

**The Academy of Performing Arts in Prague
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MASTER'S THESIS

From self to creativity, from creativity to authenticity

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D e c l a r a t i o n

I declare that I have elaborated the Master's thesis entitled:

“From self to creativity, from creativity to authenticity”

independently, under the expert supervision of my thesis supervisor, and using only the literature and sources cited therein, and that the thesis was not used within the scope of a different university program of study or to obtain the same degree or a different degree. I consent to the publication of the thesis in accordance with legislation and with AMU internal regulations.

Prague, Viktor Buzharov

Abstract

In this thesis titled "From self to creativity, from creativity to authenticity," I am searching for the connections between these three highly polemicized terms to explain to myself the effects dialogical acting has had on me. I do that by looking back to my student reflections from dialogical acting class and trying to confront my experience and articulations on these subjects with relevant literature from each of them. At the core of it all, I found to be the dialogical nature of the self, its ability to discuss and change perspectives to be the root of creativity, and when we are connected to our root, our core, to our self, is the only possible way to be authentic.

Abstract

V této diplomové práci s názvem „Od sebe ke kreativitě, od kreativity k autenticitě,“ hledám souvislosti mezi těmito třemi silně polemizovanými pojmy, abych si vysvětlil, jaký vliv na mě má disciplína dialogické jednání. Ohlížím se zpět na své studentské úvahy z hodin dialogického jednání a snažím se konfrontovat své zkušenosti a úvahy s relevantní literaturou. V jádru všeho jsem zjistil, že dialogická povaha se týká hlavně "já", jeho schopnosti diskutovat a měnit perspektivy, pak se stává zdrojem kreativity, a když jsme spojeni se svým zdrojem, naše jádro, naše já, je to, co nás činí autentickým.

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List of Appellations and Abbreviations

- DA – Dialogical Acting
- DAMU – Divadelní fakulta Akademie múzických umění v Praze (Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague)
- DACP – Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy

Introduction

For all my performative life, I have been intrigued by the moments of creation, and that fascination was not from the point of understanding those moments so that I could elaborate on them; I was simply always pursuing them to happen. Whenever something spontaneous would happen it gave me, and it still gives me, a rush of happiness. My bachelor's education is as a drama actor or, in other words, classical acting. With that education, I went through the most well-known acting methods and techniques. However, the thing that stuck with me were the exercises that involved improvisation in one way or another, such as Stanislavski's "given circumstances". In this exercise, the actors explore the given circumstances of a scene or character, including details such as time, place, social context, relationships, and events that precede the scene in which actors immerse themselves and respond improvisationally, allowing the scene to unfold naturally based on the established context. Then, there is Stanislavski's "The Magic If", where actors place themselves in the position of the characters. Going forward in my professional endeavors, I developed a practice to create abbreviations of these and similar exercises and, through improvisations, to try to answer the questions that are raised before me in my artistic work.

With this little backstory off the way, I can slowly move to the topic of this master thesis with the title "From self to creativity, from creativity to authenticity". In the past three years I have been actively practicing dialogical acting – acting with the inner partner. What dialogical acting can be is best described in the words of Mr. Vyskočil himself:

*"(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner is nothing fixed or finished. It is not a method, nor is it, in the least, a technique. If anything, it's a certain kind of inspiration, an open question. If anything, it's an instance of investigating and studying open acting. (Trans. Note: "Open acting" (also known as zero-point acting) from Czech, nepředemětné herectví. The idea here is that open acting is acting (improvising) without a theme or subject (topic) given to the improviser in advance. In other words, the actor discovers themes, subjects, topic as they emerge from his/her interaction)."*¹

However, for this introduction, I will try to simplify and explain the 'discipline' in my own words as such: It's a form of experimentation in which one performer goes on stage alone and attempts to interact with himself from 3 to 5 minutes, without goal set for them, just being subjected to the forces of public solitude and left to exist privately in public. There, the student

¹ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner*. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

is, at the same time, the author, the actor, and the viewer of his experimentation (to achieve it, it needs practice). The group of people attending the class ranges from 5 to 15 people, whose gaze, or as it is called, wishful attention, is required to set up the atmosphere for experimentation. The experimentation starts whenever the student is ready and ends when the professor says, 'thank you'. It is as abstract as it sounds, so no worries, I will elaborate on it throughout the thesis.

With my continuous practice of dialogical acting, I began noticing something that was hard to ignore: that I see a correlation between practicing dialogical acting and my increased creativity. At the same time, I feel that the art I am creating is an authentic reflection of my true self. I know this sentence involves a couple of highly polemicized terms, such as self, creativity, and authenticity, and I will try to elaborate on them through this thesis. This thesis aims to explore if there is a connection between practicing dialogical acting and increased levels, intervals, and intensity of creativity and authenticity.

This is not a notion that happened overnight, but it was somewhat of a gradual process through my master's studies at the Department of Authorial Creativity and Pedagogy. Contemplating the topic of self in Kent Sjöström's class "Self and Identity," as well as working on Marketa Machková's PhD student project on identity in the context of her PhD thesis on authenticity, I started seeing the understanding of self as a pivotal element in dialogical acting.

On the possibilities of dialogical acting, Vyskočil has said:

"(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner incorporates and opens up a number of different areas of investigation and possible paths and goals. However, it should always remain a genuinely personal and personality-based matter, where an individual's disposition (e.g., the type quality and strength of talent) determine for what and how it can be and is. Dialogical acting with the Inner Partner depends on what each person does with it and hopes to get out of it.

For most it can be, and often is, a path of self-discovery, self-understanding and self-acceptance; for many path of self-realization as well. This depends on predispositions, talents and interests.

As has already been stated, It can be, and often is, as has already been stated, about developing psychosomatic fitness for creative communication and, therefore, for a more profound and precise "conductive" empathy; understanding and acceptance of others; for encounter, in the true sense of the word.

It can be and often is, about experiencing, understanding and studying the principles of dramatic play.

It can be and often is, about experiencing, understanding and studying Zero-Point-Acting (playing, performing).

It can be and often is, a way of understanding and grasping; “physicalizing” and meeting a specific challenge; answering a particular question; accomplishing a specific task; realizing a certain text.

It can be and often is, if it is understood and comprehended as such, an open and opening path; a methodology of rehearsing, searching and perceiving, noticing and discovering.

However, it is not a goal oriented, worked out, proven approach, nor a “method” that can be accepted and deployed as prefabricated thing. And it is definitely not any kind of technique.”²

In this citation of Vyskočil’s words, we can see many possible outcomes that dialogical acting can bring to a person or performer. However, he lists the first path of self-discovery, self-understanding, self-realization, and self-acceptance. With this, Vyskočil acknowledges that the performer is dealing with the self directly through dialogical acting, trying to better understand (him/her) self.

In this dealing with a human's self, I see the connection between dialogical acting and creativity. As Vyskočil says in the cited paragraph above, dialogical acting is genuinely a personal matter, and it is a claim with which I agree; the self and the understanding of self as a sub-matter of dialogical acting is also a personal matter. However, both are not isolated, and there are shared experiences that we can discuss. There is not a finite definition of what self actually is. Still, numerous fields of study look at this phenomenon through their lenses, and the lenses that I have are the lenses of a performer, and through those lenses is my only possibility to look at this honestly and truthfully for myself. This does not mean that the already established aspects of the self would not be applicable; on the contrary, I will try to use already established viewpoints on the self from other disciplines like philosophy, psychology, anthropology, etc., to try and articulate this dealing of dialogical acting with the self and how that might connect to creativity and authenticity.

To research this connection between dialogical acting, the self, creativity, and authenticity, I will look back and try to analyse all of my reflections from dialogical acting classes from the past three years. During that analysis, I will use literature from different fields of study on the topics of self, creativity, and authenticity and try to crystalize that connection with the support of my personal experience of practicing DA for more than three years now and the changes I’ve noted in my artistic and personal development.

² VYSKOČI, Ivan. *(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner: Authorization Code*. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

1 What is Self?

To do anything further in this thesis, I must first establish at least a general understanding of what self is. As I have mentioned in the introduction, no one unifying theory can determine what the self is. So, where to start? The first time I dared to write about this was for the PhD project of Marketa Machková, for which I wrote an essay in which my thoughts on self were articulated for the first time. There I said:

“The self is the personal, intimate understanding of you, which does not always get to be conscious and therefore be understood. It is the instinct, the gut, and even the genetic predispositions, if I may add. It answers to the question “Who I am?”³

Even though this might not be inherently wrong, it doesn't even scratch the surface of what self is. Depending on the discipline researching it, the time and the world in which that research was done, and many more factors influence how self has been determined through time and even now.

What is interesting for me and valuable for this thesis is the ability of the self to be fragmented and split into different selves that serve different functions or represent different aspects of us. From a social standpoint, this fragmentation is explained by Vlad P. Glaveanu:

“[...] by living within societies characterized by a diversity of social positions, “occupied” by other people and groups, individual selves become multiple, in the sense that they are forged by the dialogue between these positions and their associated voices and perspectives.”⁴

Now, connecting on what I said in my first attempt, “The self is the personal, intimate understanding of you,” is true, but the thing missing is the correlation that one's self has with his/her surroundings. The self is not isolated; on the contrary, it is in constant correlation with its environment, and this environment is influencing the self, changing it, and creating alternate versions of the self – multiple selves. Of all the models trying to define self, I focus on the “Seven-Selves Modelling Hypothesis” or SSMH. My reasoning for doing so was because of its comprehensiveness in regard to other models and having concrete and wide differentiation between selves but, at the same time, a clear line of connection between them, allowing me the ability to apply its concrete selves in a given situation from my experience with dialogical

³ BUZHAROV, Viktor. *Essay on Self and Identity*. [Essay written for the purpose of Markéta Machková SGS Identita project] Place: Prague. 2021

⁴ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). *The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity*, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8, p120

acting as well as the ability to confront it with other literature about the self. The selves in the SSMH are:

- “ - *The actual self [...] The fact that we have a physical self is inescapable: all selfhood resides in the brain, which is a component of the physical body; [...]*
- *The social self – the self others believe me to be [...] the model of my self, offered by others as part of the exchange of social calculus. [...]*
- *The self-model – the self I believe me to be [...] we tend to hold cognitive representations of several self- models, although only one at a time*
- *The Episodic self: the self as modelled in individual past events - The Episodic self is a feature that emerges from the combination of self - modelling and conscious memory recall. [...] When we remember our self, we do not remember our self-model as it was when the memory was laid down; rather, we construct a current self- model to represent our previous self. [...]*
- *The Narrative self: the remembered self, the self with history [...] As the Narrative self is a product of the migration of selfhood, from the social self through the self-model and then the Episodic self, it is more virtual than real; and yet it is the self we most often call on to define our meness. [...] Narrative self provides the individual with a sense of unity and purpose. [...] Narrative self may not work as a thing; but as a metaphor or representation of a thing, it works just fine. [...]*
- *The Cultural self: the self I should be [...] A Cultural self, like the social selves, is a model offered to the individual by others; but, unlike the Social selves, it is a virtual self. It is a model of an ideal individual in this particular culture [...]*
- *The Projected self: the self I want others to believe me to be [...] Projected self is an amalgam of my internal representations of myself and the expectations that others put upon me. However, there also seems to be a feedback loop outside of the self that allows the Projected self to affect the Social self: the self I want others to believe me to be can become one of the selves others believe me to be.”⁵*

Most of the time, when we speak about the self, we associate it with the Narrative self, the one we usually identify with, the idea of ourselves as a whole. However, I believe that the most important self, from a performer's point of view, from this given model is the self-model. It is not just the self-model as such but the moment of change when we transfer from one current self-model to the next. This moment of change between self-models is where I locate how

⁵ EDUARDES, Martin P.J., *The Origins of Self, Book Subtitle: An Anthropological Perspective*. London: UCL Press, 2019. ISBN 9781787356306, p.165-180

dialogical acting deals with the self. Something that I will elaborate on in the next chapter(s). However, I can see a strong connection between dialogical acting and episodic self, connecting the importance of reminiscence in DA, as well as cultural self, especially visible when a beginner is starting to practice dialogical acting in the form of a block, a pressure of being normal in accordance with your cultural surroundings. This cultural self manifests itself through collective others as explained down below:

“The multiple self is neither completely fluid nor schizophrenic. Its development is marked by the gradual encounter with others and the accumulation of positions and perspectives that give the self-continuity over time”⁶

Vlad P. Glaveanu, here, when speaking of multiple self, is talking precisely about the change of these self-models by influence of the social self as it is described in the SSMH and later on continues writing of possibilities of the self to be influenced by itself through dialogism and perspectives and how that exchange between self positions is affecting the creativity. Regardless of the reason, all these changes do not happen in a moment; they are gradual processes over time. When Martin P.J. Edwards discusses in his book “The Origins of Self: An Anthropological Perspective” all the way philosophers, psychologists, anthropologists, etc., looked and approached the definition of the self through history, he refers to Alan Morin as well:

“He (Alan Morin) looked at the role of inner speech (talking to ourselves inside our heads) as a determiner of selfness. He took the view that inner speech gave us both a mechanism to rationalize the actions of others and a method for scrutinizing our self.”⁷

I cannot confirm or deny if Alan Morin is right because I simply do not know; I have no way of concluding that inner speech is the determining factor of selfness. According to my personal experience and all the literature sources that I have read and are listed in for this thesis, I can say that the self is undisputedly manifesting through the inner speech. And, if we develop on that, we can see that we can find a couple of aspects and types of inner dialogues. The inner dialogue Glavenau is filing under three types. The first is the dialogue between I-positions (voices of the self), the dialogue between complementing or conflicting perspectives of self in a given situation. Then, he goes on to distinguish the next type of inner dialogue:

⁶ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8, p.120

⁷ EDWARDES, Martin P.J., *The Origins of Self, Book Subtitle: An Anthropological Perspective*. London: UCL Press, 2019. ISBN 9781787356306, p.17

“ [...] dialogues with inner others (or “voices of others within the self”). [...] people we interact with and whose perspectives become familiar to us but whose positions remain explicitly those of others. And yet, just as in the case of I-positions, inner others and their perspectives do “populate” the life of the self.”⁸

And:

“ [...] a third important type of inner dialogues is established with a more abstract and yet no less “real” type of audience— collective others [...] a societal ‘super-addressee’ sanctioning and reprimanding individuals who dissent from socially imposed norms. What “people” say, believe, or do remains a powerful standard for the self, one inscribed from early on in children’s play whenever they appeal to the rules of the game or complain that “it is not done like this.”⁹

I have seen, noticed, and felt all these three types of inner speech appearing while practicing dialogical acting, with the most prominent one being the discussion between the two “I” positions. This discussion of “I” positions that Glavenau is writing about is the moment when a new one is challenging our current self-model. The inner others, the voices of others, were also present in my experimentations, especially the voices of my close family. An interesting fact is that these voices of inner others appeared exclusively when I was doing an experimentation in Macedonian language, and I clearly remember one experimentation in which me and my father were fixing our car, which was some mash-up of childhood memories with real-life problems from today, with comedy, laughter, and everything. I can trace the roots of my final performance for my master’s performance back to this experimentation. It is not the same topic or anything measurable, but it is on the same feeling that both are based on.

Now, back to the self, and as a slow transition towards my next chapter, “How does Self connect to dialogical acting?” This occurrence of discussion interaction within the self or between selves, or self-models, or I-positions, or however we want to name them in the realm of dialogical acting, according to Vyskočil:

⁸ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). *The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity*, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8, p.126

⁹ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). *The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity*, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8, p.127

“In dialogical acting, however, there are only ever two at play at any one time, in our case evidently in one body, through a single body, a single ‘mortal frame’ as they say”¹⁰

I am unsure that I have found a unifying answer to the question, “What is Self?”. I guess the answer depends on why you are asking that question and for what purpose. I honestly believe it is a question with a multifaceted possibility of answers. My purpose for asking that question was to build a foundation, an understanding of the self, in order to dive deeper into understanding dialogical acting and how it later connects to creativity and authenticity.

¹⁰ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague* [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

2 How does the Self connect to Dialogical Acting?

For me, this connection is as evident as daylight. However, I will try to support it and elaborate on it by reading what Vyskočil has said and how that connects to the literature and what we have established so far. The line of connection between dialogical acting and self is possible because of the ability of the self to change. This ability to change comes from two directions, external, but even more importantly for us in dialogical acting, internally, from within us. As we already know from Vyskočil's words, a possible path of dialogical acting is a path of self-discovery, self-understanding, self-acceptance, and self-realization. To get there, we must build and develop an awareness of ourselves. By this, I do not mean that it is important for us to know theoretically about ourselves. Nonetheless, we should just simply try to openheartedly understand who we are and why we are doing what we are doing, how the things happening in our lives are influencing us, and so on. For how we are absorbing this information into our current self-model, P.J. Edwards elaborates:

"If I receive information about a social relationship in which I am a protagonist, the only way I can incorporate that information into my social calculus is to envisage a third- person view of myself, a self- as- other. [...] I am not only self-aware, I am aware of my own 'selfness' – that my modelled self is simultaneously a special first- person case and a mundane third- person case in my cognitive social modelling. There is a hierarchy to my self- awareness: awareness that I can be modelled by others, and awareness that I, too, can model me."¹¹

We see and experience a lot of stuff throughout our lives without noticing; they go somewhere in our subconsciousness. They are just some information within us; it is not absorbed or incorporated, but they are not gone; they are here hovering around us. They have not passed through the filter of looking at them through the third-person view. In DA, we observe ourselves waiting for something to emerge, anything that can oppose what we are. And from where is that something coming? According to Vyskočil, even though he is speaking hesitantly about the subconscious:

¹¹ EDWARDES, Martin P.J., *The Origins of Self, Book Subtitle: An Anthropological Perspective*. London: UCL Press, 2019. ISBN 9781787356306, p.39

“It is hopefully evident from this that, first and foremost, we are dealing with the awakening and cultivation of the ‘subconscious’ for it to be in good form, prepared to participate creatively and to ‘play’.”¹²

Self-modeling is bound to happen while practicing dialogical acting as we expose ourselves to that third-person view. The modeling of ourselves is not something we look for; it is not an active pursuit that is happening, and there is no instruction like that. There is pretty much one simple task:

*“And the task for the person who goes into the space is rather simple and always the same: Try to interact dialogically with yourself, with your self as a partner, with your selves as partners. As we have already said, all of us have had some experience some inkling of what and how that could be like. So that means it’s about evoking, recalling, reminding yourself.”*¹³

With this simple instruction, we are bringing our attention towards ourselves. By repeating this simple exercise, we are building our condition to notice, confront, and accept who we are, or in other words, we are building our self-awareness. Of the importance of self-awareness, Martin P.J. Edwards notes:

*“The individual with awareness of selfness is ‘intelligent’, ‘enlightened’, ‘wise’; their behaviour is ‘generous’, ‘social’ and, perhaps most tellingly, ‘unselfish’. Lack of awareness of selfness makes the individual ‘ruthless’, ‘unsympathetic’ or, at the extreme, ‘sociopathic’.”*¹⁴

This resonates with Vyskočil’s notion that through DA as a possible path, we can achieve conductive empathy. All of this is achieved through the dialogical nature of the self I discussed in the previous chapter. The inner speech, the inner question, and the inner monologues that we have in our heads through which we update our social calculus in dialogical acting are brought to the stage in public solitude. Here, they do not just manifest through speech but are using our whole body as a medium. They express themselves psychosomatically,

¹² VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague* [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

¹³ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version* [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

¹⁴ EDWARDES, Martin P.J., *The Origins of Self, Book Subtitle: An Anthropological Perspective*. London: UCL Press, 2019. ISBN 9781787356306, p.48

subconsciously manifesting somehow, and we have to notice them, and because of the dialogical capability of the self, it sublimates in an inner partner. That inner partner:

“(..) inner partner turns up, shows himself, appears. Sometimes it’s called an inner voice, but its usually not just a voice. It’s also a gesture, a kind of corporeal tension. Sometimes it’s also referred to as an alter ego, another, better “self” – although it can also be a self that discourages or makes insinuations.”¹⁵

That better self, even if it discourages it, is still better because it strives to get better. It asks questions, and with that, it is changing the status quo. It is trying to be something else, to gain knowledge about ourselves. Our current self-model is being challenged; you look at yourself from different I-positions, trying to notice. For me, the inner partner has always been somewhere in the realm of the abstract:

“The inner partner for me represents the attention, the ability to be aware of the present and reflect on it in the real time. The answer to my questions and the one who asks when there is nothing to be answered. I would love for my inner partner to get out of the abstract, but definitively not as this invisible partner that I try to imagine at the beginning with whom I speak. That was disturbing for me, and I did not progress in that dialog with the invisible man.”¹⁶

Elaborating on this reflection to clarify how my inner partner manifested for me: at the beginning, I have been chasing some personified version of the inner partner, some humanoid partner on the stage with whom I will then discuss. This personification was driving the attention away from me, and when I managed to bring the attention onto myself, I started noticing the polarities. It was not someone from the outside but opposites within me. For example, a question arises: “Should I go out for a beer or stay home writing my master thesis?”. Even a simple question like this brings to the surface a couple of Viktors; there is a Viktor, the excellent student who will stay and work, the Viktor who is tired and needs a break, maybe even some party-animal Viktor, who knows. This is one question looked at from different I-positions; no extra human on stage, nothing of that sort. These Viktors are not fixed roles and can change throughout one improvisation. And then these Viktors discuss, they discuss questions like this numerous times a day in Viktor’s head; what we do with dialogical acting is just bring these questions out of the subconsciousness into the consciousness by discussing them in a public

¹⁵ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

¹⁶ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov. [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague, 2021

solitude, in front of the audience, out loud, with greater attention to see how they will manifest. These discussions in our heads and how they manifest Vyskočil describes as:

“There are purpose-built cases of self-talk and self-play, where there is no doubt as to why and how they come about and what they might be good for. All the ‘recaps’ and ‘reconstruction of events’ of this for or another, ‘improvements of situations’, ‘trial runs’, ‘rebukes’, ‘arguments’, ‘apologies’, ‘defenses’, ‘prosecutions’, ‘reproaches’, ‘ridicule’, ‘bullying’, ‘consolations’, ‘encouragement’, ‘pep talk’, ‘posing’, ‘trying to make an impression’ and so on. As a rule, in all of these little productions the protagonist tend to have their ‘second self’ playing a significant, albeit considerably unsteady, changeable role. [...] It seems our job is to recognize, to discover what on earth it is, what it is about, or what it might be about. Who, what, how and why? It almost becomes detective work, often unsettling, persistent. And at other times, although this is also far from clear, it is not important because we are conscious and certain of the fact that it is all just for fun, for joy, in the spur of the moment, a kind of game, play, pure play.”¹⁷

The ‘second self,’ the inner partner, is the crucial part here. As I have mentioned above, it is not a fixed character that appears, but we must find and discover it. This investigation, as Vyskočil is calling it, rests on our ability to be self-aware. During my classes in which we experimented with dialogical acting, the word concentration was thrown around a lot, and not without purpose, as concentration was a big part of being able to notice something different with us, an impulse of some other self, second self, – and if we are not concentrated that moment will pass, so it is not given that you will be able to find your second self every time. That’s why conditioning plays a big part in how successful your experimentation will be; it is the conditioning of your ability to notice yourself to raise your self-awareness levels consciously. Then this investigation becomes easier: to find your second self in a given experimentation and simply play with it, discuss, confront, agree, whatever, it doesn’t matter. Two sides of you, two I-positions, two self-models of you, will have a conversation, and from that, you can draw conclusions and use them however you like. You have just gotten to know yourself better; you achieved self-knowledge, self-understanding, and self-acceptance.

¹⁷ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

3 Dialogical Acting and (my)self

“In a situation where something is happening in the moment in solitude, we first have the answer, on which later on we pose the question. Now my dilemma is how do we treat the event where the answer appears first? It should be impossible but, on the stage, it feels that way. There is that stream of thoughts and impulses without any questions. I am afraid to say it so I will not end up in a lot of theorizing but: “Is it the inner partner the one who ask the questions?” and we should just wait to notice and then answer.”¹⁸

This is one of my earliest reflections dating back to my first year of study. What is evident here is that I was trying to figure out the second self, the inner partner. I did not say in this reflection that I have been investigating, as I was focused on understanding the rules of the investigation, but I was on the right track. What I refer to as ‘we first have the answer’- is not an answer; it is actually the impulse. I have noticed something! Something worth questioning. Something out of joint with my current self-model that needs a discussion, but that is not the answer; that is just one moment that jumps out of my stream of consciousness that I noticed. Now, I have to be honest with it and try to answer it fullheartedly. Professor Eva Slavíková, the assistant and guarantor of the discipline at DACP, this instance of the appearance of the impulse elaborates as:

“When you practice (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner, your interaction should be transparent. Anything you conceal makes it clear that you are hiding something in your head you do not want to make public. Just because something is running through your head, does not mean that it has to be expressed – but it is an impulse that you should not gloss over without any remark whatsoever. It is not about revealing what is private; it is about getting an impulse. Concealment indicates an unrevealed, unaccepted inner partner.”¹⁹

Honestly, I needed some time to differentiate the intimate from the personal. However, I found a sentence in one of my personal reflections, written towards the end of my first year of studies, addressing this issue:

¹⁸ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2020-ZS-Reflection-DJ-EN-B-Viktor Buzharov-4. [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2020

¹⁹ SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, A Teacher's Insights into Practice, In: SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, ČUNDERLE Michal, HANČIL Jan, KOMOLOSI Alexander, VYSKOČIL Ivan, ZICH Jan, (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner: Principles and Practice, pp. 101-108. Prague: Brakola. 2011, p.108

“Personal aspect which should not necessarily have to be intimate, but more in a sense talking about the things that you want to talk now”²⁰

This was the key for me, from a performative standpoint; it is not about what it is but about what it evokes. And what it evokes is manifested through that inner partner. The investigation, the action of locating the impulse, and then the question- all of this is just the tip of the iceberg. Once you establish the question, the opposition, and the different I-positions, the fun starts. The play afterward is so much fun, and the discussion with yourself is so insightful on a subtle level, but let's not jump ahead. The thing is that, even when I thought that I cracked the impulses, I still missed one.

“Here the only inspiration on which you base your experimentation is yourself. When I played a character or improvise on a topic that influence did not existed to that degree. Especially by playing a character you are able to make the distance between that and the personal life. That division between the stage and personal I did not succeed to do today. Today I felt like I wanted to shut up and don't say anything and that spilled into my experimentation no matter how much effort I put to get myself started”²¹

That division between a character and an actor does not exist in dialogical acting. In dialogical acting, there is a trinity, as Vyskočil describes it, in which the person experimenting holds three views:

“We are therefore dealing not with a binuity, but with trinity, when the author, viewer and actor are one. (And are in one). They provoke one another, add to one another, one is born from the other the other is born from the first.”²²

There is no predetermined character as such here, but an author. And it is the author's job to create the 'character'. We need to find it first to be able to apply the “V”-effect afterward. Or, more correctly, the movement between positions suggests the distance and allows the “V” - effect to appear. The information that I get from the reflection above is that there has been an impulse that I passed over and have not tried to develop and scrutinize in the space. The

²⁰ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-4. [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

²¹ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-8. [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

²² VYSKOČIL, Ivan. Subject: Stage improvisation [online]. Amatérská scéna, vol. 13 (1976), no. 5, pp. 16-17. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/predmet-jevistni-improvizace-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

author's view disregarded that impulse, and from this perspective, it is apparent to me that some Viktor, who is quiet, was trying to emerge, but he was never given a chance; he was suppressed. To use Professor Slavíková's terminology from the part I cited above, I have not been transparent. I glossed over the impulse of exploring the quiet Viktor, a Viktor that I obviously did not want to show.

I sometimes had issues translating the impulse into an inner partner because of the struggle of constipating what the inner partner is. This is a topic that I touched on a bit in the previous chapter. In my final reflection from the first year of DA, I have come to some type of definition that solved a lot of problems until that point for me, but indeed had some limitations:

*"The personification of the Inner Partner was a big block for me. When I implied my understanding of soliloquy from my classical acting education, I slowly felt I'm getting rid of the block. I was looking for some significant other and all the time that was me. I am my own Inner Partner. I stopped creating any personification of the Inner Partner and started looking towards me. Like a soliloquy of a character that is not certain in his stance, who is searching, looking, experimenting. This asks for a dialogical form. There are questions, and they require answers. The Inner Partner for me is not an invisible man that stands next to me that I have to make a conversation with but a projection of my inner struggle to find the truthfulness."*²³

For the most part, this stands true for me to this day. When we try to express our inner partner with our body, the limitations come to the front. At least for me, it functioned that way. The gradation was going somewhat like this: At the very beginning, I was missing the impulses, and then when I started noticing them, I had a hard time sublimating them in an inner partner, and when that inner partner appeared, it started being limited only to the voice. I started being reflective, I started noticing stuff and that blocked me, weirdly enough, as is evident from this reflection:

*"The reflective aspect I think that I am starting to grasp it in some parts. The thing that I am noticing is that when I can achieve being reflective on the stage, it is harder to keep the performative aspect clear, and the whole experimentation is somehow closing down into more closed expressions towards self."*²⁴

²³ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-15. [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

²⁴ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-4. [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

Even though I needed more time, until well into my second year of study, to activate my body in a way I am happy about, all these experimentations were not for nothing. Those things were found, those questions were raised, and if not today, tomorrow, they will find their expression. There is nothing that we can do with brute force; we have to be patient, and the second self will create itself; we might oppose it, we might even not like it, or we can adore it, but it is a distinct entity within us, created out of our actions so far.

“The inner partner can affirm and approve of you (yet is not identical to you) or he can oppose you. Her character emerges, is born, from the receding action; she is not predetermined. Just the same, the inner partner is about that something that each one of us has inside us, carries inside us. She is about who we are.”²⁵

It comes from “that something,” as Slavíková calls it. That something that we have buried or just never looked at, or did not notice yet, or even just didn’t notice its importance and significance for who we are. Once we achieve a certain level of reflexivity, we start to see these traces of the other self, the inner partner, in the form of impulses; for me, those manifested in a distinctive hand movement or a single word, a specific tension in the part of the body, an overall feeling of sadness or happiness and many more examples as such. I remember this experimentation in which the inner partner took the form of a wolf just because I had this overwhelming desire to howl. In the experimentation, I ended up chasing sheep, running, jumping, and ended up being funny to watch, but what was important was the opposition that had been created, opposition to the laughable but stoic front that keeps everything together, this inhibiting loneliness on the other side that was trying to show up. And just like that, you are being confronted with yourself through the game.

In these discussions/games between my different selves, inner partners, or I-positions, I recognize this tension for change of the status quo. In my experience, these moments of desire for change are my most creative moments; there is something that sparks creativity in these unsettling, uncomfortable moments. And this changes when they eventually happen; in most cases, they are barely noticeable but accumulate over time. This interaction between different I-positions happens to us naturally, and I guess for most, they happen when we are left alone and lead a conversation in our minds. Looking them back from a time distance, these distant past selves may look foreign to us, as we are already at a different point in our lives, but the sublimation of all these oppositions is what creates the sense of selfhood for me, closest to what is described as the narrative self in the SSHM. Even though I had different positions

²⁵ SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, A Teacher’s Insights into Practice, In: SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, ČUNDERLE Michal, HANČIL Jan, KOMOLOSI Alexander, VYSKOČIL Ivan, ZICH Jan, *(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner: Principles and Practice*, pp. 101-108. Prague: Brakola. 2011. p.106

through which I looked at myself and from which my inner partners were created in the past, as opposed to what I have now, I still have a sense of continuity regardless of their differences. All those self models in a given time or at different points in time are somehow part of this one overarching feeling of self that is capable of change.

“We also often feel that we have individual continuity, that the self I was then is somehow the same self I am now, and that the future selves are all continuations of the present self; but when we look comparatively at those different selves, it becomes hard to see what it is that continues.”²⁶

This difference between the selves, in my experience, is because of our ability to change and grow with time, gradually day by day, through millions of small discussions with ourselves. This type of discussion happens to us all the time in our daily lives, but dialogical acting moves them from out of our thoughts into a performative space. Vyskočil puts these private discussions of oneself as the core of what dialogical acting really is:

“The central and decisive aspect of (inter)acting with the Inner Partner, of all this experimenting, learning and studying, is to learn how to do what happens to us naturally when we’re alone in front of other people; to be able to do that. The other people, their presence and involvement, are exceedingly important. Their attention, the fact that they’re observing, seeing and listening, experiencing what we’re doing, what’s happening to you in the space with you, objectivizes you.”²⁷

This transition of the inner dialogues into a performative space with a present audience detaches them from the subjective view. To help myself with an example, the experimentation with the wolf that I mentioned earlier if it was still bound exclusively to my head, it would have been harder to see that there is some Viktor in me that is okay with being occasionally quiet. Through dialogical acting, that quiet Viktor got its expression; it was not just an idea, but it was real; he was lonely, he walked differently, talked differently, he had distinctive positions on his shoulders, etc. I can speak only for myself now; when I have some realization to make about myself, when my current self-model is challenged through these conversations in front of the toilet mirror, I tend to distance myself and shut down that conversation as it brings me anxiety; it is scary. But as Professor Vyskočil is saying:

²⁶ EDUARDES, Martin P.J., *The Origins of Self, Book Subtitle: An Anthropological Perspective*. London: UCL Press, 2019. ISBN 9781787356306. p.30

²⁷ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version [online]*. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

*“what’s happening to you in the space with you, objectivizes you.”*²⁸

It creates a distance from those overwhelming feelings so that you can look at yourself objectively. With dialogical acting, it is like I am tricking myself into having those polemicizing oppositions within me as a game instead of having these profound thoughts about myself - I just get to play as a kid and get to the same realizations. The second side is that I feel I am extremely good at avoiding those inner dialogues, which is also probably why I hate being alone. With dialogical acting, I am getting trained to notice the impulses that will spark a discussion, and I am getting exposed to having that look at myself in front of other people, yet it’s all for fun.

Having these inner dialogues publicly brings to my conscious some feelings and thoughts that would otherwise exist exclusively in my subconscious, and not just that, but they get their own body and voice. The things that I stumbled upon in this discussion are not just realizations, but they are also manifesting in the real, physical world, and with that, are getting easier to be noticed, which raises my self-awareness. That self-awareness is achieved through this constant need for a “question” to be raised, the opposition to be created, this impulse of something different, a problem if I might say, or just the presumption of a problem is enough to be the spark. And in DA, this question is raised in action while being on stage - it’s training the ability to notice, to “reflect in action”. This problem that we find is not something that is necessarily a negative thing; it is just noticing the right thing that needs to be discussed and discuss it. In the book “Improvisation and the Creative Process”, I found this sublimation of the words of Collingwood, which, for me, perfectly describes the connection between this problem that I am talking about and creating art:

*“The modern psychological distinction between problem-finding and problem-solving is strikingly similar to Collingwood’s distinction between art and craft. In so many words, Collingwood states that a craftsman is problem-solving, whereas an artist is problem finding”*²⁹

I so clearly see the connection between dialogical acting and creativity because of this problem-finding ability given to us with practicing dialogical acting. Trying to reflect, articulate, and somehow elaborate on what is happening to me with the practicing of dialogical acting and how that is affecting me, I went through the SSMH and came to this conclusion: With every

²⁸ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

²⁹ SAYER, R. Keith. *Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity*. [online]. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 58, No. 2, (2000), pp. 149-161. Available from: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/432094> [accessed on 2024-05-08], p.154

experimentation that I do, I find an impulse that is challenging my current self-model that I hold about myself, and I expose it to scrutiny from the oppositions / inner partners that arise. All of this is happening through experimentations - in my view, in essence, are theatrical, as they are bound to the same dramatic principles as any other performative art. This challenge of the self-model creates a scene in which we are the protagonist and the antagonist and are bound to the theatrical principles of improvisation when developed, as Keith Sawyer describes them:

“At the beginning of an improvisational scene, there is no dramatic frame whatsoever; but within a minute or so, many parameters are already established. At this point, the actors have created a problem for themselves, and they have to spend the rest of the scene solving that problem. In fact, in most creative genres, the creative process is a constant balance between finding a problem and solving that problem, and then finding a new problem during the solving of the last one”³⁰

The vital difference is that storytelling is not prominent in dialogical acting, but we are dealing with the moment of creation, pausing there, and exploring it. The creative process is the moment that the impulse happens, noticing it, galvanizing it, exploring and developing it. It was unfathomable at the beginning how to look for continuity in practicing dialogical acting when there is no story to continue; at least, that was not its goal. In my words, I can explain that continuity now as: “Never stop experimenting.” If one impulse happens, that does not mean that another will not occur during the experimentation because it probably will, and that should not be brushed off.

Dialogical acting is predominantly a personal matter for me; it is a public confrontation of two of my “I” positions. As a performer, I am exposing myself publicly and allowing my current self-model to be questioned regularly. This process is affecting my “self” and altering it. This process of the changes within my “self” is the well from which most of my artistic endeavors get their inspiration and substance.

In the next chapter, I present how these processes happening within oneself result in creativity.

³⁰ SAYER, R. Keith. *Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity*. [online]. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 58, No. 2, (2000), pp. 149-161. Available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/432094> [accessed on 2024-05-08], p.158

4 How does Self connect to Creativity?

“ [...] the multiplicity of self–other (or Ego–Alter, I–Thou) relations is placed at the core of all our psychological processes, from remembering and thinking to imagining and, as we will see later on, creating. [...] Most of all, this perspective makes us sensitive to the existence of “inner others” or “the-other-within-the-self as key positions within internal dialogues.”³¹

On distinguishing the others within ourselves, Vyskočil creates this dualism between the so-called conventional “I”, in which I can see the current self-model I was talking about in the previous chapters, and this other something that comes from the subconscious.

“We can establish that it is a certain ‘I’ or ‘ego’. As a rule, this is the ‘I’ that psychology characterizes as the ‘social I’, the ‘I’ of habit, the surface ‘I’, the conventional ‘I’. It is the ‘I’ that needs and wants to (egocentrically) have, get, and possess. The ‘I’ that asserts itself because of this and through this, that adapts because of this and through this. And it is depending on this – and this - that the ‘I’ also acquires and has its ‘self-consciousness’ and ‘consciousness’. And also, of course, the ‘subconscious’ in the form of something, somewhere that occasionally stands in for it, and occasionally casts doubt on it, threatens it, in its position, its ‘consciousness’ and ‘self-consciousness’.”³²

This occasional doubt from the subconsciousness is ever present in us in our everyday life, manifesting through that inner voice in our head and the inner dialogs we have for any given obstacle in our lives. This subconsciousness disturbs the status quo of our self-consciousness, and that is a good thing in my experience because even though it is not a pleasant process, some changes will happen, and something new will emerge. Something that is in opposition to the conventional “I”. Once we have a moment in which we have these two oppositions, a conversation and dialogue are required to resolve them. Precisely the moment when this dialogue has to happen, this ‘problem’ has to be found and resolved is where we are our creative self. I felt this throughout my life, but I started to notice it when I began practicing dialogical acting and finally understood it once I started learning about the human self. We are, after all, creative beings even if we do not try to do so. Vlad P. Glaveanu, this human ability to

³¹ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). *The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity*, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8. p.121

³² VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague* [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

create dedicates it to the multiplicity of character of ourselves and the relationship between our oppositions. He summarises that the human self is, in fact, a dialogical and creative self:

“ [...] a dialogical/ perspectival self is not only endowed with the possibility to create but also defined by this very possibility; in this sense, the human self is, at once, a creative self and a self in dialogue.”³³

Even though this, in a way, says— and I agree — that this is an inherent human ability, there is still a process happening, that leads to creativity that interests me the very bit. I truly believe that my interest in the self started from my interest in creativity, even though, at the very beginning, I could not pinpoint the connection between those two. In my words, this relationship between the self and creativity happens because of the ability of the self to change, and in these moments of change of the self, new ideas and perspectives are being born. This birth of new anything for me is creativity. I will discuss my view on this in my next chapter, “My creative self,” expanding with examples of my experience. For now, I would like to present a summary done by Vlad P. Glaveanu of the perspective model of creativity, to build a foundation on which we can further investigate this connection between the self and creativity:

“ (...) the relation between the self and creativity, the latter broadly defined as a dialogue between different, sometimes unexpected or even opposed perspectives, leading to the generation of new ideas, insights, and ways of acting that are meaningful and potentially useful. This simple definition forms the basis of a recently proposed perspectival model of creativity, which postulates that:

- 1. In any given situation there are a multitude of perspectives that can be adopted toward the same reality (object, person, event, etc.). (...)*
- 2. The perspectives adopted have interactive, embodied origins as they are grounded in different positions in the social and material world. (...)*
- 3. Formulating and taking new perspectives involves adopting positions of ‘others’ in relation to the situation. (...)*
- 4. Moving between perspectives makes the difference between positions productive for creative action.*

This model draws, in obvious ways, on both dialogism and perspectivism by placing position exchanges and dialogues between perspectives at the core of creative activity. Intended as a sociocultural model of the creative process, it is nevertheless relevant for our understanding of the creative self as a self that moves

³³ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). *The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity*, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8. p.123

*between different positions and perspectives and, most of all, a self that reflects on the significance of this difference between positions and perspectives. Applying the perspectival model goes, in this sense, far beyond an analysis of collaborative creative action and focuses our attention on the range of "internal" dialogues taking place within the creative self."*³⁴

What is significant here for me is point four in this description of the perspectival model of creativity. Regardless of how our different "I" positions came to be, what is important is the moving between these positions that allows us to discover our creativity and take action. If I take the conventional "I" that Vyskočil is talking about as one unifying "I" of everything that is customary for us in a given period as such and does not change it, do not expose it to the perspectives of the inner others, then that conventional "I" would stay the same, perfect or not doesn't matter. Still, nothing new will get created for sure. Or, to use the SSMH terminology, if my current self-model - the self I believe myself to be - is considered unchangeable, the only thing that does is limit the ability for something better to be created. Such a self-model is suitable only for reproducing and not for creating. For our self-model to not stagnate, we adopt positions of inner-others, different "I" positions that do not entirely agree with our current "I" position. Those "I" positions do not come from anything but are with us in our subconsciousness and manifest as a doubt, a question for our conventional self to eventually crystalize as this inner partner discussing with our present self for us to adopt some of its perspectives. The interest of the inner partner, that other self, is to discuss with us, to rise to the surface of unrecognized stuff, and to create something better from us.

*"All things considered, what is of essence here is the creative relationship: that is, a relationship that is not satisfied with what has been and what is, but one that explores, discovers, and verifies further possibilities"*³⁵

As Vyskočil says, the essence of all those inner dialogues between others within the self is a creative relationship. That one who explores and pushes forward for new possibilities is the one that, in dialogical acting, is called the inner partner. As said earlier in this thesis, dialogical acting deals with what happens to us every day privately and moves it into a performative space. Therefore, I can say that the inner partner is the manifestation of a different

³⁴ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). *The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity*, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8. p.124-125

³⁵ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *Small Stage Forms or How to go About it?* [online]. Amatérská scéna, vol. 15 (1978), no. 6, pp. 7-8. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

I position on a given subject at a given time. And this dualism, as established so far, expands in our everyday decision-making:

“ [...] at every moment we have an array of I-positions from which we can understand and act within a given situation. The perspectives on the situation specific for these I-positions may be convergent or divergent, may support or complement each other, or be in conflict. The range of these perspectives and the possibility to move between them in ways that either integrate or differentiate them further are essential conditions for creativity.”³⁶

This range of perspectives and our ability to move between them directly correlate with our less and more creative periods and, further on, between less creative and more creative people. We have often heard that artists are open-minded or that they should be open-minded people. Well, being said like that has minimal meaning for me, as it is a really open-ended phrase and can mean anything. What that openness is due in artists is that they should possess the ability to move between perspectives and be able to reflect on them. They should not hold firmly to their conventional “I” but to explore and discover further possibilities. That does not mean they should be self-critical but think critically about themselves. And this internalized view of ourselves is allowed by the multiplicity of the self. I cannot speak for every artist, obviously, but what I can say from my experience is that the higher my level of self-awareness and self-understanding, and at the very least the level of self-acceptance, the easier it gets for me to create, and getting to that awareness, understanding, and acceptance is a dominantly internal, personal process.

“In view of our discussion of the self, what is important to notice is that creative actors are not only related to “external” audiences with whom they are in direct or mediated contact but also related to internalized audiences that constitute their self as multiple; moreover, these external and internal audience positions and the self–other dialogues they enable are mutually dependent.”³⁷

This connection between creative actors, as Glavenu names them, and the internalized audiences and self-other dialogues makes dialogical acting a discipline that deals with creativity directly. If we take the ability to be in relation with your internal audience of multiple selves as what differentiates creative actors, then dialogical acting is a training for becoming

³⁶ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8. p.125

³⁷ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8. p.124

more creative. I will speak in a separate chapter about all direct and indirect connections between dialogical acting and creativity, but for now, in this context of the connection between the self and creativity, it is worth seeing the description by Professor Eva Slavíková of how one dialogical acting attempt should look:

“Your attempts should not follow a linear path, but should alternate from at least two different angles. The same holds true for approaching stereotyped movements, habits, unconscious gestures, and involuntary facial expressions. You need to disrupt what is customary, learned and automatic. The discipline is not about saying what you are accustomed to saying, or doing what are you accustomed to doing. It is about saying and doing what comes from the situation. It involves being mindful of the situation.”³⁸

From what Slavíková is describing here, it's easy to conclude that the goal of the experimentation is to disrupt the conventional 'I'. But that is not an active process; you do not go into dialogical acting experimentation with the goal of disrupting that conventional "I". I have done precisely that and noted it in one of my reflections:

“I am trying so hard to leave behind what I already have and that reduces my attentiveness. And ability to notice”³⁹

The good thing here is that I have noticed that this search for disruption is hindering my ability to be present in the moment, which is exactly how you should approach it in order to be able to notice something. As we've discussed, that other self is already with you; you should just let it show itself. On this, Slavíková notes:

“(...) to focus your attention not on what you would like to happen, but on what is actually happening. Something is happening, you are happening, and as we say, you simply have not noticed that yet”⁴⁰

This connects all the way back to the very process of creating circumstances to allow your subconsciousness to manifest, to let itself be shown and gradually become part of your

³⁸ SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, A Teacher's Insights into Practice, In: SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, ČUNDERLE Michal, HANČIL Jan, KOMOLOSI Alexander, VYSKOČIL Ivan, ZICH Jan, *(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner: Principles and Practice*, pp. 101-108. Prague: Brakola. 2011, p.107

³⁹ BUZHAROV, Viktor. *2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-9 and 10 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP]* Place: Prague. 2021

⁴⁰ SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, A Teacher's Insights into Practice, In: SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, ČUNDERLE Michal, HANČIL Jan, KOMOLOSI Alexander, VYSKOČIL Ivan, ZICH Jan, *(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner: Principles and Practice*, pp. 101-108. Prague: Brakola. 2011. p.102

conciseness, and as I already said in the previous chapters, that for me can be as little as the different movement of a hand. This requires your reflectiveness in real time to be trained to notice something unusual. So, to conclude, the right approach is not to try to change your current self-model but to let it be changed, adopt a new second “I” position, and create your inner partner.

“The perspectival model of creativity places perspective-taking and reflexivity at the core of the creative process. Applied to the creative self, this sociocultural model encourages us to study not only the positions and perspectives that constitute it but also the relation between them, conceptualized here as dialogues. What these relations imply ultimately is the capacity of our multiple self to hold, simultaneously, different if not contradicting perspectives on reality; moreover, they imply the capacity to reflect on this difference. Reflexivity as a core process in the construction of self and creative action requires further theoretical elaboration and research attention, especially since it links well with very recent concerns in the creativity literature for metacognitive abilities and creativity”⁴¹

The perspective model of creativity highlights the connections between creativity and dialogical, acting as they are both dealing with the self through exploring its dialectic capabilities. In the next chapter, I expand on this connection. Self-reflection is important not only in practicing DA but it’s also at the core of its studying principles. We, the students, regardless of the ‘reflection in action’ that happens while practicing the discipline, write a reflection on all our classes and exams.

⁴¹ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). *The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity*, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8. p.132

5 How does Dialogical acting connect to Creativity?

To continue what already has been said regarding the multiplicity of self and its connection to creativity, when it comes to the connection between creativity and dialogical acting, that connection is being established with the relationship that dialogical acting as a discipline has with the self. That the self is directly being dealt with can be recognized from the words of the founder of the discipline, Ivan Vyskočil:

“It is dangerous. You’re right. It’s risky to do anything concerning self-understanding, coming to know yourself, self-realization. Anything that leads to changing the status quo is risky. It can lead to insecurity, to freedom.”⁴²

And changing the status quo is a foundational building block for creativity. That self-understanding that Vyskočil is talking about is being achieved through interaction with your inner partner. During my first year of studying, I have mentioned the following about it:

“Inner partner is a personalized answer to your question. And at the same time the one who asks when there is no other question. Your need to create (...) Vocalizing of one’s thoughts under the performative logic.”⁴³

Trying to conceptualize what an inner partner is for me was not an easy process. It was either too abstract to grasp or too much personification, so I did not believe in its existence at the beginning of my studies. How come it can be the one that asks and answers? What am I doing here? I cannot pinpoint where exactly I struck the balance, and it started working for me, but one thing I can recall is that once I stopped looking at it as an external entity but focused inwards, it somehow clicked. Reflexing from this time distance I can say I had strong performer’s identity that was used stuff to be done in a certain way and I was looking for that way and didn’t allow myself to see what is actually there. We all have identities we have created for ourselves, projections of ourselves that we want people to see. In my experience, dialogical acting at its best eliminates those egos we are creating to preserve our identity, but it needs practice. We should be looking for something out of the ordinary that is not customary to us, and not the other way around. After all, in dialogical acting, we deal with our personal thoughts

⁴² VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version* [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁴³ BUZHAROV, Viktor. *2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-14 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP]* Place: Prague. 2021

put in a performative logic, and Declan Donnellan has this vivid description of the difference between looking and seeing, which is important when you are a performer in public solitude:

“There is nothing that Irina can manufacture within herself. There is no core centre of creativity that she can stimulate to fabricate a solution to her difficulties. She can construct no feeling, engineer no thought. Then what can Irina do? All Irina can do is see things and pay attention. Maddeningly, Irina cannot force herself to see things attentively. Like the rest of us she can only force herself ‘not’ to see. She can blind herself. She may however force herself to ‘look’ at things. But ‘looking at’ is crucial for the actor. ‘Looking at’ implies that I choose where to place my focus. ‘Seeing’ pays attention to what already exists. I can look at something without seeing it.”⁴⁴

Once the focus was on me, once I started looking for that thing that is out of the ordinary, I decided to turn a blind eye to those projections of self that I wanted to showcase; I stopped playing on my so-called ‘strong side,’ and started looking for that other thing.

“Our quality of acting develops and trains itself when we simply pay it attention. In fact, all we can be ‘taught’ about acting are double negatives. For example, we can be taught how not to block our natural instinct to act, just as we can be taught how not to block our natural instinct to breathe”⁴⁵

With this being said in the book “The Actor and the Target” by Declan Donnellan, which is compulsory read in the department, combined with my personal experience practicing dialogical acting, leads me to conclude that dialogical acting is, in fact, in a direct correlation with creativity. It actually deals with it actively and directly. However, dialogical acting does not make us more creative; instead, it frees us to be creative. During our studies, we have heard quotations from Vyskočil that dialogical acting is good for nothing and that it does not have measurable goals, but I would argue the opposite; dialogical acting is actually good for everything, and that’s why its goals are impossible to measure, and it only seems that it is good for nothing. I have noticed benefits in my artistic endeavors and have reflected on them in my final reflection during my first year of study:

“Even though Dialogical Acting is not striving for an end goal, the experimentations give valuable input about ourselves that can be a base for further performative

⁴⁴ DONNELLAN Declan, The actor and the target: New Edition. London: Nick Hern books, 2005. ISBN 987-1-78001-018-2. p.21

⁴⁵ DONNELLAN Declan, The actor and the target: New Edition. London: Nick Hern books, 2005. ISBN 987-1-78001-018-2. p.8

development. It gives our personal thoughts a performative voice. It places the conversations from our heads in the public solitude (...) The public solitude is not just solitude; it shapes the thoughts in a performative manner. In this mashup between the private and public I see a fruitful ground for that untapped creativity that I so much want to find continuously daily”⁴⁶

This reflection of mine goes hand in hand with the perspectival model of creativity I discussed in the previous chapter. While practicing dialogical acting, those different “I” positions were discussed, and something new was born from it. Those, something later on, materialized as a character in a play, a story, a lighting setup, or anything else that I tried to do later on. Nothing is for nothing in my experience with dialogical acting; it just needs some time sometimes so that you can see those benefits. In other words, it enriched my arsenal of ideas and experiences so that when I need them, I can use them. And that doesn’t mean that dialogical thinking stops when dialogical experimentation stops, but it translates to your work in whatever field; it trains you to think dialogically even after your education. I love this dissection example of the process of the work of Picasso, which, in my view, is a manifestation of this dialectic thinking in the real world:

“In his studio, Picasso is painting free-form, without preconceived image or composition; he is experimenting with colours, forms, and moods. He starts with a figure of a reclining nude-but then loses interest, and the curve of the woman's leg reminds him of a matador's leg as he flies through the air after being gored by a bull-so he paints over the nude and creates an image of a bull and matador. But this leads him to yet another idea; he paints over the bullfight image and begins work on a Mediterranean harbour-with water skier, bathers in bikinis, and a picturesque hilltop village. The free-form inspiration continues. Five hours later, Picasso stops and declares that he will have to discard the canvas-it has not worked. But the time was not wasted-he has discovered some new ideas, ideas that have emerged from his interaction with the canvas, ideas that he can use in his next painting. Picasso says: Now that I begin to see where I'm going with it, I'll take a new canvas and start again.”⁴⁷

⁴⁶ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-15 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

⁴⁷ SAYER, R. Keith. *Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity*. [online]. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 58, No. 2, (2000), pp. 149-161. Available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/432094> [accessed on 2024-05-08]. p.149

Discovering creativity is a process, and dialogical acting is training for that process. The improvisational process of creativity is the actual lived experience of the artist interacting and improvising in his studio. This example of Picasso's work process has a striking resemblance to the process of continuity that we have while experimenting with dialogical acting. Even though, at first glance, there is no logical connection between the things that are happening, they are all logical continuations of the previous situation in the form of an answer or a question of what was happening before. This dynamic of questions and answers on the things that are happening allows the actor to get perspective of their work and a certain level of detachment so that they can self-evaluate themselves.

"At times, the self is "pushed" into adopting new I-positions by the situation itself or by a new physical or material arrangement. For example, painters regularly move between a position of immersion within their work, while applying colour on the canvas and seeing it from up close, and a position of detachment when they take a step back and consider the effects of what has been done. This move between the I-positions of maker and evaluator and the dialogue between their resulting perspectives can make the difference between success and failure in art."⁴⁸

This so-called 'pushing' of the self to adopt new positions is the same as looking for the out-of-the-ordinary that I talked about before. We do indeed push ourselves, train ourselves to adopt these new "I" positions, discuss them, and reflect on them. Once achieved, this ability to reflect indeed makes us the maker and the evaluator in that experimentation. And yet again, this ability to adopt two positions is connected to making a difference in what is successful art. This reflexivity in dialogical acting is achieved in real-time under theatrical rules.

"It is not a civil existence, on the contrary it asks for engagement of the voice and the body in a performative manor. This combined with the particular circumstance of not having topic, and freed from the burden of storytelling creates at least for me the necessary atmosphere for creativity to arise"⁴⁹

What is this atmosphere necessary for creativity to arise? I will argue that the first thing it requires is fearlessness from failure. A sense of freedom to experiment to find something new. In a certain way, dialogical acting puts us in a space of public solitude to be ourselves actively. Now, in public solitude, the performer exists in a theatrical sense; the audience's gaze is

⁴⁸ GLAVRANU, Vlad P., The Creative Self in Dialogue. In: KARWOWSKI, Maciej, KAUFMAN, James C. (eds). The creative self: Effect of Beliefs, Self-Efficacy, Mindset, and Identity, p.119-132. London: Elsevier, 2017. ISBN 978-0-12-809790-8. p.126

⁴⁹ BUZHAROV, Viktor. Dialogical Acting Reflection – Viktor Buzharov – summer semester final 19/06/2021 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the semester of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

targeted towards them, something that, in dialogical acting, is called wishful attention. This attention is crucial because it puts us in a position to produce something now in these three minutes. And knowing by now the rules of DA experimentation, what is allowed and what is not, where our attention should be focused, etc., this need to produce does not go towards producing replication of what we know so that we can satisfy the gaze of today's audience but to find something that is outside of what it has been seen so far. So, in other words, DA is constipated to put us in a state to create outside of what is customary in our creations without expecting us to create anything. It is not about producing something to satisfy a given audience but creating something to satisfy your needs to create something new and different. It also allows you, as an artist, to build your own practices to get to that creative state in time. As Vyskočil is saying in his Inaugural professorial lecture about what we can expect of this type of study:

“My belief, hopefully not unjustified, is that this kind of study could inspire the creative imagination, not just in practice, but about practice, too. A creative imagination and a conceptuality regarding their own practice (self-fulfilment, perspective) are things I find the vast majority of students and graduates to be lacking in.”⁵⁰

The connection between DA and creativity is further solidified by putting creative imagination at the forefront of its goals. This ability to imagine is closely tied with the kid's ability to play, to imagine a different world than the one surrounding it. But we have to go a step further because the kid does not just have the ability to play, it also needs to play. This need is something that we have to stimulate, and I believe we do precisely that with practicing DA. Professor Čunderle, describing Vyskočil, has written:

“He managed to link playfulness with obsession, and philosophy with humor. His need to push playful idea to absurd extremes, and constantly to be trying something new, was infectious.”⁵¹

His obsession to play sublimated in a couple of rules gives us dialogical acting. A method for experimenting - as I like to call it – which can directly influence our creative imagination with its dialogical nature. An encouragement to go to those absurd extremes, it is a strive for that

⁵⁰ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁵¹ ČUNDERLE Michal, and KOMOLOSI Alexander, *Ivan Vyskočil: A life long commitment to the alternative*. Slavic and east European performance, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 63-73, ISSN 1047-0019. p.72

creative freedom. Careless freedom that only a child would have. Nurturing and contemplating playfulness is something that is being discussed during the studies, and in one of my reflections, I have written this about it:

“Playfulness comes naturally once you concorded all the other obstacles of creating public solitude.”⁵²

I think I got it wrong; it requires a bit more. Even though it can be hard to pass the point of being private publicly, the biggest nemesis of playfulness are the egos we have created to keep us safe. Those projections want to keep our status quo, and with careless play, we might learn something about ourselves that we didn't know; after all, the kid's play is a way for them to realize, understand, and discover. Coming to study dialogical acting, I only knew I wanted to learn, understand, and discover; I just didn't know how.

“I was thinking a lot why is dialogical acting important for me. All the contemplating ended up at the starting point at my main motivation to come here and start my Master study at DACP – developing the untapped creativity.”⁵³

In this reflection from the end of the first year of study, I speak again of this untapped creativity, which was indeed something that motivated me to come more than a thousand kilometers up north to Prague. At that point, I only knew that I love improvisation, and I love it when something new is created on the spot. How and why, and what to do about it, I did not know. I have never questioned my playfulness, but I was unquestionably becoming an adult, and that hindered my playfulness, so dialogical acting for me came as an antidote for adult life. Why I say that, today, at the end of my study at DACP, is because I have been and still am developing my untapped creativity, due to the training that I received and how it inspired my creative imagination precisely as Vyskočil said, in practice, and about practice. This creative imagination about practice is maybe even more important because now I know how, why, and what to do about it, about my work, about my art, and about my being. In a way, I achieved a certain level of self-realization and self-acceptance.

In this following citation from my reflection, I am talking about continuity within the realm of DA, but I think it transcends DA and applies to any artwork. Another way to look at it is that DA trains this continuity of ours for our artwork in the real world.

⁵² BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-12 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

⁵³ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-11 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

“Continuity I see as the most detrimental factor of the success of an experimentations. In its core I understand it as never stop experimenting.”⁵⁴

Having this approach of never stopping to experiment while not disregarding any, but building on top of what you already have through these dialogical discussions will increase your creative imagination; in my case, it certainly did. And at the end of this chapter, if I were a scientist (which I am not), if creativity could be precisely measured, (it cannot), if somebody asked me to create a formula for creativity (nobody did), and if only creativity could have been summed up to only one formula (it cannot), I would have offered this formula:

dialogical self + never stop experimenting = creativity

⁵⁴ BUZHAROV, Viktor. *Dialogical Acting Reflection – Viktor Buzharov – summer semester final 19/06/2021 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the semester of Dialogical Acting on DACP]* Place: Prague. 2021

6 My creative self

Nowadays, my creative self is closely tied to dialogical acting. It is my go-to move whenever I start working on something new. I was never driving fast, bungee jumping, or being any kind of a daredevil, it was not exciting for me. On the other hand, what was exciting was the creation of something. That has weirdly reflected even in the games I played as a kid, or even now - something has to be built and not defeated. This desire to create steered me, I suppose, into acting and, furthermore, to go to DACP to study dialogical acting and, nowadays, even writing. However, that process of creation and how creativity is being stimulated and eventually manifested was an unknown territory for me, as it was always there, but I had no control over it. Once I started my quest of exploring this process, it was evident from the start that this was not a smooth sailing operation and that a lot of self-discovery would have to happen, and that inhibited me a lot at the beginning as I started relentlessly looking for the answers, the formulas started overthinking every move in order to get there and eventually one day, at one class it just happened on its own. I have reflected on it in the following reflection:

“This last class with the two experimentations was a refreshment for me. From this distance I can say that I had fun in these ones. Fun like a kid would have. This made me realize that this is still a theatre discipline and one of the first principles of the theatre is “Play”. I was not burdened with looking for the inner partner or any kind of intentions of that sort. I was simply playing, not any character but myself or maybe with myself. As I said on the class already I think that my previous experimentations never started from a clean slid, from point zero, since I was always having the inner partner on my mind, and I entered with the intention of finding it. Why was this change I don’t know, I do not want to believe that it was just because I was in a hurry and did not have time to over think or maybe it was something else. I honestly don’t know. I will try to continue with less theorizing and more playing, at least for a while”⁵⁵

From this perspective, the hurry that I am saying that I was in definitely helped in my situation because I tend to overthink. Self-realization and how to go about it helped me in my future experimentations, as well as in any future creative activity. That does not mean that I am cured of overthinking, but I am aware of it, and I can now act on it, which is freeing me to

⁵⁵ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2020-ZS-Reflection-DJ-EN-B-Viktor Buzharov-6 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2020

create. This change for me was evident in a reflection just a couple of months later from the above one:

“I do not feel the pressure of looking for the inner partner like the first classes. Now I feel more similar to the freedom that I have felt previously doing improv but also having in mind the dialogical part of it. This relationship between the freedom of creation and the dialogical character is still in the realm of the abstract, but I also think that this learning by doing and not over-theorizing it is the thing that is helping me”.⁵⁶

What was happening for me here is what Vyskočil is saying is proclivity and preference for experimenting, and I got there by following Eva Slavíková’s advice and writings - accepting that I don’t know the answer. That initial chaos and pushing for results changed into a thirst for just experimenting without any goal for myself, just loving the process and not the result. It made me feel really good reading that this is something that all the students go through and it is something that Professor Vyskočil thoughtfully envisions:

“Students need to go through an initial phase of individual and collective chaos and confusion and experience its clarification, gradually structure it “from the inside.” This is exceedingly important for further development to take place: namely, so that a proclivity and a preference for experimenting, experiencing, searching – formulating hypotheses – as well as discovering, particularly that which is one’s own and personal, be activated and promoted from the outset; so that the often dominant tendency to imitate, copy, accept and produce various prefabrications and standards does not have the upper hand.”⁵⁷

Nobody wants to imitate, copy, and produce prefabrications; however, we are all susceptible to doing so, and the instinct goes where it is recognizable. I can say that I was initially unaware of my prefabrications, of my customary behaviors. Then when I became aware of my customary behaviors, I militantly wanted to get rid of them, with which I also got rid of my natural instincts – I started censoring my core self even if it had any connection to this customary behavior, and of course, it had a connection - hence the issues that I had when

⁵⁶ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-5. [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

⁵⁷ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner: Authorization Code*. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

starting DA. The approach appears to be the total opposite of censoring, but we are ourselves to the extreme that those customary nuances and behaviors are becoming irrelevant.

“It’s just that we forgot ourselves. We didn’t notice. And then how awkward it is! We must save face! We’d rather disappear. Or perhaps we act as if nothing really happened and ham it up even more, drive it up to the level of clownery. It all depends on your disposition.”⁵⁸

The thing with going to the level of clownery is that I perceived it as my natural state. I do enjoy doing that, which is probably why dialogical acting become such a big part of my creative process. However, in the beginning, that enjoyment was gone because of all the confusion, and even when it was there, it did not produce in me the awkward feeling and the desire to save face. This lack of shame, to exist publicly and make a mistake in solitude, led me to the conclusion that there is no wishful attention needed in dialogical acting or anywhere, and it is all up to the artist, something that I elaborated on in one of my reflections:

“Also, we, the actors experimenting should deal only with our inner partner, so therefore, even if we can receive their unexpressed energy it would be irrelevant to us since we are only experimenting with ourselves and any other influence would contaminate our experimentation. Having this said I think that here it exist only one way communication from the actor to the audience and the audience is here in a position of a witness to the inner dialog of the actor.”⁵⁹

I can say that the issue that clouded my judgment here was the terminology. Wishful attention and energy exchange are, to a certain degree, in conflict with my belief system. Now, with a bit more experience under my belt, I can see that wishful attention is just the willingness of the audience to see your process, which puts you in a creative state that separates your experience from being private, like in front of the mirror but in public solitude. The exchange of energy is actually an exchange of information on a subconscious level between you and the audience, and it serves as a motivating factor for the artist to play. Wishful attention is important for the setting for experimentation; it is, in other words, the necessary circumstances of creating public solitude. This solitude makes all the difference in how you express yourself. For me, that is most certainly the case.

⁵⁸ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version [online].* Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁵⁹ BUZHAROV, Viktor. *2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-6 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP]* Place: Prague. 2021

“In the instruction (study) of psychosomatic disciplines, it is essential not to lose sight of the fact that what it is about first and foremost is awakening, about activating, cultivating, and increasing body perceptiveness and body memory. Its precision, retentiveness and sensitivity, its spontaneous recall. That inner bodily sense of movement, voice, space, contact, communication, coordination etc.”⁶⁰

This awakening of the body is possible for me directly because of the existence of that public solitude. It activates me to express myself physically as well as verbally. Once that activation and awakening are possible, then I, as an artist, can start noticing the out-of-the-ordinary. Because if the awakening of the body is not happening, then there is nothing for me to notice, and I resort back to theorizing again.

“Then it comes the first impulse that is strong enough to be expressed and the experimentation begins. This impulse is the thing that interests me the most.(...) the things that I have been thinking prior to the experimentation, that have not been performatively thought off and expressed, should not be forbidden and somewhere in these thoughts was the block that I had with the first impulse. I was censoring a ton of ideas just because I have been thinking about them in my near past.”⁶¹

In this reflection, I talk probably about my biggest block, which I mentioned earlier in this chapter as militantly cutting off the customary and now upgraded with blocking everything that was in my consciousness prior to the experimentation. And saying that many no's to myself was not letting my creativity loose. With time, gradually, I started stopping my self-censorship, and I eventually found out that those things preoccupying me were indeed the first impulse that should be explored and brought to its extreme. I have written this note that I find so fitting, explaining how creativity works for me with dialogical acting: “finding the special in the ordinary.” This ordinary thought, feeling, event, question, whatever it may be that has been preoccupying me, is that first impulse; something needs to be discussed. This discussion here now in these circumstances is not happening just in our mind, but it is expressed with all our being.

“Because of the experience of inspired, creative bodylines. Because of the experience – and empowerment – of being one’s body (voice, speech), of being

⁶⁰ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁶¹ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS–Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-11 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

*oneself, being, one's own. Dramatic talent, and then dramatic art, more so than any other, is within the body and comes from the body, through embodiment*⁶²

These creative bodylines need to be cultivated. I think I have never been one with my voice and body. I have them, but I have never been actively thinking about them before my studies at DAMU. They were here to play Macbeth, Ivanov, or whatever character I have been cast to play, but I have never thought of the voice and body of Viktor Buzharov. As any other performer, I also have issues and problems that I have to understand and address, that I simply did not know how or that they exist in the first place. Dialogical acting exposes these shortcomings for me. From the very beginning, I had a problem with hearing myself in real-time, and I blamed it all on physics, that it is not possible to happen, even though everyone else heard themselves just fine. Then, eventually, I found the way, my way of achieving this:

*"I simply did not hear the voice back and did not see the time to reflect on it in real time. In this regard I was totally lost. I see the point in this hearing to be the awareness, attention, and control that you have on your voice and body. I did a little twist and started to notice what I am feeling from the inside; how am I projecting my voice, where the voice is getting created, how a certain emotion affects the voice and its instrument, what is the intensity, how I can never censor it and yet always be in control etc."*⁶³

What I did here was just simply apply the voice training I had with Professor Pavla Fendrichová in dialogical acting experimentation. It is fair to say that I do not have the best hearing in the world, and I have a hard time staying in intonation or just hearing what I am singing in general. Consequently, if I want to address something in my use of voice while doing DA or acting in general, I should be able to hear myself. So, because I do not have that hearing naturally, what we did with Professor Fendrichová was create that understanding and perceiving of the voice from within, from where that voice resonates. This allowed me to take this technique and bring it to DA and, for the first time, actually experiment with my voice on a level that I understand. This cultivation of my voice was my white whale during my studies, but every single class had its direct implementation in my experimentation with Dialogical Acting and, with that, my self-awareness and self-realization. The sublimation of all these influences, first and foremost, equips me with the ability to create my artistic practice and, secondly, but

⁶² VYSKOČIL, Ivan. On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁶³ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-15 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

maybe more importantly, to understand my artistic practice. This is something that Professor Vyskočil is addressing in his inaugural professorial lecture.

“For a day-to-day business the call “artistic practice”, is such individuals were to find themselves a part of that, the relevance would most probably be found in the fact that one would be able to hear them better, and that they would be more easily understood. And that is no small matter! Over and above this, for more genuine, more ambitious, artistic practice, the relevance could be that playing, and perceiving would be more successful.”⁶⁴

In my experience, dialogical acting is the determining factor in my artistic practice. It is the tool through which I can actively think about my artistic practice and enhance my possibilities. Returning to what I was talking about at the end of the last chapter: dialogical acting is for everything. In the following citation, Vyskočil reiterates that DA is for nothing but adds that it actually is for something that someone can take from it. Well, that was everything I needed: to look without bias towards myself for inspiration, play, and openhandedly accept whatever comes out.

“But in all honesty, we say that, generally speaking, (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”⁶⁵

Building on that self-discovery and consecutively the self-acceptance and everything that I have written so far in this thesis trying to articulate where and how creativity forms, I can say that with dialogical acting, I have been given the gift of being able to research myself to let myself be my true authentic self, and that should be the first requirement from an artist.

“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

⁶⁴ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague* [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁶⁵ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version* [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

*what the discipline is about, cannot. That sort of research requires proper, professional working conditions.*⁶⁶

That's why, since I finished attending classes, I have been working hard to afford for myself and others those proper working conditions to be possible even when we all leave school. Because creativity is not something that is given, it develops and requires nurturing; it requires the solid self-research to continue forever.

⁶⁶ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version* [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

7 What in the hell is Authenticity?

I regretted adding authenticity to my thesis a thousand times as it is such a polemicized term. There is not a single measure through which authenticity can be measured, so therefore, to be authentic, I suppose you can be only in relationship to some prior set expectations.

“A work of art, similarly, can be authentic when it makes its possibilities its own by relating them to its situation, by individualizing them in relation to a singular end, and by “possibilizing” them in presenting them as possibilities. Whether this is at all plausible turns on what, if any, the distinctive function of a work of art is, and hence on whether works of art have possibilities that are uniquely their own. But I will argue that like human beings, works of art have a “world” that they can make “their own” by revealing it in a singular manner, and that it is in this that artistic authenticity consists”⁶⁷

However, when I started my research for this thesis, I had no intention of discovering this ‘distinctive function of a work of art’ - that did not interest me a bit, but what I meant when connecting creativity to authenticity was how genuine and truthful an artist is towards his art and not how his art is genuine to some already set rule or expectation.

As Lévi-Strauss puts it:

“Modern individuality leads to the celebration of individual creativity, which cannot actually exist. Everything created is continuous with what has gone before; which means that attempting to consciously add newness usually adds imperfection – it is not creation, it is destruction.”⁶⁸

If we want to add newness to what already exists, yes, we can add imperfection, and we can destroy it, but why do we want to alter what already exists and not create something from scratch? And that scratch, in my view, is solely ourselves, the sublimation of all our predispositions and influences.

⁶⁷ BAUGH Bruce, *Authenticity Revisited* [online]. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 46, No. 4, (1988), pp. 477-487. Available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/431285> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁶⁸ EDWARDES, Martin P.J., *The Origins of Self, Book Subtitle: An Anthropological Perspective*. London: UCL Press, 2019. ISBN 9781787356306. p.24

"[...]it was precisely the concept of the autonomous individual that came to define modernity, giving "rise to personal search for proper external expression of inner states."⁶⁹

Then, we are not disrupting anything, but with all-encompassing factors, we are just simply a continuation of what has been till now, and from that point onwards, we should be judged in relationship to ourselves and how genuine we are in relationship to our desires, needs, and urges. Here is where Dialogical acting comes into play when talking about authenticity. To be genuine towards yourself, a certain level of self-discovery, self-acceptance, and self-realization should have happened, and as I discussed so far, that is exactly what is happening with practicing DA.

"Instead, he states that it is a methodology of study that can open up numerous possibilities and opportunities for a student, for example: a path of self-discovery, self-acceptance and self realization; as a means of developing psychosomatic fitness for creative communication, thus "a more profound, 'conductive' empathy", and as a process of studying the principles of dramatic play. (Inter)acting with the Inner Partner was profoundly meaningful in the totalitarian society in which it was conceived because it offered an alternative mode of existence where one could experience and explore individuality, joy, and personal freedom. It has found similar significance in today's consumerism-dominated society."⁷⁰

Regardless of what political system we are living in, it will try to make us authentic in our relationship with itself; it is simply a natural process. That's why exploring individuality will always be, in my view, the only way towards authenticity, if we are authentic to any external measurement, then we are not authentic, but on the contrary, we are a cliché.

"Authenticity is linked to the idea of an original essential source that finds a noticeable and recognizable expression. [...] if the entity that is assumed to be the source of actions, feelings, and decisions is inaccessible, everything that follows is at risk of being false and inauthentic. This idea is intimately linked to a belief that

⁶⁹ Authenticity, In: Anon Collective, *Book of Anonymity*, p. 394-400. Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2020. ISBN 9781953035318. p396

⁷⁰ ČUNDERLE Michal, and KOMOLOSI Alexander, *Ivan Vyskočil: A life long commitment to the alternative*. Slavic and east European performance, vol. 31, no. 1, pp. 63-73, ISSN 1047-0019. p.71

there is a quintessential original truth out there that has to be discovered for someone or something to be real and authentic.”⁷¹

I cannot polemicize a lot on the existence of a quintessential original truth; what I can do is offer my reasoning for its existence, and that is that for anyone in any given period of time, there is a true inner state that can be expressed. Consecutively, if we are not self-aware of that state, we, as is said above, fall at risk of being false and inauthentic in our relationship with ourselves. And in performative arts - where my experience is – if we deviate from ourselves as the core inspiration and explore its extremes, we fall into that customary behavior, into those economic shortcuts of ‘creativity.’

“Then you do what works, what’s already been proven to work. And most of the time it does work. But those folks usually don’t notice, or realize, how conventional, even cliché, what they are doing is. It tends to turn out well, reminding us of how it turns out well particularly on television. [...] We don’t give anyone any subjects or topics, and, if possible, we don’t work with imitation or suggestion because what we are after is independent, distinctive, authentic, authorial, original, and creative.”⁷²

When Vyskočil uses the word authentic, he uses it precisely in the same context that I am trying to talk about here, which is in relationship to ourselves. And this personal authenticity that we are after (at least, I know I am after) while studying at DACP. This is to be reflected in our artistic creations after the study ends; we train ourselves to find those truths about ourselves information to get independent, distinctive, authentic, authorial, original, and creative performances, books, or whatever we intend to do with our lives. This personalized authenticity of anything extends to any spectators of that art. Since my bachelor studies, I have said this construction of mine that felt true, but I did not know how to extend it or defend it: “The performance is not what we, the artist, create, but it is what the audience perceives, and there are as many performances of ours as there are sets of eyes watching our performance.”

“ [...] perception of art only occurs when the perceiver actively, aesthetically, creates her or his own experience [...] Recognition usually results from clichés: "In

⁷¹ Authenticity, In: Anon Collective, *Book of Anonymity*, p. 394-400. Santa Barbara: Punctum Books, 2020. ISBN 9781953035318. p.396

⁷² VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *A Discussing with Ivan Vyskočil about (inter)acting with the Inner Partner. Official website of Ivan Vyskočil, English version* [online]. Available from: <https://www.ivanvyskocil.cz/html/english.html> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

*recognition we fall back, as upon a stereotype, upon some previously formed scheme*⁷³

Here, I apply myself as a viewer. For me to be able to create my own experience, I have to relate to what is happening in the art that I am seeing, and secondly and more importantly, to believe that this is important for the artist because simply if it is not important to the artist, why should it be important to me. Therefore, art created based on a reflection of the inner state of the artist is being perceived as real by me, and that allows me to then, on that base, create my own experiences that are authentic for me as a viewer.

“Behind the effects of the real is a desire to experience a first cause, an origin, an authentic beginning which can only fail because the desire is experienced and understood from and through repetition.”⁷⁴

Here, I do not agree with Peggy Phelan in its entirety. Yes, for something to have the effect of being real, it must be connected to the origin, to the first cause, but I, as a viewer, do not have to be a witness of that event; I just have to believe that that performance is rooted in that origin. There are a lot of repetitions that have to happen in preparation for one performance, but if what is being repeated is based on solid research of our primary experiences, we should not fail, at least not often.

*“This is the reason why I am working on (and intend to work on) the study of authorial acting, the study of theatre art, basically from the opposite direction, from the ground up. Starting from primary experiences.”*⁷⁵

Instead of searching for the associations and connections of us as actors to a given character, with dialogical acting, we first make sure that what we are working on is in relationship with our primary experiences. What we are interested in is that our art has a strong, personally important, and researched foundation.

With everything said in this chapter, the authenticity that is important for one artist is the one that is true to our primary experience. And with everything I have researched and written so far, starting from self, through creativity, and now getting to contemplate on authenticity, it

⁷³ SAYER, R. Keith. *Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity*. [online]. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 58, No. 2, (2000), pp. 149-161. Available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/432094> [accessed on 2024-05-08]. p.157

⁷⁴ PHELAN Peggy, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. New York: Taylor & Francis, 2006. ISBN 0-203-35943-7. p.

⁷⁵ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

leads me to conclude that dialogical acting, directly and indirectly, equips us and our art to be an authentic reflection of ourselves.

8 My art as an authentic reflection of my true self

I feel closer to my art nowadays compared to the earlier years of my career because I was playing defense. I was waiting for things to come my way and then scrambled for a solution to those ‘problems’ I faced. I did not know myself to the level I know myself today, so those solutions I offered had limited relevance to me and were easily subjectable to the outside influence of “this should be done this way because it was always done this way.”

“The modern psychological distinction between problem-finding and problem-solving is strikingly similar to Collingwood's distinction between art and craft. In so many words, Collingwood states that a craftsman is problem-solving, whereas an artist is problem finding”⁷⁶

Even earlier, I made the connection between this problem-finding and dialogical acting when discussing creativity. That connection, from my personal perspective, works because with us seeking problems, finding problems for us to solve inside the realm of DA, we achieve a certain level of self-knowledge and self-acceptance that equips us to offer better, more truthful solutions when we are faced with a problem, and goes a step further to mobilize us to take action and discover something that can be an initial impulse for starting something new initiated from us.

“I find dialogical acting as a source of inspiration. The discoveries made while doing dialogical acting for me are unlike the other. The public solitude creates an atmosphere of creation and combined with the principles of following the impulses I manage to find topics, movement, thoughts that are really important to me, which I would not have been able to find if I was above a piece of paper. Then, later, this acquired information while practicing dialogical acting directly influences my creations”⁷⁷

This so-called inspirational element works for me because it puts me in a position and allows me to confront myself, to let the dialogical nature of myself clash with standpoint and from that new standpoints and information to come forward. This is newly acquired information I did not have before my DA experimentation. Because this information is acquired through

⁷⁶ SAYER, R. Keith. *Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity*. [online]. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 58, No. 2, (2000), pp. 149-161. Available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/432094> [accessed on 2024-05-08]. p.154

⁷⁷ BUZHAROV, Viktor. *Winter semester – 2021/2022 Viktor Buzharov Dialogical Acting – Reflection [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the semester of Dialogical Acting on DACP]* Place: Prague. 2022

practicing dialogical acting where the only source and origin of the information are we, confronting ourselves, that information, that knowledge is authentic for us as it is acquired, eliminating the customary behavior and any outside influence.

*"It gives you the opportunity to talk through, discuss, and play out problems, questions, doubts and issues with your inner partner(s) in public solitude, which should lead to better understanding of your situation and to the ability to act openly and accept what you do, and who you are wholeheartedly."*⁷⁸

To reiterate, dialogical acting lets us improvise with ourselves and, with that, train ourselves to play and, through play, get to self-awareness, self-knowledge, and self-acceptance. Those abilities to play and improvise with yourself and your work should be a major deciding factor if your art is authentic for you.

*"Collingwood's distinction between art proper and false art is essentially a distinction between more improvisational art and less improvisational art. False art is less improvisational because it relies on ready-mades-cliches-as an economic shortcut. Collingwood's theory can thus be extended, by analogy with performance. Performances cannot be dichotomized into "improvisational" and "scripted"; all improvisers draw on ready-mades-short riffs or cliches-as they create their novel performance."*⁷⁹

I passionately hate the terms proper and false art as they are used here, but nonetheless, I agree in its entirety with the claim that more improvisational art is less subjected to the cliches and, therefore, I add, is more authentic. Now, if those riffs are rooted and created by ourselves, then they should not be repeated in order to create a performance of any sort. They are a presentation of ourselves; therefore, any repetition should not hinder their authenticity later on. Through the words of Vyskočil, I see DA is aiming that improvisational character of the art to bring its limit to its extreme, to allow you to be that same guy on stage that you are at home while talking in the bathroom mirror. We are, I am sure, chasing that 100% authenticity and truthfulness in front of myself and others.

⁷⁸ SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, A Teacher's Insights into Practice, In: SLAVÍKOVÁ Eva, ČUNDERLE Michal, HANČIL Jan, KOMOLOSI Alexander, VYSKOČIL Ivan, ZICH Jan, *(Inter)acting with the Inner Partner: Principles and Practice*, pp. 101-108. Prague: Brakola. 2011. p.105

⁷⁹ SAYER, R. Keith. Improvisation and the Creative Process: Dewey, Collingwood, and the Aesthetics of Spontaneity. [online]. The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 58, No. 2, (2000), pp. 149-161. Available from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/432094> [accessed on 2024-05-08] p.158

“Yes, we want to discover (and be in the process of discovering) what it’s all about, and what is needed, what it takes, and what it takes specifically, for us to be as successful on stage, ‘in front’ of others, as we are in the bathroom, as we are in inspiring solitude.”⁸⁰

That inspiring public solitude is the well from which I draw all the information, motivation, and inspiration for all my artistic work. Starting any endeavor with dialogical acting, I am actively seeking to move away from representing a particular character in any performance and move to presenting the side of me in any given context in any given performance. On this difference between “presence” and “representation,” Erika Fischer-Lichte is saying:

“In aesthetic theories, “presence” and “representation” were long considered oppositional concepts, wherein presence was equated with immediacy and seen as the experience of opulence and completeness, as authenticity. Representation, in turn, belonged to the grand narratives, exerting an authoritative controlling mechanism [...]. Predetermined by the “authoritative controlling mechanism” of the literary text and recreated by the actor as a physical representation of such textual prescriptiveness, the stage character was considered proof for the text’s ultimate repression of actors and particularly their bodies. Their bodies thus had to be liberated from the strangling chains of representation in order to break free into the spontaneity and authenticity of their physical existence.”⁸¹

What I feel that DA has done for me is that it trained the spontaneity and authenticity of my physical existence so that I am the one that is in control of it even if I am required to perform some written text. You can do a representation of a character if it’s rooted in origin if that character presents yourself. I remember these two occasions of me playing Macbeth, one in my bachelor’s studies and one in my master’s studies. Playing Macbeth can be a foreign character for even an experienced older actor, and when I got the task to play him in my bachelor studies, it consumed me; I had nothing to draw from, nothing that he did or felt was even remotely close to me, and I was just going in circles and gave maybe one of my most stale performances ever. When I got here at DAMU in the authorial acting class, I got the chance to select a character I wanted to play, and I chose Macbeth as a rematch. I still struggled at the beginning, but what I did was I subjected myself to dialogue with myself. I

⁸⁰ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁸¹ FISCHER-LICHTE Erika, The Transformative Power of Performance. JAIN Saskya Iris (translator). Milton Park: Taylor & Francis, 2008. ISBN 0-203-89498-7. p.147

confronted problems, questions, doubts, and issues why I am obsessed with this monologue with the knife so much. Then, soon after, I found the connection between Macbeth's deed of killing and my horrible performance in the past. It became simple: what I had close to Macbeth in 2022 was a sort of guilt that we should have known better. I know now, as well as I knew then, that this is not a similar situation that Viktor and Macbeth are in, but it was a bonding moment. From then on, I just treated the character as a regular guy in an unfathomable circumstance and played with him. I tried to connect with him on the basic, primal instincts and play, just play with him. We both had this desire to conquer the world without the courage to do the dirty stuff. I discovered in this process a lot about my overthinking and paranoia about any decision I make. The subtle doubts of am I a good actor and artist. All this was stuff that I had to confront in my experimentations to get to a 10-minute humorous performance, as my instinct, my natural reaction, was to joke with Macbeth and myself and our shared history. The result was one of the most enjoyable couple of minutes I have ever had on the stage, yet still telling the story of Macbeth through Viktor's eyes in a doctor's waiting room. With the most possible certainty, I can say that that was my authentic performance of Macbeth, freed from all the expected burden of playing a Shakespearean character. And that freedom to truly, authentically perform my Macbeth came from the liberating training that I received in dialogical acting.

"Two years are better. Normally, it takes even longer than that. We could say that it usually takes as long as the individual student remains concerned with illusory, false ideas of results and success, imitations, fakes."⁸²

I cannot say I am always my true, authentic self, free from fakes and imitations. That result and success are not guaranteed and should not be chased. And I don't think that that is a process that can end, but it is something that we have to clean every day, day by day, as we adopt new influences in our everyday lives. What I know is that I try to light-heartedly take everything that I am given and play with it in my authentic way.

"It might be said that there is no authorial theatre without (a sense of) humor. And it might be said, too, that humor and a sense of humor is a mark of authorship. Not only on stage, and not only in art, but also in life"⁸³

⁸² VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague* [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

⁸³ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *Small Stage Forms or How to go About it?* [online]. Amatérská scéna, vol. 15 (1978), no. 6, pp. 7-8. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

My authentic expression, more often than not, is based on humor, but I would add that that is not enough; any humor is not enough; it should be self-reflecting and self-critical humor, the kind that creates a distance from yourself in order to show you an objective image of yourself. Only then do I feel I have been authentic, when I did not hide who I am.

Conclusion

“I see Dialogical Acting highly in a theatrical sense. I understand that it is not an acting method. That is quite clear to me. Nonetheless, it is subjected to the theatrical logic of existing in the space. In Dialogical Acting the fourth wall is present every bit the same as in the classical theatre. In both cases we agree to believe that there is nothing on the other side of the wall. This creates quite a theatrical approach and asks for a certain engagement in the voice and the body that is not civilian. The closest thing to Dialogical Acting that I have experienced is Improv, with the core difference of the goal of the experiment. While in Improv the goal is creating a story like one piece, here in Dialogical Acting I see the goal in the experimenting as such, in finding something that has not been there before. The answer to the question that arises for nothing. The thing that happens when all the ideas are gone. The thing that arises from nothing. And then through the dialogical principles of question and answer developing it to the level of understanding consciously or intuitively. Shortly I would categorize Dialogical Acting as an experimenting method in a public space that can be highly beneficial for understanding yourself in a psychosomatic sense primarily as an actor/performer and then as a human being.”⁸⁴

From this reflection of mine from the end of my first year of study until my current attempt at writing this thesis, I have come a long way in understanding and articulating my path toward creativity and authenticity. It is evident from this thesis that this path is intertwined with dialogical acting as the vehicle with which I have passed through it, and still driving through it, and probably will drive in it forever. I set an assignment for myself to research that notion that I so strongly had that while practicing DA, I find it easier to get into a creative state and my feeling that, since and while practicing DA, the things that I create are informed, that they are in fact a more accurate reflection of myself. These notions and their applications I have noticed even in my second year of study and noted them in one reflection:

“The first, and I would say the biggest thing, has to be the control that I feel now when I am on the stage. I find the direct connection between that and my practicing dialogical acting on a weekly basis. I notice that my level of perception is raised a lot in comparison to my time before DACP. That gives me better ability to react truthfully in the moment either if I am alone on the stage performing DA,

⁸⁴ BUZHAROV, Viktor. 2021-LS-Reflection-DJ-EN-2S-Viktor Buzharov-15 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the class of Dialogical Acting on DACP] Place: Prague. 2021

*Improvising, Acting or with partner doing whatever, or even in any kind of public existence.*⁸⁵

I knew that the control I was discussing in this reflection happened; I reflected on it. Now, after this master thesis research, I can say and articulate that this control occurred because of my self-knowledge and self-acceptance that I have achieved while practicing DA. I understand how and why that was achieved with the dialogical communication between my selves. My understanding is not just intuitive but also cognitive, theoretical, and analytical. It indeed crystallized the connection between practicing DA and what I have noticed in the connection between myself, creativity, and authenticity.

My objective was to look through my theatrical lenses through these processes between the self, creativity, and authenticity and use my experience and student reflections to understand these processes and their connection with dialogical acting. In other words, what I learned, experienced, and understood was my practice. On the possibilities of this self-knowledge in the real world, the professor Vyskočil has said:

“Study ‘for educational reasons’ ought to provide the student with this kind of extreme, limit experience and reflection. The kind of experience where you go the whole hog, all the way, all about, then the experience of one’s own potential and one’s own limits (as well as what is, in most cases, a qualitatively different consciousness and being stemming from this) is here. And this is what I call independence. It usually leads a person to participation, to partnership in a common project. It is particularly good at bringing to partnership the type of people they call distinctive personalities characters. People who otherwise hardly ever come to agree, let alone participate. This independence is probably where the relevance and meaning of studying ‘authorial acting’ or ‘theatre art’ is and can be.”⁸⁶

My personal conclusion is indeed that I have increasingly become a more independent and proactive artist. Moreover, I have become independent even in the way I look at my practice, as I do not want to just lean on DA for training but try to add twists and tweaks to it to expand its purpose for myself. I have applied its principles of always following the impulses while writing, and I came to this absurdist text that I wrote, which might be my favorite text that

⁸⁵ BUZHAROV, Viktor. *Winter semester – 2021/2022 Viktor Buzharov Dialogical Acting – Reflection [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the semester of Dialogical Acting on DACP]* Place: Prague. 2022

⁸⁶ VYSKOČIL, Ivan. *On the Study of Acting: Inaugural professorial lecture upon receiving a professorship in acting at DAMU in Prague* [online]. Svět a divadlo, vol. 3 (1992), no. 1–2, p. 34–40. Available from: <https://www.autorskeherectvi.cz/post/ke-studiu-herectvi-rec-ku-priznani-profesury-v-oboru-herectvi-1?lang=en> [accessed on 2024-05-08]

I have written so far, and I have even created an authorial performance based on it.

The result of this thesis is the established connection between the self, creativity, and authenticity through the dialogical nature of the self, first and foremost, for my personal understanding and application in my artistic practice and secondly for a broader understanding of its connection to dialogical acting through reflecting on the changes I've noted in my artistic and personal development.

In the future, I know that I will continue to use dialogical acting to gain an understanding of my personal practice, stimulate my creativity, and guard my authenticity. And where I want to explore next and further investigate it's the precise possibilities of its application in performing arts. For now, I can add one more quote from my reflections that can end this thesis for me:

“All I can say is that I am enjoying my time practicing dialogical acting and actively thinking on how to make it mine, because in the end it is really a personal experience.”⁸⁷

⁸⁷ BUZHAROV, Viktor. *Dialogical Acting Reflection – Viktor Buzharov – summer semester final 19/06/2021 [faculty obligatory reflection of your work after the semester of Dialogical Acting on DACP]* Place: Prague. 2021

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