



# A Search for the Inner Dragon

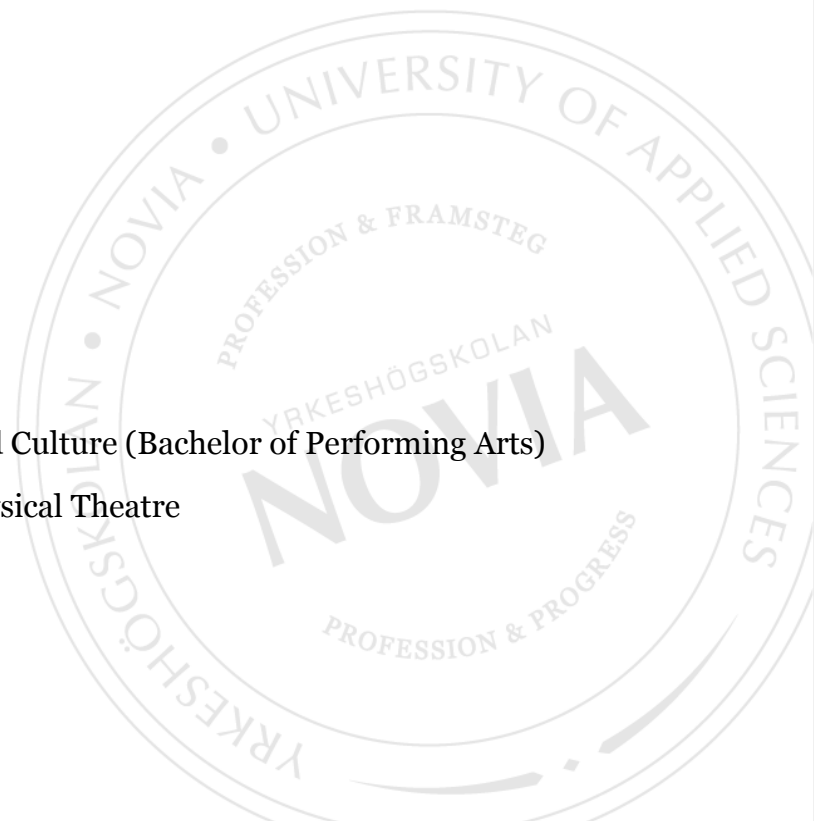
## A Student's Analysis of Physical Acting Technique

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## **BACHELOR'S THESIS**

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### **Summary**

Physical actor training can be understood in a form of toolbox consisting of different training forms for physical theatre work. To understand these kinds of toolboxes, it is important to know the origin of such a toolbox and also to know, how to use these tools.

This thesis takes a look at the author's personal view of his own toolbox and also on the physical theatre training he has undergone at Novia University of Applied Sciences during years 2011-2015.

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### **Abstrakt**

Träning för en fysisk skådespelare kan tolkas som en form av en verktygslåda som innehåller olika träningsformer för fysisk teaterarbete. För att förstå sin egen verktygslåda måste man veta varifrån lådan kommer och, hur de olika verktygerna kan användas.

Det här arbetet inspekterar författarens egen bild av sin egen fysiska verktygslåda och träningen som han har gjort inom fysiska teaterlinjen vid Yrkeshögskolan Novia under åren 2011-2015.

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Språk: Engelska Nyckelord: fysisk skådespelaresträning, fysisk verktygslåda, erfarenhetskarta

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## **OPINNÄYTETYÖ**

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### **Tiivistelmä**

Fyysisen näyttelijän koulutus voidaan ymmärtää erilaisten fyysisen teatterin harjoittelumuotojen muodostaman työkalulaatikon avulla. Työkalulaatikon ymmärtämiseksi on tärkeää tietää sen menneisyys ja toisaalta sen käyttötarkoitus.

Tämä työ tarkastelee tekijänsä henkilökohtaista kuvaa omasta työkalulaatikostaan ja koulutuksesta, johon hän on osallistunut Ammattikorkeakoulu Novian fyysisen teatterin linjalla vuosina 2011-2015.

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Kieli: Englanti

Avainsanat: fyysinen näyttelijänkoulutus, fyysinen työkalulaatikko, kokemuskartoitus

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## **Contents**

- 1 **Many Journeys in Life 1**
- 2 **My Search for the Truth 3**
  - 2.1 *My Subjective Physical Theatre Archive 3*
  - 2.2 *The Two Processes 3*
- 3 **The Map of my Journey 6**
  - 3.1 *A Year of Physical Training 6*
  - 3.2 *A Year in the Expressive Woods 7*
  - 3.3 *A Year Outside the Safe Haven 7*
  - 3.4 *A Year of Farewells 8*
  - 3.5 *Reading the Map 9*
- 4 **Here Be the Dragons 11**
  - 4.1 *The Human Body 12*
  - 4.2 *Mime 13*
  - 4.3 *Voice and Movement 14*
  - 4.4 *Acrobatics 15*
  - 4.5 *Martial Arts 16*
  - 4.6 *Body Education 17*
  - 4.7 *Nihon Buyou 18*
  - 4.8 *Mask Theatre 19*
  - 4.9 *More of the Applications 20*
  - 4.10 *An Inner Beast of Mine: A Dragon 22*
- 5 **Analysis of the Results 23**
  - 5.1 *The Final Destination 25*

## 1 Many Journeys in Life

[A] map of an island, with - -  
every particular that would be  
needed to bring a ship to a safe  
anchorage upon its shores

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Treasure Island by R.L. Stevenson

This thesis consists of two parts. Description of my education at Novia University of Applied Sciences, and the analysis of my present understanding of *physical actor's art*.

In this work I will present my personal analyses in a form of a *map* and a *toolbox* and graze a concept of *inner beast*. All of these terms I have actually already used to describe my work in my personal portfolios [Portfolio]. Two of them are something very concrete as they describe the actual skills one has and the points of time one has traveled through. The last one is also a concrete one, but not yet as cleanly definable concept as it could be.

In this thesis I use the term inner beast to speak of the whole of the actor's personal art – of all the things that make an actor actor. The concept cannot be very easily defined with my current level of analytic skills. I am not even sure, if I am actually speaking of only physical actor technique, or if it is even possible to define what I am speaking of. All I know is that when the inner beast is 'fed' training in anything, it grows in the direction of that training, and if it truly wants to achieve something, it will get that in the end.

This research project gives me guidelines for my future research: it is a thesis that only takes many things to the superficial level, and I am sorry of that. Any reader who wishes for more information may check my personal blog[Blog], where I am planning on continuing my work on the subjects mentioned briefly in this thesis.

As the name of this thesis implies, this research process has been only a search – not a discovery – for the dragon I am. It is not meant to be a complete research, but a mere blue-print for the any future artistic research projects.



## 2 My Search for the Truth

There and Back Again

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J.R.R Tolkien

In this chapter I will open my research question. Then I shall continue by describing my research methods in detail – separately for the two different parts of the research process.

### 2.1 My Subjective Physical Theatre Archive

The basic objective of my research was to find a subjective definition of myself as a physical theatre artist: as this part of my life has come to an end, I wished to understand what kind of monster I had become.

As my classmates show in their similar essays, we have gathered us a tremendous amount of bodily knowledge in every field of physical theatre. And every one of us had learned a different set of skills – even we had walked the same path, we had grown into different artists during the journey.

As I clearly saw the growth of others, I felt a strong urgency to understand also my own growth. I drew myself a sort of metaphorical map of our education – of the shared journey. Only then it felt honest to begin observe my tools in the context where I had also learned them. The better option would have been to study them in the context where I had *used them* on stage, but as I had limited amount of time, and I also thought of this option later on during my research, I decided only study the context where I had learned my skillset.

### 2.2 The Two Processes

I started this research from the two points of view: first, there was a need to find out things I had done in the past through reconstruction of my journey; the second

goal was to rediscover my artistic self in the present moment. I haven't drawn any conclusions of the causality or correlation of the two.

I collected the pieces of my personal education and placed them in their contexts. I skimmed through my personal notes [Notes] and weekly schedules [Timetables] of the courses of the program. Then I ordered my development portfolios [Portfolio] that were filed to analyze our personal growth every half a year (after every half a year we had also a conversation with our main teacher Steina Öhman in order to understand the progress on a deeper level) and finally double-checked my results with the official documents that described our studies in a formal form at the studyplan (that was available only in Swedish)[Studyplan].

Finally I prepared to use my personal diary [Diary] and my blog [Blog], but never really needed that level of information. I also read a lot of my thoughts and notes that I had made before the program – merely to draw a clearer picture. It was a very nice introspective journey inside a journey.

After I had arranged the material, I started reconstructing the content of studies on the basis I had. As the result of this process I created a map that may be found at section 3.

During the second process – understanding the actual physical theatre artist that I am – I read through the map, reconsidered old ideas and with the re-awakened memories, I searched for the parts of myself that felt like the most building blocks for my personal, artistic self. Then I wrote those parts down in more detail to the best of my ability.

This intuitive analysis may be found in the section 4 and it is actually the more essential part of this two-fold analysis. There I also explain the concept of 'inner dragon' in a more detail, and how I discovered the concept. Even though I cannot yet define the beast, I try to give the reader a picture of the beast in question and

argument further why I find the concept fitting for this kind of artistic research.

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### 3 The Map of my Journey

'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

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Lewis Carroll: Alice's Adventures  
in the Wonderland

In this chapter I have used the previously mentioned source material to light a little bit the metaphorical road that I have walked during past four years. I am still only constructing a simplified map to give a sketch of the things we have trained (and will later only present some of them as part of my personal toolbox). As I want to keep this text compact, I will go straight to the point and leave away any further analyses that I would like to include if I had more room to do so.

During the education at Novia, we had basically two different types of courses: basic training for a few hours every week and intensive courses for a longer period.

#### 3.1 A Year of Physical Training

The first year started with basic training courses in *Body Education*, *Acrobatics*, *Kalaripayattu* and *Bharata Natyam* [Portfolio, 2011: p.7-11, p.16].

Besides these courses, we did have intensive courses in *Jibengong* and *Objective Mime* and *Locking* [Portfolio, 2011: p.10-13]. Then we had a course in *choreography* [Portfolio, 2011: p.13-14] and a longer course in *Voice and Movement* [Portfolio, 2011: p.14-15]. We did also have a few two-day *kung fu* courses [Portfolio, 2012: p.40] and semi-theoretical subjects as '*Seminar of Play*' and a theoretical studies of the history and traditions of physical theatre [Portfolio, 2011: p.15-18]

During the spring, we continued with acrobatics [Portfolio, 2012: p.29], bharata natyam [Portfolio, 2012: p.32] and kalaripayattu [Portfolio, 2012: p.39], and started *balett* [Portfolio, 2012: p.31] as an additional basic training subject. We also continued with a few more two-day intensive courses in kungfu [Portfolio, 2012: p.40] and a few longer courses in objective mime [Portfolio, 2012: p.44]. The spring also gave us a possibility to use the technical training of jibengong in few traditional jingju scenes [Portfolio, 2012: p.38].

During the year, we had also a course in *improvisation* [Portfolio, 2012: p.37], in *mask theatre* [Portfolio, 2012: p.45] and a *first-year production* [Portfolio, 2012: p.48], a physical performance of Euripides's *The Trojan Women*.

### **3.2 A Year in the Expressive Woods**

During the second year, we continued our basic training very similarly to before.

The second year studies started with a course in *Marionette Theatre* (a theoretical one) [Notes, Nuket ja esineet näyttämöllä], and with few week-long courses in *Corporeal Mime* [Portfolio, 2012: p.44] and *Japanese Dance* [Timetables, weeks 19-20 and 45]. We worked with *Monologue*, *Sketch* and *Directing* [Portfolio, 2012: p.48-50].

During the spring we started also to work with different improvisations and with voice and movement our *second-year production* [Timetables, weeks 11-16] [Notes, Vasilisa] in mind – Russian folk tale Vasilisa. We did also have an intensive course in *Pair Acrobatics* [Portfolio, 2012: p.17] near the end of the year.

### **3.3 A Year Outside the Safe Haven**

This year started in Asia with my exchange studies in Japan where I studied *Nihon Buyou*, classical Japanese dance first with three week long Traditional Theatre

Training 2013 workshop, and then under my teacher Wakayagi Yayoi -sensei for a few more months. We worked with five pieces from classical repertoire, four of which I studied to the performance level. [Notes, Japan] [Portfolio, K2014: p.5]

After Christmas, we returned to work by analyzing the fruits of our labour [Portfolio, K2014: p.7-9], and started a new basic training subject: *Karate* [Notes, karate]. We finished the spring with courses in *Sign Language*, *Clown* and *Commedia Dell'arte* [Portfolio, K2014: p.9, 11].

### 3.4 A Year of Farewells

This year started with *Pantomime*, *Directing* and *Corporeal Mime* [Portfolio, S2014: p.41, p.37-40, p.44-45]. Ballet this year was in form of two week-long intensive courses [Portfolio, S2014: p.42]. Basic training with acrobatics and mime took more independent direction. Acrobatics lectures were divided in technical and artistic lessons, and we could name our training goals ourself. Mime training this year was in a form independent work (with the whole of the class) with a practical examination at the end of the period. [Timetables, autumn 2014]

The most important thing we ever do at this school (as our main teacher Steina Öhman emphasized in the beginning of the course) was though course in so-called *EKT*, *egen kreativ träning*, one's creative training. During this course we were allowed to test our ideas by leading a three-hour practice in whatever creative we wanted. This proved very interesting and truly very eye-opening experience as I noticed, how much we had grown after the first year, when it was difficult to lead warm-ups to each other. [Timetables, weeks 38-48 of 2014][Notes, EKT]

The largest project during the year was naturally the sort of *final production* [Notes, slutarbete], a very introverted production that I performed during physical theatre festival *Peeled* in Vaasa during week 7 of 2015. That was probably the only project

this far where my personal goal grew out to be to practice my skills in physical acting, and not concentrate so much on building the actual performance (which is a way I wanted to test it as I might want to work with that goal also in the future).

As I proof-read this after the *fourth-year production*[Notes, Om ett drömspel] and in the middle of a course in *bouffons*[Notes, buffoner], I notice, that also writing this essay has given my artistic vision a sort of boost: I know more clearly what I actually want to do.

### **3.5 Reading the Map**

This is what I did in terms of courses during the four years of training. If I think of this map, it is a sort of table of contents for the bodily archive shared by me, my classmates and teachers that have taught me during the program. Some points have been visited only briefly and some might need to be visited many times anew.

We have been asked to write many other essays during the years at Novia, and considering also them as an essential part of learning process might be a good idea even though I did decide at first not to do that.

If I would have a possibility to continue this research in this direction, I could ask support of Steina Öhman and Maya Tångeberg-Grischin to understand the program in its completeness. That would be an interesting opportunity to learn more, but also a dishonest one as my teachers have given me splendid training to find my own way inside the world of physical theatre: I want to test my own wings first.

Now that I have drawn a map of my previous adventures, I will try expressing something of these wings of mine. As always, it is very difficult to understand your own wings as they in practice consist of something that is already behind you (past experiences). It is a problematic thing that every performer must face: they never

know, what they actually do or how good they actually are as the only person they can never see perform is themselves.



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## 4 Here Be the Dragons

Dragons are mythical monsters represented as a huge, winged reptile with crested head and enormous claws and teeth, and often spouting fire

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Dictionary.com

In this section I will start opening up my thoughts on *toolbox* and *tool collection* of mine: I use this metaphor because of the fact that a toolbox is a place where the *tools* can be put for use. I dislike the term 'archive' as it gives me a picture of something hidden in long shelves, which is something that a physical actor cannot do: the tools will get rusty, and their use forgotten if they are not used [Notes, Shifting Dialogues III].

My personal tools consist of all the art forms, training ideas, key concepts of thought and bodily tools that I have collected during my training. There will be other tools I gather some day, and other forms that will prove more useful in the future. I am also very conscious of the fact that a tool isn't a tool without practice in its use: otherwise it is a mere object. I have yet many years left to finish my work with any of these presented here (even on the level of understanding, what they actually consist of), but as they are the ones I work with, I will present them to the reader.

I will start of describing my 'acting tools' with the most concrete tool every actor has in their proposal: a body.

I continue through a few of the semiconcrete tools – art forms – I have studied during my years of physical actor training. I give a few examples on how I would personally use the tool collections of the actual subjects I have learned in my work as an actor and as a physical theatre instructor. I see them as the most definable, best classified

parts of my personal art, and even though I have tried working my way around them, they seem to actually be very useful pedagogical tools and very simple tools of defining the different parts of my own technique.

As the third point I give two examples of the psycho-social concepts and mindsets that I have started using and appreciating on my own even though we haven't been working with them during our studies or ever explicitly spoken of them during classes.

Lastly I will explain the concept of a inner beast in more detail, and finally reveal why I decided to write of a dragon in this thesis.

#### **4.1 The Human Body**

There are very many bones in human body: normally 206 to be exact [Gray 2001, p.17]. Besides these, a human body consists of many different tissues. The numerous muscles, bones and tendons are the most important ones for our work because they allow and limit human movement.

Basically any movement on stage can be described, analyzed and classified to a point. One might take pictures of movements [Adam 2014, example: Plate 116] or study actual tissues that allow the movement [Gray 2001, p.69] or in many other ways.

To us, it is enough to articulate the movement according to a dramatic system like Articulation of Objective Mime or Corporeal Mime [Notes, Mim, Corporeal Mime] or a system that merely has a word for different dramatic movement choices [Hanayagi 2008, as an example of named hand positions of Japanese Dance: p.56-67].

I personally find the systems of analysis very interesting, and they are also a sort of a way to break down actor's *bodymind* in components, but the *bodymind* – the

combination of mind and body as an inseparable whole – is still more than the sum of its parts. There is even a science-based limit in the voluntary control of human body that is reached only through long, effective training [Klein et al 2007, p.268-270, 280-301].

During the program at Novia our work with the human body has been very practical: we have sought to test our bodily limits and practice different ways of moving our bodies. I could say that physical theatre consists mostly of the conscious use of human body in a dramatic space (stage), but there is still much more than meets the eye.

Nowadays when I speak of an *actor's body*, I refer actually to a whole bodymind where the physical body is well defined, but there is something in the 'mind' that leaks through in a physical form. It is called 'thinking heart' of an actor in Japanese dance [Notes, Japan]. What happens in the actor's psyche when they stand on the stage will show also in their body (even though the audience doesn't naturally perceive the things that a trained actor doesn't wish to show), and that is the reason why the two are inseparable whole.

## 4.2 Mime

The art of 'actor mime' is different from the stereotypic white-faced characters one might have a picture of [Lecoq 2006, p.68]. It is simply the study of illusions created with the tool that is in every actor's reach: their own body. Lecoq [Lecoq 2006, p.69] speaks of a creation of physical impressions by an actor-mime, and sees silence as a mere starting point for an actor's technique.

During our first year at Novia, we spoke of mimesis as the art of copying the world around ourselves [Notes, Lekteori], and my personal training (and my personal interests) are not in studying simple human movement to create expressions of human

thought: we have done an exercise of copying each other's natural movements, but I took it more as an exercise to heighten the consciousness of one's own body, and the bodies of others. It was an exercise to peel off the unnecessary habits – extra tensions – of movement, that might dampen one's expression. After that we could find the real expressive potential that lies in the nature: storms, volcanos and over-tragic paper that will never recover its original form when one time formed somehow [Notes, Rö/Rö].

There is very much potential in the silence of mime [Lecoq 2006, p.70-93], and I respect silence as a very useful starting point, but it cannot be all as there are also restrictions what can happen in silence and still work with audience [Notes, Mim]. I have noticed in practice, that many times a mime performance is very exhausting to watch for a little longer while, and our mime teacher Maya Tångeberg-Grischin advised of never having anything longer than seven minutes and never without music when performing for an audience [Notes, Mim].

### **4.3 Voice and Movement**

Use of voice is a very important tool to me. I find words and language very useful tools of physical expression. First, because they are also part of body, a sort of movement [Linklater 2006, p.13] and have the potential of expression same as the rest of the body if used correctly. Second, because words hold very much hidden knowledge, associations and expressive potential of a culture in: understanding language helps to understand the culture that created it. Third, in an extreme poor theatre piece with only actors without the help of modern machinery, there would be very little auditory stimulus without the use of voice. There are limits to what my voice can do, but it is still my voice – my body – that I am working with the rest of my life.

When speaking of voice and movement, I simply think of auditory and visual move-

ments of human body: human body can create many other sounds also besides the mere use of voice. In Asian theatre styles, the rhythmic stomping of feet and use of different tools in a rhythmic way while performing are very common tools to help create *the atmosphere of sound*.

I remember reading some scholar calling traditional nagauta music 'atmosphere' that simply accompanies the sounds created by the actor himself. Without any sound, the auditory atmosphere of physical theatre would non-existent. The sounds an actor can create hold very much potential in the case of poor, total theatre that I personally find something a physical actor might find very useful.

It is also something I found out while training in Japan to the said nagauta music that movements seldom go simply to the rhythm of the music in the beginning of dance: there is a sort of room for variation, thinking and artistic choices while flirting with the rhythm.

Especially in a piece called Gorou, the rhythm of the movements are sometimes not at all to the beat of the music: only at some points the dance goes back to following the music as if to remind the audience that there is still the music on the background and that it can be used. I think sometimes even that the Japanese music actually tells the story in a very simple way all the time (a sort of heart's tune), and at some point the character merely starts to believe in it. This is not something I am very experienced with, and I have never confirmed it from my teachers, but sometimes I did have this kind of feeling while practicing the dances.

#### **4.4 Acrobatics**

Acrobatics is a study of movement. There has been mentions of a Chinese word *shùn* in describing an important principle of jingju acrobatics that our training has based quite a lot on. It means simply that one puts exactly the right amount of

effort to produce a movement[Notes, jibengong].

This main principle is visible in the form of acrobatics as is the principle of *kungfu* (not to be confused in martial arts form). This basic principle means that things may be learned only by practicing diligently. I have also come to witness that most of the training in jingju acrobatics follow a road where these two go hand-in-hand: training can be done very independently to the point where one knows, how to do a certain movement.

Movements and exercises we have gathered have many inner feedback systems, that let one know, if the movement is wrong. There are naturally also things that cannot be checked on one's own, and for that reason there are teachers that can let one know, how to continue training after a new point of proficiency has been reached. As with seemingly all traditional physical theatre forms, there is always something more to learn.

Acrobatics have also been a very important pedagogical tool for us: it is very concrete form of movement with quite simple aesthetics. Movements are also psychologically challenging as one must work with one's own body in a very unnatural way. In a private discussion with Steina Öhman, she pointed out that one could say that 75% of our acrobatics lessons actually were about teaching. I think she meant all the practice we get in understanding the process of growth as we watch each other try, fail in multitudes of ways, try again with more understanding of the thing and finally even succeed in a movement that at first glance seemed impossible.

#### **4.5 Martial Arts**

Maya Tångeberg-Grischin speaks of martial arts as something giving an actor their extra-daily boost with a dilated body needed for mask work [MTG 2005, p.44, p.98]. Besides this principle, I have found my own martial arts experience giving me some

ideas of what they can teach me. I am now not speaking of any martial sport (judo, boxing) or modern battlefield training forms (krav maga, combat sambo, shooting) that both have a very restricted variety of techniques. To me, martial arts are *art forms based on the study of violence*. I am actually working on a blog text to open up this idea a little bit further.

Most martial artists know how a human body moves: first they learn to move one's own body, then they continue by moving other persons' bodies. As most of the human bodies are mechanically similar, people become physically conscious of the movements in a way that body reacts before thinking.

If movements are learned in a proper way, martial arts movements are also very optimized for their purposes. These are naturally martial movements, but there has been a few articles on how actor training might actually benefit from understanding martial arts [Turse 2003][Rafolt 2014]. Lastly there's the art of stagefighting, that cannot be really without understanding the violence itself, and not easily done in a dramatic way without a certain kind of theatrical mindset that lets do things in a flashy, meaningful way and without hurting each other.

#### **4.6 Body Education**

I am personally reluctant to use term 'warm-up' anymore after being forced to go through training at our school: simplified training of certain principles, neural recalibration or just the one we used at Novia – 'body education' – might be more exact phrase for the thing I am after. As a martial arts instructor (from year 2010 onwards) and with this education partially as a teacher of physical theatre, I know that there is a kind of training that is needed in order to become better in the arts, and that is exactly what I am after when thinking of body education.

There are many physical qualities in physical theatre that must be taken care of.

From my personal background I know, that there are many different kinds of training traditions, and I could write an essay of them later when I have done more of my research. For more information on my thoughts on strength and flexibility training tests at the moment, I would recommend checking [Tsatsouline 2001] and [Tsatsouline 2004]: besides these, I have practiced quite many traditional exercises for building these skills [Notes, examples in: ballet, jingju]. Still, there is something more needed.

The thing that body education teaches us is dramatic movement qualities. These can take form of physical theatre techniques of traditional kind, unusual ways of moving one's body around in the space and *movement analysis* that even Lecoq mentions [Lecoq 2001, p.71-90]. Body education is – in fact – what the name expresses it to be: a form of preparing a body of physical actor to meet any artistic need they might face during future productions or with learning new skills for their theatre work.

#### **4.7 Nihon Buyou**

Nihon buyou – classical Japanese dance – is a dance form I learned in Japan under Wakayagi Yayoi. The training I underwent was strict, and also of very basic level. The training method I learned there was very interesting though as very little was explained, more things were just shown and then I copied the movements of my teacher until she was satisfied with my ability to remember the dance: during this process, she also gave me feedback (when at the same time showing and example for me – sometimes even as a mirror-image of the actual dance piece).

There were many things I was taught and was able to add to my personal toolbox. I am not completely aware of all the things I learned there, but they have a lot to do with bodily understanding of things like rhythm, bodymind connection and move-



ment. I also did a lot of practice on female forms, and next time I travel to Japan, I must probably concentrate mostly on male dances to understand better those systems.

This is a form, which I will try teaching the same way it was taught to me: mostly teaching by example and only giving exact knowledge (some of them 'secret techniques', as my teacher sometimes called them) of the things as needed. I want also learn to teach this form to others, as there might be some possible benefits that only come from teaching the form. I am also forced to practice the form more before I return to Japan in order to learn more.

#### **4.8 Mask Theatre**

Mime is needed to give life to a mask, and to understand the mask energy one needs martial arts training according to Maya Tångeberg-Grischin [MTG 2005, p.35, p.44, p.98]. I personally have noticed that masks can also awake the actors as they must put their bodies into action in very different way than previously. They awake the imagination and need very strict body training to be played physically. Somehow, masks are similar to silent theatre, that they show things clearer: especially neutral mask seems to have a specific purpose of forcing the actor to think with their body as I noticed very strongly when teaching a mask course to a group of people without physical actor training [Notes, Palatsi].

The way we learned to use half-masks of Commedia dell'arte was also interesting thing: there were specific body positions and specific techniques in the use of masks. The form of commedia dell'arte is a sort of historically researched theatre form – and as such it interests me greatly.

We introduced also the nose of a clown during our training. This mysterious object is the smallest mask of them all with a purpose to emphasize what other masks seem

to hide: the actor's face [Lecoq 2006, p.116]. I have been told at times, that I don't really understand clown: I don't know, if I do, but I feel like I should go restudy these entertaining figures before I could think of working with them on stage or on pedagogics as they feel like they are something extremely useful – I am not sure why, though.

Last but not least, as I proof-read this thesis, we have started our final course in buffoons: grotesque, evil clowns that love to laugh at the holiest parts of human society. This kind of mindset might also prove useful in my future work, even though I am not yet sure, how.

#### **4.9 More of the Applications**

As the reader has seen during this chapter, it seems there are many practical forms of physical theatre. Besides the forms presented until now, there I have had a few insights that don't really have to do with form of training, but with actual actor-work: applying the diverse techniques on the stage, or in teaching stage-principles to others.

##### **4.9.1 Stagefighting**

I have started to like very much stagefighting as we started with Chinese Fights during movement practice during the start of the program, were many times told "not to use violence" during our first year production, and naturally because of my martial arts background all the way from year 1999 after which I have been always working with some martial arts system.

I did also find out a stylized stagefighting system based on Chinese Fights[Notes, EKT] that I have started liking very much. This consists of two additional possibili-

ties besides merely taking the strike (reaction): Quixotian Assault (dodge) or Münchausen Cannonball (absorb).

After I took part in stagefighting course lead by Oula Kitti and learned what kind of system is used in Finland in general, this system of mine seems to actually work together with that one quite well: it just emphasizes stylized dynamics and meanings that are much more important to me than actual fighting moves. I must learn a lot more of classical stagefighting before I can combine this system to all the skills I already possess.

#### 4.9.2 Circular Systems

In my own pedagogics – at least when teaching and planning martial arts training – it feels for some reason important to go in circles. That is, to first start with the basics, and after a while, go back to basics with a new understanding from all the higher level exercises.

As any taught system is complex and has many facets in it, every time I teach the same material to the same people, I try to take the material one step further: maybe add a step, make things more dynamic and basically challenge people even more. In acrobatics, mime or in fact any technical training this would probably be introducing a new variation of, way to play with or use of basic movements. With artistic training, maybe it would be enough to merely use higher level of technical tools and challenge people physically and mentally, but there might be also levels of how much artistic responsibility one can give people etc.

I simply have started to like these kinds of systems under this training even though nobody has (to my knowledge) spoken explicitly of something like that, many teachers of mine also use a similar idea.

#### 4.10 An Inner Beast of Mine: A Dragon

When I think of this expressive potential, and how to define and shape it, I think in practice of exercises and thought processes inside a system. If I want to speak of the complete 'thing' instead, I must speak in another language instead.

I hope the reader allows me this romantic way of expressing my thoughts, but inside a human body there is a hidden a pulse of expressive potential. The bodymind of a physical actor has a part that I have started to think of as a 'hidden beast', as it is sometimes very difficult to see this expressive potential in daily life, but when speaking of an extra-daily life – a life on stage – this beast is freed from its cage and can shape the world as it sees fit.

I cannot really explain the concept of inner beast very far, but the idea of a beast was probably influenced already by our first year of studies and the shamanic *power animal* mythos (a sort of an fictive 'advice-giver' created by shaman's unconscious mind) presented then [Notes, Lekteori].

A dragon is also a special creature to me. It symbolizes ability to transform, yin and jang in one creature and the ability to fly. It is a lucky creature and my Chinese horoscope. It has also been something that has fascinated me all the way from elementary school.

As this thesis is based on my personal journey and my personal views, a dragon felt like a best. A dragon was a figure drawn to the unknown parts of the medieval maps, and has a very interesting characteristic in medieval lore: their true danger lies in their tail and not in the fiery breath they are more known of [Notes, JHMS].

As I now have the map of my experiences, and am standing near the edge of the map, it felt like it was a proper time to explain this conceptual idea of mine – an idea of an actor's art.

## 5 Analysis of the Results

I have taken apart program, and then taken some of the tools I have best grasped during the program into a little closer inspection. I have drawn a map of my journey and then explained, where I am because of that journey. I have also spoken of the inner beasts that live in a subconscious Never Never Land where these kind of personal thinking tools may be used.

I could speculate, how I have grown during my education at Novia University of Applied Sciences, but as I don't think that is possible anymore as I have never been very good in keeping track of my past mes. I do remember other people well, but my older versions I seem to forget quite easily: I am, what I am now and I still have the essence and knowledge of the past even though I might be radically different from the one I was ten years ago (when I still ran away when someone tried to hug me).

I will now ask the reader three important follow-up questions, that I become conscious of because of this research.

1. How to put this training into practice when acting?
2. How to teach these skills of physical acting to others?
3. How would I change the program in order to make it such that I could use it?
4. Is theatre only training, skills and a list of courses and/or attributes? (from a supervisor discussion with Steina Öhman)

I don't have my own answer ready for these questions, but I should now start looking for those answers.

First, my own acting is not very well defined yet: I will grow, learn from directors and notice which tools I wish to use in which context. I will also never know beforehand which tools are useful to me in the future, so I must choose the tools I wish to train with and tools I wish to abandon altogether.

Second, teaching is also a difficult point of view: I will most likely start with teaching the skills that I named in my toolbox at section 4, and follow my bodily training and intuition to make it better. I have already started this project by teaching a course in physical expression at Musiikkiteatteri Palatsi at Tampere, and few other courses here and there. Still, I have much to learn and much tools to test.

Third, I would probably not change the program at all at the moment if I could make it as it is. There would probably be changes in scenery and in details of who could teach and what, but those would be because of circumstances. I don't really have enough knowledge of the program to make these changes, and I would need to consult those who have taught in the program and seen the complete picture from outside to understand, what parts are the most vital.

Fourth, I have written of dragons of expression, but what I am really speaking of is a human being that has their feelings, moods and thoughts to follow. I speak of the tools because an actual human being is a much more difficult study. Theatre really is for me about two people meeting each other: a sort of a Grotowskian relationship between a member of audience and an actor. I also do not completely understand how I did find the tools I have now (or what tools do I actually have besides those that have been typed out for me by a studyplan and schedules): similarly to historical fencing practice, I feel like I must actually meet more people – teach them, discuss with them and learn from them – before I can understand the invisible part of my toolbox.

To continue discussion any further than pointing out the things I have learned would need me to work with all the tools I have – in teaching and acting – and create clearer impressions on them then. At this point, it feels futile to continue any further as views we have are completely different: *my sources hold views from outside the program and my own point of view is from the inside of the program.* I must first

take a step to the outside of the program and put things into practice before I can honestly discuss anything any further.

Then I might go back to the program, and as an example start a new research project with the help of my classmates and teachers of the program.

### **5.1 The Final Destination**

Most of the points of view mentioned here – mapping one’s experiences, best-defined tools in my toolbox etc – would deserve to have a complete thesis on their own, and I will most likely write something of them later during my career. Still, my thesis wouldn’t have felt an honest one, if I wouldn’t have given the incomplete thought-construct of mine in its completeness.

It is important to remember, that in this thesis I explain simply a rough sketch of things and its idea is not to show, how deeply I understand everything but instead give me and my readers a bigger picture of things. It is also a map of the journey ahead.

Thank you for reading. Safe travel and fare well.

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