandmother, I encountered genealogy as a performative process. The past was not reconstructed as something complete. It was repeatedly re-enacted, revised, embodied, and questioned in the present.

The investigation into Voinha's migration journey further demonstrated that genealogical research is inseparable from questions of power. Her life was shaped by patriarchal violence, forced marriage, economic precarity, labour, migration, and the necessity of reinventing herself. Her departure from her first family created a profound rupture that continues to reverberate through the generations that followed. Yet her story cannot be contained within a narrative of victimhood. Through labour, determination, and self-reinvention, she also produced new forms of autonomy and care. Her life therefore embodies the contradictions of genealogical transmission: violence and resilience, abandonment and love, rupture and continuity.

The short film *Quintal de Voinha* extended this inquiry into the material and more-than-human dimensions of ancestry. In the absence of my grandmother's living body, the backyard, the plants, the soil, the wind, the water, and the sewing machine became active participants in the research. The sewing machine demonstrated how an object can shift from being a material possession to becoming a mnemonic and performative archive. Its meaning was not fixed within the object itself but emerged through its changing relationships with Voinha's body, her labour, her memory, and my own attempts to encounter her after death.

This process also produced a significant methodological transformation within this doctoral research. The difficulties encountered in the making and editing of *Quintal de Voinha* redirected my attention toward sound. I began to recognize that the aural dimension of the work possessed an independent dramaturgical force. Sound could

carry memory beyond the image; it could create spatial and temporal relations that were not dependent upon visual representation. The limitations and frustrations of filmmaking consequently became productive. They opened a new methodological and artistic direction that would become central to the subsequent development of the research.

This chapter therefore concludes with genealogy no longer understood as a search for origins, but as an ongoing practice of relation. The ancestral is not located exclusively in the past. It is activated through encounters in the present—with voices, bodies, objects, environments, and absences. To work genealogically is to remain attentive to what has been fractured, silenced, displaced, or forgotten while also recognizing that these fragments continue to generate new forms of knowledge and artistic possibility.

The research now moves from the question of where ancestral knowledge comes from toward the question of how ancestral knowledge can be heard, transformed, and composed. The genealogical fragments encountered in this chapter—Voinha's voice, the sewing machine, the backyard, the waters of migration, the military landscapes of my childhood, and the unresolved voices of family history—become material for a subsequent movement into sound.

The next chapter therefore develops the methodological consequences of this genealogical inquiry. It examines conversation as a relational practice through which knowledge is generated between bodies, rather than extracted from them. If this chapter has traced the fractures through which inheritance becomes visible, the following chapter asks how listening might become a method for entering those fractures. The movement is consequently from genealogy to conversation, from inherited silence to relational exchange, and from the fragmented traces of ancestry toward the sonic composition of memory.

Interlude III

Script of the Performance *A Backyard of Affections* (2023)

IMAGE PROJECTED ON BATHROOM CURTAIN WHILE AUDIENCE ENTERS:

ONCE AUDIENCE IS SEATED: IURY IS DRESSING HERSELF BEHIND CURTAINS. AUDIENCE SEES HER SILHOUETTE ONLY.

ONE NAVY BLUE MILITARY JACKET, MILITARY BOOTS, AND A BLUE AND GREEN BATHING SUIT ARE HANGING IN THE SPACE.



Natureza em Tibirke. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Tibirke, Denmark 2013.

IURY (VOICE OFF):

In 2018, I was 38 years old and I had been living in Berlin for over 5 years. At that point of my life, I had been in a depressive state for one year. I decided then it was finally time to create a performance where I would tackle the lifelong, difficult relationship I had with my father my entire life. The first thing I decided was that the performance should be called *Stories of a Feud* (it appears projected) which would contain short stories, written in the first person, mainly dealing with my rigid upbringing as the daughter of a Navy commander and helicopter pilot in Sao Pedro D' Aldeia, a small town located two hours away from the state capital, Rio de Janeiro. I spent ten significant years of my childhood there and my father still owns the house where my brother and I grew up. Once I started writing the Sao Pedro stories though, I remembered other meaningful stories that had taken place in other cities, such as Salvador, capital of the state of Bahia, where I spent the first year of my life. Then even more stories came to the surface such as those taking place in Aracaju, capital of the state of Sergipe where my father served for two years as the highest maritime authority.

Because these were autobiographical stories told from my point of view, I decided that for the performance, they should be accompanied on the stage by photographs and real memorabilia pertaining to my family. Most of these objects, pieces of clothing, photographs, hand-

written letters, drawings, cassette tapes, etc., are now with my father in the old family house, so I sent him a message to check the possibility of getting access to this material. Here's the answer I received from him:

IURY PLAYS WHATSAPP AUDIO MESSAGE SENT BY SONILON ON OCTOBER 23RD, 2018, 04:11AM:

Iury, o que eu quero dizer é o seguinte, boa noite, eu tenho muita coisa para fazer, cara, é... a sua prioridade não é a minha prioridade, não que eu não queira te ajudar, agora você me faz uma porção de pergunta, quer uma porção de coisa antiga, eu tenho que revirar muita coisa, eu não sei qual é a sua ideia, eu não entendo perfeitamente essa ideia de performance, são umas coisas que não são do meu mundo, bicho, o meu mundo é diferente, o meu mundo é feijão com arroz e pé no chão e cartesiano, então eu posso lhe ajudar, mas não me cobra prazo porque eu não tenho prazo, eu trabalho muito bicho, eu passo mais da metade do mês dentro de um hotel voando o dia inteiro sem tempo para nada, eu tenho pouco tempo em casa então dentro das minhas possibilidades eu vou te ajudar, vou tentar ver isso aí, mas você cismou com um negócio, uma loucura (...)

IURY INTERRUPTS WHEN THE WORD "LOUCURA" COMES UP. THE WORD "LOUCURA" IS PROJECTED ON THE SHOWER CURTAIN.

(...) I haven't understood a thing of what it is you want to make, whose story do you want to tell? Why don't you tell your story instead of mine? Your story is your story, my story is my story; but then you start to mix in my marine corps graduation voyage, my marine corps uniform, plus the photograph of your grandmother. Listen, honestly, this is madness (...)

IURY INTERRUPTS THE MESSAGE WHEN THE WORD "MADNESS" COMES UP. THE WORD "MADNESS" IS PROJECTED ON THE SHOWER CURTAIN.

(...) I will help you in my own time, as much as possible; I cannot just

stop my life, a life already very complicated, just because of a whim of yours (...)

IURY INTERRUPTS AGAIN WHEN THE WORD “WHIM” COMES UP. THE WORD “WHIM IS PROJECTED ON THE SHOWER CURTAIN.

(...) because of this need of yours; so in time I can help you, maybe not at your speed but rather at my speed, my availability. I understood what it is that you want, so I am going to look for it, copy. I just don't understand what my marine corps graduation voyage has to do with your life, what my marine corps uniform has to do with your life (...)

IURY INTERRUPTS THE MESSAGE WHEN THE SENTENCE “I JUST DON’T UNDERSTAND WHAT MY MARINE CORPS GRADUATION VOYAGE HAS TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE, WHAT MY MARINE CORPS UNIFORM HAS TO DO WITH YOUR LIFE” COMES UP. THE SENTENCE IS PROJECTED ON THE SHOWER CURTAIN. FINALLY, SHE PLAYS THE MESSAGE TO THE END.

(...) this is just madness, what you have in your head; I really cannot understand you and you cannot explain it to me, right? So, within my availability, and at my own speed I am going to check what I can do to help you, ok? A goodnight kiss.

IURY PERFORMS THE ANSWER SENT VIA WHATSAPP ON OCTOBER 23RD, 2018, 11:24AM:

Dad, I can explain to you in details the genesis of the performance I intend to create. When you have some free time, call me and I will be more than happy to share my ideas with you. What I am working on right now is not “madness”, as you defined it. It's just an attempt to understand myself through my ancestors. Not everything that one doesn't understand can be named “madness”. Following your logic, I could also call your life and your work “madness”. But I don't, out of the respect I have for you and also for believing that people are different, there are so many different ways of leading one's life and how to exist in this world. And I profoundly respect differences. I thank you in advance for your support and I put myself at your disposition for a conversation about my ideas.

IURY DRESSES MILITARY WITH EVERY STORY AND HAS A COMMENT ON EVERY ACCESSORY: THEY ARE NOT THE ORIGINAL ONES, BUT REPLACEMENTS.

Story 1: Salvador, Bahia

I was born in July 1979 during the Brazilian military dictatorship in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil., though my parents were not living in Rio at the time of my birth, but in Salvador, capital of the state of Bahia, a city located 1600 kilometers away from Rio. They were living there at that time because my father joined the Marine corps at a young age, which meant he was often transferred from one city to another, as he moved up through the ranks over the course of his nearly life-long navy career. That also meant that my father would spend a great deal of time joining military expeditions far away from home and his family. Sometimes for several months at a time.

My parents used to tell me this story: Right before my birth, my mother decided to travel to Rio so that I would be born in the same city where both my parents had been born, adding, in this way, the proud citizenship of another *carioca* to the family. That's what Brazilians call people who are born in Rio de Janeiro: *carioca*, with a sense of central-southern pride. In order to make the story of my birth even more grandiose, they used to tell me that this was my first plane trip, crossing Brazilian skies some 35.000 feet above the ground in my mother's womb, just to become a *carioca*. I used to love this story when I was a kid and spread it widely among my friends in school. But many years later, I learned that this was a one-sided version of the story. Another version is that my mother flew to Rio so that she and I would be assisted by my grandmother and my aunts during the first weeks following my birth, rather than my mother being left alone in Salvador, a city she had just moved to where she didn't know anyone.

This actually happened. My father was traveling when I was born and got to see me only three days after my birth. I had not been made aware of that though. It took me 38 years to learn that my father was absent when my mother gave birth to me. She only revealed it when I asked her about the real reason for the trip to Rio de Janeiro. Then she showed me this picture of our first encounter:

**IURY USES OVERHEAD PROJECTOR
TO DISPLAY THE FOLLOWING
PICTURE OF IURY AND SONILON.**



*Sonilon, Rigel and Iury. © Neida Salustiano Barbosa Leite.
Salvador, Brazil, 1979.*

This photo tells a story I now have trouble believing: the caring father feeding his baby. What I mostly remember from my early years is his absence. It is confusing to me why after all these years, why I still feel my father's absence. And why somewhere deep down I am still looking for his approval. Until when? For how long am I going to allow myself to walk in these shoes of oppression?

Story 2: São Pedro d'Aldeia, Rio de Janeiro

In December 1982, my father was part of the first Brazilian expedition in Antarctica, where he spent four long months away from home. I now understand what a great professional achievement it might have been for him. Back then though, for my mother, my brother and I, it was not the happiest of times. It did however provide me with one of my earliest memories: I was 3 years old and I might have been acting a bit strange because my mother kept asking: "What's going on with you?" I couldn't reply, I didn't know. I couldn't understand my own feelings. That much I remember. After much insistence the only reply I could give was: I miss my father. Yes, despite my strict military upbringing, despite all the chores we had to do every Sunday, such as cleaning the garden, brushing his boots, sweeping the front of the house, washing and polishing both cars etc., despite all those things that I hated so much, those things that kept us from spending Sunday at the beach, I still missed him when he was not around. And he was quite often not around, but involved in military exercises and I remember thinking: what threat are they preparing for? It didn't seem to me that there was any war to prepare for, and the only threat I remember feeling quite vividly was the possibility of losing my father in a helicopter crash. Every now and then there was a helicopter accident in

Sao Pedro D'Aldeia, leaving a military widow and fatherless kids. I still remember one of my classmates, Elson, from the 4th grade. One day somebody came to pick him up early from school. Not long afterwards, I heard my mother talking to someone and soon the whole town knew: Elson's father had been killed in a helicopter crash. That left me sleepless for many nights, thinking my father could be next.

Story 3: Aracaju, Sergipe

It was supposed to be a boat trip. That's how my father had announced it. My brother and I got very excited. But an alarm bell rang in my head as soon as I saw the boat, which was actually a cargo ship. To my childish eyes, a huge one. I was 11 years old and we were living in Aracaju, located some 300 kilometers away from Salvador. Already at that age, I understood that we wouldn't be making a Sunday boat trip on a big ship like that. Something smelled off. There was a lot of wind as I watched the coast slowly disappearing. Everybody seemed to be having a good time while all I thought was: When are we going back? Then something began to appear on the horizon. A black dot that slowly grew larger and larger. My father and the crew started discussing something, but I still couldn't grasp it. Then, right before my eyes, the small black dot became huge: It was an oil platform. I had never seen one before. Then a new announcement was made: the ship would continue its journey into the open sea, so we have to move onto the platform in order to return to land. Nobody had told me that before. I became very nervous. I couldn't accept that betrayal. Imagine a crane hoisting a big block of rock from the ground on a construction site. That's how we were supposed to be transferred from the cargo ship onto the oil platform and then afterwards onto a much smaller ship, that would finally bring us back to land. To safety, as I thought of it. While being hoisted up from the ship by a crane, All I had to hold on to was a thin piece of fishnet placed in front of me. I heard laughter and screams, and I did not dare looking down into the ocean. I felt frozen, paralyzed and betrayed. I was in shock, I would say. To my father though, I preferred to say nothing in order not to awaken his anger.

IURY READS DIDIER ERIBON'S "RETURNING TO REIMS" EXCERPT:

How the traces of what you were as a child, the manner in which you were socialized, persist even when the conditions in which you live as an adult have changed, even when you have worked so hard to keep that past at distance. And so, when you return to the environment from which you came - which you left behind - you are somehow turning back upon yourself, returning to yourself, rediscovering an early self that has been both preserved and denied. Suddenly, in circumstances like these, there rises to the surface of your consciousness everything from which you imagined you had freed yourself and your personality - specifically the discomfort that results from belonging to two different worlds, worlds so far separated from each other that they seem irreconcilable, and yet which coexist in everything that you are. This is a melancholy related to a 'split *habitus* to invoke Bourdieu's wonderful, powerful concept. Strangely enough, it is precisely at the moment in which you try to get past this diffuse and hidden kind of malaise, to get over it, or when you try at least to allay it a bit, that it pushes even more strongly to the fore, and that's when the melancholy associated with it redoubles its force. The feelings involved have always been there, a fact that you discover or rediscover at this key moment; they were lurking deep inside, doing their work, working on you. Is it ever possible to overcome this malaise, to assuage this melancholy?

- Eribon, Didier. "Returning to Reims"

IURY APPEARS IN A COPY OF VOINHA'S ORIGINAL BATHING SUIT:

Somewhen along the way, I realized how painful and difficult it was to create a performance about the struggles I went through with my father during a depressive crisis. I decided then to turn my attention to my maternal grandmother Voinha, a source of love and inspiration throughout my life. A show initially named *Stories of Acceptance* (projected) became in the end *Feliz Aniversário* (Happy Birthday), a celebration of Voinha's 100th birthday, presented at Hebbel am Ufer Theater in Berlin in November 2020.

In December 2022, I went back to Voinha's first address in Rio de Janeiro, the same place where we had last met in September 2018.

Despite the lack of her bodily presence, I searched for traces of her existence and ways of communicating with her by listening to the environment at my disposition. The recordings of our ancestral exchange were based on the knowledge of the soil, of the flora, of the wind and of one particular memorabilia: Voinha's ever-present sewing machine.

Voinha was the first person I met who seemed to exhale a sense of freedom and self-control by not allowing anyone to subjugate her. Already from an early age I longed to be free the way Voinha was. Her mixture of a strong-willed and independent personality with an extremely loving and caring presence was an example for me. Voinha was the first non-binary person I met.

Muito obrigade, Voinha. For showing me a way out.

IURY BATHES HERSELF IN A BATHTUB FILLED WITH WATER.

VIDEO "QUINTAL DE VOINHA", BY HILNANDO MENDES AND IURY SALUSTIANO TROJABORG.

Needless to say that my father never responded to my request, so now I am having to make do with replicas of family tokens. Five years later, I am still trying to tell these stories in order to understand my father and, consequently, myself. Maybe I never will. But I keep on trying.

I am my father, but I am also my grandmother Voinha. I am many others who have crossed my different paths along this long journey of migration. As the genesis of this performance has now taken more than five years, maybe I will need other five to conclude it. Or even fifty and, who knows, five hundred years and a million other stories. So, Salvador, Sao Pedro d'Aldeia, Rio de Janeiro, Aracaju, Doha, Salzburg, München, Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Copenhagen and now Malmö are not only the cities where I've lived, but also where I have gathered experiences. Experiences that keep pushing me forward. Off I go.

IURY AND THIAGO SAMAMBAIA PERFORM THE SONG "MARANHÃO" TOGETHER.

THE END

Chapter V. Conversation as Method

Speaking and listening are inextricable. Both are forms of mind-reading – shot through with all the unreliability that this would suggest. What you say is dictated by what you think the other person will be able to hear. What you hear will be governed by what you think the other person is trying to tell you. Both your speaking and your listening will be inflected by everything you’ve heard and said before. And somehow in this cacophony of guesswork, trial, and error, something that we loosely call ‘meaning’ may migrate between one body and another. Speech and listening are forms of touch. (Anouchka & Young, 2023)



Uncle Josias © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg Manaus, Brazil, June 16th, 2025.

UNCLE JOSIAS

My family. My sister, my wife, my life, my studies. I have a brother who is very important to me. Very important. I like to respect my sisters.
(Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

Conversation as Method: Relationality, Co-Inscription, and the Production of Knowledge

This chapter examines conversation as a methodological and epistemological practice within the development of this study. While the previous chapters established the importance of migration, genealogy, correspondence, and materiality within this research, the present one turns toward the encounter between bodies and voices. It asks how knowledge emerges when research is conducted not by extracting information from others, but through the reciprocal and unpredictable conditions of conversation.

This chapter is situated within a methodological shift in my doctoral trajectory. During the fieldwork conducted with my maternal kin in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro, I initially attempted to establish a degree of separation between myself as researcher and the family members with whom I was engaging. However, the specific conditions of the fieldwork, including the experience of Queer precarity and the necessity of residing within familial domestic spaces, transformed the methodological parameters of the research. The distinction between researcher and interlocutor became increasingly porous, and the fieldwork developed into an immersive, embedded form of ethnographic encounter.

This methodological transformation was not simply a logistical adjustment. It fundamentally altered my understanding of how knowledge was produced within qualitative and artistic research. The conversations conducted with my family members could not be understood as neutral processes through which information was collected from subjects. Rather, each encounter generated a space of mutual influence in which the participants continuously altered one another. Conversation therefore became a site of co-inscription: a process through which memory, identity, affect, and knowledge were collectively produced.

Drawing on Emma Cocker's (2022) conceptualization of *conversation-as-material*, this chapter investigates dialogue as an artistic and epistemic substance. Conversation does not merely provide content for a subsequent artistic work; it possesses its own rhythm, temporality, interruptions, repetitions, silences, misunderstandings, and affective intensities. These qualities became important material within the research. The voices of my relatives were not treated as transparent

representations of a stable past, but as living events occurring in the present—events shaped by the conditions of the encounter itself.

This approach also required a reconsideration of the relationship between intimacy and research. To work with familial histories is to encounter knowledge that is simultaneously personal, collective, embodied, and ethically complex. The interviews were therefore not detached acts of observation. They involved questions of trust, vulnerability, responsibility, and positionality. My own presence was not external to the research situation; it formed part of the conditions through which memories were recalled, stories were shaped, and meanings emerged. Conversation consequently became a form of relational dramaturgy. Through listening, questioning, remembering, translating, and responding, the encounters generated an evolving archive of voices. This archive would later become the material basis for artistic composition. The methodological question of this chapter is therefore inseparable from a dramaturgical one: how can the living complexity of conversation be preserved, transformed, and reconfigured without reducing the voices involved to mere documentary evidence?

This chapter traces this process from the intimate conditions of the family conversations to the emergence of a body of recorded material that would subsequently be transformed through collaborative artistic practice. In doing so, it examines conversation not as a preliminary stage preceding the artwork, but as the first site of artistic composition. The work of listening already constitutes a dramaturgical act: it establishes relations, identifies resonances, attends to silences, and creates the conditions through which certain narratives become audible.

Conversation, in this research, is therefore both method and material. It is a mode of inquiry through which knowledge is generated relationally, and an artistic substance that carries ancestral memory into new forms. The following pages examine how this process unfolded in the field and how the voices generated through these encounters began to move from conversation toward composition.

Metaphorical Methodologies

This research positions itself at the center of the crossroads, neither to the left nor to the right, but at the center, where the currents of wind

are the strongest. This is a vital epistemic and energetic space theorized by Brazilian pedagogue Luiz Rufino (2019) as the locus where plural possibilities emerge. Rufino's *Pedagogy of the Crossroads* originates from the recognition that critical knowledge and wisdom are continuously generated through everyday life practices. Consequently, it is imperative to engage with these vernacular epistemologies not merely as sociological artifacts, but as sophisticated cognitive systems. Operating within this framework allows this research to expand social and cosmic experiences, effectively dismantling the Cartesian ambition that positions Eurocentric rationality as the sole valid investigative pathway. The pedagogy of the crossroads is fundamentally rooted in the realization that these everyday, subaltern practices actively resist dominant institutional logics. They serve as vital sites of erasure, transgression, and the radical expansion of world-making possibilities.

The crossroads is a practice that does not exist in isolation; rather, it is enacted through a communal, reciprocal ecology with a diverse assemblage of entities from the natural world. It operates in deep relationality with human and more-than-human actors, spiritual entities and the Orishas.¹ Furthermore, this work expands conventional lineages to encompass intersecting genealogies of Queer, racialized, neurodivergent, and displaced/migrant subjectivities—all of whom co-constitute the shared ancestral cosmogonies at the heart of this inquiry. This understanding of genealogy is not conceived as linear, fixed, or exclusively rooted in a singular ancestral past, but rather as something continually produced through encounters, crossings, and the opening of new paths. In this sense, Rufino's (2019) conception of the crossroads offers a particularly generative framework for thinking about how different forms of knowledge, experience, and subjectivity meet and co-constitute one another. Drawing on Èṣù (or Exu) as the figure inhabiting of the crossroads, Rufino positions this space as one of movement, possibility, and ongoing knowledge-making.

The crossroads is the mouth of the world; it is knowledge practiced on the margins by countless beings who make technologies and poetics to scare

1 Orishas (or *orixás*) are powerful, multidimensional divine spirits that originate from the Yoruba religion of West Africa.

away scarcity by opening up paths. Exu, as the owner of the crossroads, is an ethical primate who speaks about everything that exists and can come to be. He teaches us to seek constant and unfinished reflection on our actions. That's why our compadre is so dangerous for this monological world and for a society that is irresponsible with what is exercised as life. In this corner, I have to say that today the colonial spirit is expressed in full force, increasingly crusader, narrow-minded, driven by terror and murder. Exu, on the other hand, is the radical of life, who challenges us in our ability to inscribe ourselves as beauty and power. His playful, transgressive, preaching face is the necessary counterpoint to this latifundium of inequality and lies. (Rufino, 2019, p. 5, my translation)

According to Rufino, the proposal of the *Pedagogy of the Crossroads* starts from a reflection of the presence of Èṣù. Èṣù is a prominent primordial Divinity and the chief enforcer of natural and divine laws. Èṣù is the deity in charge of law enforcement and orderliness. As this spiritual practice has spread around the world, the name of this Orisha has varied in different locations, but the beliefs remain similar. In Brazil, he is referred to as Exu. Exu, the African black prince, the cosmological principle of the Yoruba peoples.

Rufino argues that the conceptual architecture of the pedagogy of the crossroads is fundamentally initiated by a reflection on the presence of Èṣù. As this spiritual practice has migrated globally, the name of this Orisha has shifted across geographies. Exu represents a vital Yoruba cosmological principle, transmitted to the Americas via the transatlantic slave trade and continually re-enacted through daily localized rituals. Crucial to this spatial methodology is another central entity of the Umbanda pantheon: *Pombagira*. Transgressing rigid gender binaries with her dual masculine and feminine aspects, she is the deity who rules over paths, communication, and structural bifurcations. Settled protectively at the threshold of the crossroads where the *ebó* (offering) is deposited, her presence echoes counter-colonial strategies. As a guardian of community boundaries, her sacred settlement marks the entrance to the crossroads. This relational ontology resonates with the conceptual framework articulated by Performance Studies international (PSi) for its 30th conference, XXX: *Cruzo, Cruising, Crossroads*, held in Fortaleza, Brazil, in December 2025, where I pre-

sented the performance *Encruzilhada* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2024), to be analyzed in chapter VII. In its official call for proposals, PSi#30 conceptualizes the crossroads not merely as a site of intersection, but as a space of dialogue, entanglement, coexistence, tension, and conflict. The call states:

(...) the crossroad is the home of Exu and Pombagira, a place to dispatch the heavy load of colonial disenchantment. It is therefore a poetic, philosophical, and political figure of dialogue, of entanglement, and coexistence. But the crossroad also retains a sense of threat and danger. It displaces the conciliatory overtones once associated with syncretism and amalgamation, in order to more fully embrace the tensions and conflicts of intersecting trails, histories, and perspectives. (Performance Studies international [PSi], 2024)

This investigation offers a vital clearing for reflection and rest within a hyper-accelerated world that incessantly demands presence and production. Rather than conforming to this constant action, this research relies on intentional absence from the world and states of deep reflection and Deep Listening (Oliveros, 2005) as rigorous modes of living and investigating. At these intersections, the linguistic possibilities are infinite; this inquiry operates therefore as a multilingual, pluralistic practice that purposefully expands beyond the limits of human comprehension. The four vertices that intersect this crossroads form a *rosa dos ventos*—a compass rose—indicating a multiplicity of directions. At the center of this crossroads, the researcher pauses, suspended, to listen to the winds and discern where they blow. The winds articulate what language cannot capture:

Artist-researcher and Professor Karmenlara Ely once suggested that one should look less to literature for answers and more toward the skies. Embracing this line of pedagogical thought, I gazed upward to observe the kinetic choreography of the clouds. *Vamos chamar o vento, vamos chamar o vento* [Let us call the wind, let us call the wind; my

translation] (Caymmi, 1957). In response, the wind shifts. Propelled by these transoceanic winds, my practice underwent a radical spatial translocation, landing on the island of Møn in southern Denmark. Becoming my home in November 2024, this island materialized as a necessary domain of relational refuge, directly contributing to my mental well-being. This geographical shift was critical to the development of this research. The isolation of Møn provided the psychic distance required to safely excavate the dense memories of Rio de Janeiro and the newly experienced Amazonian riverways in 2025. By establishing a home within this Nordic idyllic landscape, the research balanced the intense presence of ancestral performance with the quiet, grounding stillness necessary to translate trauma into text and performance. Within this isolated ecology stands my home, a sacred space inhabited by a plural community of more-than-human companions.



Near to the Wild Heart of Life. © Mohammed Lehyr, Fredrikstad, Norway, October 3rd, 2023.

In the genesis of my research, I utilized evocative metaphors—such as the crossroads, shifting bodies of water, and the genealogical tree—as operational tools. These metaphors served as dramaturgical tools to excavate my past and map the precise geographies I have traversed. In this sense, I invite practitioners who intend to deploy this method to look inwards and identify the unique, self-sustaining metaphors that can structure the re-telling of their own lived experiences and the stories of their ancestors. By doing so, this framework transforms from an individual narrative into an expandable qualitative methodology. My own excavation begins at the first critical watery boundary of my life's geography: the South Atlantic Ocean. Turning back toward the coastline of Rio de Janeiro, I stepped into these familiar currents to unearth the initial handwritings, memories, and ancestral echoes that set this entire research trajectory in motion.

In my practice, bodies of water are never static boundaries, but fluid conduits of memory. The South Atlantic Ocean—which mirrors my transoceanic displacement—finds its deeper, more intimate source

in the labyrinthine river networks of northern Brazil's Amazonian region, the landscape of my grandmother Voinha. Linking the Atlantic to these equatorial rivers allowed me to challenge rigid colonial borders, replacing them with an ancestral flow. Voinha's riverine origin represents the freshwater source of my own identity. By connecting the expansive ocean to the deep, dense currents of the Amazon, this methodology bridges my contemporary artistic practice with the vernacular wisdom, storytelling, and Indigenous cosmogonies that my grandmother carried from the forestry into our family lineage.

Hydropoetic Archives: Ancestral Conversations in *Dentro do Mar Tem Rio*

By tracking the fluid pathways of this hydropoetic network, this project constructs a maternal cartography at the crossroads between ocean and rivers. Here, the Amazonian waterways and the coastline of the South Atlantic Ocean in southeast Brazil are activated as living repositories of ancestral memories and resilience. These aquatic terrains grounded the intimate conversations and interviews that form the core of my fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro (2022, 2025) and Manaus (2025). Recorded as audio archives, these qualitative dialogues served as the primary generative source for the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* (Within the Sea, a River). By translating oral testimonies into a curated auditory experience, the installation transformed personal memories gathered through field research into a shared artistic encounter. In this process, conversation became both the source material and the method through which knowledge was generated. This approach resonates with Emma Cocker's (2022) concept of "conversation-as-material" and Grant Kester's (2004) framework of "dialogic aesthetics", both of which understand dialogue as more than a means of communication: it can itself become a material and relational mode of artistic practice.

Rather than treating the interviews conducted in Rio de Janeiro and Manaus as static data, I approached these encounters as a generative artistic medium. Following Cocker's proposition, the conversations became material that could be listened to, transcribed, edited, rearranged, and recontextualized. The trajectory from conversation to transcription, distillation, and presentation therefore did not simply document the interviews; it transformed the speech exchanged with

my maternal kin into the structural and acoustic material of the sound installation.

This process also resonates with Kester's (2004) emphasis on dialogue as a relational and aesthetic practice. The ancestral testimonies gathered in Rio de Janeiro and Manaus were not treated as passive objects of analysis, but as living materials whose meanings emerged through the relationships established during the research process and through their subsequent artistic reconfiguration. In bringing Cocker's understanding of conversation-as-material into dialogue with Kester's relational approach, the installation became a site where oral history, artistic practice, and knowledge production could intersect. The resulting methodology proposes conversation not simply as a research technique, but as a dramaturgical material through which personal and ancestral memory can be transformed into shared artistic experience.

In the next pages, I will examine the genesis of the artistic experiment *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*, a project facilitated by a 20-day transoceanic inquiry between the island of Møn, Denmark; Rio de Janeiro; and Manaus. This project mapped a familial migratory trajectory precipitated by conflict, gender-based violence, and forced displacement. By synthesizing oral history interviews with my maternal elders, the work established a genealogical link between feminist ancestry and contemporary Queer migration. *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* interrogated memory, hydro-topographies, and aurality as primary dramaturgical and performative materials. Ultimately, the resulting sonic installation functioned as a methodological intervention, exploring how performance art can decolonize research practices and reconfigure power dynamics to facilitate more equitable futures for marginalized and displaced populations.

Developed with the support of LU Innovation and the Agenda 2030 Graduate School at Lund University, this sonic installation facilitated an interdisciplinary partnership with sound artist Kristian Hverring and set designer Mariana Ribas Coimbra. The work underwent its initial public presentation and peer validation on October 27th, 2025, as part of the artistic presentation of the 75% seminar of my doctoral studies at the Inter Arts Center.

Listening to my Ancestors: A Vulnerable Observer in Brazil

The initial engagement phase commenced in December 2024, via the dispatch of handwritten correspondence to my kin, outlining the intent and ethical parameters of this research stage (as explained in chapter III). The reception of these letters elicited a spectrum of affective responses: while some participants validated the inquiry as a vital recovery of marginalized family history, others perceived it as a potential challenge to the image of my grandmother—a figure who navigated extreme intersectional violence rooted in gender and class. Ultimately, through informed consent and relational trust, all contacted relatives agreed to participate in the recorded interviews.

On June 2nd, 2025, I left the island of Møn in Denmark for fieldwork in the two aforementioned cities 4000 kilometers apart: Rio de Janeiro and Manaus. In these geographies, I conducted interviews with the eldest generation of my aunts and uncles, trying to retrace various parts of my maternal grandmother Voinha's migration story, which she gradually forgot in the last years of her physical existence due to Dementia.

During the fieldwork period, I navigated a constant state of flux between radical alterity and profound intimacy. Between those environments, I conducted five interviews over a five-day interval. This immersion aligns with the concept of the *vulnerable observer* as theorized by anthropologist Ruth Behar in *The Vulnerable Observer: Anthropology that Breaks Your Heart* (1996):

Loss, mourning, the longing for memory, the desire to enter the world around you and having no idea how to do it, the fear of observing too coldly or too distractedly or too raggedly, the rage of cowardice, the insight that is always arriving late, as defiant hindsight, a sense of utter uselessness of writing anything, and yet the burning desire to write something, are the stopping places along the way. At the end of the voyage, if you are lucky, you catch a glimpse of the lighthouse, and you are grateful. Life, after all, is bountiful. (Behar, 1996, p. 3)

The linguistic and conceptual translation of field-based exchanges into both academic discourse and artistic outcomes presented a significant epistemological challenge throughout this inquiry. Central to this

research is the coloniality of power inherent in the hierarchies among the geographies involved: my current residence in Denmark (the Global North); my place of origin, Rio de Janeiro; and the northern Amazonian context of Manaus (my maternal family's origin). These geopolitical asymmetries served as a constant reminder of how structural power relations are internalized and enacted at the interpersonal and affective levels.

Within my familial ecosystem in Rio de Janeiro, my positionality is defined by the narrative of socio-economic migration; I am perceived as one who has detached from our common origins in pursuit of upward mobility. This perception generates a complex affective ambivalence, oscillating between sentiments of desertion and abandonment and those of vicarious pride and admiration. This diasporic tension, exacerbated by the stark geographical and economic contrast with my current life in Denmark, mirrors the emotional landscape described by Ruth Behar regarding her own migration from Cuba to the United States:

And now I despair that for me Cuba will become just another anthropological fieldsite. But it may well have to be that or nothing. The dilemma of going home, the place that anthropologists are always leaving from rather than going to (...) Nowhere am I more vulnerable than in Cuba, among Cubans as a search for a way to become a bridge between the island and the diaspora. As a "promoter" of cultural bridges, I have an almost diabolical power – I can obtain visas for island friends to visit the United States, some of whom will choose to defect, some of whom will return to the envy and spite of those who have not had the chance to see the world beyond the ocean. And I ask myself: Back home, in Cuba, have I, the returning immigrant child whose parents spared her from having to cut sugarcane, become the ugliest of border guards? (Behar, 1996, p. 24)

In my interactions with my kin in Manaus, my identity was primarily constructed through the lens of alterity; I was perceived essentially as a foreigner. On multiple occasions, I was introduced by my family member to neighbors as a relative arriving from *Dinamarca* (Denmark), *Nicarágua*, or *Canadá*. The specific geography was secondary to my status as a symbolic outsider. Given our lifelong estrangement, our

primary connection was reduced to biological essentialism—a shared genotype manifesting in physical resemblance.

This branch of the family maintains a distinct affective dissonance from the southern branch, characterized by enduring resentment over my maternal grandmother's departure during their infancy. This creates a fundamental narrative divide within our family genealogy: on one side, Voinha is framed through a heroic arc, having escaped systemic domestic violence to achieve self-reconstruction in an industrialized metropolis. Conversely, she is viewed through the lens of maternal abandonment, representing a perceived failure to provide fundamental emotional labor and care.

Mapping my ancestral lineage has expanded my understanding of my diasporic subject position and the multifaceted cultural frameworks I inhabit. This ontological clarity has been instrumental in navigating intersectional discrimination as a Queer non-binary individual and a migrant of colour across the Global North and South. In response to these pressures, I developed strategies of dissidence to subvert the heteronormative gender roles of my upbringing. Paradoxically, the fieldwork in Manaus provided a vital reconnection to lineage, offering an experience of communal acceptance that had been historically absent in the Rio de Janeiro branch of my family. Within these lifelong processes of displacement and return, the political act of reclaiming identity serves as a vital tool for resistance and transformative agency against systemic oppression.

Deviance is whatever is condemned by the community. Most societies try to get rid of their deviants. Most cultures have burned and beaten their homosexuals and others who deviate from the sexual common. (...) The queer are the mirror reflecting the heterosexual tribe's fear: being different, being other and therefore lesser, therefore sub-human, in-human, non-human" (Anzaldúa, 1987, p. 18). [...] But there is a magical aspect in abnormality and so-called deformity. Maimed, mad, and sexually different people were believed to possess supernatural powers by primal cultures' magical-religious thinking. For them, abnormality was the price a person had to pay for her or his inborn extraordinary gift. (Anzaldúa, 1987, pp. 40–41)

Anzaldúa's reflection allowed me to understand these experiences of otherness not simply as wounds produced by displacement and systemic oppression, but as sites from which alternative forms of knowledge and agency could emerge. Reclaiming my ancestral and diasporic lineages therefore became both an act of belonging and a practice of resistance, allowing difference to become a generative force within my artistic and political becoming.

Maternal Cartographies

To ground the maternal cartographies of this project, it is necessary to introduce the specific family members with whom I established conversations and recorded interviews in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro. In autoethnographic research, identifying your interlocutors is a critical step in establishing positionality and relational ethics. These individuals represent the human pillars of the crossroads I navigated during the fieldwork in my home country. Their oral testimonies do not merely provide biographical data; they offer distinct linguistic and cultural perspectives that challenge linear historical narratives. In the following sections, I introduce these key contributors, mapping their geographic origins—from the Amazonian rivers to the urban spaces of Rio de Janeiro—and their specific roles within this ancestral inquiry.

In structuring these narratives, the introductory texts serve a dual purpose: they provide the vital geographical and historical coordinates of each relative's life, and they document the sonic architecture of the interviews themselves. Since these field recordings were generated specifically to serve as raw materials for the multi-channel sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*, detailing the acoustic environment became a rigorous ethnographic requirement. This choice frames background noise and atmospheric sounds not as interference, but as valuable contextual data. Additionally, because these accounts emerged directly from reflexive field logs, I intentionally keep them in the first person and in the present tense, cementing my immediate relational presence within the cross-continental crossroads of this research.

Finally, the purposive sampling strategy for selecting which relatives to interview was guided by three core criteria. The primary criterion was generational age. I selected the eldest maternal aunts and uncles because they were the most directly involved in or affected by

their mother's migration from Belém to Rio de Janeiro. Preliminary conversations with my aunts from the south indicated they possessed highly vivid recollections of these events, thereby offering a more reliable and detailed account of the migration narrative.

The second criterion focused on gender and intersectionality. I aimed to analyze how distinct experiences of masculinity and femininity are navigated within the highly conservative socio-religious framework of Brazil—a context shaped by systemic misogyny (Boehm, 2026),² patriarchal norms, and Queerphobia (Rodrigues, 2026).³

The third criterion sought to establish a geographic balance between the starkly contrasting perspectives held by my aunts and uncles living in the south versus those residing in Manaus. Consequently, I initially structured the sample to include two male-identifying and two female-identifying individuals from each region. For methodological security, I conducted a backup interview with my aunt Naíza. Her insights into feminine struggles so closely mirrored the systemic challenges encountered by Voinha, that I decided to include her account. I chose to do this despite the risk of upsetting the narrative equilibrium between my grandmother's first and second marriages.

Although I recognized from the outset that expanding the number of interlocutors would enrich the scope and depth of this qualitative study, I had to operate within strict temporal and financial constraints. Increasing the volume of interviews would have required a greater investment of capital and time than was feasible within the three-month window allotted to develop the sound installation prior to its presentation at my 75% seminar. Consequently, I had to make a pragmatic compromise regarding the project's scope.

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- 2 Brazil has recorded a continuous, yearly rise in femicides, reaching consecutive historical peaks through 2025 and into early 2026. Data from the Ministry of Justice and Public Security shows that Brazil registered 1,558 official femicides in 2025, marking the highest annual toll since the country formally criminalized the act in 2015. This equates to an average of four women murdered every day simply because of their gender. Furthermore, the Laboratory for Femicide Studies (Lesfem/Uel) released an independent report revealing that when factoring in underreported cases, the actual toll for 2025 stands at 2,149 completed femicides and 4,755 attempted murders.
 - 3 Brazil has consistently recorded the highest absolute number of murders of transgender individuals globally for roughly 18 consecutive years. According to annual tracking by the National Association of Transvestites and Transgender People (ANTRA) and global bodies like Transgender Europe (TGEU), the country frequently leads global statistics in violent deaths against trans and gender-diverse people. Race and economic background play a substantial role, with Black and mixed-race (pardo) trans women disproportionately represented among victims.

Due to these limitations, I also had to abandon a planned component of the study: interviewing the younger generation of Queer individuals in my family, including my cousins, nieces, and nephews. This subset was intended to explore how Voinha's powerful personality and non-binary identity served as a trailblazing influence shaping our own identities. Incorporating their voices would have significantly expanded the analytical scope of gender within this experiment, moving the narrative beyond a strictly binary experience.

Arlete

I am in the back section of the house where my eldest aunt lives, in the city of Manaus, in the Amazon rainforest region in Northern Brazil. It's over 30 degrees Celsius, but I decide to switch the air conditioning system off nonetheless because of the rumbling noise it makes. My aunt Arlete and I both decide on this specific room at the very rear end of the property, as we believe that back here, we will be somehow protected from the multitude of sounds emanating from the street in front of the house. We are both soaked in sweat and by my aunt Arlete's memories. I am suddenly overcome with a sensation of being at the end of the world and at the end of myself.

I have been recording an interview with my 87-year-old aunt for over twenty-five minutes, and the tension inside the room is palpable. My aunt is a street-smart woman who had to find her way through life in order to survive the trauma of having been abandoned by her mother at the age of seven, when my grandmother Voinha secretly left home, fleeing an alcoholic and abusive husband, leaving behind four of her children.

I perceive the answers that my aunt has been providing to my questions as her evasive way of dealing with the awakening of a trauma



Interviewing Aunt Arlete, © Naira Soares; Manaus, Brazil; June 17th, 2025.

that my inquiry produces. But then abruptly, when I am just about to break off the interview, she blurts out:

I sent telegrams, I talked to her through telegrams. I went to the tavern, and I said, please, can you let me... then we paid. Then I said, look, I don't know how to talk, I said, I don't know how to talk here, can you talk for me? I'm talking to my mum, call my mum for me, please. Then they would call her, and I would talk to my mum. Then, mum, I'm like this, and son, and so forth. Dad brought a very nice woman into the house, but I miss you.

(She cries abruptly)

My life was very sad, very sad, unfortunately, but even so, we have to go through everything in life. Since I was a child, I suffered. But now, thank God, I found a very good husband. He doesn't let me cook; he doesn't let me wash all the dishes. He is a sweetheart, a sweetheart of a husband. He never left me, this man. Never. He will die in my arms. I have faith in God that he would like to die too. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

During this fieldwork trip I am conducting in, to carry out interviews with the eldest generation of my aunts and uncles, this is the first time I feel emotionally attached to my interviewee, to the point of sharing my sentiments with her. Aunt Arlete and I cry together for a while. In the meantime, a dog barks incessantly in the background. It all feels disorienting.

Josias

Before I arrived in Manaus, my cousin Joane informed me that Uncle Josias had sustained significant speech impairments from a past stroke. A few weeks before my fieldwork began, he suffered a subsequent stroke requiring prolonged hospitalization. Although his prognosis was initially critical, he luckily stabilized and was discharged. Upon our first face-to-face meeting at his home, his expressive aphasia is pronounced, rendering his verbal communication largely unintelligible to me. Yet, our connection is immediate: he welcomes me with a warm hug and a vibrant smile, communicating deep affection through his countenance, body language, and rich gesticulation. My uncle has clearly found non-verbal pathways to express his feelings.

I choose to interview my uncle in his own home on the final day of my fieldwork, after building rapport over several family gatherings. True to Brazilian cultural norms of hospitality, the visit begins with shared food—banana chips prepared by cousin Joane. This domestic intimacy coexists with another common Brazilian practice: a television playing at high volume throughout lunch. While this background noise feels incredibly distracting to me as a researcher, it frames the authentic, everyday environment of his household.

For the interview itself, my uncle sits relaxed in a chair positioned in the quietest corner of his bedroom, his body completely at ease. While an emotional resonance is immediately established between us, the research setting quickly becomes crowded. We are surrounded by an unsolicited entourage consisting of his wife, sister, and two daughters. Their overprotective presence creates a distracting atmosphere; they acted as though his linguistic deficits entirely preclude autonomous communication. Although I subtly hint at privacy, they show no intention of leaving.

Instead, the family seem to view itself as an intrinsic part of the conversational setting, positioning itself a proxy respondent. Joane, his youngest daughter and primary caretaker, along with his wife and other daughter, routinely attempts to finish his sentences and “translate” his thoughts. To protect my uncle’s individual voice and mitigate this proxy bias, I ultimately have to intervene directly and ask them to be silent. I firmly believed that his emotions did not require their verbal translations; from our very first meeting, he has proven his capacity for deep, somatic expression. While capturing the fullness of this non-verbal exchange in text remains an epistemological challenge, one sentence became permanently engraved in my mind: “My father saw me there, and when he did, he really liked me” (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation).



*Interviewing Uncle Josias © Joane Pacheco da Costa.
Manaus, Brazil; June 16th, 2025.*



Interviewing Uncle Arlindo © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg;
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; June 19th, 2025.

Arlindo

While spending time at my mother's apartment in Rio de Janeiro, I am usually annoyed by the constant sound of children playing and screaming in the background. Today, though, it creates the perfect setting for my uncle Arlindo to recall his childhood. While recording this interview, I realize that I have never achieved that level of intimacy with my uncle before. I begin to wonder if there's something invisible passing through the technical equipment and cables filling the room (microphones, SD cards, headphones, computers, batteries) and altering our states, possibly enhancing our emotions. In such a recorded interview setting, which emotions can one convey through the use of technology?

Can technology actually reveal the several layers present in acts of speech, while opening the *mise-en-scène* in which the interview is taking place? Technology is another element present in the development of a corporeal dramaturgy.

Uncle Arlindo and I have never been close, we did not even have many exchanges before, to be honest. Unlike the relationships I have had with many of my aunts on this side of the family, my contact with him has been scarce and superficial. Recently, though, we became intimate through a taboo theme very much present in our family, namely addiction. My uncle has been sober for nine years now and, while interviewing him, I am able to perceive the good effects recovery from addiction can produce. Therapy has offered him the tools for critical evaluation and self-knowledge. From the very tough life he had led, including homelessness and abandonment by his family, my uncle has shown an ability to come to terms with his past and to honor the person he has become today.

During the interview, he recalls spending many years in a public boarding school in downtown Rio de Janeiro, where he had to wake up at 4 a.m. to be picked up by a truck that would take him and the other

pupils all over town to distribute newspapers. Not until 7 a.m. would they be brought back to school to have breakfast and finally start their school day. My uncle underlines the loneliness he felt spending entire weeks at school. Within that learning environment, he was only allowed to come back home on selected weekends, depending on whether or not he had been on good behavior (which, according to his recollections, was quite rare, preventing him from coming home for many consecutive weeks). He misses having spent more time with his parents during his childhood and teenage years, and I hear him constantly repeating: “If only I could go back, change my story, my story and their story, I would change it, but I can’t go back. Yesterday is gone.” (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

Out of the many remembrances my uncle offers me during our conversation, I am caught up in how much meaning a simple shoelace can acquire in the formative years of childhood:

I had a habit, a funny habit, a childish habit... I wore boots, right? Then I would tie the laces. I would look at it and say: I tied this bow at home, so I’m not going to undo it. Then I would walk around with my shoes very tight, so as not to undo the bow. Because I tied this bow at home, I kept it there. A silly thing, really silly, but for me it was very important. It was a trademark: this one I did in my house. I wanted a reminder that that bow was made in my house. It was a strange obsession, wasn’t it? (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

Naíza

I grew up in Rio de Janeiro in the eighties in families very much informed by the feminine presence. The number of aunts in my mother’s family greatly surpasses the number of uncles. Besides that, both my grandmothers have always held positions of power within their respective familial realms. I was raised in an environment filled with women who would speak loudly and seemed very much in command of their lives. One aunt, though, differed from the norm. Over the years, aunt Naíza mostly kept herself quiet, her presence calm and tranquil, in opposition to the avalanche of voices, gestures, strong-minded opinions and attitudes I was constantly exposed to.

When my aunt and I sit down for this interview, the last one I am conducting in my hometown of Rio de Janeiro, I immediately feel a dif-



*Interviewing Aunt Naíza © Neida Salustiano Barbosa Leite;
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; June 20th, 2025.*

ferent presence. Aunt Naíza appears to be comfortable in her own skin, with a verbal capacity that by far exceeds my expectations. I start to wonder what has caused her to change her demeanor so drastically. How does one learn how to speak truth to power at a later stage in life? What does it take for one individual to find new ways to express themselves?

During the interview, my aunt stresses the importance of feminine empowerment, while explaining that, after witnessing the suffering that her mother had gone through being mar-

ried to two men, both of whom let her down, she chose not to take the same path:

I saw what my mother went through. My mother suffered a lot from those betrayals, do you understand? The woman he had, that she knew about and had already heard that he had children with her. I said no, I'm not going to go through that. I'm going to raise my children on my own, I'm going to work and I'm going to succeed. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

By the end of the interview, I dared to ask a question that I did not pose to any of my previous interviewees: "What advice would you give young Naíza?", to which she replied:

Ah, that Naíza, back then she didn't have a voice yet. I held everything in, it even gave me a lump in my throat that hurt, because I couldn't defend myself, I couldn't speak, I couldn't express my point of view, you know, my opinions, and then came a time in my life when people began to say, wow, now you speak your mind, because I had learned how to speak and to defend myself. No, I don't want to do that; no, I won't accept that. This is my opinion, do you understand? I had an opinion; I started to have a voice. Before, I was so closed off, so sad. If anyone spoke to me loudly, I would cry and cry, it would hurt my heart; I would cry a lot. Nowadays, no way. I still cry because I'm emotional,

but I say everything I have to say. Do you understand? So, I would say to that Iza from the past: learn to speak up, learn to defend yourself. You can do it, you know, do you understand? You will win. That's it. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

Nádia

As a consequence of my maternal grandmother Voinha's flight from Belém and her move to the suburbs of Brazil's then capital city Rio de Janeiro in 1945, a split occurred in our familial lineage: the new family Voinha established in Rio de Janeiro with my grandfather, consisting of nine children, had very little contact with the family she had had from her first marriage in Belém, consisting of four children. Two of these children were later taken by their father to Manaus, the capital city of the state of Amazonas, and I only got to know them recently, at the age of forty-five.

In our family, we grew up with rumors and myths about the earlier life my grandmother had led in the far north of Brazil. It all seemed unreal, more like a fairy tale. Only through the invention of the internet and social media was I exposed to images of people who looked very similar to my grandmother and even to ourselves – those of us from the south – and began to feel an identification with them. My curiosity about them finally emboldened me to travel from Denmark to Manaus to finally sit down, get to know them and have conversations with those who, after all, are my relatives as well.

Because of this break in our family history, my cousins and I grew accustomed to the idea that aunt Nádia was our grandmother Voinha's eldest daughter. She was the first one born in Rio de Janeiro, in 1947. My aunt has always made sure to claim her position and occupy it with a certain flair, demanding respect from the rest of the family for being the one who has been there the longest. Among my uncles and aunts, she was also the only one who attended college, so being the most learned became associated to her position as the eldest.



Tea time with aunt Nádia and my mother, © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; June 18th, 2025.

When I decided to embark on this fieldwork trip, I had serious doubts about interviewing aunt Nádia, because our political views differ radically. I had previously experienced disrespect and aggressiveness from her due to my political leanings and voting choices in Brazil. Nonetheless, as the focus of my research was to interview the eldest generation of my uncles and aunts, I opted to set aside our personal and political differences aside from my investigation.

My aunt welcomed me warmly for the interview, but even in the very first minutes she made sure to remind me that she had graduated to become a teacher, so she would not allow emotions to interrupt or disturb her speech. During the interview, she assumed a professorial tone, keeping herself focused on what she understood as facts, not opinions. I am thankful, though, for the detailed level of information she brought to the investigation, revealing stories about the curiosity between the children who had been formerly born in Belém, and those who were born afterward in Rio de Janeiro:

How can my mother have...I asked. I didn't talk to myself. I said, how can you have a daughter in Belém, mum? Oh, mum, stop it, she's a niece that you adore. No, she's my daughter, she's Arlene. Then there was a photo she had, and that photo, I think it was at Neide's house, because a lot of photos were given to Neide. Or Neide took them; anyway, they're with Neide. Then she showed us a girl of about 10, maybe even younger, dressed as an angel, and she said, 'This is my daughter too.' I said, 'Oh, mum, that can't be, an angel,' but we also went to church, and she would say, no, she's from the church, she dressed up as an angel in the processions, her name is Arlene, she's my daughter. I said, I didn't understand that and she didn't explain. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

Living the Field: Intimacy, Proximity, and Co-Inscribed Knowledge

The process of interviewing my maternal kin across Manaus and Rio de Janeiro was profoundly intense, marking my first engagement with qualitative inquiry at such a high register of familial intimacy. It demanded a complex navigation of safety, positionality, and space. Methodologically, the initial design required me to lodge in neutral hotel settings to establish the critical psychic and physical distance necessary to separate the researcher from the interlocutors. However,

navigating these urban environments—particularly the unfamiliar landscapes of Manaus—exposed me to acute Queer precarity, as I felt fundamentally unsafe when confronted by the pervasive, violent structures of toxic masculinity. Consequently, I adjusted my research parameters and lived directly with my relatives, remaining fully immersed in their daily lives. While this logistical adjustment collapsed the traditional boundaries between the investigator and the subjects, it structurally transformed the fieldwork into an unintended embedded ethnography. This absolute proximity ultimately fortified our relational ties and immeasurably enriched the epistemic depth of the field data.

This intense physical proximity catalyzed an aesthetic and research methodology rooted in Emma Cocker’s concept of conversation-as-material. Cocker (2022) describes conversation-as-material as a practice of collaborative writing that can give rise to a “phenomenological mode of emergent writing” (p. 202). In our case, this meant that my family members and I were engaged in a continuous process of co-authoring one another. We ceased to be separate entities—instead, the interview became a site of mutual transformation. We left indelible marks upon our conversational partners, proving that autoethnographic data is never simply collected; it is dynamically co-inscribed through shared presence.

How this conversational plasticity and relational ethics are technically operationalized through collaborative, interdisciplinary practice is the subject of chapter VI. The following chapter charts the exact aesthetic evolution of these raw audio recordings as they were translated into a physical and acoustic ecosystem. Specifically, it unpacks the collaborative creative process undertaken with sound artist Kristian Hverring and set designer Mariana Ribas Coimbra. By examining how Hverring’s aural design and Coimbra’s spatial dramaturgy structurally elevated these oral history archives, chapter VI bridges the gap between raw field research and public performance, unpacking the precise sonic and scenographic strategies that convert personal ancestral memory into a shared public space.

From Conversation to Composition

This chapter examined conversation as a methodological practice through which knowledge emerges relationally. The encounters with

my maternal kin in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro demonstrated that the interviews carried out within this research cannot be understood as a neutral process of extracting information from an external subject. The conversations were shaped by the conditions of shared presence, familial histories, affective proximity, and the continuous mutual influence between myself and the people with whom I was speaking. The methodological shift from planned distance to embedded proximity was therefore central to the development of this study. By inhabiting my relatives' domestic environments, I became increasingly aware that the field was not a space into which I entered as a detached observer. It was a relational environment in which I was also implicated. The conversations generated knowledge precisely because this implication shaped them. The stories that emerged were not simply retrieved from the past; they were produced through encounters among bodies, memories, places, and voices.

Cocker's concept of conversation-as-material (2022) provided a framework for understanding this process. The conversations became more than a means of accessing ancestral histories. Their rhythms, hesitations, repetitions, silences, and affective intensities became part of the artistic material of this research. The act of listening therefore became inseparable from the act of composing. To listen was already to begin discerning relations, resonances, and dramaturgical possibilities within the polyphony of voices.

This chapter has consequently established conversation as a central operation within this study. It is a practice through which knowledge is co-inscribed, a relational space in which participants are mutually transformed, and a dramaturgical process through which material begins to acquire form. The conversations with my family members did not produce a stable archive of ancestral truth. Instead, they generated a living and incomplete constellation of voices, memories, and affective traces.

The subsequent stage of the research involved asking how this constellation could be translated into an artistic environment without neutralizing the singularity of the voices from which it emerged. The question therefore shifted from how to listen to how to compose from listening. The raw audio recordings became the basis for a collaborative process in which sound, space, translation, and dramaturgy would operate together.

Chapter VI: Migrational Ancestries

While I write, I become the author and the authority of my own history. I become the exact opposite of what the colonial project has predetermined. I become me. (Kilomba, 2015)



Interviewing Aunt Nádia, © Neida Salustiano Barbosa Leite; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. June 18th, 2025.

AUNT NÁDIA

Because my mother started having her own problems, suffering a lot and no longer knew how to raise us, we already had a clear vision of school, and Dad also gave us a lot of guidance, although later on he made many mistakes, but he laid the groundwork, at least for the older ones, and we were able to help out. Based on that support, on the good upbringing we had before he started doing the wrong things, we were already kind of ready, we were already young adults. I was seventeen. (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

Listening Across Displacement

This chapter continues the genealogical investigation initiated in the previous chapter by turning toward the migrational movements through which ancestry is not only inherited but also displaced, fractured, reconfigured, and actively reassembled. If chapter IV examined genealogy as a field of rupture, silence, and historical discontinuity, and chapter V explored the material and affective traces through which ancestral relations may persist beyond bodily absence, this chapter follows the movements of those relations across geographical, temporal, and sonic distances. Here, migration is understood not solely as a movement between places, but as a complex process through which familial histories, memories, affects, and forms of knowledge are redistributed across bodies and territories.

The migrational trajectories examined in this chapter are situated within a broader history of displacement. My grandmother Voinha's departure from Belém to Rio de Janeiro in 1945 generated a profound rupture within my maternal genealogy, separating branches of a family that would remain geographically and affectively distant for decades. My own subsequent migration across Qatar, Austria, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden constitutes another movement within this longer ancestral trajectory. These journeys are historically distinct, yet they are not unrelated. By placing them in dialogue with one another, this research investigates how migration produces both discontinuity and unexpected forms of continuity; how a rupture in one generation may reverberate through another, and how the movements of one body may become legible through the movements of those who came before.

This chapter therefore asks how artistic research might contribute to the restoration of relationships fractured by migration, silence, and historical violence without attempting to reconstruct an imagined, unified origin. The restoration proposed here is not a return to an intact past. Rather, it is an active and speculative process of creating new forms of relation from what remains: fragments of testimony, remembered voices, family stories, digital traces, geographical distances, bodily sensations, and the material and sonic environments in which ancestral histories continue to resonate.

This process began with the recovery of a familial connection that had remained largely inaccessible to me for most of my life. Through

digital ethnographic research and social media, I located and re-established contact with members of the northern branch of my family—descendants of Voinha's earlier life in Belém and Ananindeua. The encounter transformed what had previously existed as rumor, silence, and incomplete familial knowledge into a living network of relationships. This return to Brazil consequently became more than a personal reunion. It became an artistic and methodological investigation into how fractured genealogies might be reconnected through embodied encounters, questioning, listening, and shared acts of narration.

The central artistic outcome of this process, the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*, emerged from a series of intergenerational conversations conducted in Rio de Janeiro and Manaus. The work brought together voices separated by geography, history, and the long-term effects of familial rupture. By translating these testimonies into a spatialized sonic environment, the installation transformed kinship into an acoustic field: a space in which separated voices could encounter one another, sometimes for the first time. Sound became particularly significant in this process because it enabled a form of proximity that did not depend upon physical co-presence. Voices could travel across oceans, cities, languages, and generations.

This movement toward sound also marked a significant development in my research methodology. The work began with an arboreal image of genealogy: a tree whose branches represented geographically dispersed family members and whose sap symbolized the circulation of ancestral knowledge. As the research developed, however, this metaphor became insufficient. The tree suggested a fixed structure with identifiable roots, branches, and points of origin. The hydro-topographical imaginaries of the South Atlantic Ocean and the Amazonian river systems offered another possibility. Water could move, merge, separate, carry, erode, and transform. It could connect distant territories without dissolving their differences. This shift from arboreal to hydro-aesthetic thinking consequently became both a dramaturgical and epistemological transformation.

Informed by Pauline Oliveros's practice of Deep Listening (2005), Leda Maria Martins's theorization of spiral time (2021), and the relational possibilities of sound and spatial dramaturgy, the research began to consider listening as a method of ancestral encounter. To listen deeply is not simply to receive information. It is to attend to the

textures, pauses, intensities, silences, and resonances through which experience becomes perceptible. In this sense, listening became a form of relational practice. It allowed me to move beyond the extraction of testimony and toward a more reciprocal engagement with the voices, environments, and bodies that constitute the research field.

The creation of *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* therefore involved a continuous negotiation between documentation and artistic transformation, between familial testimony and dramaturgical composition, and between individual memory and collective authorship. The voices of my relatives were not treated as raw material to be extracted and subsequently arranged according to a pre-existing artistic design. Rather, the dramaturgy emerged through an iterative process of listening, translation, transcription, selection, spatialization, and collaborative composition. The resulting work became a polyphonic structure in which multiple voices could remain distinct while participating in a shared acoustic environment.

This chapter consequently traces the development of a migrational dramaturgy: a practice that understands movement, displacement, translation, and relational reassembly as constitutive operations in artistic research. The journey from the initial visualization of an ancestral tree to the final spatial and sonic architecture of *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* demonstrates how the research itself was transformed by the materials it encountered. The sonic installation was not simply the outcome of a previously established methodology. It was also the site through which the methodology continued to develop.

At the center of this process is a question that extends across the entire doctoral trajectory: how can artistic research create conditions in which fractured histories might become relationally active again? The answer proposed by this chapter is not located in the recovery of a complete narrative or in the restoration of an original familial unity. Instead, it emerges through the creation of new forms of contact. Through voices, water, listening, spatiality, translation, and collaborative composition, this research constructs a temporary confluence in which separated histories can encounter one another.

The work presented here thus understands migration not only as a history of departure, but also as a generative condition for the creation of new forms of relation. The ancestral is not located exclusively in the past. It continues to move. It travels through voices, bodies, environ-

ments, objects, memories, and artistic practices. By following these movements, this chapter proposes that genealogical knowledge may be approached not as a fixed inheritance, but as a living and migrational practice—one that is continuously remade through acts of listening, encounter, and imaginative reconstruction.

Genealogical Restoration

For over a decade, my practice has involved a retracing of ancestral trajectories and investigating the intersection of feminist lineage and contemporary Queer identity. This inquiry examines how socially engaged arts can facilitate a collaborative space between migrant subjects and theatre practitioners. Such artistic interventions serve as a strategic response to the systemic residues of gender-based violence, machismo, Queerphobia, and coloniality—forces that precipitated both Voinha's 1945 displacement from Belém to Rio de Janeiro and my own 21st-century migration through Qatar, Austria, Germany, Denmark, and Sweden.

Voinha's departure from Belém in 1945 took place within a maritime network that had long connected Northern and Southern Brazil. The *Companhia Nacional de Navegação Costeira* (National Coastal Navigation Company), popularly known as the *Costeira*, operated a fleet of passenger and cargo vessels whose names began with *Ita*, connecting ports from the North to Rio de Janeiro and further south. This maritime network was profoundly affected by the Second World War. On August 17th, 1942, the *Costeira* vessel *Itagiba* was torpedoed off the coast of the state of Bahia by the German submarine U-507, resulting in the deaths of 39 people. The attack formed part of a series of German submarine attacks on Brazilian merchant vessels in August 1942, contributing to the political and public pressure surrounding Brazil's entry into the war (Cabral, 2020). On August 22nd, 1942, Brazil declared war on Germany and Italy, formally entering the Second World War. The attacks continued during the following years: the *Ita-pagé* was torpedoed in September 1943, while the *Itaúba*, later incorporated into the Brazilian Navy as the *Vital de Oliveira*, was sunk in July 1944 (Cabral, 2020). Voinha's journey southward in 1945 therefore took place within a maritime infrastructure whose vessels had, only a few years earlier, become targets of the war.

Voinha left Belém only three years after Brazil's entry into the war. Her journey southward was therefore not simply a private movement between two points on a map, but occurred within a maritime network that had recently been transformed by war, violence, and political



Manguezal no Rio Mundaú © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Mundaú, Brazil, December 3rd, 2025.

upheaval. The same routes that enabled migration and familial connection had also become sites of danger and an international conflict. Eight decades later, during my fieldwork in Brazil in June 2025, I encountered two of the children she had left behind in Manaus, aunt Arlete and uncle Josias, whom I had never previously known. They were 87 and 84 years old, respectively, when we finally met.

For many decades, this lineage existed only through familial myths and silences. Through digital ethnographic tracing via social media, I identified and re-established contact with this “lost” branch of the family. This research-led return to Brazil was not merely a personal reunion,

but a methodological effort to bridge a lifelong physical and epistemic distance, forging relations that transform “rumor” into documented ancestral knowledge.

This phase of the research focused on a series of intergenerational oral history interviews with my maternal elders. The primary objective was to reconstruct the fragmented migratory narrative of my grandmother Voinha, whose testimony was progressively erased by dementia before her passing at the age of 100—a loss that coincided with the beginning of this doctoral study.

The intimate conversations and exchanges with my family members became a sonic installation entitled *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*, created during the final phase of this investigation. This artistic experiment

aimed to get physically close to those sounds and feelings that touched me, not only in Rio de Janeiro and Manaus, but also on the island of Møn in Denmark. It was an exercise in Deep Listening (by American composer and sonic researcher Pauline Oliveros), an experiment where a collective of voices, hands, brains, skin, experiences, memories and dreams shared authorship. As sonic researchers Ximena Alarcón-Díaz and Ed McKeon explain in their work *Migration and Listening: Political Life in Motion*:

For both of us, Deep Listening has become an essential resource to forgo the desires of returning “home” or arrival with its visa privileges and passports of legitimized status. Migration and movement are instead embraced for their potential to constitute another practice of centering and of balance without fixed and immovable boundaries. (Alarcón-Díaz & McKeon, 2023)

This understanding of Deep Listening resonates with my own experience of moving between places, memories, and familial relations without seeking to locate belonging in a single geographical origin. Rather than treating listening as a means of recovering a fixed sense of “home,” *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* approaches listening as a practice of inhabiting the spaces between places, bodies, and memories. In this sense, the installation became not only an artistic response to my fieldwork, but also a way of negotiating displacement, kinship, and belonging through sound.

Dramaturgical Composition: From Arboreal to Hydro-Aesthetics

The initial dramaturgical point of departure of the sonic installation was the visualization of an expansive familial cartography, imagined as an arboreal structure with branches spanning the continental proportions of the Brazilian landscape. This tree functioned as a connective tissue between the coastal Atlantic and the deep, voluminous rivers of the countryside. Given the immense physical distance that prevents direct contact between these “branches,” I conceptualized the internal sap as a circulatory system of knowledge. This vital fluid facilitates the transmission of ancestral data, legacies, and ontologies across vast geographical divides.

While the sonic installation was originally titled *Tree of Life*, its research trajectory shifted toward another concept, which was named *The Crossing*. The intended methodology involved a transatlantic cargo ship transit from Hamburg to Rio de Janeiro, followed by a fluvial journey from Belém to Manaus; however, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a methodological pivot. This shift led to a deeper interrogation of hydro-topographies as a conduit for empathy and communication between disparate margins. By integrating the practice of Deep Listening, I transitioned from the arboreal metaphor to a sonic and fluid epistemology. The sap or lifeline was reconceptualized through the vocalities of my family members and the sounds produced by the South Atlantic Ocean and the Amazonian rivers—treating these sonic ecosystems as the primary conduits through which ancestral narratives flow and converge.

There is a profound epistemic quality to the acoustic experience—especially when this aurality is presented disconnected from its visual counterpart. This was further underscored in 2018 during my field recordings with Voinha in Rio de Janeiro, where a single, assertive declaration resonated: “I needed to change my life”. This became a central point of inquiry, highlighting the tension between the universal impulse for transformative agency and the structural constraints that often impede it. Consequently, the interviews conducted in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro were designed not to extract a narrative of victimhood, but to investigate the radical potential of shifting one’s trajectory. To conceptualize and imagine alternative futures, one must engage in a critical retrospective analysis of past decisions. I am, therefore, indebted to my family members’ courage in providing these testimonies; their willingness to engage with difficult memories enabled a collective interrogation of how individuals navigate and subvert their established fates.

As stated in chapter V, the interview process was marked by varying degrees of relational proximity. In Manaus, I conducted sessions with aunt Arlete and Uncle Josias only one week after our initial introduction. In contrast, the interviews in Rio de Janeiro with aunt Nádia, uncle Arlindo, and aunt Naíza were rooted in lifelong kinship. This produced a dataset of ten hours of recordings, which I condensed into a thirty-minute sonic composition.

Working with a sound artist who was a non-speaker of Portuguese necessitated a trans linguistic system of translation and curation. I developed a methodology of simultaneous transcription, translation, and dramaturgical selection, identifying excerpts that resonated with the research's core themes. This process was not pre-determined; rather, the dramaturgy emerged through an iterative synthesis as I identified thematic threads connecting disparate testimonies. The structural framework ultimately revealed itself as a four-act composition with three interludes, organized through a system of titling and content summarization. The interludes of the soundscape were constructed from my 2018 archival recordings with Voinha. To differentiate her spectral presence within this polyphonic constellation, Hverring suggested using echo and spatialization techniques to signal her position as the narrative's ancestral origin.



Dramaturgical overview © Kristian Hverring. Copenhagen, Denmark, August 27th, 2025.

Act I: Happy beginnings

Interlude I: I needed to change my life

Act II: A Journey into the unknown

Interlude II: I am the owner of myself

Act III: On the other margin

Interlude III: *Minha mãe, minha mão* (My mother, my hand)

Act IV: Voinha lives

As the dramaturgical phase neared completion, I created a spatialized map, using colour coding to visualize each vocal excerpt across a physical surface. This allowed for a comprehensive overview of the narrative's architecture. We iteratively reconfigured the sequence of testi-

monies, seeking a precise affective and geographical equilibrium between the voices of Northern and Southern Brazil. This final composition served as the foundation for a second phase of production in a Copenhagen recording studio, where five voice actors with migratory backgrounds and fluency in both Portuguese and English recorded an English-language vocalization. This translation expanded the work's accessibility to an international audience while preserving the rhythmic qualities of the original testimonies.

***Dentro do Mar tem Rio: A Sonic Installation*¹**

During the fieldwork phase, I employed semi-structured dialogue and participant observation within my kinship network to explore socio-cultural dynamics, everyday practices, and specific environmental contexts (Malinowski, 1922; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Rather than limiting these encounters to formal interview situations, I engaged with my relatives in the environments and activities through which everyday relationships were lived and maintained. This included communal gatherings, shared meals, recreational activities, and other informal encounters, allowing conversations to emerge alongside observation and participation. In this way, the fieldwork was not conceived simply as a process of collecting information from participants, but as an immersive and relational process through which knowledge was generated through sustained presence, dialogue, and shared experience.

The transition from fieldwork to artistic composition began with the way the interviews themselves were situated within particular environments. The conversations with my relatives did not take place in neutral research settings; they unfolded within the domestic, social, and geographical spaces in which their everyday lives were embedded. Alongside the interviews, I therefore recorded the surrounding soundscapes of Rio de Janeiro and Manaus, allowing the environments in which the conversations took place to become part of the material generated through the fieldwork.

These ambient recordings were subsequently embedded within the vocal testimonies, creating a sonic relationship between the spoken narratives and the places from which they emerged. Rather than func-

1 Written in collaboration with sound artist Kristian Hverring

tioning simply as background sound, the environmental recordings provide the audience with a spatial and sensory dimension through which the testimonies can be encountered. The fieldwork thus produced not only spoken accounts, but a broader auditory archive composed of voices, atmospheres, movements, and environmental textures.

This approach also shaped the way the interviews were edited for the installation. By omitting my questions and prompts, I allowed the relatives' voices to unfold without the audible presence of the interviewer, giving greater prominence to the rhythm, pauses, repetitions, and associative movements of their speech. The resulting composition did not reproduce the interviews as documentary records; instead, it transformed the conversations into an artistic material through which memory, place, and voice could be experienced relationally. Sound artist Kristian Hverring subsequently complemented these recordings with processed sonic material derived from the field data, establishing a cohesive aesthetic language through the affective resonance of water—specifically, the tidal rhythms of the South Atlantic and the fluvial currents of the Amazon.

The installation employed a dual-system spatial choreography comprising eight loudspeakers and eight headphones arranged in concentric circles. This configuration was designed to establish a non-hierarchical relationship between the diverse vocalities.

The Inner Circle (Loudspeakers): This system presented the original Portuguese testimonies. Each speaker acted as a monophonic avatar for a family member, with narratives fragmented and redistributed across the array to guide the listener's attentional focus between regions and individuals. Periodic sonic interludes—composed of moving water—functioned as acoustic erasures, momentarily dissolving the voices into white-noise textures.

The Outer Circle (Headphones): These units provided English translations, voiced by members of the Brazilian diaspora in Denmark



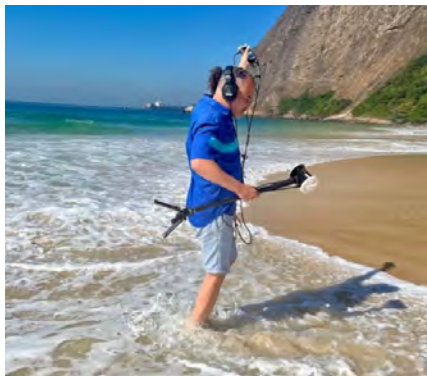
Recording Session in Copenhagen. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg, Copenhagen, Denmark. September 29th, 2025.

and Portugal. Utilizing binaural recording techniques, these tracks offered a three-dimensional, anthropomorphic perspective, simulating human auditory perception. This created a private, immersive scenography that functioned as both a translation tool and an acoustic refuge from the external loudspeaker environment.

The two delivery systems operated synchronously, offering similar entry points into the narrative landscape. While they delivered identical content in different languages, they were unified by an extra sonic layer: a continuous loop of atmospheric textures and musical interludes that serve as liminal spaces for cognitive and emotional reflection. Although these vocalities belong to the same kinship group, this installation marked their first mediated dialogue; it facilitated an unprecedented exchange of intimate affect between the Manaus and Rio de Janeiro, branches of the same family, bridging a lifelong communicative void.

Spatial Dramaturgy: The Confluence of Hydro-Temporalities

Many ideas for the sonic installation originated in moments of stillness while I observed the Solimões River near Manaus. Perceiving the water as a perfect mirror reflecting the sky, I conceptualized an inverted spatiality—a hydro-topography where the river and sea could



Recording Session in Rio de Janeiro © Neida Salustiano
Barbosa Leite. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, June 4th, 2025.

be projected onto a surface on the ceiling. This imagery was further complicated by the *Encontro das Águas* (Encounter of the Waters), the confluence of the dark Negro River and the pale Solimões River. I began to view this sixty-kilometer stretch of coexistence without merging as a profound metaphor for my own genealogical bifurcations: two branches of the same lineage existing in parallel, persisting in their distinctiveness, even as they navigate a shared current.

Previously, I explained how much this research and, consequently, this experiment is informed by the decolonial scholarship of Leda Maria Martins and her concept of the spiral time (2021). Martins theorizes a temporal ontology where the past,

present, and future do not proceed linearly but are continually reinscribed and entangled. In this framework, the confluence of the rivers represents a simultaneity of temporalities, in which ancestral legacies persist as a vital force within the now, shaping the trajectory of the future through recursive, curved movements.

(...) time can be ontologically experienced as movements of reversibility, dilation and containment, non-linearity, discontinuity, contraction and relaxation, simultaneity of the present, past and future as ontological and cosmological experiences. (Martins, 2021, p. 23, my translation)

The spatial configuration of the sonic installation—comprising two concentric circles—operates as a materialization of this decolonial spiral temporality. By organizing the sonic environment in this manner, the work actively critiqued the Western linear teleological model, which posits time as a sequential progression from ‘obscurity’ toward ‘enlightenment’. Instead, the concentric sound systems facilitate a recursive listening experience, in which ancestral and contemporary narratives coexist in a non-hierarchical, curved space, allowing for a multifaceted interrogation of the historical past and present experiences.

This initial phase involved the transposition of geographical data from the fieldwork site into the sound installation’s architectural logic. This process was iterative, continuously informing the visual and spatial aesthetics of *Dentro do Mar tem Rio*. Upon returning to Denmark, I initiated a collaborative dialogue with set designer Mariana Ribas Coimbra, an exchange we later identified as a manifestation of spatial dramaturgy (Spence, 2025).

Drawing from the intersections of theatre, architecture, and design, spatial dramaturgy utilizes the environment as a primary narrative agent. Given the intentional absence of a live physical presence in the



The Encounter of the Waters, ©Iury Salustiano Trojaborg.
Manaus, Brazil, June 15th, 2025.

installation, the spatial configuration was required to sustain the narrative arc intrinsically. Collaborating with Coimbra—whose expertise bridges architecture and scenography—was vital in conceptualizing a space that could perform in place of the human body. This approach was supported by the scholarship of artist-researcher and curator Amahra Spence (2025). In her text *Spatial Dramaturgy and the Composition of Desire*, Spence elucidates how spatiality directly interfaces with memory, decoloniality, and feminism—the core thematic axes of this research:

This is the practice of spatial dramaturgy: treating architecture and space as active participants in meaning-making. Space is not inert. It shapes behaviour, influences emotion, directs movement, choreographs belonging. It invites certain stories forward and buries others. Like a stage, it is always already performing. To engage in spatial dramaturgy is to ask: What is this space rehearsing? And what other stories and worlds might it be capable of holding? Activating this lens, invites reflection through Black feminist thought, to dream how we might recompose the world otherwise, as led by the curiosities of those who have opted out of the dominant script and developed counter-compositional practices for survival, joy and memory. (Spence, 2025)

The spatiality of the sound installation was conceptualized as a site of collective embodiment—a vessel designed to accommodate gendered,



Kristian and Mariana at work © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg, Malmö, Sweden, October 22nd, 2025.

racialized, and historically marginalized bodies. This structure functioned as an epistemic repository, fostering knowledge production, aural exchange, and somatic rest. Grounded in an ecocentric ethos, the design actively engaged with the natural world as a primary site of pedagogical inquiry and connection.

Entering the illuminated enclosure of *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* facilitated an immediate transition into a communal utopia. Within this space, navigating the tactile boundaries of the curtains and engaging with intimate vocal testimonies evoked a

sense of multivocal companionship. I felt situated within an assembly of diverse entities: ancestors, more-than-human beings, Orishas, and a diaspora of neurodivergent and Queer individuals of colour.

That soft container served as a restorative environment, nurturing kinship among those who navigate systemic discrimination. The architecture encouraged a deceleration of time, inviting participants to engage in somatic reflection—sitting, reclining, and looking inward. In this space, the vessel's boundaries expanded through collective presence. Like the growth of a tree's rings, its development was incremental and microscopic, yet it represented a profound ontological expansion known only to those within the circles.

Intergenerational Discourse

Dentro do Mar tem Rio functioned as a liminal sonic space where the vocalities of my biological family converged to initiate dialogue and facilitate relational regeneration. My family genealogy was fundamentally fractured when my maternal grandmother Voinha, migrated to Rio de Janeiro, resulting in a systemic displacement of her descendants. By developing this work, I have constructed a symbolic bridge across this genealogical schism, synthesized through the multi-vocal perspectives that constitute our origins. Building upon my doctoral research, I have moved beyond a linear narrative to investigate the structural causes and psychological consequences of my grandmother's migratory trajectory through a critical, analytical lens.

This experiment was a catalyst for intergenerational discourse between the geographically and emotionally separated branches of the family. The fieldwork conducted in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro provided a methodological framework for marginalized voices to externalize long-silenced sentiments and worldviews. By transmuting this qualitative data into an artistic outcome, this section of the research elucidated how systemic violence and forced displacement reconfigure familial structures. This process effectively bridged the gap between private trauma and the broader socio-political sphere. Through situated presence and active listening, this research facilitated the sublimation of traumatic memory into regenerative aesthetic material. Ultimately, *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* demonstrated that utilizing lived human experience as a primary medium for artistic inquiry can generate restorative imaginaries from historically painful contexts.

The connections established with the northern branch of my family remain dynamic and fluid, resembling the fluvial processes of a mighty river that continuously moves its sediments toward an unknown destination. During a recent telephone communication with my eldest aunt Arlete, the boundaries of time and identity seemed to blur; her voice carried the affective resonance of my late grandmother Voinha. Even though the voices differed, I could still feel that same deep, old bond between us. This was the one thing that hadn't changed: our mutual love.



Dentro do Mar tem Rio © Mariana Ribas Coimbra. Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, October 27th, 2025.

Interlude IV

Script of the Sonic Installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* (Within the Sea a River)

Part I: Happy Beginnings

Aunt Arlete: Marbles and Guavas

When I was little, around four years old, I really liked playing with those little balls. So we would play, play as much as we could, and win those little balls. Then I would fill up a jar, sometimes I had a jar, and I would fill it up because I won a lot. Because I won quickly, I played quickly. Then I would put them in my jar, and if it filled up, I would win a prize. And every time I won the prize. Then the girls would get upset. I would play with boys and girls. In my name, right? Then I would fill it up, then I would win a prize. Oh, I loved it. Oh, for God's sake.

Uncle Arlindo: The Shoelace

I had a habit, a funny habit, a childish habit... I wore boots, right? Then I would tie the laces. I would look at it and say: I tied this bow at home, so I'm not going to undo it. Then I would walk around with my shoes tight, so as not to undo the bow. Because I tied this bow at home, I kept it there. A silly thing, really silly, but for me it was very important. It was a trademark; this one I did it at my house. To know that I made that bow in my house... it was important. It showed my love for my home. I wanted a reminder that that bow was made in my house. It was a strange obsession, wasn't it?

Tia Naíza: The Sound of the Sea

Look, because my mother had many children with my father, it was difficult for us to go to the beach. But every now and then he would say... Let's go, everyone, to the beach. And that bunch of kids, we would take the train, and Dad would make sure everyone got on the train, and when it was time to get off, we would go to the beach. If I'm not mistaken, it was Coroa Grande beach. And wow, it was wonderful. We played; my mum brought us snacks. Wow, it was a wonderful day. But it was rare, you know? And that sound of the sea was there after I grew up and started living near the beach too and going there more often; that's when that sound really touched me, you know?

Look, actually, I love nature, I love the sea, and the sound of the sea calms me down a lot; it brings me inner peace. So, for me, it's the sound of the sea, those calm waves lapping... it calms me down a lot, it makes me feel very peaceful.

Tia Nádia: Tia Zuzu/Bento Ribeiro

And I have this nice memory of a city, a quiet, nice neighbourhood, of an aunt of ours on my father's side, our father's side. But she was our neighbour, she was the one we had all our childhood contact with, she was my father's older sister, because my dad, like my mum, was the youngest, my mum was the youngest in her family too, of her siblings my mum was the youngest, my dad was also the youngest, so he was the protected one, and she was much younger, so she made sure to keep us close to her to guide these children, these girls, you work hard, And it's nice that she, being Mum's sister-in-law, loved Mum, they got along like sisters.

So Mum left her sisters there in Belém, right? And she had repeated this to me several times, wow, Zuzu, because her name was Zuleika, I don't think we ever called her Zuleika, it was Aunt Zuzu, right? She was a very good friend of my mum's; she protected her, she supported her, she bought clothes for us, as gifts, because she knew my dad wouldn't be able to; lots of children, right?

She gave gifts and visited often, spending afternoons with us when we lived in the same neighbourhood. She spent afternoons chatting with Mum while Mum did the housework. She was very well off financially and hardly ever did any housework because she always wore high heels, was intelligent and well-dressed, and Mum was more simple and had all those children to cook for, bathe, and clean the house, but she stayed there talking, helping Mum every now and then. I remember her washing dishes, Mum would say, look at your nails, leave those dishes, and there's also, she later had a history, very bad, everyone ended up fighting with her in the end. People had their reasons, because she had a very strong personality.

But my memory of this aunt is the best possible. She was the one who would arrive with those delicious, expensive breads that Dad couldn't afford for Mum to buy, but she would go there to make snacks. So, my memory of Bento Ribeiro is the best possible, you understand?

Interlude I

Voinha: I Needed to Change my Life

Iury: Republic of the United States of Brazil, city of Ananindeua.

Voinha: I know it.

Iury: Do you know that city?

Voinha: I do.

Iury: Is that where you're from? Is that up north?

Voinha: I was born there.

Iury: And then you left that city and came to another city...

Voinha: Yes.

Iury: And do you remember what that journey was like?

Voinha: No.

Iury: And was it a long journey?

Voinha: Long.

Iury: Very long.

Voinha: Very long.

Iury: And do you remember what happened on that trip? Did you meet anyone? Did you sleep?

Voinha: No, I didn't meet anyone.

Iury: Did you come alone?

Voinha: I came alone.

Iury: With nothing but your wits and courage?

Voinha: With nothing but my wits and courage.

Iury: And you had to be very courageous to come?

Voinha: Oh, very courageous. Because... without...

Iury: Without money.

Voinha: Without money.

Iury: Without knowing anyone.

Voinha: Exactly.

Iury: Alone. New to the world. Why did you come here?

Voinha: To look for work.

Iury: To look for work. And what else? Just work, or was there something else you were looking for?

Voinha: No, I wanted to leave there because I couldn't find a job there; I couldn't find anything. I needed... to change my life.

Part II: A Journey into the Unknown

Tia Naíza: In Search of Love

What I remember is that she said she came to Rio in search of love, right? That she came here because she wasn't happy with her husband, with her children's parents, so she came to find my father. And they did meet, right?

But she left Arlene with Aunt Loló, who was her sister, because Aunt Loló loved Arlene and took good care of her, right? Di, I don't know when she came, if she came straight with my mother or if someone brought her later, because she was really little. I mean, I wasn't even born yet, right?

When I realized, Di was already there, you know? We called her Di. And I knew that two had stayed with their father. I thought it was an agreement that Arlete and Josias would stay with their father. I didn't know that Mum left them because she couldn't bring them. I understood that it was an agreement. It was only when I was an adult that I found out.

Right, the better story, that her father was kind of aggressive, so she had to run away, you know?

Tia Nádia: A Daughter in Belém Dressed as an Angel

But mom showed us very few photos, because at that time modernity was non-existent; it didn't exist, so when Mummy got a photo we were thrilled; it came in the post from Belém, and we were over the moon.

But I didn't understand why Mummy talked so much about Belém. Now I remember that, but Mummy hardly ever talked about Manaus. So, I don't know if she didn't want to tell us that she had been married before, because I was the oldest. There was Di, who is Aunt Arleide, whom you never met, but we called her... the affectionate nickname Di. I don't even know where that Di came from, but no one called her Arleide, only Mum and Dad, not us. And then I would... Mummy didn't talk about Belém, she only talked about her cousins there, so... Then she said she had a daughter in Belém and I said, "What? How can my mother have a daughter?"

I asked, I didn't talk to myself. She said, how can you have a daughter in Belém, Mum? Oh, Mum, stop it, she's a niece you adore. No, she's

my daughter, she's Arlene. Then there was a photo she had, and that photo, I think it was at Neide's house, because a lot of photos were given to Neide. Or Neide took them, anyway, they're with Neide.

Then she showed us a girl of about 10, maybe even younger, dressed as an angel, and she said, 'This is my daughter too.' I said, 'Oh, Mum, that can't be, an angel,' but we also went to church, and she would say, no, she's from the church; she dressed up as an angel in the processions. Her name is Arlene, she's my daughter, she said. I didn't understand that and she didn't explain.

Uncle Arlindo: The Big House

My mother was in love with my father. I found out recently, just recently... not long ago, my mother secretly got a little tattoo here. Very low, very low, so her clothes could hide it. She only mentioned it when she was very old, when the tattoo became visible. He was the great love of her life. They dated and got engaged in Belém do Pará. Then my father went to Manaus, I don't remember well. Then, I don't remember if Nádia was... No, Nádia wasn't born yet. We are all from Rio. They came to Rio; my father came first to find stability in the barracks and a place to live for him and my mother came later. With faith and courage, with only the clothes on their backs. The great love of her life.

My mother was a warrior, a fighter, always independent. I remember my mother cooking beans, rice, food itself, on that wood stove we had at home. That's how I remember it. After the big house was finished... we called it a big house because it was so big. I think it had eight, seven, nine rooms, something like that... and the kitchen was in the back. I remember my mother, late at night, she was still cooking. We didn't have a refrigerator. A refrigerator was a luxury; my mother would put the meat in coconut fat or pork fat to preserve it. She would make that big pot of hot coconut fat, she would put the fat in there, then it would dry out, preserving the food.

But I didn't... at that stage, I didn't participate much in their lives. That's more or less what I remember.

I don't even like to talk about it that much; it's emotional, you know? It's emotional, regretful. If I could go back, change my story, my story and their story, I would change it, but I can't go back. Yesterday is gone.

Interlude II

Voinha: I am the Owner of Myself

Voinha: I made a decision; I said, I am my own person. Because I was too authoritarian.

Iury: You were...

Voinha: I was very authoritarian. My mother always called me authoritarian.

Iury: And Voinha, how did you, since we're in Rio de Janeiro, right? How was the trip from Belém to Rio de Janeiro? That's what I'm interested in knowing.

Voinha: It was... It was a journey. On a journey I took, and I met Armando.

Iury: And what was that journey like? Was it by ship, was it by... that journey from Belém...

Voinha: By ship. By ship.

Iury: From Belém to Rio de Janeiro.

Voinha: Yes.

Iury: Do you remember that trip? Do you remember the ship? You spent...

Voinha: No, I don't remember. It was many years ago.

Iury: Many years ago, right?

Voinha: Yes.

Iury: And you... wasn't it difficult to leave Belém and take a ship to Rio de Janeiro, which is quite far away, right?

Voinha: But I was really stubborn; I would say, when I said I would do something, I would do it.

Iury: I see. You wanted to come, no one was going to say no...

Voinha: No, I say, I'm going, I'm going, I'm my own boss, I'm going to work. Because I already came with a job guaranteed.

Part III: On the Other Margin

Aunt Arlete: Mud/I'm going to Kill You

And now, Dad, we've lost our mother. How are we going to live? I'm going to find a woman to bring into my house. He found a very neat woman, very neat. Then one day, we came home from school and it was raining, it was raining. The house was clean, it was like my house. Then

Dad, then Dad... it was raining, right? Then Josias had boots covered in mud. Then he put his foot inside. Then the house was clean, but it got muddy. She punched him so hard that this came off. It came off, it came off, but it really came off. It really came off. Then I said, my God, look, I'm going to kill you. I said to her: I'm going to kill you. Then she went upstairs. It was downstairs, upstairs, above the bedrooms. Then she went upstairs; I ran after her, she ran, ran, ran, she ran away. She ran away! Then she said: and if your father comes and you say that I hit you, I'll kill you when he leaves. Then I said that if you kill my brother, I'll kill you before you kill him. She was very neat, very neat, but she was horrible.

Aunt Arlete: Telegram

I sent telegrams, I talked to her through telegrams. I went to the tavern, and I said, "Please, can you let me..." Then we paid. Then I said, look, I don't know how to talk; I said, I don't know how to talk here, can you talk for me? I'm talking to my mum, call my mum for me, please. Then she would call her, and I would talk to my mum. Then, mum, I'm like this, like this, like this. Dad brought a very nice woman into the house, but I miss you.

My life was very sad, very sad, unfortunately, but even so, we have to go through everything in life. Since I was a child, I suffered. But now, thank God, I found a very good husband. He doesn't let me cook; he doesn't let me wash all the dishes. He is a sweetheart, a sweetheart of a husband. He never left me, this man. He will die in my arms. I have faith in God that he would like to die too.

Aunt Arlete: In the Gutter

Ah, I wanted to tell you something about Dad. When he drank, he would fall into the gutter. In the gutter. Then someone would come home and say, Arlete, your dad is lying in the gutter. He's drinking that dirty water. Then I would say, for God's sake, take me there. Then I would get there, and he would be lying there, face down in the dirt, drinking that water and getting it up his nose. I'd say, Daddy, for God's sake, get up, Daddy. And he'd be stiff, stiff, stiff. Then he'd say, "Oh my daughter, oh my daughter, are you worried?" I'd say, "Don't do that, Daddy, that's why you drink too much, then you end up like that". Then I would get sick. Then, "I won't do it anymore, just this once". The next

day he was at it again. And that's how it was, we had to go get him every time, every time. Then I grew up, grew up, once I put him here, put him here and brought him. Dragging, because I was small, dragging, dragging, dragging until I got home. Then I got home, gave him a bath, he didn't like to bathe, but he didn't stink. So I bathed, and when I did, he... Don't you know I don't like to bathe? But you had to bathe because you were in the gutter, so don't go to the gutter anymore. No, I won't go anymore; the other day was... he was very good, but that's how it was.

Aunt Arlete: Bath

He bathed us. He himself bathed us. Let's take a bath. Arlete goes first. She was born first. Then he bathed me. Then come on, Mr. Josias. Then he bathed Mr. Josias. Let me wash this willy! Let me wash this ass! He said that, you know? Then he would bathe Josias. Then, now you can go outside and play.

Interlude III

Voinha: My Mother/My Hand

Voinha: You didn't know Mum very well, because she lived in the countryside...

Iury: What was your mother's name?

Voinha: Maria dos Prazeres.

Iury: Maria dos Prazeres. Was she a good mother?

Voinha: Yes, she was.

Iury: She was?

Voinha: Yes, she was.

Iury: Was she pretty?

Voinha: She was a hard worker, a seamstress.

Iury: A seamstress too? Ah, so sewing was already in the family.

Voinha: Yes, yes.

Iury: Did you learn to sew from Maria dos Prazeres? Did she teach you, did your mother teach you to sew?

Voinha: She taught me to sew.

Iury: Oh, really? You never took a technical course in sewing?

Voinha: No, no.

Iury: Did you learn from your mother?

Voinha: From my own mother. From my mother, my own mother, with my own good will.

Part IV: Voinha Lives

Tia Nádia: Transferência

There was a period in which my father... to reunite with the family in Belém, my mother's sisters, she wanted to see them; my mother really wanted to see her mother again, her mother, whom she hadn't seen in years. So my father got a transfer because he was in the military, he got a transfer; everything was official through the army. Why? Because then the army paid for housing, travel expenses and everything for all the children, his wife and everyone.

So, the girls we called children, I called them children, my sisters who are now grandmothers too, we are all grandparents, the boys are too, I called them children because I helped take care of them, they know that, they remember that, that Neide and I helped take care of them. Even Arlindo gave his two cents about the younger girls. But Neide and I were the voices of authority helping with their education and helping my mother.

Because my mother started having her own problems, suffering a lot and no longer knew how to raise us, we already had a clear vision of school and Dad also gave us a lot of guidance, although later on he made a lot of mistakes. Still, he laid the groundwork, at least for the older ones, and we were able to help out. Based on that support, on the good upbringing we had when he started doing the wrong things, we were already kind of ready; we were already young adults. I was seventeen. Before, I didn't know about some stories, but I didn't get too involved; I was studying, and I only thought about studying to improve myself. And Mum would tell me, I would get upset, I would get angry, I would say: Mum, don't be sad, Dad is so cool. She would say it, but I thought he was nice, because they had their fights, things that only couples understand. They would argue, but then they would be fine. Mum was the type who just needed a gift, a treat, an invitation. She would get the kids ready, the girls, and we would go to Bento Ribeiro to this family's house, and when we got there, it was a party.

And there was a plot of land with several houses, so there was plenty of room to stay. You could go with your kids and there was room for

everyone. So it was a trip. When they said, 'Let's go to Bento Ribeiro,' leaving Nova Iguaçu by bus or train, it was a blast.

Tio Arlindo: Memories

My mother, it's funny that my sisters used to call her Voinha, but I didn't. I called her Mum, you, Nair, those more traditional names, but Voinha, I took a while to get used to calling her that, as my sisters did. I don't even remember how Voinha ended up with her. But let's get on with it. My mother, right? My mother was a wonderful lady.

My mother suffered a lot, you know? My mother was a warrior until the end of her life. My mother didn't deserve the life she had, no. She, on top of that machine...

When I was older, already studying at Pequeno Jornalheiro, I remember coming home... and I was very 'neighbourhood-oriented'; I liked to go out, play, and I didn't care about home. I remember coming home one night, late at night, because today it's normal, around 10 or 11 p.m., and my mother was bent over that machine sewing. And I remember later, I came home and my mother was asleep on top of the machine. I said, 'Mum, go to sleep, Mum.'

Mum didn't usually hit us. When she did, it was because we had been very naughty. She used a guava stick. She would take that guava stick and take our hands: come here, I'm going to get you. Or else a slipper. Or if it wasn't a slipper, it was a clog or a Havaianas flip-flop. My father, no. My father would say, "Put your hand out! Give me the other one! If you pull it away, I'll double it, ten here, ten there." My father was in the military, so he was more stern. My mother wasn't; my mother was a sweet woman. I see that woman.

My father made my mother suffer a lot. That's why I have... I have no... I had anger towards my father. Today I miss him very much. I miss him for myself and I miss him for all of us.

My mother was in love with my father, you know? Really in love. She loved my father as... as if she loved our God. My mother, even today, even today no, even when she was close to death, she would talk about my father. She would cry. How many times I consoled her. Mum, don't cry, mum. Dad doesn't like you, but that's life, that's the life that today I know he chose and she chose. If I could, I would change that story, but I can't.

Tia Iza: Sentimental

Voinha was a very special person, our lady. I took care of her; all of us did, right? Of course. But since I'm very, how do you say it? Sentimental. Anything would make me cry about Voinha. And then, wow, I would hug her, squeeze her tight, tell her how much I loved her, that we did everything for her. She knows that, right? Even though she was in that nursing home, we would show up there by surprise to see if she was being treated well, you know? So, I would say, stay here a little longer, Mum, with me. Give me some more affection and I'll give you more love too. I miss her, I miss her a lot, even though she passed away at practically 101 years old, right? But we have this thing about hugging, feeling, right? But the love remains the same; she's just in another stage, right? In another place, but the love remains the same. God willing, one day we'll meet again.

Interlude V

Spatial Considerations

by set designer Mariana Ribas Coimbra

*Dentro do mar tem rio
Dentro de mim tem o quê?
Vento, raio, trovão
As águas do meu querer
Dentro do mar tem rio
Lágrima, chuva, aguaceiro
Dentro do rio tem um terreiro
Dentro do terreiro tem o quê?
(Bethânia, 2006)*

/

*Within the sea there flows a river.
Within me—what could there be?
Wind, lightning, thunder,
the waters of my longing.
Within the sea there flows a river:
tears, rain, a sudden downpour.
Within the river, an open ground—
and within that ground... what lies?
(my translation)*

Initiating the creative process for the sound installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* required, fundamentally, a radical openness to listening. This entailed attuning to the voices captured in the interviews with Salustiano Trojaborg's family, paying meticulous attention to what they sought to reveal. Long before any conceptual frameworks were consciously mapped, the words of these future "inhabitants" served as chronotropic coordinates, guiding the spatial and temporal parameters of the design.

My creative practice habitually begins with this form of deep, attentive listening—an effort to temporarily suspend the instrumental rationality that often dominates the production of an artistic object. In the nascent stages of a project, I intentionally maintain an open,

non-directed field of possibilities, seeking to grasp where these subjects wish to lead me.

This methodological stance evokes Luigi Pirandello's (1921) dramaturgical exploration of the fluidity of identity and the multiplicity of perspectives. Just as Pirandello's characters manifest differently depending on the position of the observer, my objective is to honor the voices of these family members not as static historical subjects, but as dynamic, shifting presences whose agency shapes the artwork. The installation thus functioned as a Pirandellian space where truth and fiction, memory and imagination, could intersect and coexist.

I contend that certain intuitive sensibilities precede rational thought, operating as innate vectors that guide the creative process, if one is predisposed to listen. The practice-led research developed by Salustiano Trojaborg articulates a dialogue across temporalities, manifested here through the acoustic presence of ancestors and living family members. As a scenographer, my role is to translate these complex temporalities into three-dimensional spatial configurations.

It was impossible to remain indifferent to the resonances of these voices, which carry profound narratives of joy, resilience, and trauma. With remarkable delicacy, Salustiano Trojaborg uncovered a deeply personal universe that simultaneously addressed a universal human condition.

Giving voice to trauma—while acknowledging the systemic silencing to which marginalized subjectivities are subjected—constitutes an act of immense political and aesthetic power. As a scenographer, my primary imperative was to cultivate deep attention. Yet, the spatial challenge was complex: how to design an architectural environment where these voices could be received in their full depth? Furthermore, how could I creatively align my work with two distinct artistic visions—Salustiano Trojaborg's conceptual direction and Kristian Hverring's sound design—to formulate a space capable of effectively communicating these multi-layered narratives to an audience?

The geopolitical framework of the work spanned two cities, connected and divided by the vast territory of Brazil—a post-colonial nation continuously grappling with its own historical idiosyncrasies, structural misogyny, and cultural and racial oppressions. This reality emerged vividly through the oral history of Voinha, Salustiano Trojaborg's maternal grandmother. As a Brazilian artist and mother, I can-

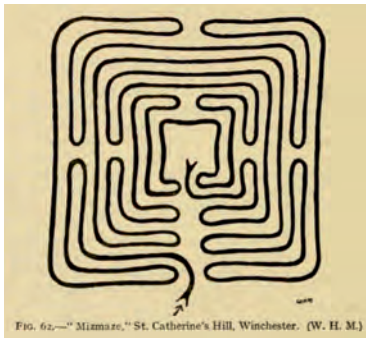
not separate myself from this socio-political fabric; in Voinha's narrative, I recognize the echoes of my own cultural lineage and shared systemic pains.

Between the cities of Manaus and Rio de Janeiro, the ocean and the river intersect through the biography of a woman who exercised agency to radically alter her destiny. Her choices opened a vast spectrum of possibilities that could only find articulation at the crossroads.

The concept of the *crossroads* (*encruzilhada*), as formulated by the Brazilian pedagogue and philosopher Luiz Rufino (2019), is a foundational epistemological pillar that Salustiano Trojaborg and I share across our respective research paradigms and ancestral lineages. Voinha's trajectory confronts the audience with the precarity of choice. Ultimately, it interrogates who possesses the courage to pursue radical transformation within a patriarchal and oppressive structure—particularly from a gendered positionality.

The conceptualization of the crossroads emerged from Salustiano Trojaborg's broader doctoral inquiry and served as a cornerstone of the installation's spatial dramaturgy. As Rufino asserts:

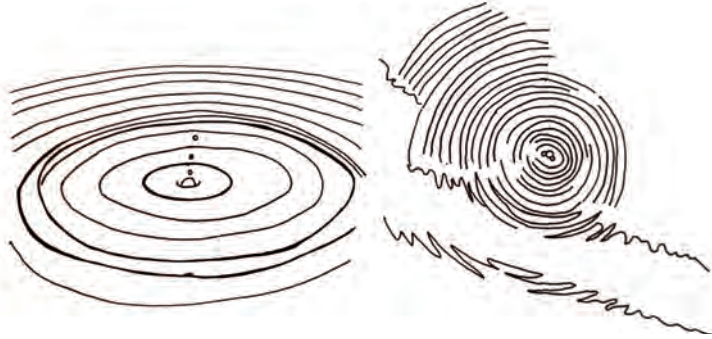
The crossroads is not claimed here to deny the presence of Western modernity, but to unseat it from its throne and lay it bare—revealing that it is as partial and contaminated as the other forms it judges. The concept of the crossroads resists any form of absolutism, whether so-called Western or non-Western. [...] The cross, strictly speaking, is a perspective that observes and practices transgression rather than subversion. It operates without the pretension of eliminating the other with which it engages, but rather to absorb it, to traverse it, to incorporate it as an accumulation of vital force. (Rufino, 2019, p. 18, my translation)



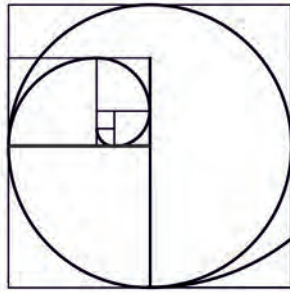
Mizmaze," St. Catherine's Hill, Winchester.
W. H. Matthews, *Mazes and Labyrinths: A General Account of Their History and Developments* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1922). Public domain.

Evoked by this initial listening process, a series of mnemonic images began to dictate the creative direction of the scenography. Material objects embedded within the oral narratives gradually acquired physical presence: a girl dressed as an angel, a cherished boot, a jar

filled with marbles. Simultaneously, acoustic landscapes emerged: the breaking of ocean waves, the violent hydrological convergence of the Amazonian *pororoca*, the rhythmic cadence of a late-night sewing machine, and the distant laughter of children. Each character revealed themselves at their own internal crossroads. One particular image emerged with overriding poetic force: a stone cast into a river, generating a series of concentric circles across the water's surface.



Hand-Drawn Sketch of Water Drop Impact and Concentric Ripples.

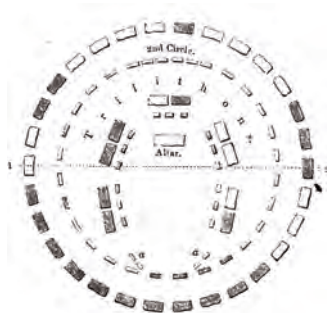


Comparison of a Golden Spiral Construction and *Victoria amazonica* Pads.

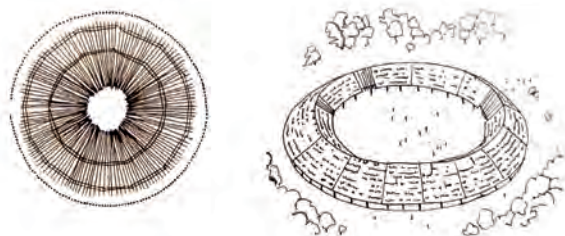
Note. The left panel illustrates the geometric construction of a golden spiral within a golden rectangle (by Mariana Ribas Coimbra). The right panel shows *Victoria amazonica* pads in a freshwater wetland ecosystem, or igarapé, in Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil. Photography by Iury Salustiano Trojaborg.

This image solidified the necessity for a circular architectural topology. The concentric circles formed by the stone symbolize the acoustic echoes of the voices reverberating across time and space. As a geomet-

ric trope, the circle embodies non-linearity—obliterating distinct binaries of beginnings and endings. Structurally, it is defined by its relationship to a center, generated by points equidistant from a singular core. Architecturally, the circle invokes vernacular, prehistoric, and megalithic configurations, recalling ancient spatial typologies dedicated to ritual and community gathering. The circular form functions as a space where hierarchical structures dissolve, fostering a non-authoritarian environment where subjects can listen to one another outside of predetermined social stratification. Within this symbolic sanctuary, deep listening becomes possible, cultivating an immersive encounter with the oral histories.



Historical ground plan of the stone alignment at Stonehenge.
Public domain reproduction of a 19th-century historical illustration.



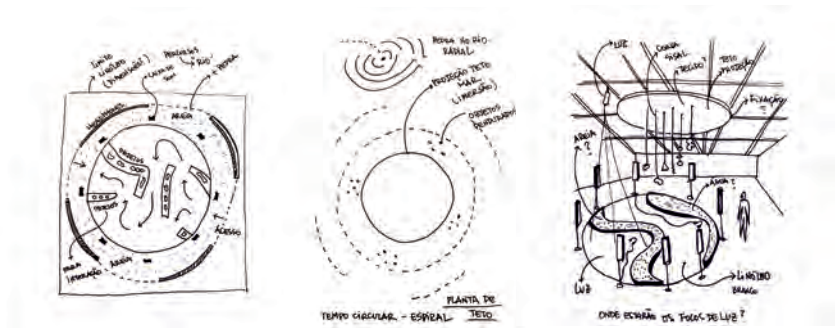
Morphological Representation of Two Yanomami Village Structures (Yano):
Roof Plan and Perspective View. Sketches by Mariana Ribas Coimbra.

From this primary circular geometry, other material and symbolic oppositions fundamental to the installation's spatial dramaturgy were derived:

- Rio de Janeiro x Manaus
- Land (sand) x Water
- Ocean (Atlantic) x River (Amazon)

Ideal (desire/dream) x Reality (patriarchal structures)
Visibility x Invisibility

The dialectic between the visible and the obscured prompted the inclusion of a translucent textile curtain enveloping the central part of the installation. This material threshold allowed the audience to perceive blurred movements and light forms beyond the perimeter, maintaining an atmosphere of liminality and dream.



Three initial concept ideas for the installation. Sketches by Mariana Ribas Coimbra.

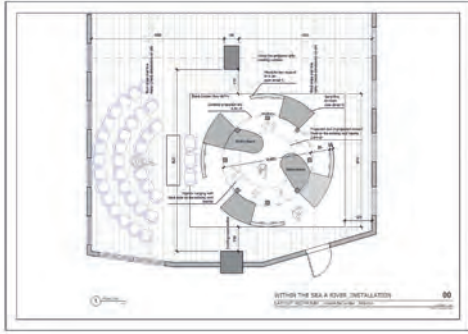


Three-dimensional perspective (superior view) of the spatial layout for the installation.
Design by Mariana Ribas Coimbra.

The textile element enhanced the immersive quality of the environment, establishing a protective sanctuary from the external institutional space and reinforcing the sensation of entering a zone outside of normative temporalities. The audience is invited to physically negotiate this transition, determining their own physical positionality within the work.

The secondary concentric zone—situated on the periphery of the central vessel—housed the audio delivery systems providing translations of the narratives, juxtaposed with tactile ready-mades that

anchor the oral histories. Intimate artifacts belonging to Voinha, alongside items of affective significance to the artist, were embedded within natural materials: coastal sand, river stones, and living flora indicative of specific Brazilian biomes. These elements amplified the haptic, sensory, and affective dimensions of the space. Within this ecosystem, no object was



Layout of the Installation. Design by Mariana Ribas Coimbra.

neutral; every element maintains an affective relationship with the architectural whole. As Gaston Bachelard posits in *The Poetics of Space* (1958), “Objects become meaningful through the intimacy they shelter” (Bachelard, 1958, p. 78).

During the conceptual development phase, Salustiano Trojaborg and I conducted fieldwork at the GeoCenter Møns Klint on the Danish island of Møn. This encounter with the Baltic coastline and its old-growth forest provided the symbolic anchor for the work: an hourglass acquired within this landscape (a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve).

Upon encountering this object, it became clear that the hourglass required a dedicated pedestal at the exact geometric and symbolic center of the installation—the nexus of its converging forces. Certain objects present themselves during practice-led research as already laden with discursive meaning, communicating directly with the researcher. In this context, they operate through a phenomenological adaptation of the Duchampian *ready-made*, where poetic displacement constitutes the primary artistic gesture. By removing an everyday object from its functional, utilitarian circuit and recontextualizing it within an installation framework, the artifact generates an altered perceptual encounter. This shift illuminates how the ontology of objects is constituted through human consciousness and spatial context. Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1948) elucidates this relational ontology by stating that

The things of the world are not simply neutral objects which stand before us for our contemplation. Each one of them symbolizes or recalls a particular way of behaving, provoking in us reactions which are either favorable or unfavorable. This is why people's tastes, character, and the attitude they adopt towards the world and to particular things can be deciphered from the objects with which they choose to surround themselves, their preferences for certain colors or the places where they like to go for walks. (Merleau-Ponty, 2004, p. 63)

The physical restriction of the hourglass—fixed to its pedestal and rendered inaccessible to manual manipulation—reinforces a state of suspended temporality. It signaled a brief caesura in normative time, demanding that the visitor pause to receive narratives that were historically subjected to erasure.

Other scenographic vectors included the multi-channel video projections featuring documentation of the sea in Rio de Janeiro, the fluvial trajectories of the Amazon River in Manaus, and the chalk-stone shores of Møn (Salustiano Trojaborg's current home). These were projected directly onto the ceiling of the installation. This spatial strategy was dual-purpose. First, it kept the ground plane unencumbered, encouraging the audience to bodily inhabit the space—inviting them to sit, recline, and dwell within the vessel. Second, projecting onto the vertical axis altered the spectator's habitual somatic orientation. Looking upward displaces normative ocular-centric perception and requires an active bodily reconfiguration. Consequently, the spectator's physical form is integrated into the scenographic apparatus, transforming the visitor from a passive viewer into an active participant.

Surrounding the central pedestal, a boundary of stones framed by sand defined a transitional zone between the inner and outer areas of the vessel. These two regions simultaneously connect and separate, facilitating a fluid dialogue between the hydrographic geographies—rivers and oceans—that have informed this research. The choreography of the audience through these paths replicated this hydrological flow: the meeting of waters, the friction between stone and sand, and the continuous exchange between solid and fluid states.

As the scenographer for this project, my mandate was to construct a spatial container capable of holding these delicate narratives with

utmost ethical and aesthetic care. My central concern was to cultivate an environment where material objects and oral histories could coexist organically. When Salustiano Trojaborg and I aligned our methodologies with the discourse of *spatial dramaturgy*, we recognized that it precisely articulated our collaborative process. As contemporary performance theory suggests, spatial dramaturgy explores:

[...] how we give form to what we care about and what we long for. This is not just an aesthetic concern but a relational one. It asks: What does care look like in structure? What does longing look like in design? How do we compose not just scenes or buildings, but worlds? To pose these questions invites a critical enquiry into the ways that power and social relations are shaped and shape spatial arrangements. Space, whether physical or social, becomes a site to unearth conflict, negotiation and power dynamics. (Turner & Behrndt, 2008, p. 142)

Consequently, we understood the articulation of this space not merely as formal aesthetic composition, but as an act of relational aesthetics. From its inception, the installation was designed to perform as an acoustic and spatial amplifier for marginalized voices, fostering an architecture where care, hospitality, and somatic attunement manifest as final artistic form. Through the rigorous, demanding, yet deeply rewarding process of spatial creation, my design attempted to translate a complex microcosm of human experiences generously shared by its narrators. I extend my profound gratitude to Iury Salustiano Trojaborg for her radical trust and collaboration, and to Kristian Hverring for guiding the sonic architecture of this shared journey.





Pictures from the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* @ Mariana Ribas Coimbra, 2025.

Chapter VII. Ancestral Kinship and More-Than-Human Alliances

To become is not to achieve a final state of being; it is to give more of a chance to that which rumbles in you, but you are not. (Bennett, 2001)



Encruzilhada. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Møn, Denmark, May 23rd, 2026.

Rosa dos Ventos: Fictional and Poetic Praxis while Border Crossing

In chapters V and VI, I deliberately disrupted linear chronology to map the narrative of this doctoral trajectory, a structural choice necessitated by the profound methodological convergences between the inception and the culmination of this research. Rather than adhering to a sequential timeline, this spatialized arrangement allowed me to trace how embryonic conceptual vectors from the early stages of the journey reached full realization and refinement toward the end of the doctoral process, culminating in the collaborative development of the sonic installation.

In the present chapter, however, the narrative retrocedes to the midpoint of the research trajectory. Here, I critically analyze how an acute decline in my mental health—precipitated by a convergence of institutional and personal pressures—instigated a profound fracture. Far from being a mere hiatus, this period of vulnerability forced a radical recalibration of my practice, steering the research toward unexpected methodological territories and reshaping its thematic contents.

This research has consistently followed the winds' trajectory, evaluating how to re-orient its methodology amid tempestuous personal and institutional climates. Guided by the *rosa dos ventos*, the compass rose, this inquiry required a deep somatic listening—moving from the internal to the external—while navigating mechanical compasses and Cartesian academic maps that suddenly ceased to function or provide legibility. Midway through its trajectory, I became adrift in an epistemological and ontological deep sea. Standard academic structures, supervision, staff expectations, departmental duties, and institutional directives lost their efficacy. I was no longer struggling only to locate the research within an academic framework; I was also navigating profound uncertainties in my personal life, while trying to find a sense of belonging in Malmö, a foreign and often unwelcoming territory.

Ecological systems then offered me vital guidance: the wind's acoustic properties and the somatic patterns of seagulls and swallows as they flew rapidly at high and low altitudes. Confronting an acute psychological breakdown mid-journey, I transitioned into practicing radical care, rest, and droplets of self-love. Integrating these practices into an intense academic rhythm required profound unlearning and re-learning of how to pursue a doctoral trajectory sustainably.

In the summer of 2023, while navigating severe depression and psychotic episodes, I recognized the methodological necessity of integrating a specific form of knowledge into my research—one that had served as a vital survival mechanism against the violent structural Queerphobia and machismo I experienced during my youth in Brazil in the 1990s: fictional literature. During my adolescence and young adulthood, I had engaged with various literary authors, such as Virginia Woolf, Clarice Lispector, Julio Cortázar, Caio Fernando Abreu, Katherine Mansfield, Anton Chekhov, and Samuel Beckett. They introduced me to literary modes, such as stream of consciousness and interior monologue, which fundamentally shaped my future writing style.

Recalling the impact of these literary frameworks midway through my doctoral studies, I decided to engage with fictional praxis, writing prose in the third person to expand the boundaries of my doctoral investigation. The first result was an autofiction experiment: the short story *The Whirlwind*, which narrates a womxn strolling by a harbour in Kalvehave, Denmark, facing the island of Møn, who is suddenly lifted off the ground and flown on an epiphanic journey amid a severe wind-storm.

This creative turn mirrored my physical reality: midway through my PhD, surrounded by metaphoric and literal waters, I spotted an island on the horizon, and within it, a sanctuary. I realized it was time to leave Malmö and embed my practice within the calm and gentle environment of the countryside. I then crossed the Queen Alexandrine bridge, which connects Sjælland to Møn in Denmark, navigating new watery territories that would profoundly alter my life, my family and my artistic research practice.

The insertion of the narrative interlude *The Whirlwind* within this chapter functions as an intentional methodological intervention designed to rupture the hegemony of traditional, Eurocentric academic writing. If, as Rufino (2019, p. 88) describes in his *Pedagogia das Encruzilhadas*, coloniality as a *carrego colonial*—a colonial burden that continues to produce violence and forms of domination over beings, knowledge, and power, sustained by rigid, logocentric forms of knowledge production that flatten somatic experience—then the use of creative-autoethnographic fiction served as an act of epistemic rebellion.

Rather than treating a period of acute mental health crisis as a sci-

entific deficit or an administrative hiatus in research, I treated my own psychological break as a legitimate site for knowledge generation. By weaving together multilingual poetics, dream archives, and sonic topographies, *The Whirlwind* bypassed rational-cognitive processing to phenomenologically map how a body undergoes collapse, unlearning, and subsequent somatic reorientation.

The Whirlwind exists within this research as a textual crossroads where personal trauma, maternal displacement lines, and more-than-human ecological attunements intersect. It established a necessary creative archive from which the subsequent theoretical analyses of Deep Listening, postnatural kinship, and somatic survival were drawn.

The Whirlwind

The Whirlwind is a multi-layered, hybrid literary-visual narrative that served as a creative-interpretive methodology within this doctoral thesis, mapping the terrain of an acute psychic fracture and its subsequent somatic recalibration. Framed by the capricious, fluid dynamics of the Orisha *Oxum*,¹ the story transformed an intense mental health crisis in the summer of 2023 into a parallel, non-linear geography spanning Denmark (Møn, Kalvehave, Hesnæs), Sweden (Malmö), and Brazil (Rio de Janeiro, São Pedro d'Aldeia, Belém).

The narrative goes beyond Western logocentric structures by weaving a complex acoustic architecture, juxtaposing alternative rock and pop music against the phonetics of Portuguese and English. Caught within the eye of a literal and psychic vortex, the protagonist undergoes a radical dissolution of human autonomy, shifting from what Clarice Lispector (1964) describes in *A Paixão Segundo G.H.* (*The Passion According to G.H.*) as a state of “profound disorder” (Lispector, 1964, p. 9) and self-destruction, toward a oneiric archive of ancestral memory. These dreams confront the systemic weight of colonial burden through imagery of exploitation, paternal friction, and the historical trauma of a matrilineal flight from violence in the Amazonian rainforest. Ultimately, the protagonist’s survival hinges on a post-natural, fluid kinship: swimming through a trans-oceanic labyrinth of ancestral waters,

1 *Oxum* (also Oshun, Oṣun, Ochún) is the Yorubá orisha associated with love, sexuality, fertility, femininity, water, destiny, divination, purity, beauty, wealth, prosperity, and also with the Osun River (located in Nigeria).

she returns to the Danish coast of Hesnæs guided by more-than-human entities. The story terminates on a potent acoustic threshold—the siren’s song (*o canto da sereia*)—positioning absolute collapse not as a deficit, but as a mandatory decolonial site of unlearning and somatic rebirth.

The Whirlwind was originally slated for publication in the winter of 2024 in the anthology *Afro-Nordic Perspectives on Performance*. Vol. I: *Territories, Geographies, Localities*, edited by artist-researchers Deise Faria Nunes, Phyllis Akini, and Jessica Lauren Elizabeth Taylor, and funded by the Nordic Culture Fund and Arts Council Norway. Structural and intra-community friction within the editorial team ultimately halted the publication. It is only now, as a crucial epistemological component of this thesis, that this work is being formally articulated and published.

The Whirlwind serves as a lyrical, self-reflexive chronicle of a psychological and geographic turning point. Prefaced by Pierre Verger’s translation of an *itã* (myth) for *Oxum* (Fatumbi, 1997) —detailing the deity’s shift from serene streams to destructive, unbridgeable torrents—the narrative maps an internal inundation that disrupts academic linearity. Here’s a summary of the story:

Parts I & II: The Gathering Storm. As a sudden windstorm scatters local beachgoers along a Scandinavian shoreline, the protagonist ruminates on an innate, inherited restlessness. She links this somatic instability to her birth year (1979) and to the melancholic, cyclical soundtracks of her youth (The Smashing Pumpkins, Radiohead). Reflecting on her migratory trajectory across European borders, she frames her geographical displacement as an act of survival—a way to open cracks in the earth to discover new self-knowledge, even at the risk of total emotional inundation.

Part III: The Eye of the Vortex. The protagonist is violently lifted into the sky by a wind vortex. Inside this chaotic spiraling column, external observers might perceive that she is in total distress, but internally, she has entered a state of deep sleep and non-rational attunement. Sinking into an indigo, dream-like ocean soundtracked by Enya’s *Caribbean Blue*, the whirlwind becomes an active agent stripping away the accumulated weight that was keeping her from breathing.

Part IV: The Desire to Disappear. Grounded in a quote from Clarice Lispector's *A Paixão Segundo G.H.*, this section explores a profound internal disorder and a longing for self-destruction. This impulse is reframed as a magical-realist desire to vanish entirely from the current landscape in search of a curative space elsewhere. Despite this impulse toward total erasure, a vegetative survival instinct takes hold: the protagonist retains a tiny fragment of sanity, capable of fully recreating her entire being from a single node, like a plant leaf growing roots in water.

Parts V & VI: Paternal and Industrial Friction. The text shifts into a vivid, autobiographical dream archive located across Brazilian topographies. A nightmare in a dark hotel room on Father's Day prompts a complex, long-distance confrontation with her estranged father, set against the quiet, indifferent growth of tree-rings outside. This is followed by a dream in São Pedro d'Aldeia, where a jarring material contrast emerges: a massive, noisy pickup truck disrupting a delicate ecosystem of seashells and tiny crabs. The dream collapses into a childhood garden, where the protagonist climbs a high ladder to survey a crimson carpet of flamboyant tree flowers, only to fall as her father's voice echoes in anger.

Part VII: The Matrilineal Labyrinth. The dreamscape moves to Nova Iguaçu, mapping the historical trajectory of her maternal grandmother's flight from violence in the Amazonian region of Belém in 1945. At a rural wedding, the protagonist confronts a deceitful blonde woman who tries to profit from the guests' charity, a metaphor for colonial extraction. Stranded by her brother in mud and anger, the protagonist and her mother walk through a sprawling marketplace, eventually finding themselves swimming through a labyrinthine, aquatic port in Belém. Here, rustic boats are named after forgotten relatives left behind during her grandmother's escape. Navigating a landscape divided between an upper and lower town, she searches for a vanished, impoverished female cook—a symbol of rescue—before being forced to keep swimming through the lush, overwhelming nature.

Parts VIII & IX: The Trans-Oceanic Return and Acoustic Threshold. The protagonist swims out of her dreams, navigating an intense blue-green current all the way back from Belém do Pará to Scandina-

via. Guided and reassured by a more-than-human companion—a small, blinking baby snakefish—she realizes she is heading home. As the seabed shifts from rock to sand, she surfaces like a comet at Hesnæs harbour in Denmark, returning full circle to the calm, balmy summer breeze where her journey began. The narrative concludes on a final, receptive threshold: caught between the rhythmic *vai e vem* (ebb and flow) of the ocean waves, she hears the siren’s song (*o canto da sereia*), which merges the aquatic domain of Oxum with the sea-womxn’s call.

In its performative configuration, *The Whirlwind* was an experiment in conjoint, communal reading. I investigated how textual meaning could be transformed when reception was shared aloud within a collective, rather than confined to solitary reading. This collective reading practice was enacted on three distinct occasions, accompanied by a projected visual essay composed of photographs from Møn and Malmö, between the summers of 2023 and 2024:

- *The Seminar on Transformative Resonance & the Arts: Social Change, Accountability, and Imagination* (Curated by PhD Jörgen Dahlqvist and Professor Emerita Eva Saether; November 7th, 2023; Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden).
- *The Performance Studies International Conference (PSi#29)* (June 20th, 2024; London, England).
- *The PhD Conference on Sustainable Development* (September 24th, 2024; Lund University, Lund, Sweden).

Debaixo d’Água, Coberta de Terra

Another venture into literary poetics occurred in the autumn of 2024 with the composition of the poem *Debaixo d’Água, Coberta de Terra* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2025). The narrative centers on a marine creature—a womxn of the sea—who chooses to leave her aquatic realm to inhabit terrestrial land. The piece was written between the island of Møn and the permaculture farm Gylleboverket/Boat in the Forest in the rural region of Skåne, Sweden. The poem acknowledges my relationship with the more-than-human entities with whom I conversed and the different landscapes through which I moved. It was an attempt to relate to them through the body, understanding myself as a small part of a full-scale ecosystem. The poem was subsequently published in *Matter: The Materiality of Artistic Research in Theatre and Performance*, Issue 4.

Debaixo d'Água, Coberta de Terra was a bilingual (English and Portuguese, with brief Danish) prose-poetry sequence chronicling the transformative journey of a mythical marine being as it transitioned to a terrestrial environment. Moving through distinct ecological stages—from murky waters and crossroads to dry canyons, storms, and fertile forests—the poem served as an allegory for migration, cultural adaptation, and environmental interconnectedness. By blending ecological terminology with spiritual references and literary allusions, the piece explored how the trauma of dislocation can ultimately give way to communal healing, diverse ecosystems, and newfound belonging. Here is a short summary:

1. Sandbanks (Hårbølle Strand, Møn, Denmark)

The Transition: A creature emerges from murky, green seawater onto land, covered in seaweed and salt. She stands at a literal and metaphorical crossroad in a harbour, drawing stares from locals and tourists alike.

The Choice: Faced with a four-way intersection (*rosa dos ventos*), she chooses to leave her marine past behind and head inland to find firm soil (*terra firme*).

The Memory of Water: While adapting to dry land, she still occasionally dips into calm waters to trace the lines of sandbanks, daydreaming about where they lead.

2. The Boat in the Forest (Gylleboverket, Sweden)

Awakening and Creation: After centuries of daydreaming, her thoughts physically carve paths into the earth. She fills these paths with a diverse array of flora (oak, beech, chestnut, and grapevines).

Finding Community: At the end of the peninsula, she discovers “the boat in the forest” and realizes she is not alone. Other diverse, colourful beings inhabit this new space. Her joy shines like a lighthouse, illuminating the crossroads of this newly fruitful land.

3. Laboratório do Inferno (Gylleboverket, Sweden)

The Struggle of Dryness: The transition is not seamless; the creature feels insecure on dry land (*terra seca*). She is tasked with digging a deep hole, facing external societal pressures.

The Internal Hell: Channeling a quote from *A Paixão Segundo G.H.* (*The Passion According to G.H.*, 1964), from Brazilian author Clarice Lispector about a woman struggling in a canyon, she experiences a “hellish laboratory” filled with anger, fear, and scorching heat.

The Cleansing Storm: The intense struggle breaks when a powerful storm arrives. The downpour recharges the fields, brings hope, and invokes the spirit of her maternal grandmother alongside the Afro-Brazilian Orisha Iansã,² deity of storms (*Epahey Oyá!*).

4. Grapevines (Gylleboverket)

Biological Rebirth: The heavy rain triggers a microscopic explosion of life in the fertile soil (*terra fértil*), prompting bacteria, archaea, and eukarya to dance and evolve together symbiotically.

Universal Harmony: This subterranean dance is mirrored in the sky as birds gather in a massive, swirling murmuration, symbolizing total alignment and harmony with her new home.

Ultimately, *Debaixo d'Água, Coberta de Terra* was rooted in a daily, early-morning writing praxis that sought to phenomenologically capture the experience of returning to a deeply meaningful landscape: Hårbølle Beach in Askeby, on the western coast of Møn. This creative process was sparked by a prolonged morning observation of the sandbanks forming along the shoreline—contemplating their geomorphological lifecycles—and later influenced by a subsequent evening observation of the spatial intersections formed by the condensation trails (contrails) of aircraft traversing the island’s airspace. The piece was created as part of the conclusion of the seminar *All My Relations 3: Relational Practices, Ecological Awareness, and More-than-Human Encounters*, supervised by Senior Lecturer Sofie Volquartz Lebech, and was first presented to an audience on September 17th, 2024, at the Inter Arts Center in Malmö.

Encruzilhada

I spent the summer season preparing written and artistic material for the 50% seminar of my doctoral research, held in October 2024. While

2 Iansã (also known as Oyá) is a powerful female deity in Afro-Brazilian religions like Candomblé and Umbanda, originating from the Yoruba culture of West Africa. She rules over the wind, lightning, fierce storms, and fire.

on the island of Møn, I conceptualized a performance piece titled *Encruzilhada* (Crossroads). Structurally, the performance drew on my understanding of *carrego colonial* (colonial burden), the aforementioned theoretical concept articulated by Brazilian pedagogue Luiz Rufino (2019) in his work *Pedagogia das Encruzilhadas* (Pedagogy of the Crossroads). *Encruzilhada* was based on creating an *ebó* (offering/sacrifice) to Exu,³ as discussed in chapter V. In this artistic iteration, the *ebó* consisted of germinated bean seeds sustained within cross-shaped soil beds. This terrestrial structure was placed atop a scroll of white paper, where the audience and I, collectively, transcribed the poem *Debaixo d'Água, Coberta de Terra*.

In Afro-Brazilian religions such as Candomblé or Umbanda,⁴ *ebó* can be understood as an offering to a deity, necessary to restore order and maintain harmony and balance with the natural world. It reinforces the notion that everything in the natural world is connected; like the cells of an organism working in unison for a common purpose: life. Nothing thrives in a vacuum, and sacrifice is for the sake of the whole.

I consider it important here to affirm my positionality concerning religious matters, as I am not a member of any religious groups. I have, however, a true passion for Nature and the Orishas that represent its elements. *Encruzilhada* was never conceived with the intention to offer an *ebó*, but this meaning emerged during the rehearsal process. Out of my utmost respect for the practitioners of Candomblé and Umbanda, I started a conversation with artist-researcher and friend Deise Faria Nunes, who herself is a practitioner of Orisha worship, and she offered me her valuable knowledge of this religious practice that, ultimately, contributed to the genesis of *Encruzilhada*.

3 Exu (also spelled Eshu or Elegba) is the dynamic African and Afro-Brazilian deity who rules the crossroads, communication, and human choices. In traditions like Candomblé and Umbanda, he functions as the vital, energetic link between humans and the spiritual realm.

4 Candomblé and Umbanda are Afro-Brazilian religious traditions that emerged through complex processes of cultural and spiritual exchange shaped by the African diaspora, Indigenous cosmologies, and Catholicism. Candomblé is primarily rooted in West and Central African religious traditions, particularly those associated with Yoruba, Fon, and Bantu cultures, and centers on relationships with orixás and other spiritual entities. Umbanda emerged in Brazil in the early twentieth century and combines African-derived spiritual practices with Indigenous, Spiritist, and Catholic elements. Both traditions have played a significant role in preserving and transforming African and Afro-Brazilian epistemologies, despite centuries of religious persecution and racialized marginalization.

The performance was presented on four different occasions:

- Indoors, at the conclusion of the seminar *All My Relations 3: Relational Practices, Ecological Awareness, and More-than-Human Encounters*. September 17th, 2024, at the Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden.
- Indoors, during the artistic presentation of the 50% seminar for my doctoral studies on October 21st, 2024, at the Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden.
- Outdoors, during the Festival *Staying with the Trouble* at the farm Gylleboverket/Boat in the Forest on August 2nd, 2025.
- Outdoors, during The Performance Studies International Conference (PSi#30). December 13th, 2025, in Fortaleza, Brazil.

Poetic Encounters and Methodological Influences

The creation of *Encruzilhada* was strongly informed by the ideas presented by the American philosopher Jane Bennett (2001) in her book *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*. Her concepts align with Rufino's (2019), where he sees decolonization as a permanent practice of social transformation in ordinary life. To decolonize oneself is a rebellious, non-conformist action, in short, a revolutionary act. However forceful the process of liberation may be, it is also an act of tenderness, love and responsibility towards life.

To be enchanted is to be struck and shaken by the extraordinary that lives amid the familiar and the everyday. Starting from the assumption that the world has become neither inert nor devoid of surprise but continues to inspire deep and powerful attachments, I tell a tale designed to render that attachment more palpable and audible. If popular psychological wisdom has it that you have to love yourself before you can love another, my story suggests that you have to love life before you can care about anything. The wager is that, to some small but irreducible extent, one must be enamored with existence and occasionally even enchanted in the face of it in order to be capable of donating some of one's scarce mortal resources to the service of others. (Bennett, 2001, p. 4)

Bennett's proposition is significant here because it shifts enchantment from a fleeting aesthetic sensation to an ethical and relational capacity. To be enchanted is to remain open to being affected by the world, to

recognize vitality and possibility within the ordinary, and to allow that affective encounter to generate forms of care. In this sense, enchantment resonates with Rufino's understanding of decolonization as an ongoing practice rather than a fixed state of liberation. Both perspectives invite a reorientation of how we inhabit everyday life: decolonization requires not only resisting the structures that constrain and diminish life, but also cultivating the capacity to perceive, value, and care for the life that persists within and beyond those structures. For my practice, this becomes particularly important because listening, memory, and artistic encounters were not simply methods of representing experience; they constituted ways of remaining available to what moves, unsettles, and connects us.



Encruzilhada. © Sofie Lebech. Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, September 17th, 2024.

Furthermore, the epistemological insights of Martins (2021) on oralities and discursive poetic practices were foundational, prompting my immersion in creating *Encruzilhada* and my turn toward poetic writing as a core methodology at the midpoint of my PhD. This lyrical orientation was further deepened during a seven-day residency at the Summer Academy for Artistic Research (SAAR) in the mountainous landscape of Rauland, Norway, in the summer of 2023 (Uniarts Helsinki, 2026). Engaging with an interdisciplinary cohort of Scandinavian artist-researchers—including PhD Jenny Perlin, whose sensitive text-and-image-based practice is developed through *The Hoo-sac Institute* (Perlin, n.d.), and sculptor, Professor and PhD Yuka Oyama, whose work investigates the performative hybridity between bodies and objects (Oyama, 2023)—profoundly opened my senses to alternative modalities of conducting, articulating, and embodying artistic research. Cultivating a deep, enduring friendship with a similarly sensitive artist like Perlin proved absolutely fundamental during this

journey; this relational bond offered vital emotional and creative solidarity, significantly mitigating the profound sense of isolation that can often accompany navigating institutional Scandinavian academic structures.

Crucial to this methodological sharpening was also the work of Professor and filmmaker Lotte Mik-Meyer (Mik-Meyer, n.d.). At the time of our encounter, I was in the critical post-production phase of editing the short documentary *Voinha's Backyard* (previously discussed in chapter IV). Mik-Meyer's insights into personal visual language and the politics of intimacy proved profoundly meaningful during this process, offering an invaluable framework for navigating how highly individual, non-linear cinematic and textual sketches can function as rigorous visual investigations. By interfacing her approach to the intimate with my own creative inquiries, I was able to treat my lyrical writing and documentary filmmaking not as mere supplements to the research, but as active, primary sites of critical, historical, and emotional knowledge production.

Although each of these artists and thinkers informed my practice in different ways, they shared an important commitment: an understanding of artistic creation as a mode of knowledge production that exceeds linear forms of reasoning. Within this constellation of influences, Martins' reflections on poetic discourse became particularly decisive. Her understanding of rhythm, recurrence, and cyclical temporality gave conceptual form to the poetic language I was developing through *Encruzilhada*.

Poetry is time. Time as ritornello, dispersed in a rhythmic spatiality. As Bosi teaches us, poetic discourse presupposes recurrences, resonances, turns, regimes of cycles, procedures of returns, simultaneity of various times and their reversibility. Poetic discourse, says Bosi, "as a fabric of sounds, lives a regime of cycles", a coming and going that is processed as rhythm, phonetic subsystem, intonation, timbre, duration, tempos. With these modes of rhythms, poetic time interrupts and breaks the absolute sequential line, tangling curves and spirals and, thus, through "the cycle that closes and the waves that come and go, the poem shortens and rounds off the successive timeline of discourse". And he adds: Rhyme and rhythm are procedures of return, of curving, of internal reversibility, structure." (Martins, 2021, p. 30, my translation)

It is important to consider that the various artistic experiments detailed in this chapter—each operating at the epistemological intersection of contemporary art and ecological systems—would not have occurred without my institutional membership at the Agenda 2030 Graduate School at Lund University, alongside the mandatory interdisciplinary courses comprising my academic curriculum. Specifically, the seminar and eco-workshop *All My Relations* hosted by my department—which subsequently transitioned into an accredited curriculum course—served as a vital catalyst for this research. My dual participation in this seminar in 2022 and 2024 at the permaculture farm Gylleboverket/Boat in the Forest⁵



Encruzilhada. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, September 17th, 2024.

provided a crucial site for intellectual and creative cross-pollination. This immersive ecological framework profoundly deepened my investigation into Nature not merely as a thematic subject, but as the primary ontological basis for an artistic praxis that encompasses more-than-human perspectives.

The critical literature introduced in these courses—most notably Bennett’s *The Enchantment of Modern Life: Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics* (2001), Gabriel Alonso’s *Matter as Kin: A Non-Binary (Nature-Culture) Matter Future* (2024), and the research initiatives developed by the Institute for Postnatural Studies in Madrid (Institute for Postnatural Studies, n.d.)—was fundamental to reshaping my understanding of Nature. These perspectives allowed me to conceptualize the environment not as an external object, but as my ancestral kin and an active interlocutor whose voice demands to be heard. Simultaneously, the periods spent at the Norwegian Theatre Academy, under the pedagogi-

5 Gylleboverket is a Swedish independent theatre and performance collective based in Gyllebo, in the Österlen region of southern Sweden. The organization develops experimental, often site-specific and interdisciplinary forms of performance, frequently working across theatre, visual art, music, and community-based practices.

cal guidance of Professor Karmenlara Ely, were vital to deepening my visceral engagement with natural landscapes. This immersion exposed me to diverse artistic methodologies of ecological relation, including artist-researcher Ayesha Jordan's permaculture practice in Fredrikstad and Oslo, Norway (Jordan, 2014). Together, these theoretical frameworks and artistic encounters formed an indispensable piece of the conceptual puzzle that structured this research.

By viewing matter as kin, we acknowledge that everything, rocks, rivers, plants, and animals, but also plastics, microchips, apples, and electrons are not mere objects but active and complex agents with whom we share a relational existence. A non-hierarchical and non-binary matter future envisions a world where the boundaries between the natural and cultural realms are fluid and permeable. In this context, from a postnatural ecological perspective, kinship might become a dynamic and interconnected network that extends beyond human relationships to include more-than-human entities, ecosystems, and the environment. A broader view of kinship emphasizes the interdependence of all living and non-living components of the world, recognizing that humans are part of a larger system. (Alonso, 2024, p. 3)

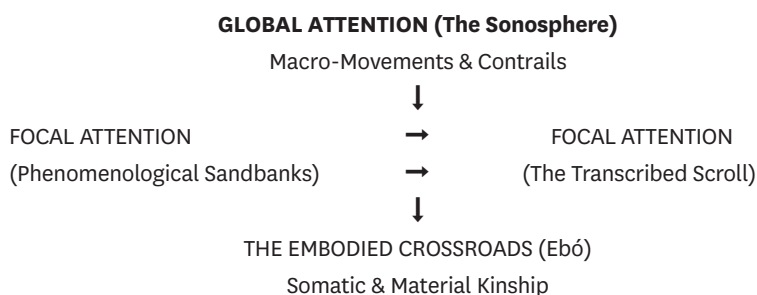
This shift from perceiving matter as passive object to encountering it as relational kin became more than a theoretical proposition; it fundamentally transformed how I approached my artistic research practice. The ecological encounters, pedagogical experiences, and artistic methodologies described above provided the conditions for developing a practice grounded in attentiveness, reciprocity, and embodied relation. In this sense, ecological thinking became not simply a subject of the research, but a way of practicing and knowing through which my relationship with the more-than-human world could be reimaged.

The Convergence of *Encruzilhada*: Epistemological Attunement and More-Than-Human Resonance

In order to analyze the *Encruzilhada* experiment within a decolonial and postnatural framework, this thesis proposes an intersectional methodology that pairs the Afro-Brazilian conceptualization of the Crossroads with Pauline Oliveros' theory of Deep Listening, both outlined in previous chapters. Structurally informed by Rufino's *Pedagogia*

das Encruzilhadas and his formulation of the *carrego colonial*, the performance *Encruzilhada* functioned as an artistic, somatic mechanism designed to dismantle Western epistemological hegemony.

By positioning *Encruzilhada* at the intersection of Rufino's pedagogy, Bennett's vibrant materialism, and Oliveros' sonic phenomenology, the performance shifted from a site of passive spectatorship to an active, relational laboratory. Within this matrix, the crossroads could be understood not merely as a spatial metaphor, but as a site of rigorous, multisensory attunement where human, ancestral, and more-than-human entities converge.



The process of creating the poem *Debaixo D'Água, Coberta de Terra* maps precisely onto Oliveros' foundational dialectic between Focal Attention and Global Attention. The prolonged observation of the coastal sandbanks' geomorphological lifecycles required a rigorous deployment of Focal Attention—a sustained focus on localized, micro-material shifts. Conversely, the evening observation of aircraft contrails intersecting across the island's airspace triggered an expansion into Global Attention, a macro-attunement to global transit, temporal layers, and environmental space.

In the performance *Encruzilhada*, these attentional vectors were materialized. The cross-shaped soil bed served as the physical axis where focal text-inscription and global ecological awareness intersected, asking both the researcher and the audience to navigate multiple perceptual registers simultaneously. Rather than functioning as a static literary artifact, *Debaixo d'Água, Coberta de Terra* operated as an open-ended text score, reminiscent of Pauline Oliveros's *Sonic Meditations* (1974), a collection of text-based participatory scores that use



Encruzilhada at Gylleboverket © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg, Österlen, Sweden, August 2nd, 2025.

simple instructions to organize collective listening, bodily attention, and the production of sound as an embodied social practice. The audience's collective transcription of the poem onto a continuous scroll of white paper thus instantiated a shared somatic ritual. This practice materialized a poetic temporality, grounded in rhythm, recurrence, and return, resonating with Alfredo Bosi's understanding of poetry as a mode of temporal experience that can interrupt the linear progression of chronological time (Bosi, 1977). In dialogue with this conception, Martins's notion of *tempo espiralar* — spiral time — offers a model of temporality in which the past is not fixed behind the present

but is continually reactivated through embodied performance, memory, and repetition (Martins, 2021). This temporal logic resonates with the *ritornello*: a return that is never simply repetition, but a reactivation that produces difference and opens new relations between past, present, and future. By engaging the audience in the rhythmic, kinetic act of writing, the performance established a slower, shared temporal field. This slowing down was a deliberate political act: it created an acoustic and physical space capable of hosting voices historically flattened or silenced by colonial architectures—specifically ancestral memories, the internal subjectivities of the diaspora, and the acoustic frequencies of the landscapes themselves.

Central to the performance was the conceptual activation of an *ebó* (offering/sacrifice) to Exu. As stated before, within Candomblé and Umbanda cosmologies, Exu is the dynamic principle of communication, relationality, and structural transformation at the crossroads.

Translated into Oliveros' sonic terminology, *Exu* can be understood as the mediator of the Sonosphere—the totality of all acoustic energy across time, which includes the “as-yet-unheard.” The *carrego colonial* enforces a systemic deafness toward non-Western, subaltern, and ecological knowledges. By framing the performance as a conceptual *ebó*, the crossroads becomes a site of epistemological repair. *Exu* operates as the relational translator that allowed me to listen to the “unheard” frequencies of migration, geography, and ancestry, rendering these marginalized voices audible within institutional research spaces.

The material components of the *ebó*, namely germinated bean seeds sustained within cross-shaped soil beds, exemplify what Alonso terms a “postnatural ecological perspective” (Alonso, 2024) wherein the boundaries between the natural and cultural are explicitly porous. Here, matter is recognized as active kin. Bennett asserts that enchantment within ordinary life is a prerequisite for ethical and political attachment to the world; *Encruzilhada* actualized this enchantment by treating the germinating seeds not as scenic props, but as vital, agential participants.

This perspective aligns with Oliveros' assertion that the entire body functions as an ear, absorbing and reflecting environmental vibration. The germinating seeds, the friction of the audience's pens, and the vocal resonance of the poetic reading form a non-hierarchical, more-than-human ensemble. The sacrifice inherent in the *ebó* is recontextualized through this lens: it is a somatic dedication of mortal resources to the collective whole. To pause, listen, and tend to soil within an academic or artistic institution is a rebellious act of tenderness, a postnatural methodology that insists on love and responsibility toward co-existence.

Site-Specificity and Acoustic Adaptability: The Multi-Locational Evolution of *Encruzilhada*

A critical dimension of *Encruzilhada* as a practice-based research experiment lies in its site-specific elasticity. The performance was not conceived as a static, reproducible spectacle, but as an adaptive ritual whose somatic and sonic architecture was continually recalibrated across three distinct geographical, political, and acoustic landscapes. This spatial mutability resonates with Pauline Oliveros' understanding of listening as an embodied and situated practice. For Oliveros, the

body is continually sensing and recording sonic information, while listening involves a conscious and active engagement with the sounds and conditions of one’s environment (Oliveros, 2005, pp. 18–19). The *listening body* therefore, is not a passive receiver of sound but a body that remains sensorially and relationally attuned to its surroundings. As *Encruzilhada* moved from the controlled institutional confines of the Global North towards outdoor, ecologically charged, and postcolonial terrains, its material strategies shifted accordingly. In the outdoor iterations at Gylleboverket permaculture farm in Sweden, and at the PSi#30 Conference in Fortaleza, Brazil, the methodology expanded to foreground collective vocalization and musical resonance as significant modes of embodied, relational listening.

The following schema maps the spatial and sonic transformation of *Encruzilhada* across its three site-specific iterations. Rather than presenting these locations as neutral contexts, the schema understands each site as an active condition that shaped the performance’s material, relational, and somatic practices. Moving from the institutional interior of the Inter Arts Center, through the ecologically situated landscape of Gylleboverket Farm, and finally into the post-colonial terrain of Fortaleza, the work progressively shifts from graphic and textual emphasis towards collective vocalization, more-than-human relationality, and ancestral re-territorialization. The schema therefore visualizes not a linear progression towards a fixed conclusion, but a process of spatial-sonic recalibration in which each location generates a distinct mode of embodied and situated knowledge.

SPATIAL-SONIC RECONCILED MATRICES

INTER ARTS CENTER →	GYLLEBOVERKET FARM →	FORTALEZA (PSi#30)]
Indoor Gallery	Outdoor Forest Farm	Outdoor Post-Colonial Terrain
Institutional Control	More-Than-Human Chorus	Ancestral Re-Territorialization
Graphic/Textual Focus	Sonic Vocal Union	Decolonial Somatic Return

The Indoor Matrix: Inter Arts Center (Malmö, Sweden)

The initial iterations at the Inter Arts Center (September 17th, 2024, and October 21st, 2024) took place within a hyper-curated, indoor white-cube gallery setting. Architecturally, this space enforced a high degree of acoustic isolation, filtering out external environmental variables.

Attentional Dynamic: In this context, the performance operated primarily on a graphic and text-focused axis. The *Focal Attention* of the audience was heavily channeled into the visuality of the cross-shaped soil bed and the physical, silent micro-movements of transcribing the text onto the white paper scroll.

Somatic Resonance: The institutional quietude amplified the friction of the pens and the isolated resonance of the spoken poem, framing the *carrego colonial* as an interrogation of Western academic and artistic structures.

The More-Than-Human Chorus: Gylleboverket (Skåne, Sweden)

When the performance migrated outdoors to the permaculture farm Gylleboverket on August 2nd, 2025, the acoustic architecture transformed into a decentralized, unpredictable environment.

Attentional Dynamic: Here, Oliveros' concept of *Global Attention* became the dominant operating system. The performance space was completely porous, intermingling with the sonic footprints of the forest, weather patterns, and non-human wildlife.

Somatic Resonance: To ground the audience within this vast, polyphonic sonosphere, the introduction of music became a methodological necessity. By integrating music into the piece, the performance successfully anchored human presence within a wider ecosystem, shifting the work from a localized text inscription into an expansive, ecological dialogue.

The Ancestral Return: Fortaleza (Ceará, Brazil)

The final iteration at the Performance Studies International Conference (PSi#30) on December 13th, 2025, in Fortaleza, marked a profound geographical and epistemic shift. Moving *Encruzilhada* to Brazilian soil re-territorialized the work, placing it in direct, physical proximity to the historical and cultural origins of the *Pedagogia das Encruzilhadas*.

Attentional Dynamic: The outdoor setting in Fortaleza demanded a radically different somatic charge. The *carrego colonial* was no longer a theoretical abstraction debated in Scandinavia; it was a felt, localized reality written into the socio-political fabric of the landscape.

Somatic Resonance: In this environment, music and collective singing served as an urgent decolonial strategy of reclamation and

spiritual grounding, allowing the performance to vibrate in sync with the immediate trauma and resilience of the territory.

In both the Swedish forest and the Brazilian coast, the activation of spectatorship was deepened through the teaching and collective performance of a song created by Thiago Samambaia, my former Capoeira instructor in Berlin. Although the song is not formally registered and circulates in popular use, its imagery draws on Afro-Brazilian cosmologies, particularly the figure of Iemanjá,⁶ the Orisha associated with the sea. The song begins: “*Tava na beira do mar / quando a sereia cantou / a maré derramou / fui rezar pra Mamãe Iemanjá*” [“I was by the seashore / when the mermaid sang / the tide overflowed / I went to pray to Mother Iemanjá”]. In that context, the song functioned not as a fixed musical object but as a shared sonic practice that invited spectators to cross from observation into participation. Its collective repetition transformed the audience into a temporary vocal community, while the invocation of the sea, the mermaid, and Iemanjá activated a relational field connecting body, voice, water, memory, and Afro-Brazilian spiritual cosmologies. In this sense, the song became a portable and adaptable ritual technology, capable of reconfiguring spectatorship across the distinct ecological and geopolitical contexts of the Swedish forest and the Brazilian coast. This pedagogical intervention structurally altered *Encruzilhada* in three interconnected ways. By teaching the audience a song created within an Afro-Brazilian and Capoeira context, the performance transformed spectatorship into a form of collective sonic, embodied, and epistemological participation.

1. Acoustic Decentering of the Researcher’s Ego

By teaching the song to the audience, the performer’s singular authority of voice was redistributed across a collective and non-hierarchical sonic body. This process resonates with Pauline Oliveros’ *Sonic Meditations*, which explore collective listening and vocalization as practices that challenge conventional hierarchies of authorship and performance. The audience therefore ceased to function as passive

6 Iemanjá is the Afro-Brazilian goddess of the sea, motherhood, and fertility. Originally a West African Yoruba deity, she was brought to the Americas by enslaved people and became a central figure in religions like Candomblé and Umbanda.

observers of the *ebó* and became vocal participants in its enactment. Through the act of teaching and collectively repeating the song, sonic agency was redistributed from the individual performer to the group.

2. The Voice as Material Kinship

Collective singing also required participants to develop a physical attunement to one another and to their environment. Through the coordination of breath, pitch, rhythm, and repetition, individual voices became temporarily entangled in a shared sonic and somatic field. The voice thus functioned not only as a vehicle for language or musical expression, but also as a material connection between bodies, space, memory, and the Afro-Brazilian cosmologies invoked by the song. This process can be understood through Bennett's concept of enchantment, which describes a heightened state of affective engagement in which the ordinary world becomes newly vivid and materially significant. Bennett associates enchantment with an intensified capacity to be affected by the vitality of things, bodies, and encounters (Bennett, 2001, pp. 4–5). In *Encruzilhada*, the shared act of singing generated such an intensified encounter: breath, voice, bodies, acoustic space, and the cosmological references carried by the song became entangled within a common sensory experience. Enchantment therefore emerged not as a purely psychological or symbolic response, but as an embodied condition produced through collective participation and material resonance.

3. Sonic Epistemological Transgression

The introduction of an orally transmitted song rooted in Afro-Brazilian cultural and cosmological references into diverse geographical and institutional contexts also constituted an epistemological intervention. In this sense, the pedagogical action resonates with Rufino's understanding of the *crossroads* as a site of transgression against the regimes of a single truth maintained by coloniality (Rufino, 2019, p. 18). Rather than presenting knowledge primarily through written, theoretical, or institutionally authorized forms, the performance transmitted knowledge through voice, repetition, memory, and bodily participation. The song became a sonic vessel through which participants could listen to, carry, and embody forms of memory and knowledge that have historically been marginalized or excluded by colonial structures of knowledge production. Its transmission therefore did not simply communicate cultural information; it enacted another

mode of knowing. Through collective vocalization, knowledge was experienced as something relational and embodied—something that could be carried in the breath, repeated by the body, and shared across differences of place, language, and cultural context.

Taken together, these three dimensions demonstrate how the pedagogical intervention transformed the audience's function within *Encruzilhada*. The audience moved from observers to vocal participants; individual voices became materially entangled within a collective sonic body; and oral transmission introduced an alternative mode of knowledge production into the performance space. The song therefore operated simultaneously as a pedagogical tool, a technology of collective participation, and an epistemological intervention.

The Somatic-Vocal Core: Non-Rational Participation, Epistemic Vulnerability, and Decolonial Attunement

To fully articulate the methodological mechanics of the outdoor iterations at Gylleboverket and in Fortaleza, it is necessary to clarify the specific nature of the audience participation activated by *Encruzilhada*. The vocal intervention employed a song created within a Capoeira context and invoking Afro-Brazilian cosmological references associated with the Orisha Iemanjá. This research, however, does not frame the

intervention as religious proselytization, nor does it depend upon the participants' semantic comprehension of the lyrics. Since the majority of the international participants did not speak Portuguese, the linguistic and cosmological specificity of the song was intentionally decentered during the act of participation. Instead, the methodology foregrounded the phonetic, rhythmic, melodic, and corporeal dimensions of collective vocalization.

The intention was not to eliminate rational or linguistic



Encruzilhada at Gylleboverket. © Etta Säfve, Österlen, Sweden, August 2nd, 2025.

forms of understanding, but to temporarily decenter semantic comprehension as the primary mode through which participation takes place. Participants could therefore engage with the song through the physical and acoustic conditions of vocalization: the repetition of syllables, the coordination of breath, the modulation of pitch, the experience of rhythm, and the emergence of collective resonance. Meaning was consequently not accessed exclusively through translation or intellectual decoding, but also through embodied and relational experience.

PhD Rajni Shah's work offers a useful starting point for understanding how *Encruzilhada* reorganized the conditions of audiencehood. In *Experiments in Listening*, Shah (2021) reconsiders the theatrical encounter in light of the conditions that enable a group of individuals to gather and attend together. Rather than treating the audience primarily as passive recipients of information, Shah proposes a form of theatrical encounter that privileges attentive modes of engagement over declarative forms of communication (Chapter 2, Section 2.3). Their discussion of the "choreography of attention" is particularly relevant to *Encruzilhada*, where the audience's attention was reorganized through collective vocalization. Participants were not required to decode the song linguistically to participate; instead, they were invited to attend through repetition, rhythm, breath, vocal coordination, and shared sonic presence.

This reorganization of attention also transformed the audience's relationship to participation. In *Audience Participation in Theatre*, Gareth White (2013) provides a framework for understanding participation as a redistribution of agency, enabling spectators to move beyond observation and become active contributors to the event (p. 2). In *Encruzilhada*, this transformation occurred through the direct pedagogical invitation to learn and repeat the song. The participants did not merely receive the performance; they contributed to its sonic con-



Encruzilhada at the PSI#30. © Ana Cláudia Moura, Fortaleza, Brazil, December 13th, 2025.

struction. Through call-and-response, repetition, and physical entrainment, the audience became an active component of the performance's unfolding.

The use of a song in Portuguese was significant to this process. Because most participants did not speak the language, semantic comprehension could not serve as the primary means of access to the song. The linguistic dimension was therefore temporarily decentered, allowing participants to engage with the song through its phonetic, rhythmic, melodic, and corporeal qualities. The intention was not to eliminate cognition or to establish a rigid opposition between reason and the body, but to interrupt the dominance of semantic decoding as the primary mode of participation. Participants were invited to encounter the song as a sonic and bodily event.

This process can be further understood through Pauline Oliveros' (2005) concept and practice of *Deep Listening*, which expands listening beyond the passive reception of sound toward an embodied, holistic attentiveness to the sonic (pp. 18–19). Within *Encruzilhada*, collective singing required participants to negotiate several simultaneous forms of attention. At the level of what Oliveros describes as focal attention, participants concentrated on the immediate task of learning the melody, reproducing the sounds, coordinating their breathing, and aligning their voices with the group. At the same time, the collective vocalization opened a wider field of attention in which the voices became entangled with the acoustic and environmental conditions of the outdoor sites.

The song therefore functioned simultaneously as a pedagogical structure and as a mechanism for embodied listening. Its repetition established a rhythmic and vocal ritornello (Bosi, 1977) through which participants could attune themselves to one another and to the surrounding environment. The invocation of Iemanjá, an Orisha associated with the sea and waters, also produced a poetic and material connection across the geographical sites of the research. This invocation created a conceptual resonance between the coastal environment of Fortaleza and the rural and coastal landscapes where the other iterations of *Encruzilhada* took place. Even when participants could not translate the name Iemanjá or understand the cosmological references embedded in the song, they could encounter its melodic, rhythmic, and corporeal dimensions through collective vocalization.

The somatic and acoustic dimensions of this process can also be understood through Jane Bennett's concept of *enchantment*, developed in *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (2001). Bennett describes enchantment as a heightened capacity to be affected by the vitality of bodies, things, and encounters (pp. 4–5). In *Encruzilhada*, the collective act of singing created such an intensified encounter. Breath, voice, bodies, acoustic space, memory, and cosmological reference became temporarily entangled within a shared sensory experience. Enchantment therefore emerged not as a purely psychological or symbolic response, but as an embodied condition produced through collective participation and material resonance.

Read together, these theoretical perspectives illuminate different dimensions of the same methodological operation. Shah (2021) helps articulate the transformation of the conditions of audiencehood and attention; White (2013) helps explain the redistribution of agency through participation; Oliveros (2005) provides a framework for understanding the embodied and expanded nature of collective listening; and Bennett (2001) helps articulate the intensified affective and material experience that can emerge from such an encounter.

The following schema visualizes this methodological reorientation. It does not propose a rigid opposition between rationality and the body, nor does it suggest that cognition disappears during the performance. Rather, it maps a temporary shift in the hierarchy of participation: from semantic comprehension and interpretive distance towards embodied attention, acoustic attunement, and relational presence. The schema represents the movement through which *Encruzilhada* invites participants to encounter knowledge and one another not only through what is understood, but also through what is heard, felt, repeated, and collectively enacted.

THE NON-RATIONAL PARTICIPATION AXIS

Linguistic / Semantic Focus	→	Somatic / Acoustic Focus
[Meaning as Primary Access]		[Embodied Listening Practice]
Cognitive decoding	→ —	Rhythmic entrainment
Intellectual distance —	→	Vocal and muscular kinship
Authoritative text —	→	Relational and visceral attunement
Translation-dependent meaning —	→	Shared sonic experience

The methodological movement can therefore be summarised as a shift from understanding the performance primarily through semantic interpretation to participating in it through embodied listening and collective sonic action. In *Encruzilhada*, the audience was not asked to abandon cognition, but to encounter the performance through multiple forms of attention simultaneously. The song became a medium through which participants could listen, repeat, attune, and contribute, even in the absence of linguistic comprehension.

Through this process, *Encruzilhada* demonstrated how collective vocalization can operate as a decolonial methodological practice: not by replacing one authoritative system of knowledge with another, but by creating a temporary space in which knowledge may be encountered through sound, bodily participation, relational attention, memory, and material presence. In this sense, decolonial listening is not only an academic theory to be understood, but also a somatic and relational practice that can be enacted collectively.

From the Crossroads to the Spiral

Ultimately, if *Encruzilhada* established the ontological tension of dislocation, and *Debaixo d'Água, Coberta de Terra* phenomenologically mapped this transition onto the landscape of Møn, it was the poem *The Spiral Root* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2026)⁷ that operated as the definitive synthesis of this geographic and spiritual relocation. Written on the specific day of my move to Møn, November 1, 2024, *The Spiral Root* sought to collapse the dualistic Cartesian paradigm that separates the human body, ancestral memory, and the vibrant ecology of a new habitat. Here, the environment was never a passive backdrop or a neutral destination; instead, it was a co-constitutive force that physically breached the somatic boundary. The internal tree disrupts human anatomy—pushing through orifices and coating the epidermis with a protective, viscous sap—to enact a visceral embodiment of a new landscape.

This biological and material merging produced an intimate, shared soil in which the self, the flora, and the ancestor—invoked through the memory of Voinha—became an indivisible relational assemblage. While *Debaixo d'Água, Coberta de Terra* positioned the migrant at a

7 The poem can be read in its entirety on page 253.

literal, four-pointed crossroads, navigating linear axes of direction, *The Spiral Root* radically dismantled this Euclidean geometry. By transmuting the linear arc of an atmospheric rainbow into a twisting, continuous spiral, the poem moved beyond the rigid binaries of origin and destination, or nature and culture. The spiral emerged as the primary motif for a relational, more-than-human future: a non-linear, open-ended loop of memory, body, and earth that permanently anchors the displaced soul within its new ecology.

The Ecology of Belonging

Taken together, the artistic works examined in this chapter trace a movement from dislocation towards relational emplacement. *Encruzilhada* initially articulated displacement as an ontological and epistemic condition, situating the migrant body within the unstable space of the crossroads. *Debaixo d'Água*, *Coberta de Terra* subsequently extended this condition into the landscape, transforming migration from an exclusively human experience into a somatic and ecological encounter with place. Finally, *The Spiral Root* moved beyond the geometry of departure, arrival, and return by proposing the spiral as a form of non-linear belonging.

This movement does not describe a simple progression from one place to another, nor does it imply that displacement is resolved by assimilating into a new environment. Rather, the works collectively propose that belonging may emerge through a continuous process of embodied, ecological, ancestral, and relational negotiation. The migrant body is not merely relocated within a new geography; it is transformed through its encounters with soil, water, vegetation, memory, sound, and the more-than-human forces of place. This chapter has therefore demonstrated how practice-based research can function not only to represent displacement, but also as a method to produce knowledge about its somatic and ecological dimensions. Through performance, installation, poetry, collective vocalization, and material transformation, *Encruzilhada* and its subsequent iterations developed a methodology in which knowledge emerged through embodied encounter rather than detached observation. The movement from the crossroads to the spiral consequently marks not the resolution of displacement, but a transformation in how displacement can be

inhabited: from a condition of separation and disorientation towards an open-ended, relational process of becoming with a new ecology.

In this sense, the spiral, does not signify arrival. It signifies continuity. It holds origin and destination, ancestry and futurity, body and landscape within the same unfinished movement. The displaced subject does not finally overcome dislocation by returning to a stable point of origin. Instead, belonging emerges as a continually unfolding relation among what has been carried, what has been encountered, and what is still becoming.

Interlude VI

Short Story *The Whirlwind*

*Historie er om kollaps af ting og historie er også om forglemmelse. Mange gange.*¹ (Vø, as cited in SMK – National Gallery of Denmark, 2018a, 2:10)



No Seio do Atlântico Sul © Ulrik Trojaborg; Praia do Foguete, Cabo Frio, Brazil; December 17th, 2022.

FOREWORD

LETTER TO DEISE FARIA NUNES: ÁGUA

Fredrikstad, January 10th, 2024

Reminder: to honor one's body, one's history, one's colors, one's wounds, one's beauty and, at the same time, recognize one's ugliness and decay.

¹ History is about the collapse of things and history is also about forgetting. Many times.

Cristais nas árvores em Fredrikstad
Crystals sitting heavily on tree trunks in Fredrikstad
Slowly melting down
Snow crystals slowly descending from dry treetops
like cosmic powder
Descending
Descending
Descendo
Against the sunlight
Um pouco de luz
Um pouco de luz já basta
To honour this body
To honour all these dancing bodies
Their rhythms
Their beauty
Their decay
Their stomping around
Their confusing paths
Our communal stupid dance
Nossas corações batendo juntas
Tic toc
Tic toc
Tic toc
Our hearts flowing like water into a large river
The largest in this country
The Glomma River
Its strong and deep currents
Will guide me inside out
And then finally
I will shine again
Like cosmic powder
Slowly descending from an old tree trunk in Norway
Descending
Descending
Descendo.
Here, I settle down.



Snow Crystals © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg, Fredrikstad, January 10th, 2024.

The Whirlwind

Oxum

Orê Yeyê ô!

Oxum tem o humor caprichoso e mutável.
alguns dias, suas águas correm aprazíveis e calmas,
elas deslizam com graça, frescas e límpidas,
entre margens cobertas de brilhante vegetação.
Numerosos vãos permitem atravessar de um lado a outro.
Outras vezes, suas águas tumultuadas passam estrondando,
cheias de correntezas e torvelinhos,
transbordando e inundando campos e florestas.
Ninguém pode atravessar de uma margem para a outra,
pois nenhuma ponte faz a ligação.
Oxum não toleraria tal ousadia!
Quando ela está em fúria, ela leva para longe
E destrói as canoas que tentam atravessar o rio.
(Verger, 1997, pp. 42-44)

/

Oxum has a capricious and changeable mood
some days, her waters flow pleasantly and calmly,
they glide gracefully, fresh and clear,
between banks covered in brilliant vegetation.
Numerous openings allow you to cross
from one side to the other.
At other times, its tumultuous waters come crashing through,
full of currents and whirlpools,
overflowing and flooding fields and forests
No one can cross from one bank to the other
because there is no bridge to connect them
Oxum would not tolerate such audacity!
When she's angry, she drives away
and destroys the canoes that try to cross the river.
(my translation)



Blue © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg, Malmö, August 31st, 2023.

I

Enquanto ela caminhava, a ventania rolava.

So much wind that she could hardly keep herself upright. Something that had started as only a light breeze, twisting her curls and gently elevating them up in the air, had in no time developed into a wind-storm. Such a storm had scared other *banhistas* away from the shore. Some of them packed up their kids, others their dogs, others their picnic baskets, some their beer bottles, and ran to a safe harbor. Um porto seguro onde as embarcações pudessem descansar. Ela tinha grande dificuldade em apenas estar. She had always understood herself as this restless creature and, sometimes, only sometimes, when she had a little time to think, did she ruminate on whether she had actually been born restless or if this was a product of the way she had been raised by her father. In the end, one way or another, it just didn't make any difference right now: she needed to always be on the move. The same way the boats, small or big, sailboats, motorboats, cargo ships, frigates, aircraft carriers, ferry boats, zodiacs, catamarans, dinghies, fishing boats, the lightest but also the heaviest, seem to find their *raison d'être* only when sliding in water, moving at a slow or fast pace in shallow or deep waters. Some boats carry on goods, other used to carry humans as

cargo. Strange boats. Luckily, they dissipated. The vision of all those boats docked in the harbor that afternoon, unable to fulfill the very reason for their existence, when the weather suddenly changed: a windstorm was coming, a storm coming so fast, “Faster than the speed of sound, faster than we thought we’d go”, the lyrics she had heard many years ago in that 1996 Smashing Pumpkins’ 1979 song. A song that marked her generation, and though initially she didn’t quite understand what the song was about, there was something about it that became incised inside her: its melancholy, the very fact that the song was included on an album titled *Mellon Collie and the Infinite Sadness* was already a contributing factor. Having herself been born in 1979, she had somehow fantasized that Billy Corgan had written the song about her, about something very deeply engraved in her persona: her melancholy, her restlessness, her somber suicidal desires. The song itself had been written in a moment of restlessness, when Billy Corgan, after the end of the *Siamese Dream Tour*, worked nonstop writing 56 songs for the upcoming Smashing Pumpkins album, 1979 being the very last one, evolving out of a demo called *Strolling*; exactly the same thing she was now doing on the shore that afternoon, when all of a sudden the wind storm rushed down upon her, the other banhistas, the seagulls and the swallows.



Queen Alexandrine Bridge with Swans © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg; Gammel Kalvehave, Denmark, July 1st, 2023.

II

Uma rajada de vento a tomou e a levou.

A sudden blast of wind was the initial sign of an anticipated storm that blew down onto the shore that late afternoon. Lost in her own thoughts as she was, she didn't realize how the environment around her had rapidly changed from a light breeze into a windstorm. Facing strong winds, birds tend not to fight the currents, but to make use of them to optimize their flights. Unlike humans, they have the advantage of aerodynamics: some birds have more power in their wings than we have in our arms, so when they flatten them out against the wind, they absorb the gust and are able to fly while maintaining their high speed. They angle their bodies towards the direction of the wind, keeping their heads and torsos stable. Not so long ago she had observed the swallows doing exactly this at Klintholm harbor, in the southeast part of the island of Møn in Denmark. In Tisvildeleje, that beautiful enclave in North Zealand where she had spent over ten summers, she witnessed a flight of cormorants doing this very same manoeuvre, flying back and forth from their nests in Tisvilde Hegn to the coast. O vôo acompanhado pode oferecer vantagens, ela subitamente se lembrou.

She was now alone in Kalvehave harbor in southern Zealand, doing her best to keep herself upright despite the blowing wind. "You can try the best you can, you can try the best you can, the best you can is good enough", wrote Thom Yorke & Co in the 2000 Radiohead song *Optimistic*, those verses originally being words of reassurance said by Yorke's partner Rachel Owen when he was frustrated with the band's progress. This song, specifically those encouraging verses, were hidden in the back of her mind over the last twenty years, during which she alternated periods of great optimism with others of extreme pessimism, always struggling to find peace in between. She found great solace though in her husband's constant belief that she would be fine. This sentence he has repeated again and again over the twelve years they have been together, flying hundreds and thousands of kilometers from one country to another, like migratory birds searching for the most suitable conditions in which to exist. On their initial flight from Copenhagen to Berlin and later to Malmö, they aligned their bodies with the direction of the wind to absorb the air mass and to be able to continue their flight. They have been doing this since that seminal day when they took off while admiring marble statues at the Thorvaldsen Museum.

Birds of passage, yes, but to where and until when?

On occasions such as the stormy one this afternoon, she was reminded of something that she later came to understand as creating distances with the sole intention of survival. Over the years she slowly came to understand that only by distancing herself from everything she had known, would she then be able to learn something new about herself and the world surrounding her. Like opening cracks in the earth to allow fresh water to flow. Mas às vezes o que vem junto te inunda e te leva embora num turbilhão de água, ar, terra e memória.

De repente uma rajada mais forte de vento soprou e a levantou do solo, lançando-a violentamente rumo ao céu.



De Vez Em Quando Chegam Nuvens A Minha Cabeça © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg; Malmö, Sweden, July 17th, 2023.

III

No olho do furacão o que se sente é calma.

Rotating at high speed as she was now in that tall column of air, there was very little she could actually do. When you don't have much to do, you may find time to think.

So much had accumulated on her surface over the years that she found herself on the verge of drowning, ceasing to breathe due to the weight of so much material. Um dia passa uma ventania e arranca fora

toda a cobertura. A whirlwind, the phenomenon in which a vortex of wind forms due to the increase in the magnitude of heat and air current, was the perfect excuse she had that late afternoon to sink deep into thought. Bastou apenas um turbilhão de vento para que ela finalmente pudesse começar a pensar.

Someone observing the situation from the outside would witness a womxn spinning around, up and down, and would therefore imagine that she was in total distress. Inside the whirlwind though, the womxn had sunk into deep sleep and the only sign of her being alive was a constant twitch in her eyes, the same way dogs' eyes twitch when they dream. Investigating the circumstances even closer (in case someone would be able to penetrate the womxn's mind), one would find her deep diving into a Caribbean blue ocean, the shade of blue coming less as a reference to the actual color of the Caribbean sea and more as a result of those verses Enya had insistently sung inside the womxn's head since 1991: "So the world goes round and round, with all you ever knew, they say the sky high above, is Caribbean blue". The waters she plummeted into were more of a deep blue and as she forged ahead, they slowly turned almost indigo.

When even thinking became too much of a task, she sank deep into dark purple dreams.



Before the Storm © Ulrik Trojaborg; Klintholm Harbour, Island of Møn, Denmark; June 28th, 2023.

IV

...estou procurando ... estou procurando, estou procurando.

Estou tentando entender.

*Tentando dar a alguém o que vivi e não sei a quem
mas não quero ficar com o que vivi.*

*Não sei o que fazer do que vivi,
tenho medo dessa desorganização profunda.
(Lispector, 1964, p. 9)*

...I'm searching ... I'm searching, I'm searching

I'm trying to understand.

*Trying to give what I've lived to somebody else and I don't know to whom,
but I don't want to keep what I've lived*

I don't know what to do with what I lived

I'm afraid of that profound disorder.

(Lispector, 2012, pp. 3-4)

Inside the whirlwind, she lost control of her autonomy.

There was something inside her that she wanted to kill, a desire for self-destruction that she couldn't even recall when exactly it had begun. Only suspicions, no certainties. Had it been in that mirage in her adolescence, where she had spent hours alternately looking up and down? Heaven or earth? Céu ou terra? Could she throw herself out of that window in search of freedom? Which sky would she then find? Or was it before, in her infancy, oblivious to soccer and so many other rigid symbols of masculinity?

Once inside the whirlwind, she believed that in order to destroy this amalgamated, amorphous and confused thing, she had to destroy the whole of her. As in the figure of speech: the part for the whole. *A parte pelo todo*. What was effect, what was cause, she definitely did not know until today.

When did she start hating herself so much, *a ponto de querer desaparecer*? Yes, because until then she hadn't really thought about committing suicide, but rather about disappearing. And she believed that everything that disappears from one place appears in another. Like in that Murakami book about the girl who disappears in Greece. She strongly believes that girl is just fine. She is in a much better place now. Don't we all need to disappear sometimes? She believes in the curative power of magical realism. Like in those lyrics that Bono Vox beautifully wrote for U2's *Mysterious Ways*: "Johnny, take a walk with your sister the moon/Let her pale light in to fill up the room/You've been living underground, eating from a can/ You've been running away from what you don't understand".

In the end, she never managed to destroy herself completely. She kept on saving a tiny part of her sanity and out of this part, she kept on recreating herself, like those plants that if you put a single leaf in water, and they grow to become a full plant again.



Claro-Escuro © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg, Gammel Kalvehave, August 21st, 2024.

V

Rio de Janeiro Dream

That night she woke up scared, screaming for her brother's help at the empty parking lot of the university where she had gotten her bachelor's degree in acting. It was actually not night anymore, but a sunny Sunday morning. She thought it was still night because of the blackout curtains that rendered the hotel room in pitch-black darkness. She got up and, while groping around the foreign furniture, she made her way into the bathroom where she splashed water on her face to come back to reality.

It was Father's Day in her country of origin. Her brother had recently become father to a boy and, despite not having kept a close relationship with him over the years, she still typed kind words congratulating him. Eu, no estacionamento a céu aberto, em busca de proteção, chamando pelo meu irmão. At that point she really did not know who should (or could) congratulate whom and, more specifically, what for, but she did it anyway because it was the right thing to do. She also took the opportunity to send a sleepy audio message to their father congratulating him for being a father, despite her decision to keep her distance from

him for many years, precisely because of his poor performance in this role.

Sun invaded the room when she pulled the curtains back, and the tree trunk rings outside grew one or two millimeters while smiling towards her. The prospect of a new day put her in an optimistic state. Light grew inside and out.

VI

São Pedro d'Aldeia Dream

It was a thin straight white sand beach, and they were driving a big pickup truck that seemed way too large and didn't fit at all into the beautiful natural landscape they found themselves in. Too much engine, too much metal, too much noise. The contrast with the delicacy of the seashells, the calming sea waves and the tiny sea crabs inhabiting that sandy environment was disconcerting. The pickup truck belonged to her neighbors from Berlin, he and his wife (who was originally blond but somehow had become brunette) were in the front, while the womxn and her brother were seated in the back. They suddenly decided to stop. She took the opportunity to bathe in those pale blue shallow salty waters where calm and rest were constant company. All of a sudden, the neighbor's wife came back in despair because she could not find her husband. Both he and her brother decided to play snooker in one of the many bars that had suddenly emerged, and they were nowhere to be found. They went from bar to bar, but the long search amounted to nothing. Finally, the womxn decided to grab a tall ladder in order to see the whole landscape from above. Once she reached the top of the ladder, she discovered that she was now in her childhood garden, caressed by the flamboyant tree and its millions of reddish flowers that transform into thousands of tiny particles once they fall on the grass. A red carpet where she could lay down and sleep for a while. But before this happened, she overheard her father's voice calling her in anger. She lost her balance on the ladder and saw the ground coming straight towards her face.

VII

Belém Dream

Her brother's wedding took place in Nova Iguaçu, the same city her maternal grandmother had first moved to when she migrated from

Belém, in the Amazon rainforest region, in 1945. Not only was the whole family there, but also many guests. It was morning, already at the end of the party. Festa de interior. Everyone was getting ready to leave. One of her brother's best friends, a tall young blonde lady, insisted that the guests donate their clothes to a charity institution. Everyone agreed and took off their clothes. At some point, the womxn realized the tall blonde was a fake, aquela loura falsa. Ela iria ficar com as roupas e vendê-las para lucro próprio. She was going to sell the clothes and keep the profit for herself. They argued, but the womxn finally and decisively grabbed the plastic bag where her clothes had been deposited. A loura alta a seguia, agredindo-a verbalmente. In spite of the blonde's verbal assault, the womxn put her clothes on and left. Her brother was coming down with the pickup truck and she kept shouting at him, asking him to wait for her, but he would not listen. He just wouldn't stop the car. Espera, espera! He simply decided not to stop the car for her to get in.

There was a lot of mud all around and she got very dirty and angry. When she finally got close to him, she pulled the cigarette out of his mouth, spilled his wine on the floor and broke the wine glass into pieces. Ungrateful!

The womxn and her mother walked through a large popular market in Nova Iguaçu in an attempt to find their way home after the wedding celebration came to an end.

They were now in Belém looking for any relative who could take them home. Her brother had simply left them behind. Ingrato! Their mother didn't mind staying in Nova Iguaçu, but she desperately wanted to go home. A large, flowing river, where the womxn found herself swimming while searching for her way home. The mother was somewhere there, her ever present figure, but not visible anymore. There were lots of boats anchored by the river, painted in light blue, black, and white. All familiarly rustic as in her childhood in São Pedro D'Aldeia. The boats were named after the relatives from Belém she didn't know. The children who were left behind when her grandmother ran away from Belém trying to survive the violence. The womxn got lost in a labyrinth in the harbor; the small houses looked all the same. She called for someone, anyone, but no one appeared. There were an upper town and a lower town, like in Salvador, the dream city where she lived for months until she turned one year old and where she hoped to die.

Down at the harbor market, she finally spotted the old female cook, who was very poor, just like the surrounding area. She was a sign of help, a way out of that labyrinth. She ran down, but the cook had already disappeared. Then she kept on swimming and swimming and swimming. That was all she could do for now. Such lush nature!



Öresund Bridge from Skanör © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg; Skanör, Sweden, July 14th, 2023.

VIII

She swam down the river in Belém do Pará all the way back from her dreams.

The colors of those waters, an intense mix of blue and green, were all that she could see during that state of trance she found herself in along the whole long journey back. Every now and then, a small but long black fish, that looked more like a baby snake, would show up in her peripheral vision, blinking its tiny eyes, reassuring her that she was heading in the right direction. Deep down in her heart, she knew: this was the way back home. Continue nadando, não pare, baby snake-fish would tell her with a fishy smile.

It was only when the seabed rubbed against her stomach and suddenly changed from a rocky one into a sandy one that she knew it was

time to leave the depths and surface. She burst out of the water like a comet! And to her surprise, she found herself not so far from where the whirlwind journey had initially begun that stormy late June. Out of all unimaginable places, she was now in Hesnæs harbor, caressed by a light breeze and warmed by an unexpectedly balmy Danish summer. A dog barked insistently in the background, where tall tree roots would soon meet the silky blue ocean.



After the Storm © Ulrik Trojaborg, Hesnæs harbour, Denmark, July 21st, 2023.

IX

Eis então que, entre o vai e vem de uma onda e outra, ela ouviu o canto da sereia:

Interlude VII

Poem *The Spiral Root*

There is a tree growing inside of me.
Her branches push through my orifices,
expanding them in a sudden geometry
of beauty and decay.
This tree illuminates the dark corners—
the hidden arrangements inside out my body.
She offers me a dual inheritance:
both light and shadow.
I receive her light directly into my bones,
storing a warmth for the cold, dark months of winter ahead.
In her shadow, I lay down.
And sleep.
A sleep stripped of dreams or nightmares,
simply traversing the weightless unconscious.
She is a fruit tree,
heavy and bursting,
producing an abundance of viscous sap.
I bathe myself in her thick substance,
shedding old weight to acquire
an entirely fresh, new, shiny skin—
an armor, an adornment,
covering and protecting me
from the outer world,
and from myself.
The tree and I
become a single entity.
Interconnected.
Braided together, like the hair I wish Voinha had woven
if only I had been allowed to keep it long
while she was still alive.
Voinha, the tree, and I—
we know each other intimately now.
In this shared soil we inhabit,

we are indivisible, yet individual.
We lay down together,
partially rendered in shifting moments of sun and
shadow.
Suddenly, the sky break and it starts to rain.
A full rainbow arches above us,
playing a trick on our eyes
as we search for where it begins or where it could pos-
sibly end.
Then, we finally understand:
it is not an arch, but a spiral.
Together, we twist.
Over and over again.
Until we part



The Spiral Root © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg; Råbylille, Møn, Denmark, November 17th, 2024.

Chapter VIII. Fissures in the Hegemony: Building Alliances

Rarely, if ever, are any of us healed in isolation. Healing is an act of communion. (hooks, 2000, p. 215)



Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between: Remembrance Workshop. © Oda-Känge Midtvåge Diallo. Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, April 8th, 2025.

Performing Regenerative Practices: *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*

In this chapter, I trace the progressive evolution of a conceptual framework initiated during the first year of my doctoral trajectory: *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*. As outlined in Chapter III, this project originated from a profound sensation of epistemic and institutional isolation—a claustrophobic experience of inhabiting an academic vacuum upon commencing my doctoral inquiry. This alienation stemmed from a visceral necessity for community. Coming from a theater-making background, I operate under the premise that artistic creation is fundamentally collaborative; unlike certain individualist paradigms within the visual arts or musical composition, theater exists as a locus of the collective. In theater, one is permanently in relation. Throughout my professional career in theatre as an actor, dramaturg, and interdisciplinary artist in various geographical locations, I intentionally embedded myself in somatic connections with the entire creative ensemble and the audience, recognizing that these interpersonal exchanges directly nourished the dramaturgical work.

Consequently, my relocation to a new country and city to begin my PhD triggered an acute loneliness that actively blocked my creative faculties. Organizing, curating, and hosting the three-day international conference *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between: Performing Decolonial Journeys* in October 2022 served as a radical spatial intervention. Through this gathering, the physical terrain of my research, namely the Inter Arts Center, was actively cross-pollinated and fertilized by the discourses, concepts, and Practice-as-Research models of international artist-researchers I admired.

Following the conference, the concept of *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* remained ingrained as an affective shelter—a site of radical hospitality where collective thought and care could gestate. It is crucial to state the structural parameters of this isolation: as a non-Scandinavian researcher working at the Malmö Theatre Academy, where my immediate PhD cohort consisted entirely of white, cis-normative Scandinavian scholars (from Sweden, Denmark, and Iceland), navigating this institutional environment was structurally exhausting across all registers. Coming from Brazil, a nation characterized by a radically distinct cultural matrix and localized modes of sociality, I found the lack of representation stark. In 2023, during a formal staff appraisal

meeting with the prefect of the institution, I was asked to articulate my institutional desires for the upcoming academic year. In a moment of reflexivity, I stated that I desired the mentorship of a Black professor within my research network, given that my inquiry interrogates the precise intersections of racialization and Queerness. The prefect dismissed my request, shrugging it off as an unrealistic expectation detached from the institutional reality of a Nordic educational institute.

While previous chapters have documented how this persistent institutional negligence precipitated a decline in my psychological well-being, my recovery marked a critical shift in positionality. Upon receiving treatment and regaining my footing, I reclaimed *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* as an active site of care, solidarity, and collectivity. During this period, I engaged in numerous conversations with Senior Lecturer Sofie Volquartz Lebech about the need to diversify the modes of knowledge production and the perspectives represented at the Malmö Theatre Academy. These conversations contributed to the invitation of Emerita Professor of Oregon State University Nana Osei-Kofi and Professor Lena Sawyer to participate in the 2024 edition of *Thinking Together*,¹ a series of encounters conceived by Sofie Lebech. Osei-Kofi and Sawyer conceived *Grappling with the Colonial Archive: Performance, Place, and Public Engagement*, bringing their collaborative performance work *Listening* into dialogue with questions of the colonial archive, performance, place, and public engagement (Osei-Kofi & Sawyer, 2024). Given the circumstances, I then invited her to facilitate a workshop connected to *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*. This invitation resulted in the first iteration of *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*.

The first iteration, entitled *Identity and Change-Making: Black, Brown, and Queer Experiences in the Nordics*. Directly countering the institutional limits enforced during my appraisal meeting, the workshop

1 *Thinking Together* is a format in which members of the research department at the Malmö Theatre Academy invite researchers and artists to engage in collective thinking within a public setting. The discussion is accompanied by a shared meal, conceived as a performative response to the topic under consideration. The format aims to facilitate interdisciplinary exchange and dialogue within the institutional space, bringing together artistic and research-based perspectives.

series was structured to ensure that each iteration was led by a guest facilitator of color. In total, *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* spanned a three-year trajectory, manifesting in three distinct annual iterations across 2024, 2025, and 2026.

First Iteration (November 2024): Identity and Change-Making: Black, Brown, and Queer Experiences in the Nordics.

The first workshops developed in relation to *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* began with a workshop facilitated by Nana Osei-Kofi, *Identity and Change-Making: Black, Brown, and Queer Experiences in the Nordics*, held at the Inter Arts Center on November 29th, 2024. Osei-Kofi's work was particularly significant for my research because the workshop created a space in which questions of identity, embodied knowledge, epistemic privilege, and change-making could be explored through participatory and dialogical practices. The workshop was explicitly conceived for Black, Brown, and Queer researchers, artists, and community activists, as well as those working closely with these communities, and invited participants to examine how their identities and experiences shape their practices and forms of influence (Osei-Kofi, 2024).

Osei-Kofi described the workshop as a space for engaging with “the challenges and nuances of navigating environments that are predominantly cisgender, heteronormative, and white”, while considering how “their identities and experiences shape their work and influence” (Osei-Kofi, 2024). She further identifies “embodied knowing, epistemic privilege, and change-making” as central concerns, proposing interactive and participatory activities as a means of creating space for “self-reflection and dialogue”, and for developing strategies to navigate environments “that both challenge and inspire” (Osei-Kofi, 2024). These concerns directly intersected with the methodological questions emerging within *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*. In particular, the emphasis on embodied knowing challenged the assumption that knowledge must be detached from the body, biography, identity, and lived experience in order to become legitimate research knowledge.

This encounter therefore became important not only as a workshop within the development of the project, but also as a methodological proposition. Osei-Kofi's emphasis on embodied knowing offered a way

of thinking about the body as a site of knowledge production rather than merely an object of inquiry. For *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*, this was particularly significant because the project itself emerged from the intersection of racialization, migration, Queerness, ancestry, and embodied experience. The workshop opened a space in which these dimensions could be approached not as variables to be bracketed out of the research process, but as constitutive elements of how knowledge is produced, encountered, and shared.

The question of epistemic privilege was equally consequential. By asking participants to consider how identity shapes both their work and their influence, Osei-Kofi's workshop foregrounded the unequal conditions under which knowledge becomes visible, authoritative, or institutionally recognised. This resonated with my broader concern of whose experiences are permitted to constitute knowledge and whose histories remain marginalised within dominant cultural and academic structures. Within *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*, this question became inseparable from the ways in which Black, Brown, and Queer experiences are narrated, archived, embodied, and performed.

The workshop also introduced change-making not simply as an external political objective but as something that can emerge through practices of reflection, dialogue, and collective engagement. In this sense, Osei-Kofi's approach helped establish an important methodological foundation for the project: research could become a space for transformation rather than merely a process of documenting existing realities. The workshop contributed to a developing understanding of *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* as a relational and embodied research practice, in which knowledge is generated through encounters between bodies, identities, memories, and lived experiences. This orientation subsequently informed the workshops and collaborations that followed, including the work with Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo and the development of *Remembrance*.

Second Iteration (April 2025): *Remembrance*

The second iteration of *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* took place on April 8th, 2025, and was facilitated by Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo through the workshop *Remembrance*. I had encountered Diallo's work before this collaboration through her doctoral research, *Joining in Black*

Study: Knowledge Creation and Black Feminist Critique Alongside African Norwegian Youth (Midtvåge Diallo, 2023), which develops *Black study* as a non-disciplinary, collaborative, and embodied mode of knowledge creation. As a Fulani-Norwegian-Dane, Diallo thinks through and against the materialities of Nordic colonialisms, while her work also explores connections between non-disciplinary study practices among Black artists and activists across the Netherlands and the Nordic countries. Our intellectual exchange subsequently deepened. In October 2024, Diallo also served as the opponent at my 50% PhD seminar, contributing to the critical examination of my research at a significant stage in its development.

Her engagement with my work, together with her research into embodied, collaborative, and non-disciplinary forms of knowledge production, established a meaningful intellectual continuity between my doctoral research and the methodological concerns of *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*. This continuity became particularly visible in *Remembrance*, which focused on “counter-archiving as a black feminist methodology of care” (Midtvåge Diallo, 2025). In her framing of the workshop, Diallo asks: “How do we remember, and more importantly who do we remember?” Diallo’s situated this question within the archival absence of Black and Brown people living in the Nordic countries, noting that they “rarely figure in public archives” and that this absence also affects how stories of “queer resistance and struggles for liberation” are told (Midtvåge Diallo, 2025).

Inspired by “queer of colour and black feminist approaches to memory and counter-archiving,” the workshop invited participants to explore what they “know, and don’t know about our kin from the past,” asking who had organised for “queer, black and brown liberation before us” and how participants were connected to their ancestors “by blood and by collective struggle” (Midtvåge Diallo, 2025). These questions resonated strongly with the concerns of my own practice. Rather



Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between – Identity and Change-Making: Black, Brown, Queer and In-Between Experiences in the Nordics.
© Sofie Lebech. Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, April 8th, 2025.

than approaching the archive as a fixed repository of officially sanctioned histories, counter-archiving here becomes an active practice of recovering, questioning, and reconfiguring relations with the past. The emphasis on kinship and collective struggle also expands the meaning of ancestry beyond biological inheritance, allowing memory to become a site where political, cultural, and affective relationships can be traced and reactivated.

For *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*, this perspective became particularly significant because the workshop situated remembering not as a passive recovery of what has been lost, but as a collective practice of asking who has been excluded from historical narratives and how those absences might be addressed. Diallo's questions therefore became part of the methodological conditions through which the project approached memory, kinship, and embodied knowledge. They also reinforced my understanding of artistic research as a practice in which archives are not simply consulted but actively reimagined through relations between bodies, memories, voices, and forms of collective care.

Third Iteration (April 2026): Spaces of Resonance

For the third and final edition of the workshop series, held on April 28th, 2026, I re-invited Nana Osei-Kofi, who introduced the organizing concept of *Resonance*. This final workshop, *Spaces of Resonance*, brought together the participants from the previous sessions and deliberately closed the cohort to new participants. The decision to maintain the same group allowed the workshop to build upon an already established relational and affective history, deepening the sense of trust, intimacy, and collective inquiry that had developed through the previous encounters.

Osei-Kofi framed the workshop through a spatial and relational provocation: "We know how to navigate walls – material ones, conceptual ones, the ones we've had to learn to move around. This is a day for Black, Brown, and Queer folx in the Nordics to move through space together. What do we make possible for each other when we change what's around us? What opens between us – in conversation, in making, in motion – indoors and out? On our own terms" (Osei-Kofi, 2026). These questions resonated directly with *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*, where the negotiation of space is not simply geographical but

also embodied, social, institutional, and psychic. The notion of moving through walls—both material and conceptual—provided a productive way of understanding how racialized and queer bodies negotiate environments that have not necessarily been designed with their presence in mind.

I understood *Resonance* here not simply as an acoustic phenomenon, but as a somatic and relational condition. It became a way of attending to vibrations, affects, memories, and invisible forces that shape how marginalized bodies perceive and inhabit space. Within *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*, resonance therefore extended the methodological emphasis on embodied knowledge developed through the earlier workshops. If the first workshop explored identity, embodied knowing, and change-making, and the second turned towards memory, kinship, and counter-archiving, this final iteration asked how these forms of knowledge might move through bodies and spaces together. Resonance became a way of thinking about what happens when embodied knowledge encounters other bodies, environments, and institutional structures.

To further situate this experience of racialized visibility, Osei-Kofi introduced the work of Zora Neale Hurston (1928). In *How It Feels to Be Colored Me*, Hurston writes, “I feel most colored when I am thrown against a sharp white background” (Hurston. 1928, p. 215). Later, she observes: “Sometimes, I feel discriminated against, but it does not make me angry. It merely astonishes me. How can any deny themselves the pleasure of my company? It is beyond me” (Hurston. 1928, p. 216). Hurston’s reflections offered an important framework for understanding the paradox through which racialized identity can become most intensely visible in encounters with dominant social and institutional structures. At the same time, her refusal to reduce herself to the terms through which she is perceived opens another dimension: racialized identity is imposed relationally, but it is never exhausted by the gaze that produces it.

This tension is central to my own research. *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* emerges from experiences of navigating spaces in which racial, Queer, and migrant identities can become hypervisible, while simultaneously being rendered illegible or peripheral within dominant institutional frameworks. Hurston’s “sharp white background”

can therefore be read alongside Osei-Kofi's question of what becomes possible when we change what surrounds us. The issue is not only how marginalized bodies move through existing structures, but also how collective presence can alter the conditions of the space itself. Resonance thus becomes both a bodily experience and a methodological proposition: rather than asking marginalized bodies simply to adapt to hostile environments, the research asks what might happen when those bodies gather, listen, move, make, and transform the spaces between them.

The practical work of the workshop developed this proposition through tactile and somatic practices. Using coloured pens, pencils, and modelling clay, participants created a form of tactile archive by physically modelling their own corporeal forms and reflecting on which memories resonate within particular parts of the body. Particular attention was given to the feet—the parts of the body that carry our weight and establish our relationship with the ground. The activity generated an atmosphere of warmth, playfulness, and collective intimacy, while also opening space for the more difficult labour of engaging with ancestral struggles, memories, and achievements. The body became both archive and instrument: a site through which memory could be sensed, shaped, and shared rather than merely narrated.

The workshop subsequently moved beyond the institutional walls of the Inter Arts Center and into the Folkets Park. This movement outdoors extended the concept of resonance from the individual body into an ecological field. Participants listened to the acoustic complexity of Malmö while attending to the more-than-human environment surrounding them. The park consequently became more than a backdrop for the workshop; it became an active participant in the process of listening and attunement. Moving from tactile bodily awareness to ecological listening expanded the methodological field of *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*, suggesting that decolonial practice can involve not only challenging institutional structures but also cultivating different modes of relation with the environments in which those structures are situated.

AXIS OF RESONANCE

Tactile Somatic Practice (Modeling Clay / Feet)



Ecological Out-of-Door Attunement (Folkets Park)



Subversion of Institutional Whiteness (Lund University/Malmö)

The final stage of this process returned to the institutional space itself. The movement from body, to environment, to institution can therefore be understood as an axis of resonance: tactile somatic practice generated awareness of the body; ecological listening extended that awareness into the surrounding environment; and the subsequent return to institutional space enabled a critical interrogation of the structures that condition racialized and queer presence. These stages were not strictly linear but mutually informing. Rather, they describe a relational movement through which sensation becomes perception, perception becomes collective awareness, and collective awareness can become a basis for challenging the conditions in which bodies are asked to exist.

In this final iteration, *Resonance* therefore became a methodological culmination of the workshop series within *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*. The workshops had progressively moved from questions of identity and embodied knowledge, through memory and counter-archiving, towards the collective occupation and transformation of space. Osei-Kofi's invitation to consider "what opens between us" became particularly significant in this context. The research was no longer concerned only with what individual bodies carry, remember, or resist, but with what can emerge relationally when those bodies come together on their own terms. Resonance thus became a practice of collective attunement—a way of sensing and creating the conditions for Black, Brown, and Queer presence to become not merely visible within institutional space, but capable of transforming it.

A Manifesto of Care, Alliances, and Communal Growth within the Fissures

Reclaiming *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* as an active site of care, togetherness, and collectivity directly aligns with bell hooks' (2000) concept of a "love ethic," presented in her work *All About Love: New*

Visions. In her foundational critique of institutionalized systems of domination, hooks (2000, p. 94) understands love not as passive sentimentality, but as an active ethical practice grounded in care, respect, commitment, trust, responsibility, and knowledge. Love thus becomes a transformative public and political force: a practice through which relationships, communities, and social structures may be actively reimagined. Within this framework, the reclamation of *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* can be understood not merely as the creation of a supportive space, but as an intentional practice of collective care and resistance to the institutional conditions that had previously produced isolation, exclusion, and epistemic marginalization.

This ethic was encoded into this project's DNA from its absolute inception. As explained in chapter III, the inaugural 2022 international conference, *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between: Performing Decolonial Journeys*, was far from a detached academic exercise; on the contrary, it offered my research and my somatic being an immediate, profound sanctuary of community and mutual validation. By transitioning this foundational gathering into a three-year cycle of annual workshops, my methodology did not change its core values, but rather extended hooks' call to embed a permanent, practice-based love ethic within the hostile, cis-normative whiteness of the Scandinavian academy. Inviting external facilitators of colour, such as Nana Osei-Kofi and Oda-Kange Midtvåge Diallo, to guide these iterations was a deliberate act of institutional responsibility, cementing a relational clearing where marginalized subjectivities could safely find collective recognition and the epistemic freedom to generate systemic change.

Furthermore, this theoretical intersection bridged my personal trajectory of psychological recovery with a collective labour of alliance-building that transcended human-centric boundaries. Drawing on bell hooks' conception of love as a transformative ethical practice, I argue that there can be no meaningful decolonization without a parallel commitment to healing the emotional and psychic fractures produced by systemic erasure and institutional isolation (hooks, 2000). Throughout its four-year evolution, *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* has materialized as a sentient vessel traveling across space and time in a state of constant, fluid transformation. This collaborative framework functioned as a dynamic sanctuary that sheltered and honored mar-

ginalized subjectivities, operating as a multi-layered repository for cross-cultural dialogue, epistemic freedom, and shared physical and mental well-being. By reconfiguring the workshop space into an open-call laboratory, this project established a parallel frequency to the immersive dynamics of the work I have developed with sound at the final stages of my PhD. While the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* used spatial acoustics to submerge individual listeners within fluid archives of ancestral and environmental memory, the workshop series assembled a human constellation to process the shared realities of diasporic displacement. Both frameworks serve as twin vessels of radical listening, designed to cultivate an acute internal and external attunement with ourselves and other natural beings.

Stepping into the live environment of *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* meant entering a zone where isolation was suspended, mirroring the precise emotional landscape of the sonic installation. Both spaces dismantled the Cartesian barriers of the traditional academy by welcoming a holistic, non-hierarchical ecology of presence. Whether one was enveloped by the physical bodies of diasporic peers, scholars, artists and activists in a workshop room, or embraced by the disembodied vocal testimonies, ancestral echoes, and riverine soundscapes of the exhibition space, the internal phenomenon remained identical. It was an intentional slowing down—a mutual decision to cease running from systemic hostility, institutional isolation, and personal trauma. In these safe communal environments, the boundaries between the self and the collective began to dissolve through direct, unmediated eye contact and shared vulnerabilities.

By prioritizing rest, listening, reciprocal partnership, and collective care over immediate institutional productivity, the collaborations described throughout this chapter cultivated alternative conditions for knowledge production. Through sound, shared presence, and embodied participation, these alliances gradually transformed vulnerability into a living archive of decolonial practice. Rather than opposing the university from outside, they enacted, however temporarily, other ways of researching, learning, and belonging from within its structures.

Ultimately, in order to preserve the autoethnographic integrity of this project, the limits and internal conflicts of alliance-building must

be transparently scrutinized. Creating a radical sanctuary does not exempt the site from human friction. While the white hegemony of Scandinavian academia flattens racialized practitioners into a uniform group, our collective was fractured by deep, intracommunity differences. Throughout the three-year workshop cycle, colourism emerged as a critical site of exclusion. A dark-skinned participant felt that the group failed to validate the unique vulnerabilities of their positionality, leading to their eventual withdrawal. Additionally, a clear disconnect arose between the racialized participants who inhabited Queer subjectivities and those who did not, introducing complex frictions in the workspace. Compounding these identity politics were material realities: accommodating motherhood and the presence of babies created unexpected operational breaches and misunderstandings.

Managing these fractures required me to confront my own dual positionality. While I attempted to establish a horizontal, non-hierarchical space where the group shared responsibility for our mutual care, the institutional architecture of the university complicated this goal. Holding the doctoral contract and controlling the financial resources allocated by Lund University created an unavoidable power imbalance between myself and the community. Acknowledging this friction is a methodological necessity. It proves that decolonial healing is not a utopian escape, but an ongoing, messy negotiation of power, accountability, and honest self-critique.

I look forward to the continuous, regenerative evolution of this receptacle—navigating it with all its inherent difficulties—while expanding its borders into unthinkable epistemic horizons and cultivating an ever-deepening ecology of communal growth.

The Structural Conditions of International Academic Belonging

The experiences described in this chapter must not be understood solely as a sequence of individual encounters with discrimination, institutional exclusion, or epistemic marginalization. While these experiences are necessarily narrated from the situated position of my own body and biography, they also emerge within broader structural conditions affecting international doctoral researchers in Swedish higher education. Recent quantitative research confirms that the diffi-

culties encountered by international doctoral students are not exceptional or reducible to individual cases. The 2026 report *How Are International Doctoral Students Doing? Migration Policy, Language, Discrimination, and the Work Environment*, produced by Fackförbundet ST in collaboration with the Swedish National Union of Students (SFS), documents significant differences between international and Swedish doctoral students in relation to work-related stress, discrimination and harassment, language-based exclusion, and migration-related uncertainty (Eriksson, 2026).

This report is particularly significant for the present research because it provides quantitative evidence for conditions that are often experienced individually, but remain structurally produced. International doctoral students report higher levels of work-related stress, sleep problems, and difficulties separating work from private life than their Swedish colleagues. They also experience discrimination and harassment to a greater extent, while linguistic and institutional barriers can limit access to professional information and collegial interaction (Eriksson, 2026, pp. 4, 10–15). These findings challenge the tendency to interpret experiences of racism, xenophobia, exclusion, and institutional vulnerability as isolated interpersonal events. They instead point towards the ways in which racialization, migration status, language, and institutional power intersect within the Swedish higher-education environment.

This broader context is essential to understanding the epistemological position from which the present research emerges. The discriminatory experiences I have encountered throughout my approximately nineteen years of education and professional life in and around Western academic institutions, at both the master's and doctoral levels in Copenhagen and Malmö cannot all be documented through institutional records, formal complaints, or forms of evidence conventionally recognized by academic scholarship. Yet the absence of documentary proof does not render these experiences epistemologically irrelevant. Experiences of racialization and exclusion accumulate somatically as memory, vigilance, exhaustion, resistance, and situated knowledge. They become part of the body through which research is conducted.

My experience must therefore be understood simultaneously at two levels. It is singular, because it belongs to a specific body, biogra-

phy, and history. At the same time, it is structural, because the conditions through which it became possible are not unique to me. The recent findings concerning international doctoral students in Sweden provide an important external context for understanding this distinction. They do not prove the details of my individual experiences, nor do they need to. Rather, they demonstrate that the broader conditions of stress, discrimination, exclusion, and vulnerability within which those experiences occurred are shared across a wider population (Eriksson, 2026).

This distinction is central to the methodology of the present research. The body is not treated merely as the site upon which institutional violence is experienced, but also as a site of knowledge production. Embodied knowledge emerges through the accumulation of experiences that may be individually difficult to verify but collectively reveal patterns of power. The methodological task, therefore, is not to transform every experience into a universally verifiable fact before it can become knowledge. It is to examine how lived experience, institutional structures, collective evidence, and embodied memory intersect in the production of knowledge.

From this perspective, this research does not present personal experience as an alternative to structural analysis. Rather, it understands the personal as one of the sites through which structural conditions become perceptible. My experiences of racism, xenophobia, and institutional exclusion are therefore not presented as isolated autobiographical episodes. They form part of the situated conditions from which this research asks how marginalized bodies produce knowledge, create alternative forms of collectivity, and develop practices of care and resistance within institutions that do not always recognize their experiences as legitimate forms of knowledge.

From Community Building to Methodological Formation

The encounters, alliances, and collective practices explored throughout this chapter were not peripheral in the development of *this research*. They constitute one of the conditions through which the methodology became possible. The communities gathered under the deliberately open formulation *Brown, Black, Queer, and In-Between* have been vital to my trajectory both personally and professionally. They have provided

spaces of recognition, contestation, experimentation, and belonging within contexts in which such spaces cannot be taken for granted. At the same time, they have challenged me to reconsider how artistic research practice could become a site for the production of knowledge through relation.

The community practices described in this chapter also expanded my understanding of ancestry. Ancestry cannot be reduced to biological descent or to the recovery of a familial past. The relations through which we survive, learn, resist, and become are also constitutive of who we are. The communities with whom I have shared space throughout this research have therefore become part of an expanded ancestral field: not because they replace genealogical relations, but because they demonstrate that identity and knowledge are continuously produced through networks of affiliation, solidarity, memory, struggle, and care. The methodology that slowly started to emerge did not begin from the isolated individual investigating a private past. It began from the understanding that every individual is already situated within multiple relations. These relations may be inherited, chosen, imposed, remembered, imagined, embodied, geographical, ecological, spiritual, or political. They may precede us, surround us, or emerge through the encounters we establish in the present. The question of ancestry consequently became inseparable from the question of relation.

The practices developed through *Brown, Black, Queer, and In-Between* have also challenged the individualistic assumptions of artistic authorship within artistic research. Across the different iterations of this work, knowledge was not produced solely through my interpretation of others' experiences. It emerged through the creation of conditions in which participants could contribute their own experiences, perspectives, memories, and forms of knowledge. The artistic space became a space of co-presence and co-production, even when the forms of participation and the degrees of authorship were not identical.

This does not mean that power disappeared within these encounters. On the contrary, the recognition of power became part of the methodology. Who convenes the encounter? Who determines its framework? Who has the authority to speak? Who is listened to? What forms of knowledge become legible within such processes? What

responsibilities emerge when personal experiences of discrimination, displacement, Queerness, racialization, or belonging enter a shared space? These questions became inseparable from the artistic work itself. Consequently, community-building became a methodological practice of attunement. It required listening not only to what was said, but also to the conditions under which something could be said. It required attention to silence, hesitation, disagreement, affect, embodiment, and the uneven distribution of vulnerability. The methodology that emerged from this research therefore understands relationality not as an abstract ethical ideal, but as an active artistic practice requiring continuous negotiation.

This dimension of this study also informs its understanding of regeneration. Regeneration is not conceived here as the restoration of an imagined harmonious community or as the resolution of the social conflicts that structure contemporary life. Rather, it denotes the capacity to create conditions in which relations can be reconfigured, damaged connections can be reconsidered, and new forms of collective imagination can become possible. The communities encountered throughout this research have shown that regeneration may occur through the creation of temporary spaces of recognition, the sharing of resources and experiences, the articulation of previously marginalized knowledge, and the possibility of encountering others without requiring the erasure of difference.

The work exposed in this chapter therefore extends the methodology beyond the investigation of my own ancestral lineages. It demonstrates that this research did not aim at developing a methodology exclusively for looking backwards. It is also a practice of establishing relations in the present. If the genealogical encounters explored in earlier chapters enabled me to listen across generations, the community practices described here enabled me to listen across difference. Both forms of listening are central to the methodology. This movement between inherited and chosen relations, between the familial and the communal, between the individual body and the collective field, is fundamental to the methodological proposition that emerges from this research. This inquiry understands the self not as an autonomous origin of knowledge, but as a site of convergence, a body at the crossroads. The individual is formed through histories, relationships, places, bodies, languages, struggles, memories, and more-than-human worlds.

Artistic research practice can make these relations perceptible, bring them into encounter, and transform them into forms through which knowledge can be collectively experienced.

The community practices developed during this doctoral research therefore became more than contexts in which artistic research was presented. They became sites in which the methodology was tested and transformed. They challenged me to move from an understanding of artistic practice as an expression of individual experience toward an understanding of practice as the creation of conditions for relational knowledge. They also made visible a principle that would become central to the development of this research: that the artistic process is not only shaped by what the practitioner brings into the room, but also by the relations that become possible there.

In this sense, the work of community building serves as a vital bridge between my personal trajectory throughout this study and the methodology articulated in this thesis. The communities encountered throughout this research did not simply provide material for my artistic practice. They transformed the conditions under which I understood artistic practice itself. They taught me that a methodology grounded in ancestry must also be grounded in relation; that a practice concerned with identity must remain open to collective transformation; and that decolonial artistic research cannot be produced through individual inquiry alone.

The methodological proposition that emerges from this chapter is therefore one of relational expansion. The ancestral field begins with the question of what and who has formed us, but it cannot remain confined to the past. It extends toward the relations through which we continue to become. The communities gathered under *Brown, Black, Queer, and In-Between* have been part of this expansion. They have contributed to recognizing that this research is simultaneously a prac-



Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between: Spaces of Resonance. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Inter Arts Center, Malmö, Sweden, April 28th, 2026.

tice of listening to what has been inherited and of creating the conditions through which new forms of relation may emerge.

With this understanding, the research can now turn toward its final question: how can the knowledge generated through these personal, ancestral, and communal encounters be synthesized into a methodology that extends beyond the singular trajectory of its origin? Chapter IX takes up this question. It marks the moment when I emerge from the processes through which a dramaturgical and performative methodology was discovered and began to articulate what, from these processes, could be offered to other practitioners.

PART III — EMERGING FROM THE WATERS

Ancestral Dramaturgies: Methodological Contributions and Future Currents

Chapter IX. Ancestral Dramaturgies

Prophecy is made by looking back, not by looking forward. The future is fiction; it doesn't really exist. What does exist is the lived experience of those who came before us and who built possibilities. Real change comes when we reconcile ourselves with the past—not by returning to it, but by making peace with it. (Munduruku, April 20th, 2026, my translation)



My eldest aunt Arlete and my eldest uncle Josias. © Naira Soares. Manaus, Brazil, June 17th, 2025.

ARLETE AND JOSIAS

And now, Dad, we've lost our mother. How are we going to live?
(Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025, my translation)

Coming Up for Air: From Personal Trajectory to Methodological Contribution

After years of being immersed in this research, I arrive at this chapter with a sensation of emerging from a large wave that swept me onto the shore. For a moment, I feel rather disoriented. There is the immediate need to grasp for air to breathe, and to understand that I am indeed back on *terra firme*. The force of the water was greater than my attempt to ride its wave. Emerging does not therefore mean I have mastered the ocean. It does, however, offer the possibility of temporarily gaining enough distance from the process to recognize what this immersion has produced.

This is the position from which I approach the results of this research. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* did not begin as a fully formed methodology that I set out to apply. It emerged gradually, through a process of searching, experimenting, failing, repeating, and returning. I began with my own body, my own histories, my own experiences of migration and displacement, and with questions concerning my ancestors and the expanded forms of ancestry through which I could understand my relationship to the world. Through successive artistic experiments, performances, conversations, encounters, and acts of reflection, I began to recognize patterns within my own practice. What initially appeared as a personal and artistic investigation, gradually revealed itself as a set of recurring principles, processes, and dramaturgical tools.

It is important, however, to distinguish between the trajectory through which *Ancestral Dramaturgies* emerged and the methodology that has subsequently been articulated through this research. I am the first practitioner to develop and put *Ancestral Dramaturgies* into practice. The methodology is therefore inseparable from the particular trajectory through which it came into being: my personal histories, professional experiences, ancestral investigations, artistic experiments, and the specific conditions in which this research was undertaken. The methodology did not exist prior to this trajectory, but was rather generated through it.

At the same time, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* cannot be reduced to my biography. The fact that the methodology emerged through my own story does not mean that its application is limited to my personal and

professional backgrounds. Through this research process, certain principles and tools have emerged that can be taken up, adapted, and reconfigured by other practitioners in relation to their own histories, bodies, communities, and contexts. The methodological contribution of this research therefore lies precisely in the movement between the singular and the transferable: the methodology originates in a specific life, but it is not intended to remain confined to that life. This distinction allows the results of the research to be understood across two interconnected levels. The first is the level of identity formation: *Ancestral Dramaturgies* has transformed the ways in which I understand myself, my histories, my ancestral relations, and my position as an artist and researcher. It has provided a means through which previously fragmented experiences could be approached, connected, and reconfigured. At this level, the methodology is necessarily situated, embodied, and particular. Its knowledge emerges from the lived experience of a specific person.

The second level concerns knowledge formation. Through the articulation of the processes that emerged from my artistic research practice, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* becomes a methodological contribution to decolonize artistic research. Its principles and tools can be activated beyond the specific content of my own story. Other practitioners may engage with this methodology without reproducing my ancestry, my migration trajectory, or my artistic outcomes. Instead, they may use its processes to investigate their own histories, relationships, forms of belonging, and expanded understandings of ancestry.

These two dimensions must remain in dialogue without one overshadowing the other. The personal trajectory is not merely an illustrative case study through which a general method is demonstrated, nor is the methodology simply an autobiographical account limited to my individual experience. Rather, the knowledge produced by this research emerges from the particularity of my trajectory while demonstrating how situated, embodied experience can generate transferable forms of knowledge. In this sense, the emancipatory and regenerative contribution of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* lies in its capacity to approach identity not as fixed or predetermined, but as something that can be investigated, negotiated, and reconfigured through artistic research practice. It proposes that knowledge is not produced apart from

embodied experience, but through the very relations, histories, and transformations that shape it.

Returning to the image of the wave, I understand this chapter as an attempt to breathe while still carrying the experience of immersion within the body. I cannot stand entirely outside the research and evaluate it as if I were an external observer. This methodology has transformed the conditions from which I speak. My task is therefore not to claim complete mastery over what *Ancestral Dramaturgies* has become, but to make visible the transformations, principles, and possibilities that have emerged through its development.

A Multi-Layered Meta-Research

The genesis of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* lies in a prolonged process in which institutional experiences compelled me to question the conditions under which my artistic practice could exist, be recognized, and produce knowledge. The methodology did not emerge as a pre-existing theoretical framework; rather, it developed through the necessity of reflecting upon, articulating, and defending my practice within institutional and academic contexts.

This process of continual meta-research became particularly urgent following my departure from the dramaturgical team at Ballhaus Naunynstraße in Berlin in 2017, after fundamental ethical and moral disagreements with the institution's management. This rupture marked a significant turning point in my professional trajectory, generating a period of artistic isolation and financial precarity. More importantly, it confronted me with the limitations of a movement in which I had invested the hope of transforming my existence within a white, Western, heteronormative context. From this experience emerged fundamental questions concerning the institutional structures that legitimize artistic practices, the conditions under which marginalized experiences become visible, and the forms of knowledge recognized as valid within artistic and academic fields.

These questions became inseparable from a deeper interrogation of my own voluntary migration. I began to ask why I had left my place of origin, how I had arrived at a state of profound mental and spiritual exhaustion, and why the relationships and landscapes I had inhabited in the Global North continued to feel profoundly foreign despite years

of living between borders. These inquiries became foundational for the research that would eventually develop into *Ancestral Dramaturgies*.

A second pivotal rupture occurred in 2022, when two months after beginning my doctoral candidacy, my maternal grandmother Voinha passed away. The impossibility of participating in the funeral rituals alongside my biological family produced another existential confrontation with distance, displacement, and belonging. Once again, I was confronted with the question of what it meant to remain geographically distant from my origins when such distance prevented me from participating in moments of profound familial transition and loss.

Together, these experiences transformed liminality from a theoretical concept into an embodied condition. I found myself inhabiting Anzaldúa's (1987) notion of the borderland—not only as a geopolitical boundary, but as a psychological and spiritual state of continuous in-betweenness (p. 3). This condition exposed a profound tension between theorizing ancestry and being physically absent from the ancestral relationships that shaped my own existence. The loss of my eldest ancestor while I remained immersed in academic research, revealed the necessity of moving beyond theoretical inquiry toward an artistic research practice grounded in presence, relation, and kinship.

The genealogy of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* is therefore rooted in rupture, loss, and a desire for internal and reciprocal regeneration. The methodology emerged as an attempt to reconnect the worlds I had departed from with those I currently inhabit. Rather than merely retracing biological lineages, it investigates ancestry as an expanded relational field composed of historical, cultural, spiritual, geographical, and elective connections. It situates individual narratives within broader continuums of memory, migration, and collective experience.

Because of this reflexive nature, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* does not propose a universal formula. Each practitioner necessarily begins from a singular trajectory, yet within these singular narratives exist recurring patterns of movement, displacement, inheritance, and transformation. The methodology therefore operates through the critical examination of personal and collective histories, transforming lived experiences into dramaturgical material through processes of distancing, interpretation, and artistic reconfiguration.

Intergenerational interviewing became one of the primary artistic

methods through which this investigation unfolded. However, I propose that the process begins earlier, with a stage of performative autoethnographic reflection. Before engaging with the testimonies of others, practitioners are invited to examine their own trajectories: their choices, ruptures, inheritances, relationships, and the structural conditions that have shaped their lives. This approach aligns with Tami Spry's understanding of performative autoethnography, in which the body is not merely an object of inquiry but a primary site of knowledge production:

At its core, autoethnography is about bodies interacting in a sociocultural space and time. Performative autoethnography is writing from/with/of the performative body as co-present with Others, the body as epistemologically central, heuristically, inspirational, politically catalytic. (Spry, 2018, p. 636)

The first methodological gesture of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* emerged from this embodied reflection. During the period of crisis following my departure from Ballhaus Naunynstraße, I initiated a retrospective psychogeographical mapping of the ten cities I had inhabited at that moment: Berlin, Copenhagen, Frankfurt am Main, Munich, Salzburg, Doha, Rio de Janeiro, Aracaju, São Pedro d'Aldeia, and Salvador. By revisiting the different lives I had constructed within these locations, I recognized that each geography had generated distinct performative identities shaped by specific social and cultural environments. This process developed into a narrative inquiry and an extensive autobiographical writing practice, producing an archive of migratory experiences from which the first principles of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* began to emerge.

Looking back, the ruptures and transitions that shaped this trajectory became methodological insights embodied through recurring motifs: the compass rose, the crossroads, the river, the ocean floor, the clouds, the winds, and the genealogical tree. These images continue to operate as conceptual and dramaturgical orientations through which *Ancestral Dramaturgies* investigates movement, memory, ancestry, and transformation.

The Complexities of Ancestral Dramaturgies

Ancestral Dramaturgies interrogates how various encounters and exchanges can be transformed into dramaturgical material without reducing them to information or representation. The practitioner establishes a process of translation between encounter and artistic form. A conversation may become a performance, a landscape may become a dramaturgical partner, an inherited story may become a sonic composition, a material object may activate a bodily score, or a fragmented genealogy may generate a spatial, textual, or performative structure. The artistic form is not predetermined. It emerges from the specific relations activated by the inquiry.

Three principles have become particularly important within this process: the crossroads, the spiral, and relational flow. The crossroads constitutes the spatial and situated condition of the methodology. It is a site where different bodies, histories, temporalities, epistemologies, and forms of agency meet. It is also a performative space in which the distinction between performer and audience, stage and everyday life, self and other, and human and more-than-human can become unstable. The spiral constitutes the temporal principle of the methodology. It rejects the assumption that ancestral inquiry proceeds linearly from past to present. Instead, the past may return through the present, the present may reactivate unresolved histories, and the future may become a site through which ancestral knowledge is reimagined. The spiral therefore allows the practitioner to work with recurrence, return, rupture, simultaneity, and transformation. Relational flow constitutes the principle of movement. It describes the circulation of knowledge, memory, affect, bodies, materials, and histories across geographical and temporal borders. Flow allows the practitioner to attend not only to what is inherited, but also to what changes as it moves. Ancestral material is therefore not treated as a fixed archive to be recovered. It is a living process that is continuously transformed through encounter.

Together, these principles form a methodological orientation rather than a rigid sequence of steps. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* is not a prescriptive formula that produces a predetermined artistic result. Its reproducibility lies precisely in its capacity for adaptation. Practitioners may begin from different histories, bodies, communities, places, and

forms of knowledge. They may work with biological ancestry, chosen ancestry, cultural ancestry, geographical ancestry, spiritual ancestry, material ancestry, or forms of expanded ancestry that exceed human genealogical structures. What connects these practices is not their content, but the interdependent process through which ancestral fields are encountered, listened to, transformed, and brought into dramaturgical and performative relation.

The methodology can therefore be understood as a process of:

situating → identifying an expanded ancestral field → establishing relations
→ listening and gathering → translating encounters into artistic material →
composing through embodied and performative practice → reflecting on the
relations produced → returning to the field transformed.

This sequence should not be understood as a linear recipe. Each stage may lead back to another. New encounters may transform the original question. Artistic composition may reveal previously unrecognized relations. Reflection may require a return to the field. The process is therefore recursive, spiral, and dialogical rather than procedural in a conventional sense.

The reproducibility of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* consequently lies not in reproducing its artistic outcomes, but in activating its conditions of inquiry. Another practitioner does not need to recreate any of the artistic experiments that constituted my doctoral trajectory. Nor should they attempt to reproduce my relationship to my grandmother, my maternal genealogy, or the migratory histories that constitute my own life. Instead, they may use the methodology to ask: What relations have made me? What histories continue to move through my body? What human and more-than-human forces constitute my expanded ancestry? What encounters might allow these relations to become available for artistic inquiry? And what forms might emerge if I allow the material to determine the dramaturgical process rather than imposing a predetermined form upon it?

This distinction also clarifies the relationship between *Ancestral Dramaturgies* and the present thesis. The thesis documents the first sustained development and enactment of the methodology. It is therefore both its genealogy and its first case study. The methodology, however, is not limited to the particular works or experiences through

which it emerged. Its contribution lies in making the principles and processes of this artistic inquiry available for adaptation beyond the singular trajectory that generated them.

The movement from personal trajectory to methodology is therefore not a movement away from the personal. Rather, it is a process of recognizing how situated knowledge can become transmitted without being universalized. My experience remains the source and first field of the methodology, but it does not constitute its limit. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* begins with one body, one genealogy, and one migratory history. It becomes a methodology when the processes through which that history was artistically investigated can be offered as an invitation for other practitioners to encounter, question, and transform their own worlds.

Epistemic Elasticity, Tacit Knowledge, and the Foundations of *Ancestral Dramaturgies*

The artistic experiments and theoretical reflections developed throughout this thesis culminate in the articulation of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* as a dramaturgical methodology situated within socially engaged artistic practice. Emerging from my positionality as a Queer migrant artist from the Global South, the methodology investigates expanded ancestry as a relational field encompassing memory, migration, collective histories, and more-than-human connections. Rather than approaching ancestry as a fixed biological inheritance, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* examines the ways in which identities are continuously shaped through encounters between bodies, places, histories, and forms of belonging.

This framework is inseparable from the specific conditions through which it emerged. It is shaped by my training in acting in Rio de Janeiro, my education in dramaturgy between Frankfurt am Main and Copenhagen, my professional experiences within the performing arts in Brazil, Germany, and Poland, and my nearly two decades of navigating migratory trajectories across Europe, Scandinavia, and the Middle East. These overlapping formal and embodied histories constitute the living archive from which the methodology was developed.

However, the situated origin of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* does not limit its possible applications. On the contrary, the methodology is founded upon what I understand as epistemic elasticity: the capacity

to adapt to different bodies, histories, geographies, and forms of knowledge. It does not offer a universal formula or prescribe the reproduction of my artistic outcomes, ancestral relations, or migratory trajectory. Instead, it proposes a flexible framework through which practitioners may investigate their own expanded fields of ancestry and the relationships that constitute their identities.

This elasticity is central to the methodology's decolonial potential. By refusing fixed structures of inheritance and singular narratives of belonging, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* creates space for multiple forms of ancestry—biological, cultural, spiritual, elective, ecological, and geographical—to coexist. The methodology therefore functions not as a closed system, but as a generative site of encounter where different subjectivities can produce knowledge through their own situated experiences.

Throughout the doctoral process, this flexibility also became a necessary form of care. The development of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* required continuous negotiation between artistic research, institutional expectations, and the vulnerabilities produced by experiences of migration, discrimination, and epistemic uncertainty. These conditions were not exclusive to my individual trajectory. Encounters with diasporic communities in Malmö and Copenhagen, as well as fieldwork in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro, revealed shared experiences of displacement, survival, memory, and belonging that often remain insufficiently articulated within academic structures.

This dimension of the research resonates with Michael Polanyi's (1966) concept of tacit knowledge, particularly his proposition that "we can know more than we can tell" (p. 4). In *Ancestral Dramaturgies*, embodied sensations, memories, affects, relationships, and forms of ancestral connection that resist conventional academic representation are treated as legitimate modes of knowledge production. The methodology therefore does not seek to translate lived experience into detached information; rather, it investigates how knowledge emerges through embodied artistic processes.

This is the first attempt to articulate the extensive series of artistic experiments developed throughout this doctorate as a coherent methodological framework. For this reason, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* remains an evolving practice rather than a completed system. Its foundations are offered not as a final model, but as an invitation to further experi-

mentation, critique, and transformation by the practitioners and communities who engage with it.

Artistic Results

Although the artistic materials generated throughout this doctoral research vary in form, medium, and aesthetic approach, they are united by a shared decolonial orientation: the investigation of how artistic practice can become a space for listening, relation, and knowledge production. Rather than treating artistic creation as the representation of pre-existing ideas, the works developed throughout this research functioned as situated experiments through which questions of migration, ancestry, belonging, Queerness, racialization, ecology, and relational identity could be explored.

The encounters that shaped these works took multiple forms of relation: conversations with family members and South American migrants in Europe, collaborations with artists and communities, embodied engagement with ancestral memory, and encounters with more-than-human presences, including landscapes, waters, plants, animals, and materials. These encounters did not simply provide content for artistic production; they became methodological sites through which *Ancestral Dramaturgies* gradually emerged. Each experiment expanded the field of listening and generated new questions concerning how histories, memories, and relationships could be transformed into dramaturgical and performative structures.

The artistic results of this research should therefore not be understood as illustrations of a methodology that existed beforehand. Rather, they constitute the successive stages through which *Ancestral Dramaturgies* was developed, tested, and recognized as a methodological framework. Each experiment generated new relations, forms of knowledge, and artistic strategies. Within a Practice-as-Research framework, the works function not only as outcomes but as modes of thinking through which the research process itself became visible.

For this reason, I use the term *experiment* deliberately. The works produced throughout this doctorate were not primarily conceived as finished aesthetic products within professional cultural contexts, but as investigative processes. Their purpose was to explore how different forms of encounter, materiality, temporality, and performance could generate knowledge. The resulting forms—including live perfor-

mance, audiovisual work, literary writing, sonic installation, and scholarly publication—emerged from the specific relationships and questions activated throughout the research.

The development of these experiments followed a progressive expansion of the concept of ancestry. The early work *In Transit Letters: Between the South Atlantic and the Baltic Sea* (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2022) established correspondence as both an interdependent practice and dramaturgical device, exploring displacement, memory, and connection across geographical distance. The subsequent research into family histories and migration trajectories in *A Backyard of Affections* (Salustiano Trojaborg & Dahlqvist, 2023) and the accompanying essay *Questioning and Listening: An Attempt to Investigate Voinha's Migration Journey* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2023) deepened the investigation into genealogy, intergenerational memory, and embodied forms of knowledge.

The research later expanded the concept of ancestry beyond biological descent and human genealogy. Through encounters with landscapes, ecological forces, material environments, and more-than-human presences, works such as *Encruzilhada* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2024), *The Whirlwind* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2026), *Debaixo d'Água, Coberta de Terra* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2025), and *The Spiral Root* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2026) explored ancestry as a relational field spanning human and more-than-human worlds. In these experiments, natural environments and material entities were not treated merely as symbols or aesthetic resources, but as active participants in the generation of artistic knowledge. *The Whirlwind* and *The Spiral Root* are presented here for the first time as part of this thesis.

The return to familial and ancestral encounters in Brazil further developed these investigations through audiovisual, sonic, spatial, and hydropoetic forms. *Voinha's Backyard* (Salustiano Trojaborg & Mendes, 2023) and *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2025), together with their associated research processes and forthcoming scholarly publication, extended the methodology toward intergenerational and ecological cartographies. These works explored how memories, landscapes, waterways, and ancestral relations could coexist within dramaturgical structures, moving beyond the recovery of individual histories toward the creation of maps linking bodies, territories, and temporalities.

The significance of these artistic results therefore does not reside only in the individual works produced between 2022 and 2026. Their contribution lies in the relations and methodological recognitions that emerged across them. Through these experiments, the research demonstrated that artistic practice can serve as a mode of ancestral inquiry; that dramaturgy can operate beyond the organization of theatrical structures; and that performance can become a site where embodied, situated, relational, and non-linear forms of knowledge are generated.

Ancestral Dramaturgies consequently repositions dramaturgy as an epistemological practice. Rather than understanding dramaturgy primarily as the composition or interpretation of an artistic work, this research proposes dramaturgy as a means of establishing relations between bodies, memories, histories, places, temporalities, and forms of knowledge. The artistic results are therefore both personal and methodological: they document a process in which I transformed my own relationship to ancestry, migration, and belonging while generating a framework through which other practitioners may investigate through their own experiences.

The Emergence of *Ancestral Dramaturgies*: From Research Methods to a Dramaturgical Methodology

Ancestral Dramaturgies emerged progressively throughout this doctoral research through an iterative dialogue between artistic experimentation, critical reflection, and qualitative inquiry. It constitutes the principal methodological contribution of this research, not because it introduces new individual research methods, but because it reorganizes established approaches into an integrated dramaturgical framework for artistic inquiry and knowledge production. The methodology developed through successive cycles of making, documenting, reflecting, and theorizing, in which each artistic process generated questions that informed subsequent investigations. Rather than functioning as a predefined framework applied to the research, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* crystallized through the research process itself.

The distinction between research methods and methodology is therefore central to understanding this contribution. Research methods refer to the specific approaches through which material is generated, gathered, interpreted, and reflected upon, whereas methodology

concerns the ways in which these approaches are brought into relation within a coherent research framework. This research draws upon autoethnography, multi-sited ethnography, participant observation, interviewing, epistolary methodology, collaborative witnessing, Deep Listening, Situated Knowledge, and Practice-as-Research. These approaches were not employed independently or sequentially. Instead, they became interconnected through artistic processes in which research and creation continuously informed one another. Artistic practice thus functioned simultaneously as a mode of inquiry, a site of knowledge production, and a means through which the methodology itself could be tested and transformed.

Autoethnography provided an important methodological point of departure. The migratory body, understood as both archive and site of knowledge, became a locus from which questions emerged and artistic processes unfolded. Experiences of migration, displacement, Queerness, family history, and cultural negotiation were not approached as autobiographical material alone, but as situated forms of knowledge through which broader social, historical, and political structures could be encountered and examined. This reflexive perspective was expanded through multi-sited ethnography, which situated the artistic practice across geographically distinct yet interconnected environments. The continual movement among Malmö, Copenhagen, Rio de Janeiro, Manaus, and Møn transformed migration itself into a methodological operation. These locations were not treated as isolated field sites, but as territories whose historical, political, ecological, and affective dimensions continuously shaped the research.

This methodology also developed through dialogical and relational forms of inquiry. Interviews, participant observation, conversation as method, and collaborative witnessing enabled the emergence of polyphonic narratives that challenged the authority of singular authorship. Oral histories gathered from family members, conversations with collaborators, and encounters with artistic communities were not understood merely as empirical data, but also as dramaturgical material through which multiple perspectives could enter and shape the performative work. Knowledge was consequently produced relationally, through encounters between bodies, memories, places, and forms of experience.

Epistolary methodology constituted a particularly significant dramaturgical development within this framework. Handwritten correspondence operated simultaneously as an artistic research process, relational practice, archival document, and performative score. The temporal delay inherent in postal exchange created space for reflection, care, and reciprocal listening, interrupting the accelerated temporalities of contemporary academic production. The letters therefore functioned both as epistemological instruments and as artistic media through which memory, migration, and ancestry could be collectively negotiated.

Deep Listening further shaped the methodology as an ethical orientation toward knowledge production. Listening to presence, landscape, memory, affect, and more-than-human environments became integral to the research process. Within *Ancestral Dramaturgies*, listening was not conceived as passive reception but as an active dramaturgical practice through which relationships are established among individuals, communities, histories, territories, and ecological systems. In this sense, listening became both a methodological practice and a dramaturgical principle.

Through the integration of these approaches, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* gradually developed as a distinct dramaturgical framework centered on ancestry as an active and relational process rather than a fixed genealogy. Ancestry is understood here as an expanding network encompassing biological kinship, artistic collaboration, migratory trajectories, ecological environments, cultural memory, historical traces, and more-than-human agencies. This understanding transformed dramaturgy from a practice primarily concerned with organizing theatrical structures into a practice of establishing and composing relations across temporal, spatial, cultural, and epistemological boundaries.

The methodological innovation of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* lies, therefore, in this reconfiguration. Autoethnography, epistolary practice, interviewing, Deep Listening, ethnographic approaches, and other established methods are not claimed as new in themselves. Rather, they acquire a particular methodological function when brought into relation through ancestry as a dramaturgical and perfor-

mative principle. The resulting framework enables different forms of knowledge and experience—including autobiographical memory, ancestral histories, oral traditions, archives, landscapes, waterways, artistic collaborations, and more-than-human presences—to participate in the dramaturgical process.

The framework emerged through the artistic experiments undertaken during the doctorate. Early letter-performances established correspondence as both a relational practice and dramaturgical device. Subsequent works expanded genealogical inquiry through oral histories, embodied reflection, and family encounters, while later experiments incorporated ecological environments, Indigenous cosmologies, and more-than-human forms of listening. Across these processes, ancestry gradually expanded from a genealogical concept into a broader ecology of relations. Each artistic experiment therefore contributed not only to the body of work but also to the development and refinement of the methodology itself.

Ancestral Dramaturgies should, consequently, be understood as an emergent methodology generated mostly through Practice-as-Research. Its development involved continuous movement between artistic intuition and critical analysis, embodied experience and conceptual articulation, and individual memory and collective forms of knowledge. Rather than separating research from artistic creation, this methodology positions dramaturgical practice as an epistemological process through which artistic, embodied, relational, and situated forms of knowledge can be generated.

Ultimately, the contribution of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* lies in proposing dramaturgy as an ecology of listening, relationality, memory, and Situated Knowledge production. It expands dramaturgy beyond the organization of theatrical events and proposes it as a practice capable of composing relations among people, histories, territories, materials, and more-than-human agencies. In doing so, it offers a transferable framework for investigating ancestry, belonging, migration, decoloniality, social sustainability, and collective memory through artistic research practice.

The Contribution of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* to Artistic Research

The contribution of this doctoral research extends beyond the creation of a body of artistic works. Rather, it lies in articulating *Ancestral Dra-*

maturgies as an original framework for artistic research that integrates methodological, epistemological, and pedagogical dimensions. While these dimensions can be analytically distinguished, they emerged simultaneously through the iterative cycles of Practice-as-Research that shaped this doctoral trajectory. Together, they propose an expanded understanding of dramaturgy as a practice through which artistic creation generates knowledge, fosters collective learning, and contributes to socially engaged forms of inquiry.

The first dimension of this contribution is methodological. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* offers a dramaturgical methodology that synthesizes established qualitative research methods—including autoethnography, multi-sited ethnography, epistolary methodology, participant observation, interviews, Deep Listening, collaborative witnessing, and Practice-as-Research—into a coherent artistic research framework. The originality of the methodology does not reside in inventing new research methods, but in reorganizing these existing approaches around ancestry as a dramaturgical principle. Within this framework, ancestry is understood not as a fixed genealogy but as a dynamic network of relationships connecting bodies, memories, territories, ecologies, and more-than-human worlds. This methodological integration provides a transferable approach through which artistic researchers can investigate various forms of knowledge across disciplinary boundaries.

The second dimension is epistemological. Throughout this research, dramaturgy progressively shifted from being understood primarily as a compositional strategy for performance to functioning as a mode of knowledge production. The artistic experiments demonstrated that knowledge can emerge through embodied practice, artistic making, dialogue, listening, correspondence, migration, and situated encounters. In this sense, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* challenges epistemological assumptions that privilege detached observation or purely propositional forms of knowledge. Instead, it positions dramaturgical practice itself as an epistemic process through which understanding is generated, tested, and transformed. Following Practice-as-Research, artistic creation is therefore not presented as an illustration of theory but as a rigorous mode of inquiry capable of producing situated, embodied, and relational knowledge.

The third dimension is pedagogical. Throughout this doctoral process, the development of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* revealed that artistic knowledge is rarely produced in isolation. Initiatives such as *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between* demonstrated that creating spaces of radical hospitality, collective care, and intercultural dialogue is not ancillary to artistic research but constitutes one of its enabling conditions. Within this perspective, pedagogy extends beyond formal teaching to encompass the creation of collaborative environments in which artists and researchers collectively generate knowledge through reciprocal exchange, critical reflection, and shared artistic practice. This pedagogical dimension therefore positions artistic research as an ethical practice of community building, where learning emerges through relationships as much as through individual investigation.

Taken together, these three dimensions redefine the role of drama-turgy within contemporary artistic research. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* proposes dramaturgy not only as a framework for composing artistic works but also as a methodology for conducting research, an epistemology for generating knowledge, and a pedagogy for cultivating collective artistic inquiry. In doing so, this research advances an interdependent model of artistic research practice grounded in ancestry, migration, embodiment, and social sustainability. Rather than separating artistic creation from research, theory from practice, or individual experience from collective knowledge, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* demonstrates how these domains can operate as mutually constitutive processes within a single dramaturgical ecology.

Breathing After the Wave: The Continuation of Ancestral Dramaturgies

I arrive at this final movement not as the conclusion of a completed process, but as a moment of temporary emergence. Throughout this research, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* has revealed itself not as a fixed methodology discovered at the end of an investigation, but as a living practice that continues to transform through each encounter, each relation, and each body that engages with it. The purpose of this thesis has therefore not been to close the question of ancestry, but to create conditions for ancestral relations to continue to be explored, questioned, and reimagined.

As clarified at the beginning of this chapter, it remains essential to distinguish between the trajectory through which *Ancestral Dramaturgies* emerged and the methodology that this research now offers to other practitioners. These two dimensions are inseparable, yet they operate differently. The methodology was generated through my particular history: through my grandmother's migration, the fragmented and reconstructed narratives of my maternal genealogy, my experiences of displacement, racialization, Queerness, and migration, and the artistic encounters through which these experiences became available for investigation. This trajectory belongs to a singular life, a specific genealogy, and a particular constellation of historical, geographical, and relational circumstances. It cannot be replicated.

What can travel beyond this trajectory are the processes that emerged through it. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* does not invite practitioners to reproduce my ancestry, my artistic outcomes, or my relationship to memory and migration. Rather, it proposes a way of approaching artistic research through the investigation of relations: the visible and invisible forces, human and more-than-human presences, histories, places, and experiences that contribute to the formation of an individual and their communities. The methodology therefore moves from the singular toward the transferable. My own artistic trajectory constitutes its first field of experimentation, the place where its principles became visible through practice. The artistic works developed throughout this doctorate do not represent the complete expression of *Ancestral Dramaturgies*; rather, they document the conditions through which the methodology emerged. They are traces of a process of listening, questioning, composing, and returning.

At its core, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* proposes that ancestry is not a static inheritance located exclusively in the past. Instead, ancestry is an active relational field that continues to move through the present. It exists within memories, landscapes, bodies, languages, materials, stories, silences, migrations, and encounters. To engage with ancestry dramaturgically is therefore not simply to recover what has been lost, but to enter into a creative relationship with what continues to be reshaped. This understanding also transforms the role of dramaturgy itself. Through this research, dramaturgy expands beyond the organization of theatrical structures and becomes a practice of relation-mak-

ing. It becomes a way of listening across temporalities, connecting fragmented histories, and creating spaces where different forms of knowledge can encounter one another. In this sense, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* contributes to artistic research by proposing dramaturgy as an epistemological practice: a way through which knowledge is generated through embodied experience, artistic creation, and situated engagement.

The future of this methodology does not depend on the preservation of its original form. Like ancestry itself, it must remain capable of movement, adaptation, and transformation. Its vitality lies precisely in its capacity to be altered by those who encounter it. Each practitioner who engages with *Ancestral Dramaturgies* will inevitably produce another configuration of relations, another ancestral field, another artistic response. The methodology continues through these differences, rather than despite them.

Returning to the image of the wave that opened this chapter, I understand this research not as having reached the shore, but as having learned another way of moving through the water. The immersion changed the body that entered the ocean. The knowledge produced through this process cannot be separated from the losses, encounters, ruptures, and transformations that generated it. Yet, like a wave, this knowledge does not belong to a single moment or a single body. It carries traces of multiple movements, multiple histories, and multiple relations.

To breathe after the wave does not mean leaving the ocean behind. It means recognizing that the ocean continues to move within and around us. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* begins with one body, one genealogy, and one migratory trajectory, but it does not end there. It becomes a practice through which others may encounter the currents that have shaped them, listen to the histories that continue to move through them, and create new forms from the relations between past, present, and possible futures.

Chapter X. From the Ocean Floor to Other Territories

This propositional knowledge is shadowed by another way of knowing that is grounded in active, intimate hands-on participation and personal connection: “knowing-how” and “knowing-who”. (Conquergood 2002, p. 151)



Moon over Iracema Beach. © Iury Salustiano Trojaborg. Fortaleza, Brazil, December 13th, 2025.

After the Wave

Throughout this research, I have repeatedly returned to the sea as a space for exploring migration, ancestry, memory, loss, and transformation. The ocean became more than a landscape; it became a dramaturgical companion, a place where submerged histories, forgotten relations, and uncertain futures could be encountered. In the artistic experiment *Debaixo d'Água, Coberta de Terra* (Salustiano Trojaborg, 2025) analyzed in chapter VII, I imagined a marine creature that, after inhabiting the depths of the ocean, gradually begins to explore dry land. It does not abandon the sea. Rather, it carries the ocean within itself, allowing the knowledge, rhythms, and movements of one territory to inform its encounter with another.

Looking back, I recognize that this image has quietly accompanied my own doctoral journey. Completing this research does not feel like arriving at a final destination or producing a definitive account of *Ancestral Dramaturgies*. Instead, it resembles the tentative movement of that marine creature as it begins to navigate another environment. The ocean remains present within its body, just as the artistic processes, ancestral encounters, and methodological discoveries developed throughout this thesis continue to shape the ways in which I understand artistic research, dramaturgy, and my own practice. This concluding chapter therefore does not seek to extend the theoretical framework established in the previous chapter, but to reflect upon what has emerged through the sustained dialogue between artistic practice, critical inquiry, and lived experience.

If Chapter IX articulated *Ancestral Dramaturgies* as a dramaturgical methodology, this final chapter considers its wider resonances. It reflects upon the methodological, epistemological and artistic implications of this research, while also acknowledging the personal transformations that accompanied its development. The reflections that follow do not introduce a new theoretical model. Rather, they revisit the journey from the perspective of someone changed by it, asking what remains, what continues to move, and what new territories become visible after the long immersion of artistic research.

Throughout this thesis, artistic research practice has functioned not as the illustration of theoretical concepts but as the primary site through which knowledge has been produced. The performances, correspondence, interviews, fieldwork, audiovisual works, and encoun-

ters presented in the preceding chapters gradually revealed ancestry as a relational and performative field capable of generating new understandings of migration, belonging, memory, and social sustainability. The methodology that emerged from these investigations was therefore not discovered as a pre-existing framework but crystallized through successive cycles of artistic experimentation, listening, and critical reflection.

This chapter is therefore not a conclusion in the conventional sense. It is a moment of transition. Like the marine creature leaving the ocean floor to inhabit other territories, I understand this research as moving beyond the boundaries of the thesis itself. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* remains an evolving practice whose future depends not on preserving its original form, but on its capacity to encounter other bodies, histories, communities, and landscapes. What follows is therefore less an ending than an invitation to continue navigating the relational worlds that this research has only begun to explore.

Practice as Transformation: Becoming through Artistic Research

Dwight Conquergood's (2002) distinction between propositional knowledge and embodied, relational ways of knowing provides an important point of departure for understanding this research. His work challenges conventional hierarchies of knowledge by recognizing that understanding does not emerge solely through analysis and representation, but also through participation, encounter, and performance. Within artistic research, knowledge is therefore not only produced about experience; it is generated through the act of experiencing itself. This perspective has profoundly shaped my doctoral journey and my understanding of dramaturgy as an epistemological practice. Throughout this thesis, Practice-as-Research has functioned not simply as a framework for producing artistic works, but as a mode of inquiry through which questions of migration, ancestry, belonging, and social sustainability could be explored through embodied practice. As Robin Nelson (2013) in *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies* argues, practice itself can operate as a form of research in which knowledge emerges through the dynamic relationship between creative action, critical reflection, and the articulation of tacit understandings generated through making (pp. 37–38). In this sense,

the artistic processes developed throughout this thesis did not serve to illustrate concepts established elsewhere; rather, they became sites where questions emerged, methods were tested, and knowledge was generated through an ongoing movement between making, experiencing, reflecting, and theorizing. The performances, installations, conversations, and encounters presented in this thesis should therefore be understood not as isolated artistic outcomes, but as interconnected research events through which *Ancestral Dramaturgies* gradually took shape.

Importantly, the knowledge generated through these processes did not remain external to the researcher. The methodology transformed the very position from which I approached artistic research practice, ancestry, and dramaturgy. This personal transformation is not separated from the research process; rather, it constitutes part of the methodological argument of this thesis. As Conquergood (2002) suggests, embodied participation is itself a legitimate mode of inquiry. Through engagement with family archives, handwritten correspondence, oral testimonies, migration routes, waterways, collaborators, and more-than-human environments, I did not simply gather material for artistic creation. I entered into relationships that reshaped my understanding of what dramaturgy can reveal and how artistic knowledge can emerge.

It was through these cumulative processes that *Ancestral Dramaturgies* emerged. It developed through successive cycles of artistic experimentation, reflexive analysis, and relational encounter. The methodology presented in this thesis is therefore both the outcome of the research and one of its central findings. It demonstrates how the diverse qualitative approaches I presented in the previous chapters became integrated into a dramaturgical framework capable of generating new forms of artistic knowledge. Artistic research, in this sense, does not merely produce performances as outcomes; it produces new ways of knowing through the very processes of creation, encounter, and transformation.

Ancestral Dramaturgies: Practice-as-Research and the Production of Embodied Knowledge

The development of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* emerged from a question that extends beyond my own artistic practice: what constitutes knowledge in artistic research? Although Practice as Research has become an

established framework for recognizing artistic inquiry within universities, the field continues to grapple with fundamental epistemological questions. How does artistic practice produce knowledge? What forms of evidence can artistic research generate? And how might artistic research engage forms of knowing that exceed the epistemological assumptions inherited from Western academic traditions?

These questions became increasingly central throughout my doctoral research. I did not begin this project with the intention of constructing a methodology. Rather, I entered the doctorate seeking to continue an artistic investigation into ancestry that had already occupied my practice for several years. As stated in Chapter I, before commencing this research, I had spent six years tracing my grandmother's migration through interdisciplinary artistic works developed within Berlin's Post-Migrant cultural scene. Through performance, sound, installation, and archival practices, these projects explored memory, displacement, and belonging. It was only within the context of doctoral research that I began to recognize these artistic processes not merely as aesthetic explorations, but as forms of epistemological inquiry.

The transition from professional artistic practice into artistic research therefore required a transformation in how I understood artistic labour itself. Rather than approaching artworks as completed cultural objects, I began to understand them as research environments in which knowledge could emerge through experimentation, encounter, and reflection. Between 2022 and 2026, a series of artistic investigations gradually developed into what I now identify as *Ancestral Dramaturgies*: a methodology grounded in ancestral memory, embodied practice, relational encounters, and dramaturgical experimentation.

Rather than understanding *Ancestral Dramaturgies* simply as a creative method, I understand it as an epistemological proposition. It asks how ancestry might operate not only as a subject represented through performance, but also as a mode of knowing. The performances, sonic installation, conversations, writings, and multispecies encounters developed throughout this research were therefore not illustrations of theoretical concepts. They functioned as sites through which questions emerged, knowledge was generated, and theoretical understandings were continuously transformed. I return, therefore, to Nelson's (2013) concept of Practice-as-Research because I believe it provides an

important foundation for this position. His conception of PaR challenges the hierarchy that has historically positioned theoretical reflection as the primary producer of academic knowledge while relegating artistic practice to illustration or application (Nelson, 2013, pp. 8–9). By proposing practice itself as a mode of inquiry, Nelson demonstrates how creative processes can function simultaneously as research methods and forms of evidence. The iterative relationship between making, reflecting, documenting, and articulating knowledge constitutes a rigorous process of investigation rather than a secondary reflection upon an already completed artistic object.

In his later development of this argument, Nelson (2022) further emphasizes that Practice-as-Research is grounded in forms of knowing that emerge through the relationship between doing, thinking, and being (pp. 7–35). Knowledge, from this perspective, does not emerge after practice as an intellectual interpretation of an artistic process; rather, it is generated through the entanglement of embodied action, reflection, and situated experience. This understanding is particularly relevant to *Ancestral Dramaturgies*, where knowledge did not emerge through the application of a predetermined theoretical framework, but through a continuous process of becoming: engaging with ancestral materials, performing, listening, documenting, reflecting, and allowing these encounters to transform both the research and the researcher.

This perspective also complicates conventional expectations regarding evidence and reproducibility in artistic research. If knowledge emerges through situated practices and embodied encounters, then artistic research cannot be evaluated solely through models developed for forms of inquiry that prioritize detachment, repetition, and standardization. The question therefore becomes not whether artistic practice generates knowledge, but how the specific conditions through which such knowledge emerges can be articulated without reducing their complexity.

These tensions were further illuminated during the three-day international research workshop *Conversation as a Research Method in Artistic Research*, led by PhD Duška Radosavljević at the University of Arts in Târgu Mureș, Romania, on November 11–13th, 2025. The workshop brought together early-career researchers to question the apparent contradiction between the collaborative nature of theatre and the

often solitary conditions of academic research. As Radosavljević asks in the workshop description: “Why is research in theatre solitary when theatre is a collaborative form?” (Radosavljević, 2025). She further questions the extent to which artistic research contributes to a “shared pool of knowledge” rather than serving the researcher alone, and asks what forms of dialogue, conversation, and collaboration might enable transnational knowledge production across borders and languages (Radosavljević, 2025).

These questions resonated directly with the methodological concerns of my own research. The workshop challenged the assumption that knowledge production in artistic research must begin and end with the individual researcher, instead proposing conversation and collaboration as ways of addressing what Radosavljević (2025) describes as the “inherent solipsism in arts and humanities research”. Her emphasis on the cultural variations of artistic research protocols was particularly relevant to my own practice, which moves across geographical, cultural, disciplinary, and embodied contexts. Rather than treating these differences as methodological obstacles, the workshop opened a space for considering them as productive conditions for dialogue and knowledge exchange.

During the workshop, PhD candidate Apollónia Bilibok (2025) examined the paradoxical position of doctoral research in theatre and performance within academic structures traditionally shaped by scientific models of knowledge production. In her reflection *Rethinking Artistic Research – An International Workshop and Collective Learning*, Bilibok identifies a fundamental contradiction at the center of artistic research:

According to those scientific expectations, research must be objective and employ one or more methods that produce results which can be replicated – in other words, the process must be reproducible, and anyone who follows the described method and sources should arrive at similar conclusions. In contrast, art is subjective and difficult to quantify numerically or factually, and it is hard to identify research methods with replicable methods. (...) Researching art, and especially theatre, involves a fundamental paradox: we examine phenomena that are inherently subjective, unique, and unrepeatable, while academic discourse traditionally expects objectivity and systematic, reproducible analysis. Although research methods in the arts necessarily differ

from the standard procedures used in the natural sciences, we are still frequently compelled to align our work with the norms mostly derived from those sciences. (Bilibok, 2025)

Bilibok's reflection resonates strongly with the methodological challenges encountered throughout the development of *Ancestral Dramaturgies*. The question was never whether artistic research practice could generate knowledge, but how that knowledge could become legible within institutions structured with different epistemological expectations. The workshop itself became an example of an alternative research ecology: one in which knowledge emerged through conversation, exchange, and collective learning rather than through isolated individual expertise.

Importantly, the collaborative ethos of the workshop extended beyond the three-day encounter itself. As documented in a co-authored account of the encounter, the exchange resulted in the formation of the Transnational Alliance of Artist Researchers in Theatre and Performing Arts (Salustiano Trojaborg et al., 2026), bringing together researchers from Denmark, Sweden, Romania, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, Serbia, Germany, the United Kingdom, Chile, and Brazil. The initiative to establish the alliance was proposed by my departmental PhD colleague Tanja Hylling Diers during the workshop and subsequently developed collectively among the participating researchers. Its formation provides a concrete example of the kind of transnational knowledge production that Radosavljević's workshop proposed: conversation did not merely facilitate an exchange of existing ideas but generated an ongoing network through which new forms of collaboration could develop.

This development was particularly significant for *Brown, Black, Queer and In-Between*, because it demonstrated that conversation can function not only as a method within a research encounter but also as a generative practice capable of producing new research relationships and communities. The alliance emerged from precisely the collaborative conditions that Radosavljević had proposed: knowledge produced through dialogue, across geographical and linguistic borders, rather than through the isolated work of the individual researcher. In this sense, the workshop became an instance in which methodology produced its own social and institutional consequences. Conversation did

not simply become a way of discussing artistic research; it became a means of making research relations.

Ancestral Dramaturgies as Situated Epistemology

Nelson (2013, 2022) establishes artistic practice as a legitimate mode of research and knowledge production, while PhD Elizabeth de Roza (2016) extends this discussion by foregrounding the relational and embodied conditions through which artistic knowledge emerges. In *Landscaping a Personal Myth*, de Roza argues that knowledge is produced not through detached observation but through the dynamic interplay between bodily experience, cultural memory, artistic practice, and encounter (de Roza, 2016). From this perspective, artistic research is not the accumulation of objective findings but an ongoing negotiation between practitioners and the worlds they inhabit. This understanding is particularly relevant to my own research, in which knowledge emerges through encounters between bodies, memories, places, materials, and other people. Rather than positioning myself as an external observer of ancestral memory, I understand artistic research as a situated and relational practice in which I am continually implicated in the production of the knowledge I seek to explore.

Ben Spatz (2024) contributes to this discussion by directing attention to the question of whose embodied practices are recognized as knowledge. In *Race and Forms of Knowledge*, he examines technique as a form of embodied knowledge and considers how its legitimacy is conditioned by histories of colonialism, racialization, and institutional authority (Spatz, 2024). His intervention offers an important framework for understanding my own position within Scandinavian academia, where the recognition of embodied and culturally situated forms of knowledge cannot be separated from the institutional histories that determine what counts as legitimate knowledge. As a Queer migrant researcher of colour, my artistic practice has been shaped by displacement, linguistic negotiation, racialization, and cultural translation. These experiences were not supplementary to this research; they constituted the conditions from which *Ancestral Dramaturgies* emerged. Rather than treating lived experience as anecdotal material awaiting theoretical validation, this methodology understands embodied ancestral experience as a legitimate site of knowledge production and as a generative source of artistic research.

This question became particularly tangible during the development of the research within the institutional framework of Lund University. Seeking institutional support for the second fieldwork period in Manaus and Rio de Janeiro required translating the value of artistic research into evaluation frameworks traditionally associated with STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines. Through collaboration with LU Innovation, the sonic installation *Dentro do Mar tem Rio* became one of the first artistic research projects in this context to receive institutional support for the sustainable application of practice-based research principles. More significantly, the process of seeking this support and articulating the value of artistic research within these institutional frameworks itself became a site of artistic research, revealing the epistemological assumptions and institutional criteria through which knowledge is recognised, valued, and legitimised.

Ancestral Dramaturgies therefore enters into dialogue with these scholars while extending their propositions. Nelson (2013, 2022) demonstrates that artistic practice can function as research. De Roza (2016) shows that such research is relational and embodied. Spatz (2024) reminds us that the recognition of embodied knowledge is inseparable from histories of race and power. Building upon these perspectives, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* proposes ancestry itself as an epistemological practice. It understands ancestral memory not simply as something represented through performance, but as something enacted through dramaturgical processes that generate knowledge through relation, embodiment, migration, ecology, and lived experience.

For this reason, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* should not be understood as a universal methodology but as a situated epistemology. It does not prescribe a sequence of methods to be replicated. Rather, it offers a way of approaching artistic research in which ancestral memory, embodied practice, relational encounter, and critical reflection become mutually constitutive. Its contribution lies not in defining how artistic research should be conducted, but in demonstrating how artistic practice can cultivate forms of knowledge that remain difficult to access through conventional academic methodologies while maintaining methodological rigor.

The Wave Continues to Move

When I opened this chapter with the image of a marine creature leaving the ocean, I described the conclusion of this doctorate not as an arrival but as a transition. Emerging from the sea did not mean leaving it behind. The movement that carried this research continues beyond the dissertation. If the previous chapters traced a long immersion in ancestral memory, what follows reflects on what remains in motion after that immersion. The wave has not disappeared; it has simply taken another form. A form that came through my dreams.

Last night, I dreamt of a large wave. It departed from the coastline of Rio de Janeiro and traveled northwards across the South Atlantic, crossing the Equator before reaching the Baltic Sea. As I woke, I had the unsettling feeling that this wave had been traveling towards me for many years and had finally arrived—not as a moment of rupture, but as a quiet recognition. I find it difficult to describe what has changed in me through this research. At times I feel as though I am reaching into my own chest and carefully bringing *Ancestral Dramaturgies* out of myself. This image may sound dramatic, yet it is not an act of violence. It is an act of recognition. I am not extracting something foreign from myself, but giving form to something that has been growing quietly over many years, waiting to be understood.

This dream immediately reminded me of the *Pororoca*, the tidal bore created when the Atlantic Ocean pushes upstream into the Amazon River. What fascinates me about this phenomenon is not simply its force, but the encounter it produces. The ocean enters the river, and the river receives the ocean. Their meeting generates a movement that belongs entirely to neither one nor the other. Neither body of water remains unchanged. I have come to recognize something similar in my own life. The Atlantic Ocean of my childhood, the Amazon River of my family's history, and the Baltic Sea where I now live no longer feel like separate geographies. Through this research, they have become connected by a movement that is at once geographical, familial, emotional, and ancestral.

Throughout this doctoral journey, different parts of my life have gradually begun to meet one another. My relationship with my family in Manaus has changed profoundly. Since returning, we have spoken every week, reconnecting different branches of the family and creating relationships that previously existed only as genealogical facts.

What has changed is not my family itself, but my relationship to its geography. Places that once existed as distant points on a map have become connected through travel, conversation, memory, and shared acts of listening. In this sense, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* has not only led me towards questions of origin and inheritance; it has also generated new relationships in the present. I no longer understand ancestry as something fixed behind me but as something continually unfolding through encounter. It is not simply inherited; it is reactivated and expanded through the relationships we cultivate.

This transformation has also altered my relationship with the more-than-human world. I have become more available to relationships that were already there—with bodies of water, plants, trees, and landscapes that accompanied this research long before I learned how to listen to them. I am reminded of another artistic experiment described in chapter VII, *The Whirlwind*, a short story I wrote in August 2024, in which a womxn appears to be caught in violent turmoil while, at the center of the whirlwind, there is complete stillness. I recognize something of that paradox now. The wave I imagine has crossed oceans, climates, histories, and forms of life before reaching the Baltic Sea. I feel its force deeply. Yet beneath that force there is an unexpected sense of peace.

Perhaps this is what *Ancestral Dramaturgies* has ultimately given me. Not a definitive answer about where I come from or who I am, but a different way of understanding movement and relation. Like a current, it gathers histories, encounters, losses, affections, and new relations as it travels. We do not simply inherit it; we enter its flow, and in doing so, we become part of its continuing movement. *Ancestral Dramaturgies* is therefore not something I have completed. It is something that has begun. The wave has reached the Baltic Sea, but it has not come to rest. It continues to move, carrying with it the landscapes, memories and relationships it has gathered along its journey.

The Rhythmic Calligraphy of Survival: Continuing Currents of *Ancestral Dramaturgies*

If the wave that carried this research has reached the Baltic Sea, the current beneath it continues to move. The completion of this doctorate marks not the end of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* but a transition in my relationship to it. What began as an artistic investigation into ancestry,

migration, and memory has gradually revealed itself as an evolving methodology sustained through encounters, relationships, and forms of knowledge that exceed individual ownership.

The realization of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* has transformed my understanding of artistic research as a practice capable of engaging personal histories, collectivity, institutional structures, and embodied forms of knowledge. This project did not begin with my doctoral enrollment; its roots extend back to 2016, when I conducted my first oral history interview with my grandmother Voinha, in Rio de Janeiro. What I previously approached through intuition and artistic experimentation, this PhD enabled me to recognize through theoretical and methodological reflection: personal histories of displacement are entangled with broader structures of migration, belonging, and diaspora. By developing my family history into a situated artistic methodology, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* proposes that ancestral narratives can become spaces of inquiry, transformation, and collective meaning-making.

Throughout the writing of this thesis, I have attempted to articulate the epistemic shifts generated through four years of doctoral research. This process has also revealed the limits of textual representation in capturing the complexity of embodied artistic knowledge. The body, its memories, its movements, and its social inscriptions have remained central sites of inquiry throughout this research. In this sense, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* contributes to ongoing conversations around artistic research by insisting on performance, dramaturgy, and embodied practice as legitimate forms of knowledge production.

As I move beyond the doctoral framework, my role changes from researcher seeking to define a methodology to custodian of a practice that remains open and unfinished. The future of *Ancestral Dramaturgies* depends not on preserving a fixed model, but on allowing it to encounter new bodies, territories, histories, and forms of knowledge. One possible continuation of this research will involve returning to the Amazonian region, particularly through site-specific investigations in Belém, birthplace of Voinha, where I hope to expand the methodology towards more-than-human archives. The trees, plants, rivers, and ecosystems of Belém that once surrounded the lives of my grandmother, great-grandmother, and generations of my maternal family will become participants in future dramaturgical encounters, not as passive objects of study but as living presences within my ancestral inquiry.

Another current of future inquiry concerns the unresolved histories within my maternal lineage, particularly the complex and fragmented memory surrounding my grandfather, Armando Salustiano. His absence continues to shape family narratives in different and sometimes contradictory ways. Rather than seeking a definitive reconstruction of his life, this future research would explore how silences, absences, and unresolved memories themselves become part of ancestral archives. Recent discoveries regarding the continuation of his lineage in Belém and its transatlantic connections towards Syria suggest further territories through which this inquiry may continue to move.

Ultimately, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* does not belong to me alone. Like a current, it gathers and carries what it encounters, changing through each relationship it enters. Its future depends on collective engagement: on other artists, researchers, and communities who may adapt, question, transform, and expand its possibilities beyond what I can currently imagine. The methodology remains in its infancy, not because it is incomplete, but because its life depends on continued movement. I therefore leave this doctoral journey not with a conclusion, but with a responsibility: to continue listening, to continue creating spaces for ancestral knowledge to emerge, and to continue following the currents that brought this research into being.

Finally, *Ancestral Dramaturgies* is dedicated to my grandmother Voinha (1921–2022), to her transcendent archive of survival, to her century of resistance, and to her boundless, unconditional embrace of my Queerness. The love she gave me during childhood is not merely a memory; it remains the sanctuary that allowed me to navigate discrimination throughout my migration journey. While this doctorate demanded intense intellectual labor, it also became a site of emotional archaeology. Within the silent spaces of this PhD, the childhood security Voinha planted within me finally matured, paving the way for a profound discovery of Queer self-love. I write these words at the center of the crossroads, where the winds are stronger, knowing that my survival, my healing, and my liberation were engineered by her loving and firm hands many decades ago.

Muio obrigade, Voinha.

Viva você hoje e sempre!



By the Baltic Sea. Original imagery: © Ulrik Trojaborg. Photography, art and design: © Mariana Ribas Coimbra. Møn, Denmark, August 1st, 2026.

Epilogue: By the Baltic Sea

I can no longer remember the beginning of this aquamarine voyage. It was set in motion long before I drew breath. It was an inherited momentum, a state of being cast into ongoing currents without yet seeing the ancestral chains of causality that carried me to these shores. It takes time to map such intricate entanglements. It has taken me some forty-seven years to trace these invisible lines. Yet, in finding them, I achieved a vital distance—stepping away from the immediate emotional turbulence to look down from a higher vantage point, gaining a clearer view. Distance and the act of distancing, both the quiet stillness and the momentum, are the rhythmic loops of my migration. This displacement journey became an alternative lens, a new way to understand my inner self, the habitats I have strived for, and, ultimately, the worlds I have crossed. Once I broke free from frozen concepts to invite the unexpected, a tide turned: a sea of affections emerged, a quantum plane where the scattered times and territories of my life revealed themselves as deeply and beautifully interconnected. In January 2022, I moved to Malmö, Sweden, to begin this doctoral journey. This city rests against a larger metropolis: Copenhagen, Denmark's capital, where I had earned my master's degree over a decade earlier. They are separated only by a narrow ribbon of water, Øresund or the Sound, stitched together by an impressive bridge linking the two nations, yet linking land and water as channeling elements of this journey. When the train leaves the coast and merges with the Øresund Bridge, a strange thrill ripples through my nervous system. To be suspended over the current, caught in a liminal space between territories, awakens a cellular memory. It carries me back to the weightless cradle of my mother's womb—high in the clouds, floating in amniotic fluid, suspended between Salvador and Rio de Janeiro—destined to meet the world in a familiar *carioca* atmosphere. This narrative of a young, vulnerable mother searching for a gentle, familiar haven to bring her child into the world echoed through my own life. Across childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood, her journey became my own trajectory—a restless urge to discover new lands, unlock latent possibilities, and, ultimately, find a place of acceptance.

Long before my birth, though, migration was a constant frequency humming within and around me, shaping itself in both beauty and

structural friction. To migrate demands a perpetual shifting—adapting to new cultural rhythms, social systems, and ways of existing. It is the evolutionary necessity of opening oneself to an unfamiliar ecosystem just to co-exist. After all these years, migration lives in my very biology as an existential paradox of pain and desire. They are coupled forces; one cannot exist without the other. I accept these terms and choose departure, time and time again. I am not certain of my ultimate trajectory, but the momentum carries me forward.

Vou danado pra Catende
Vou danado pra Catende
Vou danado pra Catende
Com vontade de chegar
Lá vai o trem com o menino
Lá vai a vida a rodar
Lá vai ciranda e destino
Cidade e noite a girar
Lá vai o trem sem destino
Pro dia novo encontrar
Correndo vai pela terra
Vai pela serra, vai pelo mar
Cantando pela serra do luar
Correndo entre as estrelas a voar
No ar, no ar.
(Bethânia, 1999)

Bound and determined for Catende,
Bound and determined for Catende,
Bound and determined for Catende,
Longing only to arrive.
There goes the train with the young boy,
There goes life, spinning wild,
There goes the ciranda dance and destiny,
City and night in a whirl.
There goes the train without a map,
Chasing the birth of a new day.
Racing it goes across the earth,

Over the mountains, by the sea,
Singing through the mountains of moonlight,
Sprinting through stars, taking flight,
In the air, in the air.
(Bethânia, 1999, my translation)

Portuguese Transcriptions of the Interviews

Chapter I

Voinha: Vocês não conheceram muito mamãe não, porque ela morava no interior...

Iury: Qual era o nome da sua mãe?

Voinha: Maria dos Prazeres.

Iury: Maria dos Prazeres. Ela era uma boa mãe?

Voinha: Era.

Iury: Era?

Voinha: Era.

Iury: Ela era bonita?

Voinha: Era trabalhadora, costureira.

Iury: Costureira também? Ah, então a costura já estava na família.

Voinha: Já, já.

Iury: A senhora aprendeu a costurar com a Maria dos Prazeres? Ela que te ensinou? Sua mãe te ensinou a costurar?

Voinha: Ela que me ensinou a costurar.

Iury: Ah, é? A senhora nunca fez um curso técnico de costura?

Voinha: Não, não.

Iury: A senhora aprendeu com a sua mãe?

Voinha: Com a minha mão mesmo. Com a minha mãe e com a minha mão mesmo, com a minha boa vontade.

Chapter II

Aunt Arlete

Eu passava telegrama, falava com ela pelo telegrama. Eu ia na taberna, aí eu digo, por favor, você deixa... aí a gente pagava. Aí eu dizia, olha, eu não sei falar, eu dizia, eu não sei falar aqui, você fala pra mim? Eu falando com a minha mãe, chama minha mãe pra mim, por favor. Aí chamava, eu ficava falando com a mamãe. Aí, mamãe, eu tô assim, assim, assim, assim. Papai botou uma mulher em casa muito boa, mas eu tô com saudade de você.

Minha vida foi muito triste, muito triste, infelizmente, mas assim mesmo, a gente tem que passar por tudo na vida; desde criança, eu

sofri. Mas agora, graças a Deus, encontrei um marido muito bom. Não me deixa fazer comida, não me deixa lavar a louça toda. Ele é um amor, um amor de marido. Ele nunca me deixou esse homem. Ele vai morrer no meu braço. Tenho fé em Deus que ele vai gostar de morrer também.

Chapter III

Uncle Arlindo

Minha mãe foi guerreira, batalhadora, sempre foi independente. Eu lembro da minha mãe cozinhando feijão, arroz, a comida em si, naquele fogão de lenha ainda que era lá em casa. Eu lembro assim. Depois que o casarão ficou pronto... a casa a gente chamava de casarão porque era muito grande. Eu acho que tinha oito, sete nove, quartos, agora sim. E a cozinha era lá nos fundos. Eu lembro que minha mãe, tarde da noite, ela estava cozinhando ainda. Não tínhamos geladeira. Geladeira era luxo, minha mãe botava as carnes pra conservar na gordura de coco, ou gordura de porco, fazia aquele panelão de gordura de coco quente, ela botava a gordura lá, aí aquilo ia secando, a gordura conservava.

Mas eu não... nessa fase eu não participei muito da vida deles. Mais ou menos isso que eu lembro.

Eu não gosto nem de falar tanto sobre isso, que dá emoção, sabe? Dá emoção, arrependimento. Se eu pudesse voltar atrás, mudar a minha história, a minha história e a história deles. Eu mudava, mas não posso voltar. Ontem passou.

Chapter IV

Aunt Naíza

A Voinha era uma pessoa muito especial, nossa senhora. Eu tinha um cuidado com ela, todas nós, né? Lógico. Mas como eu sou muito, assim, como é que fala a palavra? Sentimental. Qualquer coisa eu chorava. E aí, nossa, eu ia abraçar ela, apertar tanto, falar que eu amava demais ela, que a gente fez tudo por ela. Ela sabe disso, né? Mesmo ela naquela casa de repouso a gente chegava lá de surpresa pra ver se ela estava sendo tratada bem, entendeu? Então, eu ia falar, fica mais um pouquinho aqui, mãe, comigo. Me dá mais um carinho que eu vou te dar também mais amor. Que faz falta, faz muita falta ainda, apesar de ela ter partido já com 101 anos praticamente, né? Mas a gente tem esse

negócio de abraçar, sentir, né? Mas o amor continua o mesmo, ela só está em outro estágio, né? Em outro lugar, mas o amor continua o mesmo. Se Deus quiser, um dia a gente vai se encontrar.

Chapter V

Uncle Josias

A família. Minha irmã, minha esposa, minha vida, meus estudos. Eu tenho um irmão, assim, que é muito grande. Muito. Eu gosto de respeitar elas.

Aunt Nádia

Porque a minha mãe passou a ter os problemas dela, sofrer muito e já não sabia mais como educar, aí a gente já estava com uma visão de colégio bem arrumada e papai passou também muita orientação para a gente, embora lá mais tarde ele errou muito, mas ele deixou um terreno pronto, pelo menos para as mais velhas, e que a gente teve condição de dar uma ajuda Baseado nessa assistência, nessa criação legal que a gente teve quando ele começou a fazer as coisas erradas, a gente já estava tipo assim, pronto, já era um jovem pronto, eu tinha 17 anos.

Arlete

Eu passava telegrama, falava com ela pelo telegrama. Eu ia na taberna, aí eu digo, por favor, você deixa... aí a gente pagava. Aí eu dizia, olha, eu não sei falar, eu dizia, eu não sei falar aqui, você fala pra mim? Eu falando com a minha mãe, chama minha mãe pra mim, por favor. Aí chamava, eu ficava falando com a mamãe. Aí, mamãe, eu tô assim, assim, assim, assim. Papai botou uma mulher em casa muito boa, mas eu estou com saudade de você.

Minha vida foi muito triste, muito triste, infelizmente, mas assim mesmo, a gente tem que passar por tudo na vida, desde criança, eu sofri. Mas agora, graças a Deus, encontrei um marido muito bom. Não me deixa fazer comida, não me deixa lavar a louça, tudo. Ele é um amor, um amor de marido. Ele nunca me deixou esse homem. Nunca. Ele vai morrer no meu braço. Tenho fé em Deus que ele vai gostar de morrer também.

Josias

Lá o meu pai me viu e quando ele viu, gostou muito de mim.

Arlindo

Se eu pudesse voltar atrás, mudar a minha história, a minha história e a história deles. Eu mudava, mas não posso voltar. Ontem passou.

Arlindo

Eu tinha uma mania, uma mania engraçada, mania de criança... que eu usava uma bota, né? Aí dava o laço. Eu olhava e falava: esse laço eu dei lá em casa, não vou tirar não. Aí eu dava uma volta com o sapato todo apertado, pra não desmanchar o laço. Porque esse laço eu dei na minha casa, conservava o laço aqui. Coisa boba, boba mesmo, mas pra mim tinha uma importância danada. Era uma marca registrada, esse foi na minha casa. Eu queria uma recordação que aquele laço foi na minha casa. Era uma mania esquisita, né?

Naíza

Eu vejo o que minha mãe passou. Minha mãe sofreu muito com aquelas traições, entendeu? As mulheres que ele tinha, que ela sabia e já tinha escutado que ele tinha filho com a mulher. Eu falei, não, eu não vou passar por isso. Eu vou criar meus filhos sozinha, eu vou trabalhar e vou vencer.

Naíza

Ah, aquela Isa de lá não sabia falar. Eu segurava tudo, chega me dava um nó na garganta de doer, mas eu não conseguia me defender, não conseguia falar, não conseguia mostrar meus pontos, sabe, de opinião, e aí teve um tempo na minha vida que todo mundo falou assim, nossa, agora você fala tudo, porque eu aprendi a falar, a me defender. Não, isso eu não quero fazer, não, isso eu não vou aceitar, entendeu? A minha opinião é essa, entendeu? Eu tinha opinião, eu passei a ter opinião. Antes, eu era tão fechada assim, tão triste, se falasse um pouquinho mais alto comigo, eu chorava, mas chorava, me dava uma dor no coração, eu chorava muito. E hoje em dia, não.

Eu choro, porque eu sou emotiva, mas eu falo tudo que eu tenho que falar. Entendeu? Então, eu diria pra Iza: aprenda a falar, aprenda a se defender. Você pode, você sabe, entendeu? Você vai vencer. E aí é isso.

Naíza

Como que minha mãe pode ter...eu perguntava, eu não falava sozinha, ela falou, como que a senhora tem uma filha em Belém mãe? Ah, mãe, para com isso, é uma sobrinha que você adora. Nada, ela é minha filha, é a Arlene. Aí, tinha uma foto que ela tinha, e essa foto, acho que até na casa da Neide, porque muitas fotos foram entregues à Neide. Ou a Neide pegou enfim, estão com a Neide. Aí, ela mostrava uma garota de uns 10 anos, talvez até menos, vestida de anjo. Ela falava essa é a minha filha também. Eu falava, ah mãe, isso não pode ser, de anjo por que? Mas a gente também frequentava a igreja. Aí ela falava, não, é da igreja, que se vestia de anjo nas procissões, o nome dela é Arlene, ela é minha filha. eu falei, isso eu não entendia e ela não explicava.

Chapter VI

Aunt Nádia

Porque a minha mãe passou a ter os problemas dela, sofrer muito e já não sabia mais como educar, aí a gente já estava com uma visão de colégio bem arrumada e papai passou também muita orientação para a gente, embora lá mais tarde ele errou muito, mas ele deixou um terreno pronto, pelo menos para as mais velhas, e que a gente teve condição de dar uma ajuda Baseado nessa assistência, nessa criação legal que a gente teve quando ele começou a fazer as coisas erradas, a gente já estava tipo assim, pronto, já era um jovem pronto, eu tinha 17 anos.

Chapter IX

Arlene and Josias

E agora, papai a gente ficou sem mãe. Como é que a gente vai viver?

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A portrait of Iury Salustiano Trojaborg, a man with a grey beard and mustache, smiling. He is wearing a green polo shirt with a yellow bird graphic on the left chest. A colorful tassel earring is visible on his left ear. The background is a dense, green tropical forest with large banana leaves and tree trunks.

Iury Salustiano Trojaborg is a Queer, non-binary, Afro-diasporic interdisciplinary artist-researcher whose work explores the intersections of theatre and performance, migration, decoloniality, and social sustainability. For over ten years, Iury has been experimenting with listening as a practice for encountering other existences, histories, and temporalities. Her artistic and research practice is guided by a belief in the regenerative powers of Nature and the arts, and by a commitment to cultivating new relations between bodies, memories, places, ancestral relations, and forms of knowing.



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