

VOLUME VIII, ISSUE 2
JULY-DECEMBER 2021
ISSN: 2284-3310
ISBN: 9791280081032
SPECIAL EDITION



LAMP IN A WINDLESS PLACE

Developing an Actor Training Methodology
through Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora

Issue Editors: Saumya Liyanage,
Lyudmyla Honcharova, Marlon Ariyasinghe

Mise en Abyme

International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts

Vol. VIII, Issue 2

July-December 2021

Lamp in a Windless Place

Developing an Actor Training Methodology through Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora

Editor-in-Chief

Armando Rotondi – Institute of the Arts Barcelona

Guest Editors / Issue Editors

Saumya Liyanage – University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Lyudmyla Honcharova – University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Marlon Ariyasinghe – Senior Assistant Editor, Himal Southasian, Colombo, Sri Lanka

Editorial Office

Elena Dal Maso – University of Venice; Anita Paolicchi – University of Pisa; Valentina Temussi – Institute of the Arts Barcelona / Liverpool John Moores University; Alessandro Valenzisi – University of Strathclyde; Ida Libera Valicenti – University of Bucharest

Advisory Board

Alessandra De Martino Cappuccio – University of Warwick (UK); Joseph Farrell – University of Strathclyde (UK); Srecko Jurisic – University of Split (Croatia); Gaetana Marrone – Princeton University (USA); Andrew McKinnon – Institute of the Arts Barcelona (Spain); Drew Mulligan – Institute of the Arts Barcelona (Spain); Mariantonietta Picone – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy); Elena Pirvu – University of Craiova (Romania); Antonio Saccone – University of Naples “Federico II” (Italy); Elisa Sartor – University of Verona (Italy); Andrew Sherlock – Liverpool John Moores University (UK); Roxana Utale – University of Bucharest (Romania)

Logo

Nicoletta Preziosi

Publisher

Mise en Abyme/IDEA
in partnership with the
Institute of the Arts Barcelona

Issue published in academic partnership with

University of the Visual and Performing Arts,
Colombo, Sri Lanka



And funded by and as a part of the

Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development
(AHEAD-DOR HEMS) Project



Contact information

Armando Rotondi: a.rotondi@iabarcelona.es

Submission of contributions and material for review purposes

journal.abyme@gmail.com

Web address

www.journalabyme.com

“Mise en Abyme” is officially recognised as an academic journal by ANVUR and is indexed by Scholar — WorldCat — Bielefeld Academic Search Engine (BASE) — JURN Directory — IngentaConnect — Directory of Research Journals Indexing (DRJI) — Internet Archive — Academic Naver. All work in “Mise en Abyme” is licensed under a Creative Commons 4.0 Non-Commercial International License.

ISSN: 2284-3310

ISBN: 979-12-80081-03-2

All works are blind peer-reviewed.

Cover Picture

The illustration on the cover pages is inspired by angampora wood carving piece at the *Embekka Devalaya* and designed by Nuwan Chamika.

Can we know the *Dancer* from the *Dance*? Embodied Metaphors in Angampora

Marlon Ariyasinghe*

Sri Lanka Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies

Abstract: “How can we know the dancer from the dance?” is Yeats’ concluding rumination in his poem “Among School Children”. However, is this really a question? Can we separate the dancer from the dance? Or the actor from the act? Or the angampora (Sri Lankan martial arts) *baramba* from the angampora artist? In the dance and the dancer, Yeats had found a quintessential act of embodiment. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, in *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought* (1999), posit that “the mind is inherently embodied. Thought is mostly unconscious. Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical” (Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 3). Theories of embodiment, imagination, and embodied cognition in the fields of neuroscience, psychology, and linguistics have provided meaningful tools and epistemology to have a broader, holistic understanding of the inner mechanics of the body, the mind, corporeality, and imagination. Does a shift to a holistic understanding support concepts and practices that view the integrated, psychophysical nature of the performing arts and martial arts, which were previously thought to be firmly situated in the physical realm? Further, can the concept of ‘embodied metaphor’ help us understand the psychophysical nature of angampora and shed light on some of the challenges I encountered during angampora training? Drawing upon personal performance experiences, journal entries from the Actors Lab: the AHEAD-DOR HEMS 73 project, leading contemporary theories of cognitive science on embodiment, and academic scholarship that amalgamates cognitive perspectives on acting, this study will explore the cognitive processes or the ‘embodied metaphors’ in angampora.

Keywords: Angampora, acting, embodied cognition, embodied metaphors, neuroscience, Sri Lankan theatre.

* Marlon Ariyasinghe is a writer, poet and an actor. He is the Senior Assistant Editor of *Himal Southasian*, and the current Secretary of the Sri Lanka Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (SLACLALS). He is a masters graduate in English literature from the University of Geneva and received his BA (Hons) in English from the University of Peradeniya.

1. Introduction

*O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music, O brightening glance,
How can we know the dancer from the dance?*¹

It is an evening in late March. Torrential rain is battering the roof of the *angam maduwa*², and I am revising the five angampora (Sri Lankan martial arts) haramaba with other actors of the Actors Lab³. With ease, the movements of the first haramaba come to me, quite unlike my blundering self a month back. I get to the third haramaba. I forward kick with my right leg and drag it back in one swift movement, and place it at the back of my body. I hear a clicking of the tongue and an emphatic “Stop!” from behind me. I turn to see Guru Karunāpāla⁴ shaking his head in disapproval. He points towards my right leg, which is placed behind me. I immediately become conscious of my faux-pas, literally. I had mixed up the fourth haramaba with the third (see figure 1). In the third haramaba, the right leg is placed in front of your body and not back. I tried the third haramaba again, and the right leg instinctively went back. I then realized the ‘problem’. For the last two weeks, I had exclusively focused on the fourth haramaba, which led to my body ‘memorising’ this particular movement.

It also dawned on me that the angampora haramaba recycled similar movements (kicks, jumps, turns and punches) for different haramaba. The forward right kick in the third and fourth haramaba was the same, and my subsequent placing of the right foot was imprinted in my body memory, and it felt natural for me to place it at the back after the forward kick. From then on, while performing the third haramaba, it required me to consciously pull my right foot forward and to the back in the fourth haramaba. This ordeal made me reflect on similar incidents over the years on stage where I made many faux-pas mixing up my own and other actors’ physical and verbal cues. These ‘mistakes’ are often caused by a lapse in the unity of cognition, physicality, and

¹ W. B. Yeats, “Among School Children” *The Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (1989).

² The angampora training space (See Figures 2 and 3).

³ The Actors Lab is a part of the Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development or AHEAD-DOR HEMS 73 project, funded by the World Bank, that aims to develop an actor-training methodology through Sri Lankan martial art angampora under the supervision of Prof. Saumya Liyanage and team.

⁴ Guru Karunapala is an 80-year-old angampora master who trains students at his *angam maduwa*, located in Mirihana, Nugegoda, Sri Lanka.

emotions. I realized that in my approach to learning angampora, I had neglected to see through, what theoretical neuroscientist and authority on brain imaging Karl Friston calls, the “eyes of our muscles” (2018: online), thereby not identifying angampora’s psychophysical nature. Theories of embodiment, imagination, and embodied cognition in neuroscience, psychology, and linguistics have provided meaningful tools and epistemology to have a broader, holistic understanding of the inner mechanics of the body, the mind, corporeality, and imagination. This study employs personal performance experiences, my training at the Actors Lab, and literary and scientific theories to illuminate the cognitive processes in angampora and explore the ‘embodied metaphors’ in angampora. This study will engage with the following questions: Does a shift to a holistic understanding support concepts and practices that view the integrated, psychophysical nature of the performing arts and martial arts, which were previously thought to be firmly situated in the physical realm? Further, can the concept of ‘embodied metaphor’ help us understand the psychophysical nature of angampora and shed light on some of the challenges I encountered during angampora training?



Figure 1: Actors Lab participant and AHEAD team member Banduka Premawardhana performing right leg positioning in the third and the fourth angampora haramba. Photo: Banduka Premawardhana, 2021.

In terms of methodology, in this paper, I will draw upon journal entries – which were kept during my time at the Actors Lab, leading contemporary theories of cognitive science on embodiment, and academic scholarship that amalgamate cognitive perspectives on acting.

2. Beyond the mind-body dichotomy

The centre of my approach to theatre is the collective exploration of systematized psychophysical acts and building cohesion between text, image, speech, and performance. I have over 10 years of experience in theatre as an actor, workshop coordinator, and director in Sri Lanka and Switzerland. As a master's student in English Literature, I have studied dramaturgy, classical Greek and Roman theatre, Shakespearean theatre, and contemporary theatre and have presented papers on Shakespearean theatre. I seek to explore more experimental ground through the creative adaptations of non-theatrical literary sources and studying actor training methodologies. The Actors Lab in the AHEAD project offered me an opportunity to work and share knowledge with actors, academics and researchers.

In my early years as an actor and a director, though I incorporated physical exercises and 'games' in rehearsals and workshops, I was largely ignorant of their impact on acting. Coming from a background of literary analysis, I leaned more towards the close reading of scripts and lines while pontificating on the psyche of the characters I played and interacted with. Only later, with my exposure to studies that acknowledged the holistic nature between the mind and the body, I began to see the body as more than an instrument to be manipulated and the fundamental necessity of marrying corporeality with the mind. My understanding is echoed by Sonia Moore in her work *Training an Actor: The Stanislavski System in Class* (1979). Moore integrated the 'Stanislavski System' in her workshops. She states that "an actor's control over his body should be as complete as that of a dancer" (Moore 1979: 16).

In a general study of cognition, Wilson and Foglia define embodied cognition in the following terms: "Cognition is embodied when it is deeply dependent upon features of the physical body of an agent, that is, when aspects of the agent's body beyond the brain play a significant causal or physically constitutive role in cognitive processing" (Wilson, Foglia, 2017: online).

Moreover, the embodied nature of the mind is presented by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their influential study, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*. Lakoff and Johnson propose three ‘major findings’ of cognitive science: “The mind is inherently embodied. Thought is mostly unconscious. Abstract concepts are largely metaphorical” (Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 3). Lakoff and Johnson argue that their findings or “empirical discoveries”— especially on the embodied mind in the interest of this study, challenge the “philosophical assumptions” that dominated Western philosophy from its origins (1999: 3), in particular the Cartesian mind-body dichotomy. Further, they posit that the primary consequence of these discoveries is that “we can never go back to a priori philosophizing about mind and language or to philosophical ideas of what a person is that are inconsistent with what we are learning about the mind” (1999: 7).

These studies help us understand the embodied nature of our mind and provide a framework for interpreting the embodied nature of performing arts. Rick Kemp, in *What neuroscience tells us about performance* (2012), incorporates the scholarship of embodied cognition of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. Kemp emphasizes the need for holistic approaches and theories of performance to unlock the embodied nature of acting. Kemp asserts that cognitive



Figure 2: Angampora training at the Actors Lab, Mirihana Nugegoda, Sri Lanka under the purview of Guru Karunapala. Photo: Marlon Ariyasinghe, 2021.

studies have much to offer in effecting a “conceptual shift” in the conservative “inside-out” or “outside-in” approaches to acting since cognitive studies have debunked the conceptual separation between mind and body (Kemp 2012: xv). For Kemp, “all acting is embodied. The actor’s bodymind experiences, formulates, and communicates meaning” (2012: xvi).

As mentioned in the introduction, in the “dance and the dancer” in Yeats’ poem ‘Among School Children’, he found a quintessential act of embodiment; one that cannot be separated. Dance is a psychophysical, embodied act. It is a physical action, a bodily movement, while also a work of art. But just as we cannot separate the dancer from the dance, or the actor from the act, the angampora movements cannot be separated from the angampora performer, and from the angam maduwa (the space).

3. Embodied metaphors in angampora

In my first journal entry in the Actors Lab, I had noted my excitement and reservations about taking part in the angampora lessons. Suffering from a chronic knee issue for over a decade, I was aware of my physical limitations. The first day was quite challenging, and at the end of the lesson, I had not fully grasped the first haramba:

By the third hour, it was quite exhausting. Yet, I wanted to keep going. Repeating a physical act sometimes can be quite meditative, where your entire focus is on getting the movements right. This required concentration and intense focus. In the end, I still was not satisfied with my progress over the three hours. The session ended, and I was determined to go home and practice the footwork.⁵

However, even at this early stage, I had already made associations between angampora and theatre: the intense concentration and discipline, attention to detail, rehearsed choreographic movements, being conscious of one’s body, and having control. While I had noted that my first day was quite challenging, I had marked the embodied nature of angampora and how it was similar to dancing:

The other aspect that I remarked on was how conscious we have to be of our own body. For example, the footwork/movements are very precise, almost mathematical. So, I became aware of how my left leg was placed as opposed to the right. They need to move in tandem (along with

⁵ Marlon Ariyasinghe 2021, Actors Lab Journal Entry: 17 February

arms and the rest of my body) in order for the choreography to work...I felt that angampora demanded that awareness and that precision (like in dancing).⁶

In my fourth journal entry, I cite how a session began with meditation, “The session started with a brief meditation (which I felt was missing in the earlier sessions and some gruelling exercises... It lasted for about 30 minutes.”⁷ In the same entry, I have noted how the meditation had impacted the overall productivity of the session:

I started practicing the second haramba on my own and realized that somehow the spin kick, which was giving me so much trouble in the previous session, was slightly easier. It felt good because I was no longer afraid of twisting my knee. Somehow, the movement was internalized... I felt good; it was as if the movement came to me naturally.⁸

This illustrates how angampora training combines both meditation and physical exercises embracing this “reflexive, integrated” relationship between the body and the mind and how it positively impacts the learning of the haramba (Kemp 2012: xv).

Moreover, angampora employs imagination as a tool in training. From the first lesson onwards, we were asked to use our imagination when performing different haramba. I had ended my first journal entry with the following statement:

What I did not like was the constant references to violence and invisible enemies that should be imagined when performing the choreography [angampora haramba]. The angampora Master made quite a few references to how certain moves can even be fatal.⁹

The angampora performer needs to imagine fictitious enemies. As the journal entry suggests, this embedded violence was quite distasteful to me. However, I had utilized imagination in other modes of performance in the past, especially when portraying characters on stage.

The role of imagination in acting derives primarily from Stanislavski’s concept of the “magic if” (Stanislavski 1946: 65), which states that the actor must transport oneself into an imaginary situation when building a character by asking the question: What would I do if I were in those circumstances? This supposition helps actors to imagine things that they have not experienced in real life. Stanislavski presents the concept of *if* as a “powerful stimulus to

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Marlon Ariyasinghe 2021, Actors Lab Journal Entry: 28 February

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Marlon Ariyasinghe 2021, Actors Lab Journal Entry: 17 February.

imagination, thought, and logical action” (Moore 1960: 36). An actor must use the most appropriate circumstances created out of imagination to take a character in a given scene forward which “transforms the character’s aim into the actor’s aim” and becomes “a strong stimulus to inner and physical actions” (1960: 36). Lakoff and Johnson propose the cognitive aspect of the magic if in their concepts of “advisory projection” and “empathetic projection” (Lakoff, Johnson 1999: 254) through which people identify and relate to another person and fictitious situations. However, Kemp states that contemporary practitioners of the Stanislavski system have changed “the concept to ‘what would I do if I were the character in the situation?’” (Kemp 2012: 109), which echoes Lakoff and Johnson’s “emphatic projection” in which an actor projects/imagines values of the fictitious character in addition to the fictitious circumstances.

While popular culture has consistently fed the narrative that martial arts are for self-defence, there are no such scruples in angampora. As the previous journal entry points out, the consistent reiteration of how certain moves can maim and cause serious injury was part of the angampora training. Contrary to Moore’s instructions to her actors in her workshops to “think, think and make your body project what is in your mind” (Moore 1979: 42), from my first angampora training session onwards, I refrained from visualizing combat scenes; punches and kicks from imaginary enemies and defending or performing counter attacks on them.

While my progression through angampora haramba was satisfactory, in my seventh week of training, I hit a roadblock – mentioned above in the first paragraph. In the training sessions, we would repeat the haramba one after another, and I was struggling. The trainer attributed my mistakes to a lack of concentration and lapses in memory.

The possible explanation for my predicament is found in Gallese and Lakoff’s paper *The Brain’s Concepts: The Role of the Sensory-motor System in Conceptual Knowledge*. The study states that while we conceive of imagination and mental imagery as being purely psychological or “abstract”, all metaphors are embodied and are grounded on the physical, sensorimotor domain: “We now know that *visual and motor imagery are embodied*” (Gallese, Lakoff 2005: 463, emphasis mine). Therefore, the training of angampora haramba that involves imagination of attackers and specific circumstances point towards the utilization of embodied metaphors which help to learn the angampora haramba.

The concept of embodied metaphor aptly describes some of my personal experiences in performing angampora movements and haramba. In my dismay for what I perceived to be the embedded violence of angampora, I had ignored its embodied nature and the quintessential role

of imagination when training the angampora haramba. My body had memorized the movements without the necessary mental imagery for every movement in each haramba. Theatre practitioners often emphasise the significance of purpose in each movement: “In the theatre, making a movement is never a mechanical act but must always be a gesture that is justified. Its justification may consist in an indication or an action, or even an inward state” (Lecoq 2000: 69). In the same vein, each angampora movement, whether an attack, defence, or counter, has a purpose and accompanies a mental image of an imagined attacker. After understanding the necessity of the embodied metaphors in angampora, I did not confuse different movements from different haramba. I was able to complete haramba from one to five in the ascending, descending, and even mixed order.

Gallese and Lakoff, using multiple research on cognition, explain that the act and the perception of the concept of grasping use the same neural networks: “Our ability to imagine grasping makes use of the same neural substrate as performing and perceiving grasping.” (2005: 456). Through everyday examples such as grasping, these studies, specifically that of Gallese and Lakoff, show how we use embodied metaphors, first in the conception and then in the performance of any physical act.

In my ninth journal entry, I note my struggles with learning the sixth haramba, which involved movements using a staff:

He [Guru Karunāpāla] went over the movements of how to manoeuvre the staff a couple of times. I tried following them but failed miserably. A trainer also came to help and realized I had trouble handling the staff. I found this particular movement where I had to twist the staff from left to right in a swift movement quite difficult.¹⁰

My main challenge with the sixth haramba was embodying the pole/staff by treating it as an extension of my body: “I found this particular haramba quite difficult to grasp, unlike the other haramba that focused on the body. It requires a lot of concentration, and I assume the pole has to be considered an extension of your arm.”¹¹ In my training of the sixth haramba, I had neglected the embodied nature of imagination as proposed by Gallese and Lakoff: “Imagination, like perceiving and doing, is embodied, that is, structured by our constant encounter and interaction with the world via our bodies and brains” (Gallese and Lakoff 2005: 455).

¹⁰Marlon Ariyasinghe 2021, Actors Lab Journal Entry: 31 March

¹¹ Marlon Ariyasinghe 2021, Actors Lab Journal Entry: 4 April 2021.

I had run into the same issue as I had with the third and the fourth haramba – overlooking the significance of mental imagery or the embodied metaphors in angampora training. Each movement must be accompanied by a mental image of countering, defending, or attacking an imagined enemy. Once the embodied metaphors were incorporated into the training of the movements, it became much easier, as I note in a later entry referring to the sixth haramba: “The entire session, except for the last 30 minutes, was devoted to this haramba. By the end, I think I was at a satisfactory level.”¹²

4. Concluding remarks

The theories of cognition, embodiment, and embodied cognition enrich our understanding of performative arts, and they hold the key to a broader understanding of the embodied nature of angampora. The studies referred to in this paper help us understand the embodied nature of our mind and the relationship between metaphors, mental images, and imagination with our physical actions. They provide a framework for interpreting the embodied nature of the performing arts.



Figure 3: Cognition extends beyond our mental faculties and our body to the environment.
Photo: AHEAD DOR HEMS 73 project, University of the Visual and Performing Arts, 2021.

¹² Marlon Ariyasinghe 2021, Actors Lab Journal Entry: 7 April 2021.

There holds promise for future studies of incorporating theories of extended cognition, primarily by principal exponents such as Andy Clark, to angampora: the scholarship that argues the extension of cognition beyond our mental faculties and our body to the environment. Thus, the question posed in the title is not rhetorical. Knowing the dancer from the dance is to understand that the dance is holistic, a marriage of corporeality and cognition. This, in turn, sheds light on the embodied, psychophysical nature of the dancer, the actor, and the angampora artist and the need to explore and understand embodied metaphors in the performing arts.

Bibliography

- FRISTON, Carl (2018), "Embodied Cognition", *Serious Science*, 1 June, online, <http://serious-science.org/embodied-cognition-9027> [Last access: 14 September 2021].
- GALLESE, Vittorio, LAKOFF, George (2005), "The Brain's Concepts: The Role of the Sensory-motor System in Conceptual Knowledge", *Cognitive Neuropsychology*, 22(3), pp. 455-479.
- KEMP, Rick (2012), *Embodied Acting: What neuroscience tells us about performance*, London-New York: Routledge.
- LAKOFF, George, JOHNSON, Mark (1999), *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York: Basic Books.
- LECOQ, Jacques (2000), *The Moving Body: Teaching Creative Theatre*, David Bradby (tran.), London: Methuen Drama.
- STANISLAVSKY, Konstantin (1946), *An actor prepares*, New York: Theatre Arts.
- WILSON, Robert, FOGLIA, Lucia (2017), "Embodied Cognition", *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), online <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/embodied-cognition/> [Last access: 09 September 2021].

Mise en Abyme
International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts

Vol. VIII, Issue 2
July-December 2021
Lamp in a Windless Place
Developing an Actor Training Methodology through
Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora

Publisher
Mise en Abyme/IDEA

Mise en abyme
International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts



Journal in academic partnership with the
Institute of the Arts Barcelona

iaab Institute of the Arts
Barcelona

Issue published in academic partnership with
University of the Visual and Performing Arts,
Colombo, Sri Lanka



And funded by and as a part of the
Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD-DOR HEMS) Project



COPYRIGHTS

All work in *Mise en Abyme. International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts* is licensed under a Creative Commons 4.0 Non-Commercial International License. According to this, you are free to copy, distribute, display and perform the work as long as you give the original author(s) credit, do not use this work for commercial purposes, and do not alter, transform, or build upon this work. For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the license terms of this work. Any of these conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holders. Nothing in this license impairs or restricts the authors' rights.

OPEN ACCESS POLICY

Mise en Abyme. International Journal of Comparative Literature and Arts is an Open Access journal, conforming fully to the Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI). It has adopted the BOAI policy of "free availability on the public internet, permitting its users to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of its articles, crawl them for indexing, pass them as data to software, or use them for any other lawful purpose, without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. The only constraint on reproduction and distribution, and the only role for copyright in this domain, is to give authors control over the integrity of their work and the right to be properly acknowledged and cited".

AUTHOR'S RIGHTS

Copyright on any research article in *Mise en Abyme* is retained by the author(s). Authors grant a license to publish the article and identify *Mise en Abyme* as the original publisher. Authors also grant any third party the right to use the article freely as long as its integrity is maintained and its original authors, citation details and publisher are identified. Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 formalizes these and other terms and conditions of publishing research articles.

This special edition is dedicated to the actor training project titled “Lamp in a Windless Place: Developing an Actor Training Methodology through Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora” initiated by the University of the Visual and Performing Arts (UVPA), Colombo Sri Lanka in 2019. The three-year-long performer-training project is funded by the Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD-DOR HEMS) Project supported by the World Bank and the Ministry of Higher Education in Sri Lanka.

ABOUT THE ISSUE EDITORS:

Saumya Liyanage is an actor both in theatre and film. He is currently working as a Professor in drama and theatre at the Department of Drama, Oriental Ballet and Contemporary Dance, University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Colombo, Sri Lanka. He has a PhD from La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia.

Lyudmyla Honcharova is an actor and theatre maker from Ukraine. She is a research assistant for AHEAD DOR HEMS 73 Project supported by World Bank at University of Visual and Performing Arts (UVPA), Colombo, Sri Lanka. She is reading for her MPhil degree at the Faculty of Graduate Studies, UVPA, Colombo. She completed her MA in Acting at the Institute of the Arts Barcelona/Liverpool John Moores University and her BA in Acting at Ivan Franko National University of Lviv.

Marlon Ariyasinghe is a writer, poet and an actor. He is the Senior Assistant Editor of Himal Southasian, and the current Secretary of the Sri Lanka Association for Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (SLACLALS). He is a masters graduate in English literature from the University of Geneva and received his BA (Hons) in English from the University of Peradeniya.