

«Know thyself»: Mind, body and ethics. Japanese archery (*Kyudo*) and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze

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Abstract

This article aims to describe the mind/ body problem from an Eastern philosophy point of view addressing firstly *Kyudo*, the Japanese martial art of archery; and secondly the Western philosopher Gilles Deleuze.

Ethics is, in Western philosophy, what deals with the way we take decisions and act upon them. Decisions and actions consider rationality and intuition but seldom the body's own rationality and intuition—which *Kyudo* exercises. We can find in Deleuze's philosophy important concepts to better understand this: difference, repetition, chaos, identity, energy, force, stage and micro-perceptions.

To what extent can the dominant Eastern thought approach on the mind/ body topic be effective to fulfill the Ancient Greek aphorism «Know yourself» (γνώθι σεαυτόν) inscribed in the Temple of Apollo at Delphi?

Keywords: *Kyudo*; Deleuze; Philosophy of the body; ethics; rationality.

Resumen. «*Conócete a ti mismo*»: *mente, cuerpo y ética. El tiro con arco japonés (Kyudo) y la filosofía de Gilles Deleuze*

Este artículo pretende describir el problema mente/cuerpo desde el punto de vista de la filosofía oriental y más específicamente desde el *Kyudo*, el arte marcial japonés del tiro con arco, y en segundo lugar a partir del filósofo occidental Gilles Deleuze.

La ética, en la filosofía occidental, trata de la forma cómo tomamos decisiones y cómo actuamos a partir de estas. Decisiones y acciones se analizan desde la racionalidad y la intuición, pero rara vez desde la racionalidad e intuición propias del cuerpo—que el *Kyudo* ejerce—. Podemos encontrar en la filosofía de Deleuze conceptos importantes para entender mejor esto: la diferencia, la repetición, el caos, la identidad, la energía, la fuerza, el escenario y las micropercepciones.

¿En qué medida el enfoque dominante en el pensamiento oriental sobre el tema mente/cuerpo podría ser eficaz para cumplir con el aforismo griego clásico «conócete a ti mismo» (γνώθι σεαυτόν), inscrito en el Templo de Apolo en Delfos?

Palabras clave: *Kyudo*; Deleuze; filosofía del cuerpo; ética; racionalidad.

Summary

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|---|---|
| 1. What is <i>Kyudo</i> ,
the Art of Japanese Archery? | 3. Deleuze's philosophy: an ethical
project and a new paradigm |
| 2. Describing <i>Kyudo's</i> performance
and method | 4. Final remarks
References |

1. What is *Kyudo*, the Art of Japanese Archery?

Asking «what is *kyudo*» while writing on a piece of paper is one of the less *kyudo*-like things one can do. *Kyudo* is about doing and not about talking about it. The best way to understand what *kyudo* is, is to find a place where it is taught and start practicing and observe others to practice.

Still, in this article we will aim at not only describing *kyudo*, but also at trying to understand what *kyudo* is confronting its principles with what in Western culture translates as Ethics. How can *kyudo* knowledge enrich our Ethics concept?

In the West, there is a dominant cultural tradition that separates mind and body activity. Though it has existed before, this separation was conceptualized first by Descartes (1596-1650) and since then many have attempted ways to explain the mind/ body relation and how do they interact. But those attempts have always considered a way to do so either rationally or by offering a neurophysiologic-based explanation. What do we mean here by «rationally» is «not using the body». This may still seem obscure but we hope we will clarify it. The point is that *kyudo* offers a third way to solve the mind/ body separation: the Way of the bow.

The Japanese affix the suffix «*do*» to the names of the Zen arts. It translates into Chinese as «Tao». In English, its translation has no direct equivalent but it usually translates as «Way» connoting path or road to spiritual awakening. «The Zen arts can be referred to as «Ways» and are not limited to the martial arts: *kyudo* is the Way of the bow; *kendo* is the Way of the sword; *karate-do* is the Way of the empty fist; *shodo* is the Way of writing («spiritual» calligraphy); and *chado* is the Way of the tea (tea ceremony)».¹

A «Way» in its essence is therefore best described in action. Moreover, «actions become Ways when practice is not done merely for the immediate result».² This means that *action*, in this context, should be taken as *gesture*. This distinction is crucial to understand that what is at stake in the practice in any of the «Ways» is not the result but the act of doing itself. It's about the body as something able *to perform a gesture*, in such a way that that *gesture*, with time and through repetition, appears as *action*. In order to simplify the understanding of this passage (from *gesture* to *action*) we give an example.

1. Kushner (2000), p. 5.

2. *Ibidem*.

Awa Kenzo (1880-1939) is known for having been one of the great *kyudo* masters. He was the one teaching the German professor of Philosophy in Tokyo, Eugen Herrigel (1884-1955), the first Westerner to be taught *kyudo*, also responsible for writing on *kyudo* for the first time (*Zen in the Art of Archery*, 1936), offering Westerners the possibility of getting in touch with this martial art.

It is told that «Kenzo once had the students gather in a garden to demonstrate that a *kiai* (*ki* concentration) did not have to be a loud shout to be effective. A *makiwara*³ was set up. Kenzo held a sword. He took a deep breath, raised the sword, and in a flash split the very thick bundle in two (...)» hardly making any noise. Then one of his students, after a new *makiwara* was set up, gave it a try. «The sword bounced off the *makiwara*, barely making a dent in it».⁴ The *gesture* of raising the sword and then lower it as surely as possible, that is what is practiced and repeated having as main focus «what can be learned». One can *learn* the *gesture* but one can never learn its result —and that is why in *kyudo* hitting the target or not is irrelevant. Teaching the body a specific *gesture* (or a sequence of *gestures*) through persistence, humbleness, and bravery, by repeating it over and over is what can be *learned* (and therefore *known*). The body's physical limits and resistance to learn, and the ability to overcome them through practice, is what the body teaches the mind. *Kyudo* is therefore a method that orients both mind and body through a simultaneous learning process. One does not progress without the other.

Each *gesture* is progressively perfected in order to become an *action* and that happens when mind and body are leveled, synchronized. We are not born knowing how to act. It is something that has to be learned through *gesture*. And *gesture* is educated and exercised through the body. When Kenzo slices the straw bundle in two or when he (frequently) hits the target with his arrow the result is not measured by the feeling «I hit it» but from the feeling «I know». In *kyudo* the body is therefore NOT dismissed of the act of knowing.

We have briefly described the passage from *gesture* to *action* but what happens when *action* happens? Let us focus most of all on this way of putting it: *action* happens. *Gesture* is something that is done, conventioned, performed but *action* itself happens. In a very specific sense we can take it as something caused by chance. But let us not forget, that in this situation chance is not an effect of randomness, but instead something instilled by repetition, promoted by a method, and enabled by a progressive process, in short, *kyudo*.

The mind/ body duality in *kyudo* is therefore solved creating a third tension focus in the exterior, the target, managed through a sequence of *gestures* and a performance. The target becomes therefore the mediator between the mind and body and when *gesture* becomes *action* (mind and body are leveled) harmony happens. In what way do they come to harmonize? That is what we will analyze in the next part of this article by describing in detail *kyudo*'s per-

3. *makiwara*, a big straw bundle.

4. Stevens (2007), p. 19.

formance and method. For now, let us just conclude elaborating on what does *kyudo* relates with Ethics.

Kyudo promotes synchronism between body and mind exercising them simultaneously in order to generate an experience of *release* creating a sense of *oneness*: dissolution experienced as one being part of *cosmic harmony* and not as fragmentation (as it happens in schizophrenia or bi-polar disorders). *Release* takes place when one literally releases the arrow and not when one realizes that has hit the target. The moment of release of the arrow is therefore decisive in *kyudo* showing the true character of the archer not only to others but to himself. Does he shoot to hit the target and be acknowledged as a good shooter or does he shoot to *know*? That is why *kyudo* practice is a Way to know yourself. In each shot you find out why do you shoot and you learn about your motives to do so. You can hit the target and experience no harmony and you can miss it and experience harmony.

The target exists in *kyudo* and it is there: 1) as a third element of tension that allows to redirect the tension between mind and body, creating a common goal for them both in the exterior; 2) to test one's ability to focus in the gesture of release and not in the result of hitting the target which if its done correctly makes *action* happen, providing the event of harmony.

The arrow is important because of its ability of being able to move trough space maintaining a straight orientation, is a physical metaphor for the reframing of the tension, in other words, the mind/ body tension is reframed as an interior-exterior tension provided by the archer's position while facing the target having the arrow oriented towards the target as if acknowledging the reframing. The arrow's trajectory is the archer's intention and through practice that *gesture* of *release* becomes *action* when the archer experiences the arrow's trajectory as if he has shot against himself.⁵ It is like the arrow movement, while it moves/ during the time it is flying in the air, provokes the experience of regression in the archer towards a place where time has no place and when it stops either rebirth happens or it does not. If it does, death and rebirth experienced simultaneously, harmony, dissolution, beyond space and time, beyond life and death, beyond mind and body.

Why is *kyudo* then the Way of the bow and not the Way of the arrow? Because the arrow's movement enables a momentary event (*action*), that can happen or not, but the bow is what daily, allows the body and mind to learn, letting one to know his character. The bow is also an instrument of passage between *gesture* and *action*: the constant exercise of performed metaphor, a sacred implement⁶.

Kyudo therefore establishes a direct connection with one's character on several levels. It strengthens your persistence, it helps you deal simultane-

5. To better understand this we here refer literally to the physical impact that the *release* of the arrow has in the body, that from a strictly physical point of view is similar to the one when one shoots a gun and the body retracts as if absorbing the impact.

6. Awa Kenzo. *Idem*, p. 69.

ously with body and mind's resistance to learn and *know*, it teaches about frustration and how to overcome it, it makes you realize your most deep inner motivations to live and die: is it about the result, recognition and hitting the target or is it about *knowing* and accessing something that overcomes yourself realizing that you are the medium between *this* (technique) and *that* (release)? Your character strangeness as you learn how to become transparent when you shoot, precisely because you become more than an instrument. You become the invisible link between *this* and *that*. You become in each shot able to die and be born again. And ethics is about knowing thyself, in his essence.

2. Describing *Kyudo*'s performance and method

We will now repeat the same steps and we did in §1 this time following *kyudo*'s performance and method.

Concerning the body's performance itself, *Kyudo* has eight basic positions, though the performance includes cleaning and marinating the practice space (*dojo*), preserving the equipment, displaying the equipment for each practice session and then also keeping everything away in the right place, in the right way, by the end of practice. Before performing those eight positions, one needs another *kyudoca*'s help in order to string the bow, then it is necessary to massage the bow to heat it making it more flexible and easier to manage, then putting the glove and wrapping it in the right way, and finally selecting the arrow(s) (different cuts and tips).

A beginner starts practicing all these tasks (*gestures*, concerning body positioning and orientation), using instead of a bow and arrow a rubber band as a practice bow. He is not given a bow and arrow until he is ready (and it can take many months) and he does not face the target until he is ready (and it may take years)⁷.

Roughly, the Eight Stages of *Kyudo* are: *Ashibumi* (to stand with legs 60 degrees apart, bow in the left hand and arrow in the right hand); *Dozukuri* (setting the torso and fitting the back of the arrow in the bow's string); *Yugamae* (setting the bow and gripping the back of the arrow as one gets into to position to shoot); *Uchiokoshi* (raising both arms and starting to open the bow pulling the string back while facing the target —head to the left, left arm fully stretched, right arm 45 degrees bended); *Hikiwake* (lowering the bow while stretching the string until the arrow gets to the mouth's height); *Kai* (previous position is maintained and the archer faces the tip of the arrow looking to balance the vertical and horizontal axes of his body in full tension and maximum effort due to the body, bow and string's resistance); *Hanare* (to release the arrow); *Zanshin* (body in cross position, arms open to 180 degrees; remaining heart or mind moment).⁸

7. Herrigel himself, out of the five years he has spent in Japan, for four years shot only to the *makiwara*. Kushner, Kenneth (2000), p. 12.

8. *Idem*, p. 19-27; Hoff (2002), p. 79-109.

This is the sequence of gestures that promotes the simultaneous and mutual education of body and mind. They demand an attentive mind in order to memorize them and constantly being aware to each part of the body that seems to resist and escape each time is time to take the next stage/ position. It is like suddenly one becomes aware of the multiple parts and muscles a human body is made of and for each position (and each transition from one to the other) the body has to learn its natural place. The repeated exercise of these eight positions should promote self-reflection and not rationalization: «Self-reflection encourages great bravery. Rationalization is your greatest enemy».⁹ Breathing is also essential and each stage demands a specific breathing, thicker or thinner. Kenzo used to say that breath is more precious than gold and that in —and out— of breath are the coming and going of life and death.¹⁰

Gesture becomes *action* when the eight-stage sequence is performed in such a way that a progression is achieved from one stage to the next. If a mistake is done in stage 2 it will harm stage 3, which will distort stage 4 and so forth and by the time you get to stage 8 *action* does not take place. To avoid this, full concentration, physical strength, practice and persistence are necessary. All these have to be present each time one shoots. *Kyudo* it is not a poetic or romantic activity, it is a martial art that demands hard work. «Fostering the spirit is painful, hard work; shoot each shot as if your life depended on it»¹¹, Kenzo says, otherwise you are just getting your body tired.

The eight stages are therefore an exercise of self-reflection where one's mind is empty, if you rationalize you loose focus and the mind will not be empty, that is why it is your biggest enemy. Chance experienced as a fortunate event is therefore being able to coordinate breath, positioning, concentration, self-reflection and an empty mind.

The mind/ body duality in *kyudo* can be better comprehended if we attempt in the double meaning of the word *zanshin*, the last stage, the one after releasing the arrow, when the archer takes a moment to himself experiencing simultaneously full concentration (mind) and total tension release (body). «If *shin* is written as *mi*, it means «body». *Zanshin* is then understood as the form of the body that remains behind. (...) If, however, *shin* is written as *kokoro* (literally, «heart»), it means «mind» or «soul». *Zanshin* is then translated as the return of ideas and thoughts after the highest point of concentration».¹²

Zanshin is therefore a stage where body and mind are experienced in opposite states. The mind is in full tension and the body in full relaxation. In stage one the body is what is in full tension and the mind is in full relaxation, but all through the eight stages, the movements shape the mind and body and they interchange their energy in such a way that by the end of the sequence they are in opposite states. What appears to be from an outside perspective a

9. Stevens (2007), p. 42.

10. *Idem*, p. 40.

11. *Idem*, p. 43.

12. Hoff (2002), p. 99.

clam and slow sequence of gestures, is actually experienced by the body of he who performs them as an intense circulation of energy flow and a hard physical effort. This is one more perspective that confirms the reframing of the tension, from mind/ body to interior-exterior: effortless form the outside, in tension on the inside.

Ethically you constantly correct yourself (posture, orientation and attitude) and let others that are watching you correct you. Actually, you depend on others to correct your positions because you can never perceive yourself exactly. *Kyudo* is therefore exercising character in the sense that it promotes self-reflection. Kenzo says: «When you understand what your shortcomings are and act upon correcting them, that is being a Buddha».¹³

The release (*hanare*) is the stage where you let *action* take place or, in other words, is the stage where you fully realize if *action* does happen or not. The *gesture* of letting the arrow go is supposed to be a movement of compassion¹⁴ because releasing it is like you are shooting yourself, in the sense that you have to give up on your Self, let go. Knowing yourself, do what you can do and experiencing cosmic harmony sounds good but it is a scary experience, in the sense that you are in unfamiliar territory. It is not a common feeling at all.¹⁵ Therefore, in Kenzo's words, «Release the arrow with no intent. Each shot reveals your character, it shows who you are, what you can do».¹⁶ Buddhism is not about meditation or about liberation; it is about seeing into your nature,¹⁷ it is about building character.

The target, the tension dissolved is about a strong character¹⁸ and oneness¹⁹. According to Kenzo, «If you look at the target as your enemy you will never make progress. The target is a reference point, not your opponent».²⁰ The target is therefore the third tension focus that reframes the mind/ body tension and only in this way one progresses in order to harmonize them.

The arrow is something without limit, Kenzo says, it is full if is not shot, not released containing all perfection of heaven and hearth²¹. Concerning the

13. Stevens (2007), p. 40.

14. *Idem*, p. 72.

15. Awa Kenzo says «The Bow becomes oneself. To learn about the Bow is to learn about oneself is to forget the self. To forget self is to realize that all things, in the universe are you. From the beginning, heaven and earth are you, from start to finish. We are all from the same source, one with the cosmos». *Idem*, p. 42.

16. *Idem*, p. 43.

17. Awa Kenzo: «The essence of Buddhism is not meditation or liberation from samsara. It is *kensho*, «seeing into your nature»». *Idem*, p. 44.

18. Awa Kenzo: «Confucius practiced the Way of the bow to demonstrate how a cultured person acts. Confucius was not concerned with hitting the target one hundred times out of one hundred shots. He was demonstrating how one hundred shots can be one hundred perfections of character». *Idem*, p. 47.

19. Awa Kenzo: «Hitting a target with an arrow is a small vehicle; attaining enlightenment with an arrow is a big vehicle». *Idem*, p. 48.

20. Awa Kenzo: «Hitting a target with an arrow is a small vehicle; attaining enlightenment with an arrow is a big vehicle». *Idem*, p. 64.

21. *Idem*, p. 44.

moment that precedes the release of the arrow (*kai*) Kenzo says: «Do not focus on the center of the target. The sound of the arrow hitting the target should simultaneously hit the center of your being. That instant is a divine, mystical experience». ²² You should not be the one deciding the moment of release, the release should *happen* as if *action* was not intended, only the *gesture*. Like death also happens. This connection is clear in both Kenzo's statements: «Death may be close at hand; death may be far off. Transcend death with no-thought, no-idea. Do what you need to do, with no regret» and «From birth your life is a preparation for death. If you are born, you will die. Your life and death are treasure. Shoot within the realm of life and death». ²³

The bow is what allows you to exercise character and that is why Kenzo formulates the ultimate teaching as «Shoot the big Bow in whatever you do». ²⁴ At the end it is the bow that allows one to achieve oneness: «You and your bow must come together as one; that act is divine. This unity of instrument and oneself is divine. There is no bow, no arrow, no you; yes and no are one». ²⁵ No body/ mind separation but communion instead.

Kyudo relates with ethics since decision-making is one of the strongest issues discussed in Ethics. Precisely, *kyudo* is about learning through gesture, following a method in order to manage chaotic tension by repetition and exercise, how to make a decision with both body and mind simultaneously.

Ethics is, in Western philosophy, what deals with the way we take decisions and act upon them reflecting on decisions and actions, considering rationality and sometimes intuition, but seldom the body's own rationality and intuition—which *Kyudo* exercises. Ethics excludes the body's own intelligibility inserting it in a logic of deprivation, repression, denial. *Kyudo* includes the body in the exercise of building character. You are not born knowing how to decide and you are not born with character. You have to learn both by getting to know yourself.

This brings up an interesting question: what is the relation that ethics and *kyudo* both have with moral, religion and society? In Ethics, the tension is addressed within the realm of a body/ mind tension and it is the focus (own body vs own mind), therefore it is easier for society rules (morality) and religion (set of common beliefs) to penetrate the Self and character. *Kyudo*, because it places the focus tension on an interior-exterior basis through its performance, it is less permeable to morality and religion.

Maybe that is why *kyudo* was perceived several times throughout its history as a threat to social order, or even as a religion itself, and therefore forbidden. In that sense it is not that it is anti-social, but it is a-social because what orients it are one's own principles and each man's character. There are no rules concerning actions, only conventioned gestures. You make your own rules and

22. *Idem*, p. 76.

23. *Idem*, p. 41.

24. *Idem*, p. 77.

25. *Idem*, p. 44.

your character shines through. All men have different characters but the mystery that *kyudo* brings before all of them is one and the same. Therefore if all men *know*, they are one and the same, society will be healthy.²⁶ *Kyudo* has a stronger relation with ethics than Ethics itself and maybe that is why most books on *kyudo* are a report on one's personal encounter with this martial art and one's own progress on getting awareness.

3. Deleuze's philosophy: an ethical project and a new paradigm

We will repeat again the same movement previously performed in part one and two, this time briefly describing key concepts of Deleuze's philosophy. By doing this we have two goals: 1) acknowledge key moments in *kyudo* showing Deleuze's concept flexibility to better understand *kyudo*, and 2) to acknowledge Deleuze as one of the first philosophers to embody a paradigm change in the way central philosophical problems are approached, that is, trying to leave behind a dualistic body/ mind logic and incorporating an Eastern thought dynamic.²⁷

Deleuze's first book confirming the sprout of an individual thinker is «*Différence et répétition*»²⁸ (1968) and precisely the concepts of *difference* and *repetition* are central ones to describe his thought.

Difference is something not ready at hand to be accessed to. One has to proceed in a certain way in order to access *difference* and from that *identity* emerges. Roughly, first one has to strip down all layers of common sense that have accumulated and sedimented over time. This stage is similar to Kenzo's description of purification: «The Bow is in fact a gift from the gods. Right from the beginning it has been an instrument of purification».²⁹

Like when one practices *kyudo*, *repeatedly* one has to keep the Self away so that one's own character emerges, according to Deleuze, *repeatedly* one has to keep common sense away so that identity *emerges*. In order to do that, according to both, one has to submerge in chaos. Let us not mistake what we here mean by «chaos». *Chaos* is a state (not a place) where one has no spacio-tem-

26. «Problems with society are not a matter of misguided ideas; such problems are due to diseases of the spirit». *Idem*, p. 65.

27. It would be interesting to systematically verify to what extent Eastern thought influence, and Japanese Zen and Buddhism in particular, have in Deleuze's thinking but an article is not suited to so since it would have to be an exhausting and long analysis.

28. Deleuze, (2000, 1968), Though not directly quoted the brief reference to Deleuze's key concepts in this article has in mind a direct reference to Deleuze's following works: *Différence et répétition* (1968). English transl. «Difference and Repetition» (1994); *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (1968). English transl. «Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza» (1990); *Logique du sens* (1969). English transl. «The Logic of Sense» (1990); *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 1. L'Anti-Cédepe* (1972). English transl. «Anti-Oedipus» (1977); *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2. Mille Plateaux* (1980). English transl. «A Thousand Plateaus» (1987); *Le pli - Leibniz et le baroque* (1988). English transl. «The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque» (1993); *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (1991). English transl. «What Is Philosophy?» (1996).

29. Stevens (2007), p. 51.

poral reference and that one actively strives to dive in slowly and carefully. In this sense «chaos» is not related with randomness or something negative. On the contrary, *chaos* is a form of positive *energy* able to produce *identity*.

In *kyudo*, each time you shoot, you have to repeat the *gesture* of keep Self away and according to Deleuze, each time you aim at thinking something, you have to repeat the gesture of keeping common sense away. We are not born knowing how to think, says Deleuze, and we are not born knowing our characters, Kenzo could have said.

Deleuze's thinking is a cumulative progressive processes, with several stages, like *kyudo*. Learning how to think is a way to know ourselves. What Deleuze describes is a self-reflection process and not a rationalization. Through practice, to think is more than a gesture performed by habit and becomes action. That is why to think is to act. Deleuze's philosophy intends to reconcile a lost connection in Western philosophy between thinking and doing. So what one does matches what one thinks. One acts based on a decision that one has already taken: self-reflection. What Deleuze presents us is an ethical project.

To Deleuze and in *kyudo* one has to exert violence in order to start thinking, in one case, and to start shooting, in the other, always facing hard resistance. «The solution is in the idea of chance and encounter (from Spinoza): we desire, we «get out» for the first time of one strata by chance of an encounter. And even in a world dominated by strata, the adventurous life will go on producing encounters that will make any buried desire blossom».³⁰

Going through those stages (both in *kyudo* or in Deleuze's thinking) demands a strong connection with knowledge. In other words, what motivates one to start the process, both in *kyudo* and in Deleuze's thought, is: wanting to know. Kenzo enhances «character», Deleuze enhances «desire». We think that there is no need to choose between the two since they complement well and actually they express the same thought. *To know* through one's own *character* fueled by the *desire, to know*. To know, not what society or others assumed as important for anyone to know, but *to know* what one's own *character* wants to find out: following its natural orientation. When you do *know* you no longer need to will it and *knowledge* (character and thinking) comes to you in a clear, sharp way.

The natural orientation of character is *oneness* and that is why according to Deleuze, *identity* emerges from *difference*. *Difference* comes first and *difference* is what generates *identity*, through *caos* and *repetition*. «Make every shot anew»³¹, Kenzo says, «The target keeps the tension you just have to learn how to manage the evil inside».³²

The bow is a «Way» because it frames (literally, shapes) the body in order to manage interior energy and contradictory *forces* that flow inside the body.

30. Author's translation. Gil (2008), p. 199.

31. Stevens (2007), p. 39.

32. Awa Kenzo: ««Destroy evil» means to make the evil in your heart submit». *Idem*, p. 53.

The bow promotes one's ability not only to be aware of *micro-perceptions*³³ in one's own body and mind but also simultaneously orienting both body and mind to manage them. The archer's body is positioned perpendicular to the target's axis defining a cross. This should be taken not as a religious symbol but as an expression of a fictional geography, two straight lines with no beginning and no end, that define the four cardinal points, the four seasons and whole universe³⁴. The man holding the bow actively creates this fictive geography while holding the bow and arrow, facing the target. The moment has every ingredient to activate Self and yet what is demanded is self-reflection, release, compassion and dissolution. Once again, in a different way, we realize that the tension, in *kyudo*, is diverted from body/ mind to interior-exterior.

Though it dismisses the body, by not assigning it an active role in the way *kyudo* does, Deleuze is perhaps the first Western philosopher to incorporate in his thinking an Eastern dynamic where dualism body/ mind is diverted, anticipating a new paradigm in Philosophy. Deleuze does not offer a system and perhaps not even a method. He describes a process that progresses through cumulative stages and that dynamic is dominant in the Eastern culture.

4. Final remarks

We have repeated the same movement three times first through an explanation on the principles of *kyudo*, then through a description of *kyudo* and then approaching briefly Deleuze's philosophy. In this article I tried to offer three different perspectives on a possible connection between *kyudo* and Gilles Deleuze's principles, hoping 1) to enrich our concept of Ethics and 2) to show how Eastern culture is penetrating the West offering new approaches.

«Do» we have already said it means «Way». Now we say what «*kyu*» is. *Kyu* is 1) «class» (student beginner); 2) bow; 3) endurance; continuity.³⁵ So, the name *kyudo* actually describes what the art is about in its essence: one (possible) Way to enlightenment using the bow repeatedly where one, also repeatedly, is a beginner because each time one shoots is like starting anew and that demands endurance and continuity.

Deleuze's philosophy describes a process and it is in a way a bow for the mind, that shapes it, in order to teach us how to think, *to know* what each one of us is meant to learn. Like the bow, Deleuze's thinking teaches how to frame our thinking. It is an ethical project just like *kyudo* is, where the bow is a «Way» to strengthen character and know yourself. As Kenzo puts it: «Shooting is to study the mind (...)».³⁶

33. A concept that Deleuze uses under Leibniz's strong influence.

34. Awa Kenzo: «Shooting is rooted in nature. You are a miniature universe, everything—heaven and earth, the stars, the sun, rivers and valleys—are within you. Trust in this truth when you shoot. Shoot in harmony with the four seasons». Stevens (2007), p. 74.

35. Hoff (2002), p. 240.

36. Stevens (2007), p. 48.

Herrigel writes: «When I asked the Master how we could get on without him on our return to Europe, he said: «Your question is already answered by the fact that I made you take a test. You have now reached a stage where teacher and pupil are no longer two persons, but one. You can separate from me anytime you wish. Even if broad seas lie between us, I shall be with you when you practice what you have learned. I need not ask you to keep up your regular practicing, not to discontinue in on any pretext whatsoever, and let no day go by without your performing the ceremony, even without bow and arrow, or at least without having breathed properly. I need not ask you because I know that you can never give up this spiritual archery. Do not ever write to me about it, but send me photographs from time to time so that I can see how you draw the bow. Then I shall know everything I need to know».³⁷

Mind and body become inseparable whatever their relation is as soon as one learns how to promote their encounter. Like master and student, once they become one they are never set apart, as long as you keep practicing self-reflection.

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37. Herrigel (1989), p. 65