



ANNA THURING

## BETWEEN ARCHIVE AND REPERTOIRE

### Asian Martial Arts in Transcultural Performer Training

#### Abstract

Asian martial arts constitute an integral part of both traditional Asian and modern international performer training. Particularly important they are in those systems, methods or approaches that aim at educating transcultural, physically (or psychophysically) skilled performers. The focus here is in three contemporary transcultural performer training systems or approaches, namely Yoshi Oida's, Akira Hino's and Phillip B. Zarrilli's, that integrate Asian martial arts in their corpus of exercises and training philosophies. The paper will explore these processes through the concepts of "archive" and "repertoire," as defined by Diana Taylor in *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing cultural Memory in the Americas* (2003). It argues that both Asian martial arts and the transcultural training systems using them negotiate constantly between archive and repertoire and create layers of intertwined interactions that provide material for understanding preservation and transformation of cultural traditions.

#### Tiivistelmä

Aasialaiset taistelutaidot kuuluvat useiden perinteisten aasialaisten esittävien taiteiden koulutukseen. Niitä käytetään myös monissa kansainvälisissä teatterin ja esittävän taiteen koulutuksissa. Ar-

tikkelissa tarkastellaan kolmea koulutusmenetelmää: Yoshi Oidan ja Akira Hiron luomia järjestelmiä, jotka hyödyntävät erilaisia japanilaisia taistelutaitoja ja niiden filosofioita, sekä yhdysvaltalaisen Phillip B. Zarrillin psykofyysistä lähestymistapaa, jossa intialainen *kalarippayattu* yhdistyy joogaan ja kiinalaiseen taijihin. Näitä menetelmiä tarkastellaan Diana Taylorin "archive" ja "repertoire" käsitteiden avulla, ja tutkitaan erityisesti sitä, miten nämä kolme järjestelmää liikkuvat jatkuvasti näiden käsitteiden välillä hyödyntäen sekä kirjallisia että ei-kirjallisia perinteitä - ja samalla luoden tässä prosessissa omia liukuvia "archive" ja "repertoire" kenttiään.

Various forms of Asian martial arts constitute an integral part of both traditional Asian and modern international performer training. They are particularly important in those systems, methods or approaches that aim at educating transcultural, physically (or psychophysically) skilled performers. The paper touches only briefly some Asian performance traditions in which martial arts are used. Its main focus is on three contemporary transcultural performer training systems or approaches, namely Yoshi Oida's, Akira Hino's and Phillip B. Zarrilli's, that weave Asian martial arts in their corpus of exercises and training philosophies. The reason for choosing these three cases over some other relevant options<sup>1</sup> is that they are internationally used and documented approaches in performer training and that I have some personal and even embodied experience of them.<sup>2</sup> Of these three, Zarrilli and Oida specialize in actor training, whereas Hino caters a wider clientele, among them dancers and athletes. Hino's

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1 Such as A.C. Scott, Herbert Blau, Eugenio Barba, Jerzy Grotowski, and Tadashi Suzuki, to name a few. Unfortunately, the scope of the article does not allow a detailed examination of all these cases.

2 I have taken a short workshop by Zarrilli and had some brief discussions with him (2011). I have also met Akira Hino and talked with him and some artists who have found his method useful for their work (2017). Oida I have seen only on stage in Peter Brook's *Mahabharata* (1987), but since his texts have been translated also into Finnish (*The Invisible Actor* became *Näkymätön näyttelijä* in Lauri Sipari's translation in 2004) and resonate to some extent in Finnish actor training, I find it relevant for this particular publication.

published work is not as extensive or internationally known as Oida's or, especially, Zarrilli's, but I find it a relevant example because of his heterodox use of a wide variety of Japanese martial art styles.

The aim of this paper is not to examine how and how well these systems serve individual performers in their practice but to look critically at their historical and cultural formation under the themes of memory, archive and performance.<sup>3</sup> The paper will explore these processes through the concepts of "archive" and "repertoire", as defined by Diana Taylor in *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing cultural Memory in the Americas* (2003). I shall argue that both Asian martial arts and the transcultural training systems using them negotiate constantly between archive and repertoire. During this process, they create layers of intertwined interactions that provide material for understanding preservation and transformation of cultural traditions.

## Asian Martial Arts as Archive and Repertoire

Martial arts are considered to be systems that blend the physical components of combat with strategy, philosophy, tradition, or other features that distinguish them from pure physical reaction (in other words, a technique, armed or unarmed, employed randomly or idiosyncratically would not be considered a martial art).<sup>4</sup>

The term "Asian martial arts" comprises of multiple co-existing forms, traditions and schools. Yet, the emphasis on mental mastery that equals the physical skills seems to be essential for all of them, whether they are classified "hard", such as *karate* or *taek-won-do*, or "soft", as *aikido* or *taijiquan*. Sometimes they are defined as external practices, in which the emphasis is on force against force, and

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3 The first version of this paper was written for the symposium *Shifting Dialogues III: Documenting Asian Art and Performance: Embodied Knowledge, Virtuality & the Archive*, organized in December 2014 by University of the Arts Helsinki and the Shifting Dialogues Research Project, funded by the Academy of Finland. Of Hino's work, I have previously given a paper at the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR) Regional Conference, organized by the IFTR Asian Theatre Working Group and the University of Philippines Diliman in Manila in 2018.

4 Green 2001, xvi.

internal ones that aim to develop *qi*, the internal energy assumed to circulate through the body.<sup>5</sup> In practice, both elements are present in different forms, following the principle of *yin* and *yang*.<sup>6</sup> Often, practice of these arts is linked either to Buddhist, Daoist, Hindu or Confucian religions and philosophies. Meditational practices are often integrated into them. They can even be said to be embodied expressions of these philosophies or “the subtraction of thought itself from practice”.<sup>7</sup>

Most Asian martial arts are based on generational transmittance of physical and mental or spiritual skills from a master-teacher to a disciple or disciples. It is assumed that this takes a considerable amount of time. A commitment to one master teacher is often taken for granted. At least in theory, the student is not expected to go around “master (s)hopping” but to delve into one system as deeply as possible with one master who, presumably, has learned his skills and philosophy from his own master.

Because of the strong interpersonal learning, as well as the gradual building of skills and character, Asian martial arts seem to fall more into the area of ephemeral “repertoire” of embodied practice/knowledge, such as spoken language, dance, sports, ritual rather than to the territory of the “archive” consisting of supposedly enduring materials, texts or documents, resisting change and allowing a possibility for re-examination (even if these materials can also be re-interpreted and are by no means free of resisting change and manipulation), as Diana Taylor defines the difference between these two concepts. Taking a post-colonial stand, Taylor’s discussion aims to enforce the importance of the repertoire that “enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing” that are usually thought as non-reproducible knowledge. She also emphasizes the requirement of presence and participation in the repertoire.<sup>8</sup>

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5 Zarrilli 2008, 73.

6 Originally a Chinese philosophical principle (particularly in Daoism) that presents dualism as two opposite, yet closely intertwined elements: *yin* (passive, dark, etc.) and *yang* (active, light, etc.).

7 Bowman, 2012, 8 and 15.

8 Taylor 2003, 19–20.

Dichotomy between archive and repertoire is not absolute nor categorical. As Taylor herself states, there are areas that do not completely fit into the division. Rather, she wishes to point out that the Western logocentric culture tends to ignore or downplay the repertoire, a form of knowledge that does not have written documentation as its central component<sup>9</sup>. There are processes of convergence that create grey areas between these two. Taylor's concept of "scenario" refers to the processes of interaction that fall between the two main concepts. "[ - - ] the notion of the scenario allows us to more fully recognize the many ways in which archive and repertoire work to constitute and transmit social knowledge"<sup>10</sup>.

[ - - ] there is also an advantage to looking at scenarios that are not reducible to narrative because they demand embodiment. Scenarios, like narrative, grab the body and insert it into a frame. The body in the scenario, however, has space to maneuver because it is not scripted.. Critical distance between social actor and a character - the scenario more fully allows us to keep both the social actor and the role in view simultaneously and thus recognize the uneasy fits and areas of tension.<sup>11</sup>

As will be seen, the concept of scenario seems to align smoothly with such embodied practices as Asian martial arts and transcultural performer training. However, in this article, I shall use the dichotomy of archive and repertoire in order to pinpoint the territories where these two are negotiated and take up the concept of scenario in those cases where it clearly seems the most appropriate option.

There is plenty of written heritage pertaining to Asian martial arts, and it is often used to legitimize the length and continuation of the tradition. Additionally, other types of archived components can be found. As Taylor writes, the archive can consist of other enduring

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9 Ibid, 24.

10 Taylor 2003, 33.

11 Ibid, 55.

materials than texts<sup>12</sup>. In martial arts, they can be weapons or other fight-related items and even temples or *dojos* or *kalaris* where the training takes place. In the history of performance, masks, costumes, and props form an integral part of the archived tradition. This is the case in, for example, Japanese *no* theatre where they are valued treasures that legitimize the right to the tradition.

Even if there is written evidence of the tradition, there are controversies about the length of the traditions. Many Asian martial art schools present themselves in a lineage of ancient traditions even if that is not really the case. Alexis McLeod writes:

Another common misunderstanding (one common even among many martial arts practitioners) is that modern martial arts [- -] are ancient in their origins, and that the arts we practice today in dojos and other training halls are manifestations of ancient systems of martial art constructed by revered martial sages. While they may have some connection to early practices (especially in the form of inspiration), the martial arts practiced today did not exist as such much prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Martial arts as we know and practice them are modern arts. Despite the modern origins of what are commonly called “traditional martial arts”, there are many ancient origin stories associated with the arts. Every style and school has such a story - though some are more forthright about their modern origins than others.<sup>13</sup>

In many cases, the “pure Asian-ness” is also a fiction. “In fact, the modern martial arts are a fusion of modern Asian and Western techniques, systematized by figures in China, Japan, and Korea in between the late 19<sup>th</sup> and mid 20<sup>th</sup> centuries-indeed, this may be some of the reason these arts have caught on so well in the West.”<sup>14</sup>

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12 Ibid, 19.

13 McLeod 2018, 10.

14 Ibid, 2.

Yet another twist is that many of the written materials pertaining to Asian martial arts use poetic style and are open for multiple interpretations, depending on the reader. The practice of *koans* (riddles) that the master-teacher may give to the student verbally or in writing in order to enhance the student's learning process, are an example. They are not expected to be understood in the same way by the master and the student. It is assumed that the student can internalize the wisdom in the course of her/his training and development, i.e. *koans* are in constant dialogue with the embodied practices of repertoire and resonate well with Taylor's concept of scenario.

Martial arts also replicate themselves through their own structures and codes. The elements of secrecy and ritualization are in many ways, even if not strictly preserved in written form, but still they can be understood as part of change-resisting archives.

## Martial Arts and Performing Arts Training

A wide variety of Asian martial arts are used in the training for traditional Asian performance styles. For example, *jingju* or Peking opera uses *wushu* or *kung fu*. In Kerala *kathakali*, *kalaripayattu* is mandatory basic training. They aim to improve bodily strength, alertness, contact and special awareness, as well as balance and agility of the performer. Oftentimes, the training extends to mastering certain roles on the stage. In some role categories, they work only in the background.

Regardless of their origin or preferred performing genres, many individual contemporary performers around the world have discovered the benefits of martial or meditational training in their profession. Especially the soft techniques, such as *aikido*, *taijiquan*, or *yoga* suit well for most performers.<sup>15</sup> They can be trained without extreme

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15 As a reviewer of this article wisely pointed out, the average Asian martial arts body is a non-disabled, masculine body. This frame can be problematic when the techniques are used with diverse groups of performers. However, both in Asia and in countries around the world, martial arts have been and are practised by individuals of different sexes and genders and also with different physical capabilities. When used in performer training, they are inevitably "applied martial arts" that are used to achieve desired creative results with different kinds of trainees.

physical excess and do not necessarily require any long-term commitment. Theatre and dance schools can also integrate courses on Asian martial arts into the curriculum. For example, Christel Weiler argues for using *taijiquan* in actor training in Germany

I am far from suggesting that practicing Taijiquan would solve all problems. [- -] I would rather like to take it as one example, one possibility to think through a different model of intercultural actor training that, on the one hand, supports the actor-to-be on various levels and, on the other hand, could be a signpost for their life in general, i.e. something that keeps its value after graduating from drama school. [- -] Creativity, expressive and imaginative freedom, sensory awareness, all these demanded qualities are less actor- or theatre-bound but rather connected to living a full and rich life.<sup>16</sup>

Weiler is not alone nor the first one in propagating *taijiquan*'s benefits for performer training. In the United States, Herbert Blau and A.C. Scott integrated *taijiquan* into actor training curriculum at the end of the 1960s and, as will be seen, *taijiquan* constitutes a central part in Phillip B. Zarrilli's psychophysical training system.

"Performing arts training" means various methods, approaches, systems and traditions that are used to coach individuals in professional skills as an actor, dancer, circus or performance artist. Such terms as "intercultural performer training" and "transcultural performer training" are complex and have been under discussion for decades.<sup>17</sup> In this paper, "intercultural performer training" means training that uses elements from different performance cultures. "Transcultural performer training" is in most cases intercultural but adds the global dimension: the training is not located in any

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<sup>16</sup> Weiler 2019, 172.

<sup>17</sup> For example, a recent book *Intercultural Acting and Performer Training* (2019), edited by Phillip B. Zarrilli, T. Sasitharan and Anuradha Kapur, has chosen the word "intercultural" but is also bringing in terms cross-cultural, multicultural, intracultural, global and/or interwoven, etc.



particular geographical area but can be taught in workshops in different parts of the world for students originating from varied cultural backgrounds. The three cases that are examined in this paper, can, in my opinion, be best classified as “transcultural”.

Eugenio Barba is one of the most well-known inter- and transcultural performer trainers and performing arts theoreticians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Leo Rafolt has found similarities between Barba’s principles of contemporary performer training and Japanese martial arts (*budo*) training as follows:

Eugenio Barba formulated this as five functions of a performer’s own training: (1) interpretation of a dramatic text; (2) transmission of a performance text; (3) transmission of secrets; (4) self-expression; and (5) group-formation (Barba & Savarese, 1999, p. 248). Besides being ritual-like, these functions are easily translated into budō terminology as, respectively: interpretative self-training (*kata-geiko*), the principle of direct and personal hereditary transmission of a craft by and within a traditional art school (*iemoto*), secret learning (*ryū-densho*, *menkyo kaiden*, *mokuroku* or any other secret transmission principle), self-educative and self-expressive values (*shugyo*), and the *communitas* principle, designated as a group-society, school, lineage, or preservation group (*kan, kai, kaikan*).<sup>18</sup>

Eugenio Barba’s, Jerzy Grotowski’s and Tadashi Suzuki’s views and explorations would also have been relevant for the topic of this paper. This time, however, I have chosen to focus on three other contemporary performer training systems, methods or approaches, namely, Yoshi Oida’s (b. 1933), Akira Hino’s (b. 1948) and Phillip B. Zarrilli’s (b. 1947)<sup>19</sup>. The terms “system”, “method” and “approach” are

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18 Rafolt 2015, 98.

19 Phillip Zarrilli passed away in April 2020. Nevertheless, I have not changed the tense of the sentences in this paper that was written some months earlier. After all, his valuable work still lives with all of us who are interested in Asian performance and actor training.

fluid and even fuzzy. Hino talks about his training as a method and a theory. In Oida's case, it might be more appropriate to talk about an approach or philosophy. Zarrilli can be said to have an articulated system that aims to enhance the psychophysical qualities of an actor.

The aim of this paper is not to seek similarities or differences between the methods but to consider how these methods integrate Asian martial arts and to investigate how the dynamics of archive and repertoire appear in this process. The reason why I have chosen these three examples is that all of them use Asian martial arts as an important part of the training and that the creators have articulated their training methods and ideas in writing, i.e. there is an archive that can be used. Yet, they are used in live workshops in transcultural, global contexts and use elements, such as the Asian martial arts and meditation techniques, that cannot completely be subsumed into the concept of an archive but hover between archive and repertoire. Because of this, these systems provide, in my opinion, relevant cases for discussion on archive and repertoire as defined by Diana Taylor.

Oida and Hino are of Japanese origin, Zarrilli is an American based in the United Kingdom and with a thorough knowledge of Asian, especially Indian, culture and performance practice and theory. Regardless of their cultural backgrounds, their methods can be classified as transcultural since they are taught internationally in workshops either for open groups or in connection with specific productions. Oida's and Zarrilli's systems are specifically linked to performer training and, as directors, they also use them closely intertwined with productions. Hino teaches his method for a wide variety of customers including businessmen and athletes but has also worked with actors and dancers. For example, choreographer William Forsythe has found the Hino Method useful for his performers. Hino has also created and directed a few own theatre productions. This paper concentrates only on training and does not look at any specific performances or outcomes of training. The training processes connected to productions would require a detailed analysis that is not possible here. Just like the individual training of martial arts or martial arts as a part of a curriculum, these systems can be studied and used selectively. They do not formally require a long-term commitment nor do they have different levels of competence that could be demonstrated through the years.

Before looking at the nature of Asian martial arts as part of the training systems, it is relevant to ask what is the role of archive and repertoire when it comes to the overall information on these methods. The workshops and production-related training by Zarrilli, Hino, and Oida are clearly something that can be seen as repertoire even if they are based on exercises and patterns that in one form or another are repeated in different training occasions and/or written down in manuals.

All three have written about their training approaches. Zarrilli has been the most prolific writer of them and from early stages of his career, he has also addressed questions of using martial arts in actor training<sup>20</sup>. Oida has written three books with Lorna Marshall. They comprise of his memoirs, philosophy, and references to the training. The last one of these, *An Actor's Tricks*, contains also an appendix of exercises used in Oida's workshops. Hino has published one book, *Don't Think, Listen to the Body* that explains his method. Some of the training sessions or parts of them have been recorded and found their way to the internet. This way they can be said to have been transported to the realm of archive, even if a limited live experience is captured in these mediated products.<sup>21</sup> They are verbal or physical testimonies of the practice, not complete presentations of the methods. Yet they, like written archives, can be returned to for further examination. As far as the teachings of Zarrilli, Hino and Oida are concerned, there are these publicly available video materials, such as lectures, interviews, and recordings of workshops. Zarrilli's book *Psychophysical Acting. An Intercultural Approach after Stanislavski* (2008) also includes a DVD-ROM documenting the exercises of his method.

In the following, I shall look at the role of the Asian martial arts in the three training systems as they are expressed in the writings that are available in English. The questions that I shall address are: What are the Asian martial arts used in these systems and how they are understood and appropriated? How were/are they combined or subsumed

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20 This book (*Asian Martial Arts in Actor Training*) was published in 1984. Unfortunately, it seems to be out of print and I have not been able to find it from libraries. Also, Diana Daugherty mentions about the hard availability of the book in her review in *Asian Theatre Journal* Vol 13 1996.

21 Taylor 2003, 20.

into the training system? In a sense, I shall be tracking the traces of repertoire in the archive.

## Yoshi Oida's Theatrical Research into Japanese Culture

Yoshi Oida's three books are written with his collaborator, the British director and performer trainer Lorna Marshall. The first is *An Actor Adrift*, published in 1992, the second, *The Invisible Actor*, from 1997, and the most recent one, *An Actor's Tricks* that dates from 2007. These books convey Oida's life, philosophy as well as performance practice and theory.

A constant theme in the books are comparisons between Eastern (Japanese) and Western attitudes in various areas of life and theatre. Before leaving Japan to join Peter Brook's international theatre research and performance venture<sup>22</sup>, Oida had studied *kyogen* for twenty years and was thus familiar with this part of *nogaku*<sup>23</sup>. This apprenticeship was accomplished by learning the *kata*, the movement and vocal patterns of the form, from his master Yataro Okura, i.e. through bodily transmission and repetition in interpersonal learning situations.

The functions of *kata* are similar in Asian martial arts as in traditional theatre. Leo Rafolt summarizes them in *budo*:

There are several functions of *kata* that are preserved in modern *budō*: the metacognitive function, since *kata* is essentially always training of bodily cognition; pedagogical functions, because this is the way to transmit knowledge of a particular pattern of movement in a martial arts school; and archival function, because the exact learning and relearning of formative and ritualized patterns of *kata*

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22 Centre International de Reseaches Théâtrales (CIRT), and later Centre International de Créations Théâtrales (CICT).

23 *Nogaku* consist of *no* and *kyogen*. The acting techniques are same even if certain actors/schools specialize in *no* and the others in *kyogen*, the comical form. Oida refers to his *kyogen* teacher/master Yataro Okura sometimes as a *no* teacher. Oida is not a member of a *kyogen* family. Mostly he writes about studying *kyogen* but there is a mention in *An Actors Tricks* (p. 81) that he sometimes performed in *kyogen* plays.

preserves all of the structures of movements in the existing style, employing aesthetic experience as a dominant one.<sup>24</sup>

According to Taylor, the repertoire enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing with a requirement of presence, participation and constant repetition.<sup>25</sup> Oida himself writes passionately about the importance of repetition, emphasizing that it should not be rigid but rather a mental exercise.

Even in the martial arts, you must be careful to choose a good teacher, since the exercises are very powerful. If they are badly taught, they can become rigid or over-programmed, which can contribute to mental inflexibility.<sup>26</sup>

Repetitional and generational transfer of the tradition in as unaltered form as possible can be seen also holding elements of archive. Taylor writes:

Embodied memory, because it is live, exceeds the archive's ability to capture it. But that does not mean that performance - as ritualized, formalized, or recitative behavior - disappears. Performances also replicate themselves through their own structures and codes. This means that the repertoire, like the archive, is mediated. The process of selection, memorization or internalization, and transmission takes place within (and in turn helps to constitute) specific systems of re-presentation. [- -] Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge.<sup>27</sup>

An additional twist is that *nogaku* also has its written tradition, namely Zeami's writings. Oida refers to them often and part of the

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24 Rafolt 2015, 103.

25 Taylor 2003, 20.

26 Oida 1997, 45.

27 Taylor 2003, 20-21.

books are more or less citing and paraphrasing Zeami's thoughts.<sup>28</sup> When looking at Oida's *nogaku* learning, we might see a 'Taylorian' example of "the archive and repertoire working in tandem and with other systems of transmission. [- -] materials from the archive shape embodied practice in innumerable ways, yet never totally dictate the embodiment."<sup>29</sup>

Oida does not refer to martial arts extensively in his books. Sometimes he mentions *aikido* or *taijiquan*. For example, from *T'ai Chi* or *taijiquan*, he chooses exercises of breathing.<sup>30</sup> Martial arts movements are for him mainly a good way to explore response and relationship. He does not value the compulsive desire for survival or winning in them.<sup>31</sup> Oida does not even see martial arts automatically the best way 'to find freedom' - any physical training could work as well.<sup>32</sup> The exercises that are presented in the books do not include any direct fighting drills.

Clearly, Oida's use of traditions is more in the meditational component of the Asian martial arts than in fighting skills. He resonates most with the ultimate purpose of the martial arts, as defined in Zen Buddhism: attaining the Emptiness<sup>33</sup>. Oida started to study Zen Buddhism seriously after his first European residence in the late 1960s. Return to Japan created in him a desire to delve into his own traditions.<sup>34</sup> He writes about the ways of Zen as presented by the head priest of a Rinzaï sect temple in Saitama, Keizan Hokusui:

In Za-zen (sitting meditation), there are three important things: the energy in the Tan Den (a point in the lower abdomen), "Kufu" ("Exploring the paths") and "San-mai"

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28 Oida 1997, for example in pages 32–35, and Chapter 5: Learning, pages 112–118. This chapter is also reprinted in *The Actor Training Reader* (2015, 44–47), edited by Mark Evans.

29 Taylor 2003, 20.

30 Oida 1997, 91.

31 Ibid, 74 and 82. This is not to say that he would not have played the roles of fighters, most notably the role of invincible Drona in *Mahabharata*. He also mentions having played a samurai in an unnamed film (Oida 1997, 104)

32 Ibid 1997, 112.

33 Ibid 1997, 124.

34 Oida 1992, 28.

(“Self-immersion”). As you work towards understanding of “Mu” (“Nothingness”), it is not empty “Nothingness” that you pursue. It has to be “Mu” imbued with force and energy. You cannot reach the state of “Nothingness” without religious self-examination. You have to explore many paths within yourself. That is “Kufu”. Once you are in the state of “Mu”, you simply concentrate. Do nothing. Nothing at all. These are the ways of Zen. And the same ways can be applied in the theatre.<sup>35</sup>

Already in 1970, Oida “used to invite Japanese priests, both Buddhist and Shinto, to come to Europe for workshops to introduce European actors and dancers to some of the physical and mental disciplines of the two religions”.<sup>36</sup>

Again, after three years abroad, Oida returned to Japan and wished to research incantations, sounds, and sacred movements of Buddhism and sought his way to a Shingon sect’s Buddhist temple in Mount Koyama. In the process of studying mantras and mudras and going through the training for priesthood, he felt that the unity of *Shin* (movement of the body), *Kou* (utterance) and *Yi* (mental focus) that are crucial in this form of esoteric Buddhism were similar to the process of acting. “When performing a role, the actor must transform his speech, his action and his thought”<sup>37</sup>. The training and transfer of knowledge took place learning through practice and he states that “in the esoteric Buddhism, there are no books or manuals to follow”<sup>38</sup>. His training and residence without manuals lasted three months and heightens the notion of repertoire in these practices. There is, however, an interesting additional notion:

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35 Oida 1992, 29-30.

36 Ibid, 56.

37 Ibid, 117.

38 Ibid, 118. The mantras were recited in Sanskrit (126). Around the same time, Oida practised also yoga and studied Indian philosophy (120).

The high priest, Aoki, was a truly great man. His followers told me that in his extensive library were many books on esoteric Buddhism. In every one of those books you would find thin red lines marking the text, following the tracks of the master's study. But the great man who had absorbed all this vast knowledge spoke only in very simple terms.<sup>39</sup>

Oida named those three months during 1973-74 'Theatrical Research into Japanese Culture'<sup>40</sup> and this research was to continue after yet another period in Europe when he was about to direct his own work and select performers in Japan. At that point, his research extended also to martial arts.

In Japan, there have always been strong links between religion, the arts, and the martial arts. [- -] they all seem to seek the truth via the physical body rather than the intellect. [- -] The participants I chose came from various disciplines, including Shintoism, Buddhism, martial arts and Noh theatre.<sup>41</sup>

He continues that in each location of the performance tour or "as-cetic training through travelling"<sup>42</sup> the group set up workshops, using the title 'Movement and Voice in Japanese Culture'. They did not give lectures or presentations: "[- -] Rather than explaining Japanese culture through words, we asked the students to do exercises in voice and movement", explains Oida.<sup>43</sup> For example, they used exercises from a number of different sects of Shintoism, such as cleansing (*Misogi*), vigorous physical movement (*Furutama*), meditation (*Chin-kon*). From Shingon Buddhism, they appropriated breathing and hand movements. From *no*, came the principles of *jo-ha-kyu*.

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39 Ibid, 126.

40 Ibid, 131.

41 Oida 1992, 143.

42 Oida uses the Japanese term, *angya* that can also be translated as pilgrimage.

43 Ibid, 144.



During the martial arts workshop, we didn't do the exercises in order to learn fight technique. Instead we wanted to discover where the fighter's energy comes from, and how it is used. It also trains people to respond directly to each other, since the martial arts are totally based on the idea of 'partnership'.<sup>44</sup>

Releasing the powerful sounds and visualization were also part of the martial arts sections. Eventually, the explorations became a combination of workshops and performances and were taken to an international tour, *Global Angya*, in 1975. 'Movement and Voice in Japanese Culture' workshops remained part of the package and Oida continued to invite different masters to guide them.<sup>45</sup>

There was a vision and method in this research-performance project but it is slightly problematic to say that Oida has a concise training system or method. The three books provide an archive of Yoshi Oida's training philosophy and practice. They also give a report on how he assimilated traditional martial arts or rather, the philosophies behind them, into his teachings. This process is revealed especially in *An Actor Adrift*. In *The Invisible Actor*, the exercises are embedded in the text that is commented and clarified by Lorna Marshall. The text of *The Invisible Actor* reminds of spoken text or, indeed, a recording of something that a master would convey to the students in his/her sessions, and what the students would subsequently carry with them as memories of stories, anecdotes, or occasional riddles.

It is actually interesting if Oida's books would have come into being without Lorna Marshall's contribution. Oida as a person comes through as an extremely modest individual who might have left his achievements undocumented and transferred his knowledge in personal encounters that would have remained in the field of repertoire. Thinking about Marshall's role, Taylor's notion on the epistemological status of word and writing in Western culture is worth of consideration.

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44 Ibid, 149.

45 Ibid, 159.

The written/oral divide does, on one level, capture the archive/repertoire difference I am developing in this study insofar as the means of transmission differ, as do the requirements of storage and dissemination. The repertoire, whether in terms of verbal and nonverbal expression, transmits live, embodied actions. As such, traditions are stored in the body, through various mnemonic methods, and transmitted “live” in the here and now to a live audience. Forms handed down from the past are experienced as present.

It is only because Western culture is wedded to the word, whether written or spoken, the language claims such epistemic and explanatory power.<sup>46</sup>

It would be too extreme to claim that Marshall’s writing and explanations “bring about the disappearance of embodied knowledge” and that “the dominance of language and writing start to “stand for *meaning* itself”. Yet, in *An Actor’s Tricks* Marshall’s contribution is clearly more palpable than in the two previous books. The book’s Appendix contains Marshall’s verbal rendering on Yoshi’s workshops with a list of exercises with a notion “that the exercises themselves change constantly and there is no fixed curriculum. Nevertheless, it is possible to discern certain themes that constantly recur in his teaching and the existence of a shaped journey for the student.”<sup>47</sup>

## Phillip Zarrilli ‘s Psychophysical Actor Training

Phillip B. Zarrilli does not need a mediator in conveying his philosophy and practice of performer training: he has the advantage of having English as a native language and a capability of expressing his ideas for both academic and artist contingencies. He has written several books and articles about transcultural performer training and Indian, mostly Keralan, performance and martial arts traditions. His *The*

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<sup>46</sup> Taylor 2003, 25.

<sup>47</sup> Marshall in Oida 2007, 93.

*Kathakali Complex*, a study on *kathakali* dance-drama was published in India in 1984. In the introduction, Zarrilli writes that the book “is intended for two audiences: those whose interest in Kathakali stems from their own participation in the creative arts, especially dance and theatre, and those who specialize in the study of cross-cultural performance”.<sup>48</sup>

In this process, Zarrilli could be seen as a typical Western individual using the epistemological power of the word and transforming the repertoire into archive. However, it is somewhat unjust to blame Zarrilli for contributing to the Western epistemology’s role of bringing about the disappearance of embodied knowledge that it so frequently announces. Before this book was published, Zarrilli had already studied *kathakali* for several years and collaborated with *kathakali* professionals. Already in the 1970s, he had criticized the blatant Western mystifying of *kathakali* and, partially, the book was born from this de-mystifying project. The introductory chapter of *The Kathakali Complex* shows humility in front of a tradition and awareness of limitations in understanding the traditions of another culture and the difficulties of translating the understanding of *kathakali* into Western acting terminology.<sup>49</sup>

*Kathakali* was Zarrilli’s springboard to Indian performance culture. The most relevant part for the examination of the role of martial arts is his practice is the martial arts form, *kalaripayattu*, and its role in the *kathakali* training.

*Kalaripayattu* directly influenced the techniques and content of numerous traditional forms of performance such as folk dances; ritual performances such as the *teyyam* of northern Kerala where deified heroes are worshipped; the now internationally known *kathakali* dance-drama, which enacts stories of India’s epic heroes based on the *Mahabharata*

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48 Zarrilli 1984, xi.

49 Ibid, xxi.

ta, *Ramayana*, and *puranas*; and the Christian dance-drama form, *cavittu natakam*, which used martial techniques.<sup>50</sup>

*The Kathakali Complex* includes chapters on *kalarippayattu* as a part of *kathakali* training.<sup>51</sup> However, the later *Kathakali dance-drama* (2000) barely touches *kalarippayattu* and other technical issues since it, indeed, focuses on *kathakali* texts in performance. Did something happen in the way to the forum? Probably. Unlike *The Kathakali Complex*, this book is published and printed by a Western company and functions both as documentation of research and introduction to *kathakali*. This is *kathakali* 'archived' and brought to the epistemological sphere of the word.

However, as it happens, two years before the publication of *Kathakali dance-drama*, Zarrilli published a separate ethnographic monograph on *kalarippayattu*, *When the Body Becomes All Eyes* (1998). This book was published in India. There is an element of participating to re-discovery and preservation the tradition whose existence even some of the *kathakali* performers did not seem to be aware when Zarrilli visited Kerala in the 1970s.<sup>52</sup>

During the modern era *kalarippayattu* was first brought to general public attention during the 1920s in a wave of rediscovery of indigenous arts. Despite increasing public awareness within the north Malabar region in particular, and in the state capital, *kalarippayattu* continued to be little known as a practical martial and healing art to the general public in Kerala and in India as late as the 1970s.<sup>53</sup>

Zarrilli's main motivation for writing the book is clearly the desire to document and preserve the tradition in written form. An-

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50 Zarrilli 2001, 247.

51 Zarrilli 1984, 107-123.

52 Zarrilli 1998, 12.

53 Zarrilli, 2001, 247.

other motivation was to correct misunderstandings of the form that had started to spread because of an ambitious teacher in Malaysia who veered the form towards flashy self-defence style.

The current history and practice of kalaripayattu cannot be considered without taking into account the emergence of Asian martial arts/self-defence as a global form of cosmopolitanism, a phenomenon attributable to the spread of popular martial arts films and other forms of popular literature on the martial arts.<sup>54</sup>

Indeed, in the mid-1970s, for example, Bruce Lee's films had become popular around the world, also in India, and started to shape the understanding of martial arts and created also a renaissance of martial arts in India.

Here it might be interesting to return to the contested history of some martial arts forms discussed in the beginning of the paper, and play briefly with the concept of "prosthetic memory", as used by Alison Landsberg.<sup>55</sup> By this concept, Landsberg refers to memories that are adopted as the result of a person's experience with a mass cultural technology of memory that dramatizes or recreates a history he or she did not live. It could be applied also to the processes that take place in training that, in a way, mediate traditional Asian martial arts into contemporary context. Prosthetic memories are not authentic but derive from mediated representations of the past. They are useful products and commodities that promise enhanced skills and capabilities that give the possibility or illusion to reach something that cannot be obtained otherwise. The cinematic representations of martial arts can be seen as a sensuous engagement with the past that through the cinematic illusion are shared by diverse communities around the globe. They, in a way, form a fictional archive that turns into repertoire.

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54 Zarrilli 1998, 3.

55 Landsberg 2003. This is a short re-interpretation of Landsberg's ideas. She, actually, sees also positive elements in the prosthetic memory.

Zarrilli, of course, took a critical stand against superficial appropriation of traditional martial arts and chose a path of engaging in serious research (archive) and embodied practice (repertoire) of the form that eventually became a cornerstone of his psychophysical actor training system presented in his book *Psychophysical Acting* (2008). The use of martial techniques in actor training opened him new doors to understanding both the place of physical training in Indian culture and the problems of intercultural transmission.<sup>56</sup> The use of martial training derives from the origins of *kathakali* as a form developed by the military cast (*Nairs* or *Nayars*) and is also behind the historical tradition of men playing women's roles in this form. As far as the embodied transfer of the knowledge is concerned, Zarrilli assumes that the early basic *kalari* training did not necessarily follow the master-pupil (*gurukkula*) pattern but that this way developed later when the performance form solidified and performers advanced.<sup>57</sup>

*Kalaripayattu* is clearly the element in Zarrilli's training system that he has written about most extensively, and his own bodily practice of it has helped in formulating the key principles of psychophysical acting. *Yoga* also came along with this practice since it is the base of *kalaripayattu* training. Possibly in order to avoid the martial arts/self-defence label, Zarrilli emphasizes that *kalaripayattu* is 80 per cent mental and only the remainder is physical.<sup>58</sup>

The traditional practice of *kalaripayattu* is informed by key principles and assumptions about the body, consciousness, the body-mind relationship, health, and exercise drawn from Kerala's unique versions of yoga practice and philosophy, South Asian medicine (called Ayurveda [Sanskrit; science of life]), and religious mythology, practices, and histories.<sup>59</sup>

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56 Zarrilli 1984, xii.

57 Ibid, 74-75.

58 Zarrilli 2008, 63.

59 Zarrilli 2001, 248.

The third (or second if *yoga* is seen as a part of *kalarippayattu*) Asian element, *taijiquan* (Wu style) is Zarrilli's heritage from University of Wisconsin in Madison where A.C. Scott started using the form in actor training in Asian/Experimental Theatre Program already in the late 1960s. The yearlong training regime that ran two hours a day for six days a week aimed to teach the students directness, simplicity and intensity<sup>60</sup>. After Scott retired, his successor, Zarrilli, continued with the training.<sup>61</sup>

Chapter on the source traditions in *Psychophysical Acting* concentrates in *yoga*, *kalarippayattu* and *taijiquan* that he has "organized into a systematic daily training for the actor"<sup>62</sup> *Yoga* practised by martial artist and performers is a practice that helps the ego become quiet and the emotions calm. This applies also to the *kalarippayattu* practitioner, who "at first tames both the body and mind via poses, body exercises, and breath-control exercises aiming for the complete control of the body. Eventually, the external exercise regime leads to mental and total psychophysical development."<sup>63</sup> "This gradual discovery of a form and its application reflects the general cultural assumption that long-term practice of psychophysical exercises cultivates a certain form of bodymind awareness".<sup>64</sup>

For the martial artist (or the actor!) simply mimicking an external form is never enough to attain inner actualization of awakening. [- -] Actualizing free circulation of the vital energy (*prana-vayu*) within allows the practitioner to dynamically release and shape this energy for healing therapies and/or for concentrated attack in fighting.<sup>65</sup>

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60 Liu 2011, 420–422. In addition to profound knowledge of Chinese performance, A.C. Scott was familiar with Japanese theatre, especially *kabuki* and *bunraku*.

61 Ibid, 422.

62 Zarrilli 2008, 65. N.B. There are different ways of spelling *taijiquan* in English. In *Psychophysical Acting*, Zarrilli spells it *taijiquan*.

63 Ibid, 66–69.

64 Ibid, 70.

65 Zarrilli 2008, 70.

These are some of Zarrilli's learnings from his *kalaripayattu* teacher, Gurukkal Govindankutty Nayar, and also things that he wants to convey to his own students. He himself learned the form in embodied practice from his teacher, proceeding from harsh external regime towards the point in which he often describes as when the learner's body-mind has "become all eyes". Repeating the external exercises can be seen as transferring the (bodily) archive from a master to student same way as *kata* is passed to the apprentice in Japanese martial arts, as well as in traditional theatre and dance forms. The philosophy behind *yoga* and *kalaripayattu* (and traditional Indian theatre and dance forms) has also its written (archive) tradition in *vedas* and especially in *Natyashastra*. Yet, the practice itself in which the body and mind become together resides in the field of repertoire. It cannot be articulated or captured totally into a written form. It is in constant move and process of transformation.

Integrating *taijiquan* and *kalaripayattu* in Zarrilli's system works seamlessly. *Yoga*, in a way, works as a bridge between the two traditions, and the concepts of *prana-vayu* and *qi* are close to each other.

Attaining internal equilibrium through practice of *taijiquan* and the closely associated practices of *qigong* is accomplished through gaining use of *qi* - breath, energy, air, the enlivening vital force. *Qigong* literally means "exercises of the vital breath". Taoist breathing techniques are similar to those of *yoga*. [- -] In Chinese culture it is not necessary to conceptualize *qi*; rather what is important is to functionally perceive and understand what it does.<sup>66</sup>

Zarrilli's psychophysical actor training system is a deliberate mixture of traditions from West and two Asian cultural areas, whereas Oida's approach is more strongly grounded on Japanese soil - although, of course, influenced by Western performer training methods with which he became familiar when working with Peter Brook. Like Oida's

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66 Zarrilli 2008, 74.



training, Zarrilli's approach is transcultural, syncretic, and designed to appeal to global audiences. They both have an interest in deconstructing the differences in 'Eastern' and 'Western' approaches to performer training but also transcending these differences in embodied practice. The archive of conceptualization and the repertoire of exploring areas that cannot be subsumed in a solid intellectually graspable form are in constant dialogue.

### **Akira Hino's Method of Human Body and Movement Control**

Both Yoshi Oida and Phillip B. Zarrilli tap into Asian sources, among them martial arts, in their training. Compared to Oida's and Zarrilli's approaches, Akira Hino's method and theory are even more linked specifically to Asian martial arts, to "Budo, the martial way of the martial arts", as he states in the introduction to the book, *Don't Think, Listen to the Body! Introduction to the Hino Method and Theory of Human Body and Movement Control* (2017). In the introduction, he also writes that his theory is not rooted in Western culture nor is it a theory from a vague "Eastern" tradition but that it is a theory rooted in authentic Japanese culture.<sup>67</sup> His dream is no less than to restore the technique of legendary martial arts masters of Japan, such as Ito Ittosai and Miyamoto Musashi.<sup>68</sup> It is tempting to comment here that his bold style of expressing himself is more *yang* than his fellow countryman Oida's modest *yin*.

Hino's method is based on embodied experiences of training different Japanese martial arts forms. In a way, he is very un-Japanese in his approach since he is not a follower of one style but combines freely from different practices that he has studied. He has also established his own Hino Budo Institute in Kumano, Wakayama. Hino gives credit to the contemporary masters whom he has trained with, but he is also legitimizing his own method by referring primarily to the past masters, Ittosai and Miyamoto.

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<sup>67</sup> Hino 2017, 10.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 197.

Budo is difficult to learn and to apply it to our current lives because the historical background from which it was born is something that does not happen in current times. It is also because there are only the words of the masters left for us as the key to actualize the forms of their techniques. In other words, the words of the masters are the only hint for doing Budo.<sup>69</sup>

This is a fascinating statement from the perspective of the archive and repertoire discussion. Hino decides to go to the archive of the old, 16<sup>th</sup>-century samurai master's writings (archive) in order to revive the current repertoire and to create his own archive, as far as the written book is concerned. It can also be seen as a contemporary example of how many modern Asian martial arts became solidified as part of an ancient history or tradition.

It is interesting how freely Hino plays with traditions or, in some cases, with invented traditions. When analyzing the practice of Eastern movement forms in the West, David Brown and Aspasia Leledaki present three concepts or cultural forces: Orientalism, reflexive modernity and commodification.<sup>70</sup> In my opinion, all these are evident in Hino's training system. Firstly, he uses certain amounts of Orientalism (or, in this case, auto-Orientalization) when appropriating Japanese martial arts traditions and reaching to the origins of these traditions. Secondly, his method is also an example of reflexive modernism in its attempt to challenge and heal the dysfunctional movement patterns of contemporary dancers and other performers, as well as athletes or even businessmen. Thirdly, his method is clearly a commodified product intended for both Japanese and international markets. From the three cultural forces, Brown and Leledaki conclude three basic dispositions: preservationist, conservationist, and modernizing.

The preservationist disposition [- -] seeks to halt the development of these movement forms entirely (in terms of

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69 Hino 2017, 204.

70 Brown & Leledaki 2010, 123-154.

form content and purpose), lock them in time, and attempt to close down change of any part of their ritualized practice. The conservationist disposition is more progressive [- -] but attempts to retain some sense of essence or core principles based on ideas and influences claimed to have been passed down over generations by the abbot, guru, swami, sensei, or sifu of the movement form in question. [- -] Finally, is the modernizing disposition, which seeks to update any and all aspects of the cultural practice to fit into the perceived prevailing (scientific and market-led) needs of the moment.<sup>71</sup>

I would say that especially Hino's method not only falls into the last category but also has some touches of the conservationist disposition. And, indeed, the same can be said about Oida's and Zarrilli's approaches even if the role of the conservationist disposition seems stronger in their work.

In spite of some theoretical considerations, Hino's *Don't Think, Listen to the Body!* is primarily a practical manual and, at least, for the time being, the only written book by him in English. Naturally, it is assumed that a student would not learn only from it, but also through embodied practice. Its aim is to work in tandem with the repertoire. Some of the theoretical concepts that Hino presents are familiar and can be found from Oida's and Zarrilli's writings. Also for Hino, body is a psychophysical entity and martial arts are a way to help to create contact between body and mind. He emphasizes the importance of flexibility (*jukozo*) as a way of adapting to any changes and uncertainty because to get fixated on something leads to death.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps this can be interpreted as a powerful statement on behalf of the repertoire!

This brings us to the core of Akira Hino's training philosophy as expressed in the title of his book: *Don't Think, Listen to the Body!* Yoshi Oida uses almost the same words in *The Invisible Actor*: "One

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71 Ibid, 143.

72 Ibid, 25.

of my masters said, 'As an actor, you shouldn't be a theorist. Don't be too logical and rely on intellectual understanding. Learn through the body. "<sup>73</sup> He continues: "Every time you find yourself in a certain position or movement pattern, the body will want to do something in response. You must learn to listen to what the body wants to do."<sup>74</sup> Phillip Zarrilli's way of expressing the same idea is:

Long-term training in taiqiquan, kalarippayattu, and yoga allows the practitioner to develop the bodymind's perceptual awareness to a point in which one literally "thinks with the body and acts with the mind". This is the optimal state of "no-mind" where all intentionality disappears.<sup>75</sup>

As Zarrilli writes in the introduction of *The Psychophysical Acting*, the greatest of the villains for the actor or any performer or a fighter is intentionality that destroys the effortless ease filled with subtle energy.<sup>76</sup> With this, both Oida and Hino would certainly agree.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have looked at different manifestations of archive and repertoire, as defined by Diane Taylor, in Asian martial arts and in three transcultural performer training systems that use Asian martial arts as their central elements. As source material, I have deliberately used only books or other written materials by Yoshi Oida, Phillip B. Zarrilli and Akira Hino and traced signs of repertoire that are hidden between the lines of these documents. I have also looked at the Asian martial arts traditions that are used in these systems and discerned how they found their way to the methods.

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<sup>73</sup> Oida 1997, 28.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>75</sup> Zarrilli 2008, 70.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, 4.

The interplay between Asian martial arts traditions, that in themselves manifest the tensions between archive and repertoire, and performance training that uses them reveals layers of interactions that surely would deserve more detailed examination that would integrate, if not researcher's own embodied engagement, at least participatory observation and discussions with participants who follow these systems. The written materials that I have looked at are born from embodied practice of the three individuals and since the training methods are used in live workshops in varied, transnational contexts, they can never totally dictate the actual embodiment. In these environments, it is the combination or tension between the archive and the repertoire that creates the platform for performer training. The methods keep the discipline but the multiple shifts and layers give freedom for individual choices and expressivity. Indeed, Taylor's notion of scenario as presented in the beginning of this paper<sup>77</sup> and while examining the work of Oida, Zarrilli and Hino seems most appropriate for understanding the processes that are not strictly archive or repertoire but both. However, introducing the territory of scenario does not remove the tensions and cultural and social power politics imbedded in martial arts training and performer training systems using martial arts. It would be most useful to study these mechanisms through a combination of theoretical and practice-based research projects in different cultural contexts and with participants from multiple cultural and socio-economic backgrounds.

All three, Oida, Zarrilli, and Hino work in global context, in global performer training market where an archived and "packaged" training programs are an asset. The more known, convincing and charismatic the teacher is, the more likely he or she is to attract paying students. By writing and publishing the philosophy and practical parts of the system, it is possible to establish a claim for ownership that would not be possible if the training stayed in the area of ephemeral repertoire.

Without wishing to be overly critical, it also seems that Phillip Zarrilli and Lorna Marshall, who has co-written Oida's books, have

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<sup>77</sup> Taylor 2003, 33 and 55.

fully embraced the opportunities to write down and document the methods. Could this originate from their “Western” background? Surely, Akira Hino has also published his theory and practice in a book form but it is fairly modest both textually and theoretically as compared to, for example, Zarrilli’s corpus or the texts compiled of Oida’s thoughts and memories. Zarrilli, as a native speaker of English, has written his own texts.<sup>78</sup> Oida and Hino have been assisted by collaborators who are in command of the English language. The question of language in the dynamics of archive and repertoire is extremely interesting and evokes disturbing thoughts on what exactly happens when repertoire transcends into an archive and what happens when an archive is tapped and remodeled into repertoire through psychophysical performer training.

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