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The search for the Tiger

Silat Harimau in an Austrian Transnational context



Master's thesis in Choreomundus - International Master in Dance
Knowledge, Practice, and Heritage
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ABSTRACT

The Southeast Asian martial arts of Pencak Silat holds a long tradition and heritage of embodying mental-spiritual discipline, performative arts, ritual practice, social and cultural values, and self-defence. Inspired by the myths surrounding the phenomenality of the ancestral tiger spirit, the research explores how the Minang style of Silat known for its tiger style continues its transmission in the context of Silat in Austria.

The fieldwork was conducted on three main training sites from a transnational Silat training group for two months in Vienna. The Austrian training group in Vienna continues to practice Silat with the background experience of visiting and training on the native land of this martial art style in Sumatra. The objective was to reveal how the transnational group makes sense of the embodied practice of Silat and what significance the culturally translated context plays in their social, physical, and learning experiences.

I posit that there is a transmission process taking place that is realised in their own ways. With my findings, I demonstrate how the community engages with Silat through embodiment and transmission in a dedicated ritualised space to practice the different aspects of the art form. This ethnographic study is apprentice-based research analyses relational somatic modes of attention in the mirroring technique and the emotional affects embodied in Silat sparring.

Key words: embodiment, Silat Harimau, feeling, attention, tiger, mirroring

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Introduction

Coming from an English literature, language, and American culture academic background, it was a beautiful surprise for me to end up in the Choreomundus program to explore my love of anthropology, culture, and dance. This academically rich program is greatly diverse, and it awarded me the chance to immerse myself in different educational systems from France, Norway, Hungary, and the United Kingdom. Since my placement was designated mainly in the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Norway, I learned significantly about Dance Analysis, and through this subject I discovered my newfound passion for Phenomenology. Through the University of Clermont Auvergne, I learned deeply about ritual performance studies, intangible cultural heritage, and anthropological writing.

Preceding the program, I gained an interest on the subject of Spirituality mostly through my encounters and travels. From those experiences, I encountered ecstatic dance from the Psytrance New Age scene in Goa, India and from living for four years in Turkey I encountered the Sufi Sema whirling scene from certain events in Istanbul. Carrying these interests with me, I became very interested in reading about spiritual possession, different ritual ceremonies and practices from East Africa to Southeast Asia. Books around those topics drew me to that section of the campus library. During my reading times in the first year of the program, I became interested in reading about folk performances, ritual, animal symbology and mimicry. And so, I searched for a movement system that would encapsulate the mimicry aspect of animals which would be a starting point to study the embodiment of its performative dimension, and this gave birth to a question in relation to animal embodiment.

Motivation

As I explored as much material as I could, the practice of Minang Silek Harimau found me. After discussion with a very dear friend of mine, Jeffrey Smith, the embodiment of the tiger in Silat Harimau is what stood out. Another aspect that came to my attention about Silat is that part of this movement practice contains a form called Kembangan, which is described to be the flower dance of Silat where one artistically expresses its movements by tuning in with the rhythm and flow. Out of the many movement practices I encountered especially during my time in Turkey, Silat found its way back in my life again. During my stay in Istanbul, Smith introduced Silat to a group of friends including myself in a collective alternative café

that we used to spend our time in. It was the style of Cimande that we participated in and played with amongst a group of friends coming from the Middle East, Europe, and the United States at a special time in the geopolitical plexus of Istanbul around 2017-2018.

With the very little exposure that I had on Silat, it was the style of Silat Harimau that I drew close to during my research on literature about mimicry and embodied movements of animals. The amount of literature on the spiritual possession in Southeast Asia is considerable, to which it eventually led me to the work of D.S. Farrer about the martial arts of Silat and Sufi Mysticism. Although Farrer's ethnographic work mainly focuses on Seni Silat Haqq Melayu, a different style of Silat, his work and encounters with people in the field alluded to and implied the myth of the Harimau.

I was curious to work with a topic that involved the myth of the tiger – most especially because it is an animal that is a predator symbolising strength and power. Despite being an outsider of Indonesian Silat culture, Silat continues to live on as a serious practice that carries many forms to many Western martial artists who are active actors of merging these different life-worlds.

And since I learned about Silat from outside its source, it became a motivation for me to learn more about the Southeast Asian heritage and tradition of Silat. At first, my plan was to reach West Sumatra in Indonesia and conduct my fieldwork with the guru masters of the Silat Harimau art form. There have been previous sociological studies about local perspectives from rural communities about tigers within and around the province of West Sumatra (McKay, 2018), which show that these strong local beliefs about tigers could potentially be a case for community-based conservation. There is much to discover about the deep relationship the Minangkabau people have towards animals, specifically the tiger (Harimau), and the natural world through their traditional martial art practice Silat of the 'Silek Harimau' style.

1.1 Research Question: Adapting and applying the question

Due to the pandemic limitations of reaching the source and place of the art form, I searched for the possible transnational links and connections between West Sumatra and Europe.

Initially, the research questioned how the embodiment of the Harimau tiger is experienced in the Silat guru masters. Since there is a line of embodied knowledge that becomes passed on from guru master to student, I followed two identified lineages that are found in Europe.

These lineages can be traced back to two native Minangkabau gurus that live in West

Sumatra, of which a handful of their European pendekar (master) students are identified and based in at least three locations in Europe.

The plan was to follow the trained masters in Europe and to study their movement style, teaching method and experiential knowledge of the tiger, which links them to their experience in Sumatra with their gurus.

The aim is to contextualise and map the representation of this tradition by tracing how the trained masters, based in Austria, transmit the practice of Silat and its embodied somatic knowledge in its pedagogical context. The purpose of the research is to discover the connection the Austrian Silat practitioners have towards the traditional martial art practice of Indonesian Minang styles, among them the 'Silek Harimau' style. The spiritual dimension of the fighting art is an implicit part of the practice and one that can be explored its appropriate culturally translated context. The research considers the Harimau tiger energy and how practitioners and players interact with this energy and each other during trainings.

An underlying theme that the research considers is some level of hybridisation taking form between the Western practitioner and the physical expression of Silat. In the world of Silat, great Silat practitioners can be granted permission by their own gurus to create and develop their own Silat system and this shows the openness and diversity that take place in the different life-worlds of Silat. The merging of the Silat practitioner's mind with the characterisation of the model of a tiger is also a window into understanding their relationship with the embodied practice, as there are certain tiger postures and movements incorporated in the pedagogical system that provide meaning and a kind of energy during these trainings. The point is to observe the adaptation and integration of the Harimau style and how it is practiced in non-Native communities away from the origins of its land and the jungle. The study can explore what aspects and dimensions of Silat culture are absorbed in the life and practice of the practitioner, and the relevance of this style being adapted is a subject of inquiry as it brings up compromises and changes made in the integration process of learning the style. Therefore, the research posits the question as to *how is the tiger embodied and transmitted in Pencak Silat Anak Harimau in the context of Austria?*

1.2 Outline Plan

The dissertation consists of 6 chapters of which the first chapter is sectioned into three parts. The first chapter part discusses the motivations and development of the research question. The second part shows the methodology that was implemented in the field as it justifies why certain methods were chosen to attain a close understanding of the research objective.

The second chapter titled 'Quest for Harimau' is in three parts, of which the first part showcases the relevance and significance of the tiger in the tradition and movement practice of Silat. This part features a section on Tigerism, a term inspired by my tutor Georgiana Gore, which further shows the development of the conceptual framework developed for the thesis. Moreover, the chapter captures the difference and development of the researcher's positionality that took place before entering the field and during my presence in the field. The last section of the second chapter contextualises the Anak Harimau group in Austria, which further discusses the group's history up to the present time and their knowledge of Silat. This chapter also contextualises about the location of the fieldwork and locations of the training sites.

The third chapter titled 'Recreating Silat Harimau' outlines the forms and components of what recreates the energy of Silat Harimau, which was experienced during their trainings in Sumatra and through interactions with their gurus in other occasions. The theme of this chapter is the importance of memory and their kinship to Sumatra. It shows how memory plays a role in bringing the experience felt in Sumatra to the context of Austria. The third chapter is an introductory chapter to the last three major chapters of the dissertation. This section of the dissertation argues for how Anak Harimau gather to recreate and relearn the experience of Silat Harimau.

From the third chapter, the thesis develops into three main aspects of this Silat paradigm: the physical dimension, the relational dimension, and the affective dimension. These dimensions are depicted through moments from the training sessions that are narrated in an auto-ethnographic approach. The later chapters gradually show how the paradigm of Tigerism takes effect in different layers and levels of the embodied practice of Silat.

As chapter 4 deliberates on the physicality of Silat, the highlighted features and forms including the fundamentals of the positions and movements in Silat. This was greatly supported by actively learning as an apprentice and participant.

Chapter 5 closely analyses an aspect of Minang Silat that has to do with mirroring. Using Egil Bakka's movement analysis for the mirroring aspect of Silat highlights the importance of attention with a partner during these choreographic interactions. The relational aspect of Silat is what alludes to the essence of its embodiment.

Chapter 6 unravels the unexpected findings that I faced in the field. Three different events are highlighted through the form of storytelling and reflection. The search for Harimau would not be complete without experiencing the affective dimension of Tigerism, which is elaborated and discussed here.

1.3 Methodology and Materials

Fieldnotes

Most of what I did in the field was account for those daily experiences, conversations, and trainings in a descriptive and narrative manner in the form of a diary. I learned that ethnographic description is essentially an interpretive exercise. As soon as I was in the field, I wanted to account for every relevant detail to help me understand the characters of this lifeworld that I found. According to Clifford Geertz, 'We begin with our own interpretations of what our informants are up to, or think they are up to, and then systematise those'. (1973: 15) The descriptive part of the writing influenced the process of shaping the material to its conceptual framework.

Before entering the field, I considered that the backbone and support for such spaces of transmission is the people that come together to organise and materialise the training sessions. To the best of my ability in describing the field, I captured the impressions, mood, habits, and interaction between people during the training sessions in the field note accounts. Therefore, a significant tool of my methodology was the writing process of the field note descriptions.

Observant Participation:

The kind of competence and expertise that the Silat master worked for years with dedication to acquire from the Silat guru is an entry point to apprenticeship-based research to understand the process of transmission that takes place. It is important to understand what aspects of knowledge in which pedagogical framework are being transmitted. The study explores how somatic embodied knowledge is articulated in the transnational context. The ideal method of research is to embody the practice as a novice and learn about its processes – Downey, Dalidowicz and Mason discuss the ethnographic research method of active participation in the context of apprenticeship by saying that, 'In some skilled communities, complete expertise will simply be impossible for an ethnographer given the commitment involved. Rather, we seek through apprenticeship to put ourselves inside the social and practical machinery that facilitates developing expertise. We hope to achieve, not mastery, but a more intimate knowledge of the paths that lead to mastery'. (2015: 185)

Since my question involved the aspect of the spiritual and mystical dimension, I did not anticipate that I would be assigned as an apprentice so soon into my entry in the field. It became apparent, especially after the moment I was reinscribed as a participant, that the people in the field encouraged me to understand what I wanted to learn through action and practice. I learned that being a observant participant was the most essential tool for my fieldwork, as I relate to

Loic Wacquant's ethnographic work on his experience as apprentice boxer when he talks about '*deploying the body as tool of inquiry and vector of knowledge*'. (2004: 9) Wacquant emphasises the significance of diving into the field and conducting a kind of enactive ethnography. By fully immersing oneself and body in the lifeworld of the actors, the ethnographer could gain insight by embodying tacit knowledge.

Through my practice with them, I learned more about the meaningful context embedded in their relationship with the practice. Lave and Wenger (1998) accurately describe this learning experience of a newcomer entering a community through their concept of 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation'. They discuss that people are engaged in actions that consist of meanings that are dynamically being negotiated and these are done through engagement and peripheral participation. Through active participation, newcomers can gain a sense of the mechanisms involved that enable embodied practises. As a newcomer who joined the Silat group in Austria, after some time, I was able to identify certain regularities that occur during training.

'Observation can be useful, but only as a prelude to actual engagement. To open up a practice, peripheral participation must provide access to all three dimensions of practice: to mutual engagement with other members, to their actions and their negotiation of the enterprise, and to the repertoire in use. No matter how the peripherality of initial participation is achieved, it must engage newcomers and provide a sense of how the community operates.' (1998: 100)

Since it is inherent part of Silat training and practice to absorb the composure of the movements in daily life, part of the ethnographic method will be to fully participate, record these senses and observe the embodied knowledge of the practitioners. Inspired by Geertz' Thick Description (1973), the study aims to capture and describe the impressions of attending the training group sessions, the sensorial experiences of the body, the verbalizations of the instructor, detecting the level of familiarity of the students and the dimension of intersubjectivity of the participating researcher that is involved in learning physical skills from expert practitioners.

On the ethnographic study of Silat, Samudra discusses about thick participation and the translation of kinaesthetic experience by expressing that, 'In the social domain of self-defence training, what matters is not whether you and I subjectively feel the pain of being punched in exactly the same way; what matters is that I have enough experience to know what a punch feels and looks like and I manage to parry your hit to my face. Skilful

knowledge works, and information passes between us. This transmission would not be possible if somatic experience were purely subjective and internal.’ (2008: 678)

Videos and Interview

A combination of different interview techniques was considered before the field and the methodology of ethnographic semi-structured interviews gradually took effect.

The other materials collected in the field were videos of the training to observe the modes of transmissions involved, historical videos of the group to map out the trajectory of the practice within the group in Vienna and audio recorded interviews of the members and students. Towards the end of the field, I was infected with COVID, and this disrupted my plans to conduct in-depth interviews with my collaborators. The interviews were semi-structured with pre-set questions prepared in advance: open-ended questions related to the themes of the questions along with supplementary questions related to the answers. The recorded materials consist of a total of five interviews; two of the interviews conducted were one-on-one interviews as discursive conversations, while the other three group interviews were also interactive and dialectic in manner. The questioning style of the interview as a conversation was intended to elicit narratives of personal experience in relation to their history and connection to Silat, their training in Sumatra, trajectory with Anak Harimau, their pedagogical experience in Sumatra and Vienna, their initiation process, their teaching style, and the training structure.

From the selection of transcribed one-on-one recorded interviews, some parts were extracted based on topic of interest as it helped select relevant key information regarding the research objective. In the process of transcribing a piece, I discovered that the structural variations and changes made within the curriculum of the group is a matter of the community’s choice.

Other accounts highlighted the traditional Silat teachings they were exposed to, the initiation ritual they participated in and how their overall experience contributes to his teaching style.

The other materials collected in the field were videos of the training to observe the modes of transmissions involved with the guru masters, keep track of the group’s historical videos of Silat competitions and organised festivals that took place in Vienna and outside to observe the development of the Silat network in Europe.

The themes I found from my materials mirror Lave and Wenger’s social theory of learning (1998). I narrowed the themes to at least four threads: a network of Silat practitioners that draws out the social structure, the pedagogy that supports their practice, the experience and energy of their trainings and the meaning that constructs the identity of the group.

The Material

Upon careful reflection and revisiting of the field, I realise that the different ways I utilised for my ethnographic method are heavily interlinked with each other. For my field notes, I used myself and my memory as a resource. My interview method was largely conducted informally through conversations and dialogues, where I gained the most personal insights during the field. A crucial indicator that I entered the lifeworld and intimate space of my interlocutor, Stefan, is when he drove around to pick me up and drop us off between the destinations of his home, my location, and the training space. Another feature of this experience is Stefan playing music in his car and sharing the experience of listening to his playlist together. I know that this space marks my first entry and last exit of the field.

Our conversation in the car had many silences but eventually become chatty enough... At first, he played classical music and as the car ride got comfortable, he played music by Arrested Development, and even made rhythmic taps and clicks with his fingers to the beat of the music. [Field note, 15/06/2021]

Eight months later when I revisited Vienna and on my last day, we were on our way to the train station listening to music together as we usually do and as we are on the highway with Viennese mountains and the city view ahead, Stefan picks up the conversation of Silat. It is easy to pick up where we left off and proceed with full presence, focus and attention. Stefan approaches with the subject with a tone of knowing, but also comfort and interest in Silat. I do not think he gets bored of Silat. He talked to me about how Silat, but also martial arts in general helps in cultivating your experience with violence. I admitted to him that my experience with aggression and violence was always negative. He nodded in understanding and expressed that this would help me to work and deal with people and their destructive nature.

This development in our interaction is one of the ways I have come to be situated in this lifeworld – as a young Silat apprentice and a woman who has found some kind of solace under the guidance of a friendly support.

Sarah Pink suggests rethinking the ethnographic process as she terms it ‘sensory ethnography’, this ethnography is an innovative form of methodology as it creates new roots to people’s worlds by taking account of the sensory experience. For example, she points out that walking during ethnographic work is a multisensory form of sharing experience with our interlocutors. Although she suggests that these multisensory methods are innovative, as they

complement film taking or recording of interviews during these shared experiences. Taking his preference into consideration, I purposefully opted out of recording these conversations during my car rides with Stefan as it may have potentially disturbed the intimacy of our conversation and those moments opening to certain windows of insight. However, this feature of intimacy was essential to understanding the lifeworld of my collaborator and building a strong foundation for our relationship as a teacher and student. I reflect that this could be a personal preference and that recording may disturb the process, bringing on the awareness to speakers involved awareness that there may be an enforced performative aspect at play during a very casual activity.

‘My body is the fabric into which all objects are woven, and it is, at least in relation to the perceived world, the general instrument of my ‘comprehension’’ (Merleau-Ponty: 273)

The study considers the ontological framework of Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological theory of embodiment as an important and fundamental resource into examining the embodied experience of learning Silat and perceiving how others practice Silat. I take my experience of training with as many details on the bodily exercises into account and correlate the fieldnote’s accounts with the filmed training footage.

Felföldi suggests that the cognitive approach to acquiring dance knowledge is to show the practitioners the filmed documents for further commentary about their experience.

Considering the different limitations presented to me in the field regarding the highly fluctuating movement of people during the summer season and the shortage of time, it later became apparent to me later in the field that conducting the hermeneutic method of examining intersubjective experience would be most productive in the direction of taking my embodied experience, being an apprentice and a woman as the subject of investigation. In a way, it is a method of self-confrontation and self-explication.

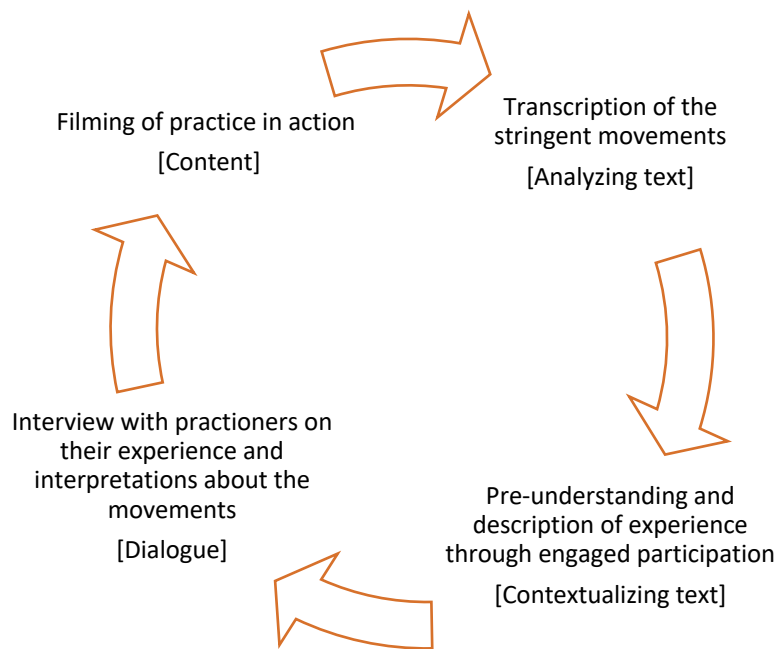


Figure 1 shows an illustration of a hermeneutic circle to assemble the knowledge in the field.

The point is to reveal different perceptual differences that are not just limited to declarative theoretical perspectives but also to the sensorial and live actions of experience.

When a hit is initiated, the opponent can step aside to a 45 ° angle in order to block the attack from the outside. Martin monitors to check my movements and Michael shows me how to step forward correctly. As I perform the step, I realise that my body is stiff and not lively enough... Stepping with full energy forward is key in Silat.

[Field note, 03/07/2021]

The observant participation of a researcher supported by the field note accounts describing sensorial and bodily experiences of the training sessions, affectations of the movements, film documentation of practitioners, in action in addition to the interview; these are all crucial information to apply a hermeneutic methodological approach to highlighting not only cognitive representations but also the scene of the intersubjective experience from this sensorial knowledge that carries the memory of the body.

Most members were more open to being filmed post-training when it was a spontaneously conducted interview, however, they felt more inclined and comfortable to be recorded by audio when the interviews were pre-arranged. There are seventeen filmed training sessions in total; the videos deal with the topic of transmission and the Silat structure that Anak Harimau employs.

Examining the content of filmed practice that I collected, I found salient points of movements and choreography that became an interesting focus for analysis. These salient moments capture a characterised Minang style that they learned from their guru masters and a style that captures the features of a 'Mirroring' element. This element is suggested by the interlocutors in the field to contain a kind of awareness, connectedness or in other words a spiritual or mystical streak. Therefore, this technique will be analysed and transcribed with Egil Bakka's transcription method and as I discuss into further chapters, I will demonstrate how these analyses feed into the picture of a Silat gathering in Austria.

Chapter 2: Quest for Harimau

2.1 The Tiger

The myth and history

There are many mythical characters surrounding the legendary tiger coming from Jambi and West Sumatra. For example, Cindaku is a story of a half human half tiger who is said to have inherited his power from his ancestors.

There is also another mythological tiger named Inyiak Rimbo, his story originates from the Minangkabau people, and he is said to be the ancestor of the community that predates Cindaku. The martial art of Silat Harimau is said to be overseen by Inyiak Rimbo. One of the first details I learned from my interlocutors in the field about the knowledge they know of the tiger is that the tiger spirit watches you train, and when you are ready you can fight the tiger.

Many texts (Hanif, 2019), of native Bahasa literature found in the mythology and folklore of Harimau, suggest a mythical character of a tiger man who transforms either with the performance of Silat or unknown supernatural powers. Popular cultural adaptations of the myth appear in forms of film, graphic novels, and soap operas. For example, Harimau Tjampa (Djajakusuma, 1953) is a black and white film that tells a story of a man who learns Silat and avenges his father's murder.

Tiger-as-symbol

The attainment of the tiger encompasses several interpretations of how the tiger is conceived. The liminal intensity of the performance of Silat is a phenomenon that may suggest the tiger spirit entering the practitioner as an articulate ritualistic process. (Farrer, 2009: 82)

The traditional and popular beliefs in relation to the tiger suggests an attitude of respectful reverence to a powerful symbol but also to a possible incarnate ancestral spirit. Popular myths and beliefs reveal that the powerful reverent tiger is humanised and deemed to have special ilmu (powerful inner knowledge). The expression of these beliefs that relate to humanising the tiger is an implicit animistic notion that the tiger's soul is in connection with the ancestral lineage, spirit world, shamans, royalty, and nature. In Sumatra, the tiger is also called 'Puyang' which means ancestor.

Founding ancestors are thought to have had extraordinary capabilities, and, though dead, to retain something of those powers. Among these powers is the capacity to deal

with tigers, believed to be incarnations of the natural forces of the locality. (Wessing, 1995: 208)

The guru holds the responsibility of embodying the power they receive from practice and the higher forces that allow them to enliven the source of ilmu. From this transmission of knowledge, the expression to develop further styles grows and spreads.

A key informant of Farrer in understanding the richness of Silat was Pa' Ariffin, and it is important to understand the concept of ilmu as he describes that, ilmu, defined as mystical knowledge and as science, is an important component of the art. Pa' Ariffin says that, 'Silat is eighty percent knowledge, and only twenty percent physical. Silat is a form of knowledge that is embodied in the practitioner, resulting in a set of martial skills that may occasionally be seen in the public performance of the guru silat, but which should also condition their conduct and composure in day to day life.' (Farrer, 2009: 45)

The tiger can be found as a symbol in many martial arts systems like the Shokotan tiger or Karate, the tiger in Kung fu andante Silat Harimau. The tiger is raised to incarnate the warrior ethos for its martial symbol, as its fierceness and strength in the wild is an inspiring model for mimicry, in order to develop strikes, blocks and their mastery of stealth.

The mythical symbol of a tiger holds a strong association with the ancestral roots and spirits of the Southeast and reveals a symbolic construct that functions as a connection to the ecological, religious, social, and cultural threads of the place. These myths serve as a need to protect nature as the tiger-as-symbol embodies and mirrors people's perception of its environment.

Tigerism

Most importantly, since I take into account the myth of the tiger and its role in the cosmology of Silat, this thesis is about shedding light on the group's description and interpretation of the tiger in how they interact with Silat as a practice.

Firstly, it is of relevance because their group is named 'Anak Harimau', which means baby tiger. As discussed with the group in the beginning of the field, they consider themselves to be playful like young tigers. Playing like a young tiger is the attitude and starting point for the symbolism of the tiger to the group.

In Stefan's case, he perceives it as a type of energy that he cannot exactly transmit. In one of our conversations, he admits that when he moves during Silat that, 'I don't use sports, I let the energy guide me.'

Martin also has a keen awareness of the influence of the Sumatran styles consisting of tiger-like movements that came from the mountains. And during training with him, I realise that the mirroring feature found in Minang Silat is a prominent feature in his experience.

The reason I write a separate section for their ritual experience (Chapter 3) is because it is a foundational moment to how Silat Harimau has been absorbed in their lives.

I am approaching the study through different dimensions that are developed by elaboration of certain members in the group that represent these experiences and interpretations of Tigerism. I include myself in the study as an apprentice who navigates what this could mean in the processes of embodying Silat. For the study, Tigerism becomes the conceptual framework to understanding the experiences and interpretations of certain people in the group in addition to the embodied ethnography involved. I use the term Tigerism to illustrate how there are different layers that function to produce a continuum that takes place in the paradigm of Silat in Austria, it is the thread that ties to the research question. What arises from the study are several conceptions, these are: aggressive energy, relational attention, and emotionality. These concepts are further explored and discussed in the last two chapters with the support of the physical form of Silat, which solidifies this conceptual framework.

2.2 Positionality

'I don't like to speak about it' is what I heard before entering the field in Austria when I asked the practitioner about Harimau.

Without the initial questioning of the research, there would not have been access to the field. It was after a long conversation on the phone about the mystical aspect of Silat Harimau with the president of the Pencak Silat Verband Österreich (PSVO) federation in Austria, Stefan Taibl who soon became my gatekeeper, that I learnt about his background with Silat and how connected he is with the Silat community in Europe.

I approached the Anak Harimau group to research Sumatran Silat, when COVID presented its limitations, it became inevitable that I was entering their world mainly as a third-party academic.

Unlike with some of the students such as Christa, who has been training Silat with them for more than 17 years after she found a visual poster of Anak Harimau's Silat, for me it was clear that I was coming from a non-Silat world to study their group initially as an outsider. At some point during one of our post-training sessions, one of the members asks me: how do you self-identify? Due to my multi-ethnic background, my travels, and the countries of I have studied in, it is not easy to give a straight answer of where I come from and so the interlocutors in the field perceive me as leaning to be European despite my Southeast Asian heritage. And I am aware that although I was not born and raised a European, as an academic I represent a European institution with its own educational system and methodologies.

Anecdotes from the field

When I first arrived in the field, I was hosted by Stefan during my first two days of arriving in Austria. I had just left Norway, the country of my last residence then, having packed all my belongings, finalised my apartment contract and officially moved to Austria for the summer of 2021. This presented a funny and awkward scene when I finally showed up in Stefan's living room with two of my big suitcases, which may have presented challenges in the field at first, i.e., jumping right into the field and planting myself in my gatekeeper's living room was an overwhelming first step. I was treading in the personal territory and boundaries of the participant of the research.

Therefore, almost two weeks after arriving in Austria, I was focussed on orienting myself and settling into this new city that I had just moved to. Even though I had already joined a few classes by then, I still did not feel like I actively started embodying the practice with the group until exactly 2 weeks later when there was a moment that determined a change in my positionality.

Justifying my positionality

On the second day of my stay, Stefan prepared Indonesian food for lunch. While he was preparing the food, he asked me about the ritual process of Silat, to which I did not answer correctly; he then told me that I did not know much about Minang Silat. When we were finally seated for lunch with his wife, Stefan asked me why I was doing this [research]. I worked up the courage to tell him that I wanted to understand my own heritage back to precolonial times with all the animist, Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic influences. I wanted to understand the ancestral spirit of the tiger and how it takes form and shape in Europe in a world where things are modernising and globalising so fast.

He grows quiet but speaks eventually about the tiger energy. When I wrote the last line of what he said in my notebook, while we were talking, Stefan told me he would have

to talk to his wife instead of having the interview that we planned together. I decide to go out, soak the sun and play with the three-legged cat of the neighbours. I contemplated so much then and I wondered if the field would somehow throw me out and I would have to find my way again. I do not know why I chose to take the long, high, and difficult road to ask the deepest of intimate questions. [Field note, 17 June 2021]

This moment was a testing point to break the ice when I first entered the field. I realised early on that it was strange for a foreign student and single lady like myself to move all my bags from Norway to their living room and dare to ask to the most intimate spiritual question about Silat. I justified my reasons for being in the field directly and deeply – asking the question had a big impact and it set the tone for how my relationships formed in the field.

As I reflect now, I realise the very act of writing my notes in front of Stefan was paradoxical in a way, because there I was welcomed in his home and taking a somehow detached journalistic and participant as observation role instead being really present to listen to the weight of what he was trying to disclose to me. Seim draws the differences between the roles of participant observation and observant participation by discussing field positioning, analytical gaze, and data assembly spectrum. When it comes to fieldnote taking, he points out the differences in how notes are taken.

The difference is subtle yet significant. Participant observation presents more opportunities for jottings which then inspire field notes focused on the speech and conduct of others. Observant participation is better suited for a corporal submission to the field, and this can prompt a field diary focused on the personal experiences of the ethnographer. (Seim, 2021)

The Assigned Participants

Two weeks later during an early stage of the field on a Wednesday (trainings on this day are just for old members), there was a special moment that occurred which marked a shift from a participant as observer to observer as participant.

I had decided to play the role of the observer on this day. Stefan was clearly disapproving of me solely observing. (More about the observations of the training event is described in Chapter 5). Before we started, we negotiated, I was asked what the difference would be observing without participation. I explained that the point of this was to observe the training without my presence, to which they both expressed that, *'It's impossible'* in ethnology.

That training day was particularly tense and uncomfortable to watch. After exhaustive attempts, I decided to join them at some point. It was in that moment that I realized I was assigned to a more participatory role rather than an observational role. The field was trying to tell me to be a participant. [Reflective note, September 28 2021]

The Shift

On our way back, in our usual car rides, Stefan reveals to me that I have the potential for this energy. He tells me that I need to practise to get this Harimau energy and that I have it in me to find it with practice.

Since then, I took this remark as a great sign in the field that the only way to really answer this question about the tiger is to actually live it for myself and to conduct the ethnography in an embodied method. It is important to feel in the body and to situate myself as an apprentice, because this role is central to having the quest in the first place.

By some point in the field, I had memorised their set of warm up exercises and I was taking it seriously to work out these exercises every morning to physically condition my body to build more stamina and strength for the sessions.

In one of our last trainings in the countryside, during our sparring exercises, I became comfortable to play the role of the dummy. A student asked a technical question in German and without hesitation, my trainer pulled me down to show them how to immobilise me on the ground. I tapped the ground to gesture for a stop, and Christa said something in German to which I asked, and she explained, '*We are astonished that you are coming again and again. You're really brave.*' [Video material, 27 July 2021] This moment highlights a sense of acceptance as I was perceived as a clueless outsider at the beginning of my journey and developed into a committed novice. Commitment is a key feature of what keeps this group alive.

2.3 Context

Positioning myself as a newcomer and apprentice enabled me to see the people and members of the field in an interpretivist manner, which allowed me to see the dimensions of the practice influenced by the social dynamics of the actors involved.

In the cultural hub and centre of Vienna, there are many martial arts enthusiasts and dojo spaces. Beyond the cherished Viennese mountains known for their fresh water and organic milk from well-groomed cows exist pockets of different martial arts groups. These pockets harbour one of the currently very few training groups that practice Silat and they are called Pencak Silat Anak Harimau Minang. Inspired by the playful energy of a baby tiger (*Anak*

Harimau), Anak meaning child and Harimau meaning tiger. The club was formed in 2003 by co-founders, Martin Jagoditsch and Stefan Taibl, who is also the current president of the Pencak Silat Verband Österreich (PSVO) federation in Austria. The club combines the elements of the Sumatran Silek Harimau style along with modern Pencak Silat movements and styles.



Figure 2 The logo of Pencak Silat Verband Österreich (PSVO) on the right, and the logo of Pencak Silat Anak Harimau on the left.

The training group has sessions in three locations on three different days of the week in Vienna, the Wednesday trainings exclusively involve the oldest and organising members of the group and they particularly happen in a private garden.

Shops, restaurants, and entertainment spaces were beginning to open in Austria during the summer of 2021 as vaccination rates rose. In this period, I decided to venture into training with this group to learn more about the special intricacies of the tiger energy in the practice of Silat. The most engaging part of my research were the people and personalities from the Anak Harimau group in Austria that I worked with and their enthusiasm for Silat, their interaction with the practice and how that fits in their lives. Silat found its way in the lifeworld of these people born in Vienna, and so the project to initiate me as an apprentice in search for the tiger energy became the basis for my positionality in the field.

My field was shaped by my ability to mobilise around different spots in Vienna and the outskirts of Vienna in the countryside. The gates opened for me when I first stepped my foot in Neubau in Stefan's home, which was a crucial point as this determined the acceptance of my presence for the rest of my time in the field. From this point, I moved to one of the members' homes in Vienna for two weeks and attended the training in Vienna and Ladendorf with car rides to the training locations. I spent the second month of my fieldwork in a rented apartment, navigating the city by myself since the group members helped me set myself in the city of Vienna.

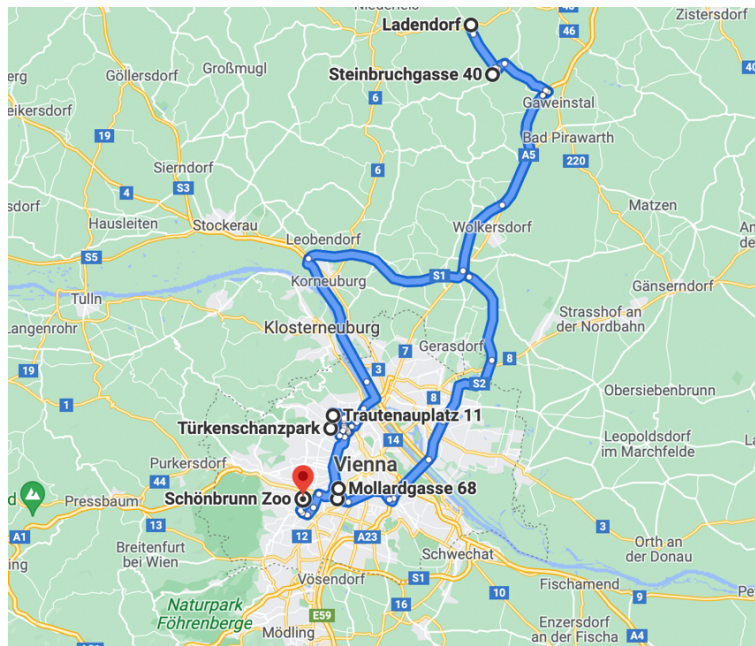


Figure 3 Mapping of the training sites in Austria

Ways of Knowing

Silat has existed in Austria for more than two decades ago. The first Silat World Championship competition in Europe was held in 1986. There were more Silat groups in Vienna then, but currently the schools are reduced to at least three Silat schools.

A Minang Indonesian man introduced Silat classes in a community centre organised by the city council in Vienna, and after training under him for some years the group grew an affinity to the martial art form and formed their own Silat training group called Pencak Silat Anak Harimau Minang. For a few years, the founding members of Anak Harimau used to be great students under the institute of the Indonesian man – some of them had their first field trip to Sumatra under his apprenticeship. Such trips facilitated cultural exchange and understanding; some members went through one of the first rituals of initiation into Silat, while other members had their own independent trips to explore not only Sumatra but Java as well to discover more about Indonesian culture.

I attempted to reach out to the Indonesian trainer in Austria during the pre-fieldwork stage of the research, but it proved to be difficult as I was presented with a fee to have an interview with him. But after hearing much about this character, it became apparent that his formation

was not compatible with the group anymore and that the students felt it important to start their own group in 2003.

Out of all the martial arts and throughout the different styles of Silat that Stefan witnessed, he enjoys and appreciates the Minang styles of Silat. An interesting and significant element of Anak Harimau's experience with Silat is their field trip visits to Sumatra. During their travels, they discovered other grandmasters who are more 'authentic'. This motivated and pushed their efforts to search for more authentic practices of Silat.

The older members and co-founders of the group learned about Silat around the same time as students in the early 1990s and formed their own separate group together in 2003, and therefore have a common history. The group eventually worked with two grand masters: first Pak Edwel Datuk and second Pak Haji Syofyan Nadar. It was meeting Silek Harimau expert and guru master, Edwel Yusri Datuk Rajo Gampo Alam at the Open Pencak Silat Festival in Paris, France in 2008 that prompted the members to go together and search for sponsorship to train in Sumatra. The whole group visited Sumatra together once, with guru Edwel Yusri and Haji Syofyan Nadar. The motivation of the group to train in Sumatra was to prove their skills and to start again from the basics. Both co-founders had prior training experience in Sumatra; it made sense to sponsor them to bring Sumatra Silat back to Austria. Both guru masters requested Anak Harimau to license their styles and have their own school in Austria, but the group refused and preferred to be their own group as Anak Harimau. Stefan confirmed that their interests as a group lay in grounding themselves as a community to support each other in progressing in the martial art.

This methodology of searching for the origin and the quest for authenticity suggests something about strengthening the connection between the practitioner and the art form. In my journey of delving into this thesis, I met many martial arts practitioners, scholars, and enthusiastic appreciators of the art. I, myself have experienced and questioned what it means for my collaborators to attain the titles of *Pendekar* (master), and what the weight of such a title means. I remained in contact with other Silat practitioners while conducting my fieldwork in Austria, for example with some Silat practitioners in London. One of the Silat practitioners based in London once warned me to beware of western practitioners that market themselves as authentic. This influenced my perception about western practitioners in the field, but with enough distance from the field, I write with confidence that my Austrian collaborators in the field did not market themselves as more than what they are. Collaborators like Stefan did not shy away from encouraging me to research more about the roots of Silat

and thankfully helped me form some connections to Sumatra. During the pre-fieldwork stage of the study, before coming to Austria, he was very encouraging and almost insistent about my travel to Sumatra to research the spiritual aspect of Silat.

I met Johnny Silmon, one of the renowned western Silat martial artist based in London and avid documenter of Silat in Sumatra, in February 2022. We had discussions on the competitive nature of Silat – around the phenomenon of Silat, there is a question of who is more legitimate than the other. He termed Silat practitioners who get out their minds with Silat as ‘space cadets’. He stressed the importance of being on land to feel it, implying that the spiritual aspect of feeling it is about the element of awareness.

The point of interest on the epistemological nature of learning about Silat is the webs of knowledge it creates transnationally between its native land to the west. This is mainly the reason behind the existence of the phenomenon of Silat in Austria.

The formation of Indonesia’s independence in 1948 brought new developments into Silat institutionally and this included a philosophy of national liberation that had an effect on the establishment of a national Indonesian Pencak Silat Organization for pencak silat schools or, in other words, Peruguan called the Ikatan Pencak Silat Indonesia (IPSI).

Silat masters and gurus have the capacity to create their own styles especially after acquiring the mastery of many styles. The Silat masters are not usually traditionally tied to mastering the style through formal group learning systems but can seek instruction through intensive and rigorous or magical and religious means depending on the type of perguruan they follow. Traditional and conservative perguruan are usually small scale, strict with techniques but not in its organizational structure, whereas modern and rational schools include a larger number of students with a more developed management of the school. These modern and rational perguruan were especially easily incorporated and absorbed into the sportification of Silat culture in the West. Therefore, mechanisms set in place by organisations like IPSI became a growing point for Silat to be exported to the west as its national martial art.

There became a civilizing and secularisation process as it was more lucrative for the economy to shift Silat into a more organized sporting criterion rather than a cultural one.

‘Whereas previously body and spirit were treated as forming an inseparable unity, the introduction of sport established a dualism where the physical and spiritual were

treated as mutually exclusive realms. Sport trained the physical body, but not the soul.’ (Wilson, 2002)

Since it was part of the politics to examine the competitive and authentic aspects of Silat, an unavoidable part of questioning the authenticity of Silat was finding the divide between the sportive practices of Silat and the more traditional ones.

There are several reasons for why people practise Silat, and this could range from sports, self-defence, focus and mindfulness. In the case of Anak Harimau, the group makes an effort to learn and train traditional ‘Silek’. Extracted from their website, they state that, ‘To understand its roots, learning of traditional Silek is part of the training of advanced students. Pencak Silat Anak Harimau tries to study Silek in its most original ways.’ (Harimau, n.d.)

In the most contemporary and current sense, the group knows Silat by engaging with it few times a week by practising it together, by learning it together as friends and teaching to select students around the city as well as the countryside. Their limited knowledge traces back to the first encounter they had with it in Vienna and to an extension in Sumatra. The continuity of how they preserve this knowledge is the act of remembering, relearning, teaching it amongst friends in an Austrian context, where they can make sense of it in a physical and logical sense. There is a sense of appreciation for the art and a sense of contextualising the art form in the comfortable and leisurely outlet in the corners of Vienna.

Most of them belong to an older age group and this has to do with the fact that most of them go a long way back, familiar enough with their own personal lives about career, marriage, and children. It is a space to joke around, catch up about daily life, and blow off some steam. Wednesday trainings are a way and chance for them to remember, revise and reembody what they learned a decade ago or so, because the grand masters were not so verbal in their instruction, then this presents a chance for them to relearn it in a friendly, comfortable, and casual space.



Figure 4 Mapping of their knowledge broken down to at least three stages.

Chapter 3: Recreating Silat Harimau

This chapter outlines the main components of what makes a typical training session with the Silat group, in which these components are highlighted to show the regularities of how a Silat gathering is created. The concept of ritualisation can be a helpful framework for understanding how the embodied practice of Silat in Austria is continuously recreated, reproduced, and remembered. I explore the possible componential features and themes of what makes this ritualisation come to life. The findings demonstrate the functions of the Silat group's gatherings, the regularities found within the training and the interactional dynamics at play.

3.1 The foundational moment: Sumatra

Stefan speaks about a memory in a poor Sumatran village watching young boys to older boys train in the same principle and pattern where one attacks and the other defends. It was a friendly lock. These boys were also trained in a madrasa (an Islamic school) and were dependent on the village to handle any fights that happen. [Field note, 15/06/2021]

The relatively small group present in Vienna is a localised transnational group of people that follow the lineage under the apprenticeship of Pak Haji Syofyan Nadar and Pak Edwel. The experienced trainers were granted the title of pendekars (master), received training in Sumatra and had their own trajectory and set of expertise related to the art. The group attempts to learn and incorporate traditional Silek styles within their curriculum.

The oldest members had their first contact to Sumatra through their first teacher prior to the formation of Anak Harimau. As one of the group members, Christian, explains: 'One of the concepts that this teacher had was that for specific levels and especially when you start becoming a master (pendekar). It's obligatory to go to Indonesia, because his idea was that it's necessary to get in touch with the culture and to see the roots and so it would be weird to do that just from being abroad and I think he has a point in there.'

However, this drive to revisit Sumatra persisted even after the group's separation from their first teacher and it became a motivating point for Anak Harimau to train with native guru masters based in Sumatra. The co-founders of the group each had their own several travels to Sumatra and then later arranged for a whole intensive training fieldtrip for all the members once. The main motivation for the group was to learn more from their guru masters and refine

the skills of the Silat art form that they already knew, but more than that, it was also about the feeling of being present in the land of Sumatra.

Most western Silat practitioners that I have interacted with bring up and describe the connection of ‘feeling it’ from the source of the native land itself. And this seems to suggest that their experience is accompanied by being present in the land of Sumatra and how interconnected it is in the formation of a heightened level of sensing the knowledge of Silat. In one discussion with Martin following the question of his experience with the initiation process, he describes that, *‘The impression of that was like an adventure. You know, I was young, it was my first time in Southeast Asia for myself. So, all the air, all the smell, all the environment and the people. And it had an impact on me that I can hardly explain. It was so cool and so colourful, and so different from the world I knew, and I think I just sucked every, every moment because I knew, okay, I’m only here three weeks, then I’m back home for. I don’t know. Next years.’*

The cofounders underwent an initiation ceremony by two different teachers, but both events highlight a sacrificial offering in its ritual process. The sacrificial offering marks the event of being welcomed as part of the lineage of the guru master, and the initiation into Silat is part of a continuous process that involves many kinds of rituals to do with sacrifice, divination, revelation, purification, protection and more. The initial offering as a ceremonious event has many variations, which vary from guru master to guru master depending on each one’s tradition of their lineage, and it usually involves bringing an assortment of food or gifts when a student approaches the guru to seek instruction. The guru has the autonomy to declare the initiation ritual with their own meanings and interpretations behind the nuances of the forms.

With Farrer’s ethnographic work on Malay Silat, for example, he outlines the kinds of Silat rituals he witnessed in Kuala Lumpur specifically to do with Silat bath rituals.

The members of silat gayong perform three ritual baths of initiation, specifically, the mandi limau (lime bath), the mandi bunga (flower bath), and the mandi minyak (oil bath)... The mandi limau is a rite of initiation and divination; the mandi bunga is a rite of protection and purification; and the mandi minyak is a rite of revelation by ordeal. (Farrer, 2009: 225-228)

For their initiation ritual event with their last teacher, the Anak Harimau members had to bring: a knife, four meters of a special white cloth, kilograms of rice, betel set for chewing, tobacco leaf cigarettes, areca nuts, tiger claw fruit (a citrus fruit that grows in West Sumatra) and finally a live chicken for sacrifice. The cutting of the chicken represents a sacrifice to God, and in some offering rituals the blood of the chicken is dripped over the Sasaran (training area). With their first teacher, the chicken was offered to the poor people in the village while the second teacher organised for the chicken to be feasted on with the students as part of the welcoming ceremonious event.

After the dinner, the Anak Harimau students were instructed to train Silat Tangan Kosong, a bare-handed technique that involves breaking coconut shells with bare hands in the form of tiger claws. These techniques are aimed at training the grip of the hands for catching, hitting, and slashing.

The sacrificial offering was a pre-requisite to another element of the ritual which involves the invitation of the Harimau. Later in the evening, a blessing and invocation of the Harimau were called over the heads of the students to bring in the power of the tiger energy.

Prior to entering the field, I gained the impression that my gatekeeper could be the link to understanding the tiger energy and later learned that the two main trainers of Anak Harimau underwent a Silat initiation ritual process in Sumatra by their guru masters. By possessing the features of charisma as trainers, it is also possible to consider that the experience of an initiation ritual may be a salient liminal link to the transmission of tiger energy. I would propose that Tigerism is the closely guarded secret transmitted between the guru and the student, which is a feature of Silat training, and this plays a role in the context of Silat training in Austria.

3.2 Learning is a ritual: relearning, remembering, and reproducing

Being assigned as an apprentice and participant in the field enabled me to position my intersubjective experience as a source of data collection. Lave and Wenger (1991) posit that learning essentially becomes a social function of constituting oneself among other community members. It is not only limited to the process of acquiring the pedagogical output, but the process entails learning about the personalities of the communities involved, their biographies, trajectories and relationships that sustain the generative sociocultural organisation of the community.

Dedicating spaces to learn through communities of practice is an act of mutual agreement by the group to develop and negotiate meaning. Lave and Wenger claim that negotiating meaning involves the process of participation and reification. The act of sharing time to learn, play and exchange contemporary stories of each other and what is happening locally is, I would argue, a process of reification. But most importantly, the process of learning is to continue remembering what has been lost and forgotten in memory and in this way the act of remembering and forgetting in the context of learning is a ritualistic act. Wenger illustrates this point by stating that, 'Participation is a source of remembering and forgetting, not only through our memories, but also through the fashioning of identities and thus through our need to recognize ourselves in the past.' (1998: 88) During my time training with Anak Harimau, especially when old members gather to practise advanced techniques, members admit that they are trying to remember together when engaging in exercises. This reveals a function of the Silat gatherings, which is to remember and refresh the basics in order to develop their exercises into a variety of combinations of locks and blocks.

In the discussion on the topic of body memory in a transdisciplinary approach in phenomenology, cognitive science, and embodied therapies. Explicit memory is more associated with the verbalisation and articulation of an embodied knowledge, whereas implicit memory is associated with the activation and representation of bodily movements stimulated by past experiences. These movements can let the body remember learned habits by the body engaging in a repetitive and rehearsal kind of manner. In this case, I argue that the process of remembering implicitly and explicitly happens simultaneously during moments of training since the trainers are passing on the instruction verbally and also engaging their bodies to remember actively. These advanced sets of techniques that are embodied are highly stimulated, especially when old members, who have the shared bodily memory of practising in Sumatra together, are recreating and finding new combinations of movements together during their Wednesday training sessions.

Remembering is not a process of retrieving an accurately preserved set of information. It is rather the productive process of actively generating patterns according to generalized previous experiences (e.g. Tschacher 2010). (Koch, Fuchs, Summa, & Muller, 2012)

3.3 Liminoid and Leisure

Silat in the context of the training ground in Austria is a leisurely based sportive activity, in which expressions of playfulness and seriousness can be found in its ritualised sphere.

Turner's concept of liminality (1966) touches on the significant transitioning point of moving from one life stage to the next during a rite of passage, whereas the liminoid experience refers to the point where one's personal and work responsibilities are paused for voluntary leisure-based social acts. And since Rowe (2008) distinguishes sports to be part of a liminoid genre, she discusses that, 'Liminoid genres, on the other hand, are recognisable as distinct and autonomous forms of expression or entertainment, existing independently and without any necessary reference to one another, expressing the individual effort and diversity of their creators. As such they are "plural, fragmentary, and experimental" (Turner 1977b: 43), generating a wide range of forms.' (2008: 134) She further explains further Turner's description on the realm of leisure by stating that, 'In leisure we explore, experiment, create, and indulge our tastes through individually chosen modes of play and relaxation.' (2008: 141) Although I identify the time spent by the players in training as a time for leisure, the space becomes ritualised through tangible forms of greetings, warmups, formation of players, but also through intangible nuances of tension, playfulness, outbursts of emotion that are contained, as well as flow and attention. The ritualisation aspect is mainly in the process of learning, remembering, reembodying the tiger energy of Silat. For some students, the intention for attending Silat sessions is for the point of physical conditioning as one of them admittedly said, *'I like very much these different styles where you have choreographic movements, which is very sophisticated. It's good for your body. I think all these low and high things is very good.'* While for others, the motivations could range from decompressing from work, coping with aggression, practising a kind of mindfulness, the option for self-defence and building a sense of confidence. Whether each of the participants consistently seeks these goals or not, a kind of social cultivation takes place between participants as they engage in this leisurely learning outlet together. For example, revisiting the field again 8 months later, I noticed a change in a beginner student named Nada in the way her stances are more ready and alert during the training sessions. She accurately draws this point of transformation from her personal experience in developing the readiness for contact accurately by saying that, *'Here I could feel strong tensions, but with the growing trust and the exchange between the group members also the ability to let this tensions transform, without giving it too much attention, is developing.'* The point of familiarity of building trust between group members is an important feature to highlight.

3.4 Forms of the Silat gathering

As soon as the Silat circle is opened, we warm up and the casual communications start as they update each other on what has passed in their life since last meeting.

In his book 'Ritual Communication,' Rothenbuhler explores the different forms of communication and how they become symbolic ritual and social actions as he comments on greetings as a form of ritual communication, 'These simple greeting and parting forms are examples for ritual communication that correspond to an element of social order (the relationship), not just because they are an expression of it but because they are a performance of it.' (1998: 108)

'Even during the stretches, I found students speaking German in between, probably about what has passed since they last saw each other.' [Field note, 21/06/2021]

An important aspect of Silat are the salutations at the beginning of the sessions because this initiatory gesture is called Hormat and it is a form of respect and adat (custom) to come in peace before the session start. One of the members of the group revealed that he designed their own Hormat salutations for their curriculum. Hormat means Respect in Bahasa Indonesian. During practice when an instructor or leader calls out hormat, this is equivalent to calling to attention and paying respect.



Figure 5 Hormat gesture

The Silat sessions are initiated within a circle formation, where players would greet each other with a lifted left hand and shake the other's hand with a right then place it on their chest at the start, and followed by this a big clap to the one's centre is signalled to initiate the circle with a Hormat gesture that is brought to the back of the head then the body is directed to the right and later to the left in a Langkah (step/stepping) position. After this, one kneels with their hand pointing directly to the ground then close to their face and finally directed towards the sky to the eventual Hormat gesture. These Hormat gestures of pointing to the ground and the sky are influenced by their guru master's opening steps. According to the teachings of Pak Edwel Yusri (Anwar, 2007), performing the hormat towards the ground is called Hormat

Bumi (honor the earth), while performing the hormat towards the sky is called Hormat Langit (honor the sky). Some groups and schools have a different set of opening steps and Silat groups have the autonomy to intentionally design their own unique combination of gestures to start the session. For example, the Silat Open Circle classes based in London start with students standing in line formation in a straight position with both feet set apart at shoulder length and the right hand cupping the left, which is inspired by the Islamic prayer movements, followed by this a step forward is performed to gesture the Hormat.

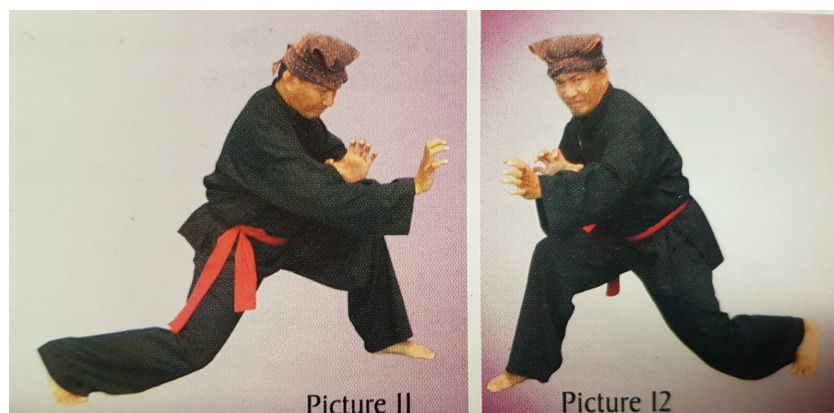
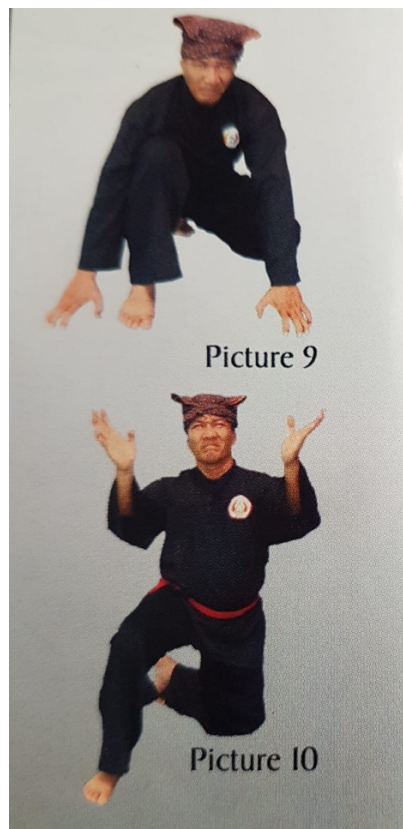


Figure 6 Excerpts taken from the Silat Harimau book (Anwar, 2007).

Picture 9 and 10 are Hormat Bumi and Hormat Langit, while picture 11 and 12 are called Langkah Satu (a right and left fencing position).

'The regularities I find is that all sessions start and end with a circle. During warmups and stretches, they talk in between themselves in German – most probably about what has happened since they last saw each other.' [Field note, 23/06/2021]

The streams of different Silat groups and in this case a transnational group seem to flexibly adopt many different forms that can be incorporated to the ritualisation of a Silat gathering. A member of the group explains their choice of circle formation at the beginning and end of the session. He says, ‘*..this immediately went into a circle because Anak Harimau is very much around not a teacher-student setting but rather more around a community of equal persons so that makes it clear that the circle is a suitable thing, but I think just deep down we felt that makes sense to have a common understanding that this is the start and this is the end of the training all together*’. (Hansen, 2021)

Initiating and closing the sessions in a circle represents a point of demarcation of the space, because whether the circle is formed in Ladendorf or Schönbrunn, it becomes exclusive as no passer-by can easily interject and join the session. There was once a time when a passer-by witnessed the training session in Ladendorf and decided to watch, he only later approached Stefan to inquire about the Silat class after the circle was closed.

3.5 Charisma

The enactment of the ritualised learning space would not be present without the charisma of the trainer. Like with any opening of a circle, a figure usually moderates the tone and mood of the session. It is because he initiates the first gesture, the greeting, the set of warmups and sequences of exercises for us to follow. It is he who decides what drills to work with, what formation to set the players in, whether in line formation or triangular or sporadic circle formation and how much space of the area we would be utilising for the training. Most importantly, we follow and imitate his movements after he demonstrates them to us.

In reference to charisma, I use the terminology cautiously as I take into consideration its Weberian (1968) definition, in which he refers to charisma as an authoritative figure who possesses the personal gift of grace. With this concept, I am referring to the term as understood in contemporary discourse as a charismatic person whose personality strikes

power and magnetism. In my experience as an apprentice, I consider the pedagogical method of my collaborator and trainer to be influential in practice.

The time I spent as an apprentice and participant observer with the group opened channels of understanding the dynamics and importance of such a space in which tapped at some crucial points tapped into the essence of the training's energy. The materials presented assert and support that this Liminoid space is a potential space for the ritualisation of a Silat gathering.

Chapter 4 Chicken and Knife

4.1 Learning the fundamentals and observing the fight

It has been a month since I began learning Silat with the Anak Harimau group. On Wednesdays, we train in Christian's garden with the founding members. It was almost two weeks ago when one of the participants from the Tuesday trainings told me, *'I envy you for seeing the Wednesday group because I've never seen it. I imagine it to be a fight club or something.'* Wednesday is an exclusive session, usually for the oldest and experienced members like Stefan, Andrea, Martin and Christian.

When I first enter the garden with Stefan, I see Christian, and his wife seated. He stands up to greet me but before he does, he asks me if I am vaccinated. After confirming my vaccination status, I greet him with a ciao on both cheeks.

He offers us some smokes. Apparently, it is a European take on Indonesian cigarettes. It is strong – I smoke it like a normal cigarette, until I realize that it is the kind that burns slowly, and it is something to share and savour together. Smoking 'kretek', which is blended cloved tobacco, was a marker of their experience training in Sumatra. Their guru masters would smoke kretek and they would join them in these encounters.

Stefan and Christian decide to train at a different spot of the garden, at a hidden corner. The day is not so sunny, but it is windy, and I can feel the dampness of the earth beneath my feet. This is the first time I have the opportunity to train with Christian. There is a light-heartedness in the air between us as Stefan jokes when we greet each other with the usual Hormat gesture to open our Silat circle.

The hand work can be opened from the Hormat gesture, where one hand must be in front of the other hand; in which the hand behind cannot be too close to the chest but both hands must be centred enough. Martin once described the front hand as the source of feeling the other person's point of contact as he explained, *'If she hits me [bam], this [his front hand] is a kind of a sensor and if she's going with much force I can turn [second position of Langkah]. I don't let her go inside, if she comes here, I can turn my body. So, this [his front hand] tells me if she's too close or not. And I take her energy to move my body and I have to really be in my centre and be aware that I can move my body... and this is the turn of the hip of my upper body.'*

We practise our stance work and kicking techniques. In this session, we are practising on the drills of a particular attack and defence in which we focus on the fundamental aspects to perform the movements correctly. For this particular counterattack on the right side of right

langkah, I must stand at a 45-degree with my right foot forward with the open handwork. Once I am faced with a punch, my foot work twists to a second position, and I wave away the punch with one hand to eventually grab the opponent's hand while my other hand grabs his elbow for a lock and levers his arm to a twist as I make a step forward. In contrast, we also focus another attack in which the next Langkah position is to make a step and a punch forward.

4.2 Attention – Learning by seeing and feeling

Anak Harimau translates to baby tiger, an intentional name for how they see themselves to be playing like little tigers. Growing older together like a family, and in spite of that they describe their attitude to playing like a curious tiger.

While Stefan corrects me by asking me to look at him and directing me with the details through bodily contact, Christian has an interesting way of correcting me by elaborating the movements, recognising the body as a whole and identifying which parts can apply force. When teaching me how to kick properly, Stefan corrects my posture with his contact, and he asks me to direct my visual attention to his knee for a proper focus.

The process of learning by guided rediscovery is most aptly conveyed by the notion of *showing*. To show something to someone is to cause it to be made present for that person, so that he or she can apprehend it directly, whether by looking, listening, or feeling. Here, the role of the tutor is to set up situations in which the novice is afforded the possibility of such unmediated experience. Placed within a situation of this kind, the novice is instructed to attend particularly to this or that aspect of what can be seen, touched, or heard, so as to get the 'feel' of it for him- or herself.

Learning, in this sense, is tantamount to an 'education of attention'. (Ingold, 2001: 141)

Ingold borrows the Gibsonian phrase 'education of attention', and analyses different scholars' takes on the learning process of acquiring enskilment of a task by a novice. The analysis points out to the phenomenological reality of a novice entering a new lifeworld unfamiliar to the mastery of skills that exist in the lifeworld; therefore, the novice must be guided with their attention because there is too much information happening at once for the novice's mind and body to perceive in the field of perception. And this is why Stefan constantly asks me to look at him directly, while Christian directs my attention to different sections of the body, as

they both simultaneously attune my body through contact and touch to allow me to eventually experience the correct posture, angle and footwork.

Merleau-Ponty posits that there is no experience without a body in space and in the field of perception.

The body is able to move, to initiate and undertake actions, because the body schema is a series or rather a field, of possible actions, plans for action, maps of possible movements the body “knows” how to perform. (Merleau-Ponty, 1968:40)

Christian in particular directs my attention to the angle and degree of my footwork by demonstrating to me in mimetic slow motion the incorrect movement and how I can posture myself to throw a kick in a straight line. He points out that when I perform a kick, my leg tends to swing around the side towards the opponent instead of executing a straight kick towards the opponent. The key point is that my posture needs to be balanced and firm enough to perform the straight kick, otherwise I would waste spatial energy by swinging my leg around. I reflect on this key point as many times my trainers have highlighted the importance of balance, weight, direction, distance, tension, strength and flow – the principle seems to cover that one must know where to be positioned first to attain the right balance, then to be aware of the opportunities of direction, and of course calculate the distance between one’s body and the opponent in order to shift the weight with the right force. The rest of the features come with training and contact practice with the other. I have found that aspects of tension, strength and flow are aspects that require serious mastery, as these points are challenging for a beginner. In our first group discussion, Stefan and the rest also consider it important to understand the mechanism of twisting joints in a discomforting manner by saying, *‘If you understand the point of the joints, then you know how to manipulate it. Yeah, that’s it. You have to understand it. And balance and your own weight. [He demonstrates] When I try this technique like this, I need tension and strength but when I just let myself fall I use weight I use the right angle.’*

4.3 Langkahs

On the second day of training, Martin notes after some sparring exercises that I am receiving too much information. It is important for me to start from the very basics, which are the Langkahs, in other words steps and footwork of Silat. The basic starting position of a Langkah on a 90-degree angle is that if your right foot is a step forward, then the back left

step is twisted to the side. And the same principle applies when the left foot is a step forward. This starting position of a Langkah can be on a straight line, 45-degree angle and 90-degree angle on the front side as well as the back side.

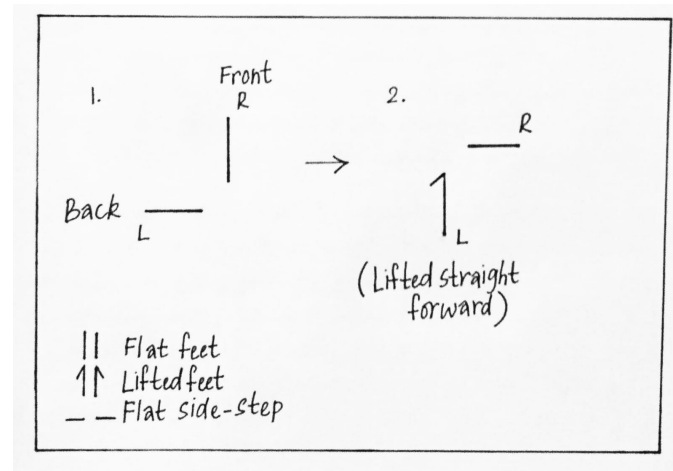


Figure 7 Basic footwork of 90-degree Langkah step

These Langkahs can be best demonstrated on the imaginary lines of a Tiga (triangle) and Ampeh (square) footwork. These geometric patterns represented by straight, 45- and 90-degree angles are the very foundation of all Silat footwork and its many styles including Harimau, which also unlocks the secret to its effectiveness. Martin sometimes presented a square piece of cloth for us as pairs to train our footwork on, as we could practice these different angles of the Tiga and Ampeh on top of the cloth.

Although such footwork is common among many Silat styles, the Harimau style and styles like Silek Tuo are distinct as it imitates the movements of tigers playing and being low in the knees. The langkahs, which are lower body transitionings, are designed and codified in the overall core movements of Harimau to give a closeness of distance to the ground. With the langkahs, I am instructed to lower my hips and bend my knees lower if I can.

As we progress into triangle formation to practice our pair work exercises, I learn the fundamentals of throwing a decent punch. I am called to be aware of my stance at 45 degrees, placing my weight in the right place, and an emphasis on initiating my body forward.

Christian tells me, *'Try to move the body first and then the hand. It's also called a falling step. There's actually the full body moving forward. And there's the rotation of the shoulder [tak] that gives you energy and last and actually the smallest piece is the power of your arm'*.

Vygotsky's theory on the zone of proximal development (1978) suggests that the acquisition of learning skills is greatly supported when guided by more experienced people. He termed this tool as scaffolding and Downey (2008) describes this similar learning technique of scaffolding that he observed from Capoeira trainings. The orientation of space seems to be a determining factor in the way the pedagogical tool of scaffolding is applied in the trainings. Our formations are formed in a triangle, in a circle, facing each other or side by side, and depending on such positions the technique is aided and stimulated by different visual angles that a novice like myself can perceive. Stefan quickly learned from training with me that positioning himself in front of me or by my side, and not a mirroring position from me, is the most effective way to show me a technique. He either demonstrates visually, gives me verbal cues, or corrects my movements through contact. The break-down of complex technique into simpler repetitive sequences is an apparent form of scaffolding, especially when Christian meticulously corrects these movements by imitating the broken-down gestures of body parts from the sequence. Regarding that training session, they focussed on delivering a set of techniques that are facilitated by repetitive motions and imitative postures.

Stefan points out that there are three energy points working together, each bringing the other one to move forward. I learn that the same principle applies when throwing a kick forward as well. Christian explains that the solar plexus is the target, and in a fast kick three pieces of the body connect which includes releasing energy from the hips and finally the legs after bringing the hip to leg movement upwards.

This pedagogical technique of scaffolding breaks down the movements into smaller pieces; and so that is how Christian calls me to pay attention to the different points of my body as he directs me to mimic his physical movements and corrects me. He demonstrates each part of his movements slowly. Through physical contact, he demonstrates how much force each body part with the rest of the whole body to exert impact.

4.4 Distance

This training session is a fundamental lesson for me as they both meticulously correct my posture, the lines of my footwork kicks and the distance of my body to the opponent. I am too careful when second-guessing my next movement, and this gives no impact. I need to learn how to give impact, by going to the borders of someone and then learning to attain a certain amount of control to release that impact. But most importantly, the aim of such learning exercises is to eventually gain the quality of attunement and sense of the calculated distance between oneself and the opponent.

When it comes to my distance, I am either too far or too close. As Lave puts it accurately, 'The 'calculator', in other words, is not a device inside the head but the whole person in the world (1988: 154). For example, due to my close distance, Stefan punches my eyebrow by mistake with his thumb and the punch is uncalculatingly too forward, but I move on. I want to see how playful the force and energy can get as it becomes a lively training, but then before I know it both my trainers explain the error I am making as Stefan points out in demonstration that, '*If you have no partner, you make like this* [holds on to his arm to pull him for a kick] *And if you have a partner and you play with him, you let him go.*' This touches on the element of play to be able to test out your distance and grip, but also with the aspect of letting go to also exercise caution and safety.

Christian further explains, '*When you have him, let him go in the very last second when you kick. Never give him any chance because when I let go too early, he might puff (punch).*'

And when I am too close to my opponent, Christian makes a comment that I am too forward with my punches. He says, '*You're really a dangerous enemy, because what you're doing is BOOM* [sound effect for the punch] *And as far as I know, this is how knife fighters fight.*'

What Christians means by '*dangerous like a knife fighter*' is that my falling step combined simultaneously with punch is an overcommitment of the total movements. The goal of a knife attack is to go for a full thrust and lunging motion towards the body of the opponent in order to utilise the weapon. In the art of blade fighting, the point is that if you are committed to the thrust, then the full body is committed to the thrust. Whereas in the point of a Harimau technique, the tiger's point is not to thrust but to slash with its claws. And in this sense, he reminds me that it is a dangerous position to give the full commitment of my body and energy in one blow.

A tiger would have perfect knowledge of the distance to display dominance, to play or hunt. A feature of Harimau is the deceptive footwork to conceal range at play, and so the art of Silat means to know the distance between yourself and your target. The element of tension happens at many points throughout the body during training or a mock fight, and the primary element where tension determines the rest of the movements is situating oneself in appropriate proxemic distance to the other. The point of this distance is to hold tension and support the structure in the right points of the body for a good balanced groundwork to be established. On the other hand, relaxation is also key after a transitioning of the hip or jurus (combined upper body to lower body transitionings) for the throwing motion of a punch and counterattack to take place. Therefore, to build the foundation to create tremendous Harimau

power means to fundamentally understand and be aware of the kinetic mechanism of the body at work.

Christian knows very well how to imitate an incorrect movement very slowly, and it makes me more aware to correct mine. 'Not bad' is a general attitude about my steps and this is very encouraging for me. The teaching style that he possesses leaves more room for interpretation on how flexible the socialised transmission of learning can be in Silat. Although a strong feature of this transmission process is the visual mimetic process, an important highlight is the mental checklist that occurs in my corporeal awareness to perform the right steps in the correct order.

4.5 Every opening is an opportunity

They proceed to show me a mock fight, and halfway through the fight, an interesting twist appears when Stefan gives Christian a knife. As he tugs it to his side, they both roll forward dramatically and start the fighting sequence with the weapon. As they both get up, Christian attacks him twice and Stefan grabs his arm, pushing it to his back exactly like the exercise we have been training throughout the session. But for the rest of the time, Stefan takes over the role of the opponent by striking Christian at least 12 times as Christian demonstrates different ways to defend and dodge the weapon – each attempt ends with the same exercise of twisting the opponent's arm to their back and pushing them away. I observe the fight with excitement, exclaiming sounds of surprise with each fast strike that Stefan attempts towards Christian. At some point, I distance myself from the fight as Christian grabs his elbow and extends the back of his left hand to Stefan's face to bring him back to the ground.

I learn that each attack is an opportunity to lock the opponent's movement from twisting their hand, bending their elbow, hooking their foot, kicking their leg backward, and reaching out to their face. Training martial arts come with the mindset that every opening one can scan of the opponent's body is an attack opportunity, and Stefan did not hesitate to emphasise this crucial point. He taught me that when there is a chance, I need to take it. There is no time to think and analyse what to do for the next move. He explained that there will be no time, and that one must react and be fine with the results that come afterwards. There is a chain of possibilities when scanning for the body – I could go for the foot, the knee, and the face, and I can go straight into the inner domain, or outer domain of the other. Striking one point of the body could lead to a combination of different movements. He assures me that I do not need to worry about the impact I give during training when I reach my partner's borders and that I could always ask politely if I am giving too much or too little power. As I am on my way to

mastering the basics, he instructs me to *trust that power* to give impact and as I reflect – I realise it is a serious process to come to the realisation of the inner power of Harimau. Christian shows another lock we have been practising in many of our sessions as he grabs Stefan’s wrist and steps his foot forward over Stefan’s foot. At the same time, Christian pushes Stefan's head forward to a bend and brings him down as he tugs Stefan's attacking arm inwardly to his thighs to immobilise him and grab his head. (This lock is demonstrated in Figure 9)



Figure 8 A photo from the field.

The demonstrated block of the opponent, with myself in the side front pulling the opponent's right hand making him fall forward. [Taken on July 13, 2021.]

As Stefan attacks again slowly and finally this time, Christian carefully twists his wrist back and moves his position forward. We all laugh with Christian's excited sound effects. As Christian steps his right foot forward behind Stefan's leg, he kicks backwards and brings Stefan to the floor and then twists his hand, grabbing the knife away from him.

4.6 'Feeling it'

As our training circle gradually ends, they both ask me if I have a chicken. I asked, '*for initiation?*' We all smile funnily with my response because guru masters assign a ceremonial entry into Silat, which usually involves sacrificing a chicken. The chicken is a reference to the 'ritual initiation' that the founding members of Anak Harimau went through and in this context, and the possibility of me being initiated formally into Silat. When it comes to the context of their journey and experience in Sumatra; they revealed to me that, although their

initiation into Silat all happened at a different time and separately from the other, there always seems to be a chicken involved.

As clarified in the previous chapter, it is important to note that to be accepted as an official student under a guru master where lessons involving the knife can be taught, the student must perform a grand symbolic gesture as a form of offering to the guru. The members perceive it as ritualistic through their cultural lens and performed the offering twice with two different gurus. The initiation rituals are comprehensive and consists of many different levels, the spilling of blood and the sacrifice of a chicken to the guru and ultimately to God is a liminal point for the trainers to be granted permission to use the knife as a weapon in Silat.

Chapter 5: Mirroring the Other

In this chapter, I am presenting an event in the field where I mostly played the role of the observer. After the two members, Stefan and Martin, demonstrate a series of advanced choreographic fights involving the mirroring feature of Silat; as agreed, I join and follow their steps closely as Stefan instructs me by breaking each movement apart.

I realise the running risk in supporting the description done purely by observation with analysis. However, this overview is to clarify that the descriptions of the event were supported primarily by film viewing, accounts of the field notes and lastly by memory in a thorough fashion.

The analysis and interpretations have been re-examined multiple times, especially after having gained more experience with Silat since then and after several discussions with interlocutors about the aspect of mirroring.

The study considers the aspect of mirroring to be an important feature of Silat, given that interlocutors in the field have disclosed its importance in Minang Silat. Its relational quality, which I explore more through Csordas' Somatic modes of attention, could afford another perspective in unravelling the trained responses of these interactions in the framework of Tigerism.

When I describe the interaction, I zoom in on the nuances of the Harimau technique which I provide contextual information on in the start and the aspect of mirroring found in Silat. Then I zoom out of the moment to discuss the relational significance of the mirroring aspect in the context of the overall of genre of Minang Silat and the several styles it influences like Silat Harimau and Silek Tuo. This moment presents at least three players involved: I (myself), Stefan and Martin. Occasionally, I will be bringing up external secondary sources, excerpts of interview transcripts from the field, as well as citations from expert Silat practitioners I have spoken to directly outside the field. Moreover, a sequence of the recorded mirroring choreography by film is analysed using Bakka's movement analysis towards the end of the chapter.

5.1 Minangkabau Silek Harimau

There are many style variants found even within the Minangkabau Silek Harimau system that originates from West Sumatra, as reviewed from the Black Triangle Silat documents (McQuaid, 2019). These variants are formed by respective gurus depending on the towns they come from. The precise style of Silek Harimau was developed by practitioners performing their fights in marshland terrains of the rain forests. The farthest the Silek Harimau Silat fighting style was traced was back to the 16th century, thanks to the physical

lineage of the Minangkabaus and the traditional heritage of Randai theatre that incorporates Silek in the theatrical performances. The lineage of Silek Harimau Minang is said to have started from Guru Warrior Poyang Lebeh in 1610, and the tiger became the definite inspiration of the Minangkabau tribe because of their predominate animist historical background. Such a performative martial practice dedicated its focus on strengthening the legs, accompanied by the muddy waters, for holding powerful stances that are usually low for strong footwork, flexibility of knees, kicking and leaping. Grasping the marshy ground is not just heavily reliant on highly developed legs, however the Harimau practitioner and warrior is also unpredictable in their movements by utilising their hands, feet, belly and back to support them on the ground for mechanical tiger attacks and strikes. The Silat Harimau style requires a high flexibility of the spine and back as many of the positions and stances assume very low positions to surprise the opponent from below, around them or behind them. The upper body must strengthen and utilize the points of the shoulders, forearms, and wrists to aim against the opponent's knees, legs, and ankles in a low position to potentially throw them backwards and immobilise them on their critical point on the ground.

Minangkabau Silek Systems

-  Silek Harimau
-  Silek Tuo
-  Silek Lintau
-  Silek Sterlak
-  Silek Kumanggo
-  Silek Patai
-  Silek Baru
-  Silek Pauh
-  Silek Luncua
-  Silek Gulo Gulo Tareh
-  Silek Ulu Ambek

Exclusive publication for blacktrianglesilat.com, 2012.

Figure 9 A list of the many Minangkabau Silek Systems that come from West Sumatra.

5.2 From Spectator to Participant

On one Wednesday training two weeks after settling in the city and training with the group, I decide to play the role of the observer because I want to have a better grasp of the techniques from the angle of an observer. Out of the Anak Harimau members, Martin is negotiatory while Stefan is disapproving of me solely observing instead of fully participating. After a lengthy discussion, we reach a compromise and agree that I would observe first then join in later.

I sit by the camera with my notebook across them while they start stretching in their own pace after opening the circle. They speak German, while they warm up, then soon Martin takes the lead. They connect into a line formation to demonstrate a full sequence of movements facing the camera. Usually, the warmup session would be longer in a class and the first formation would have been taking place in a circle i.e., in front of each other to exercise a drill. I feel definite tension in the air because of how the camera's eye is visibly obvious with myself positioned right beside it with my notes. I sense that Stefan is distracted, and I gather this feeling by observing that he picks up pinecones from the ground, walks around and glances towards where I am with the camera.

They perform at least three rounds of different drills of attack and defence. The first session starts in a steady pace, as they gesture the *Hormat* out of respect and bow their head to begin to engage in a fight. They begin carefully as each of them strikes the other and as a defence the other one rolls away, and when Martin rolls away after a strike – Stefan rolls away from him the same way, and then he picks up more pines to throw at Martin and towards my direction. As I recall and revise from the field note accounts, this eases the tension and brings a kind of playfulness to the picture.

First, the defence in the fight is played out by catching the opponent's leg after a kick. They both demonstrate the different techniques of blocks and locks against such strikes by using their weight to fall and roll away. A technique that exemplifies the third level of their curriculum happens when one blocks a kick shooting towards them by elbowing above the knee of the kick and grabbing the knee to twist it downwards. Martin shows Stefan another way of locking a kick to a twist by having the arm under the leg to claw onto the back of the upper thigh for a twist. Stefan tries again, slowly this time, and it works as Martin says *genau* (exactly). As if to gain some kind of momentum again to create a more focussed and attuned energy with each other – Stefan takes the lead in line formation to perform another sequence that they have memorised together, a different sequence from the first one they presented.

From observation, they are relatively in synchrony with each other without direct visual attention for mimicry and Martin is the observable follower as he is slightly delayed compared to Stefan at some points. Having said that, their proxemic distance between each other, which is a leg apart, could be an additional indicator of how they and especially Martin, as a follower in this instance, can peripherally sense and follow Stefan's movements as observed in the film.

At this point I feel it is relevant to bring up the concept of their joint habit-memory as Paul Connerton (1989) characterises it. The moment I just described marks an interesting point of collective remembering of the learned techniques. It is through the transmission of verbal and morale encouragement that they both succeed in reaching their target performance with the presence of each other's bodies. The aspect of sociality is important here to reproduce the desired physical performance through accessing their habit-memory together as Paul Connerton characterises it.

Bodily practices of a culturally specific kind entail a combination of cognitive and habit-memory. The appropriate performance of the movements contained in the repertoire of the group not only reminds the performers of systems of classification which the group holds to be important; it requires also the exercise of habit-memory. In the performances explicit classifications and maxims tend to be taken for granted to the extent that they have been remembered as habits. Indeed, it is precisely because what is performed is something to which the performers are habituated that the cognitive content of what the group remembers in common exercises such persuasive and persistent force. (Connerton, 1989: 88)

Reiterating Merleau-Ponty's point of the body as a source of subjective experience, he argues that one senses their own body pre-reflectively as an object and organism set in a lifeworld that perceives and interrelates with other objects. And so, this learned experience that Martin and Stefan share together as partners becomes a relational exercise of remembering the habit of their bodies by interacting with each other. And since their journey began relatively around the same time through many sessions together as they have told me, they have habitually learned and incorporated the skill of the techniques to its fluency through shared interaction and practice. I gather this as both practitioners state that they 'try to remember'.

The tension persists when between each drill and choreography, a water break interrupts. Martin shifts back to exercises and drills on the rolling techniques from the second level of

their curriculum. Martin starts to roll fast, and Stefan tries to catch Martin's rhythm and fast pace as much as he can, because he wants to bring this aspect of synchronicity in play like they did with the previous performance of the sequence. To be clear, this session is highly irregular on its own because both players are not exactly students or teachers of the other – but they are partners that negotiate and for me their different initiatives seem to be a negotiation without verbalising who gets to lead and follow. It is also highly irregular because there seems to be this undecided and improvised shift between performing a sequence, exercising a drill, and having a semi-contact fight under close observation. Being under observation seems to also contribute to some tension and pressure as it is a demanding event for their embodiment of Silat Harimau, because they are both co-recreating the experience of these learned techniques.

After this, Stefan takes the lead again and decides to rehearse and connect with the Silek Tuo choreography. As they play around it, both find each other performing the exact same movement at a point where there should be a contrast, and this makes them both laugh as they remind each other verbally of their positions while they are in action. They do this for at least two rounds, in between they both tire easily for a moment as Stefan says, '*we try to remember*'. And, when they try another round, both starting in a standing position and clapping loudly, they resume and finally find their connection, this time barely committing any mistakes this time as they complete a principal choreography of Silek Tuo that captures this mirroring quality. This choreographic piece is an opening sequence and a prerequisite to the mock fight, and it is a customary step that is performed in most Silat styles before a fight. It is part of *hormat* (respect) and *adat* (custom) to perform the opening piece which, in other words, can be described as a kind of *hormat* dance or a dance of respect, as it shows respects for teachers, students, opponents, and observers.

5.3 Remembering Harimau

From this point, they start their free form mock fight; Stefan blocks each strike with his defensive hand and a duck to roll away from Martin's kick. The interesting thing is that when they face each other with enough distance, each of them stands in a prepared *juros* position for an attack and slaps their own thigh loudly to alert their opponent.

Between each transitioning movement, each player slaps their thigh to signal attention or potential threat to the opponent. Through our deliberations, Stefan once explains that the slap is not only to call attention and signal the opponent, but also a way to call attention to oneself. Everything is information in the senses to hear, to touch, to see, to smell, to taste. The point is

to reach the oneness connection with the other by tuning in where the leader and follower are one. Maybe one is too slow, or one is too fast, but one can find ways to tune in. Glaring gaze at each other in their ready stance, it is clear that this is the recognised tension during a fight after the alerted slapping noise to signal that they are ready to fight – they then smile and nod together and say ‘Ah!’ as if their bodies improvising is bringing them to a state of remembering and once again this time Martin looks towards me, points at his head knowingly and says probably to himself ‘try to remember’. This goes back to the concept of habit-memory as the patterns of their bodies in motion are activated in mirroring distance and contact through interacting with each other, through actively refining their movements together there comes this ‘Aha!’ moment of recognition between the partners despite the process of remembering being a clumsy and disharmonious activity at first.



Figure 10 A photo of Martin and Stefan mirroring each other.

They engage again and this time Stefan surprises him with his attacks, but Martin blocks them with his arm and brings Stefan down to the floor – Stefan does not stop there as he kicks Martin away from his laying position. They slowly stand out of breath and start again this time facing each other, as they both grab each other’s arms because of their blocks – Martin performs a Harimau technique by clawing Stefan’s thigh down and rolling away. They both stand again, and this time Martin prepares his stance in the secondary Langkah position with hands gesturing claws as an invitation to engage again, as Stefan brings him to the floor then rolls away and when Stefan gets up and Martin is still on the floor, Stefan then reminds him *harimau harimau harimau*. Martin seemingly remembers then, as his facial

expression indicates a moment of realisation, brings Stefan's kick back to the floor. It is during these improvised choreographic fights that I see their hands gesturing claw attacks, which is a feature of the Harimau technique, and I hear more grunts and growling noises as the scene heightens to an exhaust.

Bourdieu would emphasise the social factor involved in the learning process. Bourdieu takes into consideration that the body is a mediating entity, which embodies knowledge as 'generative grammar, but is not an inborn generative grammar. It is a principle of invention, a principle of improvisation. The habitus generates inventions and improvisations but within limits'. (Bourdieu, 2005: 46) In Bourdieu's terms, the body is a socially mediating/mediated body, and therefore through the embodied socialisation of learning Silat, their experiences have shaped the way they move. The concept of Habitus is a set of embodied life experiences supported by navigating through implicit influences of culture, it is perpetuated and reinforced by the repetition of actions that are mental and physical, it inhabits through the activity of the body knowledge that is translated into the body consciously and/or unconsciously. Although the members of Anak Harimau were not born into the tradition of Minang Silat from Sumatra, their social exposure and secondary socialisation to learning the arts of Silat outside their hometown has influenced the grammatical skills or in other words repertoire of movements in their bodies and their own cultural habits that they carry may suggest a cultural translated confrontation with the movements that allows them to creatively reproduce the performance of the choreographic fights. The reason behind using linguistic metaphor of the word 'grammar' is because my interlocutors in the field perceive their Silat movements to be like another form of speaking a language. As they admit to trying to remember the advanced techniques they learned from the native land of Sumatra, these unconscious moments of remembering by actively improvising together is a telling point that when they can remember the sequences while practising together – it suggests that the social learning factor was involved in creating the repertoire they inhabited.

After reaching the height of their mock fight, I decide that this is an appropriate moment to join. I am instructed to follow Stefan's movements and the tension of session dissipates. He is now much more at ease now to eagerly direct me on the mirroring movements while Martin mirrors us.

We are now engaged in a deconstruction of each stance and movement, and one of the striking things about this exercise is that we punctuate each of our movements with a slap to our thighs. With what feels like my lifeless body this point, I try and follow each step as best

as I can because my presupposition before entering the exercises is that it would be too difficult for me to follow in one go, and so I do not feel confident, and I have trouble following the mirroring exercise that they show me. When I am in Stefan's shadows trying to mirror him, I am more careful and thoughtful with my steps, and I get the steps eventually but very slowly. I admit to them that this may be challenging for me to do, and Martin reminds me that it is important not to think about the steps – they both talk about the connection between the leader and the follower partner dances. When I practice the exercise with Stefan, Martin comments, *'you wanted the spiritual thing.'*

Martin refers to my initial motivation to study Silat. It is not mystery to my interlocutors in the field that my initial interest before entering the field was my understanding that the practice of Silat Harimau entailed a long tradition of not just martial art practice but also a spiritual practice. Reading D.S. Farrer's work on 'Shadows of the Prophet' prompted me to think about the complexities of the myth behind the ancestral tiger spirit, as discussed in the chapter 'Quest for Harimau'. And so, revealing the question as I entered the field may have elicited notions of what could be spiritual in these trainings. Nevertheless, it set the tone for how interlocutors perceive and present the field.

To recognize one's self in the light of the enchanted cosmos, one must begin to adjust personal, social, psychological, and spiritual faults in order to overcome them by "polishing the heart" (a Sufi metaphor for perfecting the self). The project to perfect the self is the ultimate goal of Islamic Malay mysticism. In silat it takes the form of a quest to develop physical skills and to acquire mystical knowledge (*ilmu kebatinan*). (Farrer, 2009: 134)

This mirroring technique is a strong aspect of Minang Silat. Together, they show the moves, specifically addressing my attention. Martin explains: *'to know this, you have to know the basic steps and you have to be more experienced in Silat because it's important that you don't have to think about yourself and your steps. So, it's like learning a language if I don't know the vocabularies and the grammar, I don't know how to talk to another. You have to be very precise in the techniques, you don't have to think about it anymore and then you focus on the other one and you feel how Stefan is moving. If I know my steps, if I know my Silat and I don't have to think about ah am I standing right or how is this working? If I know this, then I can play. It's like car driving you know, if I'm constantly focused on how to grab the wheel and how to make the shift then I'm not focused on the street. So, you really have to be like you're doing it automatically and you can a safe driver. And here is the same if I know my steps then*

I can follow him. I'm not even looking that much.' I hear this with acceptance and understand that it is about the energy and connection that they give with the embodied memory in their body (Koch, Fuchs, Summa, & Muller, 2012) in those steps. The shared experience that this group has formed through learning together for years shows a strong link that they have with the transmission process of remembering and reproducing the physical techniques together. And the research objective considers how these connections produce the Harimau energy through these relational dynamics and processes. In this interaction, it is important to highlight what Martin is trying to point out to me when he says *'you feel how Stefan is moving'*. In one of my discussions with Minang Silat arts expert, Silmon explains that on a basic level a student must observe and mimic the teacher and he confirms that there is a relational connection happening as he explains, *'On a more subtle level and this is certainly the case with students that are more advanced there is a training of 'Rasa' or the senses...feeling. the ability to move in unison, to anticipate or feel an opposing move and thus react to it...this is based of being able to 'feel' the other persons energy, often to tap into their intention before the move actually occurs.'* (2022)

5.4 Somatic modes of Attention in Mirroring

Thomas Csordas reviews the works of Merleau-Ponty and Bourdieu and considers the embodiment of the living body in the world as a methodological field, whereby the body must be considered for its grounds of experience in its intercultural forms of transmission and intersubjective historical experience, and in this case, the context of martial arts. Csordas emphasises how the concept of Somatic modes of attention involves processes of sensorial attentiveness to one's body in the presence of other 'objects' as bodies in the environment.

Attention to a bodily sensation can thus become a mode of attending to the intersubjective milieu that give rise to that sensation. Thus, one is paying attention with one's body'. (Csordas, 1993: 138)

If the body is able to connect to other bodies in a given perceptual space through somatic modes of attention as Csordas argues, our bodies as intersubjective beings communicate with each other and can become subject to the process of reflecting. It is this mirroring exercise in the training that Martin refers to as spiritual because it does not require thinking and planning, but it depends on a special kind of attention related to sensing the other. In other words, to feel and anticipate what the other person's body next moves are. The grammar must be acquired and learned for the connection of mirroring to take effect, as pointed out by the advanced trainers. I infer from observation that the techniques are embodied in the memory

of their bodies, since when I tried the exercise myself it was not an easy natural process in my experience.

Csordas (1993) attempts to analyse what it is that exactly attends to one's body in a mode and he breaks it down into four categories: intuition, imagination, perception, and sensation. With relevant points addressed, Csordas mentions the concept of Henry Corbin's *mundus imaginalis* (Shariat, 1991) implying that the process of sense impressions is an imaginative process. And if there is an element of not seeing the other but actively sensing the other in a mirroring exercise, which is interestingly described as spiritual, then it suggests that there may be an imaginal and intermediary dimension to move in opposing directions complimentary to one's partner in the perceptible field.

This is not to eliminate that a cognitive process is at play. Stefan, my trainer, describes the connection that is formed during a mirroring technique in Silat. He infers that intelligence is manifested, a mental activity that is not intellectual or analytical, but probably intuitive.

In an almost ritual-like manner, the members of the group share an intersubjective and intercorporeal experience together like sharing one body which creates some degree of what Csikszentmihalyi terms 'flow.' In the mirroring exercise of Minang Silat, there becomes an initiator and a follower – one who initiates a movement and stance, where the other reflects the opposite congruence of the initiator. At some point of the choreographic sequence, the dynamic changes and these roles can shift. Essentially, it is about testing out the oppositional relationship with the other.



Figure 11 Demonstrates the mirroring exercise in Silat.

And since martial arts is a space where one is encouraged to challenge the other, test out this opposition, it becomes a sacred field of disharmonious union.

5.5 Movement Analysis

Egil Bakka and Gediminas Karoblis (2010) propose that approaching the realisation of dance is the most important source of dance research given its element of perceptivity. And Bakka's transcription methodology creates a comprehensive analysis that examines movement patterns. I choose movement analysis as a method of analysing Silat as a martial art because I am curious about the connection between the pair work and how they 'mirror' each other. According to my collaborators in the field, the mirroring technique found in the Minang styles of Silat is considered a spiritual or mystical feature of the art. As Martin explains about his embodied Silat vocabulary and grammar, it becomes a point of interest to find the structure of the movements. Therefore, I decide to analyse 21 seconds of this salient moment with myself as point of reference because there is a substantial dynamic yet structured movements to be considered. With this moment, I further explore the concept of Csordas' Somatic modes of Attention and the empathic structure of pairing one's body with the other. Upper body and lower body are the parameters I identify to examine what type of congruence is taking place because there seems to be kinaesthetic emphatic relation embedded between

their relationship. With the types of congruences I identified, it is interesting that a small portion of their movements reflect each other in 'mirroring' way. In addition, the parameter of the clapping sound as a signalling gesture in Silat is of focus to the analysis, since it might serve as a basis to explore the empathic attention Silat martial arts players have with each other.

Within the parameters of the upper body and lower body, I closely investigate what is happening with three main subsystems; the head, the eyes, and the hip to leg movements of each player. Attention is an important feature of the mirroring choreography, determining the direction of the head with its oculomotoric movement on whether it is direct, peripheral, or passive view seems to be a fair starting point of analysis. And since there is the initiator and the other is the follower, to which degree are they actively watching each other for anticipation, and what kind of interaction comes out of the encounter? Does this affect their role, whether it is to negotiate a harmonious connection or oppositional reaction?

The findings from the transcription suggest that Stefan initiates the first movement and therefore Martin is the follower. Throughout most of the interaction, Stefan has his gaze lowered with a complete focus on each of his own movements while Martin seems to anticipate by looking directly at him and peripherally. The times where Stefan is out of Martin's sight like behind or below him is when Martin does not use his vision to sense Stefan, and this is a telling point, revealing that the initiator dictates what the next movements of his follower could be, whether from a recollected piece of choreography or a creative improvisation. Regarding the types of congruences, the point was to find out at which points during the mirroring exercise did the partners directly have an identical rotational congruence, reflectional congruence or no congruence at all happening with their whole body.

To make things clear, the congruence we are looking for when referring to 'mirroring' exercise is actually a rotational congruence as it is when, for example the right side of the body is performing exactly the same moves to what their partner's right side is performing and vice versa. Whereas a reflectional congruence occurs when facing each other that the right side of a partner relates to the left side of the other. These points of dispositions are embedded in our kinaesthetic emphatic relation with each other as a result of the brain readjusting to relate to the other's body.

The findings suggest that a quarter of the movements from the pair happen with a rotational congruence, another quarter of it happens with a reflectional congruence and the half of it

which occurs in the second half of the exercise is when more variations occur and no identical congruences can be found. The first movement must be a reflectional one since both partners clap at the same time to begin the exercise; the point of the first half of the exercise is to achieve as much rotational congruence with the other as possible. It is in these seconds of anticipation when the follower Martin is caught in a reflectional congruence as these seconds capture the delay of the follower attempting to anticipate what the leader's next movements are.

Where there are identical congruences to be found, there becomes a moment of cohesion and when there is a moment of non-congruence then there seems to be moment of playing with roles of the leader and the follower. For example, a highlighting moment of non-congruence is at 26 seconds when Martin is standing on one leg with hands in a clawing gesture and Stefan is across him crouching down pressed on the grass. 8 seconds later at 32 seconds the partners imitate the opposite role, and this time Stefan is in the one-legged position while Martin is crouching below.

Time	Clap Sound		Whole Body Type of Congruence
	Clap M	Clap S	
0,2	R.H.	R&L	Rotation
0,21	L.H.		Identical Rotation
0,22	R.H.	R&L	Identical Rotation
0,23	R&L		Identical Rotation
0,24	R.H.		Identical Rotation
0,25			Reflection
0,26	R&L		No Congruence
0,27		R&L	No Congruence
0,28			Reflection
0,29	R.H.	L.H.	Reflection
0,3		R.H.	No Congruence
0,31			Reflection
0,32		R.H.	No Congruence
0,33	R&L		No Congruence
0,34	L.H.	R.H.	Reflection
0,35	L.H.		No Congruence
0,36		R.H.	No Congruence
0,37	R.H.		No Congruence
0,38	R.H.	R.H.	No Congruence
0,39	R.H.		No Congruence
0,4	R.H. L.H.	R.H. L.H.	No Congruence

Figure 12(a) Movement Transcription of the clap sound and type of congruence the pair M and S.

Having observed the partners in action across from each other, I indicate that there is a central axis that is determined between them and that is the vertical zed axis which determines their direction of rotation. In other words, this is to say that this central axis is imaginary and this axis between them is how it is observable when Martin and Stefan are moving in a clockwise or anticlockwise motion. And so, the z-axis in the transcription, the direction of their motion and the reason for working with the subsystem of legs is because the legs determine the transfer or change of support of the weight from left or right and vice versa. The hand gestures are highlighted mainly for its semantic distinctions as motif of the hands when it is in a clawing gesture signals the appearance of a Harimau technique. As discussed earlier, since each movement is punctuated with a slapping sound to the thigh, I notated which hand of each player is slapping by using the initials right hand for R.H. and left hand for L.H. Also, highlighted with the colour orange is a slap with a strong sounding emphasised clap, and the colour yellow for a faster soft slap.

Time	M				
	z-axis	Head M	Eyes M	Hips M	Legs S
0,2	Straight	Straight	Direct	Straight	Straight
0,21	Anti-clockwise	Forward	Direct	Twisted	Left
0,22	Clockwise	Forward	Peripheral	Twisted	Right
0,23	Anti-clockwise	Turned	Direct	Twisted	Left
0,24	Anti-clockwise	Turned	/	Low	Left
0,25	Anti-clockwise	Turned	Turned	Twisted	Right
0,26	Anti-clockwise	Forward	Direct	Low	Left
0,27	Same position	Forward	Direct	Low	Right
0,28	Same position	Forward	Direct	Twisted	Left
0,29	Clockwise	Forward	Direct	Twisted	Right
0,3	Anti-clockwise	Forward	Peripheral	Twisted	Right
0,31	Anti-clockwise	Turned	Turned	Twisted	Left
0,32	Clockwise	Lowered	Lowered	Low	Right
0,33	Same position	Forward	Direct	Twisted	Left
0,34	Same position	Forward	Direct	Twisted	Left
0,35	Same position	Forward	Straight	Twisted	Left
0,36	Clockwise	Turned	Direct	Low	Left
0,37	Anti-clockwise	Forward	Direct	Twisted	Right
0,38	Anti-clockwise	Forward	Direct	Twisted	Right
0,39	Anti-clockwise	Forward	Direct	Twisted	Left
0,4	Anti-clockwise	Forward	Lowered	Twisted	Left
Time	S				
	z-axis	Head S	Eyes S	Hips S	Legs S
0,2	Straight	Lowered	Lowered	Straight	Straight
0,21	Clockwise	Lowered	Lowered	Twisted	Left
0,22	Clockwise	Lowered	Lowered	Twisted	Right
0,23	Anti-clockwise	Lowered	Lowered	Twisted	Left
0,24	Anti-clockwise	Turned	Lowered	Low	Left
0,25	Anti-clockwise	Turned	Not looking	Twisted	Right
0,26	Anti-clockwise	Lowered	Lowered	Low	Left
0,27	Same position	Forward	Direct	Low	Right
0,28	Same position	Forward	Lowered	Twisted	Right
0,29	Clockwise	Lowered	Lowered	Twisted	Left
0,3	Anti-clockwise	Lowered	Lowered	Twisted	Right
0,31	Anti-clockwise	Turned	Not looking	Twisted	Left
0,32	Clockwise	Forward	Direct	Low	Right
0,33	Same position	Lowered	Lowered	Twisted	Left
0,34	Same position	Forward	Lowered	Twisted	Left
0,35	Clockwise	Forward	Lowered	Twisted	Left
0,36	Clockwise	Turned	Turned	Twisted	Right
0,37	Clockwise	Turned	Turned	Twisted	Right
0,38	Clockwise	/	/	Twisted	Right
0,39	Anti-clockwise	Turned	Turned	Twisted	Left
0,4	Anti-clockwise	Forward	Covered	Twisted	Right

Figure 13(b) Movement Transcription of the central z-axis, with subsystems: head, eyes, hips and legs of M and S.

Chapter 6: ‘Am I ready to show my claws?’

This chapter will reveal three events during the field, which are central moments in navigating through the experience of being an apprentice and making sense of what the tiger is. The first event is a look into one of the training sessions introduced, like other sessions mentioned previously. However, this training session is a salient moment for it reveals an affective dimension of my experience in the field. The second event exposes what happens during the aftereffects of the post-training session when I come back to my residence fresh from the training. The third event marks the turning of a full circle back to the field 8 months later when I revisit the field to meet my interlocutors and discuss these events prior events. Throughout the chapter, I support these events by adding excerpts from my field notes, in addition to interview and conversational transcripts in and outside the field, literature sources that allude to the phenomenon I am discussing and finally, I analyse these situations and reflect on them. This chapter ultimately discusses the phenomenon of ‘Tigerism’, a term inspired by my tutor Georgiana Gore, in which my journey and quest set out to find the tiger brings me to a point of making sense of this paradigm and myth that is embedded in the cosmology of Silat.

6.1 First event: Being Affected

I reach the train station at Ladendorf in the countryside at exactly 7pm, half an hour late. Stefan picks me up right away and we reach the training ground soon after. I notice that Nada and Martin are present for the class, and they are practising as they wait for us to join. (Martin, from Ladendorf is another participant and not a trainer) Stefan tells me to change into my training clothes and I decide while changing that I probably should not film this session as I am already late, and I do not want to cause anymore disruptions. As I am changing, I hear and sense that something is wrong behind me. I turn and see that Nada has just backed off from Stefan, flushed red as she covers the bottom half of her face. I realise then that Nada is crying. She decides to take a cool down break and walk around the street.

During her break, Stefan instructs me to warm up while he exercises some techniques with Martin. I begin the warmup exercises and maintain a level of composed calmness; I know that in such situations it is important for me not to react as this might create more tension during the training. Having witnessed her reaction, I decide it best not to express my attention to it. When Nada comes back, I ask her if she would like to warm up with me and she responds positively.

Stefan then decides to demonstrate the first exercise by inviting me to be the model for the attack. This exercise happens to involve the touching of the face to bring the opponent down. I do not appreciate this move, because I do not feel grounded in the space yet. There is something irritating about a potential opponent breaching into one's inner domain, and I suppose that one of the most intimate and sensitive points of that inner domain would be the face.

It is now our turn to practise the exercise as pairs; when Nada and I are paired together I notice she is much rougher with her hold and force than how I experienced her contact in previous sessions. I guess this was an after effect of exposing her tears. And the result is to toughen up after experiencing that immediate toughness. I wonder how emotionally vulnerable it can be to expose yourself in martial arts training. I let my body become non-reactive enough for her to be tough with. I did not mind her release on me.

In martial arts, there is a technical term called sensitivity training, it entails training the ability to respond to your partner based on touch, and to ultimately be aware of yourself, your partner's next moves and the environment. Sometimes sensitivity drills involve blind folding the players in order to heighten the perception of feeling. The group admittedly has done some exercises in the dark to practice this kind of sensitivity training. More importantly, the utilisation of tactile perception allows one to train consciously to receive energies a partner feeds you. Upon reflection, in this case, I am able to empathetically perceive and emotionally read what my partner's needs were.

James Gibson (1966) defines 'the haptic system', which echoes this phenomenological experience during touch. As he elaborates on the feeling of touch, he explains that,

‘The haptic system, unlike the other perceptual system, includes the whole body, most of its parts, and all of its surface. The extremities are exploratory sense organs, but they are also performatory motor organs; that is to say, the equipment for feeling is anatomically the same as the equipment for doing’. (1966: 99)

As we progress with the exercises, we play with this lock in this exercise multiple times. It involves the twisting of the arm with the pressure point on the elbows and eventually the shoulder. Stefan decides to exercise the basic steps and postures with us in between few other exercises. One of the pair exercises that we engage in involves the feeder kicking while the opponent steps back to aim for a counter kick. Nada and I practice this exercise. Stefan observes then interrupts us and says, ‘Do you know what is disgusting?’ He points out that it is disgusting when someone looks at their feet instead of looking right at the person one is trying to kick. In this scenario, he refers to me as the person committing the error. I try not to react at his use of words. I try to guess if he might be on edge but as I reflect; I realise this could be an encouraging tactic.

Next, I pair with Stefan, and I am instructed to kick with the sole of my foot and back off with a step right away just in time to dodge a reactive kick from my opponent. I try to do this as best as I can because it seems challenging to slap the leg with the sole of your foot so quickly after striking a kick and to evade the counter kick just in time. I attempt to do this again and I fail. I know this because I felt Stefan’s light kick to my stomach. I feel shocked, not from the pain but the feeling that I failed, and that I can be the hit if I do not perform it right and quick enough. I suddenly feel this adrenaline rush, which quickens my speed, but he is still faster, and at one point I end up kicking him the wrong way, my toes cracking when aimed at his leg. Now, I understand why it was important to kick with the sole of my foot.

We practice another pair-up exercise and this time I am with Martin. In this exercise I take a step forward to attack Martin, he dodges my attack by dropping to the floor and hooking his leg to my front leg to drop me. There is a counterattack to this movement which involves me landing with the other leg on my knee and pressing my hands to the floor to support the turn of my hips to kick with the other leg on his face. We exercise this multiple times to get it right and when I finally get the movement right, I almost actually kick his face with my foot.

This causes us to both laugh loudly. Right then, as if without thinking Stefan jumps in and plays roughly with Martin. When Stefan turns to me for my turn to perform the same previous kicking exercise, I am defeated, and with this I feel overpowered and cornered. I sensed another counterattack coming my way and this time I exclaim ‘Nooo!’ and he lets go. Our last exercise is fun, we are paired to sit across each other on the floor. As we sit, we are supposed to try to slap the other on the face or head. When I am paired with Stefan, I try to dodge his slaps by somehow moving my upper body away to avoid them. I flash him with my claws, and he mutters something like ‘tiger’ to address my moves.

To close our training session, we stand in a circle and Stefan gives a long speech about martial arts. He talks about how martial arts is for the health and security of society. Nada is inquisitive and asks about the role of martial arts and how Silat differs from it. Stefan justifies its healthy advantages for the individual’s physical body and health in their place in society. He talks about the shocking element involved in Silat. He turns to me and asks if his hit towards me was painful, I just replied ‘it was shocking’. After his speech about Silat, we gradually start to do our cool down stretches as we close our circle.

6.2 Second event: Post-training aftereffects

That night when I got home, I was very upset. I felt emotional, even angry. I did not know how to process my feelings when arrived. I took some bread and angrily chewed it and cried at the same time. I did not know where this anger was coming from.

The fact is there, and it remains, I am entering this training space of martial arts with an untrained body and limited experience of being in such spaces. I see now how the training ground can be a very emotional place with mixed feelings that keeps fluctuating. After all, we are adults that agreed to learn how to fight with our vulnerable bodies. That also entails learning to take pain or that shock value of it as appropriately as possible. Martial art spaces like these are still relatively controlled spaces. It was appropriate for Nada to take a break, cry, walk then come back.

This tiger energy, I realised, is not as peaceful and ‘zen-like’ as I thought. Actually, it is the complete opposite of zen. I talked to Johnny Silmon in London, and he responded positively

about me training this style of Silat. He said, ‘Nothing beats “feeling it.” You are doing it and that is what makes it important to give you more insight.’ I asked him if he meant pain. He responds, ‘Pain sure, but the energy, intentions and principles of the art.’

Tiger Energy

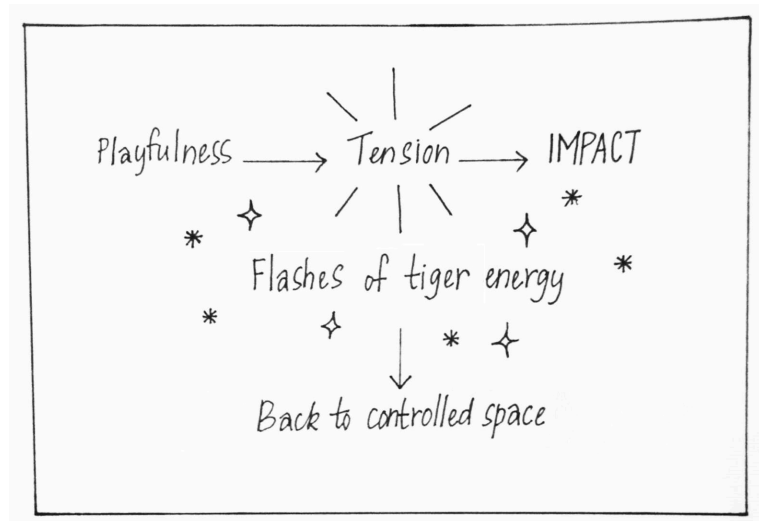


Figure 14 Visual support of Tiger Energy

In attempting to break down the dynamics of interaction that I have observed and experienced during the interactions in the training is that at the beginning, there is a lightness and playfulness, which are accompanied by jokes and small talk, that permeates before contact. Before drills are perfected, this playfulness can carry during the sparring contact when errors occur. When drills are performed repetitively and correctly, the tension of the body gradually relaxes. The tension is held and felt just before contact exercises of sparring throughout the several rounds of exercises that occur. Once impact is felt from an opponent by a push or a pull into the inner or outer domain of one's body, flashes of a type of energy emerge. As per example mentioned with my partner touching my face, my personal space was challenged, and I felt my body reacting internally to the breach of this contact. This reaction is maintained by the reality that we are in fact in a socially controlled training situation. This suggests that the body being-in-the-world experiences emotions actively. And as a result of cognitive evaluation, consequently, it is the emotional body that can control how to respond to perceptible senses in its given social world. As Klaus Scherer states,

‘one of the major functions of emotion consists in the constant evaluation of external and internal stimuli in terms of their relevance for the organism and the preparation of behavioural reactions which may be required as a response to those stimuli.’ (1984: 296)

Having highlighted how emotions function as a key to cognitive evaluation of sensing what affects the emotional body, Lyon and Barbalet (1994) argue for the role of embodied emotion in bodily agency. They highlight that emotion has a simultaneous a social-relational genesis, meaning that its role is embedded in social consequences. The energy I was looking for prior to entering the field was the tiger energy, and after many deliberations and reflections on expanding and simplifying what I experience with my interlocutors in the field, I identify this type of energy as an aggressive kind. O'Shea describes this experience accurately by stating, ‘Sparring manages emotional response and sometimes suppresses it. Taking a hit to the face while staying the course requires squelching feelings of fear and anger.’ (2019: 75) There are a few places in life where these physical and emotional conditions are challenged and elicited, and martial arts is that permissible space to honour the aggressive nature.

In these trainings, there are displays of sheer dominance. It is about establishing dominance over the other. It can determine who is physically better or faster, which also entails establishing dominance physically. And I have come to the realisation as a beginner student that I am at the bottom, I know this through the sheer recognition that the expert in front of me is very much capable of defeating me. It comes to my awareness because it is felt.

Because it is relatively controlled, it does not dissolve into violence. Martial arts are about the rhythm of back and forth, the giving and the taking, which otherwise would not happen in an actual fight. The tiger is a model because it can establish dominance and power over you. The captivation of fear and the possibility of lethality are the powers of the tiger.

I want to be tough in entering such controlled spaces. I am laying everything out as someone who can feel easily afraid when the element of shock is involved. That day caused a roller coaster of emotions, and it may have just been an unusual and an emotional day for some of us involved. Is real aggression or at least flashes of it during training, the first sight of the

tiger? I do not think it is explicit, it is much subtler than that. In this Silat space, the tiger retracts its claws.

6.3 Third event: Coming full circle

Umwege erhöhen die Ortskenntnis – Kurt Tucholský

‘Detours increase local knowledge’ and this was the central theme of coming back to 8 months later during the beautiful springtime of April 2022 in Vienna. I found myself compelled to reach out to some of the people in the field again. I joined two trainings; for fun, interest and to reconnect again with what is familiar. This time, I came back more relaxed and better conditioned than the year before, since I continued training Silat in London. I wanted to reach Stefan and Nada again, and this was not hard because of their interest and respect for the work.

I had a lovely excursion and a friendly reconnection with each of them; with Nada it was important for me to reach out to a fellow beginner and a woman like myself. As for Stefan, it was important for me to confide in our student-teacher relationship in such a way for me to make sense of the tiger, my emotions and Silat.

Few days before the full moon, I had a lovely day with Nada and we were sitting across from each other outside a Persian restaurant when she said, ‘I didn't expect it to be deep.’

We discussed my initial interest point about studying the myth of the tiger, my experience with Silat and what I know so far about the origins of the practice. Moreover, we deliberate about her conception of it, her experience with Silat as a beginner up to now as well as her experience being a student of Stefan's.

As a student of Stefan's, she described her coach or Abang (great brother) as a preaching figure. Someone who is confrontational, but he knows how to handle it, he does not say too much, he says enough. She revealed that she was inquisitive to her coach about her positionality and what it means to be affected in Silat during the training. She said that he responded by saying that she could be afraid to feel this tiger energy, this aggression.

‘Am I ready to show my claws?’

When she reflected on this energy that she could possibly have, it amazed her and she wondered rhetorically, ‘Am I ready to show my claws?’ We both discuss and reflect about the tiger energy, and I ask her about her personal understanding of the tiger and its connection in training.

Right in the beginning I didn't know anything theoretically about Silat and the mythology of the tiger. In retrospective it was always incorporated in the training sessions. Being/moving playful and flexible like a cat, holding the focus, and widening it, observing, and taking action if necessary. Trying to understand and feel the essence of the tiger I'd conclude it as a presence of dualistic energy qualities and bringing it into balance.

Such as aggression, for example, which can empower or destroy, to protect or attack. In any matter I understand it's about energies/emotions, the awareness about them (upcoming), controlling and handling those, taking actions wisely and responsibly. Basically, it clicked during the training in moments of flow such in positive, flexible/fluid interactions and in challenging moments of upcoming and hard-to-handle emotions.

When Nada brings up ‘dualistic energy qualities’, she refers to the light and dark qualities exist in being. With all the basic emotions that arise, she confirms that the tiger can be felt as a medium of controlling these emotions. It is important to clarify that even after months of not having brought up the event to her, that she refers to these ‘moments of flow’ as what I had identified in my field notes as moments when the body relaxes after repetitive sparring contact and drills.

Throughout the study, one cannot help but ask if I found the tiger. To which I cannot help but dance around the subject, whether to confront it directly or to retract with hesitation. I come back to this point that I experienced during the mentioned training; flashes of it, the energy of aggression and its controlled containment in training. Like Nada said, it is much deeper than

that. The point of training is not merely for the expression of this said energy nor it is merely for the catharsis of it, but that it is the process of training that expression. Training Silat entails shaping the physical condition and emotional energy that comes out of it. As for the group members who understand at least the taste of 'feeling it', it becomes an additional layer and process that involves remembering and reembodying it.

For Nada, her motivations for joining Silat is a personal journey of being whole with the trinity – it is more than a physical process, it is a process of integrating with three levels of being mentally, physically, and spiritually.

Having reconnected with Stefan, I asked him why people from the group are motivated to practice Silat. He disclosed that it is probably for a mix of reasons; when he introduces Silat to people, he brings up the sportif aspect, the health aspect, the physical aspect, the aesthetic aspect, the self-defence aspect but also that there is this inner aspect. He said that he does not name it, he refers to it generally because it is a private aspect.

To highlight Bourdieu's term of the body being a 'socially mediated body', other scholars (Reynold, 1981) would add that the emotional body is a socially mediating body. When Stefan refers to this general phenomenon as a 'private aspect', I cannot help but wonder which part is exactly the private one. Since we are generally socialised to compose our emotions in social settings, and the training context could be an outlet where we are at least encouraged to be present with our senses, this private aspect that he refers to could be how we individually confront the complexities of our inner workings. In spite of this sentiment, this is not to discard that whatever takes place in the training, whether psychosomatic, physical or emotional responses – it is socially shared between us all.

Did you let go after your break? 'Quite the opposite.'

We remembered and returned to the memory of the event together. I told Nada how distinct it was to me as I felt affected by it. I wanted to know how she felt and if it was all in my head, since I did feel the difference of her contact after she came back from her break.

Feeling her contact and observing the whole scene while participating was enough for me to emphatically relate to what Nada felt. I understood right away this need to toughen up after feeling exposed. In my discussion with Nada, interestingly she mentions the state of masking and demasking during training. She talks about the dynamic mental process of questioning where to let go of one's feelings; to pack one's feelings or play wild. In my case, my emotional outburst was released when I was finally home and alone with myself. I kept composure throughout the whole session and maintained it outwardly as best as I could. It was in my self-interest and preference for discretion not to show my weakness and vulnerability even though I could directly see and confront the physical inferiority of my untrained body.

Its mainly the same topic of a mistake tolerance and initialized an inner process of a reflection about it. How did I get socialized and how did I cultivate it myself? How do I deal with power and assess it? How do I deal with weakness and the acceptance about it? Its about several personality aspects and bringing it into balance, especially if its an "unwanted", weak shadow aspect. One point is to perceive your own borders, for example, the experience of being defeated (being fixed on the ground and the inability to leave) and the dealing with it. How is the dealing with "powerlessness"? Do I trust the other one handling his own power responsible and carefully? Which impulses come up and what strategies come up? Here I could feel strong tensions, but with the growing trust and the exchange between the group members also the ability to let these tensions transform, without giving it too much attention, is developing.

And it is this negotiatory process that she describes so well that involves the emotional dimension of our being. Since martial arts is a practice of the back and forth, the feeding and the taking, the acceptance and the resistance; bouts of feelings having to do with powerlessness, weakness and vulnerability are clashing with feelings of aggression, defence, and empowerment. And that is why this feeling of not wanting to be weak and vulnerable

erupted in me, especially when I realised that my mistake with my kick would not be good enough for the fight. This feeling of trust between the group members and especially with the trainer is greatly important, since this emotional element fluctuates and is unpredictable but, in a way, a necessary part of the training to confront.

As I got aware of the trigger points and the instant reaction with basic emotional and behavioral programs of panicking, trivializing with smiling (again female way to appease) or leaving the situation, that's when the masks are falling, and it shows all of the weak repertoire humans can have. Here it needed time, trust, the sensitivity of my Abang and the group and a lot of self-acceptance... In the personal development it's one thing to have topics on your screen on an intellectual, so to say controllable, level. What was new to me was the very direct interaction on a physical level, which is direct, unreflected and unconscious. When the body memory gets triggered and non-expected body reactions happen, such as crying, laughing, shivering, fleeing... to break it down to fight, flight or freeze-responses. The process is developing more handsome flexible strategies. Its a healing process really.

After hours of deliberations on the event, we both pondered on this inclination as females to make sure that everything is fine to display amicability - that in spite of having overwhelming feelings, there is this tendency to contain and keep together to pack and unpack for later. We can recognise the social conditioning and internalisation of this behaviour during training in comparison to the males. At least in fair comparison to a male beginner student, she describes one of the new male students as a wild baby tiger who is unafraid to make mistakes. In a way, this interconnected relationship between the mechanism of the physical and emotional output that happens within us may make sense when there is a relaxed attitude that translates physically within a student who is not too cautious about making mistakes, then there is not much emotional containment and control to endure.

Overall, practising Silat as a form of embodiment challenges gendered conditioning of the body. Through engaging in training, I have gained some psychosomatic sense of aware that

my defences were low from the beginning. But that developing a power for counterattack is possible, this is made possible with repetitive physical drills that my body can create. As O'Shea articulates well:

‘Physical play, when handled with intention and respect, can encourage reconsideration of vulnerability. Women find combative play empowering not only because of the skills it imparts but also because they learn in a direct and immediate way that they are not as vulnerable as they’ve been taught; they are likewise reminded that men are not invincible.’ (2019: 86)

CONCLUSION

After the development of my positionality in the field, it became clearer that active participation was necessary and that it was central to understanding the embodiment of Silat. Downey, Dalidowicz and Mason (2014) argued that apprentice-based research is a gateway to perceiving the social and practical machinery when developing skills as a novice and these different learning methods and situations that were facilitated by the group allowed me to embody the experience and energy of Silat. Learning the fundamentals physically was the foundational step to getting a glimpse of the complex tiger. As I sought to find a spiritual dimension in the transnational world of Silat, this search presented its own challenges and limitations as this was not a pronounced aspect in the field. The significance of the group members experience was their embodied memory of learning Silat in Sumatra together. The tiger became reinterpreted in meaning through performed action.

The findings of my experience and embodied ethnography, that I explored through the conceptual framework of Tigerism, revealed an emotional apparatus that affected novices like myself.

Between experienced members, this process of expression seemed to be controlled. But through their performance of the mirroring aspect of Silat, another angle can be investigated in the depths of the Silat world. This dimension of relationality shows dynamics of Somatic modes of Attention (Csordas, 1993), anticipation and awareness in their performative movements.

Through this experience and further practice, I learn that the physical training of Silat can be a way of balancing emotions. Samudra (2008) alludes to how certain movements in Silat contain a type of energy. Since the tiger holds a strong association in the cosmology of Silat, further research can be done to deeply study the affective dimension of Silat for the purpose of health and wellbeing.

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Appendices

Excerpts of Interview Transcripts

Interviewee: Christian Hansen

Interviewer: Fatema Albastaki

Date: 15/07/2021

Duration: 40:30

Fatema: Now your part in Anak Harimau.. Did you also play the training role? Did you train other people?

Christian: Actually, from the beginning on, I was not wanting to have my own group because more or less because of the responsibility that comes with it.

If you have your own group, you're actually on one hand there's a time obligation that you have to invest and of course you're a little responsible for those persons, so I never did that.

I only participated with this group of advanced students, and I always offered and often did jump as replacements for Martin, less of Stefan because he's in lower Austria so the group is far away, but for Martin quite often I was standing in when he was on holiday or so or when he asked or whatever was happening. Or sometimes I insisted so it was always going in that direction.

And I very much left the decisions on what actually Anak Harimau should go for or how the curriculum be structured for the students I left it very much to Martin and Stefan and only consulted so there are a few pieces where I designed actually the way of doing the Hormat at the beginning of each training session so going to the left to the right and then to the floor - actually this is came from me.

There was a time I had an operation or something and I could not train so I said ok you cannot train but you are here so would you please make a proposal for this so I developed this it's just this tiny piece but this is actually coming from me and a couple of other things you actually would also find tiny piece which I contributed but the big picture is Stefan and Martin.

Interviewee: Martin Jagoditsch

Interviewer: Fatema Albastaki

Date: 05/07/2021

Duration: 01:11:01

Fatema: So, what are these two kinds of initiations experience for you like and the process and the difference?

Martin: The impression of that was like an adventure. You know, I was young, it was my first time in Southeast Asia for myself. So, all the air, all the smell, all the environment and the people. So, it was very, and it had an impact on me that I can hardly explain. It was it was so cool and so colourful, and so different from the world I knew so it was very irritated, and I think I was I just sucked every, every moment because I knew, okay, I'm only here three weeks, then I'm back home for. I don't know. Next years.

Because I couldn't afford every year journey. [Yeah] and it was really it was a training session where some of his group became a master class. So, it was a master test. I don't know how to say master.. that they get their certificate. I was the only one who was not. I just trained the same stuff they did and make the same actions in here. Thought he did some some weird stuff there and I joined everything, but of course, I didn't get the master belt, because I was only training, one and a half year there. But he said I was learning so fast of course, because it was fun that I can join the students who are gaining the master title.

Yeah. Actually this was kind of sad because I said, okay, I'm doing Silat then back in the days, one and a half year. And Okay, I didn't know every technique, but I can fight with them all the time. So, what's up? You should be a master. Okay. But anyway, um there was this ritual and and this was kind of, and I needed several weeks or maybe months to after that to get my head clear what happened there [laughs]

...

Fatema: Yeah. So do you decide like I'm just curious because when you teach you decide in the structure like okay, this part will be traditional or this one will be more martial art or because there are some improvised combinations. And I don't know if those are traditional and or if those are not or let's just intuitive experience from from how your you also have a background in other martial arts. So, you you can just, you know, being intuitive about different movements.

Martin: Yeah. Yeah, Of course, if we learn some styles from Syofyan's, let's say I learn it. And but what I what we want to keep pure is what we learnt from him. So like the one lock with the knife today..I try really to follow the instructions Syofyan gave me. And I don't add this or that to it. I mean I have ideas but they're not these ideas, I keep with myself and maybe I put these ideas in the next technique. But if I say, okay, we train this Sinua style we

know from Syofyan, and not make our own style, but of course, I do this technique, and it became one of my own techniques.

So of course, Anak Harimau style is influenced by a lot of people and lot of Silat styles, and we say, does it work? Then take it, does it not work? We don't take it, and if it does not work, there are two possibilities. One is, we didn't understand the technique, we do it wrong. So, we try to work on it that maybe it's working. So, this is what we are on Wednesday to improve our Silat.

Transcript from Video Material

Date: 16/06/2022

Duration: 36:19

Stefan: [He demonstrates his point physically with Martin] If you understand that point of the joints, then you know how to manipulate it. Yeah, that's it you have to understand it. [Martin: and balance] and your own weight yeah [He demonstrates again] When I try this technique like this, I need tension and strength but when I just let myself fall I use weight I use the right angle yeah.

Martin: And it's about experience you know, if you train one year you get a slight idea what we train kind of several years and it became ah if you do this, you do that. So it's just experience, the more you train you relax and when you relax you can feel more and you can see more 'cause sometimes you don't see the weak points because you look in the face or whatever and you can feel the weak point in the feet, his knee or whatever.

Stefan: The other thing is the flow - when he stand like this, I know this one is a weak point for me [touches his knee with his foot] I must not look at it, I get his knee or step on his feet. This is difficult to come here [points at his head] but I know when I try to come here, he's open there so I have to and then I have to get in the flow. I decide to attack something like this, he try to escape, then I can try to move this. I must try to get in the flow, then I can try to manipulate him here so I have to find the flow and to move with him and the weak points are easy I musn't think about it. Here I have one, here I have one, here even there I can take the muscles, the joints.. body have not so much.

Fatema: See you weren't even looking but you sensed it, you sensed it from?

Stefan: For me, I scan it [touches knee with his foot and steps on his foot]

Fatema: Because you get in tuned with the other body or?

They both say yes.

Stefan: It's your anatomy, the second is that I have to get my anatomy yeah... I must know how is the distance [he backs away] this I cannot do from there. The distance now is like this, I can stand yeah. The distance now from here, now I can kick.

Fatema: So you can calculate the distance between you and your opponent. When I was training with Andrea, I couldn't tell the distance between us.

Stefan: The distance is just training, you must get used to. You must used to see these points, you must used to know how you can kick, push, punch. You must use your balance and this is training you have to do it. This is the important thing.

Andrea: Your body learns and remembers. There's a body memory.

Interviewee: Nada

Interviewer: Fatema Albastaki

Date: 10/04/2022

Fatema: What was your motivation for joining Silat? How has it developed so far from your starting point?

Nada: The main motivation for joining Silat, around one year ago, was basically finding some balance, retrieve my physical strengths and besides empower myself being able to defense if necessary.

That was probably just the first layer. I started at a sensitive point with a weak condition and a lot of insecurity. During the practice I realized its including a lot more topics: being seen, trust, presence, concentration, getting attaced, fears, handling those, masking, controllng strategies, allowance, demasking, tolerance, faint, power, using power, tensions, relaxation, contact (to myself and others), emotions, acceptance, discipline, personal borders, trigger points, playfulness, awareness, allowance/permission, strengths, weakness, dominance, inferiority, centering, keeping focus, believe, confidence. I didn't expect that impact. And it's still a hard work in process between giving up and fighting, insecurity and authenticity in forms of bridge a gap. The status quo is a strong healing process in the trinity of being. My body strengthens slightly up, coordination ability and stability improved, mentally the ability to focus, the allowance to change the very same thing on apparent conditions, self-tolerance and joy blossom up. In the process it shows that it's about the integration of those three levels of being.

Fatema: What did you know so far about the tiger energy and your personal understanding of it? How has it clicked with you in moments of realization and training?

Nada: Right in the beginning I didn't know anything theoretically about Silat and the mythology of the tiger. In retrospective it was always incorporated in the training sessions. Being/moving playful and flexible like a cat, holding the focus and widening it, observing and taking action if necessary. Trying to understand and feel the essence of the tiger I'd conclude it as a presence of dualistic energy qualities and bringing it into balance.

Such as aggression f.d., which can empower or destroy, to protect or attack. In any matter I understand its about energies/emotions, the awareness about them (upcoming), controllng and handling those, taking actions wisely and responsible. Basically it clicked during the training in moments of flow such in positive, flexible/fluid interactions and in challenging moments of upcoming and hard-to-handle emotions.

Fatema: In what moments do you feel a connected energy in Silat? How would you describe this energy and during which techniques?

Nada: Depending from the personal mental and physical condition as well as from the group dynamics I feel more or less connected (intern/extern). Therefore its more or less easy in techniques with very close/distant contact in pairs/group/solo.

Fatema: What do you think or feel about the mirroring technique?

Nada: I think its a very valuable technique for teaching and studying, cause humans learn mainly by imitation. At the same time I observe needing a different kind of attention and effort on a cognitive and coordinative level reproducing movement sequences depending from the niveau of distraction or concentration. Especially when its about very new combinations of movement the body never experienced or the decoding in left-right-coordination sometimes cost me some inner struggles, provokes my own mistake tolerance and trains these very.

Fatema: How would you describe the interaction that takes place during the training? You described the energy of tension and letting it flow, can you talk more about this?

Nada: Its mainly the same topic of a mistake tolerance and initialized an inner process of a reflection about it. How did I get socialized and how did I cultivate it myself? How do I deal with power and assess it? How do I deal with weakness and the acceptance about it? Its about several personality aspects and bringing it into balance, especially if its an „unwanted“, weak shadow aspect. One point is to perceive your own borders, f.e. the experience of being defeated (being fixed on the ground and the inability to leave) and the dealing with it. How is the dealing with „powerlessness“? Do I trust the other one handling his own power responsible and carefully? Which impulses come up and what strategies come up? Here I could feel strong tensions, but with the growing trust and the exchange between the group members also the ability to let this tensions transform, without giving it too much attention, is developing.

Fatema: After the event we talked about recently, about being affected or triggered during the training, how would you describe that experience then and as you reflect now?

In the personal development its one thing to have topics on your screen on an intellectual, so to say controllable, level. What was new to me was the very direct interaction on a physical level, which is direct, unreflected and unconscious. When the body memory gets trigged and non-expected body reactions happen. Such as crying, laughing, shivering, fleeing... to break it down to fight, flight or freeze-responses. The process is developing more handsome flexible strategies. Its a healing process really.

Fatema: Tell me about your experience as a woman who started with an untrained body entering the space of martial arts.

Nada: Starting material arts as a western, cognitive and communication oriented woman in a period of a weak body condition in a male dominated, very

physical space was a real challenge to me. In the context of female/male dynamics, depending from the personal and cultural background, I watched a lot of different approaches causing different basic emotions; you called it very appropriate the „gender body“. As soon as it came to close physical contact in pair exercises with strike and defence I would have preferred to discuss it on a rational level, which is absurd in a way, but it made me feel very uncomfortable entering this level. I felt clumsy, uncoordinated and dreamy, which provoked a lot more insecurity. Parallel to that I noticed its a very valuable necessity exceeding one point and integrating that aspect of being.

Fatema: You talked about masking and demasking during the training. Can you elaborate more about this?

Nada: In the described vulnerability I often related to my controlling mechanisms (masking), which worked on an intellectual level, but not at all on the physical and emotional body. As I got aware of the trigger points and the instant reaction with basic emotional and behavioral programs of panicking, trivializing with smiling (again female way to appease) or leaving the situation, that's when the masks are falling and it shows all of the weak repertoire humans can have. Here it needed time, trust, the sensitivity of my Abang and the group and a lot of self-acceptance. Cause I realized if I leave I take me and useless masks with me, so let's face it. I honor that a lot.

Fatema: How do you usually feel after the Silat training?

Nada: Renewed and pure.

Movement Analysis of subsystems: hands, feet, and whole body

Time	Right Hand M	Hands M Left Hand M	Hands S Right Hand S	Left Hand S	Whole Body M
0,2	Upward	Forward	Upward	Forward	Standing
0,21	Claw gesture forward	Claw gesture low (towards the right)	Claw gesture forward	Claw gesture low (towards the right)	Leaning forward (diagonal)
0,22	Claw gesture low (towards the left)	Claw gesture forward	Placed flat on thigh	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the left)	Leaning forward (diagonal)
0,23	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the right)	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the left)	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the right)	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the left)	Leaning forward (diagonal)
0,24	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the left)	Placed flat on thigh	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the left)	Placed flat on thigh	Spread low
0,25	Palm downward	Palm downward	Palm downward	Palm downward	Leaping
0,26	Claw gesture forward	Claw gesture low	Pressed on the ground	Pressed on the ground	Partially standing
0,27	Palm in	Palm in	Palm downward	Palm downward	Partially standing
0,28	Claw gesture forward	Palm in	Palm downward	Claw gesture forward	Pasang Satu
0,29	Placed flat on thigh	Open palm midhigh (towards the right)	Open palm midhigh (towards the left)	Placed flat on thigh	Pasang Satu
0,3	Hanging downward	Open palm midhigh (towards the right)	Palm downward	Palm downward forward	Leaning forward (diagonal)
0,31	Palm downward	Palm downward	Palm downward	Palm downward	Leaping
0,32	Pressed on the ground	Pressed on the ground	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the right)	Claw gesture low (towards the left)	Crouched
0,33	Hanging downward	Placed flat on thigh	Claw gesture forward	Palm downward	Partially kneeling
0,34	Claw gesture upward (towards the right)	Claw gesture low	Placed flat on thigh	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the right)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Serong
0,35	Claw gesture upward (towards the right)	Claw gesture on thigh	Claw gesture midhigh (towards the left)	Placed flat on thigh	Kuda Kuda Harimau Sejajar (medium)
0,36	Palm downward	Palm downward	Placed flat on thigh	Palm downward (towards the right)	Sideways
0,37	Claw gesture forward	Claw gesture low	Palm downward	Open palm midhigh (towards the right)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Sejajar (medium)
0,38	Claw gesture low	Claw gesture upward (towards the left)	Palm downward	Open palm midhigh (towards the left)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Menyamping
0,39	Claw gesture low	Claw gesture upward	Open palm midhigh (towards the left)	Hovering flat on thigh	Kuda Kuda Harimau Sejajar (medium)
0,4	Claw gesture forward	Claw gesture low	Open palm upward (in towards the face)	Open palm low (towards the right)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Serong
Time	Right Foot M	Feet M Left Foot M	Feet S Right Foot S	Left Foot S	Whole Body S
0,2	Straight forward	Straight forward	Straight forward	Straight forward	Standing
0,21	Heel lifted	Placed towards the right	Heel lifted	Placed towards the right	Leaning forward (diagonal)
0,22	Placed towards the left	Heel lifted	Placed towards the left	Heel lifted	Leaning forward (diagonal)
0,23	Heel lifted (back)	Placed towards the left	Heel lifted (back)	Placed towards the left	Leaning forward (diagonal)
0,24	Straight forward	Straight toward the left	Straight forward	Straight toward the left	Spread low
0,25	Hanging in the air	Hanging in the air	Hanging in the air	Hanging in the air	Leaping
0,26	Lifted	Straight forward	Straight forward (front)	Heel lifted (back)	Partially standing
0,27	Hanging in the air	Straight forward	Straight forward (front)	Heel lifted (back)	Partially standing
0,28	Placed towards the right (back)	Straight forward (front)	Straight forward (front)	Placed towards the left (back)	Pasang Satu
0,29	Straight forward	Placed towards the left	Placed towards the right (back)	Straight forward (front)	Pasang Satu
0,3	Pad of foot lifted	Placed towards the left	Pad of foot lifted	Placed towards the left	Leaning forward (diagonal)
0,31	Hanging in the air	Hanging in the air	Hanging in the air	Hanging in the air	Leaping
0,32	Heel lifted	Straight forward	Straight forward	Lifted inward	Crouched
0,33	Heel lifted	Straight forward	Heel lifted	Hanging in the air	Partially kneeling
0,34	Heel lifted	Straight forward	Straight forward (front)	Heel lifted (back)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Serong
0,35	Placed towards the right (back)	Straight forward (front)	Placed towards the right (front)	Straight forward (front)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Sejajar (medium)
0,36	Lifted upward	Straight toward the left	Hanging in the air	Straight forward	Sideways
0,37	Straight forward	Straight toward the left	Straight forward (front)	Placed towards the left (back)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Sejajar (medium)
0,38	Placed towards the right (front)	Heel lifted (back)	Placed towards the right (front)	Heel lifted (back)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Menyamping
0,39	Placed towards the right (back)	Straight forward (front)	Placed towards the right (back)	Straight forward (front)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Sejajar (medium)
0,4	Heel lifted (back)	Straight forward (front)	Heel lifted (back)	Placed towards the left (front)	Kuda Kuda Harimau Serong