

## APPROACHES BETWEEN THE RODA DE CAPOEIRA AND THE DITHYRAMBIC CHORUS IN THE DIONYSIAN RITUALS OF ANCIENT GREECE

### APROXIMAÇÕES ENTRE A RODA DE CAPOEIRA E O CORO DITIRÂMBICO NOS RITUAIS DIONISIÁCOS DA GRÉCIA ANTIGA

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#### RESUMO

Um dos fenômenos brasileiros que reserva mais possibilidades de interpretação é, sem dúvida, a arte performática da capoeira. Isso por ela adquirir um caráter polissêmico que possui características da dança, da luta, do jogo, do ritual e do espetáculo. Nossa pesquisa, fundamentada no método estético filosófico, buscou identificar sentidos semelhantes entre os coros ditirâmbicos do culto a Dioniso e o fenômeno da roda de capoeira. Buscamos referência, em especial, na análise de Nietzsche (1844 – 1900), que nos mostra como os rituais dionisiacos representavam, para o povo grego, mais do que mera distração ou dogma religioso, configurando-se como um elemento central na relação entre o homem e a natureza, o homem e o divino, o homem e seu semelhante. Nossas interpretações nos levaram a identificar principalmente três congruências, a saber: uma orientação estética circular, um sentido do *ecstasis* da cena e, como ponto chave, a quebra do princípio de individuação. Por essas possibilidades de interpretações cruzadas, identificamos que, por mais que a capoeira tenha sofrido transformações acerca do seu potencial estético, ela ainda mantém elementos que apresentam características próximas à potência dionisiaca.

**Palavras-chave:** Roda de capoeira. Coro Ditirâmbico. Nietzsche.

#### ABSTRACT

One of the Brazilian phenomena that presents the most possibilities of interpretation is, without a doubt, the performance art of capoeira. This is because it has a polysemic character that carries marks of dance, of fight, of game, of ritual and spectacle. Our research, based on the philosophical aesthetics perspective, sought to identify similar meanings between the dithyrambic chorus of the Dionysian cults and the practice of the roda de capoeira. We focus our analysis on the relationship between the meanings that may be manifest in the phenomenon of the roda de capoeira and how they resemble certain Dionysian cults. We seek to refer in particular to Nietzsche's analysis, which shows us how the Dionysian rituals represented, for the Greek people, more than mere distraction or religious dogma, becoming a central element in the relationship between man and nature, man and the divine, man and his fellow men. Our interpretations led us to identify mainly three congruences, namely: the breaking of the principle of individuation, a circular aesthetic orientation and a sense of ecstasy. From these possibilities of cross-interpretation we have identified that, although capoeira has suffered consequences on its aesthetic potential, it still maintains elements of its genesis, which presents a Dionysian power.

**Keywords:** Roda de capoeira; Dithyrambic Chorus; Nietzsche.

#### Introduction

One of the Brazilian corporal phenomena that presents the most possibilities of interpretation is, undoubtedly, the roda de capoeira (as a close translation, the capoeira circle). And that is because it is marked by a history based on game, ritual, dance, and fight. Such polymorphic features allow it to adapt to different contexts. However, as much as such changes might entail transformations of some attributes, the roda de capoeira is able, as a cultural manifestation, to establish resistance movements amid demands for “spectacularisation”.

In this text, we will use the image of diaspora, a concept that leads us to an idea of dispersion and is used most often to describe the separation of a people. In this dispersion, not only community cohesion is lost, but values, senses, representations and meanings are also dissolved. However, we will take the intellectual liberty of focusing on the idea of dispersion, which will be examined here not through consequences of ethnic mobility, but from the loss of original meanings. More specifically, we intend to reflect upon the reduction of the

Dionysian power in the phenomenon of the *roda de capoeira*. We do not consider that the traditional *roda de capoeira* possessed a clear Dionysian power that has been lost over time or throughout this diaspora. Subtly different from that, our argument proposes that modernity has brought with it strongly Apollonian values, which may have dimmed the Dionysian potential of a spontaneous practice of popular origin such as *capoeira*.

Nietzsche<sup>1</sup> warns that the change of technical-energetic devices in phenomena creates a chain of changing meanings that can be understood together, as a genealogy. In the case of some components that make up the *roda de capoeira*, the exacerbation of form, of plasticity and of technical gestures refers to some attributes related to the Greek deity Apollo, god of beautiful appearance, measures, self-restraint and limits. Thus, the overlapping of these characteristics can lead to a weakening of spontaneity or anomie present in popular expression. Apollo's overbright light seems to have brought all the branches of this tree to the same side. This light is the spectacularisation of gestures, to which the trunks of sportification, of individuality to the detriment of the collective, of gratuitous virtuosity, of aggressiveness and of an inconsequent hybridity are oriented. By tipping more to that side, where the gestures are ruled by a plastic virtuosity, the movement of the body, intrinsic element to the world of culture, is therefore changed.<sup>2</sup>

When we focus our analysis on the approximation between the elements present in the dithyrambic chorus that may be manifest in the phenomenon of the *roda de capoeira*, we follow a path very similar to that of other analyses, such as those of Nietzsche,<sup>3,4</sup> which show us how Dionysian rituals represented more than mere distraction or religious dogma to the Greek people, playing a central role in the relationship between man and nature, man and the divine, man and his peers. Evidently, we are making a comparison between two phenomena that are from very different times, one originating in classical culture, another appearing in the modern context. However, understanding Apollonian and Dionysian forces as generic and polysemic parameters of aesthetic interpretation, we dare to stem from such alignments as an exercise of interpretation and expanded understanding of culture.

We propose, in this text, a reflection inspired by Philosophical Aesthetics, from whose concepts we feed in order to analyse the *roda de capoeira* in terms of its aesthetic components. The philosophical-aesthetic method focuses on the human capacity to create meaning and experience things. Surely, such meanings and experiences are more intense in intentionally expressive phenomena, such as artistic ones, yet we can assume that they are present in virtually all human activities.<sup>5</sup>

We bring this text on as a reflection on the *roda de capoeira* and on a certain dispersion of some of its aspects, i.e., the emptying of technical-energetic disposition that is close to Dionysian features or, more particularly, present in dithyrambic choruses.

## Methods

We subscribe methodologically to a proposal of philosophical-conceptual creation, more specifically, the contribution of Philosophical Aesthetics, as a path to the attainment of a philosophical construction with an inquisitive and critical stance. We have adopted such a methodology model because of its usefulness and efficiency in thinking about contemporary problems.

The creation of new meanings and the proposition of re-signification of concepts serve us to illuminate, under different perspectives, the debates in which some positions would tend to be crystallized. We use the concepts of philosophers to question problems that are no longer under their control. The philosophical-conceptual creation methodology should, therefore, be used to think about problems that were not the ones philosophers considered

when they created their philosophical systems and their concepts. Moreover, by having a constructive character, the philosophical conceptual methodology promotes re-conceptualisation, which allows us to propose ways of seeing the world, or a specific problem, and vitalise them in ways that fall beyond the conventional.<sup>5</sup>

In the specific context of Philosophical Aesthetics, enclosed here in the philosophical-conceptual methodology, the goal is to find linkages of intelligibility for the sensitive data. In other words, we produce interpretations about aesthetic expressions. It is through this path that crossing different manifestations such as the dithyrambic chorus and the roda de capoeira becomes an interesting task. When what captivates us is a shared feeling, such phenomena can reveal the intelligibility links that the proposed methodology seeks.

### *The Greece of Dionysus*

Among the great variety of gods of the Greek pantheon, one of the most polysemic deities is, undoubtedly, Dionysus. God of wine, of metamorphoses, of fertility and of festivities. Son of Semele and Zeus, gestated in his own father's thigh, he carries in himself the legacy of vital energy, of excess and self-indulgence. The festivities in his honour carry these traits as well, taking the role of strong expressions of the Greek people's passion for life. Excess was stimulated and drives were released at these festivities.

In the Greek cult, devotees of Dionysus, after a dizzying dance, close to total fatigue, believed to have an out-of-body experience through *ecstasis* (ecstasy). *Ecstasis* allowed the worshippers to receive Dionysus in their body, by a process called *enthusiasmós* (enthusiasm). It is in this magic moment of *enthusiasmós* that man overcomes himself, goes beyond his transient condition and his existential misery. He overcomes his own measures (*métro*n) and, thus, becomes a hero (*anér*). The *anér* partakes of immortality, which makes him a *hypocrités*, which is the one that responds in ecstasy and enthusiasm. Brandão<sup>6:132</sup> signals this process:

This overcoming of the *métro*n by the *hypocrités* is configured as *hybris*, an inordinacy, a 'desmsúre' (disproportion), a violence, done to himself and the immortal gods, which triggers the *némesis*, the punishment for the injustice practiced, the divine jealousy (...) one more step, and the claws of Moira, blind fate, shall close on him.

To know Dionysus is to understand a little bit about our energy provisions and. to find in transgression, in excess, in inordinacy, one of the expressions of our will to live or of our will to power. For Schopenhauer,<sup>7</sup> the meaning of life lies precisely in that will to live, that is, the primordial energy that drives the being towards its preservation. For Nietzsche,<sup>3,8</sup> this will is motivated by power, which directs it to a certain organization towards its preservation. In both these understandings, we note that will, as a vital impulse, is a Dionysian movement, i.e., connected to a celebration of life and of its energy. In a general sense, the doctrine of will and life built by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche receives the name of vitalism and it is a philosophy of the becoming, as is Heraclitean dialectic, which alludes to the role of Dionysus in mythological imagery.

Just as in Heraclitean philosophy, the Greek deities Apollo and Dionysus refer us to a dialectic of opposites. The disparities between light, heat, moisture and nutrients in their vegetative representatives are a first reference to this ambiguity and reveal its dark traits, necessarily present when a sense of totality is sought. The dark, obscure and avoided side of the solar, Apollonian doctrine is present in its totality and is a necessary component of that holism. Dionysus teaches us, through nature, about the ivy, which germinates in this side as

well, growing, possessing life and energy as much as the solar vine. Nietzsche's Zarathustra shows us that this is a necessary (and inescapable) combination, as we read in Nietzsche:<sup>9:29</sup>

But it is with human beings as it is with this tree. The more they aspire to the heights and the light, the more strongly their roots strive earthward, downward, into darkness, depths – into evil.

Zarathustra's metaphor is no less relevant to the argument here exposed. Man is compared to the tree, which is also a plant as the vine and the ivy. The plant world and the human world can be found in all of nature, in all of Dionysus. The Dionysian power does not admit bias, fraction. If *enthousiasmós* is to have a god inside one's body, it is also, by this totality, to have one's own nature. Body and nature are reinstated in life power, by the force of ambiguity, which is, also, powerful versatility. As we read in Otto,<sup>9</sup> the ivy and the vine, combined, offer a wide possibility of growth. Both are creeping plants as well as they, if possible, climb up towards the sky. Finally, we note that the Dionysian nature is, as observed initially, activated in multiple forms and directed to the whole, through ambiguity, agility and drive energy, typically bodily elements.

Still on the vine, or more specifically, about the process of extracting the wine of this plant, another reference to the body in the myth of Dionysus is possible. It is the grape-stomping, which extracts the juice through a violent maceration of the fruit, and, as Kerényi<sup>10</sup> points out, was symbolically alluded to the tearing of the body of Dionysus by the Titans when of his death, before his second birth. From the lacerated body of Dionysus the god is born again, stronger and more powerful than before, as well as, from the stomped grape, the divine beverage, capable of leading to *ecstasis*, will come. This is one more key element about the body from the imagery of the Dionysian religion.

Violence and tearing are not the end but a process, a transformation. This transformation does not mean purification or spiritual uplift, as we might assume based on Christian references. Transformation is from matter itself into another matter, that is, from body to body. Wine is the transmuted body of the grape, which the maceration did nothing but reveal. Life and death are the same thing, or, in other words, they are necessary passages of an infinite loop. This cyclical aspect of the Dionysian religion is radically opposed to a linearity that we could identify in the imaginary of a body that would perish, to the detriment of a soul that would give continuity to the individual. Once condemned, metamorphosis ensues. If gone in a cult, there is the possibility of resurfacing as a young buffalo. If torn apart, there is rebirth.

The presence of the bodily element is very intense in Dionysian expressions. The motion capabilities of Dionysus have no borders, obstacles or bounds. Perhaps, it is this kinetic nature that makes Dionysus a ubiquitous presence in the magical imagery of ancient Greece. The body and its potential are the fundamental instrument for the elevation of man to godhood in Dionysian worship practices. The experience of *ecstasis*, i.e., the possibility to elevate oneself to the divine plan by means of bodily sensations, is something reached by the association of wine, music and dance. Although our current habits might make us think about these festivities as something quite exotic, it is important to understand how they were representative of the capacity, through bodily experiences such as dance, to achieve a high level of sensations, producing a kind of collective communion.

The presence of this collective factor is fundamental in the Dionysian cults, and that is why music and dance cannot be expressed in an individualized way. The song takes place in the form of a chorus and the dancing in circular dynamics. The dithyrambic chorus, as Nietzsche<sup>3</sup> noted, more than a mere characteristic of the musicality of these festivities, should be considered as an identifying element of the aesthetics and the ethics of the Greek people.

That is to say that the role of the collective that Greeks sought to achieve through behaviour (*ethos*) was merged with their sensitivities.

The dithyrambic choruses, collective chants performed with great vigour and engagement by all worshippers, would later be replaced with the birth of Greek tragedy, the role of the soloist, discourse and the systematisation of actions. In the tragedy, heroic protagonism becomes the responsibility of a single man, the soloist, who is usually the very incarnation of the virtues sought by the political philosophy of the *polis*. In the Dionysian cult, a communion with the god was sought, because everyone, together, was uplifted and reinforced, and, for such, the instrument used was not of a personal virtue nature, but the power of the collective. What the soloist inaugurates is the *principium individuationis* (principle of individuation), a new aesthetic and, at the same time, static form of understanding the role of man in the social context. This static form would later be the foundation of Socratic rationalism, unfolding into platonic philosophy.<sup>3</sup> If truth was achieved through dance and contact with others, i.e., in the collective drive during the Dionysian cults, in rationalism, what Socrates proposes is the maieutic, an art of extracting the truth from within the individual. The Dionysian look is outward, why Socrates looks to the inside.

We do not want to propose a judgment that attributes to the Dionysian worldview a simplistic superiority to the methods of reason. The contributions of Socrates to philosophy and the human thought in general are significant. The development and the complexification of the Greek *polis* also point to other forms of seeing and thinking about life, in which the space reserved for mysticism and transcendence is less prominent when compared to the pragmatism of ideas produced by rational methods. However, if there was a great power present in the Dionysian cults, this power is also a human culture heritage. At times in which we seek to establish forms of dialogue between fields, apparently separated by mechanistic dichotomies such as reason and sensibility, a closer look at the god of wine – especially for the evoked relations of the body to music and dance in the rituals in his honour – can provide us with subsidies for new connections and convergence. A good starting point for us who study physical activities in the light of Philosophy may be to look for phenomena in Western culture that somehow resemble the characteristics of aesthetic manifestations such as those of Dionysian cults, so that we might connect this view of world to present-day reality and thus compose a philosophical reflection on the body, movement and the legacy of the Greek tradition for the Western thought. This is the interest that led us to find in Brazil a form of cultural expression that brings elements close to those that we signalled as characteristic of the Dionysian cult and that, even though we know that their origins are quite different, allows us to create a reflective analogy about the world vision produced by such practices in the Greek past and in present-day Brazil. This expression is the roda de capoeira.

### *The roda de capoeira as dialectic body art*

An admirer of ancient Greece and the pre-Socratic Greeks who showed an intense passion for life, Nietzsche built a conceptual panorama in which the Greek thought could be understood from a duality of forces. Such forces have behaviour that is sometimes contradictory and sometimes complementary and are represented by Apollo and Dionysus. Apollo, the god of plastic aesthetics, connected to the harmony of form, praises the right measures, the limit, the plan and the appearance; Dionysus, in turn, corresponds to the forces of creation and destruction, the immoderacy of music, drunkenness and vital drives.

Nietzsche, when alluding to the two deities, emphasizes a calm and youthful being, understood as the balance between the Apollonian and the Dionysian sides. In spite of representing opposite impulses, this youthful being must be understood as a depiction of Dionysian wisdom and drive by artistic means of Apollonian appearance.<sup>3</sup> Although

Nietzsche's exaltation, enthusiasm and admiration of classical Greece and the nature of its people in affirming life are irrefutable, we do not intend here to adopt Greece as a model to be followed nor do we propose a return to the Hellenic way of life. Were it so, we would be performing a simplistic reduction of Nietzsche's philosophy. However, reflecting upon the relation of Apollonian and Dionysian forces is a fruitful exercise for the purposes of this text. With these two energetic references, we bring forth a new perspective to the interpretation of the roda de capoeira. We then proceed to identify the presence of the Dionysian power in this Brazilian phenomenon.

Among the various rituals of ancient Greece, the Dionysian cults stand out. Nietzsche attributes to one of these cults, namely the dithyrambic chorus, a singular importance for the Greeks. For the philosopher, this chorus, source of the birth of tragedy, enhanced the energy of the crowd of followers, leading them to *ecstasis* and transforming them into a community of transmuted actors. The Greeks then no longer saw themselves as individuals, but as a collective body. In analysing the role of the body and its transformations in the Dionysian rituals, we noticed a certain proximity of some elements of the dithyrambic chorus to the roda de capoeira. In both cases, the body presents itself as a central element, which allows us to reflect on the energetic dynamics present in these two manifestations. In this sense, we will dwell on the possible relationships between the roda de capoeira and three elements present in the dithyrambic chorus, namely: circular aesthetic orientation, *ecstasis* and the disruption of the principle of individuation.

The desire for communion in the dithyrambic chorus manifests itself in the festive body, soaked with wine and dance. The cult involved the crowd of celebrants dancing in circular orientation, which raised the energy level and the sense of collectivity. We can observe a similar arrangement in the roda de capoeira. Its circular format allows for all participants to be welcomed and for the energy, expressed through music, to be emitted, amplified and felt by everyone. In the centre of the circle, where the capoeira players (the two people that fight/dance/play in the middle of the roda) are, there is a focus of attention and the most intense point of energy. Receiving stimuli from the singing, the hand clapping, the chorus and the instruments, players feed off all this energy and reciprocate it with the beauty of their body movements. The movements dynamics in the game of capoeira is not comprised of a rigid opposition. The dodge is the great defence basis against blows. This dodge behaviour is one of the aesthetic marks of capoeira, one that finds in circular movements the possibilities to escape attacks, to occupy empty spaces, to explore a plastic and acrobatic movement. The body of the capoeira player spins around different axes, finding support on the feet, hands and head. The game progresses in an incessant continuum of movements that tend both to contraction and to expansion, and which translate an internal and external relation of the capoeira player as creator and creation.<sup>11</sup> The circular shape of the roda itself is seen as a representation of the world for the capoeira players, a dynamic world that never ceases to spin. Given this circular characteristic of the players' movements, we infer that the nature of this game is cyclical.

The celebrations in honour of the god of wine were composed by dizzying dance through which the celebrants believed to leave their bodies in a trance, in an ecstasy that produced *enthousiasmós*. Indeed, from Nietzsche's analysis<sup>3</sup> on the birth of Greek tragedy, enthusiasm, in the aesthetic sense, started to be incorporated as a possibility of interpretation of experience. In this sense, we can take hold of this idea to announce the second aesthetic evidence, that is, the potentiality of capoeira to provide a state of *ecstasis*. This state is related to various elements of the roda, so that the combination of energy proposed by the music, the clapping, the rites, the singing, the uninterrupted movement and even the inherent vertigo caused by the incessant spiralled movements, leads to the uplifting of the capoeira players. As

in a Dionysian cult, we can perhaps infer that the capoeira itself is also uplifted and enthusiastic at the time of the roda. Towards *ecstasis*, reason leaves room for fruition, energies rise, and the body manifests itself as a source of creation. Players no longer cling to standardized movements, they intuit and throw their bodies in new directions, movements are performed spontaneously, on the spot.

The last aesthetic evidence that places the roda de capoeira alongside the study on the birth of tragedy, as proposed by Nietzsche,<sup>3</sup> is the collapse of the principle of individuation. Nietzsche called principle of individuation the rupture from the collective energy of the dithyrambic choruses, which were being replaced by soloists and unique characters in the context of Greek tragedies. This substitution corresponds to the process of extreme rationalisation that originates from the Socratic philosophy and expands, in particular, due to the interests of the *polis*. The disruption of the principle of individuation, on the other hand, would allow the celebrant to reach a state of maximum communion, dissolving the individuals into pulsating bodies. The dance, the wine, the music, are catalysts to the state of *ecstasis* that will open the doors to Dionysus, leading to the disruption of the Apollonian veil, from which the principle of individuation comes.

We suggest that the roda de capoeira, through its circular orientation, vertiginous movements and music, has a predisposition to the collapse of the principle of individuation, a potentiality for the emergence of the collective body. In this perspective, the chorus represents, as in Dionysian cults, one of the most energetic signs of collective orientation. More than chanting phrases at random, the brief and repetitive structure of the chorus puts the capoeira players in tune with the whole, as it harmonizes them with the other performers of the chorus. Mestre Acordeon, in an interview<sup>12</sup>, speaks about the capacity of music to connect people in the roda de capoeira, to bring everyone to a common denominator. Individuals meet at the roda and unite in music. However, the energy present in the roda does not come from a single source and does not follow a single direction. It comes from the drums – a set of instruments with music players and singers; of the roda circle, with the chorus; and from within the roda circle, with the players. They are all sources that discuss and feed on each other, strengthening the formation of this collective body.

From the analogies described above, on the reflections of aesthetic basis, we interpret the roda de capoeira as an expression composed of two energy matrices that, dialectically, feed this phenomenon. Apollo, conceding the harmony of shape, the appearance, the limit of the particular, the beauty, while Dionysus causes destruction and creation, immoderacy, the dissolution of the individual. As previously announced, Nietzsche understands the importance of these two forces being in dynamic balance, in constant dispute. For the philosopher, this balance would have been reached by the archaic Greek people, after whom the West would go on in a process of excessive elevation of the Apollonian power and, on the other hand, would suffer with the dispersion of the Dionysian power.

As a parallel event, from another time, we find the roda de capoeira, which manifests its Dionysian power, above all, in the movements that favour the collapse of the principle of individuation for the formation of the collective through dance, music, game and fight. However, much as the roda de capoeira has this Dionysian potential, an excessive Apollonian light, which dims and often suppresses such features, can be seen.

If on the one hand the African Diaspora brought to Brazil a multiplicity of knowledge that has been repeatedly denied by our history, on the other hand, the roda de capoeira, in its process of struggling for existence, incorporated practices and behaviours that allowed it to be accepted, little by little, by society. “Sportivisation” and schooling processes, fruits of a rational, scientific perspective, brought other influences to capoeira, making it often excessively standardized and regimented. From clothing, with the adoption of uniforms, to

gestures, with the models of paradigmatic movements, capoeira traits have been crystallized at times, leaving its inventive and playful character in the background.

The practice of capoeira in large urban centres and places such as gymnasiums presents the risks inherent to the usual behaviour of these spaces, such as the reproducibility of sensitive data. In this case, we refer to the trivial fact that, in many spaces of this type, the music used for the game of capoeira comes from recordings played on stereos. The procedure of performing recorded media is much closer to contemporary urban *ethos* than the ritualistic construction of a chorus.

The capoeira of the twenty-first century is present in all continents, spread across more than 150 countries,<sup>13</sup> which demonstrates a potential for adaptation and attraction of bodies. Consequently, the roda de capoeira will be the expression of the construction of each collective, which allows for a great variety of experiences. The competition format or arrangement of stages for performance demonstrations are examples of directions in which the form and the individual would be priorities; in other words, expressions apparently based on the excessive weight of the Apollonian and the emptying of the Dionysian traits. On the other hand, when the ritual of the roda is a priority, when the aesthetic sense of the game is found in the relations between bodies and songs, the collective synthesis gains strength and seems to stimulate the collapse of the principle of individuation.

## Considerations

As a result of the correlations described above between the dithyrambic chorus of Dionysus and the roda de capoeira, we now turn to a few considerations regarding the matching elements between the two phenomena. It seems to us that the roda de capoeira preserves a volition that is similar to the Dionysian power. We perceive some elements that are present in both the dithyrambic chorus and the roda de capoeira, such as the circular aesthetics and their peculiarities in the construction of the circle shape and of the dance itself, the *ecstasis* provided by the combination of dance and music and, as a consequence of these attributes, the collapse of the principle of individuation, which is in turn understood as the rupture of the particularities of individuals for the construction of a single body, or rather, the transformation of the subjects and their respective spaces into one: the roda de capoeira.

We see, as we have mentioned, a possible emptying of the elements that resemble the Dionysian potential due to the advent of spectacularisation and sportification which may lead to excessive overlapping of the principles of contours and the Apollonian moderation. Such excess of Apollonian precepts of exacerbation of forms and of impulse control works on the principle of individuation and thereby detracts and reduces a latent potential of the roda de capoeira as a phenomenon of Dionysian resistance to a society with certain inclination to spectacularisation and a ceaseless demand for overstimulation of sensations.<sup>14</sup>

We do not try to erect truths about the phenomenon of the roda de capoeira. We attempt the links proposed here as a philosophical exercise to generate questions and reflections. The roda de capoeira, by approaching this potentially Dionysian phenomenon, will possibly become more permeable to the vicissitudes of the body and, consequently, of existence. Finally, we conceive the roda de capoeira as the product of a circular aesthetics that enables the collapse of the principle of individuation as a result of the *ecstasis* promoted by music and dance. Thus, the roda de capoeira seems to appear as a dialectical art that is still capable of maintaining Dionysian power and of linking the energetic volitions of the two Greek deities in a play of opposites.

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