

Strands of Eastern Thoughts and Creation in Western Contemporary Dance

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Abstract

This essay is part of a graduate thesis defended in 2021 at the University of Campinas (ANDRAUS, 2022) on the development of creative processes in contemporary dance inspired by different types of Asian body training experienced by the author over three decades. From this experience, the author reflects on the concepts of technique, permanence and interiority in dance and highlights possibilities for creative dance procedures involving the quoted repertoires, from a Western composition perspective.

Keywords: contemporary dance, creative procedures, Indian dance, yoga, kungfu

1. Introduction

This essay is part of a graduate thesis defended in 2021 at the University of Campinas (ANDRAUS, 2022) on the development of creative processes in contemporary dance inspired by different types of Asian body training experienced by the author over three decades.

It has three parts: in the first, I reflect on Indian dances, comparing them to yoga and characterizing them as a type of a “danced yoga” for an audience. This first reflection echoes a discussion about self-practices related to Chinese Martial Arts, contrasting them with Indian dances due to their distinct form of symbolic elaboration, simplicity and, in a certain sense, a little closer to the Western dance approach. Secondly, I reflect on the concepts of technique, permanence and interiority presented in an interview I gave in 2021, which main excerpts are transcribed in this article. Lastly, in the final considerations, I highlight possibilities for creative dance procedures involving the quoted repertoires, from a Western composition perspective.

I emphasize that, as a Brazilian, I am not the best researcher to speak appropriately about Asian arts as they are in their original contexts; I ask the reader, therefore, to consider that these are my impressions, as a Brazilian research artist, about these three techniques (Yoga, Odissi and Kungfu) which I practiced for extended periods (12 years, 12 years, and 15 years, respectively).

2. Discussion about Self-Practices Related to Chinese Martial Arts

I begin by quoting Campbell (1994), from whom it is possible to affirm that not every path of reconnection with the sacred is, exactly, a *religare*:

The Indian term *yoga* is derived from the Sanskrit verbal root *yuj*, “to link, join, or unite,” which is related etymologically to “yoke,” a yoke of oxen, and is in sense analogous to the word “religion” (Latin *re-ligio*), “to link back, or bind.” Man, the creature, is by religion bound back to God. However, religion, *religio*, refers to a linking historically conditioned by way of a covenant, sacrament, or Koran, whereas yoga is the psychological linking of the mind to that superordinated principle “by which the mind knows.”²¹ Furthermore, in yoga what is linked is finally the self to itself, consciousness to consciousness; for what had seemed, through *mayd*, to be two are in reality not so; whereas in religion what are linked are God and man, which are not the same (CAMPBELL, 1962, p. 13).

That yoga that I learned in my doctorate has manifested itself in American modern dance through precursors such as Martha Graham – which I deduced, by logical syllogism, to be a natural and inescapable influence also to Brazilian contemporary dance – permeates our current practice of contemporary dance with a union of the dancer

with himself, however by way of a more psychological route than the social route that religion, by definition, offer. So it is impossible to escape a certain skepticism when incorporating yoga in our training. However, when we delight ourselves in an Odissi, Kuchipudi or Mohiniyattam performance, among other dances practiced in India, it is somewhat difficult not to get inebriated with the publicized aesthesia evoked by the music and visuality of these dances, which speak to our cultural reality of Brazilians much more – or in a much deeper way – than, for example, we would experience if we attended to a yoga practice. Yoga is something we practice for our well-being, while an Odissi choreography is a kind of “danced yoga” that we dance to the cosmos – a performance, therefore; it is made for the audience, the “Other”, and it’s impregnated with symbols that turn on our own “senses of being” in the world. Indian dance is like a “shared ecstasy”. We need to understand, then, if the contemporary dance principle of “taking care of ourselves” (encouraged by current somatic practices) is enough. I have a feeling that in India there is a much more interesting hole to dig, a hole that we, Brazilians – a people colonized and deprived not of some specific cultural roots, but of all the things that form us – we live in search of filling. The aromas of incense from an Umbanda *terrier* (Note 1) are exhaled by the East and spread in air masses that travel over Africa, flowing into precipitation here and there, in a great south-south carousel that brings us much closer to India than we realize.

In the case of Chinese martial arts, the story is very different and, in a certain sense, closer to our Western rational mind – because, despite not having gone through the Cartesian mind-body split, its self-practices are part of a connection of the practitioner with himself without the need for symbolic elaboration. The different currents of Chinese thought precisely influenced the development of the Chinese martial arts, and have a strong presence in rationalism. Bueno (2013) discusses the reception of Buddhism in China and the frictions between the strands of thought already present in China (Confucianism and Daoism) when Buddhism emerged in Chinese territory.

The establishment of Buddhists in China was characterized by a long and complex process of intercultural dialogue, which required a century of debate among Chinese intellectuals, linked to the traditions of Confucianism and Daoism, and the Buddhist community, formed by native and foreign converts. The reception of Buddhism was not simple; its arrival sparked a series of cultural, ethical and philosophical debates among the Chinese, calling into question their social and religious structure (BUENO, 2013, p. 53, free translation).

For his analysis, Bueno explains the Huahu (化胡) theory, which can be translated as “conversion of the barbarians”, delimiting the reactions to the Buddhist movement among Chinese thinkers linked to Daoism. The theory starts from the assumption that Buddha was a disciple of the ancient Daoist master Laozi and, in some versions, even an incarnation, framing Buddha in an imaginary hierarchy of knowledge and as a way for Daoists to rescue “their religious prestige, seriously shaken after the wide dissemination of Buddhism in Chinese lands, mainly after the 3rd century” (p. 54). To carry out his analysis, Bueno presents hypotheses about the chronology of the arrival of Buddhism in China and the foundations of each aspect, contextualizing the reader about the guiding principles of each current.

Confucianism emerged around the 6th century, based on the doctrine created by the wise Confucius 孔夫子 (-551 to -479). Confucius was an important historical character for the Chinese; his philosophical proposal was eminently educational, intellectual, and political. He argued that the articulation of society took place as a function of culture, and that this could only be properly promoted by education (教 Jiao). Without education, therefore, it would be impossible to govern a country, since society would be unaware of the customs, laws, rights, and duties. Education, the study of history, the arts and a kind of cultural sociology (called Li 禮 84) would constitute the Confucian Dao 道 (Way, method). As a result, Confucianism was elevated to the status of state ideology during the Han dynasty, and it had become the basis of Chinese education [...] (BUENO, 2013, p. 57, free translation).

In contrast to the Daoist vision, considered more “resigned”, the Confucianism contemplates the notion of a certain social effort so that society and its structure are maintained through education, with a laborious exercise in maintaining customs and, from the point of view of the cult of ancestors, although present, this tends to occur in a “symbolic and distant” way (BUENO, 2013). Confucianism does not have metaphysics and, according to the author, this is one reason for the emergence of interest in Buddhist metaphysics. Daoism, in turn, has two distinct currents, one of which comprises metaphysics:

As in the Confucian case, we need to return to the ancient Chinese language to understand the emergence of the Daoist religion. The Daoist tradition attributed to the mythical Laozi (-6th century?) the foundation of Daoism, a doctrine that preached detachment from the material world by means of a return to the original human nature (自然 Ziran). Opposing directly to the Confucians, the Daoists argued that culture was a corrupter of the human nature, and for this reason, the practitioner of Daoism should dedicate himself to a

frugal and hedonic life, following a natural course of things that was represented by the word Dao (path, method). However, Laozi, disgusted with the situation of his time, would have climbed on the back of a buffalo, and disappeared into the lands of the west. Before going, however, he would have bequeathed to a humble border guard a succinct book, composed of just eighty-one verses, called from Daodejing 道德經 (Treatise on the Way and Virtue). The Daodejing is the founding text of philosophical Daoism (Chan, 2000, p.1-30). Since then, Daoism had developed in China, but ended up dividing into two distinct movements: philosophical Daoism (Daojia 道家, School of the Dao) and religious Daoism (Daojiao 道教, Teachings of the Dao) – the latter came closer to ancient religiosity Chinese folklore, and built a whole new religion out of it, which incorporated the Chinese folk pantheon and their beliefs (BUENO, 2013, p. 60, free translation).

After presenting the three aspects under examination, Bueno enters the discussion about whether Laozi had gone to India and been influenced by Buddhism or whether, instead, Otherwise, Buddha would have been a disciple of Laozi and Buddhism, in that case, would be a “lower form” (BUENO, 2013) of Daoism:

The Daoists took advantage of a detail in the biography of Laozi, his mythical founder, to create an alternative historical discourse to that of Buddhist historiography. Laozi's life was told in Shiji 史記 (Historical Records, chapter 63) by Sima Qian 司馬遷 (-1st century). In it the story appears that Laozi had left China, leaving in towards the western lands. From this passage, Daoists developed the idea that Buddha would simply be either a disciple, an incarnation or Laozi himself, who would have spent his last years teaching in India before disappearing from the earthly world. Thus, Buddhism would be an Indian misrepresentation of Chinese Daoism, full of beliefs and concepts foreign to traditional Chinese thought. A memorial supposedly written in 166 and addressed to the emperor, would state: 'some people say that Laozi went to the region of the Barbarians and there he became Buddha' (ZURCHER, 2007, p. 291). Another text, the Sanguozhi 三國志 (History of the three kingdoms, approx. 4), stated categorically that Laozi had 'converted the barbarians' (Huahu) when he was in India (ZURCHER, 2007 p.291). It's possible that these historical writings caused some confusion between Buddhism and Daoism due to some superficial doctrinal similarities, such as the discourse of material detachment or spiritual transcendence. For Daoists, However, this seemed like a perfect opening to develop the theory Huahu, that is, that Buddhism was an adulteration of Daoism, an imperfect – and non-Chinese – copy of Laozi's doctrine (BUENO, 2013, P. 64, free translation).

This debate is controversial due to the difficulty of chronologizing historical documents, added to the fact that, in both cultures, myths appear in historical explanations, and this is not considered a problem in the same way that generally occurs in the modern West. This brings us back to the importance, so well outlined by Joseph Campbell and Mircea Eliade, to value and study local myths – and, I add, the creation of dances with/of/about these myths.

Basic knowledge about cultures outside the Europe-Americas colonization axis has a fundamental value especially nowadays, when Brazilian researchers have obstinately pursued the decolonization of epistemes and curricula, but commonly, to achieve this (noble) objective, they get lost in a summarized version of the colonizer-colonized or oppressor-oppressed dialectic as if refusing European references was the only way to transcend a dichotomy that, deep down, is perceived through a still colonial lens, as if the planet were still summed up to the continents of Europe and America. I postulate that shedding light on cultural references from other continents – Africa, Asia and Oceania – is another way for Brazilians to decolonize this gaze, with less friction and with the benefit of reaching peers and interlocutors who have colonized experiences that are different from ours in some aspects and similar in others. It is certainly important to talk with South American countries, but what can I learn from talking to people from non-hegemonic cultures in a country like India?

In China, equally, ethnic-cultural diversity is so wide that, in a certain sense, it comes close to the Brazilian experience of not feeling like you belong to a certain national identity, at the same time people are called for a kind of “national identity” which is definitely not limited to one term, be it “Brazilian”, “Chinese” or “Indian”. And I don't even need to say that the history of Europe was entirely also built on relations of oppression and colonization. What did the European people who were oppressed in a historical moment before the Great Navigations have to teach to Brazilians today? As Chimamanda Adichie (2009) teaches, unique stories are always dangerous. Just as there is not a single America or a single “Asia”, Europe is also not an undifferentiated whole. I think that the practice of arts such as Chinese gongfu and different Indian dances fulfills the educational function of awakening Brazilian students to an epistemological diversity that far transcends the boundaries of the academic course itself. Those who are interested will look for opportunities in the field of research. These will go deeper. For other students, however, these arts also constitute an opportunity to transcend their own sameness (Note 2) (CIAMPA, 1986), to have a kind of constant reminder, present in the course's daily routine (and not in the sporadic nature of

elective offerings), that dance is a broad and much more diverse phenomenon than our Western conception of “contemporary” can contain. Studying arts of Asian or African origin helps us re-signify the very role of art(s) in culture(s), as well as its political dimension exercised in the fluid dynamics of international relations not mediated by performing arts ghettos. Not all performing art is mainstream, and sometimes it seems important to say: all performing art can be studied. Artists are pioneers and field openers.

Creating contemporary dance is mastering the art of presenting bodily knowledge in a critical perspective, and we live in the 21st century, post-globalization, when understanding intercontinental relational dynamics is increasingly more pressing; in which the concept of nation is, once again, put on the agenda; in which the UN creates and guides an agenda to reduce inequalities at different levels with global initiatives aimed at preserving life on Earth. We need to be together.

There is extensive debate over the chronology of the coming of Buddhists to China. It is possible that the interests of the Buddhist community in relationship with this country intensified after the 3rd century, when a series of political crises involving the Silk Road made the journey of Buddhists to the Mediterranean world difficult. Various Westerners authors, such as Clement of Alexandria, Bardasanus and Porphyry reported the presence of Buddhists – who made a point of distinction from the Brahmins – in the limes of the Roman Empire (COEDS, 1977). Buddhists had a long-standing relationship with the West, but failed to develop it fully, and the reasons for this are the subject of extensive speculation. So, the point is that around the 2nd century, there was a shift in movements of the Indian Buddhist community, and it turned gradually towards China, following the movements of the Silk Road [...] (BUENO, 2013, p. 54, free translation, my emphasis).

China has had relations with the West for a long time, but very little specifically with Brazil - something I discussed in my doctoral thesis. Current Brazilian political tensions and Bolsonarism as a political phenomenon that surfs on Trumpism, show us how much the Americas still ignore and despise China, as if it were not a culture a millennium older than our own and had nothing to teach us, Brazilians. That is why it is so important that Chinese arts should not be a mere detail in curricula that aim to train critical and decolonial dancers.

3. Thoughts on Technique, Permanence, and Interiority

It was certainly not in my plans to become known among academics who focus on martial arts in other areas of knowledge – Physical Education, Philosophy and History especially – but, over the years since the publication of the first article in 2009, researchers from different parts of Brazil started to get in touch, generally for having read one of my books. I received invitations to participate in research groups. As I already lead my own research group and my themes were not currently limited to martial arts, I have declined most of them, but I accepted to participate in the group “Caminhos Marciais, Humanidades e Educa ção Integral” – EDUCAM, linked to the UFU History Institute and led by Prof. Guilherme Luz. This group, which has 18 members, brings together researchers from Anthropology, History, Science of Religion, and for this reason adds to my perspective a line of thought that differs a little from the artistic-mythological perspective with which I always focused on regarding arts of Asian origin.

In addition to this formal research group, I was invited and became part of informal groups, such as the Chinese Martial Arts Memory group in Brazil. On Facebook, with 1.1 thousand members, and the Bushido e Educa ção group, on Whatsapp, with thirty participants. It is a network that is becoming interested in discussing Chinese martial arts on Brazilian grounds and the inclusion of this field in academic areas of humanities. This happens because the phenomenon of this field being peripheral, in the sense of being worked on elective subjects and sporadically, is not exclusive to the Department of Corporeal Arts at Unicamp. It is an emerging field and, in practice, due to its extremely interdisciplinary nature, it is not perceived (at least to date) as belonging to a specific area. Personally, I like traveling through this border area and about that I spoke, on 05/19/2021, to a hybrid audience composed of some (few) dance researchers, but especially by researchers of martial arts academically linked to other areas of knowledge.

This lecture is available on YouTube (Note 3) and, on the pages below, I highlight specifically a point of interest to this topic, which is when I explain about the improvisation, I developed for this video performance (Note 4), just 1’22”, as it is important to understand the analysis that follows.

Specifically talking about the sequence that I improvised: it was really an improvisation. I didn't rehearse for it. I went to the yard and danced, and I asked my partner to record from the balcony. I said I wanted one plong é footage, then I repeated the same sequence filming from a frontal shot to be able to work with the editing. I did a sequence that lasted about 8 minutes, then I redid it, and it lasted 8 minutes again. I repeated some patterns in its script – we call it structured improvisation. The script is the same: I start on the floor, I'm lying down, I turn there... Even so I can compose this in editing. But it's all improvised. And then I'll get up. It has those circles, there's all this more circular movement, which is where kungfu will appear. And later I

completed this script with the series picking up dry leaves on the ground. And the symbols go emerging from the process of improvising itself (lecture transcript).

I continue to explain, to that audience, what it is like to proceed in a creative process without an *a priori* planning and how symbolisms emerged during the compositional process:

[...] we don't have awareness, an *a priori* planning. But as I did, and after it was done, I looked at the video, and I started to understand that the movement of picking things up from the floor was an answer to the apple that Milena had dropped from her lyre. So, a trigger for the composition is this: the apple falls, she looks down, and if you look in the edition, I start in the sequence to pick up the leaves [on the ground]. And then I create this script like the creation of this video performance. It has the image of a bird, the image of a crow, they are images that begin to emerge for us in conversations. And in conversations to write articles we began to realize that we were creating with the theme of death, and the lightness that this moment [covid pandemic] requires from us. How to deal with the theme of death lightly in a context where the topic of death is so heavy for everyone? The crow is a very strong symbol, it is spreading like that, on a battlefield... This is in mythologies, the crow as a harbinger of death. Then the clothes black symbolizes this, but none of this was thought of *a priori*. I work like this: it flows by intuition and then I realize what I did. And so the senses are built and gain a cohesion there (lecture transcript).

I comment, shortly after, on how certain patterns arising from codes of the arts we train are sedimented in the body:

The Chinese martial art excerpts, I don't know if in the second and third video is clear to everyone, but in the moments when I make these excerpts that I cut to put in video 2 are moments that, during the improvisation process, what is in my image, in my imagination, are the movements of the martial arts, because I took fifteen years of practice. And fifteen years are not fifteen days nor fifteen months. So those movements are internalized in me, and this happens in the training process of every dancer. And very likely that [for] Milena, in a process of improvisation ten years from now, certain movement patterns that she has trained a lot of contemporary dances, of classical dance, of the lyre itself, they will persist in her story as an improviser and as a creator. There is also a temporal perspective, let's say, of a career. And then these movements emerged. I didn't plan it like "I'm going to do a video performance about kungfu movement or with kungfu movements", but I started dancing and these movements emerged. And there I even wanted, to open up our chat, to ask you (and then maybe we'll talk a little about ling, the sparring form): I don't know if anyone here realizes that what I do in the video performance is not what I'm doing in the video in the form of sparring form, but what my partner is doing in the form of sparring form. Did you notice this? It's the attacking side (transcription lecture).

This passage is particularly interesting because it was when "I changed the language": probably the reader of this article does not know (or did not know until reading it) what is a ling, but for that audience, this word probably brought comfort: I showed, for them, that my creation was not inspired by the Bung Bo (Note 5), which is made up of defense and countering moves, but rather on the attacking side. I had shown, at the beginning of the lecture, a video with movements of the Ling Bung Bo sparring fighting form interspersed with the movements of the performance Between flights and falls that were inspired by Chinese martial arts, and in this video (Note 6) I had done the attacking side, which is what inspired the artistic creation.

In the following I explained, for viewers unfamiliar with the Chinese martial art, details on what "lings" are, what single contact techniques are, and I mentioned names of praying mantis forms – all with the intention of contextualizing it. I talk a lot about my break from continuous training of fifteen years at the Lai Kungfu Institute and about how this break was triggered by my own need, as a performing artist, to free myself from the codes and dictates implied in belonging to a specific martial art school. I also talk a lot about my journey into kungfu, back in 2000, as a path (created by me at that time) of alternative technical training to ballet or "contemporary" dance, and at all the reasoning that led me from the choreographic perspective on martial arts, developed in the master's degree, until the doctoral thesis in which I argued that it would be the very training (and concept) of fighting that would increase something for a dancer improviser. And then the participants' comments and questions begin.

Regarding the issue of repetition in technique, I consider, based on Heraclitus's fragment that it is not possible to enter the same river twice, that the same form of gongfu performed at different times is not the same form. If I create within a repertoire – and that means repeating codes and patterns – I am creating, and it is possible for us to be creative in that place. The point is that, in performing arts, the artist is expected to have the ability to move between different languages, and this means not being tied to anyone – it implies not being tied to a specific system of Chinese martial art, therefore. Performing artists are always in this place at the border of traffic. They move between different arts, trying to find each other, and different artistic references emerge during their creations.

On the other hand, while martial art training is codified in terms of forms, it is completely improvisational in terms of fighting. And this also implies a technique. In my doctoral thesis, I called this training “fighting proper”, in writing, to differentiate it from *ling*, that is, to differentiate it from sparring fights. And, in fact, this was one of the threads that I pulled out in my doctorate: developing the idea that, when starting to train in a martial art, the person is generally exposed first to form training, which is a choreographic training, and only then you will be introduced to fight training, whether sparring fight or fighting itself. The sparring fight is interesting because, even though it is codified, due to the acceleration process it begins to awaken a certain creativity. In my understanding, after training in combined fighting, the experience of performing the form (of kungfu) becomes creative, and this can be transposed (it usually is) to experience in dance.

Teaching only punches, elbows or kicks is not creative. But after experimenting with the application of the blows, the choreographed sequence begins to become a creative process, even if it is within the code. There is creation as rupture and creation as recreation. Personally, I am very open and libertarian in understanding that, even in a codified art, I am creating. But this is not very consensual in the performing arts area, and dance specifically. In the context of contemporary dance, the dancer is required to always stay in the “rupture” mode.

Thomas Kuhn (2013) talks about a shared paradigm, and I always joke that in the arts there are few shared paradigms. Everyone who talks about their research invents a concept. We invent words and concepts. During the pandemic, for example, I started using the terms video letter and videoperformance, and I had previously used (ANDRAUS, 2018b) the term videoscene, which I composed to explain the work I was developing, differentiating it from video dance. We are artists in our own use of the Portuguese language. And that's a problem because we end up not having many shared paradigms. Thomas Kuhn says that scientists spend most of their time doing puzzles, putting together puzzles. In normal science, rupture is not so frequent; it is an event within the structure of the revolution in that area, in that specific field. And sometimes I bring up this provocation in methodology classes for dancers: what's the problem with doing works that are puzzles? But, for us, this is a huge taboo, it's as if we have an obligation to be original not only in our doctorate, but in every unique dance we do. We must be original every moment of our lives and that is also stressful. Being creative all the time is as tiring as it is unfeasible.

Finally, I move on to the purpose of the topic, which is to talk about technique and permanence. My formative references have always been classical arts, in the sense of coding. Both Yoga, Indian Odissi dance or Kungfu/wushu are codified training. To create with these references, we usually carry out systematizations afterwards. So, when a movement emerges “by chance”, it is not an accident that cannot be repeated. On the contrary, the concept of structured improvisation foresees the exercise of constant awareness/vigilance, on the part of the performer, about what she/he is doing, so that, after the end of the improvisation session, even if she/he is unable to fully repeat the choreographic score, she/he manages to retain essential matrices that she/he can later return to and develop. It's as if the dancer learned to talk to what's in his preconscious. Thus, strategies are sought for a systematization that will occur later; the aim is not to be Cartesian in the sense of prospecting creation, but to expand awareness during the performative act and immediately after its end, to be able to resume essential parts (or matrices, or “findings”). So, the trend in dance, from a methodological point of view, is always this: first make the art and then write (and only then do you look for references).

I resume the study of Heraclitus now, ten years older: I no longer wanted to be stuck only with the idea of not being able to enter the same river twice. I accessed the Stanford Encyclopedia and panicked, because I discovered that, in fact, there are several possible interpretations and translations of this fragment of the river. [...] I am revisiting Heraclitus and studying him in more depth only now. In my master's degree, I used the fragment superficially. Regarding Thomas Kuhn, equally, I must reread it every time I work with his book in methodology disciplines, and each time I understand it a little better.

My two “healing training” during the pandemic were Odissi and Kungfu/wushu. Even though I have separated myself from the context of Chinese martial arts in the sense of training in schools, I continue training at home. And this experience is very important, because, when we are in the context of the school, be it kungfu/wushu or European ballet (which is a completely similar example), we want to learn things, learn new techniques, learn some more choreography from the repertoire, whatever it is. And, in the case of Kungfu/wushu: one more form, one more form, one more form. While I was at school, I accumulated knowledge in about twenty ways, including hands-free and weapons. However – and this is one of my main postulates – it is when we move away from the context and spend several years without training that we test and verify what really imbued us. What remains.

This permanence speaks directly to the concept of contemporary art. The dancer, in his fusional process of creation, sees movements emerge that she/he has not practiced for years. If the movement emerges, it is because it was retained, elaborated, sometimes transformed by the artist's bodily memory. Today, at my age (and without training

in classical ballet for 25 years), I position my legs in fourth position and do a double pirouette *en dehors* without bouncing. So, I consider this a technique that has remained. I cite the example of the pirouette but there are many others, many other techniques that remain. It's a taboo to say, but I see movements that are being lost – whether in dance or in kungfu/wushu – as non-essential. They may be essential for others, but they are not essential for me. What is essential remains, without having to make an effort to make it happen.

In coded training, the subject appropriates the technique through repetitions, but those that were most trained will not necessarily remain: the process of permanence – and constitution of memory of the movement – goes through a set of inputs that are established in the relationship of teaching and which can be related to the way the teacher addressed the guidance. The times when I best perform the Vasant Pallavi Odissi choreography, for example, are those when the memory of the teacher explaining the meaning of each gesture is present. The memory of the teacher's voice. The memory of the teaching itself as an event that occurred on a specific day, specific time, specific temperature, and light. They are like photographs of life. However, these moments are rare, and we can, as teachers, systematize records in other ways: this is why I argue for the importance of videography and photography to generate memories of the creative process.

In dance we think a lot about interiority. I myself have written several times about subject, emergence, the bird that appears in everything I create (whether twenty years ago or now), but there is a very interesting provocation, in the line of thought of the artist Katie Duck (SANTOS, 2018), which is: “there is no such thing as interiority”. There is no interiority. What the performing artist does is to work with the scene elements. So, in terms of process, process development, the fact is that such emergencies eventually come to an end. How, then, can we begin a process of directing or teaching creation? By the scene elements. We started talking about the video we are going to produce to project onto the scene, about the lighting, about costumes... For me it is more organic when the scenography arrives before the interiority.

Interiority, in the works I supervised at Unicamp, came towards the end, even though it was present from the beginning. It's almost a perception: you do the whole thing and then look and say “Wow, look at my interiority”. You recognize yourself in the work, instead of starting from a restlessness to seek such interiority. You simply trust that it will emerge.

Thus, I have been developing a reflection on creative procedures with repertoires of arts of Asian origin: they include themes such as acceptance of codified training as an important part of a dancer's training, as well as the importance of this dancer developing the ability to dilute and transcend them; by the concept of the technique remaining in body memory not by force (of repetitive training), but by means of confidence in the permanence of the learning itself; by means of the concept of fusion of languages (and the development of the ability to move between them); and for the recognition that intellectual development and artistic development are inseparable.

4. Final Considerations: Creative Procedures with Repertoires of Different Asian Arts

I believe that these ideas help me to develop a reflection on creative procedures with repertoires of Asian arts: they go through themes such as the acceptance of coded training as an important part of the dancer's training, as well as the importance of this dancer to develop the ability to dilute and transcend them.

I summarize, at the closing of the curtains of this writing, that possible teaching proposals for dance creation processes are inspired by intercultural studies that involve intranational (considering the Brazilian context) and international references, with an emphasis on cultures outside the Europe-Americas axis, although without excluding any references that come from to emerge spontaneously in one or more dancers involved in the process.

It would be possible, for example, to delve deeper into the choreographic study – whether of forms of kungfu or items from the Odissi repertoire – to better train to perform in these languages, perceiving *eukinetik* elements that differentiate them from other dance languages, and with this practice, to develop a fluidity of the transit between languages triggered by improvisational studies based in fusion. It is possible to increase gestural repertoire through the study of a broad set of *mudras*, with the understanding of their meanings in their original cultural context (Indian) and the conscious exploration of creating new meanings. This teaching objective appears to be perfectly viable and developed as a creation process which, obviously, does not need to be restricted to Odissi dance gestures. For example, I am currently guiding a graduate conclusion work about Libras (Note 7) and I have been establishing, with the student, concrete aspects of the relationship between the meanings of mudras in comparison with signs of Libras (by analogies or by counterpoints), deriving creative studies of these analyses that are focused on gestures, and not exclusively on *mudras*. The focus, in this research, is the calligraphy of space using the hands and the study of reverberation of these investigations throughout the body.

Another possibility would be aimed at developing a differentiated perception of rhythm, based on Indian polyrhythm, starting from comparative studies between splints and Afro-Brazilian polyrhythms, carried out in the body. If, in Indian dance, the rhythm is built mainly by the tapping of the feet on the floor, in sequences ranging from 01 to 10 beats (*chouks* and *tribhangs* (Note 8)), in a contemporary creative investigation in Brazilian rhythm it is possible to work on these rhythmic bases with other parts of the body, generating materials for future compositions. It is always worth remembering, as already elaborated in the body of this article, that I am not talking about processes of rational transposition (and literal) content from Indian dance to a “contemporary” language, but an intuitive and integrative process carried out through improvisation laboratories. And it is possible to focus on sparring fighting and improvised fighting training, to develop speed in decision-making and in improvisational processes. A creative process along this path would focus on contact improvisation and is particularly interesting for working in pairs, or even small groups.

I reach the end of this writing by also reaffirming keypoints to this argument: i. Text creations and dance creations involve similar cognitive processes and should always be stimulated and balanced, always prioritizing the art-writing relationship; ii. For a Brazilian student, studying Asian arts expands the mind to accommodate a healthy balance and not dichotomize between theory and practice; iii. An important technique is one that remains; iv. Knowing how to work with memories and stroke symbols is an essential skill for a creative artist.

In the thesis from which this article originated, I integrated elements that I had not yet had the opportunity to integrate, elements that life had presented to me in a scattered way. I just had to put the *puzzle* (KUHN, 2013) together. We live in a time that demands from us a notion of global political contexts that helps us transcend existing dichotomies and polarities. Transcend with creativity, critical thinking and avoiding passions that are blinding. At the same time, the research artist is expected to have a constant re-passion for what she/he does.

Studies in the arts require accurate methodological rigor. The division of study areas into specialties is as recent as it is destructive to the preservation and development of knowledge, cultures, and human legacy in terms of knowledge – especially and ironically, technical knowledge. When I deliver something, be it a poem, photograph, video, or dance, it was not an inspiration that came from beyond or the emergence of a sensitivity. It is always the delivery of a model, a specific materialization that was chosen in detriment of many others. Every detail was deliberately chosen. It may or may not please, and it doesn't matter, because the focus of my attention is only on the cohesion and coherence of this form, detached from me. Even when in the first person, she always refers to many “others”.

There is a specific training so that the artist learns to recognize the deliberate paths of this polishing, a training that works hard to remove art from the status of a practice that only those who “have talent” do. Art is woven in sweat, in muscle pain, in the fatigue of those who don't sleep until they deliver what they set out to deliver. Talent is a small part, a pebble compared to the enormous work of dedicating yourself to improving a technique, whatever it may be.

Creations can be born from inspiration, but they will not succeed if they are at the mercy of the “expressiveness” of a subject who does not revisit himself every moment, with each singular training session, with each nuance of a technique he has learned in the past, from a way not yet fully perceived, and just now perceived in a new way. And it's not just any revisiting: it's a revisiting of an artist, meticulous, obstinate, and never satisfied with himself. This is the exact ingredient that makes artists not care much about judgement. They are judgmental personalities, who deal with criticism all the time and with self-criticism always and first. Personalities that will continue to be annoying, but that will not remain silent in the face of the indefensible. They say what they say because they feel impelled to say it, and not just to say it, but to do it with precision. The methodological rigor of creating art is unique and, precisely for this reason, it needs to be taught.

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Notes

Note 1. *Terreiro* is a place where Umbanda, one of the Afro-Brazilian religions, is practiced. Many Brazilians, even when are not practitioners of this religion, have entered one for a quick visit just to get to know.

Note 2. This author elaborates the idea that human beings tend to reproduce their own patterns (it's what he calls "sameness"), inversely of what happens in nature, where things tend towards constant transformations.

Note 3. Available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXqN2MRBOo8>

Note 4. Available on <https://youtu.be/Jpz0mrCeVfs>

Note 5. Bung Bo is a kungfu form, from the Praying Mantis system: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o1OuZDo-s20>

Note 6. <https://youtu.be/Jpz0mrCeVfs>

Note 7. Brazilian Sign Language.

Note 8. *Chouks* and *tribhangs* are sets of Odissi dance techniques.

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