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A Transcreation of Poetic Operators between Brazil and Japan

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze some artistic experiences developed in Brazil, since the arrival of Japanese immigrants in 1908. The focus is the impact of the so-called transcreations, which is a concept invented by the Brazilian poet and semiotician Haroldo de Campos. More than a literal replication of Japanese Aesthetics, Campos's proposal of transcreation became a powerful tool to recreate Japanese Art through the lens of some Brazilian singularities. A few bridges among Campos and other artists, such as Sergei Eisenstein, are also developed to explore multiple possibilities to deal with performing arts, by combining aesthetic and political attitude. Some Nipo-Brazilian choreographers are mentioned to illustrate the discussions, such as Alice K., Angela Nagai and Thiago Abel.

Keywords: Transcreation, Japanese Immigration, Dance, Aesthetics, Haroldo de Campos

In Brazil, the activities of immigrants arriving in the early twentieth century sparked fascination with Japanese aesthetics. The first group left Japan and came to São Paulo, embarking at the Port of Santos, in June 1908. More Japanese immigrants were drawn to Brazil than any other country, except Manchuria, during the three decades after 1908. Most settled in the southern states of São Paulo and Paraná. (Masterson and Funada-Classen, 73).¹

During the long trip, which comprised 52 days, the journalist Rokurô Kôyama decided to create a Tupi-Guarani-Japanese dictionary, justifying his enterprise with a fantastic claim that Tupi and Japanese sprang from a common Polynesian source (Hosokawa, 299). Leaving aside the relevance of this linguistic adventure, Kôyama's dictionary expressed a desire for common roots and opened possibilities for imaginary bridges between these two distant cultures. In a certain way, Kôyama's dream offers a parable for this chapter's inquiry into the history of the encounters between Japanese and Brazilian cultures which emerged from the experience of a movement across continents, traversed by different cultures.²

This project reflected Japan's opening to the world, which intersected with Brazilian anthropophagical transculturalism conducted by Brazilian poets and became particularly meaningful to several artists. In fact, rituals of cannibalism have been an actual practice in Amerindian and Afro-Amerindian culture since the sixteenth century. However, in São Paulo, after the "Week of Modern Art" in 1922, anthropophagy was also embraced as an

artistic strategy for cultural adoption that characterized the eclectic appetites and *mestizo* ways of producing culture and arts in Brazil.³

At the same time, the transmission of Japanese culture in Brazil in the 1920s was concurrent with the worldwide communication of Sergei Eisenstein's conception of montage, which was inspired by the avant-garde director and theorist's recognition of an ideogrammatic logic in the Japanese traditional arts. Montage had a significant impact among Brazilian artists, especially in the performing arts. It represented a radical dislocation of perspectives by accepting dualities' co-existence (and conflicts) without exclusions. As Eisenstein explained:

Montage is conflict. As the basis of every art is conflict (an "imagist" transformation of the dialectical principle). The shot appears as the cell of montage. Therefore, it must be considered from the viewpoint of conflict. Conflict within the shot is potential montage, in the development of its intensity shattering the quadrilateral cage of the shot and exploding its conflict into montage impulses between the montage pieces. (Eisenstein, 38)

In this sense, the anthropophagical nature of Brazilian culture, including its specific relation to Japan, is analogous to Eisenstein's notion of montage as an approach for dealing with conflict by devouring cultures and differences without worries about *a priori* identities. The main argument of this article is that Eisensteinian montage, developed through his dialogue with Japanese culture, became a methodology and also a particular strategy to deal with different cultural perspectives in Brazil, combining aesthetical and political attitude.

Eisenstein's legacy was widely acknowledged among Brazilian artists, especially by the Brazilian poet, semiotician, and professor Haroldo de Campos (1929-2003). Campos was certainly the greatest admirer of Eisensteinian montage, especially because he was enchanted by the fact that the ideogrammatic logic of montage is conceived as a principle and a kind of semiotic operator, devoid of exoticism or voyeurism, which at Eisenstein's time usually accompanied interest in Japanese exotic objects like kimonos or folding fans. Campos was particularly impressed by Eisenstein's essay "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram," which he included in his collection of essays *Ideograma, Lógica, Poesia e Linguagem* (*Ideogram, Logic, Poetry, and Language*, 1977). In this book, Campos integrated Eisenstein's method with the aesthetic of a powerful network of other prominent authors like Ernest Fenollosa, Roland Barthes, and James Joyce to introduce the notion of *transcreation*. This proposal became especially powerful as a key to understanding the plurality of encounters between Japanese and Brazilian aesthetics in the field of dance.

Dance and its Transcreation Procedures

Since the early beginnings of mass migration, several small Japanese communities in Brazil tried to preserve traditional rituals such as ikebana, calligraphy (*shodō*), tea and Buddhist ceremonies. In the performing arts, amateurs presented dances and fragments of theater pieces to the members of the Japanese colony, using every day meeting spaces such as classrooms for Japanese language lessons and barns for community get-togethers.⁴ On some specific occasions, such as New Year's celebrations, these presentations were open to the general public. The interest of Brazilian professional artists in Japanese culture started later and mainly focused on Japanese traditional theater (noh, kabuki, bunraku, and kyōgen). After the 1990s, when the butoh dancer Kazuo Ohno came to São Paulo for the first time, some Brazilian artists also discovered the subversive images of butoh dance. The actress and dancer Alice Kiyomi Yogi (known as Alice K.) is a good example.

In the second half of the 1990s, after having spent a year studying noh theater and literature in Japan at the *Musashino Women's College of Tokyo*, Alice K. decided to reinterpret/adapt Zeami's 14th-century play "Hagoromo." At that time, she read Campos' book *Metalinguagem e outras Metas (Metalanguage and Other Goals, 1992)*.⁵ Campos explained that given its cultural alterity, a poem can't be translated into a foreign language word for word, but needs to be "transcreated" in a way that accounts for the singularity of each new host language. Transcreation was expected to preserve the poetic laconism of the very aesthetic operation underlying the original in the foreign translation rather than transposing each individual signifier from one language into another. Campos' notion of "laconism" was an aspect of Eisenstein's aesthetic that emerged from his analysis of Japanese arts, especially from his study of Japanese poetry.

Eisenstein was fascinated that "Japan possesses: the *haikai* (appearing at the beginning of the thirteenth century and known today as 'haiku') and the even earlier *tanka* (mythologically assumed to have been created along with heaven and earth). Both seemed like hieroglyphs transposed into phrases." (Eisenstein, 70) According to him, these poetic genres translated images into words, becoming ideograms: "As the ideogram provides a means for the laconic imprinting of an abstract concept, the same method, when transposed into literary exposition, gives rise to an identical laconism of pointed imagery." (Eisenstein, 31)

For Eisenstein, the transformation of image into words and of words into image was a method that could be merely abstract and conceptual or lavishly poetic, depending on the

material to which it was applied. Having a cinematic application of this Japanese method in mind, he wrote: “The concept is a bare formula; its adornment (an expansion by additional material) transforms the formula into an image.” (Eisenstein, 43). The analysis of Japanese poetry contributed to Eisenstein’s search for a formula to translate between verbal and cinematic language.

Applying Eisenstein’s method of laconism to the questions of translating poetry, Campos focused on the very materiality of poetic articulation, such as prosody, rhythm, and phonics as a basic formula for “transcreation” of poetic operations from an original to different languages: “My effort is to attain, in Portuguese, according to guidelines and criteria informed by my long and diversified practice as a poetry translator and also suggested by the nature of the original, a reconfiguration $\frac{3}{4}$ in terms of transcreation $\frac{3}{4}$ of the phono-semantic and syntactic-prosodical articulations of the source text” (Campos, 11).⁶

These ideas inspired Alice K. and came to inspire her creative process. In the 1980s, she participated in the first theatrical group, Ponkã, organized by Japanese descendants in São Paulo. The Brazilian group’s name Ponkã was a reference to a citrus hybrid of mandarin and pomelo, alluding to the transcultural profile of the group, which included Paulo Yutaka and Celso Saiki, among other artists, who were half Brazilian and half Japanese. *Pássaro do Poente* (*Bird of Sunset*, 1987) was one of the most famous performances of this group, which received several prizes and captured the attention of the Nikkei community (descendants of Japanese families).

“Hagoromo” (Celestial Feather Robe), written and performed by Motokiyo Zeami (1363-1443), was the first piece completely reconceived by Alice K., based on the dramaturgical version translated by Darci Kusano and transcreated by Haroldo de Campos. What appeared on stage was no longer the specific *kata* (Noh-style patterns of movement), but a singular understanding of a spacetime interval presented in the gestures and in the organization of scenic elements that created a minimalistic environment inspired by the traditional Noh stage.

Campos started his research on Japanese aesthetics after reading Ernest Fenollosa’s *Certain Noble Plays of Japan* (1916), edited by Ezra Pound. He concluded that Noh theater was like a big ideogram interconnecting music, dance, architecture, costume, and plots - a clear example of what Eisenstein recognized as an ideogrammatic montage. But Campos also pointed out a similarity between the main character’s “celestial feather robe” and Helio Oiticica’s *parangolés* because both were more than simply costumes but articulated the movements of the dancing bodies after an ideogrammatic logic.

The Brazilian visual artist and performer Oiticica (1937-1980) created *parangolé* to subvert fixed notions of the body, art objects, and history. The term *parangolé* was related to the language of “vagabonds” - as singers and musicians who lived and created inside *favelas* (shantytowns). Oiticica’s *parangolé* was a colorful cape made out of different materials such as plastics, metal, cardboard, fabric, leather, or whatever one’s memory and imagination desires. They were not exactly a cover or a costume but a symbolic (and cognitive) ignition

to movement like the celestial feather robe, a complex ideogrammatic composition of textures, accessories, gestures, masks, and movements. As a free-flowing wearable sculpture, *parangolé* allowed the dancers to express what might exceed discursive boundaries.⁷

In 2005, after “Hagoromo,” Alice K. has presented *Qioquem?! (kyōgen transcreated pieces)*⁸, based on her research of Japanese and Brazilian comical expressions, jokes, and gestures. At the same time, she became interested in the *butoh* technique proposed by the choreographer Anzu Furukawa (1952-2001).

Furukawa worked in Berlin for many years and was very interested in a sense of humor conveyed by different movements - not only of human bodies but also of animals. Inspired by Furukawa’s animal pieces (*Anzuology*), in 2013, Alice K. transcreated her performances in three small homage solos *Atti Kotti* (Here and There): “The Crocodile Time,” “The Insect,” and “The Bird.” It was not a mimetic approach. Alice was not interested in reproducing Furukawa’s choreographies but in exploring the singularities of Japanese spacetime aesthetics known as *ma*.

The notion of *ma* was introduced to Western audience in 1978, when the architect Arata Isozaki curated the exhibition “Ma, espace-temps au Japon” at the *Musée des Arts Décoratifs* in Paris⁹. Looking for a possibility of dealing with Japanese culture beyond Orientalist stereotypes, he decided to create a *ma* experience via pause, interval, or in-between spacetime conveyed through the perceptions of the Japanese daily life, including architecture, art, nature, body, and performance. As was previously the case in “Hagoromo,” *ma* or the spacetime singularity became a poetic operator for Alice K.’s transcreation of Furukawa’s solos.

What seems relevant in her works is the fact that she decided not to present typical elements of the Japanese theatre, such as kimonos or folding fans, or even patterns of movement (*noh* theatre *kata* or *butoh* stereotyped aesthetic). Rather, she was interested in using the reference to Japanese performing arts as an operator to transcreate her own experiences. In this sense, *ma* became a powerful starting point. In other words, it was by changing her conception of spacetime into a poetic operator, that she started working with

the traditional Japanese theaters (especially noh and kyôgen) as a Nipo-Brazilian actress and theatre director. In this sense, she was in tune with Eisenstein and Campos, looking for a particular creation logic.

Nipo-Brazilian Dance's and African Remix

At the end of the 1990s, the choreographer Angela Nagai, who had studied noh at the International Noh Institute of Kyoto with Rebecca Teele Ogamo and Michishige Udaka (and now with his son Norishige Udaka), proposed a different approach to the transcreations of noh in Brazil: a bridge between the classical Japanese theatre and Umbanda - an African diasporic religion developed in Brazil during the 19th century. Nagai decided to investigate similarities between the embodiment of characters in the Afro-Brazilian rituals/myths and the embodiment of ghosts in the noh pieces when the leading actor of the plot (*shite*) reveals his ghost identity to the audience. The *shite* character defines the special nature of the noh drama, and it may be a variety of divine beings, including a ghost, a demon, a vengeful spirit or an imaginary creature. According to Komparu, “this character is given life and breath by depiction of the complexities of life and death”. (Komparu, 45)

The Umbanda rituals also deal with spirits and transcendental entities. The spirits in Umbanda are transcreations of *orixás* (from *Yoruba* mythology). Rituals of possession opens the communication with spirits, looking for revelation or healing. The cultural context is very different from noh theater, however, Nagai tried to create a connection through the dancing body, looking for similarities in the act of possession, and embodied rites.¹⁰

In 2020, the dancer Thiago Abel tried a similar strategy used by Nagai to reinvent the butoh specters working with Umbanda rituals. Umbanda originates in Brazil, and not in Africa, therefore the spiritual entities are Brazilian and not only the African *orixás*, as Nagai already observed. Some examples are *preto velho* (old black men) and *caboclo* (a person of mixed Indigenous Brazilian and white European ancestors).

Abel didn't know about Nagai's research. Still, he was also thinking about Brazilian ghosts and characters of folk culture and religion, looking for his own *butoh-fu*, which was a notational butoh proposed by the creator of the butoh dance Tatsumi Hijikata, and his dancers.

Besides the embodiment of spirits, the main focus of Nagai and Abel was a particular idea of spacetime: the *encruzilhadas* (intersections). Instead of the *ma* interval, the starting point of these dancers' research was the crossing of paths, symbols, and specters. During the Afro-Brazilian rituals, the offerings (food, sacrificed animals, and candles) are placed at

the *encruzilhada*, which is also a symbolical place for the intersection between African and Brazilian, Western and non-Western cultures.

Abel was particularly interested in understanding the changes of bodily state through the embodiment of the Other in the corporeal *encruzilhadas*. He was inspired by the Japanese choreographer Hijikata, who wrote about his dead sister and many other lives he felt inside his own body: “I keep an older sister living in my body. When I am absorbed in creating a dance piece, she plucks the darkness from my body and eats more than it needs. When she stands up inside my body, I can’t help but sit down. For me, the fall is for her to fall. But there’s more to our relationship than that.” (Hijikata apud Baird, 112)

Indeed, butoh ghosts are unlike the Noh ones who come back for revenge or to remind us of another person’s life. In butoh, the embodied ghosts can be both someone who lived in the past (Hijikata’s sister), or specters of such phenomena as slavery, diseases, and all sorts of unknown crises.

It would appear there is a political trace beyond the traditional mythologies.¹¹ Therefore, it is revealing that Nagai and Abel were less interested in the patterns of movement than in the exchanges among haunted characters as the possible operators/generators of their creative process. They asked themselves how specters of the past can trigger new dancing bodies and new possibilities of transcreating artistic experiences outside the scope of *a priori* aesthetic models.

Abel’s approach resisted a long European and North American choreography tradition in Brazil. From the late 1990s to the early 2000s, many artists started looking to their roots to develop their approaches and ways of perception. Cross-fertilization of noh and butoh with African-Brazilian rituals transformed these art forms in a way that distinguished them from their European and North American receptions by opening new possibilities of political action that are not unlike those implicit in Eisensteinian aesthetics, from which the notion of transcreation emerged. This political action can be understood as a political resistance or an anti-colonial strategy to deal with singular histories and questions.

As Prasenjit Duara¹² pointed out, it is time to replace the linear history of nations with circulatory histories. Historical narratives can be instruments of domination, and in Brazil, they actually became a powerful colonial strategy in the academic field, as well as in artistic experiences. When dancers like Abel and Nagai deal with foreign theatrical languages such as noh theater and butoh, without trying to replicate the models but using these languages to deal with Brazilian singularities, this can be understood as a way to create a laboratory of circulatory histories, among Japan, Africa, Brazil, and also Russia, when we

think about the power of Eisenstein's legacy related to the idea of ideogrammatic montage. Therefore, it is not the content of particular histories but the historical operation of bringing back invisible narratives by expanding the view for events and processes that not only moves forward in time, but also returns as "a spiral developing other meanings from the same events and in other ways". (Duara, 58)

In these experiences, Umbanda, which was a syncretic religious practice between Africa and Brazil since the beginning, returns as a powerful apparatus to deal with the singular ghosts and specters that interested Abel and Nagai.¹³

***O Olho do Tamanduá* and the Transcreation of Butoh**

The dance company Tamanduá, established in 1995 by the choreographer Takao Kusuno (1945-2001) and his wife Felicia Megumi Ogawa (1945-1997) in São Paulo, exemplifies another political dimension of transcreation. Kusuno was always interested in the genesis of the dance movement in Brazil. He invited Siridivê Xavante (a member of the Xavante indigenous tribe) to join the performance *O Olho do Tamanduá* (*The Eye of Tamanduá*) as a dancer, so this first piece for the *Tamanduá* company would bring together references to Japanese and indigenous aesthetics.

However, Kusuno was not interested in including indigenous elements of Xavante or Japanese culture in his choreography. Through his dancing work, he asks how different bodies from different cultural contexts could come together with their own contradictions and different perspectives of life. This seems very much in tune with Eisenstein's and Campos's strategies of composition and transcreation.

Eisenstein underlined the implicit socio-political dimensions of his ideogrammatic aesthetics while editing the film *Old and New*. He described it thusly:

In distinction from orthodox montage according to particular dominants, *Old and New* was edited differently. In place of an "aristocracy" of individualistic dominance, we brought a method of "democratic" equality of rights for all provocations, or stimuli, regarding them as a complex. For example: the sex appeal of a beautiful American heroine-star is attended by many stimuli: of texture --from the material of her gown; of light -- from the balanced and emphatic lighting of her figure; of racial-national (positive for an American audience: "a native American type," or negative: "colonizer-oppressor" for a Negro or Chinese audience); of social-class, etc. (all brought together in an iron-bound unity of its reflex-physiological essence). In a word, the central

stimulus is attended always by a whole complex of secondary stimuli.
(Eisenstein, 66)

This social aspect of ideogrammatic expressivity was exactly what Kusuno aimed for in his choreography *O Olho do Tamanduá* (Tamanduá's Eye) which sought to articulate multiple images as an ideogrammatic montage. As Eisenstein pointed out, montage became a means of achieving an organic embodiment of a single ideological conception, embracing all the work's elements, parts, and details. And in conformity with this point of view, unity and diversity are both considered as interrelated principles by avoiding dualism (for example, East and West) and mechanical parallelism between the realms of sound and sight. There is a multiplicity of differences working together. In Eisensteinian montage, the final artistic unity can be recognized in the resolution of the audio-visual synthesis problems, which in Kusuno's work become kinesio-visual synthesis problems. Indeed, Eisenstein's and Kusuno's paths crossed in their shared points of reference to Japanese theater (kabuki and noh), movement principles, and spacetime operators (*ma* and ideogram).

Both Kusuno and Eisenstein conceived the sphere as a potential space for bodily movement that orients from within in accordance with the coordinated axes. Commenting on the drafts for the notation of the vertical and horizontal locomotion within a sphere, Eisenstein discovered that the core of his technique relies on the rotation axis and this enables the movement of the actor's limbs. He developed this proposal when he studied biomechanics by working with the theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold. The sphere as an epistemic model and a root of bodily movement provided Eisenstein with an *image of movement*, capable of metamorphosis, rotation and vertiginous displacement of any linear perspective.

When Kusuno decided to include Siridiwê Xavante side by side with other dancers, he constructed an ideogrammatic system reminiscent of a combination of singular movements blurred in dancing. As in Eisenstein's proposal, these movements blossom forth immeasurably and the emotion is directed towards the audience.

Eisenstein recalls the writer Yone Noguchi, who explained, "it is the readers who make the haiku's imperfection a perfection of art." (Eisenstein, 32) This was also Kusuno's strategy to affect his audience. It was not about an explicit political action, claiming a political subject, but an action more related to the possibilities of involving people, by exposing the singularities of different movements and specific forms of lives.

Shifting Artistic Imagination

Brazilian academic research on Japan started in the 1940s and 50s, following in the steps of the European and North American methodologies, which focused on the history of traditional Japan. However, the new paths proposed by Campos about transcultural and transcreation encounters did not come from these fields of research, but from the realm of artistic imagination. As a professor at the Communication and Semiotics Program of the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo, Campos and his colleagues, especially Decio Pignatari, have invited artists and scholars to strengthen this perspective to deal with a plurality of cultures.

A good example is the composer Hans Joachim Koellreutter (1915-2005), who became a great influence among Brazilian artists, especially musicians. Besides the research conducted by Campos and Eisenstein, Koellreutter also brought to the discussion the work of the composer and performer John Cage, who had long challenged clear-cut binaries of East and West in his understanding of aesthetics and creative process. The recognition of chance as an operator of creation has moved both John Cage and Koellreutter, when they became interested in Asian aesthetics. Koellreutter had a long history of engagement with Eastern cultures. In 1965, he received the task of organizing its international programming sector from the Cultural Institute of the German Federal Republic, starting with India, where he lived until 1969, and maintained his pedagogical activity at the New Delhi School of Music.

In 1970, he moved to Japan, at the service of the Goethe Institute and as director of the Cultural Institute in Tokyo, where he began to develop musical activities. During this period, he established an intense dialogue with artists and intellectuals, including Satoshi Tanaka, a professor of German at Meisei University in Tokyo, who conducted Germanic language and culture studies at Keio University. From 1974 to 1976, they developed an epistolary dialogue, and this correspondence written by both in German was published in Japan in 1983 and a few months later translated and printed in Brazil.¹⁴

This book became a remarkable reference among Brazilian artists from different fields of research, and not only musical composition. Koellreutter was interested in subverting the supremacy of individualism. The sounds created by “exotic” Eastern instruments became a reference for him, as well as the completely different rules of composition; however, he was also intrigued by the philosophical aspect of Eastern aesthetics. For Eastern philosophy and not only artists, the decentralization of individuals seemed to be desirable, as the collective was always more important. Therefore, in the artistic

field, it was not about authorship, but the most relevant aspect seemed to be the creation process and its impact on the community. Both Cage and Koellreutter were moved by this idea of anonymous art to light up life, and in many senses, this idea was more related to Buddhism than any aspect of the art system or the art market. This means the work of art (a choreography, a theatrical piece, a music composition or a painting) was less meaningful than the process of creation. The focus was the practical training as cultivation, which means: “personal cultivation in the East takes on the meaning of a practical project aiming at the enhancement of the personality and the training of the spirit by mean of the body” Yuasa (1987: 85)

Cage came to Brazil in 1960 and in 1985 for the São Paulo Biennale. He explained that his first spark of inspiration was a lecture by Nancy Wilson Ross in 1936 about “Dada and Zen Buddhism” at the Cornish School in Seattle, expressing the importance of irrational rather than logical understandings. From 1952 onwards, Cage was very inspired by the meetings with Daisetz T. Suzuki. At that time, he was having emotional problems questioning the function of art in society, and the study of Zen Buddhism helped him to find different possibilities of creation. Before meeting Suzuki, he was already interested in Zen, due to the readings of Ananda Coomaraswamy’ s book *The Transformation of Nature in Art* (1934). However, Suzuki, definitively assumed that the task of art was to wake people up or, in his own words, “waking up to the very life we’re living.” (Cage apud Westgeet, 56)

Koellreutter was also very inspired by this alliance between art and life, looking for the non-disciplinary power of languages outside the boundaries imposed by the market of art. As in Cage’ s experiences, the cross fertilizations between music, performance, and movement seemed to be a starting point to defy the boundaries among languages and cultures.

Concluding Remarks

This aspect of the non-disciplinary power of artistic languages and the alliance between art and life is very close to the conception of dance proposed by the artists I analyzed in this article. All of them are interested in exploring the possibilities of creating a form of life, and not only dancing results as the production of choreographies.

Indeed, as it was mentioned before, this is a trace of Japanese art (i.e., the focus on the process and not in the final results), that can be recognized in several contemporary artistic experiences, both in the East and in the West. Yasuo Yuasa (1987) explained that Japanese theory of artistry is not a simple theoretical investigation of the arts, but it is a theory

formulated only in the light of the practice of artistic creation. Therefore, the very modes of thinking about artistry arose through the influence of Buddhist cultivation theory. This is also present in indigenous cultures, as Kusuno realized when he spent time with Xavante's community. In this sense, it is interesting to observe that the main challenge proposed by the Nipo-Brazilian choreographers is not about the better way of dealing with the hybridization of East and West but how to create different possibilities of living together. Therefore, the main focus is the encounter and the cross-fertilization among the singular experiences.

The histories triggered by the choreographic experiences have engaged with the embodied conceptions of transcreation (Campos), montage (Eisenstein), and collective cross fertilization (Cage and Koellreutter). There is an epistemological and political movement, and it becomes clear that none of them were interested in the circulation of typical elements of each culture (Brazilian, Japanese or Russian), neither in terms of folk histories nor stereotypes. Through their dances, they are galvanizing embodied histories of their own lives.

This reminds us, once again, of the Eisensteinian subversive montage of East and West, which generates a non-dichotomic path of life and art, outside transnational identities that exposes vulnerabilities and conflicts.

The singularities of dancing bodies and their flux of subjectivities, along with circulatory histories, rather than the "traditional notion" of linear history, gave birth to new paths of encounters. At the same time, the crossing zones of politics and aesthetics turn to be fruitful territorialities to affirm the power of being in the edge of crisis, converting vulnerability in states of creation.

Notes

¹ There are also a relevant number of Japanese immigrants in Mato Grosso do Sul and Pará, respectively in the middle of the country and North region. According to the Japanese Embassy in Brazil, the total number is around 1,5 million.

² Tupi-guarani is one of the 274 indigenous languages spoken in Brazil, according to the 2020 Census provided by the Brazilian Federal Government. About the imaginary dictionary written by Kôyama see Hosokawa Shuhei “Speaking the language of the antipode: Japanese Brazilian fantasy on the origin of language” in Greiner, C. and Ricardo Muniz Fernandes *Tokyogaqui, an imaginary Japan* (orgs). São Paulo: Sesc, 2008, pp 299-313.

³ The Manifesto Antropofágico written by Oswald de Andrade was published in 1928 and the main statement refers to the Brazilian’s experience of “cannibalizing” a plurality of cultures. One of the famous claims of this manifesto was “Tupi or not Tupi, that is the question” an example of cannibalizing Shakespeare and celebrating the Tupi language and culture. An English translation is “Cannibalist Manifesto”

Author(s): Oswald de Andrade and Leslie Bary. Source: *Latin American Literary Review*, Vol. 19, No. 38 (Jul. - Dec., 1991), pp. 38-47.

⁴ This information about the early theatrical activities of the Japanese Immigrants in Brazil, especially in São Paulo, was collected by me during the 1980s through a series of interviews conducted at the Bunkyo School, situated at Liberdade neighborhood, and other spaces (such as the Osaka Naniwa Kai Association at Vila Mariana neighborhood). During this period, I had practical lessons of *shimai* (noh theater solo dances) with professor Noburo Yoshida, representative of Kanze School.

⁵ There are many books and articles about the concept of transcreation proposed by Haroldo de Campos. Good examples are the book edited by Bernard McGuirk and Else R.P.Vieira, *Haroldo de Campos in Conversation*. London: Zoilus Press, 2009. And the article written by Odile Cisneros, “From Isomorphism to Cannibalism: The Evolution of Haroldo de Campos’s Translation Concepts,” in *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie et Redaction* (January 2012). These books have explained Campos point of view to discuss translation, by dealing with the singularities of languages and the embodied perceptions of sounds and visualities, like Ezra Pound and Mallarmé did before in their own works. Campos was part of the Brazilian concrete poets who launched a program of literary translation based on the work of Ezra Pound, from whom they derived the title of their first little magazine, *Noigandres* and the name of their group. According to Cisneros, this translation program was based on different examples of a similar poetics, from the medieval troubadours to the avant-gardes of the interwar period. Their practice became a “laboratory” for writing and theoretical reflections on translation.

⁶ “Meu empenho está em alcançar em português, segundo linhas e critérios aconselhados por minha longa e variada prática de tradutor de poesia e sugeridos também pela natureza do original, uma reconfiguração – em termos de “transcrição” – das articulações fonossemânticas e sintático-prosódicas do texto de partida.”

⁷ Images of parangolés can be seen at the website of the Museum of Modern Art in Rio de Janeiro: <https://mam.rio/obras-de-arte/parangoles-1964-1979/> access at January, 26th 2024.

⁸ Kyôgen is a comic form of traditional Japanese theater that is presented as an intermission between the noh theater pieces.

⁹ Isozaki developed a whole discussion about the historical importance of this exhibition in his book *Japanness in Architecture*. MIT Press, 2003. In Brazil, Michiko Okano has also written a book on Ma (*Ma, Entre Espaço da Arte e da Comunicação no Japão*, 2012), inspiring many Brazilian artists.

¹⁰ In English language, a good book that explains with more details the Umbanda and Candomblé rituals is Alonso, Miguel *The Development of Yoruba Candomblé Communities in Salvador, Bahia, 1835-1986*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Alonso analyzes the rituals but also presents the historical and political evolution of the communities in Salvador, one of the main centers of these rituals in Brazil.

¹¹ While researching at Nichibunken with professor Manami Yasui (from December 2023 to March 2024), I started thinking that maybe Hijikata’s spectres were yôkai and not yûrei (ghosts), as the category of yôkai seems to be more open to include different types of entities and unknown specters.

¹² Duara, Prasenjit. *The Crisis of Global Modernity, Asian traditions and a Sustainable Future*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

¹³ The academic thesis written by Nagai and Abel are available at internet. First one at <https://repositorio.unicamp.br/acervo/detalhe/866263>, and second https://bdtd.ibict.br/vufind/Record/PUC_SP1_38aaefbb8b2e6a1f93000035ba770344 (access September 11th, 2024)

¹⁴ Koellreutter, H. J. *À procura de um mundo sem vis-à-vis – reflexões estéticas em torno das artes oriental e ocidental*, translated by Saloméa Gandelman. São Paulo: Novas Metas, 1983.

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