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Anecdotal Body Transformations

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D e c l a r a t i o n

I declare that I have prepared my Bachelor 's Thesis independently on the following topic
Anecdotal Transformations:

Anecdotal Body Transformations

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date:

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Warning

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Keywords:

Acting - Indian Classical Theatre, Body in Motion class, Dialogical Acting, Indian Folk Dance, Training for Movement class, Kalaripayattu, Feldenkrais, Authorial Acting, Singing.

Abstract:

My eagerness to learn acting brought me to DAMU (The Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague). During the journey I had classes of many kinds but most important for me were the ones focusing on movement, awareness and acting itself.

The major focus of my theses goes back to the basics of acting studies. The most important part of my thesis focuses on the physical and mental transformations that happened within me.¹ This transformation affected my regular life in numerous ways. The transformation made me experience a whole new persona inside of me, further making me competent as an actor.

It feels like I was a part of this process for a long time, but I became profoundly aware of it through the experience of learning. Day by day, these classes rejuvenated past experiences and realisations inside me. The realisations came first through the physical and then the mental realms. This process opened my eyes to the benefits and drawbacks of an increased awareness within me. My main approach was to always look towards the bright side of my transformation. Sometimes it proved hard to do so, but I also realised it was never impossible, and that I possess the power to do so.

In short, this process taught me to live and enjoy the present moment. And as an actor, it has taught me to understand new characters, and to live and breathe their life.

¹ These two chapters focus mostly on the mentioned topic: *Theatre in India / Becoming an actor, Natyashastra VS Ivan Vyskočil*, and *Western culture movement transformation*.

Keywords:

Herectví-Indické klasické divadlo, Tělo v pohybu, Dialogické Jednání, Indický lidový tanec, Pohyb, Kalaripayattu-Bojové umění, Feldenkraisova Metoda, Autorské herectví.

Abstract:

Na DAMU mě přivedlo moje nadšení učit se herectví. Na mé studijní cestě jsem navštěvoval mnoho druhů předmětů, ale nejdůležitější pro mě byly ty, které se zaměřovaly na pohyb, vědomí a samotné herectví.

Hlavní těžiště mé práce se vrací k základům studia herectví. Nejdůležitější část mé práce se zaměřuje na fyzické a duševní proměny, které se ve mně udály. Tato proměna ovlivnila můj běžný život mnoha způsoby. Tato transformace mi umožnila zažít uvnitř sebe zcela novou osobnost, která mě dále učinila kompetentním jakožto herce.

Připadá mi, že už jsem součástí tohoto procesu po dlouhou dobu, ale hluboké uvědomění přišlo teprve skrze zkušenost učení se. Den za dnem ve mně kurzy obnovovaly minulé zkušenosti a realizace. Uvědomění přicházelo nejprve prostřednictvím fyzické a poté mentální sféry. Tento proces mi otevřel oči směrem k výhodám a nevýhodám mého vnitřního zvýšeného vědomí. Mým hlavním přístupem bylo vždy dívat se na světlou stránku mé transformace. Někdy to bylo těžké, ale uvědomil jsem si, že to nikdy není nemožné a že k tomu mám sílu.

Tento proces mě zkrátka naučil žít a užívat si přítomný okamžik. A jako herce mě to naučilo rozumět novým postavám, žít a dýchat jejich život.

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I would like to thank my Gurus, who introduced me to “art” itself and folk dance, Chetan Dave, Jayesh Prajapati, and Nimesh Upadhyay.

A special thanks to my Friend, Mentor, Guru, Chirag Modi, who introduced me to theatre and acting, and supported me by encouraging me to study acting in the Western world (DAMU), even though it was a hard decision for him to “let me go.”

Finally, thanks to all those who helped me in my journey of DAMU / DACaP that I might have forgotten to mention.

I feel as if my body is being shaped by the help of letters, as if I am a part of the letters themselves. Or maybe am I a letter myself? Living in DACaP, my body was transformed from letters and became a sentence, that I might call myself a writer and an actor.

ખુબ ખુબ આભાર મારા પરિવાર, મિત્રો અને સાથીદારોને, મારા ઘડતર ને પુરુકારવામાં.

મારા શરીર ને પૂરું કરવામાં. મને નીરવ બનવા માટે.

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Operational Definitions:

(AA): Authorial Acting, a class taught in the Authorial Acting Program

(AP): Authorial Presentation, a pivotal discipline in the Authorial Acting Program

(AR): Authorial Reading, class taught in the Authorial Acting Program

(BIM): Body in Motion, a class taught in the Authorial Acting Program

(DJ): A Czech acronym for Dialogical Acting with the Inner Partner, in Czech Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem

(DACaP): Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy, in Czech language known as Katedra autorské tvorby a pedagogiky (KATaP)

(DAMU): Divadelní fakulta Akademie múzických umění v Praze, A Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague

(AMU): A Czech acronym for the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, in Czech Akademie múzických umění v Praze

(Speech): Speech as Active Communication, a class taught in the Authorial Acting Program

Introduction

In my thesis, I focus on observing my own physical transformations as an actor and performer. I start with introspection on certain experiences from my childhood up till the artistic experiences nowadays that have constantly exerted changes on my mental and physical states. Hard work and perseverance play a huge part in every change that has happened within me. This same perseverance, over time, solidified into willpower and self-confidence. I believe this strength adds nuances to my body and continues to do so.

I learned to work hard in India and this especially cultivated willpower in me, but my upbringing has instilled rigid stereotypes in my way of thinking. My studies at DAMU, being artistic and open, and also my experiences of acting, have given me the beautiful realization that I can observe my stereotypes, make them conscious, and that I do not have to follow them all the time, nor do I have to try so hard to break them necessarily.

As I come from such a deeply traditional cultural background, my upbringing filled my mind and body with the ideal of a stereotypical Indian lifestyle. For example, I was taught that I should focus on what to study, how to get a better job, how to settle down (get a wife, have kids), and how to communicate with other people in a stereotypical, inherited way, which sometimes did not strike me as truthful. This felt like theatre, playing the role of, for example, the dutiful nephew. While there is nothing wrong with this in principle, it struck me that society didn't allow me to grow up in my own way, to speak truthfully and create authentic and sincere relationships with others and with myself. I could not handle this approach.

Until a certain age I did follow what I was told to do. However, I found that my mind would only focus on myself. So, day by day, I started to follow my intuition. I tried to live my life the way I wanted. I wanted to break the chain of my cultural lifestyle. Doing so always gave me motivation to learn something new and go beyond my boundaries and challenge myself.

Through art, I did discover how to live in such a way back in India. I traveled the world as an Indian folk dancer and visited many European countries. I decided that I wanted to come back to Europe at some point. After many ups and downs, I finally found myself at DAMU.

While studying at DAMU, I realized that I am especially interested in the body, because, unlike the mental aspect, it is the part of the actor that can be seen and felt tangibly. Yes, my soul plays as much of a role as my body. But the difference is that I can *talk* about the inner experiences, supplying information that is secondhand for the listener, but I can never succeed to communicate the full experience itself (to which I refer as “internal” or “mental”); it can only be experienced personally. Whereas I can see the smallest change in my body, “physical behaviour,” affected by internal experience. Most of the time, I pay more attention to my body, because I can *see* it, like everyone else.

In my opinion, this change started when I started learning dance. Later, I encountered it again through acting. The deeper realizations these changes occurring within me came slowly after I joined DACaP. My studies made me more aware. In my experience, through this awareness, I could observe every kind of physical process that was taking place in front

of my eyes, understand it, and adapt to it. Along with the external observations, my consciousness of the internal observations also increased.

Throughout the journey of movement, I never failed to listen to myself. By this I mean expressing my desires and putting them into action, which reminds me of Dialogical Acting, which “explores a double existence of an actor in the role and the ability of identifying with the role or distancing from it.”²

In my journey, I’m constantly passing through change. I do not believe I am the same person I once was. I can choose to do what I want. For example, I want to be an artist, but I know it will change me in every step of my life. As mentioned, “art seems to have developed a good relation with change and theatre is certainly one of the art forms where this is most evident.”³

This is what I aim to explain in my thesis: that I have found my art (acting and theatre), but also how, and what was the process of it. What was the challenge in it? What was the change in it? What change did it evoke in me? How did I transform into another Nirav, whom I nowadays call my own ‘self’?

² Musilová, Martina. “Stanislavski in Dialogical Acting with the Inner Partner – in the Neighbourhood with Brecht.” Taylor & Francis, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/20567790.2018.1439674>. 22 April, 2022.

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³ Sliva, José Eduardo, et al. “(PDF) The Changing Theatre: A Psychological Approach to the Experience of Acting.” ResearchGate, 11 April. 2022, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265934020_The_Changing_Theatre_A_psychological_approach_to_the_experience_of_acting.

Chapter 1: My Early Creative Experiences in India

If I have one thing that I can call my own, that is myself. If I have achieved anything, it is the step-by-step formation and growth of another Nirav, as if something is developing inside me, in my body, in my mind. My thoughts have changed, and so my perspectives have changed.

In “The Changing Theatre: A psychological approach to the experience of acting,”⁴ José Eduardo Silva et al. says the following about human transformational processes:

From all the human transformational processes of knowing, appropriating and making sense of the world – in the act of sublimation from which culture emerges – art is probably its most supreme expression (Goodman, 2006; Silva, Menezes e Coimbra, 2012 in print). The artist, by the exploratory way of action, is able to transform his felt experience in objects, sounds, drawings, gestures, words and many other aesthetical forms with which he can give shape to his emotions. This way he becomes able to start a dialectical process, where he transforms the world he lives in at the same time as he transforms himself – and through this interactional dialogue he becomes able to open a path of access to his own self-knowledge and accomplishment, as well as to an ever-increasing knowledge of the world. Life continues and develops through relations, imbued in energetic and dynamic processes where change is a constant presence. In the comprehension of human functioning, we must take into account the inevitability of change. We cannot choose between change and immutability, the choice that can be made is about the direction that a change can take (Coimbra, 1991): we can choose to participate or not participate, to influence or not influence that process. Art seems to have developed a good relation with change and theatre is certainly one of the art forms where this is most evident.

As mentioned in the article, people try to make sense of the experience of growing within their own culture and the experience of finding themselves through art. I feel the change itself is an art.

My authorial presentations during my studies usually recalled stories and events that happened to me in real life, which evoked certain transformations in me. Most of the time the topics were from my childhood: electrical work, running a marathon (unexpected event), dancing (authenticity / tradition), acting (theatre /multiple skills at once) and studying acting in a foreign culture. All those experiences are sort of like different shapes of Nirav, a bunch of different emotions. Throughout my studies I tried finding creative relationships with those versions of Nirav, and all the emotions associated with them. This was art for me.

While I mostly focused on my physical challenges (marathon, dance, Kalaripayattu, theatre exercises, movement classes at DACaP) and how these have inspired me, I’m also constantly examining the thought processes and inner challenges that helped me to learn physical skills, and making it evident how the mind and body are interconnected.

I grew up in a modest family in Ahmedabad, a well-known city in the Indian state of Gujarat. Living a traditional lifestyle⁵ had its own good side, but it was mostly exhausting for

⁴ Sliva, José Eduardo, et al. “(PDF) The Changing Theatre: A Psychological Approach to the Experience of Acting.” ResearchGate, 11 April. 2022, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265934020_The_Changing_Theatre_A_psychological_approach_to_the_experience_of_acting.

⁵ I was forced to finish my high school and try to get a government job, not to study further even if I wanted to. I was told to study some technical field so I could earn money or have my own business. I had to believe or follow a religious structure in daily life (pray every morning and night, visit the temple always on certain days of the

me. I would keep trying to break the chain of stereotypicality and find a way to enjoy the moment and to feel alive.

The only thing that satisfied me was art, or at least being part of some creative process. Looking for my own creative outlet wasn't easy, and I tried anything that had something to do with art: painting, dance, theatre, etc. Before that, I worked as an electrician, which had nothing to do with art. Despite that, I tried to see electric work as a creative process. But sometimes that wasn't enough, so I kept trying to find something that I would enjoy.

In addition to art, I was also interested in physical activity, so I tried to focus on my body, for example, through some physical challenges, such as exercising or running. However, I would not stop looking for joy in creative pursuits.

Due to my fickle nature, new curiosities kept awakening in me. As a teenager, I developed a passion for painting, and over time began to study it myself. Doing this gave me the passion to focus on the details of human figures. How to draw them, how to shape them, how to make them expressive. When I got tired of routine, I would sit down and sketch for hours and hours. I promised to myself aloud,⁶ "Hey Nirav, do not forget that you want to be an artist", as if talking to myself, having a "dialogue" similar to what Eva Slavíková describes in her paper.

So 'dialogue' need not only denote its typical meaning: 'two people who are speaking together.' It can also mean clarifying actions or a process through words, speech, and a search for meaning. But of course, when you speak, they should also-be responds to you, who hears you out.⁷

In this case, the one who responded was "me" telling myself or giving a commitment for what I want to be in the future. I believe that things do not simply happen tomorrow. Progress comes with lots of effort in the present, through trial and error. So, I continued working.

Electrical work always amazed me with its new techniques, which to me wasn't merely technical knowledge, but itself a form of art,⁸ and I found it deeply interesting.

week, fast based on the Hindu calendar a few times in a week, visit every ritual, marriage function, Hindu festival or tradition held up by my family, relatives, and culture,etc.).

⁶ Most of the time when I had to do something in the future, and remember something important, I would always say it out loud. I developed this habit to train my mind and tell it "do not forget about it." When I'm saying something out loud, I know this will somehow be stored in my mind and transfer into my body. If my body would forget, then my mind would remember, and if my mind would forget, then my body would remember. This works surprisingly well. I can even wake up without an alarm by telling myself what time I want to get up before going to sleep. I can also make myself fall asleep or stop thinking about something that I don't want to think about.

⁷ Ivan Vyskočil. "A Teacher's Insights Into Practice." Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 104. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The translation is part of the archive of Brkola awaiting to be published.

⁸ In electrical work I cannot make mistakes. One mistake can create a big disaster or a risk of someone getting hurt. Creating connections requires focus and accuracy. I cannot doubt my work nor what I'm doing. This sort of authenticity gave me confidence to prepare for the character and stay focused on it. This is why I call it art. Also, the occasional electric shock made me fear less and taught me how to hold onto my fear and accept the fear of what's going to happen. Similarly, my experience with art has taught me how to hold or play with my emotions

Learning and doing it has given me technical understanding in every aspect of life. If I take art as an example, there are lots of areas where technique is important: acting technique, theatrical technique, body and movement technique, drawing technique, and so on. I gained an ability to understand everything technically, whether it's art or any technical field itself, e.g., if I'm learning to dance, I focus on every single movement and try to understand step by step as if I'm dividing the movements into hundreds of individual pieces, following them one by one, and trying to apply the same sense in my body. This is how I'm able to understand dance, acting, movement, anything.

In the process of finding a balance between non-creative and creative pursuits, one thing wasn't enough for me. I mastered the electrician pursuit in me, and so I had to challenge myself and try something else. Somehow this eagerness wouldn't let me stop surprising myself, always leading me to challenge my mind and body.

For example, once I was at my grandma's house, and I was introduced to marathons by my elder brother. The idea of testing myself in such a way sounded very exciting and challenging for me. With the help of my brother, I signed up for a full marathon just two days before the main event. The marathon was a new adventure for me; it allowed me to prove to myself that I could do it, despite my brother's doubts.

I believe that it's often difficult to put into practice what we have in the mind, so effort is necessary. Eventually, due to my stubborn nature, even though I almost lost, I completed the marathon and triumphed over myself. Whenever I take on a challenge like this, my aim is more to triumph over myself than to win the event itself. I enjoyed challenging my inner curiosity. When it jumps out of my body/mind, it makes me feel mature and much more present than simply living in my thoughts. It brings me back to reality and alerts me to who I am, what I am doing and why I'm doing it. From such an event, I answer those questions to myself and achieve a new "Nirav" in me.

That experience gave a new direction to my willpower. It transformed my mindset into a definite discipline. During the marathon, I realized that the willpower and discipline taught me how and when to use my inner strength. In my opinion, my mindset was the only reason I could finish the marathon.⁹ I believe that this experience made me realize that each and every person is full of a wonderful type of strength; that one can do whatever they wish to. There is a saying in my mother tongue Gujarati that "મન હોય તો માળવે જવાય."¹⁰

and cooperate with my body. I've never been away from art. I started to find artistic perspective in whatever I did, and it doesn't matter whether it's electrical work or some artistic discipline. All is art for me.

⁹ I still remember, from the moment I started running to the very end, my gaze was straight on my goal, the direction of the finish line, and my mind was constantly repeating only one sentence, "Here is the end, here is the end". The repetition did not allow my brain to focus on physical exhaustion, did not allow me to give up, due to which my full attention was on my goal and I finally reached the end.

¹⁰ Meaning 'if you have a firm mind, you can reach your goal without any doubt.'

During the same year as the marathon, I joined a folk-dance group.¹¹ I ended up using one of the methods that I had learned during the marathon. I used my physical efficacies, such as my strength, tenacity and endurance, in small quantities from the beginning to the end. That kept my body running. On the other hand, with my willpower, I focused my psyche on the goal, in which all I could see was the “end”. Unbeknownst to me, the marathon had taught me to switch between two modes: mental and physical. I knew how and when to use body and mind when needed.

Until the day of the marathon, my psyche had never let me down. However, one can be proven wrong. I almost died that day. I would suggest to properly prepare oneself beforehand rather than get hurt by one’s own risky decisions.¹²

¹¹ India, Panghat Performing Arts Group, stated Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India since 2001. “Panghat Performing Arts Group Ahmedabad - India.” YouTube, YouTube, 22 April. 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBM6pWjYaZnL3uaIl8H-c6Q/featured>>.

¹² After finishing the marathon, I went home and wanted to just rest and take a shower. On my way to the bathroom, I collapsed and ended up in the hospital, taken by my family. I was told by the doctors that I had had a minor heart attack. At that moment, I didn’t care very much, because I was still in a celebratory mood. But looking back, rather than being stubborn I should have practiced more. I hurt myself physically and I hurt my family emotionally, just because I was being stupid. Yes, there are things that people can prove themselves to do. But if you plan to take such a risk, you should prepare yourself properly, so you don’t end up hurting yourself and others.

Chapter 2: Indian Culture's Heritage of Movement and Transformation

Chapter 2/1: Indian Folk Dance

Panghat taught me many different kinds of folk dances. In India, folk dances are usually performed in celebration of religious festivals. The beauty of folk dance in India is that for each state, there is a different folk dance style altogether. There are 28 different styles of folk dance in India.¹³ Even within each of these styles, there are lots of variations between the dances of different villages and cities in each of these states.

Folk dances are celebrated on the streets during festivals. Friends, family, and neighbors from the vicinity would gather and dance around goddesses “Amba.”¹⁴

Religious music would be played, and people would dance to the beat and rhythm of that music. The dance, “Raas and Garaba,” takes place in a circle. Boys and girls make pairs and dance in one direction with reciprocal physical movement, with a certain rhythm in a clockwise direction.¹⁵

For this dance, people prepare wonderful and colorful costumes and wear heavy jewelry. Costumes are mostly hand embroidered, due to which the weight of a normal costume easily exceeds seven kg.¹⁶ The dance, and so the circle, keeps on rotating and revolving all night, and this is how the festival is celebrated. Doing this type of physical activity continuously for eight hours wearing so much weight requires physical strength in each person. Along with strength, they need to have passion.

Whenever I saw such fervor and intense passion in people, I would also want to join and dance with them. But I would usually end up getting too physically tired. There were many reasons for this: I did not know how to dance with fixed steps, I did not have the right rhythm in my body movement and every now and then I would forget the steps. These small mistakes made me physically tired. Learning dance at this stage in life was a challenge for both my body and mind.

Before joining the dance group, I was aware that I was a bad dancer. But I had also decided that if I would join the group, I would not leave without learning. So, from the first day, I put all my shame away and fully committed myself to the dance group.

While learning the dance, I didn't pay any attention to my panicking mind. I crawled in the middle, and tried my best to dance like them. I was not even an inch close, but I tried. I possessed the skill and zeal to learn.

¹³ “List of Indian Folk Dances.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 13 Apr. 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indian_folk_dances.

¹⁴ Goddess Amba "મંબા અંબા" (In Gujarati), "माँ अम्बा" (In Hindi), around this goddess we celebrate one of the festivals in Gujarat call Navratri, "નવરાત્રી" (In Gujarati), "नवरात्री" (In Hindi).

¹⁵ Dave, Chetan. “Sonal Garbo Shire | Panghat Group | Garba Steps | Learn Garba | Traditional Garba NavratriC.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 22 April. 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZmGHvjQMKk>.

¹⁶ Gujarat, India, 13, Oct. 2021, Folk dance Performer (Darshes Patel) from Panghat Performing Arts Group with full traditional costumes and all kinds of ornaments that the man is supposed to wear while dancing (Garba). The picture is to be found in the Appendix, p. 39.

Toning of the body was an utter necessity to dance. At that age, and due to the long endurance that my body had been through, I didn't have the flare and the flicker necessary to develop a "dancey" accent. I was trying to learn from scratch. It was always easy to understand any technique, whereas it proved to be quite difficult to actually do it. The most important part was practice, which I kept at, constantly. It was an arduous journey to be able to perform quite consistently.

Because of my stage fright, I found it difficult to actually enjoy the dance during the performances. In the process of learning the basics, I was aware of my errors and common mistakes. Many times, my teacher, Jayeshbhai, would get angry and shower me with insults in order to break my stereotypical thought process and teach me to learn without fear. I would listen and try my best to understand him. Then I would say to myself "Nirav, you have come here to learn." I was persistent and ready for anything.

I understood two important things: how they teach dance and why he was mad. My teacher was as eager to teach, as I was to learn. Once I had this realisation I accepted every conflict which came during my learning process. With that realisation, I knew that I genuinely wanted to learn dance. Professor Vyskočil¹⁷ once stated in a discussion:

I don't teach anybody how to liberate themselves or how to find themselves, or find some better person within themselves. I don't teach that or even with that as a goal, but sometimes that does happen. Or what happens is that there is a feeling that this is happening. You're correct that some people do discover a certain ethos or pathos, but we don't teach anyone that. That's something some people experience and discover. Sometimes that's connected to meeting yourself in a genuine way, and with self-understanding and, especially, self-acceptance.¹⁸

I relate to Professor Vyskočil's way of teaching, especially after my early experiences with dance, as they allowed me to be more open in the space, which then as a result, allowed me to be more accepting of the circumstances of being in the space.

Practicing DA also reminded me of the previously mentioned feeling, where I allowed myself to accept whatever impulse was being thrown at me, such as the insults, but instead of "being insulted," I took it as an impulse which forced me to focus on the details of the dance that Jayeshbhai was teaching. This only encouraged me to practice harder. As a result, this

¹⁷ Professor Vyskočil (born April 27, 1929 in Prague) is a Czech writer, playwright, actor, director and theater teacher. He graduated in 1948 from the Academic Grammar School in Prague, then studied directing and acting at DAMU (1952). After completing this study, he decided to continue his studies at Charles University, where he studied psychology with a specialization in juvenile delinquents and criminal prevention and pedagogy (1957). Simultaneously with these activities, he was a teacher of psychology and pedagogy at AMU from 1957 to 1959. Vyskočil co-founded the Na Zábřadlí Theater, from 1958 to 1962 he worked here as a drama director, actor, author and artistic director. Prof. Vyskočil founded the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy at DAMU in 1991. The discipline of Dialogical Acting (with the Inner Partner) is the primary foundation of the study program at the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy in year 1991, and its affiliated institution, the Institute for the Research and Study of Authorial Acting. He also, held with students at The Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno at the start of an (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner course taught there in 2004.

¹⁸ Vyskočil Ivan. "A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner." *Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem*, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 49. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

made me realise my genuine and honest need to learn dance. These experiences in my dance lessons would later help me in my experiences with DJ, as I would be able to work with whatever impulses came up while being in the space with my inner partners.

A flood of questions came with each experience: how do I add fluidity to my body? How do I transform my inertia and strength into elegance through dance? How do I make good use of my endurance? How do I soften my stiff body with the help of my inner qualities and give it a new flow? All these questions kept ringing inside my head throughout the practice, but I was driven to become better in the craft and I felt I was full of discipline.

Because of my strict daily routine, the ups and downs of my emotions, the worries, the embarrassments, and the anger within caused me to lose my mental and physical well-being, or to behave unwelcomely towards people. But the moment I would set foot on the dance floor, all my pessimism would start to turn into positive fulfilments.

After practicing for years my mind and body became stabilised. My training gave me a certain type of discipline within me. I believe that having such an intense process would give purpose to life for any human being. I think everyone should find their own creative process while doing anything. It doesn't have to be an artistic field. My opinion is that sooner or later you would definitely gain something that you wouldn't have imagined.

What I enjoyed most was focusing on the physical, which has always managed to anchor me back in the present. "The body itself doesn't live in the past, it doesn't live in the future, it only lives in the present," as Julyen Hamilton said in his workshop.¹⁹

Chapter 2/3: Kalaripayattu

I had been dancing for about four or five years when an opportunity presented itself for me to take part in a Kalaripayattu workshop. Kalaripayattu (Kalari for short) is a world-renowned form of Indian folk art and martial arts. As a martial art it is ancient, its roots coming from South India, and it was used in wars. The tradition of learning this art continues even today, and is often presented in a dance format.²⁰

The Kalari workshop was ten days of intensive training, most of which was just to teach us the basics. I learned that Kalari martial arts is based on animalistic movements.

Trying out Kalari was a very vivid and inspiring affair for me. In folk dance, I had learned a certain set of dance moves and the discipline that goes with them. I found there was a discipline in Kalari as well, but the movements were very different. They were based on

¹⁹ From 17th to 20th February, 2022, I attended a movement workshop led by Julyen Hamilton, a British dancer and improviser, who was invited by our head of the English program at DACaP, Michaela Raisová, PhD. Julyen Hamilton's teaching investigates deeply the creative act and the approach needed to accompany and facilitate it. His vision of approach is one which observes how things are made, how they function and how knowledge, experience and intuition can be used to create the work we each need to make. It naturally enters the worlds of physiology, philosophy, culture, imagination and the future. The workshop took place at the Music and Dance Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. "Julyen Hamilton." Julyen Hamilton, 22 April. 2022, <https://www.julyenhamilton.com/>.

²⁰ Indian Martial arts, Indian folk, "Kalaripayattu." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 27 Mar. 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kalaripayattu>.

unique animals: the lion, elephant, horse, pig, peacock, fish, snake, rooster and cat. The movements were based on each animal's special characteristics.²¹

Most of the time we had to be under the strict discipline of the guru we had. Our guru was Balraj Soni,²² who had taken seven years of proper training and learned Kalari thoroughly.

For me, the two most important things in Kalari were obedience and discipline. Once the practice would commence, we would be at it for three hours straight. At the beginning of the workshop, we started with a warm-up of about 20-30 minutes. The warm-up started with very intense stretching,²³ which resulted in everyone losing their energy already at the beginning. As dancers, we were not in the habit of doing this kind of warm up.

During the workshop, I felt changes happening within me. In those ten days, in those three-hour sessions, it seemed to me that every moment, a new Nirav was being born inside me. As Vyskočil said about DJ, “sometimes that’s connected to meeting yourself in a genuine way,”²⁴ So once again, I met a new version of myself.

I remember those three-hour bouts, my body would scream, my mental fortitude would shake and unexpected physical pain would never fail to challenge me. Over and over, I would hit my threshold, and would need will power, a push, a tremendous force to go past my limits. In my case, I managed to ‘force’ myself, which did the trick. I got to access a very exotic kind of flexibility, I got to learn completely new kinds of moves and I got to assess a different kind of strength and stability in my body, which hadn’t been there before. It felt like a tremendous flow, which was of a different kind than I had ever experienced in dance. It became even more joyous to dance.

I was also able to gain such versatile knowledge, knowledge that’s rooted in ancient Indian culture, and it was such a pleasure to have it in my mind and body. This knowledge is rooted in spirituality, even though the work is physical. I believe that most cultures contain such knowledge. I also believe that everyone should try to know different cultures, because it may help the person to break through their own boundaries and step out of their own stereotypical lifestyle.

I have seen that happening throughout my journey. I have seen people learn certain art forms from different cultures and try to create new creative processes through their

²¹ Pictures and descriptions of all nine animals’ movements can be found in the Appendix, p. 39.

²² Soni, Belraj. “Belraj.” *Kalari*, <http://www.kalari-belraj.com/>. 21 December, 2021.

²³ Examples of the stretches: loosening your head in every direction, slapping the palm on the shoulder and turning the elbow forward and backward ten times, rotating the fists, while keeping both hands on the waist turning the chest to the right and left side ten times, or ten times from top to bottom and from bottom to top, like running water in the stomach, which is very difficult. We also had jumping and bringing the knee in contact with the chest and straight kicks, cross kicks, cycling wherein the knee comes close to the chest and of course sit ups.

²⁴ Vyskočil Ivan. “A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner.” *Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem*, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 49. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

multicultural experiences. My own culture has developed me in certain ways, through Indian folk dance and Kalaripayattu, and I would encourage others to experience them as well.

After learning folk dance, and later Kalari, I realized that humans are the kind of creatures who have more strength than they could ever have imagined, and possess more knowledge than they think they do. They just need a trigger, someone to wake them up, after which they can assess and adapt to almost anything they encounter. I believe we already have all the tools we need; we already know all that we have to know. We just need to be reminded, to remember all that we already possess. That reminder could be learning a new style of dance, experiencing a new culture's view, or practicing something on your own.

Chapter 3: Western Cultural Movement Transformation

Chapter 3/1: Description of Dialogical Acting with the Inner Partner discipline

At this point, my curiosity had no boundaries. All I wanted is to learn more and know more, which is how my journey began, driving me to explore a different culture and to learn a new style of acting. DAMU is where this process of awareness started inside me. What I'd learned so far in yesterday's world had been mostly a practical experience; I learned only by doing. Now, for the first time, I was going to study art (acting).

Until I went to DAMU, I was focused on classical acting. The only reason I chose to study at this department is because they have an acting program. It was quite clear to me that I wanted to be an actor.

At DAMU, I began to study Authorial acting, a program where the discipline Dialogical Acting with the Inner Partner is pivotal and, like the Dialogical Acting discipline itself, was founded by Ivan Vyskočil. This discipline seemed to me quite intense, more so than classical acting/ method acting-

As mentioned in book *Twentieth Century Actor Training*,

Stanislavsky relates 'experiencing' to states of mind that seem more familiar: 'inspiration', 'creative moods', the activation of the 'subconscious'. He compares it to the sensation of existing fully within the immediate moment – what he calls 'I am' and what Western actors generally call 'moment-to-moment' work. He describes this state as 'happy', but 'rare', when the actor is 'seized' by the role (Stanislavskii 1993: 363). The Russian word carries many different nuances, amongst them 'to experience', 'to feel', 'to become aware', 'to go through', 'to live through'. Unfortunately, English has never found a suitable translation for this term, often playing upon the last option and mistranslating Stanislavsky's ideal as 'living the role' (Carnicke 1998: 109).²⁵

He also said,

"fall into two broad groups: techniques that foster a proper 'sense of self' and hence induce in the actor a creative state of 'experiencing', and methods that offer pathways into dramatic texts for the successful creation of characters."²⁶

but also, softer somehow, less obvious.

In my own words, Dialogical Acting is a process of self-development, self-awareness, self-consciousness and as they call it in the department, "psychosomatic fitness". That is why I believe that it's more intense than method acting²⁷ but as I said, less obvious. As mentioned by Ivan Vyskočil,

²⁵ Hodge, Alison. "The System." *Twentieth Century Actor Training*, Routledge, London, 2002, pp. 17.

²⁶ Hodge, Alison. "The System." *Twentieth Century Actor Training*, Routledge, London, 2002, pp. 18.

²⁷ These techniques are built on Konstantin Stanislavski's system, in method acting, I try to "seized" the role by going through deep psychology and being obvious. I believe, which may harm the actor, not being able to come out of the characters psychology to the present moment. But in DA being present is one of the keys, which helps me coming back to present from any role. With this discipline, I believe, I would be able to play the character with intensity and come back to present moment, being less obvious.

(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner is for nothing. In other words, it is for that which someone can take from and make of it based on his own resources, abilities, and potential. Self-discovery and self-acceptance play a significant role in that.²⁸

He also said,

This is organically related to another factor: conductive tension. The idea here is that in order for psychosomatic (some prefer to say somato-physical) process to run propitiously, our organism needs to be in a state of excitement, “commotion,” tension. This tension facilitates and guides these processes. Hence, the term “conductive tension.”²⁹

The setup for a Dialogical Acting session is very specific. The class is filled with a maximum six to ten students and one or two Dialogical Acting assistants. One by one, each student visits the space for two to four minutes by themselves, until the DA assistant(s) signals the end of the round. Each student participates in several rounds.

While in the space, as suggested, the student should try to be as honest as they can be. Because in this process they try to avoid any kind of rules and instructions. What I mean is, there is no need to come up with some topic to act or any character. Better way for students, try being honest based on their current mood/feelings. Try to focus on what is happening rather than what you think that you should do. The idea of this discipline is when you jump into space there is no need to act, because things are already happening just from you being there.

When I am in the space, I find myself going through my nervous system, where I might be feeling stressed, worried, confused, lost, scared, closed, maybe happy, maybe sad, enthusiastic, etc. I start paying close attention to those feelings, which often leads to an impulse in my body. By paying attention and following that impulse, my body produces a reaction to that impulse. Slowly, by staying honest and aware, I start doing what I feel like, following the impulses and the reactions to those impulses as they come to me in real time. That could mean anything: making sounds, singing, moving through the space, dancing or speaking to other versions of myself. As long as I do it faithfully and honestly, I can feel that these actions are true. Before I know it, I’m already acting, or maybe a better way to put it, I am in dialogue with myself. Instead of being confused or refusing to react, I’m communicating with myself.

E.g., you have the inner dialogue, where one might be saying “wtf” and you yourself might be reacting towards that “no I shouldn’t say that” or “should I,” “I don’t know.” Having these kinds of thoughts and confusions, your mind is already reacting, and at some point, knowingly or unknowingly, your body will start reacting as well. Sometimes, it is important to articulate out loud what goes on in your mind in real time. To open it up by acknowledging it and by saying it out loud you give yourself a chance to actually hear what you are saying.

²⁸ Vyskočil Ivan. “A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner.” *Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem*, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 50. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

²⁹ Vyskočil Ivan. “A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner.” *Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem*, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 46. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The Translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

This whole thing happens in two to four minutes with any author/actor in the space. This is what I call dialogical acting or interacting with an inner partner.

What I realised is, while going through this process, constantly it may help you to become extremely aware of yourself and what happens around you. Though, it was always hard for me to find a conclusion of dialogical acting. But at some point, I decided not to look for the conclusion and keep doing what I was told to do. Doing that, has also made me realise that there is no conclusion to it because this is a process and I believe that, there is no conclusion of any process. As I said, being part of this process by the time, the author becomes self-aware, self-conscious and self-developed. I think, for some people it is very helpful but also it might be proven harmful for some people. Not physically but mentally, for those who can't handle themselves having self-awareness. Or it might be affected harmfully when the persona has been facing some crisis.

For me, I found it quite an interesting process from an acting perspective. After a while, most of the session has made me feel like I'm able to generate the character out of me going through this process in two to four minutes. Based on my daily feelings and moods, I would react in a certain way in the DA session, each reaction totally different each and every single session. I see this reaction as a character, the character where I don't have to look for the background or any other observation. It's already there in me, and that's quite fascinating for me. I hold a variety of reactions in my body and mind, and those reactions are already quite intense within themselves, as if I'm playing some character on stage.

I also found it way easier than the method acting. In "method acting,"³⁰ you try to adopt the personality of the other person in your body and mind, try to process his/her history and living style within you, you try hard to know about the character, who they live, how they talk, walk or behave in general, etc. In DA, I believe that you can adopt the personality without going through all these intense approaches simply because it's already in you. Throughout the process of DA, the author is able to manifest a variety of behaviors within themselves where one can be very similar to any character. So, there is no need to go through a deep method acting style for any character because you can just bring out one of the behaviors that is already in you, something already very similar to the character you want to play. And the intensity of the character is already there because it's already inside you; that's why I found it quite an easier process than method acting.

Though the process itself might bring lots of emotions and frustration with it. At least that's what my experience is. Sometimes it made me feel frustrated and angry. But mostly I was told to express my feelings no matter how I felt. So I did. My anger and frustrations mostly came through my trying to understand dialogical acting. I had a hard time doing that.

³⁰ If I describe method acting in my words, it is just an approach to the way you see it rather than trying to understand what method acting is. In my observations working with theatre since 2013, I have seen Chirag Modi working with an actor and preparing them for the role. And for a few years, I just observed them working, and it was enough for me to understand the approach. I found a way which could be useful for method acting, from my habit of behaviors in general. Such as, I'm stubborn, I have strong will, strong belief in myself when I decide to do something. These are the approaches I use when I have to prepare the character. I will try to find some similarities, between me and character, then I'll try to put belief in it as if it's part of me. Being stubborn, constantly I remind myself that I'm the character.

In my case, I constantly asked the “teachers”³¹ to define dialogical acting. Some definitions would make sense for me, some wouldn't. Also, the definition of DA would change depending on who you asked. So, I wasn't sure whether what I'm doing in the DA sessions was correct or not. My point was, I wanted to do what they were trying to teach me; I just couldn't really determine what that was. Or maybe, just because I wanted to perform? as professor Vyskočil said,

Even though many would like to perform, to know how to do precisely that, to study something like that, (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner is about something else. That's why they want instructions. That's why they want to know what they should do. That's why they want to be given a topic. Or even just some words, a cue. Most likely, they are not mistaken: In that way, or perhaps accompanied by music, things would work better, easier, faster. But that is not what we want, and that is not how to experiment.³²

But sometime after reaching this stage, every class of DA started becoming more difficult to go through. Every day before or during each class, I would get frustrated. I used to express that embarrassment substantially during that session of DA. For a long time, I pushed through this state of uneasiness. I did things which I frequently don't do, like mimicking someone, keeping my hands clasped together, keeping my hands on my waist, sleeping on the floor, deciding in advance what I'll do when I'm in class, talking with audience and even bad mouthing about the class with him/her. In the majority of these classes, I used to play lazy intentionally; I was tired of my own intellect. I've done everything that professor Vyskočil told me not to do:

(Inter)acting with the inner partner is about experimenting, trying out and becoming aware of, coming to know, and not about competing to see who's doing it better or more successfully. I know it's pointless telling that to those who have certain predispositions, talents and ambitions, to those who have been, and are led toward that kind of competition. That's even more reason to try to approach the discipline keeping in mind that that is not what it's about; rather, that it's truly about experimenting, perceiving, noticing and realizing what is happening and what is - and responding to that. That is why you'll arrive at what is probably the most significant - concentration and relaxation; relaxing into an active, conductive tension, not into a slackness or idleness.³³

³¹ Since I started studying at DACaP, I had basic DA class with Zuzana Partlova, Vaclav Trojan, then advance with Eva Slavikova, Pavel Zajíček, Maryana Kozak and once with Vyskočil Ivan. After a semester, I got more curious to know about DA. And of course, they would give me some written materials from Vyskočil Ivan, which wasn't helping me. But when I asked them to explain, they would usually talk about how DA inspires something in them, mixing some of their own thoughts with Ivan Vyskočil's. No one was able to put it in exact words what DA could be or what it is. And it took me a long time to understand that it was just a process. I believe that, as with any process, you just have to experience it before even beginning to put it in exact words.

³² Vyskočil Ivan. “A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner.” *Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem*, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 54. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The Translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

³³ Vyskočil Ivan. “A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner.” *Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem*, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 53. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The Translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

But this experience, on the other hand, increased my awareness, added a little more depth to the process of observation and helped to pull my wandering mind towards the present. Where I was able to be in the process of DA, rather than trying to understand the DA or do the DA. By the time, the questions and frustration about DA went away. Then DA became more joyful and a wandering process in each session. I started to pay attention to my inner expressions without having any fear of “what’s happening to me.” I discovered wonderful physical expressions through my emotions. That was quite surprising to me. And towards the end of my study, I kind of understand the process of DA, but I can’t explain or define it in words. I guess now I’m in the same stage as all the teachers where they try to explain in their words and definition becomes individual expressions from each and every teacher.

Along with the main subjects I was studying at DACP, I had classes on many other various subjects as well, namely: Dialogical Acting, Authorial Acting,³⁴ Interpretation seminar, Voice, Singing, Speech, Authorial Reading, Body in Motion,³⁵ Training for Movement,³⁶ Feldenkrais,³⁷ Intro to Authorial Acting,³⁸ Philosophy and Psychology. Experiencing all of these subjects helped me mature as an actor and as an artist. All this has also been mentioned in the *Natya Shastra*. Constantly studying these subjects in DACP, and many of these subjects, as I said before, have raised an awareness within me. That awareness has played and continues to play an important role in my mental, physical, inner and outer transformations.

Chapter 3/2: Theatre in India / Becoming an Actor

Natyashastra vs Ivan Vyskočil

³⁴ For me, authorial acting is where we work on stories that come from our self-experience in a group. We work with the same intensity as if it happens right now. We also have a chance to work on a particular topic based on plays or historical perspective. E.g., we worked on Greek mythology Odysseus combined with Indian mythology of Ramayan. I believe that this class is focused on acting as if self-monologue/acting.

³⁵ This class mostly focused on movements and how to use the body. Where we are taught to understand the movement and generate them authentically. We work on a variety of exercises which are focused on core, breathing, particular moves, particular physical skills, body balancing, stillness, sensation of flow in the body, focusing on deep manner of body. On the other side we are also taught to use the movements dramaturgically with space and time.

³⁶ In this class, we mostly focused on the movements themselves. Where we practice certain movements with music and different tasks. Where we train ourselves how to focus on movements having a variety of tasks. At some point it makes us to move in certain way which we wouldn’t have known.

³⁷ This class for me, it’s like having physical therapy. Where you learn from the teacher’s instructions, how to fix unnatural movements, those who unknowingly cause you pain in the body. In this class, sometimes you work with a pair, sometimes you work by yourselves. In general, it is very helpful to have this practice in your daily life. Whether you have pain or not but it does fix your body alignment.

³⁸ In this class, the senior teachers introduce us to the study program where we study, what we study and with what discipline.

After spending eight years at Panaghat, I wanted to explore more in the field of art. With the help and suggestions of a few friends, I decided to learn acting, which led me to join a drama troupe called Ouroboros Theatre Company.³⁹ I spent the forthcoming two and a half consecutive years in this drama group learning basics. Due to my technical experience, I was very useful to Chirag Modi.⁴⁰ After some time, he decided to do an acting workshop for which he strongly asked me to join him.⁴¹ At the end of the second workshop, I realized that drama and acting are the forms of art with which I would want to learn more deeply. Over time, my friendship with Chirag Modi grew stronger, and we opened our own theater studio to invite artists from all over the country, showcase and make plays and conduct workshops. It was known as ‘Ouroboros Art Hub.’⁴² In the beginning, I had no knowledge of theatre at all, but was willing to learn and know more about it. Once I joined Ouroboros, I underwent a marvelous change as an actor. At that time, I was focused on learning classical theatre,⁴³ as Chirag Modi directed. Modi focused mainly on classical theatre, but he had his own experimental approach. As such, we tried making performances in different spaces, which can be seen as site-specific theatre. We have done productions as a poor theatre, in which you mainly try to use your physical skills and also, in the sense of using the bare minimum number of properties, from props to set design to overall budget. It was inspired by Grotowski, as mentioned in the book of *Twentieth Century Actor Training*.

Grotowski and his collaborators developed an aesthetic that minimised reliance on autonomous costume, make-up, scenery and lighting (Grotowski 1975: 15–53).⁴⁴

³⁹ Ouroboros is a drama company based in the Indian state, Gujarat, in the city Ahmedabad, created by Chirag Modi. He has a BA in Performing Arts from Gujarat College (Gold Medalist) (2008) as well as an MA from JG College of Performing Arts (2011). He has been working with a small group of people and creating performances based on creative ideas; no one could beat him or his style of creating art. He has won national awards for several of his projects.

⁴⁰ Chirag Modi, actor, writer, director and mentor, is the creator of Ouroboros Theatre Company, which will be simply portrayed as Chirag Modi in the all the following text.

⁴¹ Chirag Modi did two acting workshops in 2016, each workshop lasted 3 months.

⁴² Ouroboros Art Hub is a performing arts studio located in Ahmedabad city and was functional from September 2016 to June 2020. It was the first ever blackbox studio in the state of Gujarat, established by me and Chirag Modi. The investor was Keval Prajapati, my brother. And I built the studio with my own hands and I was also responsible for maintaining the studio. India, Episodic series of all great content that we come across at Ouroboros Art Hub, Shivranjani, Modi, Chirag. “Ouroboros I See.” *YouTube*, YouTube, 22 April. 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC6X48BxbR3h4YKDXkdahjjg/about>.

⁴³ In my own words, we usually work on theatre plays by known authors. Such as Shakespeare, Anton Chekhov, or some of the Indian theatre play writers. In the process of play, keep the discipline of classical theatre, like having a fourth wall, method acting, directing, light design etc. The process itself mostly focused on acting and directing. where the actor goes through such an intense process of character adaptation with help of the director. Where my job was to do back stage and stuff related to productions. That's how I began my theatrical journey.

⁴⁴ The way we work on poor theatre and the way I have experienced it was that we kept the idea of being poor in the field of theatre. And based on that we worked on any theatre play, with minimal properties, minimal budgets, not having simple lights and simple costumes. But still the performance would be done in a classical way. Where my job mostly was to help them with technical stuff. Whatever they need to build up one performance, I would

He also said,

Ninety per cent of what goes on in daily life, he said, is not the material from which great art can be made; likewise, the ability to speak naturalistic text in a relatively believable manner or to mimic social behaviour was never, for Grotowski, a measure of the actor's skill. 'If [the actor's] body restricts itself to demonstrating what it is – something that any average person can do – then it is not an obedient instrument capable of performing a spiritual act' (Grotowski 1975: 33).

We created installation performances with pieces of classical drama. We put on musical performances, which included dance and acting at the same time. So more or less, we experimented with a variety of approaches to the classical style of theatre. While taking part in these kinds of performances, I have used all my skills to create pieces such as set design, light design, back stage, production, floor manager, and of course acting. After spending a few years doing everything, slowly and steadily I started to focus more on acting. The effect of acting started to change me mentally and then physically. This experience from time to time produced a source of energy within me which made me feel that there is another part of me, like an unanswered soul inside. From what I think, it is omnipresent in each one of us, you just have to direct your awareness towards it. When I am onstage, it's as if I'm managing to see my own reflection and talk to him. Or maybe I'm communicating with past or future versions of myself. In certain situations, I'm able to see my own growth in hundred pieces per second. As I'm carrying many characters in me. I can see the dancer Nirav stepping into the world of theatre who was ready to take on new challenges.

Getting into the world of theatre, I would say, made me feel more mature as a man, calmer and much more focused on what I'm doing. I believe that the process of learning to act is a process that never ends, one that's never allowed to move out of you. It is you who just has to start paying a little attention to it. In my experience, I manifest acting through an inner process and display it with my body, and every time I try, I learn something new. For example, I learned how to possess the character mentally, and that by paying attention to those details, it can bring you closer to that character and bring it out through your body. In theatre or whenever I performed, I saw a new form in myself.

In my experiences of dance, I would say that there may have been an inner physical and mental change, but I did not pay full attention to it. But it is also an art, and I believe that any art plays a big role in the transformation of a human's life.

In my case, those transformations mostly focus on inner physicality and a bit of mind. But simultaneously those inner changes affect my body, to behave differently in daily life. Even though I didn't pay attention to my inner transformation then, I slowly found myself falling into a transformative mode, which literally came from the dance movements that I was learning. These movements stayed inside me, and I knowingly used them to learn other dance movements, which made progressing easier for me. My focus though, at all times, was more

provide them. This was my beginning in the theatre. This corresponds to the "poor theatre" of Jerzy Grotowski. For more information.

Hodge, Alison. "Grotowski's Vision of the Actor." *Twentieth Century Actor Training*, Routledge, London, 2002, pp. 196–197. 7 May. 2022.

on physical transformation. I focused on my inner behaviour (feelings, motions, patience, expressions, anger, excitement, eagerness, and so on, all those inner tools, but how to use them?) and its transformation when I stepped into the world of drama to learn acting.

Because of learning drama, my body slowly and with wonderful patience, began to change shape. After I began my journey, the process of internal and physical transformation took place in a rhythm like flowing water, moving in the direction I was going, towards a new stage for my process of life and for me. I was happy to be part of this process of theatre, but also uncomfortable at the same time, just because some of the questions keep raising in my head: Being a dancer, how could I be useful in theatre? Can they accept me as a dancer? After spending so many years in dance, can I be an actor? Can I even do theatre? I was anxious about whether I should stay in the theatre or leave? However, after stepping into theatre, I became proud to have learned the art of dance, when one day Chirag Modi told me about the *Natya Shastra*.⁴⁵

Because after many years of being a folk dancer, I decided to get involved in drama. In the beginning I was ashamed that I was a dancer, because of this no one would adopt me in a drama, or questions like 'should I not join drama or theatre' always harassed me? I was embarrassed and confused because of so much overthinking. Sometimes I even felt like quitting drama. But because of my stubborn will, I decided in my mind that I will at least give it a try first then decide. I would simply not accept defeat. In this kind of situation, I always remind myself, "whatever happens will be seen."

Chirag Modi was paying attention to this confusion of mine, and so all of a sudden one day, he asked me, "What did you say Nirav, you are a dancer right?" I nodded. And he replied with, "That is such a good thing, Nirav."

"Why is it so," he would tell me, "is because in *Natyashastra*, the definition of an actor is: 'As an artist, it is your duty to be proficient in dance, song, and music.'"

In the work's original words, the translation, "in theatre, the actors deed is to be, Dance, singing, and Musical instruments. The drama depends on these three main subjects."⁴⁶

The performer has to gain the skills in order to act or perform. On the same topic, in a deeper manner it also has mentioned in *Natya shastra*, the translation is,

⁴⁵ *Natya Shastra* is a dramaturgy book, based on Indian (Hindu) culture. I believe that the theory of the book deeply fantasizes based on the Hindu gods' world and how the god has brought the drama into the world of Hindu people. It's fascinating how each event has a connection between god and people and their living lifestyle, how they have brought the dramaturgy piece by piece creating the situation and relationship between god themselves and their followers. www.wisdomlib.org. "Natyashastra (English)." Wisdom Library; The Portal for Hinduism, Sanskrit, Buddhism, Jainism, Mesopotamia Etc..., 22 April. 2022, <https://www.wisdomlib.org/hinduism/book/the-natyashastra>.

⁴⁶ तौयांत्रिक नृत्यगीतवाद्यं नाट्य मीद त्रय। इसका आशय है (नाट्यस्येदं नाट्यम) नट का जो कर्म नाचना गाना एवं बजाना वह तौयांत्रिक नाट्य है। Muni, Bharata, et al. "Natya." *Natyashastra*, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi India, Uttar Pradesh, 1971, p. 18.

That an actor is an artist who should know or learn everything there is to know, such as expressions, dance, make-up, clothing, stage, light, production, direction, writing, and so on. All these combined, help to complete a one show.⁴⁷

Now all these are not your responsibilities or compulsions, but doing so, knowing them, would only help the person to construct themselves better. I believe that, along with learning acting you get to learn how to live your life. Or vice-versa, you start to see the acting involved in living life. I started to observe/noticed behaviors deeply into others and myself. It's like I'm seeing others acting; then I would ask myself, "am I acting"? Which surprised me most when I think of the fact that I'm also acting in my daily life. As if I'm behaving in a certain way with certain people or my own self, telling myself what to do and what not to do, confronting the truth or reacting when I'm going through something or when I'm alone. I'm acting/reacting through my emotions, or talking to myself, it's like I'm preparing the character of play. In that case, I'm the character and I'm the one who preparing, my life is my play. Sounds very cliché, but it's the truth. As if I'm (Inter)acting with inner partner. Once, professor Vyskočil said,

(Inter) acting with the inner Partner. Almost everyone knows about it, or at least is familiar with it, from their own experience. Do you ever talk or interact with yourself? Generally speaking, in private? When you're alone? At times, mainly so you wouldn't be quite so alone? Because you need someone, a partner in that particular situation. Since there isn't a real, visible partner readily at hand, an inner partner turns up, shows himself, appears.⁴⁸

This behavior used to make me embarrassed and uncomfortable. And I would judge myself as if I was going mad. Up until I joined DACAP, I wasn't sure this kind of behaviour could be part of acting. But now that I have been practicing DA for almost five years, it does make sense. That acting does not come only from others' behaviors or characters, but can also come from you, if you observe yourself deeply enough. This idea developed me as an actor quite deeply. I also think acting is like behaving/reacting towards certain situations through the emotions.

Acting fills me with such a pure essence that I can use in various situations, an essence that exposes myself to my feelings, enthusiasm, fear, fearlessness, sorrow, responsibilities, love, laughter, anger, humor, and all the inner dwellers of this body and mind. Something very similar was mentioned in an article about 'rasa' according to Bharata Muni⁴⁹. I think they are ever present since birth and we have never paid much attention to them.

⁴⁷ नटानामयमान्यः (शास्त्र) नाट्यम। नटों का धर्म या शास्त्र इस अर्थ में नाट्य पद की सिद्धि होती है। इसका मतलब हैं की नाट्य नाटो का धर्म अर्थात अभिनय प्रदर्शन करने के लिए अवबन्धन स्टेज बांधना और किसी विशेषरूप से अवस्थित होना याने साज सजाना या सांग धारण करन। क्योंकि घुड़ अवबन्धने, घुड़ अवस्थाने एवं घुड़ धारणे इन धातुओं से मनीन करने पर धर्म बनता है। Muni, Bharata, et al. "Natyā." *Natyashastra*, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi India, Uttar Pradesh, 1971, p. 22. 23 Jan, 2021. The translation is mine.

⁴⁸ Vyskočil Ivan. "A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner." *Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem*, Brkola, Praha, 2012, pp. 38–39. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The Translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

⁴⁹ "Bharata Muni Biography - Ancient Sanskrit Sage." Pantheon, 24 April. 2022, https://pantheon.world/profile/person/Bharata_Muni/.

The theory of rasa is attributed to Bharata, a sage-priest who may have lived sometime between the 1st century BCE and the 3rd century CE. It was developed by the rhetorician and philosopher Abhinavagupta (c. 1000, who applied it to all varieties of theatre and poetry. The principal human feelings, according to Bharata, are delight, laughter, sorrow, anger, energy, fear, disgust, heroism, and astonishment, all of which may be recast in contemplative form as the various rasas: erotic, comic, pathetic, furious, heroic, terrible, odious, marvelous, and quietistic. The rasas comprise the components of aesthetic experience.⁵⁰ (Original version of the same text from *Natya shastra*)⁵¹

You should have the skills for each of these arts. According to what Chirag Modi gave me as knowledge, “you are a dancer, you will learn music with time, and you have already joined acting. So, there is no need to be confused or worry and there is a lot to learn in future.” That day, I realized that I was not in the wrong direction, but that I was proud of the experience I had gone through so far. The reason for my pride was that I was already skilled even before joining the theatre, those skills which I have mentioned according to *Natya Shastra*. For example, I was good at handling the productions and creating them. In view of the fact that I used to build or renovate the commercial and residential properties as an electrician/contractor, I was able to prepare any big theatre productions. Being an electrician, I was able to create the stage lights from scrap, which I have done for the theatre that I built, called “Ouroboros Art Hub,” as well as one other theatre company, “Scrapyard – The Theatre.”⁵² I could/can handle any type of stage design. I was able to create or manage costumes and props. Surprisingly, some of the random skills I possessed I never had to learn. It was the benefit of growing up in poor conditions. Apart from that, I was even able to work with my feelings and have them when I want. Being self-employed, my observational power was adept and precise. So much so, that I could/can criticize the person close enough without even talking to them. Just by observing them. My own stubbornness, my belief in myself and my discipline were good enough to characterize myself the way I wanted/want. Eventually, when I found out that these skills are used or are meant to be used as a theatre practitioner or performer, I knew that I’m where I’m supposed to be.

But on the other hand, since I have joined the DACAP, the discipline of DA is quite opposite to the *Natya Shastra*. In the discovery of DA, Professor Vyskočil said,

⁵⁰ “Kathak.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 22 Jan. 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/art/kathak>.

⁵¹ रस और भावों में कर्यकारणभाव। रसों में उत्पाद्य उत्पादकभाव। रसों के रंग एवं देवताओंका कथन। श्रुण्डार। हास्य। करुण। रौद्र। वीर। भयानक। वीभत्स अदभुत। रसों के बहुत से प्रकार। आठ रसों का लक्षण एवं भेद कथन। शान्त रस के स्वरूप का निरूपण। आठ रसों का उपसंहार। Muni, Bharata, et al. “Subject Natya.” *Natyashastra*, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi India, 1971, p. 33. 24 Jan, 2022.

⁵² Thakor, Kabir. “Scrapyard - the Theatre.” Facebook, 22 April. 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/Scrapyard.thetheatre/>.

I soon understood that good theatre and good literature can be done with a minimum, almost without anything, if need be, but quality, solid research, which is what the discipline is about, cannot. That sort of research requires proper, professional working conditions.⁵³

Based on these disciplines at DACaP, most of the process has been done with minimal or without any props. For me, it was challenging going on stage and just acting without having anything on me/with me. In classical theatre, we have all the support from props, lights, makeup, etc. But in DACAP, every time I had to perform, I had only me and myself, and only myself with me. This was hard but also quite intense as a self-development process. One where I had to perform with my presence, with all the emotions and all those awkward behaviors produced by my nervous state while I'm on the stage. In that moment, I was surprised by my own skills that were carried through the emotions and into me. Acting has given me a knowledge of 'rasa' 'Emotions' that I can always use in any situation. An interest which shows my feelings, which shows enthusiasm in the audience. My enthusiasm, fear, fearlessness, sorrow, responsibilities, love, laughter, anger, humor, all sorts of inner gestures that were in me, but I never paid attention to them, or rather, I was mostly too ashamed to show them, because I often felt that this kind of feeling shows my weakness. But I have learned that weakness in acting is also an important part of it. I think expressing one's feelings to people through plays is an important part of being an actor on stage.

I believe that this type of 'rasa' does not come out automatically or is even visible; the effect of 'rasa' is always from the inside. The manner in which 'rasa' is portrayed as an actor or a performer is a constant process of originating emotions that occur during his performance. You can feel the effect of the internal process in the body of the actor or artist, and you can enjoy it. This kind of change I saw happening on my own through drama. The upheaval caused by the emotions inside me was part of my inner transformation. That is why it happens to me, from time to time that I would get divided into two parts, one would be silent which people can see and the other silent which only I can feel. But the influence of my experience is visible in my existence, and the visible existence is my body.

Which is also proven in theory of *Natya shastra*, according to Bharat Muni,
In other words,

It can be transformations or form or human appearance through the body. Most of them are agreed with this theory. In the theory of 'natya' 'raam' (Hindu god) was charged with Inner form or it can be Inner partner or soul. It has been quoted that any form or transformation can only be seen through the eyes. In the theatre, any kind of Inner changes in the actors or performers, you can even call it inner partner or inner soul, can be seen through the eyes. And it can be known as Inner form.⁵⁴

⁵³ Vyskočil Ivan. "A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner." Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 38. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The Translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

⁵⁴ दशयं तत्राभिनेयम्। इसी की दूसरी संज्ञा रूपक है और रूप है। इन संज्ञाओं के बारे में सभी एक मत है। नट में राम का आरोप होता है अंतः रूपक है। और रूप जैसे आँखों से ही देखा जाता है उसी तरह नाट्य आँखों से देखा जाता है अंतः रूप भी इसको कहते हैं। Muni, Bharata, et al. "Natya." *Natyashastra*, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi India, 1971, p. 22. 25 Jan, 2022. The translation is mine.

Going through the upheaval of emotions, it's as if I'm becoming slower and slower and getting into my body. Same as DA discipline professor Vyskočil said,

Don't rush so that you can perceive and grow aware of it, and how, the "other" (partner, opponent, someone) is already speaking or acting, and whether it wouldn't perhaps be appropriate to attempt a larger, more distinct differentiation (in terms of corporeal tension, voice, gesture, speech, in how you are "holding your body"), to designate each pole more precisely as two complete opposites.⁵⁵

It is also mentioned in *Natya shastra*,⁵⁶ "in the poem, they listen to 'rasas,' but in drama, you would see the emotions." After experiencing both, I felt like I'm in the process of molding myself from Indian cultural heritage movements into Western cultural movements, through which people can see the reflection of my experience or the upheaval of emotions or the changing-unchanging shape of my internal organs. The process of learning 'rasa' was taking place inside me at that time, now I see it as my own reflection in the experience of DACAP. When I compare DACAP's experience with the present and the past, it occurs to me that when I look at my inner body and outer layer of body, I move with the intimacy of the outside body working through the impulses of the inner body- the same as what Doc. Mgr. Jiří Lössl⁵⁷ said in his Body in Motion class. Any movement first begins with the bones, then the muscles and then the skin, which is the outer layer of my body, and that's what I call the body, that which is outer (skin) and that which is inner (bones and muscles). But this experience through drama gave me a gentleness in my body and filled me with patience. At the same time, I came to have an understanding that gives me patience and strength to understand the situation and the problem. Which gives my outer body a different kind of stability, which helps me stay focused and calm. Which makes me feel like my feet are on the ground.

The world of drama taught me to deal with internal and external gestures and emotions. Taught me to stay still. Taught me to digest unexpected hours. After stepping into this world, it was such a wonderful experience, it was difficult for me to stop myself from learning further or to gain new knowledge. My curiosity increased day by day. I used to spend time with experienced people in the theatre, trying to learn something new, letting their wisdom flow. But in the process, I realized that many of the people I met and talked to had reached their maximum, stopped learning. Some people were defeated. The seeds of hope in many people were slowly waning. At that point I decided I wasn't one of them.

⁵⁵ Vyskočil Ivan. "A Discussion with Ivan Vyskočil about (Inter)Acting with the Inner Partner." *Dialogické jednání s vnitřním partnerem*, Brkola, Praha, 2012, p. 45. Translated from the Czech by Alexander Komlosi. The Translation is in the archive of Brkola waiting to be published.

⁵⁶ रस रत्नप्रदीपिका द्वितीय परिच्छेद २४ श्लोअलंकार चिंतामणि पश्यम परिच्छेद पश्यम श्लोक में जिन सेनाचार्य ने कव्यादौ नाटकादौ च श्रुण्वन्ता पश्यतां रसान काव्य में रसों को सुनते हैं। नाटक में रसों को देखते हैं। Muni, Bharata, et al. "Natya." *Natyashastra*, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi India, 1971, p. 22. 25 Jan. 2022. The translation is mine.

⁵⁷ Lössl, Jiří. *Doc. Mgr. Jiří Lössl*, 27 March, 2022. <<https://sp.amu.cz/cs/ucitel106148.html>>. In my words, he taught us how to root the movement in our body. Or he made us think or realized how each and every movement is born in our body.

I wanted to pursue further studies in theatre, and I decided to go abroad to study acting. Until that point, I had been performing Indian folk dance with Panghat as an artist in several different countries. I had been getting to know theatre from theatre groups and Indian culture. At this point, I felt I should move on to study more in theatre before someone tries to change my mind and put me in their box.⁵⁸ I had been wanting to study in a foreign country, but I was unaware of the subject I should choose, and now, this time I had the perfect subject to go ahead with.

Chapter 3/3: Movement Discipline and the Approach to Body and its Training at DACaP

The studies of the Authorial Acting program cultivates awareness in observing one's self, one's own creative work, one's relation to the outside world and the psychosomatic connections between the body and mind. As I have mentioned earlier, I first became aware of my body transforming through dance, but here at DACaP I became aware of this process even more intensely. The learnings of this drama school have taught me a lot in the world of acting, but their full effects have been and always will keep continuing in my personal life as well.

The main subjects behind my transformations were Body in Motion, Training for Movement, Feldenkrais, Dialogical Acting and Authorial Acting. During my journey, all these subjects, one by one, had various transforming effects on my body and mind. In this chapter, I will examine more deeply these classes, and explain how these classes affected me. I will also talk about different teachers working with different movement exercises, giving examples of exercises and examining how they work. What were the teachers trying to teach and how? What did I perceive from them? And what effect / inspiration have these exercises given me? With these experiences I'm also observing the Western cultural approach to movement.

Here I got to learn and understand the movement from a different perspective. People here have found understanding even in the body. During these classes, I noticed that they have a different way of understanding the body, their own way. People have a different skill in how to use the body and how much to use it. I saw many such differences between us. So far in my experience, I have had many character creating opportunities. Now the direction of flow was a new stage for me to create a new character. Before the start of this phase, Chirag Modi told me a wonderful thing, that

Nirav you are going to learn something new in the world of, *कुल, कला*, (Kala) (art). I know you have a lot of experience, there are many real skills and good understanding, power even, but one thing I would

⁵⁸ In my words, living our traditional lifestyle is quite nice in one way but also difficult. We keep our relation constant, with family and with relatives. We care a lot for each other but I think, that caring behavior does not allow us to grow by ourselves. For example, throughout the lifestyle I have been told, what to do, what to study, where to work, what kind of work I should do, to get married in certain age, to take responsibilities for your whole family, even if you can't or no able to do those things. But it's very hard for them to recognized that. Keep doing what his/her been told. That's how the person ruins their lives in our tradition life style. It's like being part of a herd of sheep everyone walks in a direction where the few first ones go. That's what I call living in a box; many will never be able to get out of it.

like to mention for you to keep in mind especially if you are going to learn this new art. I know that you would never allow yourself to lose this work of yours, and I know many kinds of questions will arise within you because of your experience. Because of your experience you will get in the habit of comparing everything you have learned till now and everything that you are learning. This type of behavior is not present in everyone. But if so, you try to avoid it especially while learning. As this will allow you to focus on learning new things rather than comparing them.

And I reminded myself of this in every class whenever I felt like I was comparing, so that I could break the chain of thoughts and focus on my learning. This habit helped me a lot in learning ‘movement’ or any other skill that has been taught to me from DAMU. In the duration of this class, there were so many types of skills, it’s hard to talk about all of them. Which surprised me each and every time. It still does.

Like, in the beginning of the class, one of the first exercises is about finding support in the body for upright standing and for movement – walking – through six points of support on the feet and other two supports for upright standing (top of the head and back of the neck) – that work with imagery after gaining experience with the partner work.

Games were often played in the classes. For example, the chain-catching game, where from the group of people, one person would have to catch the others. Whoever he/she would catch, that person and the original one would together start catching the other people. And that’s how the chain would be created. The same game we played in our movement class but with different rules, created by our movement teachers. Such as changing our names while playing the catching-game, playing the catching-game by the use of sound, or by calling your own name and then another person has to catch you. Such different types of games were played. The purpose of the games for me was to get to the present moment. It was also helpful for my classmates, which I had always noticed in their behavior. I believe that everyone goes through a lot of ups and downs during their daily life. As a result, my mind or theirs is often distracted, or the body has assumed an inertia due to the daily routine. The inertia is either physical or it is due to the changing mentality during the daily routine. By playing such games, in this initial phase, the source of energy in our bodies and mind increases as the game progresses. It can even come to the lines of ecstasy. The present moment, like a joyful meditation, brings an unexpected force, which arises in the body of each of us. The ability to concentrate is born. It pulls the anger and channels it within you in the direction of achieving a goal or creates a surge of enthusiasm in its place. This type of change I have seen many times in myself and others. During the class, such energy is generated from each person which draws everyone into a circle, a pool of behavior with one another which fills all that are present with a wonderful interest. After that, the body begins to focus on new skills through the different exercises it is put through.

We did many different exercises using techniques from acroyoga, contemporary partnering, acrobatics, body weather inspired by Min Tanaka and Ido Portal such as,

1. Walking on all fours on the ground, while engaging the core to move, work with the momentum of the movement
2. Crawling on all fours forward without touching of the abdomen on the ground,
3. Cartwheeling with applying principles of support from the ground and finding softness in the body while being present and understanding the consequence of the movement,

4. In pairs, one partner leaps over the other partner without jumping or without applying any pressure, and the other lifts him/her or helps the partner to sit, such exercises from acroyoga or acrobatics but with certain emphasis on principles (softness, support, open gaze),
5. In pairs, one partner stands on the other partner's side and holds the opposite hand, moving from one direction to the other using the center as the equilibrium point,
6. Flock of fish exercise, in which a group works closely together and moves in space with different movements suggested by always one leader and the other follows as if in water flowing in a rhythm. This exercise is a group improvisation, about recognizing, giving, accepting and developing an impulse. And many more.

In addition to all that, we did many breathing exercises. Impulse exercises in pairs, in which one person moves another person through space by only following the impulses from the partner. We used to do different types of exercises like these. Each exercise has its own purpose, which imprints in the personal life as well. This was a whole new world for me. In the early days, I could technically understand every movement that we had to do, but it was very difficult for me to implement many movements within me. I had a good grip for a lot of movements, but just having the grip was not enough. I would try to do every movement after a lot of careful introspection. Eventually, this changed the way I introspect.

I already had the power of deep introspection. Even so, I was already in the habit of introspecting for no reason, but I always found it very useful in my artistic life since then. The reason it changed was that, according to my daily habits and my understanding, I would try to learn the movements in the classroom. While observing others, I could understand a part of every movement, but still I could not do it exactly. This is part of the class structure so that you work in a group and in pairs and can observe each other and learn from each other. It is part of the base pedagogy principle. So I had to pay close attention to the movement itself, physically. Even so, it was hard for me to fully take in those movement exercises. In order to understand those movements, I had to focus deeply into the physicality of the movers or those games that we played before the exercises gradually began to help me to introspect in a new way.

Somehow those games were related to those movement exercises. The games made it easier for me to introspect without any burden because they did not have any force of doing or understanding. It was just a game. And it was nicely put in a different rule of order, which helps the player to have fun and focus without being very serious. It's like how to work with moves while being serious but also having fun so we wouldn't get stressed about not being able to do it.

In this new process of introspection, I would pay special attention to where each movement starts in the outer part of the body. What leads to the increase of the movements in each limb from the beginning to the end? How and where does a movement end? The beginning that happens is in the outer part of the body, but in reality, the movement starts a few seconds before, through the inner part of the person's body. What I want to say now is that I was able to understand to some extent the beginnings of this, but I was never able to use it emphatically. But during this class, I always had to understand before the beginning of the movement in which most of the real movements I could understand but not each and every

one. Which is why I had to ask my pedagogue, Michaela Raisová,⁵⁹ to repeat the movement from time to time to further implement it in me. During this process, my observation and introspection skills increased.

I kept trying to grow and become more alert. After understanding the movement during this process, my whole focus was on the movement itself. Changes on my own body as well as those around me; I was constantly observing people. I even wrote about it for one of my movement class essays (Body in Motion; July 2021, the following citations are from this reflection). The gist of what I mean by the “words”⁶⁰ in the essay is:

In my first year of school, I spent most of my time understanding the people and the rhythm of the class. During this time, I was able to understand the method in depth. Based on my observations, I came to the realization that everyone has their own way of doing the movement being taught in class. Because at the department, the student develops his capability and finds his neutral and then the scale. The aim is not to train everybody in the same but to keep their individuality. During that process, I especially tried to improve my own movement or I helped others to improve their movement. I believe that is the best way to learn. Because sometimes due to overcrowding in the class, when the teacher is teaching, you cannot pay full attention to it. In this situation, it is easier to observe and learn from your classmates. During this mental process, as well as physically, I learned how to work in a group, how to work in pairs, how to add tone to myself, how to work with flow, how to observe, how to interact with each other through movement, speed, physical stability, modesty, and living grounded. Thus, along with the introspection, one by one new skills kept adding in my body and new changes started emerging which helped me to forget the bad habits in my daily routine. At the same time slowly putting my limbs into a very specific type of arrangement. The method of doing this is a positive embrace of one's own self. It taught me to use my physical focal point and stay grounded. The experience of the first year with the movement taught me to focus on the changes taking place within me. The process of change continued through different classes. I could now introspect with the naked eye. I could see each person from a different perspective, how they move and prove that each one has a different way to move using their body. I can see the emotions that are generated through this movement and the relationship that is created with others emotions or my own story.

Thus, after years of experience, having seen the changes taking place in me, I was so stunned that every movement class would introduce me to a new body in me. I could see myself in a different direction than before. I could understand the process going on inside me and listen to it. The ability to listen to myself was not only due to the movement's class, but also due to DA. DA also created in me the stunning ability to listen. DA often helped me to understand the process that took place in each of my classes, but sometimes that same habit forced me to think rather than to try practically. Generally, I'm more inclined to try than to think but over time, the process of thinking inside me grew fruits, and those thoughts forced me to judge myself. Most of the time, I would ignore it, but sometimes when I inadvertently go to my thoughts during the class process, it would be difficult to get myself to stop over-

⁵⁹ Raisová, Michaela or also Mish Rais. The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, 22 April. 2022, <https://www.damu.cz/en/katedry-programy/department-of-authorial-creativity-and-pedagogy/contact/>. Michaela Raisová, PhD., Mish Rais, is the head of the English program at DACaP since 2020. She is also our teacher of the subjects Body in Motion, Training for Movement, Speech and Interpretation seminar. Besides DACaP she also co-runs the company called Partial Uncertainty and is part of the Crew collective (see <http://crewcollective.cz/en/contact/>). The company invites people nationally and internationally for movements workshops or projects related to movement and improvisation.

⁶⁰The reason I said ‘my words’ is that, in the early days, my English was very bad, due to which there are many mistakes in my writing, but now I understand the point, so I would like to repeat the same thing with proper language and words.

thinking in classes. Sometimes even though I wanted to, I couldn't, to be honest. In that situation what helped me was not to try to break a thought process, but just do it or take a break from doing anything. This is the reason why psychosomatic studies only work IN TIME – you need time and repeated practicing of the classes to gain real experience and psychosomatic fitness.

As the years went by, I kept learning new things, also with new movement teacher, Jana Novorytová,⁶¹ who joined us in our second year, and with whom Michaela Raisová taught sometimes together. That experience created a new curve in me. I've mentioned Jana's teaching in my essay written for the movement class in June 2019, in which I have said, "Jana's movement is done with rhythm which makes me feel pleasant. With rhythm there is a focus on mental awareness which has an effect on physical rhythm. It happens inside of me. And it proves to be a lot harder than some physical exertion." During her class, we played different games. The difference was that two different brains came together to play the game (Misha and Jana), putting new rules into the game which created curiosity for the observers. With Misha I felt we had a different focus in the classes. For me, a good particular example is Tai Chi, which we did with Misha, in which there was a certain kind of discipline in the movement accompanied with the breath, focusing on the body's focal point and core at the same time as physical balance.

Whereas in the movement exercises done with Jana we often moved with music, repeating different movements from one side of the space to the other, having a strict form of repetition and rhythm, which also gives a certain freedom. I had to connect my body with the music, as if in dance choreography, and I was connecting the body with the mind in a different way. This reminded me of my dance experience. With Misha, most of the classes focused on *what* things to focus on, how to be grounded, breathe, these sort of fundamentals that lead up to movement. It was like meditation for the body and mind. Jana's class on the other hand focused on connecting the body with rhythm, music, and being able to do two different tasks at once, which requires a different manner of focus. It was like training your body and mind with speed, but at the same time to have the perception of seeing those quick movements in very slow motion. Both teachers had different ways of leading the classes, but what surprised me was when they worked together, and somehow were able to combine their different ways and approaches, for example in the simple "catching game".

Once I saw them working together it made me realise that, if two different people with different mindsets can work together so well with movement, then I should be able to work in the class with other students having different mindsets also.

While observing them I also realised that in order to work together, as a teacher or a student, in some way each person needs to be able to let go and be open to accept the other with their choices and decisions. Seeing Misha's and Jana's ways of working together made me apply similar ways in myself as a student working with my classmates. In my experience this proved to be definitely worth it.

⁶¹ Jana Novorytová joined the DACP is a movement teacher in 2019. She teaches a class together with Michaela Raisová called Training for Movements. In my words, it is where we have a chance to learn how the movement works and what could be the honest approach creating the movements. Jana Novorytová, 22 April. 2022, <https://sp.amu.cz/cs/ucitel140610.html>.

Introducing new rules in the “catching – game” kept people engaged. So, our attention would be fully focused on the game, making it necessary for us to use the body as well as the brain. It made students come together in the class, as a group, and I believe made them feel mentally and physically comfortable. Through this, students wouldn’t feel weak, and I felt it also made them feel independent while being in a group, and more cooperative. I love it when both of them⁶² add new ideas to the same “chain-catching” game, which is aimed at technique and wider perspective. In this class we mostly work with body, brain, focus, awareness, observation, technique, rhythm, body music, behaviors, neutrality, these kinds of rules and their purpose. On the one hand, we are working on technique and mental and physical awareness, while on the other hand we are working on physical balance, keeping the body grounded and maintaining our body’s focal point. As stated in the same essay,

During the class, when I got different tasks from both sides, I got a second task before I would have completed the first task and then all my attention would be focused on hurrying to complete the first task so that I can move on to the second task. The eagerness to complete a task with the fear of not being able to complete the task made me stronger than before. This situation helped me to focus and calm to fulfill the task.

Often, Misha and Jana changed or adjusted the rules in our games, and would create new kinds of goals for us students. A new kind of atmosphere would also be created. Often I felt that as an actor, unexpected artistry came out of me. For example, at some point we were working with postures of different types of statues. We had to pay close attention to the physicality, and then we were given a new rule of not staying in the same space for more than two minutes, so people would assume their posture, but also have to find a place to move and take the pose again. Assuming different places amidst other people’s statues and playing around with the distances created a bunch of different stories and meanings that could be interpreted from our exercise performance.

Here I could use the understanding of my body and transform into different characters, depict different emotions, situations and relationships, as well as relate to what my classmates were doing. And so, my body transforms into a new body, particularly in the manner of audience perspective.

At some point, we were able to go on and off stage whenever we wanted, and this created interesting freedom of choice for us students/performers. We could first observe what was happening on stage, then listen to ourselves what felt like the right moment to go on and join the others. Why would now be the right time? Did the people on stage need something more, or something less? What is the story now, and what will the story be if I go there? Also, it was very fascinating observing people on their way to the stage. What will they show?

⁶² This was one of the movement classes called Body in Motion. The class is usually taught by Michaela Raisová. Where we work on body principal with motion of movements. Usually, it’s fun with the learning process. Where we began with certain types of games focused on Individuality, awareness, space and time and so on. On some occasions Michaela Raisová would invite one of our other movement teachers, Jana Novorytová. They both usually work together on certain projects. When this happens, I believe that, in my observation, they were doing some pedagogical research based on movements working with students. Where they try new different rules in any of those games or any movement exercises. Which, for us as students, brings curiosity in the class, in us individually and in us as a group.

What sort of a character will they become? How much faith does the person have in their presentation?

As we can read in the publication on actor training:

The themes of atmosphere, actors' creativity, physicalisation of inner experience, and the question of style, which were to become important elements in Michael Chekhov's method, can be seen to have been part of the theatrical milieu for over a decade.⁶³

Mostly these types of exercises shake the body as well as the brain. Especially during class our half-asleep nervous system, “learning takes place through our nervous system, which is so structured as to detect and select from aiming our trials and error, the more effective trail.”⁶⁴

An awakening comes, one that teaches us to use our bodies and minds in a balanced way without even really knowing it. This is because of the tasks assigned to the movement, especially in the classroom. In my opinion, most of the time the task is not to try to teach every movement in a certain way and in a way that everyone knows, to reach satisfaction by trying to do so in a certain way for ourselves and learn.

In the essay I wrote in February 2020 on the subject “Feldenkrais Illustrated the Art of Learning”, I talked about the class of movement through a quote written in chapter four of that book. The quote was,

The Teacher knows what he/she is teaching and where he leads his students. The students know what they learned and when they achieved the learning to the teacher's satisfaction. Their training is strewn with exercises designed to reach the desired goal to the teacher's satisfaction.⁶⁵

As a student and a person with experience, I believe that when we need to be taught by a teacher in a movement class, we need a similar understanding and agreement between the teacher and the student. The previous quote I presented from my essay feels to me nowadays one-sided, because it is mostly talking about the satisfaction of the teacher. I agree with the first line in the quote, the teacher knows what they are teaching and where they are leading their students, but I don't agree with the second statement. “The students know what they learned and when they achieved the learning to the teacher's satisfaction.”⁶⁶

In my experience as a student in movement classes, I don't believe that I necessarily know what I'm learning. For example, at the beginning of the class, we were told to make pairs, then both partners sit on the ground, massage each other's feet in the shape of a triangle, focusing on three distinct spots, then we would stand up and the other partner would hold the other partner's heel between their toes, thus grounding them, and at the same time keeping

⁶³ Alison Hodge, ed. *Twentieth Century Actor Training*. New York: Routledge, 2007. p. 80

⁶⁴ Feldenkrais Moshé, and Tiffany Sankary. “The Art of Learning.” *Feldenkrais Illustrated: The Art of Learning*, Movement and Creativity Press, Sommerville, MA, 2014.

⁶⁵ Feldenkrais Moshé, and Tiffany Sankary. “The Art of Learning.” *Feldenkrais Illustrated: The Art of Learning*, Movement and Creativity Press, Sommerville, MA, 2014.

⁶⁶ Feldenkrais Moshé, and Tiffany Sankary. “The Art of Learning.” *Feldenkrais Illustrated: The Art of Learning*, Movement and Creativity Press, Sommerville, MA, 2014.

both hands on the other person's head, gently offering support on the neck and top of the head, helping the partner to “lean” onto them. Exercises done in this way made me feel good, but in my opinion many exercises didn’t have a specific purpose, nor did they have a definite effect on me. Through this experience I understood that it helps me in some way, physically and mentally, but sometimes it’s difficult to say exactly why and how. For some people it may have a different effect, and the effect can also vary depending on each day and time. And the teacher may find out that even though they assumed the exercise would have a specific effect, to their surprise, it might have a different effect, and perhaps sometimes even a better one!

But it has spoken quite the opposite about the exercise as shown in my own essay written in February 2018.

It was very nice that in class we started to be aware of your body. The two partners each press the point of feet and then support from the back of neck, relax knees to then start walking in space as a grounded. It is awareness of your body and how to stand. However, the experience of the class is expressed in shallow words. After four years of experience, I can say for sure that I did not have enough understanding then, and this one exercise was not enough for awareness of your body and how to stand. After going through a lot of exercises during the class, in the end I will say yes, I got ok with body awareness. I understand it better now. Many exercises have a specific purpose, and I believe they will help me physically over an extent of time. But that time seemed to be many months of practice and I think it often took me more than a year. For example, there was an exercise in which we had to walk on all fours without letting the knees touch the ground. It took me almost two semesters to do it in a precise way, but in the end, after a lot of effort, I was able to do it. This helped me to understand how to use the core of my body. When I succeed in doing so, I can say “I satisfied the teachers.”

Now, it would be a big task for us to focus on every process that takes place during the class and to do it in a specific way. In completing the task, each of them used her/his body, brain, consciousness, awareness, wide vision, according to her strength and skill. I noticed this by observing the effort and mistakes made by me and others during class. From my point of view, this effort and the process of mistakes is as much a part of the teacher's ethos as it is in the classroom, as much as we emphasize our learning effort. In my opinion, the movement taught by the teacher in the process of this endeavor would have been clearer for him/her. How he/she will do it or wants to do it. Now that confidence and clear demeanor helped us to make every movement that took place. As if we ourselves were part of his/her confidence and to some extent her/his confidence became our own confidence. Many times, we were able to carry out the movement that took place after many attempts, and through that success, we got satisfaction as a student and her/his as a teacher. So, my point is that, in my experience, that satisfaction is not just for the teacher. The student gets the same satisfaction as the teacher. So, I don't think, “their training is strewn with exercises designed to reach the desired goal of the teacher's satisfaction.”⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Feldenkrais Moshé, and Tiffany Sankary. “The Art of Learning.” *Feldenkrais Illustrated: The Art of Learning*, Movement and Creativity Press, Somerville, MA, 2014.

Chapter 3/4: My pedagogical attempts⁶⁸

From my experience as a teacher, I concocted the possibility of what to search for, how to begin a class, and how to give the participants energy and support. I had to be able to assess the energy level of each participant so that I could pace the work accordingly so that they would not exhaust themselves too quickly. Rather than pushing ahead while teaching, I tried to give close consideration to everybody and assist them with each movement. In this moment, I realized there was a ton of mental and actual strain on the educator. In my first attempt, I tried to do that, but even still, the participants didn't have the strength. They were getting drained, so I was unable to do any of these moves. I could see that he/she had a great deal of what they wanted to do. But because of my showing technique, I was unable to help him/her out. If I had done it differently, I could show them further. Things being what they are, as an educator, I began to stress: were they just unable to catch what I was trying to teach, or was my teaching the problem? These questions bubbled inside of me, and with them uneasiness. I had to adjust my way of giving instruction. As I had seen in every one of our classes, you had to educate with tenderness, tolerance, delicacy and with practically no sort of over tension in the body. In the following two workshops, I made an honest effort to instruct in this way, softly and with great attention to their interest and energy levels. Rather than pushing everyone further, I tried to figure out the participants' limits, keep them engaged, and encourage them to persist. I took an active role in every development. This time, I could see how much they enjoyed the movements. Their enjoyment gave me satisfaction as their instructor.

I would say that as a pedagogue, I feel the weight of responsibility for each participant in each class, as their experience rests on me, and I want each person to benefit as much as possible. By the end of the day, I made an honest effort to encourage my students to feel great, so they could be fulfilled, and so that fulfillment would arise as an invigoration in them, which could bring about the same in me. This brilliant light grew inside of me from experiencing their joy, which in turn I reflected back to them. I discovered it is necessary for the students and the teacher to be equally invested, so that mutual satisfaction can be achieved.

After the end of my last workshop, I realized that after learning a lot in DACAP, I also got a chance to teach, which introduced me to another person, as if it were my inner partner, a person who has knowledge through experience. He has the ability to be patient and listen. He can see and understand the feelings of others. He can give honest advice about the problems of others by observing them closely. The eagerness and experience of learning transformed me into a teacher.

⁶⁸ While studying at DACAP, in the year 2018 in class of movement with Petra Oswaldová I introduced them to my movement of Kalaripayattu. Then I was insisted by her to take a workshop to teach the discipline of Kalaripayattu. I did the three workshops as a pedagogue. In the year of the 2018 winter semester. In the year 2019 summer semester I was invited by our movement teacher Michaela Raisová and in the year 2019 Nablizko festival from the department of authorial creativity and pedagogy. In the first workshop I had nine participants including our Feldenkrais teacher Petra Oswaldová. In the second workshop I had eleven participants including our movement teacher Michaela Raisová. In the third workshop I had twelve to sixteen people.

Chapter 3/5: Body Meditation

There was another class called Feldenkrais⁶⁹ in which almost the whole internal body has to get out of the wrong habits and get used to certain habits. At least that's how I see it. By leading a certain part of the body in a certain direction, you try to notice what effect it has on the whole body or if you can move the whole body or turn it in any direction. It focuses on the internal organs of the body and teaches how to work on external organs of the body. And it's tutored in a specific way. Most of the time in this class, you have to lay down with your eyes closed on the ground as the teacher guides you through the flow. As you progress, blockages of hands and bases, neck, midriff, back, shoulders are released. It also taught us to be aware of these blockages in our daily life. For example, in an exercise in which two people work together in which one is lying flat on the ground and the other is working with his/her body as the teacher says. So, the body of a lying person has to be relaxed in a proper way and also, he/she has to learn how to turn the whole body in an inverted direction with his/her hands and elbow. This means that you can affect the whole body by any small organ of the body or shake the whole body. In the same way you can turn the whole-body upside down just by using your feet. This means that if any part of the body is used in a certain direction, a heavy person can be moved even by a thin and weak person. Doing some of these exercises every day seemed to increase my life expectancy. Things like getting rest, getting proper sleep, relieving fatigue, calming the mind, feeling relaxed. There are so many benefits to me that most of the time after class I felt relieved from my physical and mental fatigue, and I could concentrate better on the rest of the classes. My ability to work and grasp new things was amplified. And plus, I could work without getting stressed out.

Feldenkrais classes have always been a great benefit to me. Having this class after going through unperceived events of life was a great help. All the frustrations, questions and confusion from previous classes melted away after attending Feldenkrais. Instead of fatigue, it brought me a new kind of enthusiasm. It helped me to be a better student and always left me satisfied, especially since I was learning something new.

⁶⁹ The Feldenkrais method is an alternative exercise method developed by Moshé Feldenkrais (1904–1984), a Ukrainian-Israeli engineer and physicist. The method aims to improve self-awareness through movement and thus streamline the connection between the brain and the body. This class was taught by Petra Oswaldová, who used to be our former teacher till the year 2019 at DACAP. Class was taken once per week every Friday evening at the DAMU in the big ballroom. She was also teaching a movement class twice a week. "Petra Oswaldová - Felenkraisova Metoda." Feldenkraisova Metoda, <https://www.feldenkraisovametoda.cz/petra-oswaldova/>. 22 April, 2022.

Conclusion

I did not know that walking the path of artists would change my mental and physical being in this way. Yes, I always believed in the fact that I was not making a wrong decision. I have never lost faith in myself, and I never will. My self-confidence and decision-making abilities were nurtured by the continuously new stages of this journey. I was already full of physical strength. Mentally, I was stubborn and full of will power. The desire to become an artist over time, led me in the direction of dance. After stepping into the world of dance, my strength, perseverance, willpower, and stubbornness, were given a new direction, a new flow. I reached a point where things started to change inside me. I never knew I could ever give my strength a grace, a ripple. I never knew that my stubbornness could become a part of my inner artist. I never knew I could turn my persistence into a river of energy, flowing forever. I never knew that my willpower could go through the process of fetching everything I expected it to. I did not know that my body and mind would mature in the ways that they did. Knowingly or unknowingly, these endless changes continue inside me. I believe most habits keep you tied to a certain type of recurrent cycle which speaks of your lineage and where you come from. It's not that the group you come from can be considered low or bad, but the point is that to come out of that prevalent direction and detour to a good or different way itself becomes a big task for you. You can't forget the habits of your body. That inertia is visible in you. And it's not wrong, but learning a new thing is also a part of life, equally as is being caged, stuck doing one thing over and over again. I believe that human nature and the body are accustomed to learning new things and moving forward. The extent to which we are willing to learn new things is in our hands.

After spending eight years in dance, I noticed changes in my body only after coming to DACaP. It was as if, day by day, I was realizing that I could give a rhythm to my inner body. That I can play music in it. I discovered a mindfulness in it I had never known before. There was a new layer of curiosity and exhilaration in me. This excitement compelled me to learn a new art. I see now that I made the decision to learn not just for the sake of learning, but because my inner artist was reaching out, wanting to be realised. With this new curiosity, I discovered that dance was not my future, but rather art as a whole, and it was no longer just scattered thoughts inside of me.

When I felt I needed to learn something new, something other than dance, I looked to the theatre. Without any haste, I took my time, and after enough searching I decided I would learn drama. I was nervous, but at the same time I was adamant that I should not decide if it was for me until I tried it. Putting my shame to the side, I poured myself in the mold of drama. And in my opinion, it is such a mold that works for a man to become a man. This is a mode of art which is itself a collection of art.

My body found a new shape through dance. But in this mold, my body got support; I unveiled a new identity in every step I took. Not only my body, but especially in my psyche new colors were added; I got new eyes. I got a chance to understand the way of my mind. I realized my feelings. I learned to support these feelings instead of changing them. I learnt how to use my feelings at specific times when necessary. My expression found a language. These changes were amazing, yet somehow still I felt incomplete, as if my inner transformation had stopped midway. My curiosity was aroused by that pain that grew over time. I began to learn

everything that theatre/drama involved. I found DACaP. Eventually, I transformed into a man as well as an artist. I believe that my existence as a human being is through my body.

If I have anything of my own, it is simply my body. The changes that do not take place inside me through drama emerge in my daily life through my physical behavior. I found the language to understand my thoughts. It is difficult for me to put this in words, but I am curious as to whether my body changes my mindset or my mind changes my physicality? But I believe in what I see, and that is obviously my body. So my focus and confidence has always been on my body. And yes, as I moved forward, I learnt to carry my mentality with my body. I was very satisfied with the changes going on inside of me, all thanks to the in-depth knowledge of what I acquired in the four year of my time at DACaP.

Learning new things day by day in different classes constantly reminded me of different experiences I had throughout my life. These memories helped me to learn or recognise the art inside me, which I didn't know existed. I had never experienced this kind of awareness inside me, the Experience of which, and my eager curiosity for the world of theatre, started in the DACaP department in Prague.

Not only did it make me aware, but it also taught me to live in the present. Taught me to take responsibility as an actor, so that I can narrate and prepare stories through experiences of my own. And then turn it into a play. And direct it. Perform it. And to see it through the eyes of an audience. To add colors, essence, enthusiasm, art and my very own presence to it. And then to present it in the real world, myself, as an artist, as a writer, as a director, as an audience, with unseen properties. To present it as Nirav. These processes made me my own boss. I never knew that I had any merit as a writer. I never knew I could be a writer. I never knew I could be an actor while being a writer. I never knew what writing skills I can have as an actor. I could never imagine that with the onset of the physical changes in me, I would ever be able to see the new Nirav being born as a writer.

Many times, I feel as if my body is being shaped by the help of letters. As if I am a part of the letters themselves. Or maybe am I a letter myself? Living in DACaP, my body was transformed from letters and became a sentence, that I might call myself a writer and an actor. I can call myself a man with a new body. Or to put it another way, DACaP fostered a new awareness in me that allowed me to witness the changes that took place and that are continuing to take place even as we speak. I believe that this process will continue for the rest of my life, as will my awareness of it.

I will also admit that the overwhelming awareness I found in the Dialogical Acting discipline or the eye-opener sessions about the existence of my inner partner took me a little too deep. I still can't say if it is the awareness or my inner partner because of which I now pay more in-depth attention. And many times, I pay attention to subjects that I later realised and now firmly believe are better off not being paid any attention to. It often got difficult for me to get out of the process of deep meditation on these subjects. But yes, it was never impossible. It has given me a lot of trouble in the last two years, but gradually I learned to focus on my inner awareness, I learned how to assess it and I learned when to use it.

At the end of it all, I am proud of myself that I studied here because now I am not a single Nirav but rather I carry a multitude of Nirav's within me at once. Through this new

multitude, my body and I learned how to listen, read, sing, talk, speak, and see. I have no regrets of being here, I never had, I never will.

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Appendix:

Folk dancer (Darsesh Patel) with folk costume.



1) **Lion** is known to use its paw, so do we, in a vertical seating position.



2) **Elephant**, the whole body is used as the trunk and the vertical seating is used.



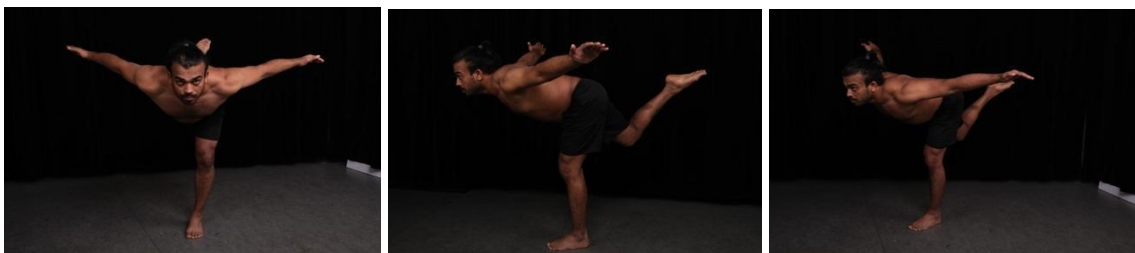
3) **Horse**, keeping the elbow in front of the eye and keeping the eye and the elbow forward in one direction a triangular shape is formed, and it's a defensive mode.



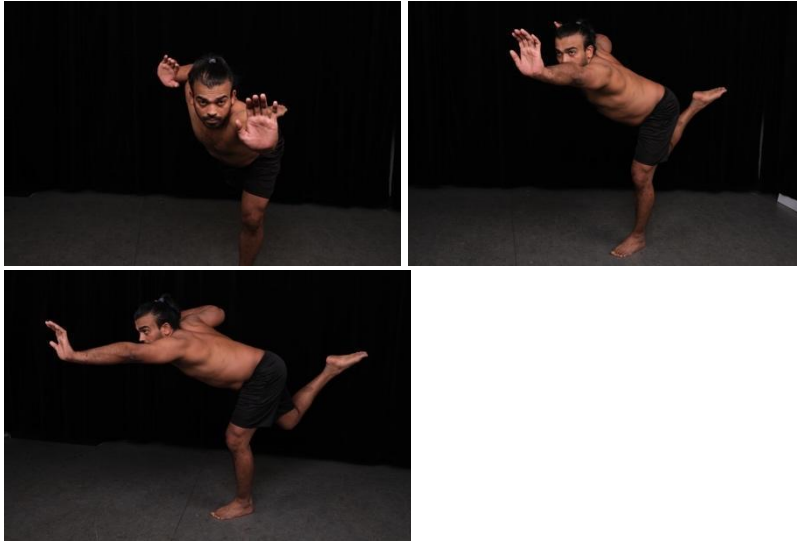
- 4) **Pig**, one locks both their hands with their paws, and sits upright, striking the locked hands in a certain circular direction from head to toe. Attack mode.



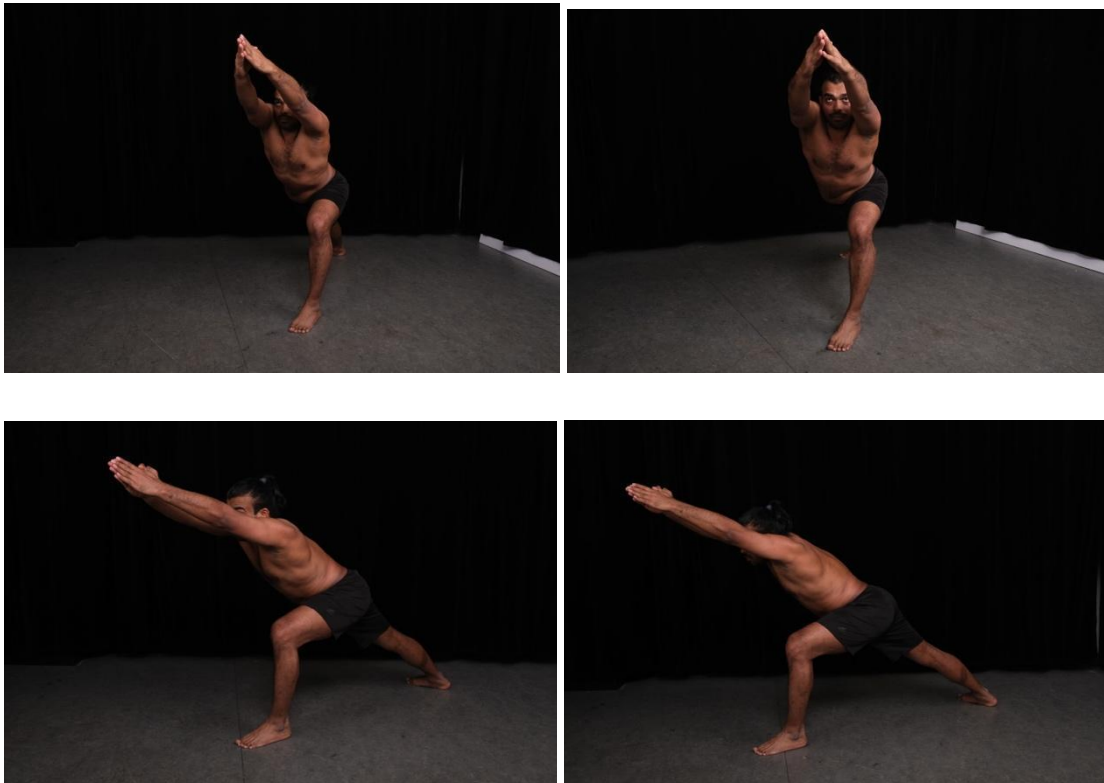
- 5) **Peacock**, standing on one leg, keeping both hands open, keeping the other leg up in the air, and the eyes keenly focussed on a specific object.



- 6) **Fish**, standing on one leg, looking at the object, keeping one hand straight towards the object, showing the palm, keeping the other hand behind the ear.



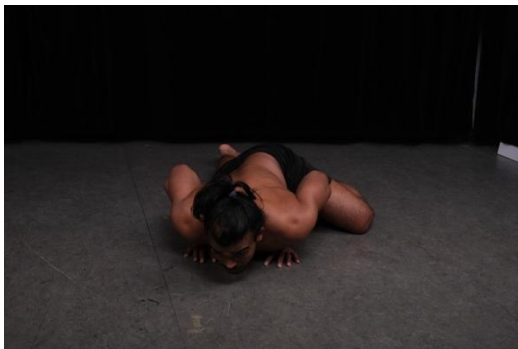
- 7) **Snake**, standing with two hands above the head in a pair of triangles, then turning both hands together from the head, making a circle in the same direction, standing in the same position.



- 8) **Rooster** keeps both hands in a cross towards the neck, kicks with one foot, the crossed hands and the upper part of the body in one direction leaning forward in a triangular shape.



- 9) **Cats** take one step forward, kicks with the other, and then sit on the ground with a fixed shape of the foot, and keep both hands on the side, on the knees, after sitting, keep the hands together, after sitting, keep the hands together keep them on the ground in the lower part of the center, bring both the legs back, lie on the weight of your abdomen, pull the upper part of the body upwards with the help of two hands.



In the practice of Kalari, we always keep our hands up in practice. In the beginning, we take a step forward and hit something with the foot, then cross kick, then round kick, then we kick in four directions, and each kick lasts two to three rounds. Then we sit down with the same kick, in a certain shape and stand up and repeat the same thing. The same thing happened with different kicks. This was for the subsequent process of stretching, the motive being to move forward to the Animal Moves. Now most of the time in dance, you have to move across with a tempo and rhythm, but you also need energy for the same.

Now Kalari especially requires strengthening. Despite the strength one possesses, one never really needs to invest so much in dancing as they do in Kalari. So in the beginning of this process, so much energy is used up in stretching and warming up that after an hour or two, there is no strength left in anybody. We get tired only by thinking about how we could be spending the remaining two hours. But the Guru is very strict, constantly pushing us to do more, trying to give us a different kind of motivation. Which often works.

One hour later we would move onto the Animal Moves. We perform a part of it, and then go on repeating it. Once a whole move gets completed, we repeat it from one direction to the other and vice-versa. The energy for these comes from the repeated pushing by our Guru, coming from the constant force of his energy. Many get tired; others accept defeat. In dance, you get strength from the music and the fun of doing it. But for Kalari, we have to use a different part of our physical and mental strengths.