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# 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 Abyrne

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*Lamp in a Windless Place*

Developing an Actor Training Methodology through Sri Lankan Combative Art Angampora

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

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This special edition covers some of the writings generated through the Actors Lab and the literature review developed along with the research project. Lyudmyla Honcharova, a Ukrainian actor and a research assistant of this project, was a postgraduate student of Prof. Armando Rotondi, and this academic connection paved the way to work with Prof. Armando Rotondi and his team to realize this special edition of *Mise en Abyme*.

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<sup>1</sup> In order to demystify angampora martial arts and to cement its position among the other martial arts of the world (one of the main objectives of this endeavour), the Editorial Team decided not to italicize the word and to only capitalize angampora in its first usage. All subsequent references within the journal (except in titles) will be written as ‘angampora’.

early years of this project at the University of the Visual and Performing Arts, Sri Lanka. Further, the AHEAD team wishes to thank the current UVPA Vice Chancellor Senior Prof. Rohana Mahaliyanarachchi, who has a clear sense of the value of research and innovations. Further, we are indebted to OTS office Director Dr Anusha Jayasiri and her team and our international consultants: Prof. Jonathan Pitches, University of Leeds, Prof. Paul Bauman, Cardiff University and Associate Professor Tanatchaporn Kittikong, Khon Kaen University, Thailand.

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The COVID-19 pandemic was a difficult time for many theatre artistes who relied on live theatre and performance. During the second lockdown in early 2021, the Actors Lab participant Imitha Jayakodi decided to take his own life. The Actors Lab lost an emerging, talented young actor and a dear friend. All the members of the AHEAD Team would like to dedicate this special edition of *Mise en Abyme* to Imitha and his valid contribution to the development of the Actors Lab.

*Issue Editors: Saumya Liyanage, Lyudmyla Honcharova and Marlon Ariyasinghe*

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Maybe a different kind of education would be an option, a different concept of acting-culture, one that in an admittedly old-fashioned sense – provides the person with more than skills and information. This would allow the person to conceive of himself constantly (Weiler cited in Zarrilli 2019: 172).

Weiler suggests rethinking the approach towards actor training methodologies, emphasizing on the constant learning process of oneself. Therefore, an actor's personal development, physical and mental wellbeing could be prioritized in a new concept of acting culture. Angampora could serve such an aim if introduced to actor training systematically. Further, Weiler holds the view that “the optimal way of teaching and practice would be to leave the outcome and result open to the practitioner's curiosity and capability for a lifelong learning” (Weiler cited in Zarrilli 2019: 170). While it is still not clear whether angampora would successfully fill the gaps in the modern actor training traditions of Sri Lanka and Europe. At the current stage of AHEAD DOR HEMS 73 research, angampora certainly can satisfy the psychophysical needs of the contemporary actor. Consequently, the paper aims to identify the needs of the modern actor by analyzing traditional western and non-western actor training systems.

## 2. Western actor training traditions

Research into western actor traditions has a long history. Most scholars trace Western theatre tradition back to ancient Greek performances, which is considered as the beginning of European theatre culture. However, it is incorrect to perceive European actor training and theatre traditions as something separated from the Asian theatre culture. Wiles and David suggest in their studies that Greece was a point where East and West interweaved. They also state that Greek civilization is close to the Indian and Japanese regarding its attitudes towards harmony between body and mind (Wiles, David 2000: 2):

Geographically Greece is a place where East meets West and it is not today a hegemonic power like the land of Shakespeare, so the drama of Greece is well placed to become a shared cultural possession, a vehicle of communication (Wiles, David 2000: 2).

In the same vein, Sarachchandra (1971), in the interview *The Uses of Traditions* notes “Greek theatre has many affinities with Sri Lankan theatre. The Greeks used chants, masks,