

**Emotion and Performance Processes:  
from a Korean Buddhist Perspective**

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**Sunhee Kim**

## Abstract

The intention of this thesis is to reconsider and redefine how emotion in acting is understood and practiced. This thesis addresses the problematic notion of the separation of emotion and action in performance practice. It begins by pointing out how inherent in this separation are the dualistic and hierarchical understanding of body and mind and subjectivity and objectivity, from which stems the unnecessary issue in and around 'acting emotion'. From the perspectives of the Buddhist understanding of Mind and Heidegger's ontology of Being, the complex nature of thought, action, emotion and self is examined and reconsidered.

Through the three practical projects I examine, from the perspectives of the director and/or the actor, my process of utilising 'simple' task-based actions as a means of creating appropriate condition(s) that may allow the actors to directly enter into an 'emotional' state of being doing. The first project *-ing; playing (no)self* focuses on playing emotion in the context of a devised performance; the second project, *(Playing) The Maids* focuses on playing emotion in the context of 'character acting'; and the third project *Mother Project; playing a 'foreign' emotion* focuses on a particular Korean emotion, *han*.

This thesis is accompanied by three DVDs, which contain clips of selected scenes of the performances as well as full-length recordings of the performances.

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## Accompanying Materials

Three accompanying DVDs are affixed to the inside of the back cover of this thesis. Listed below are the contexts of each DVD. Each DVD contains the video clips of selected scenes of the performances as well as the full performances. The reader will be referred to the DVDs when reading the corresponding sections in the thesis. It is recommended that the DVDs are watched with headphones.

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines emotion in the context of theatre practice, from both director's and actor's perspective. The thesis consists of a written material and audio-visual recordings of the three practical projects.

### *A starting point*

From the perspective of both makers and spectators, emotion often is at the centre of discussions of artistic practice. Emotion has been studied by many different academic disciplines over a lengthy period of time in both Eastern and Western societies, including the arts. Perhaps this is because emotion is undeniably a part of being human, a part of human life. As a drama student – perhaps long before that – I was no exception. I was fascinated by how theatre can touch and move its spectators; but also, how much it revealed about the person both making and experiencing theatre. Zarrilli also observes the central role of emotion in acting:

Central to the on-going debates about the nature and practice of acting, as well as the concepts of body, self, person, role, and character implicit in any particular theory, paradigm, or practice of acting, “stands the question of emotion”.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Zarrilli 2009: 145

Despite this central place of emotion in the arts and the variety of theories of/around emotion in performing arts, I found that there still exists a particular view that dominates rehearsal processes where emotion is separate from physical actions/movements. In this view actions are a 'vehicle' that carry the performer as well as the performance to the 'place' where emotion will be expressed. The problem with this assumption of separation of emotion from action is that the place where the actor is performing and the performance is happening should not be somewhere else, but the immediately present moment where the actor, the performance as well as the audience are equally present.

My experience of Phillip Zarrilli's psychophysical training process challenged this fundamental separation of emotion from action. Since my first encounter with Zarrilli's psychophysical performer training in my second year of undergraduate studies in 2002, I have trained, though not continuously for the entire time, and worked with Zarrilli on several productions both within and outside the academic setting. My encounter with Zarrilli's work has had a profound influence on my understanding of performing arts as well as development of my practice in many ways. In terms of emotion, especially in relation to the two assumptions noted above, I was particularly intrigued to see how this separation between 'physical' actions and 'mental' emotions were being blurred. In both training and rehearsals, terms such as emotion, feeling, and/or psychology were hardly mentioned, and yet my experience of what I was doing often was emotion-al. This experience showed me that emotion, e.g., emotions of the character or emotion of a person more generally, did not have to be approached separately from what the person does. The actor's doing of the actions can be related directly to the experience of emotion.

But it is also true that Zarrilli's approach to acting can be misconceived especially in its relation to the practitioner's 'inner' experience of the training and/or of the performance. For instance, not talking explicitly about what may be happening in the practitioner's mind during training and/or not talking explicitly about the role/character's emotion in the creative process might be misconceived as dismissing 'inner' realm of the practitioner altogether. I noticed that this was true particularly if/when the psychophysical approach to acting and actor training was seen as the opposite of the acting paradigm that emphasises the actor's psychological engagement with her role. Furthermore, I realised that this (mis)conception about a psychophysical approach to acting and actor training both resulted and was the result of the presumed characteristics of emotion: that actions – what one does – and emotion – what one feels – are two different things.

In order to delve into this persisting issue of emotion as well as deepening my understanding and practice of the psychophysical approach to performance making, I continued training and worked with Zarrilli for a further two years during my postgraduate studies. These two years were extremely significant especially in the sense that I realised that the separation between emotion and action was certainly the dominant assumption for the actors with whom I was working. This commonplace understanding of emotion dominated how 'acting and directing emotion' was approached regardless of different performance genres/paradigms and/or the dramaturgies within which the performances were being created. Of course, learning and having knowledge about theories of acting and directing does not automatically grant one the ability to practice them, and some performance traditions/systems require

a life-long training. However, unlike when learning the theories, the majority of creative processes that I was involved in seemed to be guided by rather a singular approach when it came to emotion in performance. Furthermore, I realised that this was also true outside the academic environment when I was working on projects in professional settings outside the university. Again, the separation between emotion and action persisted when it came to approaches to emotion in practice. I felt that there was a gap between theoretical discourses on acting and directing emotion and that in practice.

Prompted by the lack of alternative approaches to acting and directing emotion in performance practice, despite their existence in the context of less dominant paradigm(s) of performance practice, my research on acting and directing emotion focuses on exploring possible ways through which embodiment of emotion and making of emotionally dynamic performances may be redefined. However, before introducing how I approach addressing this issue in my research, I first examine how the dominant view of emotion has evolved.

*The 'issue' of emotion: Key views contributing to this persisting issue of emotion in performance practice and alternative perspectives*

Some possible contributing factors to this persisting issue of emotion in performance practice may be found in the dominant understanding of and assumptions made about emotion(s). One of the most common assumptions is that emotion is 'irrational'. This view is so deeply rooted in dominant thinking about emotion both in English speaking countries and some westernised cosmopolitan Eastern cultures, that it is inherent in

their language(s). For example, the adjective 'emotional' in English describes the propensity of a person to lack a feasible objectivity in judgement and therefore to be a poor decision maker. Such a person is often described as illogical, unreasonable and/or irrational. This particular commonplace view of emotion as irrational, and therefore negative, has been influenced and reinforced by the long-standing dualism found in modern thinking; a dualism which opposes "body and mind, public and private, essence and appearance, and irrationality and thought".<sup>2</sup>

This is not surprising when we consider the fact that "from the seventeenth century to roughly the end of the nineteenth century, with the odd exception, the Cartesian feeling theory was the orthodox theory".<sup>3</sup> This dualistic opposition between emotion and thought influenced the hard sciences and social sciences from biology and physics to sociology, psychology and philosophy as the fields emerged and inevitably influenced people's way of understanding their emotion in their everyday lives.

The dualistic separation of emotion and thought has contributed to the view of emotion as unintelligent. The idea that emotion is a feeling and without any cognitive element, thus is irrational and/or unreasonable, labels emotion as unintelligent. This is what philosopher Solomon Robert C. means when he lists eight "myths" about emotions—one being "emotions are stupid".<sup>4</sup> Without denying that emotion can lead to physiological changes as well as altering a subject's behaviour, Solomon argues that emotion is not merely feelings, but that it has intelligence. Further, even when one

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<sup>2</sup> Lutz 1988: 3

<sup>3</sup> Lyon 1980: 2

<sup>4</sup> Solomon 2007

realises that emotion usually does accompany physiological changes – feelings, those feelings alone do not give one grounds to conclude that they are emotion.

Another view that has influenced approaches to emotion in performance processes is that emotion is impulsive. The distinction between irrationality and thought, and the idea that emotion is opposite to thought-processed phenomena, results in thinking that emotion is impulsive with no active involvement of the subject in the occurrence of that emotion other than the subject's awareness of the emotion happening. In this view, emotion is considered to happen to us. As Lyons states when discussing the problematic view of emotion in Descartes' feeling theory:

[...] perhaps Descartes' greatest problem stems from the fact that it makes emotion purely passive and sensation-like. Despite Descartes' referring to emotion as 'a passion of the soul' and to a passion as 'a form of knowledge', he goes on to give an explanation which makes emotion a feeling and without any cognitive element.<sup>5</sup>

Before examining alternative views on emotion, another problematic notion about emotion needs to be discussed. Another concept that makes the dominant understanding of emotion problematic is that it positions emotion and its occurrence solely inside a person. Again, "the long-standing dualism found in Western thinking" seems to play a major role in this, especially the one between "public and private" and

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<sup>5</sup> Lyons 1980: 5-6

“inner and outer”.<sup>6</sup> They are just too simple, thus quite ignorant, ways of understanding a human being and its relationship with the world.

Such theories of emotions fail to articulate the interconnectivity – inter-being-ness – of the public and private and/or inner and outer aspects within a person as well as the relationship between the person and the world. This has influenced the commonplace understanding of emotion in its varying dimensions such as its nature, structure, function(s), objects, and expressions. The notion that emotion happens inside and therefore is private and personal, defines the subject as an entity separate and independent from the world in which she/he lives. Further, this assumption grants emotion status as a separate entity, i.e. human emotions are separate from the subject, the world and each other, i.e., anger is separate from sadness. The argument that a human being lives completely independent from its surroundings, or that there is a part of a person that is completely private/personal would be erroneous. Such separation is another of Solomon’s “myths” about emotion that “emotions are “in” the mind” of a subject.<sup>7</sup>

However, there are alternative views on emotion that challenge those views discussed above. In discussing the nature of the mind in relation to emotion, Solomon – drawing primarily on phenomenology with examples drawn from Husserl, Heidegger and Sartre – observes Husserl’s point that “the mind was essentially an activity, and its objects were essentially the objects in the world”.<sup>8</sup> The notion of being-in-the-world found in Heidegger’s work, directly breaks the dualism between the mind and the world

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<sup>6</sup> Lutz 1988:63

<sup>7</sup> Solomon 2007

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*: 154

or that between simple dichotomy of inner and outer. From a Korean Buddhist perspective, philosopher Kim argues that the word mind ought to be seen as a verb rather than a noun; more specifically, he argues that it is an intransitive verb rather than a transitive one. He argues that the mind goes outward towards the world, that is, it is active and, by nature, it wants to enter into a relation with the other. Therefore, even if emotion were 'in' the mind, at all times it relates to and is related to the other/outer by the mind.

Unlike the dominant understanding of emotion, this alternative understanding of the mind and its relation to the world assumes that emotion cannot be a separate entity from the person's surrounding, i.e., society, culture, and/or the people with whom the person lives. As Solomon states:

[But] all of this happens in our real world, not a world "external" to the mind, and nothing happens in the inner reaches of the mind. There simply are no inner reaches of the mind. There are just the peculiarities of the first-person standpoint and of particular people and personalities.<sup>9</sup>

He goes on to explain that

Our emotions arise, for the most part, in the nexus of our interpersonal relationship. Thus, we might say that emotions are political. This is not just to say that they can be used to manipulate other people. They also originate with other

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<sup>9</sup> Solomon 2007: 158



people, and their structure is virtually always some sort of social or interpersonal structure. Looking inside, “introspecting” is looking in the wrong place for them.<sup>10</sup>

This understanding of emotion process is also found in ethnographic and cross-cultural studies of emotion. In relation to the dominant understanding that views emotion as the opposite of thought-processes and therefore as lacking cognition. Anthropologist Catherine Lutz observes the misconception that “emotions, in contrast to thoughts, predominantly happen to the person and are, therefore, not fully intentional.”<sup>11</sup> This notion of intentionality as emotion’s primary characteristic is also noted by Solomon when he states that intentionality “is the key to emotional intelligence.” He argues:

[...] what is built into the very concept of emotion is that it has such a structure, a formal object that is defined in terms of the kinds of things it picks out or perceives in the environment.<sup>12</sup>

Whatever the process might be, this undoubtedly shows that some kind(s) of cognition is/are involved in the process of the occurrence of emotions. The misconception of emotion as a purely physical/physiological/biological feeling leads to the problematic view that emotions are “more natural, and hence less cultural, than thought.”<sup>13</sup> However, as discussed above, it is neither true that emotions are just physiological reactions nor that they lack cognition. Consequently, the argument that

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Lutz 1988: 63

<sup>12</sup> Solomon 2007: 161

<sup>13</sup> Lutz 1988: 66-67

emotions are less cultural and are “as biological events are the same the world over”,<sup>14</sup> i.e., the universal/basic human emotions, does not seem very persuasive. Extensive fieldwork conducted by anthropologists show that there are people who have “unnatural emotions”.<sup>15</sup> There are people who are “never in anger”<sup>16</sup> and people who say, “my intestines [the seat of the emotions] desired that” or “my intestines were angry”.<sup>17</sup> Needless to say, what makes someone angry, sad or frightened varies from person to person. The process and structure of emotion can be said to involve interpretation and/or judgement involving “concepts and conceptualisation, values and evaluation”.<sup>18</sup> Since concepts and values can and do vary between cultures and/or societies as well as subcultures within a society, emotions are therefore cultural and social ‘artefacts’. For example, the fact that the English translation of *fago* consists of three seemingly contradictory concepts – compassion, love and sadness, whilst the people in the Ifaluk see nothing contradictory in the emotion, shows that this particular emotion is developed by the Ifaluk people’s particular understanding and knowledge about the world they live in and by their value system as to what is required in a good person. Another example is when Tahitians say that “my intestines were angry”. This is not merely a different way of expressing anger: it shows grammatical differences in verbalising anger but is also a reflection of the Tahitian conception of anger and perhaps a different kind of anger from a non-Tahitian’s.

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<sup>14</sup> Linzey 1961

<sup>15</sup> Lutz 1988

<sup>16</sup> Briggs 1970

<sup>17</sup> Quoted in Levy 1973: 214

<sup>18</sup> Solomon 2007: 161-162

### *Approaches to acting emotion*

The dominant commonplace understanding of emotion influences how emotion is approached in the context of contemporary/cosmopolitan theatre practice – in particular, in acting as well as directing. The three approaches to acting emotion described in Elly Konijn's *Acting Emotions* are closely related to the dominant understanding of emotion as discussed above. *Acting Emotions* provides an overview of acting styles in the West and provides a detailed account of how acting emotions are understood in terms of the actor's relationship between his/her emotion and that of the character/role s/he plays. Diderot's Paradox provides an entry point for Konijn's study and underlies and shapes the entire project. The infamous question of whether or not the actor him/herself should experience, or feel, the emotions s/he performs shapes Konijn's categorisation of the three acting styles: the style of involvement, the style of detachment, and the style of self-expression. Furthermore, with reference to "the relationship between the actor's emotion and those of the character", Konijn states that the paradox of the actor has become "the dilemma of the actor."<sup>19</sup>

However, in other performance traditions such as the Korean performing art, *p'ansori*, acting emotion can be approached differently and without reference to the "dilemma" as such. The *kwangdeae* – *p'ansori* performer – not only plays multiple characters and the role of a narrator within the given *p'ansori* drama, but s/he is also present on stage as herself when s/he steps in and out of the drama and interacts with the audience and/or make comments about her/himself. For the *kwangdeae*, these different modes of being are all integrated into the one that she is: for the *kwangdeae*, the

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<sup>19</sup> Konijn 2000: 21

characters, the role of narrator and her/himself are not separate. Unlike the understanding that underlies the actor's dilemma as described in *Acting Emotions*, which sees the actor and the character as two separate, independent entities, *p'ansori* assumes all are one.

However, this does not undermine the importance of the experience and portrayal of the characters' emotion in the *kwangdeae's* performance in *p'ansori*. There is great emphasis on the importance of emotional engagement of both *p'ansori* performers as well as audience members. As the *kwangdeae* manoeuvres her/his voice, dramatically shaped by *changdan* (the rhythmic cycle), *kil* (the melodic path) and *sŏngŭm* (vocalisation) specific to each song, s/he activates and carries in and through her/his voice and the whole body various types of energy. In turn, this informative voice allows the *kwangdeae* and the audience to experience various kinds of feelings and emotions. The *kwangdeae*, fully equipped with means of expressing emotions in this way, flows from one character to another, a character to the narrator, and steps in and out of the *p'ansori* drama without any conflict between them.

As much as there is an emphasis on emotional engagement in *p'ansori*, it is not an entry point to the drama for either the *kwangdeae* or the audience. The *kwangdeae's* primary focus is to master—during training—and provide—during performance—appropriate channels through which the *kwangdeae* her/himself and the audience can enter the realm of the drama. When optimally done, the threshold between the drama and the *kwangdeae's* performance blurs, and the *kwangdeae's* voice and performance become the drama itself. It is this process that enables the *kwangdeae* to play multiple characters and/or the role of narrator as well as stepping in and out of the drama at

ease; the *kwangdeae* exists simultaneously in these seemingly separate worlds. Switching from one to another, the *kwangdeae*'s performance embodies various emotive energies specific to each moment within the whole phenomenal reality of *p'ansori* performance.

This phenomenal reality of *p'ansori* performance may seem paradoxical in everyday sense of 'reality'. The fact that the *kwangdeae* is able to shift between various kinds of emotion, including seemingly conflicting emotions at times, as well as being able to perform up to a whole day when performing an entire drama, shows that the *kwangdeae* cannot be emotionally affected in an everyday, or 'personal', sense. For example, optimally done, the *kwangdeae* is fully engaged with sadness when singing a partying song and s/he is fully engaged with happiness in the following moment when s/he reminisces over the time s/he spent with a lover. Further, the same applies to the audience – the seeming paradox, or 'unrealistic' mode of operation of the *kwangdae* and the *p'ansori* performance does not create an issue. This shows that the *kwangdeae*'s process of acting emotion in *p'ansori* cannot be examined within the three acting styles framed in Konijn's study.

Through this particular performance tradition, two important issues, or questions, regarding acting emotion are clarified. First of all, it shows that the question of whether or not the actor should feel the emotions of the character stems from the dualistic concept that views the actor and the character as separate entities. Secondly, it shows that emotions are understood within a frame of thinking that does not account for the physicality inherent in emotion: it is often considered that emotion is something else beyond, or behind, perceptual actions. As a result, actors often try to find this

'something else' assuming that that is the meaning, and therefore the 'essence' of the character and the character's actions. Accordingly, the actions of the actor—the acting—are considered as a means to get to the end – the meaning – which separates the actor's process of embodying the actions from what might manifest and be experienced from doing the actions. But, as mentioned earlier, where else can the performer, the performance as well as the audience be except in the time and space of the performance?

*On-going discourses on emotion and performance and acting from perspectives of Buddhism*

There have been other studies examining emotion in the context of performance practice. Eric Hetzler's PhD thesis, *The Survey of the Actor's Experience*, contains a comprehensive survey of actors' experience of performance, and is designed to provide data that could be helpful "in determining how actors describe their experience of acting."<sup>20</sup> The survey consists of a series of questions, and, along with interviews with some of the participant actors, Hetzler's thesis consists of an extensive database of "how actors approach a role, how they create a character, how they feel before going on stage, how they feel while they are on stage, and how they feel after performing."<sup>21</sup> However, it seems that further studies on some of the conclusions drawn and observations made through his research are needed. For instance, Hetzler observes that the actors are able to maintain multiple levels of consciousness during performance

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<sup>20</sup> Hetzler, Eric Thomas. PhD. 2007: 47

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

that “allow them to complete their various performance tasks.”<sup>22</sup> Also, what they meant by “I” and the “character”, which Hetzler observes to be seen as completely separate things, can be clearer in terms of determining the actors’ understanding of, or belief about, the nature of their task.

Jessica Beck’s PhD thesis, *Directing Emotion: A Practice-led Investigation into the Challenge of Emotion in Western Performance* provides a useful insight into how emotion in the context of performance practice can be understood. She states that emotions are by-products of the actor’s psychophysical engagement with the performance. Beck’s research examines how this psychophysical engagement can be applied to performative processes in different performance contexts and dramaturgies. However, since her approach to realising such process is focused specifically on three methods/systems, it seems necessary for actors/directors to share a common working language, e.g., the vocabulary of Alba emotion, in order to utilise such an approach in their creative processes. Although interviews with the participant actors are provided, the research is primarily from the director’s perspective focusing on directing emotion. Therefore, further research into how the process of enabling psychophysical engagement in acting may be possible and a detailed examination of such process from the actor’s perspective can be fruitful in redefining how emotion in acting is understood. With regards to the relationship between action and emotion, can acting emotion be directly related to the psychophysical engagement with the performance rather than being seen as its by-products; that is, how can the emotion process be understood in relation to action?

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<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*: 236

There have been studies on performance practice from perspectives of Buddhism before. Among them is Jerri Daboo's *Mind of a Flower: the psychophysical experience of performance*.<sup>23</sup> Daboo's study provides an insightful understanding of "the interconnection and unity of body, mind, breath and subtle energies" from perspectives of Buddhism.<sup>24</sup> Based on the Buddhist principles of interdependence origination, *sūnyatā* (emptiness) and no-self among others, Daboo suggests that imagination be considered as an "embodied sensing-imagination" rather than a "site-specific, "mind-only" visualisation."<sup>25</sup> As stated in her thesis, her research is concerned with "on-going shifting of patterns and processes of changing perceptions and practices of a psychophysical approach to acting."<sup>26</sup> Focusing in particular on acting a character, Daboo's thesis illuminates how Buddhist perspectives on the body-mind relationship can be of help for the actor.

In this sense, my research also is positioned along the same lines as Daboo's. However, further research into the actual creative processes of utilising those (Buddhist) perspectives from actors/directors is needed. How the Buddhist principles can be applied to and utilised in performance processes with specific reference to acting and directing emotion may be fruitful in deepening the shifting paradigm of the bodymind in performance.

### *Research through Practice*

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<sup>23</sup> George, David E.R. 1999

<sup>24</sup> Daboo 2004: 244

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*



As discussed above, this research was initiated by my witnessing the long-standing approach to emotion that views emotion separately and independently from physical actions. This approach to acting and directing emotion seemed to persist in performance making processes despite recent developments in emotion research as well as the shifting paradigm of the body-mind relationship in the context of both performance practice as well as other disciplines. However, as mentioned at the beginning of this Introduction, my practice over the past ten years or so convinced me that emotion is far richer and more complex than the limiting dualistic understanding of human mind and body. Moreover, I was not convinced that this misunderstanding of the rich, complex nature of emotion would be beneficial for directors and actors in their practice of creating emotionally dynamic performances systematically and organically.

From my perspective there are two issues that may contribute to the gap between discourses about acting practice and disembodied knowledge of emotion as it relates to acting emotion. First, theoretical discourses – knowing-what – about performative and creative processes may not necessarily capture the knowing-how(s) that is required in the actualisation of that ‘knowledge’ in practice. As Zarrilli observes:

many of our current critical theories and methodologies have not taken sufficient account of the body/experience/emotion at this site of materialisation of experience and meaning in the theatrical performative event, either from the perspective of the performer or the audience.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Zarrilli 2009: 146

From this perspective, applying disembodied knowledge directly to examination of an embodied and experienced phenomenon such as acting can not only result in confusion but also produce insufficiently processed information that can be misleading. This creates unnecessary obstacles for the practitioner. For example, the so-called actor's dilemma of whether to act from the heart or from the cool, calculated head in relation to acting emotion is, as discussed earlier, misleading in the way it posits the two as opposite to each other. Moreover, if/when one's research into emotion and acting emotion is guided by this problematic frame of reference, it does not capture the complex phenomenon of how 'the head' and 'heart' are both simultaneously engaged in acting—at least acting as I have experienced it from a first-person perspective.

Therefore, practice through research, especially research that examines phenomena that are intrinsically related to the *subjective experience* of acting, requires the researcher-practitioner to sustain the endless tension between the guiding frame and the practice that does not always fit into the specifics of the frame. Doing practice as research always raises additional issues or problems that challenge the very frame that shaped the practice in the first place. It also demands of the researcher-practitioner the ability to understand and shift between very different modes of knowing. Developing knowledge about acting/acting emotion necessarily requires both modes of knowing since the very subject of research, i.e., acting, inherently involves the experience of the actor. This concern with the (actor's) body as “the site of materialisation of experience and meaning” as well as the primary medium through which that experience and

meaning are communicated in a theatrical event has led to the recognition and development of practice as research, or research through practice.

One important body of practice as research is the Canadian-based study, *Transnet*. This Practice as Research focused on developing an embodied form of knowledge in the context of Canadian cultural studies. The research began with the researcher-practitioners' awareness that existing models of "so-called knowledge-based societies (...) continue to marginalise cultural practices that explore embodied forms of knowledge despite many attempts to show that there were other alternatives."<sup>28</sup> *Transnet* takes an inter/multi-disciplinary approach in order to strengthen the study of the performers' subjective experience of embodiment, and, as a result, introduces the notion of *transdisciplinary* as a new paradigm of research, as Daniel states:

Practice-as-research is fundamentally interdisciplinary. However, since it assigns great importance to the studio process, to the performance site, and to the involvement of a family of disciplines precisely at these sites of investigation, it has the potential to engage in a profoundly transdisciplinary discourse.<sup>29</sup>

*Skin* – the performative event that resulted from *Transnet* – emphasises the body as the site of knowledge, focusing primarily on a sense of touch in exploring "the idea of surfaces as interfaces" through both physical touch and that in the imagination. The

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<sup>28</sup> Daniel 2009: 150

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*: 154

interaction between and among the cultures and disciplines in Transnet was designed to “suggest both a conceptual and practical continuity” between and among newer forms of technology utilised in the performance of *Skin*, e.g. use of live and recorded music and sound and/or use of the physical bodies and projected bodies on a screen. *Skin* also utilised an abstract set of images layered to the real-time dancers’ performance in order to examine different kind of relationship there may arise which are beyond the perceptive characteristics, i.e., the colour of the bodies and/or the sex of the bodies.

Another example of practice as research that began with the body as the primary concern is dancer-researcher Dianne Reid’s three projects, *The 12 stages of adventure*, *Back & Forth* and *27 seconds*. She states that, in her artistic practice, the shift from more conventional forms of dance into making dance-films was initiated with her realisation that “traditional dance models [...] no longer offer (her) the right vehicle for speaking about and utilising (her) experiences as a mature artist”<sup>30</sup> This research led the researcher/artist to both finding a new medium – film – through which her experience of dancing can be shared, and also led to exploration of alternative ways to examine her experience of the body in her dancing from the first-person perspective.

A key issue is that the researcher/artist must provide an account of the knowing-how(s) required in specific modes of embodied practices. Such accounts must focus on the particularities of the body placed in the context of performance practice as an extra-daily event that “require(s) the practitioner to undergo specialised body-training in order to become accomplished in attaining an often virtuosic state of consciousness, body,

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<sup>30</sup> Reid 2007: 48

agency, and power.”<sup>31</sup> This means that knowledge of the body developed through the first-person perspective in other contexts, e.g., medical studies of the body, etc., alone cannot provide sufficient knowledge – even if it was acquired through the first-person perspective – when applied to the body in a theatrical event. That does not, of course, undermine the possible benefits, and, in some ways, the necessity of interdisciplinary research. This applies, to a certain degree, to the distinct tasks required even within the same discipline. For instance, putting aside the questions of aesthetics and artistic styles, the task of directing and the task of acting require translation into the language each speaks because the perspective from which the experience of directing and acting are different. This point demonstrates the necessity of developing knowledge – of acting and directing – from ‘inside’ the doer(s) experience even within the same general field of theatre practice. This is why developing a shared language amongst the researcher-practitioners can be of benefit—a point I discuss in more detail later in the thesis.

From this perspective, acquiring knowledge of/about performance practice, e.g., acting, directing, etc., as well as its development processes requires *an on-going dialogue* between knowing-what(s) and knowing-how(s). In relation to recently growing interest in the notion of research through practice in the arts, Professor Boyce-Tillman observes that:

(...) both the development of PhD’s include creative elements and the Professional Doctorates are development stemming from a dissatisfaction with the concept of disembodied knowing.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Zarrilli 2002: 147

<sup>32</sup> Boyce-Tillman 2012: 9

My research on emotion and performance processes is carried out through both embodied and disembodied modes of developing knowledge. It is hoped that the conversation between the three practical projects and the critical examination of key issues which initiates, guides and contextualises the three projects provides a more rounded account of acting emotion than would be possible without the practice.

#### *Documentation of Practice: DVD*

The accompanying DVD contains the clips of specific moments of each of the three projects submitted as well as the recordings of full performances. Their functions are different in terms of how they might serve the user. The clips of specific moments of the performances are designed to be watched primarily in relation to the performance scores in their corresponding chapters in the written thesis. Although they may lack a (sufficient) sense of the performance as a whole since they have been edited to illustrate a specific point, they are to direct the user's focus to the actors' creative processes in the moment(s) of playing.

The recordings of the full performances are designed to provide a sense of the performance as a whole. Watching the full-length video recordings of the performances, which include the transitions between the scenes/sections within each of the performances, may assist the user in 'seeing' the relationship between and among the scenes/sections and therefore the flow in each performance.

In discussing the issue of documentation in the context of practice-as-research in performing arts, Piccini and Rye **state** the difference between documents and documentation as follows:

While both may stand in for experience when we cannot get to the show, where documents as artefacts presence absence, the intentional documentation of practice-as-research through the use of camera-based technologies provides an illusion of knowing through its dominant alignment with the aesthetics and logics of direct cinema.”<sup>33</sup>

Piccini and Rye further points out that:

While any event produces traces – is always, according to Derrida, a process of archivization – the use of camera-based technologies attempts to produce a ‘document’ that indexes event.”<sup>34</sup>

From this perspective, as well as considering “the inadequacy of the DVD in capturing the totality of the experience”<sup>35</sup>, the accompanying DVD is neither a document nor documentation of my practice. That is, without clashing with their primary functions for which the audio-visual materials have been selected, edited and placed, my intention to design the DVD as it is, is not to “materialise memory” of the actual performances, or

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<sup>33</sup> Piccini and Rye 2009: 35

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Boyce-Tillman 2012: 4

towards “total documentation”<sup>36</sup>. Instead, my hope on one level is that the DVD material serves the functions discussed above and offers the reader/viewer a sense of “what might be”.<sup>37</sup>

While a performance itself is not considered a document of ‘real’ life and yet it cannot be separated from ‘real’ life, the written thesis and the accompanying DVD might be seen as the same in the sense that they are both specific to my research and at the same time different in terms of the different mediums in/through which my research may be communicated with the reader/user. Furthermore, in this sense, all of these – the actual performances/practice, the DVD as well as the written thesis – can be understood through the notion of “boundless specificity”<sup>38</sup> in the sense that research requires specificity and clarity but it perhaps (should) always leave, or open up, the space of what might be.

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<sup>36</sup> Piccini and Rye 2009: 46

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Kershaw 2009: 1-16



## CHAPTER 1 Reconsidering the Relationship Between the Mental and Physical Phenomena in Human Being

As mentioned in the Introduction, this research addresses the problematic notion of the separation of emotion and action in performance practice. I have discussed how inherent in this separation are the dualistic and hierarchical understanding of body and mind and subjectivity and objectivity, from which stems the unnecessary issue, or 'dilemma', of emotion in performance. Therefore, in order to shed light on the nature of emotion, the nature of mind as related to the notions of subjectivity, self, emotion and action need to be reconsidered. In order to do so, this chapter examines selected Buddhist concepts, focusing on their underlying principles of emptiness and interdependent arising in conversation with selected concepts of Martin Heidegger with a focus on his ontology of Being and its structure. **This discussion will provide an alternative insight into how one comes to perceive, understand and make sense of her surrounding world.** It also provides an understanding of how one comes to feel and experience certain emotions as well as the way in which certain information can be gained regarding the individual. From this perspective, this chapter concludes by proposing how emotion may be understood and how such an understanding of emotion may be related to acting and directing emotion in performance with primary working definitions of key concepts that will guide the practical research.

Instead of focusing on the doctrinal differences among the different Buddhist schools and historical contexts, I will explore these two key notions in relation to the Buddhist philosophy of Mind as found in Wonhyo's thinking, in Vasubandhu's eight-consciousnesses model and in the *Samdhinirmocana sūtra*. Similarly, the examination

on Heidegger's ontology of being is focused on his notion of *da-sein* and of Being-in-the-world.

## Section 1. Nature of (human) being from perspectives of Buddhism; through Buddhist understanding of Mind

### *Ilshim; beyond dualistic oppositions and hierarchy*

In order to elaborate the nature and characteristics of these two concepts, I will first focus on the writings of Korean Buddhist practitioner, Wonhyo (617—686 CE), some of whose writings are regarded as “one of the finest examples of a scriptural commentary ever written in the East Asian Buddhist tradition.”<sup>39</sup> Wonhyo's concept of *ilshim* (one-Mind) can be found, among his other writings, in his *Exposition of the Vajrasamadhi Sutra*, where he discusses the nature of “the fountainhead of *ilshim*” in the first part of his writing.<sup>40</sup> The fact that he begins the very first part of the *Vajrasamādhī Sutra* by describing the nature of *ilshim* shows that, in his understanding of the Mahayana tradition of Buddhism, the world is viewed through the ideal of *ilshim*<sup>41</sup>. In short, through this concise statement on the nature of *ilshim*'s fountainhead, Wonhyo demonstrated how the world itself is *ilshim*. However, before going into further examination of the notion of *ilshim*, how Mind in Buddhism is understood needs to be clear, and what differences there are between that and the dominant ideas about mind, I first examine what Mind is and how it is used in the Buddhist context.

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<sup>39</sup>Buswell 2007

<sup>40</sup>Buswell 2007

<sup>41</sup>As both Wonhyo and the Yogācāra Buddhism are under the Mahayana tradition, the Buddhist philosophy discussed here are primarily that of the Mahayana doctrines.

Firstly, the Mind in the Buddhist context has no specific placement in one's body. In dualistic thinking, it is often considered in relation to reason, especially in the computational theory of mind articulated by Hilary Putnam, Jerry Fodor and others, and it is related to the brain/head area. It is interesting to note that, in Chinese, the word, mind uses exactly the same character for the word, heart. However, it is neither the head nor the heart as a physical place in the body where the Buddhist Mind dwells. Still, what this does show is the reflection of the fundamental difference in their understandings of mind-body relationship between the dualistic frame of mind and a holistic approach to Mind. Secondly, the dominant understanding of the mind's nature is associated with the logos, which is opposed to soul/sprit and/or feeling/emotion. This understanding has influenced the dominant way of thinking, and an example can be found in modern English. The expression 'you must be out of your mind', for example, is used to comment on the person's inability to act sensibly, logically, or reasonably in a given situation. What this common English expression, with its thinking deeply rooted in the traditional dualistic frame of thinking, has also produced is the belief that the mind can/is objectified, which then can be 'improved' or 'controlled', i.e., 'mind-control'. Thirdly, unlike the notion of soul, or spirit in the dualistic frame of a human being and/or some religious traditions, Mind in the Buddhist context is not immortal or eternal. For instance, while spirit is believed in Christianity to be immortal essence of a human that "shall return unto God who gave it" after the person's death, the Buddhist Mind is not given by any higher, pre-determined being.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, while it is considered to be separated, and, therefore, independent from the physical or material part of a living creature in the dualistic thinking, Mind in Buddhism can neither be objectified nor is it

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<sup>42</sup>Ecclesiastes 12:7

closer to the notion of essence that is anti-physical/material.

In Buddhism, it is fundamentally impossible to have the separation between the physical/material and the mental/immaterial as absolute, objectified entities that are opposed to, and therefore, independent from each other. It is because, as Kim points out in *Wonhyo's daesung-cheolhak*, all things in the cosmos – whether living beings or non-living things – are considered to be nothing other than the *ki-energy* they are, regardless of whether something manifests in physical/material form or is mental/immaterial.<sup>43</sup> It is through this notion of the cosmos as “one vast network of *ki-energy*” that Buddhist Mind can be understood: Mind in the Buddhist context is considered as “the order” of this network.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, Mind is not a substance that can be objectified: it can neither be ‘improved’ nor controlled (or controlling). Rather, Mind is *the way* in which all beings exist including the cosmos itself. In summary, Mind in the Buddhist context differs from the mind in long dominant dualistic thinking in three ways: it is not associated with one particular place in the body, i.e., the brain or the heart; it is not solely related to cogito that is considered to be the opposite of feeling or emotion; it is not an eternal/immortal substance of a human being.

Going back to Wonhyo's *Exposition of the Vajrasamādhi Sūtra*, the way in which Wonhyo sees *ilshim* can then be understood as a term that describes the way in which all things exist as their *ki-energy* woven with each other, creating the network that we call the world. The examination of the structure and process of this network will follow shortly. Wonhyo's use of the numeric term, *il* (one) in *ilshim* should not be

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<sup>43</sup>Kim 2006:34 (my translation)

<sup>44</sup>Ibid, p.34

misunderstood as *shim* (Mind) of one individual. As explained previously, it is the nature of all things' existence as one vast network of *ki-energy* inseparably woven together that the notion of *ilshim* is founded. Robert Linssen in *Le Zen, d'Extrême-Orient*, describes *ilshim* as “Le Mental cosmique”.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, the notion of inseparable 'oneness' found in Wonhyo's notion of *ilshim* does not only apply to the intersubjective nature in all things, as *ki-energy*, but it also rejects all dualistic opposition in and of beings, and, therefore, any hierarchy among them.

### *Dongyilon; doubleness in/of Mind*

One-Mind as such, however, should not be confused with reductionist and/or an essentialist view of being. Any Buddhist notion, as it is in Wonhyo's *ilshim*, can only be understood through its doubleness. The most successful reading, arguably, of this double-structure in/of Buddhist thinking can be found in Wonhyo's *Dongyilon*, literally translated as the same (*dong*) – different (*yi*) theory (*lon*). *Dongyilon* on the whole can be examined through two broad approaches: one is to look at the way it is written and the other is to examine Wonhyo's pairing/paralleling of seeming opposite concepts such as “*dongilyibulyi* (one does not mean not-two)”. Through the use of such phrases, Wonhyo explains the Buddhist principle that challenges any dialectical approach. Hyeong-Hyo Kim argues in *Wonhyo's Daeseung-cheolhak* that central to Western philosophy throughout its history as well as Confucianism in the East is the principle of an excluded middle.<sup>46</sup> This middle-as-central notion in Buddhism should not be viewed as a middle point between the two opposite points on a polar; rather, it is the space that

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<sup>45</sup>Quoted in Kim 2006:34

<sup>46</sup>Kim 2006 (my translation)

is free of conceptual oppositions, which allows and embraces all 'points' there are. Wonhyo further explains this nature of truths, both the ultimate truth as in enlightened eyes and phenomenal/conventional truths as in the eyes of sentient beings, through yet more pairing of 'opposites' such as transcendence/liberation from the phenomenal worlds and sinking/integration into the phenomenal worlds. By stating that "neither is one reduction of not-one(s) nor is not-one rupture of one", Wonhyo states that the nature of *ilshim* as the cosmos, the collective Being, in its process of coming and its mode of existence, is that of 'braiding'.<sup>47</sup> From this perspective, the dominant notion of boundary or border needs to be reconsidered.

Wonhyo explains the Buddhist paradigm of *huayan*, by stating that the nature of the cosmos is *ilshim*, the collective Being. He explains that in the world as *ilshim* there is no conflict since there is no tension of deduction/reduction into one, and yet, there is also no sense of indifference since it is not-two. In order for the co-habitation of *dong* (same) and *yi* (different) as neither not-one nor not-two to be possible, any intentional interference on an individual's part in this mode of existence is considered to be unnecessary. Instead, Wonhyo suggests the phenomenal distance between not-one(s) and not-two(s) be viewed as the nature of a gate: when open, it is the expansion/continuum of not-two and when closed, it is the manifestation of one.<sup>48</sup> In other words, it is the simultaneousness of non-simultaneity nature of *ilshim* as the Buddhist view of the world as a whole. The issue of intentionality and its problematic

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<sup>47</sup>ibid.

<sup>48</sup>The use of the metaphor, gate, is also found in the Buddhist description of Nirvana. According to Buddhism, one has to pass three gates in order to arrive to the state of Nirvana: 1) gate of emptiness, 2) gate of signless-ness and 3) gate of wishless-ness. By describing these 'borders' as gates, Buddhism states that the state of enlightened (Nirvana) and that of (not yet) enlightened co-habit in the mode of neither same nor not-different. Also see examination on the eight consciousnesses model for the relationship between the 'ultimate' state and the store consciousness.

nature as interfering with the natural order of *ilshim*, or the world, can be examined through the notion of habit energy in particular relation to the eight consciousnesses model.

*The eight consciousnesses model; beyond logocentrism*

One of the most rigorous inquiries into Mind within Buddhist tradition can be found in the Yogācāra school of Buddhism. As Lusthaus writes:

[...] the Yogācāra school provided perhaps the most sophisticated examination and description in all of Buddhism of how the mind works—in psychological, epistemological, logical, emotional, cognitive, meditative, developmental, and soteriological modes.<sup>49</sup>

It is through the manifestation-only (*vijñāptimatra*) as their core concept that Mind in the Buddhist context could be understood.<sup>50</sup> The manifestation-only theory was developed by the Yogācāra school of Mahayana Buddhism, and at its core lies *Thirty Verses on the Manifestation of Consciousness*, or the *Vijñāptimātratā-trimshikā-kārikā*, composed by the Indian Buddhist practitioner, Vasubandhu in the fourth century CE. Through the

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<sup>49</sup>Lusthaus 2002

<sup>50</sup>The Sanskrit term, *vijñāptimatra* is usually translated as 'mind only' or 'consciousness only' in English. However, in *Transformation at the Base*, Thich Nhat Hahn points out that the relevant Sanskrit of consciousness is 'vijñāna' whereas 'vijñāpti' means to manifest and to inform in Sanskrit. Therefore, in this thesis I use the manifestation only as the English translation.

thirty verses, Vasubandhu elaborates the following: first, the threefold transformation of consciousness as it manifests in and/or as human; second, the nature and characteristics of each of the threefold; third, the interrelationship between the three through which they affect each other in their operation.

The first of the threefold is the eighth consciousness—store consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna*), which is also called consciousness as retribution (*vipāka*) or the maturing consciousness.<sup>51</sup> It is considered as a 'storehouse' since all the 'seeds' that one has sown in the past are stored here. It is also considered as 'retribution' or 'maturing' since 'the seeds' will grow/mature over time, bringing about certain result. According to Vasubandhu, this is one of the threefold transformations of human consciousness. No individual person is consciously aware of this transformation unless he has attained the state of *arhattva* (the dignity of an *arhat*), at which point the store consciousness will cease to exist.<sup>52</sup> This store consciousness can also be understood in comparison with the term, *karma*; therefore, it is also considered to be the subject of *samsara*—the cycle of unenlightened existence. However, *Ālaya-vijñāna*—store consciousness—should not be considered as some kind of record that is kept in a specific place within one's body, or anywhere else for that matter, that controls one like a puppeteer does his puppet. It can and does cease to exist on the attainment of *arhattva* at which point one's karma ceases to exist as well. Karma as with store consciousness in the Buddhist context should not be misunderstood as something 'destiny-like' from which one can never escape. Furthermore, although store consciousness is always associated with contact, attentiveness, feeling/sensation, conception, and volition, "in it, the sensation is

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<sup>51</sup>Verse two.

<sup>52</sup>Verse four.



indifference” and is merely there either to be manifested into a further action or to simply be left alone.<sup>53</sup> This is the character of all informative *ki-energy*, which *ālaya-vijñāna* is, that it itself is neutral.

Interrelated to this level of consciousness is the second of the threefold termed as *manas*—the seventh consciousness. It is dependent on *ālaya-vijñāna* for its support and object. According to Vasubandhu, it is through *manas* a human comes to experience the four kinds of passions/afflictions (*klesh*); belief in the existence of unchanging self, ignorance about self, pride in self, and love of self.<sup>54</sup> Although it is contaminated by belief in the self, and the 'three poisons' of desire/craving (*rāga*), anger/hatred (*dvesa*) and ignorance/delusion (*moha*), the character of *manas* is still neutral, i.e., it is neither good nor bad. Like the *ālaya-vijñāna*, *manas* is there either to be taken and attached to, or to be left alone. It is rather the thinking nature of *manas* that can bring about conceptual interpretation of good and bad in one's perception when manifested inter-relatedly with store consciousness.

Manas is translated by Robinson as mind in English, which is fascinating when considering that *manas* is at times called in Chinese and/or Korean as the thought-consciousness. It is their discriminating nature through which the two can be compared. The 'general' mind as discussed in the previous section is associated with reason, the logos, and the essence, and considered as the opposite of the physical/material. It is also thought to be superior to the seemingly arbitrary and 'unreasonable' feeling or emotion since it is driven by the act/power of thinking. However, the thinking nature of

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<sup>53</sup> Verse four.

<sup>54</sup> Verse six.

the thought-consciousness, or *manas*—the seventh consciousness is not considered to be the ultimate essence that makes human beings seeming rational creatures, which gives them the power to control other seeming irrational creatures.

This is because *manas* always depends on store consciousness, or *ālaya-vijñāna*—the eighth consciousness, for its support and object. *Manas* does not act directly in perceiving a surrounding world; therefore, it does not act independently from all the information of store consciousness. In other words, what is the result of the *manas*' manifestation—its thinking nature, whether it be a 'rational' judgement or an 'irrational' feeling—is always coloured by the informative *ki-energy* of store consciousness. This process cannot be consciously realised or rationally taken into account. From this point of view, the 'reasonable', 'logical' and/or 'intelligent' nature of mind loses the ground upon which the logic of its understanding was first built. When one is not even aware of all the factors that affect the 'logic' through which one's mind functions, on what ground can one's thinking be considered to be factual, logical, or rational? According to the theory that the thought-consciousness (*manas*) has store consciousness for its objects and does not directly perceive stimuli from one's surroundings, one's thinking as a result of *manas*' manifestation can never be as 'objective' or 'pure' as it is considered to be in the dualistic view of mind, nor can it be controlled by the individual.

From the eighth to the seventeenth verse, Vasubandhu explains how the third transformation of consciousness is a collection of the first five consciousnesses—the consciousness of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body, plus the sixth consciousness (*manovijñāna*). The sixth consciousness is the ground for the first five consciousnesses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, and is related to the mental processes such as

knowing, conceiving, judging, etc. According to Vasubandhu, it is the sixth consciousness from which the primary as well as the secondary passions/afflictions can spring such as desire/craving, anger/hatred, ignorance/delusion, pride, thoughtlessness, unbelief, reasoning and so on.<sup>55</sup> Although it is also associated with the universal, i.e., touch, etc., and good, i.e., composure, alertness, etc., mental factors as well therefore can be manifested as either good, bad or neutral/indifferent in perception, Buswell designates the eighth and seventh consciousness (*ālaya-vijñāna* and *manas*) as 'sub-consciousness' in the sense that an individual is not consciously aware of their operation and does not have direct access to them in her daily life.<sup>56</sup> In addition to introducing these two layers to the mind as generally understood, what the manifestation-only theory provides is an alternative model through which the notion of Mind can be understood. The Yogācāra model of eight consciousnesses can shed light on how the human mind is structured and how it operates. The Yogācāra system provides a framework through which one can examine the make-up of the human mind and its way of operating in relation to emotion in the context of theatre practice. It provides an alternative to that of the dominant dualistic view(s) of mind and of psychology through which emotion in the context of theatre practice 'problematic', as discussed in the Introduction.

### *The Samdhinirmocana Sūtra; the world as projection of mind*

One of the fundamental differences between Buddhism, especially the Yogācāra

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<sup>55</sup> Verse twelve to fourteen.

<sup>56</sup> Buswell 2004:176

school, and the Western as well as cosmopolitan Eastern thinking in relation to the cognitive nature of human mind is reflected in how the two understand and evaluate the act of thinking. From a Western/cosmopolitan perspective, human's cognitive nature has always been highly valued. Cognition has been understood as a valuable ability that enables a human to be a 'rational' being. This is what separates humans from other 'lower' creatures. However, Buddhist thought regarding the cognitive aspect of human nature differs greatly: while it does not value the act of cognition itself as either positive or negative, what it points out is the 'danger' one can fall into, i.e., thinking something by thinking. In the manifestation-only theory, the 'consciousness/mind' points precisely to the thinking nature of human consciousness, especially that of the seventh consciousness—*manas*. From the Yogācāra school's point of view, the phenomenal world is none other than what is projected by one's mind in the act of thinking—perception. What shapes the world and all beings, both animated and non-animated, within it is not how that world and all phenomena themselves might actually be, but rather the projection of the mind of the being in constant contact with the elements or stimuli. What shapes, colours, and names/terms those stimuli and ultimately creates a world in perception is one's Mind. Furthermore, it is through those shapes, colours, names and terms that one creates certain concepts and gives them certain meanings. Whilst someone's existence might have a certain meaning to me and my life, for example, it might have a very different meaning to someone else, or be considered irrelevant or insignificant. To take another example, why is it that one sees the colour yellow whilst another sees the colour green when they are looking at the same 'object'? What the Yogācāra paradigm points out is not, however, that those trees and houses I

see outside the window do not physically exist, that is, to say that the *ki-energy* of their life does not exist, but that what they look like to me is the result of an active projection of my Mind; that is, the active encounter of my particular mode of perception with the world. The information based on which one's Mind creates various concepts and meanings, primarily through the means of language (names and words) and images, is greatly related to one's eighth consciousness—store consciousness. What the manifestation-only theory points out is that Mind that is at work in this process of perceiving and understanding the surrounding stimuli, and ultimately creating the individual's world, is not solely associated with the realm of consciousness—the sixth consciousness in Vasubandhu's verses. From this point of view, the argument about whether or not what is perceived is an objective truth and/or is rationally processed information becomes completely irrelevant and inadequate. All those 'objective truths' and/or 'rationally processed' reflect, from the Yogācāra point of view, is the information that is in store consciousness.

This concept of the projected Mind as a world and all phenomena within that world, which one ignorantly believes to be 'real' and true, can be understood through the terms, *sanghun* and *kyeonbhun*. *Sanghun* as the projected/objectified mind describes what is perceived as the world and all phenomena, and *kyeonbhun* describes the mind that projects itself onto the outer physical realm—the network of *ki-energy*. In this sense, one's world can be said to be one's *sanghun* and one's projecting mind to be one's *kyeonbhun*. Needless to say, one person's world differs to that of another's. One of the reasons that the thinking nature of human (sub)consciousness is considered to be 'dangerous' in Buddhism is because the nature of cognition is this very

objectification. That is to say, in thinking, which is perceived and contextualised primarily through the means of language, this world and all phenomena are considered to be permanent since the terms that are used to describe them do not change.

As explained in *the Sandhinirmocana Sūtra* the first of the five natures of the ultimate truth (*paramartha*) is supposed to be the conventional truth. It is beyond words and names as well as the images that are implicit in them. The ‘danger’ or problem that lies in the process of perceiving by means of language is that the language used in perceiving will be considered to be the same as the perceived. For example, one will think that I am the person who I was last week, and will be the same person who the I am in the future. This understanding seems to be true since the word ‘I’ never changes and stays the same as a word. However, according to a Buddhist understanding, the true nature of the actual being that the word ‘I’ represents is that of impermanence. The I that is permanently fixed and isolated from others as a substance is to be found in the word and concept only, and nowhere else. Therefore, the sutra states that the *paramartha* is beyond words and names without denying that there still is the need for us to borrow the means of language in order to help ‘ignorant’ beings. The teaching constantly calls us to “see the moon that the finger is pointing, not just the finger itself.”<sup>57</sup> The objectification of the perceived is also dangerous because once objectified, the perceived stimulus becomes a fixed entity, making one mistake it as an isolated substance from other (objectified) stimuli. In other words, objects as in the objectified stimuli whose identities/meanings are grounded in the associated names/terms and images/concepts are understood to be separate from one another including the

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<sup>57</sup>Jiwoon 2009:5

'subject'—the objectifying Mind. They are mistaken as substances of absolute objects, which never change. This separation is often found in the process of giving a being a thing/being an identification or 'identity', and fails to see the insubstantiality in nature of all beings.

The nature and structure of Mind as discussed from the perspectives of Buddhism thus far challenges the dominant notion of mind. It argues that mind, and the person who operates through that mind, cannot be understood as a separate and independent entity, and therefore cannot be objectified. In order to further examine the inadequacy of the dominant understanding of a human being from another perspective, I now examine the ontology of Being as articulated by Martin Heidegger.

## Section 2. Nature of (human) being from Heidegger's perspective; Ontology of Being

### *Da-sein; a human being beyond the subjective self*

Heidegger uses the term, *da-sein* in relation to the human being. For him, traditional Western philosophy has always placed the human being at the centre of its thinking from whose perspective it views humans themselves as well as the world around them. What is the difference in meaning between Heidegger's *da-sein* and the traditional Western philosophical views of the human being? This can be summarised in two ways: according to Heidegger, a human being is an ontic and categorical way of understanding beings and the world, whereas *da-sein* is related to the 'existential' and

ontological inquiry into our 'existence'.<sup>58</sup> Whilst a being is always thought to be an independent entity, Being (*sein*) cannot be described through using nominative terms. For example, traditional Western philosophy has often defined human beings through nominative forms like, '*homo faber* (toolmaker man)', '*homo loquens* (talking man), and/or '*animal ratonabile* (animal capable of rationality), whereas Heidegger's *da-sein* is described as 'Being-in-the-world' and 'Being-toward-death'. As we shall see shortly, Heidegger demonstrates his thinking on Being through these terms emphasising his concern, which is not with what something is but with what it is to be.

A being or beings are not the same as the Being of that being. For Heidegger, Being is an investigation into ontological and existential faktum (facticity) as supposed to categorical/ontic and "existentiell tatsache".<sup>59</sup> As Polts explains, "ontical questions, i.e., how old is the sun, stand a chance of being answered by experimental science, but the ontological question, i.e., what is the way of Being of stars, call for philosophy."<sup>60</sup> In comparison to the Western tradition of metaphysics and phenomenology, Heidegger called his work *fundamental ontology* for it is the ontological inquiries about one's existence and the existential facticity gained as the result of those inquires. This provides a ground on which the ontic, as well as scientific enquiries, can gain their truth and be meaningful. However, at the same time, Heidegger's ontological inquiries into the question of Being take the "phenomenal horizon", which he calls "the everydayness of *da-sein*" as his "thematic point of departure".<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>In Heidegger's thinking, the term 'existence' is only related to the existential and ontological mode of being, *da-sein*.

<sup>59</sup>Heidegger 1996

<sup>60</sup>Polts 1999: 34

<sup>61</sup>Heidegger 1996: 156



One difference between traditional Western ontology of being and Heidegger's philosophical analysis of ontology of Being is in how each views the relationship between Being and a being. Heidegger views Being as *the way that all beings exist* rather than 'characteristics' of a being: whether or not a being is aware of Being. Being in this sense cannot be separated from a being for taking Being away from the being would erase the being altogether. Further, since Being cannot be separated from the being, it cannot be objectified either unlike the categorical and 'compartmental' view of a being in the traditional Western philosophical inquiries of a human being as discussed above.

For Heidegger, traditional philosophical **enquiries** about the nature of a human being in particular relation to phenomenology was an inquiry into "*seiendes*" and its "*seiendheit*" instead of an investigation of "*sein*" since they did not see the "ontological difference".<sup>62</sup>

Polt explains the difference between a being and Being in Heidegger's thinking:

Once we have noticed and celebrated the fact that beings are, we can take a step further – and everything depends on this step. We can ask: what does this "are" mean? What is it to be? Now we are asking what makes a being count as a being, instead of as nothing: on what basis do we understand beings as beings? Now we are asking not about beings, but about Being.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Heidegger 1988: 17, 319

<sup>63</sup>Polt 1999: 2

Heidegger's *da-sein* replaces "a being" as the subject he elaborates in his thinking. "A being" whose nature is viewed as "the objective presence (existentia)" is different from "existence as a determination of being only to *da-sein*."<sup>64</sup> "*Da-sein*", literally "being there", is used in Heidegger's thinking in close relation to his notion of existence. Existence is only applied to the ontological, rather than ontic, mode of being. Either knowingly or unknowingly, *da-sein* is each of us, in terms of our existence—our mode of being. As Polt explains, *da-sein* is "the entity who has the understanding of Being."<sup>65</sup>

*Being-in-the-world; the inter-being of the 'inner' and 'outer'*

Based on the examination on the differences between Being and a being discussed thus far, I now examine how Heidegger elaborates *da-sein* in terms of its structural nature and characteristics in *Being and Time*. In doing so, I compare his understandings to the operational mode of Mind as viewed in Buddhism. I do so in order to clarify the nature and characteristics of *da-sein*, and secondly to illuminate the similarities between these two concepts. Heidegger's definition and usage of *da-sein* resonates with the context in which Buddhism views human Mind, particularly in contrast with the more dominant view of a human being. Focusing on Heidegger's notion of being-in-the-world as the fundamental constitution of *da-sein*, I will now discuss the interconnected, interdependent nature of a human being and its relationship to the surrounding world in relation to how it manifests and operate; also in conversation with the Buddhist notion of *interdependent arising*—*pratītya-samutpāda*.

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<sup>64</sup>Heidegger 1996: 39

<sup>65</sup>Polt 1999: 60

As examined in the previous section of this chapter, Mind in the Buddhist context, especially in Yogācāra Buddhism, is viewed through a set of characters/characteristics that are distinctive from the mind as generally understood in the dualistic frame. One of the most fundamental understandings of its nature is that it is not a separate entity that is isolated either from the being (the 'subject') nor from its surrounding world (the 'outer' world as objectified). As seen in Vasubandhu's treatises, the consciousness-only paradigm demonstrates that the human Mind consists of the threefold of consciousness, which includes; the first five consciousnesses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, and the sixth consciousness together as the third dimension; the seventh consciousness *manas* (the thought-consciousness) as the second dimension; and the eighth consciousness *ālaya-vijñāna* (store consciousness) as the first dimension. Since this Mind as a whole exists only in relation to 'other' Minds within the network of their *ki-energy*, the Mind itself cannot be viewed in isolation from the network.

Yogācāra Buddhism explains the inter-relational activities that Mind and the network together carry out, which we call the world, through two terms: one is *jong-cha-saeng-hyeon-haeng*, and the other is *hyeon-haeng-hoon-jong-cha*. The former, literally translated as present activities as manifestation of the seeds, describes the influence that the seeds in store consciousness have over one's perception of the world (the network), and the latter, literally translated as the seeds as smoked by present activities, describes the influence that (one's perception of) the network has over store consciousness. In other words, as the consciousness-only paradigm states, in the process of understanding and forming a meaning of the network, the network itself is at work, effecting the Mind's very concept and understanding as to what that world is, and

what it means to the being. At the same time the other way round happens: it is not only the network (the world) that influences the Mind but also the Mind that influences the network's process of becoming the network. In short, because of this interdependent relationship through which the mind and the network inter-manifests and inter-are, they cannot be viewed as absolute entities isolated from each other in their 'own' process of becoming what they are.

Therefore, the dualistic view between the Mind and the network loses the ground for its stance. To borrow Heidegger's expression, the Mind and the world cannot be considered in their objective presence. As a result, the subjective sphere that separates the Mind/*da-sein* and the network/world loses its ground as well. Furthermore, neither the Mind in Buddhism nor *da-sein* in Heidegger's thinking is considered in the dualistic sense that separates the mind/essence/spirit/soul/mental and body/physical/material. The dualistic view of the relationship between an individual and the world is the result of a rather ignorant concept that fails to see the fundamental inter-dependency in nature that a human being has with his surrounding world, and vice-versa. Being-in-the-world as the fundamental constitution of *da-sein*, like the Buddhist notion of inter-dependent arising, both refuse to objectify the being as well as the world the Being lives in. Furthermore, the interconnected nature of the being and the world is also related to the Buddhist notion of inter-dependent arising since both are intrinsic in their very manifestation. Therefore, it becomes clear that, in exploring the nature of Heidegger's *da-sein* and its Being, the so-called external including the world is no longer solely outside the Being/being. This inter-dependent nature of Mind/Being and the network/world can then be said to constitute a twofold structure of the Mind-as-the-

world, or the world-as-the-Mind as a whole. This ontological constitution of Mind, as determined in Buddhism, is parallel with “the essential structure of *Da-sein*”, i.e., Heidegger’s ‘being-in-the-world’.<sup>66</sup>

Given the nature of *da-sein* as fundamentally being-in-the-world and given the inter-relational mode of Mind and the network (the world), their spatiality can be understood. Mind dwells neither in the head/brain, nor is it ontically/’objectively’ present in the heart, as often assumed in the dominant paradigms. Their spatiality cannot be determined “‘metaphysically” in the naïve opinion that human being is initially a spiritual thing subsequently placed “in” space.”<sup>67</sup> Therefore, as with the case of Mind and the network in Buddhism, the nature of the relationship between *da-sein* and world should be understood as interconnected on the fundamental level of their existence. As Heidegger states, “subject and object are not the same as *da-sein* and the world.”<sup>68</sup> Heidegger’s explanation of this twofold structure of Mind/*da-sein*’s way of ‘existence’ can be examined also through his notion of *das geworfene sein*, the thrown being. This explains *da-sein*’s ontological condition as already having certain information that has influence over *da-sein*’s Being—our thrownness. Just as the network of Minds has influence over the condition in which Mind as an individual’s Being manifests and exists, it is also inevitable that *da-sein* is passively influenced by the world. However, Heidegger also points out that *da-sein* as ‘*das geworfene Sein*’ is not only passively influenced by and/or ‘thrown into’ the world but it also actively transcends/throws itself to the world as the *das entwerfende Sein*.

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<sup>66</sup>Heidegger 1996:53

<sup>67</sup>ibid:53

<sup>68</sup>ibid:56

Similar to the consciousness-only theory, which understands the world not as a 'real' substance but as a set of concepts/images/sounds and so on as a result of the threefold transformation of consciousness's manifestation, Heidegger also understands the world not as an already existing independent substance but as in the process of *becoming* that world. Furthermore, it is in this process that *da-sein*, or Mind in the Buddhist context, actively engages itself by transcending/throwing itself outwards. From this similarity in the ontological way of their existence, a parallel can be drawn between *da-sein* and Mind. As Kim points out, "*Da-sein* can [then] be understood in parallel with the Yogācāra Buddhism, as the projecting/'seeing' Mind, and the world as Being-in-the-world can be understood as the projected/seen of that Mind."<sup>69</sup> Like the Mind in Buddhism, *da-sein* cannot be understood only through the mind—the seventh/thought consciousness, *manas* in Vasubandhu's eight consciousnesses model.

The throwing and thrown—nature as the ontological condition of *da-sein*/Mind's existence cannot be grasped consciously by the subject. For example, since no human being is consciously aware of the existence and activities of *ālaya-vijñāna* (store consciousness) and yet no human being is without it unless one has reached the state of *arhatt*. *Da-sein* for Heidegger is a state of "*Gestimmtsein* (Being-attuned)", and this state of Being-attuned lies beyond the realm of consciousness—the first six consciousnesses in Buddhism. Through this term, Heidegger explains the ontological donation of the Being as having a mood (*stimmung*) which cannot be explained by everyday being. Like the seeds in store consciousness, what this mood is concerned with in Heidegger's thinking is prior to all moods of psychology; it is the state of mind

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<sup>69</sup>Kim 2000: 424 (my translation)

that is fundamental to the ontological constitution of *da-sein*.<sup>70</sup> In short, *da-sein* (being there) describes the Being's interconnected relation to the there, and Being-attuned reflects the there in the Being. Both Heidegger's notion of Being-in-the-world as the fundamental condition of *da-sein*'s existential and Mind-the world relationship in Buddhism demonstrate the interconnected and interdependent nature of a human being and his world on the ontological level of their manifestation and existence.

### Section 3. Thought, action, emotion and self

#### *Thought-action and habit energy*

From the Buddhist perspective, any enactment can be considered as fruition of the seeds in store consciousness. According to Buddhism, one's actions are the result of the seeds that one has sown over his lifetime, or, for the Buddhist, over many lifetimes. Thich Nhat Hanh uses a metaphor of a gardener sowing and cultivating seeds then ripening of the seeds in describing the enactive nature of mind, consciousness and action of the gardener as well as its relationship with each other.<sup>71</sup> What is perhaps most significant about this view is that Buddhism perceives thought as action and therefore rejects any dualistic view upon the relationship between mental and material phenomena.

In Buddhism, especially in the Yogācāra school, there are *vijñāna* corresponding to each of the five corporeal senses as well as mental feature of a being, i.e., eye-

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<sup>70</sup>Heidegger 1996: 172

<sup>71</sup>Thich Nhat Hanh 2006

consciousness, ear-consciousness, touch-consciousness, etc. This notion of thought-action, along with body-action and oral/speech action as the three kinds of action more generally discussed in Buddhism, refers to what one thinks; body-action to what one does and oral/speech action to what one says. Underlying this paradigm are two principles: first, the principle of interdependent arising nature of all beings in the world, and second, the notion that view mental phenomena such as thoughts as already a physical manifestation; or, at least as a constitutive part of the “seeds’ physical ripening. Vasubandhu’s verses provide detailed theory on the nature and process of sowing, cultivating and ripening of seeds as discussed earlier. The principle of interdependence is one of the two fundamental principles that underlie all strands and schools of Buddhism. It is the way Buddhism views the process of how the world as we perceive it comes to be.

This notion of interdependent nature is closely related to the doctrine of causality; as when this is present, that comes to be. At the same time, it is also to say when this is absent, that does not come to be. The doctrine of causality provides the basis for the Buddhist principle of impermanence, which in turn is related to its view of the world as *ko* (suffering/pain or unsatisfactoriness). The doctrine of causality is the underlying principle through which the Buddhist paradigm of karma or karmic circle (as supposed to Hinduism and/or Jainism) is constructed: what has been ‘sown’ is inevitable going to come to fruition. The significance of the Buddhist paradigm of karmic circle is what Buswell describes as “(Buddhist) presentation of soteriology: the Buddhist way of liberation from the bondage to this world.”<sup>72</sup> This liberation is possible because in order

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<sup>72</sup>Buswell 2007



for the ‘seed’ to come to fruition, there must be appropriate conditions in place, which in turn means that when the appropriate conditions are not present the ‘seed’ will not ripen. Moreover, all seeds that are stored in one’s store consciousness are neutral in their characteristics—neither wholesome nor unwholesome.<sup>73</sup> The Buddhist concept of Mind not only provides an alternative understanding of the cognitive-corporeal relationship but also provides a paradigm through which the process of cognitive-corporeal manifestation can be examined.

*(No)Self; reconsidering the notion of subjectivity and of self*

As discussed in this chapter, Vasubandhu’s Thirty Verses on the Manifestation of Consciousness provides an alternative model that sheds light on the dominant way that the human mind has been viewed. By introducing the seventh and eighth consciousness (*manas* and *ālaya-vijñāna*), the Yogācāra paradigm states that, in the process of perceiving and understanding all phenomena, the informative *ki-energy* of the seeds of the *ālaya-vijñāna* is at work, ‘perfuming’ perception and understanding, and therefore denying the notion of ‘pure reason’ and ‘pure objectivity’. It also states that, as the thought-consciousness (*manas*) takes the seeds of the store consciousness as its object rather than directly perceiving the outer stimuli, one’s understanding/interpretation of the stimuli/phenomena is based on those informative seeds of the *ālaya-vijñāna*. Furthermore, since the nature of both the seventh and eighth consciousness is of subconscious-ness, one is not aware of their existence and operation; therefore, the boundary that separates the subjective and objective becomes conceptual therefore irrelevant.

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<sup>73</sup>See appendix, *Thirty verses on the manifestation of consciousness*

As a result, the mind as understood in the dualistic frame differs from Mind as described in the Buddhist context. A parallel to this point of view is Heidegger's *da-sein*: as *da-sein* is understood not as a categorical/ontic being but as the ontological existential Being, Mind in Buddhism should be viewed prior to the dualistic and/or psychological understanding of nature of human existence. Furthermore, both Yogācāra's and Heidegger's explanations regarding *da-sein*/Mind's relation to the world/network calls for a shift in the way that the subject and object, and/or the mental and physical, are viewed, hence a shift in how emotion is understood.

The notion of *jong-cha-saenig-hyeon-haning/hyeon-heang-hoon-jong-cha* and *Being-in-the-world* as discussed in the previous pages reveal the interconnected and interdependent nature that is fundamental to the process of arising and existing of *ki-energy* that we call life. Without this fundamental shift, the inquiry into the nature of our existence and our relation to the world would always be within the ontic and categorical understanding. As Polt argues “[In philosophy], this self-deceptive absorption in the present leads to a metaphysics of presence, which only encourages the self-deception.”<sup>74</sup> Neither Heidegger's *da-sein* nor Mind in Buddhism is an inquiry into metaphysics that is based on the dualistic frame of thinking. On the fundamental level, their inquiry into the ontological nature of our existence both refuse the distinction not only between subject and object but also between mental and physical. As the Prajñāpāramitā sutra states, “form is nothing other than emptiness and emptiness is nothing other than form.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>74</sup>Polt 1999: 5-6

<sup>75</sup>Prajñāpāramitā sutra

## *Emotion*

In Buddhism, emotions are viewed as results of complex interaction among various operating factors. The first step in the emotion process is one's contact with an object. This object can be either outside or inside the boundary of one's physical body; for instance, it can be the person sitting next to me or it can be the discomfort I have inside of my stomach. The object can also be either physical or non-physical; for instance, the object of the contact I am making can be the person in my mind as I am recalling a conversation I had with her in the past. Either physical or non-physical and/or either inside or outside of my physical body, Buddhism states that one's contact with a phenomenon (the object) is made through the five sensory receptors of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, skin (integumentary system) with difference in the degree of their engagement. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this contact gives rise to corresponding consciousness, i.e., the eye-consciousness, the ear-consciousness and so forth.<sup>76</sup> These sensory consciousnesses, in turn, generate information; for instance, the information generated by the eye-consciousness is of an 'image' and/or the information generated by the ear-consciousness is of a sound and so on. Or, in the case of a non-physical object, e.g., the person in the recalled conversation in my mind, one does not necessarily go through the sensory receptors, hence the sense consciousnesses; the information is generated directly by the sixth consciousness.

However, according to Buddhism, the process of such contact is selective, that is, one selects—either consciously or non-consciously—the object of the contact as well as

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<sup>76</sup>See the examination on The eight consciousness model; beyond logocentrism. Also see appendix for Vasubandhu's Thirty verses on the manifestation of consciousness.

particular aspect(s) of the selected object. In other words, we chose what to see, what to hear, what to smell and so on. Moreover, since the five sense consciousnesses and the sixth consciousness always arise inter-dependently with the seventh and eighth consciousness (*manas* and *ālaya-vijñāna*), the information they generate – or rather, the information that is processed – are *compounds* of what the object(s) brings and the ‘seeds’ in the eighth consciousness. Based on this projection of the ‘self’ onto the information generation processes, Buddhism views the information, as perception, regardless of the means of their generation, i.e., cognition, feeling, and/or the two combined. From this perspective, feeling (*Vedanā*) is distinguished from emotion. *Vedanā* is noted as pleasant, unpleasant or neutral whereas added to emotion, as it arises through the selective and evaluative processes at more intensive levels described above, is the notion of likes and dislikes. Also, among the operating factors in this complex network are the six primary as well as the twenty secondary “defilements”, which in turn, generate various emotions.<sup>77</sup> In this sense, “the Buddhist perspective on emotions is strongly cognitivist.”<sup>78</sup> Rather than its examination on the nature of individual emotion, what this Buddhist perspective on emotion offers for my study is its understanding of the bodily and cognitive nature of emotion in the complex *orchestration* that emotion process is, despite the varying levels of consciousness of the bodily and cognitive operation.

As discussed throughout this chapter, the Buddhist paradigm of Mind as well as Heidegger’s ontology of Being challenge the long dominant notions of rationality,

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<sup>77</sup>See Verse twelve, thirteen and fourteen in Thirty verses on the manifestation of consciousness in Appendix for the details of the ‘defilements’.

<sup>78</sup>de Silva 1995: 114

subjectivity and of the relationship between a person and the world. Both Buddhism and Heidegger state that, instead of a separate independent self, a (human) being should be viewed in its interdependent relationship to its surroundings, and therefore, the notion of absolute control by that disembodied conceptual self over the embodied ontological Being/Mind is rejected.

Based on the inadequacy of the dualistic and hierarchical understanding of human being and as based on the Buddhist perspective on emotion my research rejects the biological/physiological and/or behaviourist approach to emotion as articulated, for example, by Paul Ekman's notion of basic human emotions<sup>79</sup>. Similarly, my examination of emotion through the three practical projects does not concern itself with forms of emotional expression. Instead, based on the Buddhist notion of the body-mind unity, the relationship between the person and the world and informed by Wonhyo's notion of world as a vast network of *ki-energy*, I propose that emotion be viewed as a form of dynamic resonance that occurs in the process of embodying actions.

#### Section 4. Emotion in the context of theatre practice

Before discussing how emotion and performance processes are approached in my research, I now provide a brief overview of how acting and directing emotion is approached in three Western theatre practitioners; Stanislavsky, Strasberg and Grotowski.

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<sup>79</sup>Paul Ekman is an American psychologist whose work includes his research on emotions and facial expressions, promoting the universality of certain emotions and facial expressions from which resulted his list of basic human emotions.

## *Stanislavsky*

Stanislavsky often used complex terms such as experience, feeling, imagination and/or memory in his discussion of acting and emotion; hence acting emotion in Stanislavsky's view needs to be examined in relation to those related yet *distinct* terms. While there is not space here to provide a detailed examination of each of the key terms found in Stanislavsky's discussion of acting, this section does provide a brief overview on his views on the emotion-action relationship as integral to the actor's creative process as a whole. This section briefly examines five key aspects of Stanislavsky's perspective on emotion, including:

- 1) Stanislavsky's view on the complexity of the process of utilising the actor's past experiences in the present moment of acting;
- 2) the notion of psycho-physicality including activities such as the act of imagining and/or recalling the memory of the (emotional) experiences as well as Stanislavsky's notions of breathing/respiration, affective memory and the Method of Physical Action. I will argue that Stanislavsky meant this complex orchestration of distinct processes to be involved in the actor's process of experiencing the performance, including emotional experience of the role that the actor plays; therefore, emotion as Stanislavsky viewed it, cannot be reduced to merely the cause of an action and/or its physical expressions/manifestations. Moreover, I also argue that the infamous question of whether we run because we are scared or we are scared because we run is both an insufficient and wrongly framed question because it does not account for the complexity of emotion-action relationship. In *Creating A Role*, Stanislavsky writes:

The more an actor has observed and known, the greater his experience, his accumulation of live impressions and memories, the more subtly will he think and feel, and the broader, more varied, and substantial will be the life of his imagination, the deeper his comprehension of facts and events, the clearer his perception of inner and outer circumstances of the life in the play and in his part.<sup>80</sup>

Underlying the above passage are Stanislavsky's view on several issues regarding acting process: a) the ability to observe as a requirement of an actor to enrich her experience; b) the relationship between the past experiences (as a result of active observation) and the present, or future, experience(s);

3) the nature of imagination, that is, the source of the actor's imagination as it relates to the actor's ability to observe enriched past experiences, and therefore to also enrich present/future experience;

4) the relationship between the past experiences and the ability to understand present experience; and

5) the nature of perception. What Stanislavsky states in this single short passage is not simply that the actor's past experiences can enrich her acting, but rather how complex this process is since it involves several distinct – though related – processes, i.e., observing, knowing, accumulating, thinking, feeling,

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<sup>80</sup>Stanislavski 1961: 40

comprehending, and perceiving. These are complex processes, and their relationships are even more complex. It is therefore important to acknowledge their distinct nature since they are all aspects of Stanislavsky's complex notion of emotion.. When approached with insufficient understanding of the complex orchestration of these distinct processes acting emotion is an extremely dynamic process. As Stanislavsky saw it, this process cannot be fully examined. Breaking the balance among these distinct processes can result in a misunderstanding of each process itself, which in turn can create unnecessary issues and/or confusion for the actor. When viewed only through the notion of causality, as is in the question above, Stanislavsky's passage can be (mis)interpreted, i.e., it is sometimes mistakenly understood that the imagination the actor utilises for her present performance depends solely on the past experiences, i.e., knowledge, feeling, and/or emotion in the form of memory of the past experiences. Moreover, in this (mis)understanding, information is assumed to accumulate as fixed entities which the actor can recall at her will and treat as material for her performance. Furthermore, in such a (mis)interpretation, the relationship between the actor's past experience(s) and her acting – the present experience – becomes a series of circuits. Rather than a parallel process, the result not only reinforces the notion of causality but also can tend to create fixed patterns since this misunderstanding limits the actor's present experience to that of the (memory of) past.

From my reading, Stanislavsky's focus on the actor's creativity in terms of generating dynamic emotional experience in the moment of performance emphasizes what is



happening now in the actor in the moment of her playing rather than on her recalling what happened in the past. Stanislavsky writes:

[Imagination] stirs up our affective memory, calling up from its secret depths, beyond the reach of consciousness, elements of already experienced emotions, and *re-grouping* them to correspond with the images which arise in us . . . That is why a *creative imagination* is a fundamental, absolutely necessary gift for an actor.<sup>81</sup>

Although written with reference to the actor's work on "comprehending" the play and the role the actor plays, the passage quoted above shows that Stanislavsky viewed those processes of comprehending and imagining not as strictly mental operations but as *embodied knowledge*, generated through the active act of observing present experiences. Hence, in his view, even the act of recalling the memory and utilising knowledge from a memory cannot solely be a mental process and must involve the bodily features of the actor. From this perspective, the actor's body, or anything bodily, is not treated merely as the actor's means to physically express what is mentally processed; rather, the body itself is that which processes. This notion of psychophysicality in the actor's creative process of utilising her past experiences, imagination, comprehension, perception and/or feeling in the present moment of acting, also

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<sup>81</sup>emphasis added. Stanislavsky's Legacy: 151

underlies Stanislavsky's view of emotion in acting, which can be clearly seen in Stanislavsky's discussion of the nature of breathing, or respiration:

Till you realise that the whole basis of your life – respiration – is not only the basis of your physical existence, but that respiration plus rhythm forms the foundations of all your creative work, your work on rhythm and breathing will never be carried out in full consciousness, that is to say, as it should be carried out, in a state of such complete concentration as to turn your creative work into 'inspiration'.<sup>82</sup>

The notion of *experiencing* further shows how Stanislavsky's view of the emotion-action relationship as integral to acting is fundamentally psychophysical. Across Stanislavsky's writings, this notion of *experiencing* is emphasised, and Stanislavsky "distinguishes "the theatre of experiencing" from two other theatrical forms, "craftsmanship" and "representation"."<sup>83</sup> Stanislavsky repeatedly warns about clichés or mechanical acting without inner truth; therefore, according to Carnicke, Stanislavsky's view of acting as *experiencing* can be defined as:

[...] experiential actors summon a dynamic creative process every time they perform in public. Their art cannot be turned into fixed forms (as are printed poems

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<sup>82</sup>quoted in Merlin 2007: 36

<sup>83</sup>Carnicke 1998: 135

and pre-formulated gestures), because *their performances embody the ephemeral and improvisational creative act itself*.<sup>84</sup>

As seen in the earlier passage, Stanislavsky identifies several processes that are required for the actor's fuller understanding of the play and her role--not just the actor's memory of past experiences. More importantly, the underlying principle is that both the process of generation of memory and the process of recalling a memory are embodied acts. Therefore Stanislavsky's attention to affective memory, the terms he borrowed from Théodule Ribot, and his utilisation of emotion memory for the actor's creative process need to be considered in relation to his notion of psycho-physicality in emotion-action relationship rather than as a means for psychological truth. When discussing a case of an actor who was to play a role and its particular emotion that he himself had not experienced directly, Stanislavsky writes:

[But] sympathy might be transformed into direct reaction . . . From the very moment when the actor feels that change take place *in* him he becomes an active principal in the play of life – real human feelings are born in him – often this transformation from human sympathy into real feelings of the person in the part occurs spontaneously.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup>emphasis added. Carnicke: 139-140

<sup>85</sup>emphasis added. Stanislavsky 2013: 162

According to Carnicke, Stanislavsky was aware of possible ‘side-effects’ of utilising personal experiences in creative process as he remarks:

[However], he found (in consonance with Ribot) that conscious use of personal experience could disturb the actor’s “mental hygiene” and distract from the play. Therefore, Stanislavsky shifted his attention to other sources of affective memory, notably imagination and “empathy” (sochuvstvo, a derivative of the verb “to feel”).<sup>86</sup>

Similarly, the Method of Physical Action further demonstrates Stanislavsky’s holistic approach to emotion-action relationship:

An actor on the stage need only sense the smallest modicum of *organic physical truth in his action* or general state and instantly his emotions will respond to his inner faith in the genuineness of what his body is doing. (. . .) If, however, he forces his feelings he will never believe in them; and without that faith he will never really feel his part.<sup>87</sup>

From the Buddhist perspective, this process requires of the actor the ability to realise “the changes in him” in the moment of their occurrence *and* the ability to minimise the

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<sup>86</sup>Carnicke 2009: 214

<sup>87</sup>emphasis added. Stanislavsky 2013: 127

unwanted interference of automated response patterns both in her perception of the changes and in her processing of the changes perceived. From this review of Stanislavski's notions of *experiencing* and psycho-physicality as integral to acting, two primary observations can be made: firstly, further clarification of the distinct nature of all the constituent parts that together make up the process of an emotional occurrence is necessary—i.e., from the initial contact with consciously selected (acting) stimuli that give rise to emotion and realisation of an emotion through the actor's heightened and focused awareness, and thence finally to the conscious and creative utilisation of the emotional dynamics in one's acting. Secondly, further research should be focused on whether and how the actor's concentrated focus can be developed and sustained directly and simultaneously by the actor's embodiment of her acting score in order to acquire the requisite 'emotion' in performance.

#### *Strasberg: sense memory and emotional memory*

Lee Strasberg, who has coined the term, The Method, is considered to “best represent the Americanisation of Stanislavsky's ideas” according to Carnicke.<sup>88</sup> Focusing on the notion of sense memory and emotional memory, the following brief overview examines the nature of emotion and emotion-action relationship in the context of acting emotion as advocated by Strasberg.

The underlying principle of Strasberg's sense memory and emotional memory is that in acting emotion, the actor is to *re-create* emotional dynamics that she experienced in

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<sup>88</sup>Carnicke 2009: 221

the past regardless of the relationship between the context of the particular emotion selected from the past experience and that in the context of the play/performance. As Strasberg states:

Ultimately, our exercises train the actor to re-create and re-live in his imagination any object or group of objects which when combined into a scene on stage, stimulate the desired experience called for in the performance.<sup>89</sup>

It seems that utilisation of sense memory and/or emotional memory in the actor's process of acting emotion is driven by and toward this ultimate goal of achieving the desired, or true, emotion of the character; and yet, despite the centrality of emotion in Strasberg's work, the nature of emotion itself is extremely simplified. One of possible issues that inadequate understanding of emotion may cause is generalisation of the nature of experience – the phenomena of experiencing, in which an emotional experience is reduced to its externally manifested expressions without accounting for the process through which it manifests. This in turn creates confusion for the actor. For instance, the phrases that are often used in Strasberg's discussion on acting emotion, such as "blocked emotion" and/or "the emotion was not coming out", are confusing since they seem to treat the occurrence of emotion and its external manifestation as the same. Why does emotion need to be externally manifested in order for it to qualify as an emotional experience or to have emotional truth? Is what is happening inside of the body (even if not externally expressed) not an experience? Apart from the visually

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<sup>89</sup>Strasberg 2010: 14

perceptible 'signs' of emotion, what qualifies one as an experience and the other as not an experience?

A second example from Strasberg's body of work is when he guides the actor through the *Song exercise*. Strasberg instructs the actor to "settle into a position and don't move from the neck down. All areas of the body should be quiet" and, in the later stage of the exercise after the student/actor has begun singing, he instructs the actor to "commit yourself to a good vibration".<sup>90</sup> The "quiet body" here refers to the actor's ability to control unwanted movements. However, it needs to be clear how the actor can both be active in controlling the body and at the same time passive in being moved by "a good vibration".

From the actor's perspective, that is, from inside the experience of acting, the parallel occurrence of both emotion and the external expression of the emotion becomes even more confusing. This is especially the case when the only difference between the emotion as perceived by the senses and emotion externally expressed is their level of intensity. As Strasberg states:

I believe the emotions and the senses work exactly alike. There's only one difference. The emotion is sensation at a point of high intensity. Say something hurts you and you say, "I feel a little pain." Something hurts you sharply and you cry, you weep, you say, "Oh God, it was so terrible." What's the difference?

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<sup>90</sup>Strasberg 2010: 37-38

There is no difference in the pain except to a certain degree. (. . . ) At a certain point something changes to a more intense experience. That to me is emotion.<sup>91</sup>

In a broad sense, Strasberg here points out the psycho-physicality in the experience of emotion as he connects it to sensory states; however, by reducing the experience of emotion to a sensory state and by differentiating both only by the relative level of intensity, the active play of the consciousness that selects, processes and makes sense of the initial realisation of the sensation, i.e., the pain, is not recognised. This may be true of emotion in daily circumstances that happens largely in a non-conscious manner; however such simplification is insufficient when examining emotion in the context of extra-daily theatrical events that requires the actor's conscious engagement with otherwise automated process.

Another question that arises from the actor's perspective in working towards re-creating from one's past experience a pre-determined emotional effect is how the actor is able to tell whether or not she has achieved the desired experience through her acting in each moment of performing. If an experience of emotion is reduced to an external expression of the emotion and experiences of certain emotion are associated with particular expressions, how can the actor negotiate all possible dynamics and association that may arise in the process of acting a particular score/scene? Strasberg explained that the sense memory exercises and/or emotional memory exercises are not a beginning point of all acting but they can help when the actor is having trouble (re)creating emotions called for by the given scene. It is still not clear, however, how the

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<sup>91</sup>ibid:33



issue can be assessed and resolved unless the actor – or the director – is able to distinguish all the constituent parts that together make up the process of emotion occurrence, realising of the occurred emotion, processing of the dynamics of the occurred emotion as well as selecting and utilising emotional dynamics in her acting. The acting problem as such cannot be sufficiently addressed or systematically resolved. Further, when the emotion is considered as a more intense experience of sensory states, the actor may seek more intense emotional experiences from her past in an attempt to raise the intensity of the stimulating experience so that she may be able to re-create the desired emotion.

From the director's perspective, the notion of "re-creating and re-living" previously experienced senses and emotions is problematic. What is the relationship between the realm of the actor's imagination wherein the actor is "re-creating and re-living any object or group of objects" and the time and place wherein the performance takes place? How might the director integrate the two in the theatrical event?

From a Buddhist perspective on the nature of emotion and the process of its occurrence, the understanding of emotion that underlies the notion of utilising sense memory and/or emotional memory in one's acting lacks clarity in illuminating the complex process of accumulation of memory (of the actor's emotional experiences) and of how that *embodied* information is related to yet another embodied process of generating emotional dynamics in the present moment of acting. Therefore, there remains the need for a further examination on such process.

## Grotowski

The following overview focuses on Grotowski's approach to the impulse-action relationship without detailed examination of different phases of his work. In so doing, the necessity of the actor's heightened awareness in acting emotion will be further argued, and a need for further research on how the awareness as such may be manifested and sustained directly through the actor's embodiment of the actions – the acting score – will be further pointed out.

In speaking of actor training with reference to his notion of *via negativa*, Grotowski states:

The result is freedom from the time-lapse between inner impulse and outer reaction in such a way that *the impulse is already an outer reaction. Impulse and action are concurrent*: the body vanishes, burns, and the spectator sees only a series of visible impulses.<sup>92</sup>

The “inner impulse” that Grotowski refers to here should not be reduced solely to the actor's psychological state, but also relates to what may be happening in the internal milieu of the actor's body as a ‘theatre’ or psychophysical organism. The impulse-action relationship underlies Grotowski's approach to acting and informs different phases of his practice. Grotowski speaks about the notion of *total act* as “like a step towards the

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<sup>92</sup>emphasis added. Grotowski 1968: 16

summit of the actor's organism in which consciousness and instinct are united."<sup>93</sup> From this perspective, acting is considered as the process of 'stripping off' – *via negativa* – unwanted automated operations of the organism (the actor) that are unnecessary for the impulse and action to be directly and simultaneously in conversation.

Furthermore, by considering the state of acting as the state of doing in which the actor's "consciousness and instinct are united", Grotowski acknowledges the need for a sustained focus and heightened awareness that enable the actor to consciously select and process the dynamics – the instinct – in the moment of they arise. His understanding of acting as a state of doing as such further demonstrates his emphasis on the direct relationship between inner impulses and outer actions as situated in the present moment of playing. As Grotowski's long-term collaborator Thomas Richards remarks:

(...) for Grotowski, *organicity* indicates something like the potentiality of a current of impulses, a quasi-biological current that comes from the "inside" and goes toward the accomplishment of a precise action.<sup>94</sup>

Moreover, Grotowski seems to recognise the embodied dynamic that is embedded in impulse(s), including those which generate an emotional dynamic. He observes that in impulse, "lies the secret of something very difficult to grasp."<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup>ibid:178

<sup>94</sup>original emphasis. Richards 1995: 93

From a Buddhist perspective, the unification of the (actor's) consciousness and instinct can be characterised as that state of being/doing in which the deceptive interference, or projection, of the (actor's) seventh consciousness – *manas*'thought-consciousness – is minimised, but the five sense-consciousnesses and the sixth consciousness are activated and heightened. Though still influenced by the eighth consciousness – *ālaya-vijñāna*'store-consciousness' – the result is a heightened awareness that can realise otherwise non-conscious operations of the self *and* the resulting changes of such operation, including those that entail emotional dynamics. However, what is required to achieve such an *awake and revealing state*, which is otherwise "something very difficult to grasp", is a **firm** ground. By emphasising the immediacy between the impulse and action, Grotowski first grounds the actor in the solidity of her body, or the acting score as constituted by bodily actions. As Richards further remarks:

Usually, when the actor thinks of intentions, he thinks that it means to pump an emotional state. It is not this. Intentions are related to physical memories, to associations, to wishes, to contact with the others, but *also* to muscular in/tensions.<sup>96</sup>

In this respect, the emotion that is intended for a given moment of the performance manifests in a form of dynamics which immediately bares movements, and the actor's

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<sup>95</sup>quoted in Richards 1995: 94

<sup>96</sup>original emphasis. Richards 1995: 96

conscious selecting, shaping and executing of those movements constitute her acting score. Furthermore, repetition of the actions/acting score is the process of generating additional dynamics; thereby making them more complex rather than 'getting used to them'.

[. . .] he realized that when an actor knows a score of physical actions very well, in order to keep it from descending, as **time passes** one must break the same score down into smaller actions. (. . . ) It is not that the actor should change his line of actions, but rather that he should discover the smaller elements within this same line of actions, so that the original line of actions becomes more detailed.<sup>97</sup>

Grotowski devised an extensive series of 'exercises' over the course of his lifetime that he utilised in his work with actors not only as a pre-performative actor training but also as a means to reveal what may lie in impulses in order for creative utilisation. This remains otherwise hidden in layers of an individual and culture. With concerns of a long-term pre-performative actor training put aside, the three practical research projects examine whether and how the actor's revealing state of being doing as such can be enabled directly by the acting score.

### *Primary working assumptions*

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<sup>97</sup>ibid:88

I briefly outline below some of the primary working assumptions about emotion, acting, directing, creativity and organic process that guide my consideration of emotion in performance throughout this thesis.

1. Emotion: emotion is the moment by moment, complex orchestration of all constituent aspects of a human being, including the physical and mental faculties, in dynamic conversation with the environment in which it is situated. Emotion is a process of orchestration, which, under normal circumstances, occurs largely non-consciously; however, the perception of emotion per se requires consciousness.

From the perspectives of the Buddhist paradigm of Mind, Heidegger's notion of *dasein*, as well as recent studies of neuroscience, the non-conscious process of occurrence of emotion may be characterised as the automatic response of the subject in selecting stimuli based on repeated patterns accumulated and appropriated over time. However, from both Buddhist as well as Heideggerian perspectives such non-conscious/automated processes are explained and understood as part of the notion of impermanence. From a neuroscientific perspective 'impermanence' is known as neuroplasticity—a concept which encompasses repeated pattern, as well as serving as the source that allows such patterns to form in the first place. Despite the fact that the environment of the internal milieu of a human being wherein emotions manifest (consciously or non-consciously) and its operating system – biology – are largely the same across persons and remains largely similar over the course of one person's life, emotions themselves are not innate. Therefore, the manifestation of emotion and its dynamic – especially in the context of extra-daily circumstances such as that of performative theatrical events – is considered to occur in and through the subject/actor's

*conscious* embodiment of actions as situated in the performance environment. Emotion as such is therefore considered to always be in process, or, in other words, in the flow of systematic action(s).

2. Acting/Acting emotion: based on the working definition of emotion discussed above, acting emotion is considered primarily as related to the principle of reducing the occasions and levels of non-conscious/automated operations that occur in the process of generation of emotion. This is assumed to be done by developing and sustaining the heightened sensory awareness and conscious focus on what happens to the actor's bodymind in the moment of embodying the actions, i.e., the acting score, as realised through sense consciousnesses together with consciousness<sup>98</sup>. In so doing, the actor is enabled to recognise and thereby to minimise random and/or unwanted interference of patterned perception of what is happening since these random perceptions would influence the actor's experience/performance of actions constituting her score. This type of awareness is assumed to enable the actor to utilise the information generated by the embodiment of the actions *systematically* and *creatively* in her process of manifesting the emotional dynamics called for in given moments of the performance. Acting emotion in this perspective is thus assumed largely to be processual and improvisatory – therefore ephemeral – regardless of the acting context, i.e., text-based character acting and/or devised theatre. Therefore, my research assumes acting emotion to be less relevant to the psychology of the actor and directly related to the bodily state of

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<sup>98</sup>Based on Vasubandhu's eight-consciousnesses model, the sense consciousness occurs concurrent to the contact made by the five sense organ(s), e.g., eye-consciousness in looking through the medium of the eyes, ear-consciousness in listening through the medium of the ears and so. These sensory consciousnesses together with the sixth – consciousness – make up the first six of the eight consciousness which can, unlike the seventh and the eighth, be accessed directly by the subject. See the section, *Eight consciousnesses model; beyond logocentrism* earlier in the chapter for detailed examination of the model.

being/doing the acting score, processed through the consciousness(es). Furthermore, given the focus discussed above, other means of engaging, meaning-making as well as communication such as that of language take a secondary role although they are utilised at times.

3. Directing/Directing emotion: the three practical research projects focus on working with actors as the primary aspect of directing. In principle, this is to examine whether and how the director can create a situation that allows **actors** to directly access the emotional state of being/doing. Although aesthetic and dramaturgical means are also utilised by the director, the primary means of creating such conditions from the director's perspective is exploring the way through which the actors engage with their actions and create their acting score, in order to:

a) direct the actors' attention to the part of the emotion manifestation process that occur largely non-consciously in daily circumstances;

b) develop the actors' heightened awareness and focus so as to turn a non-conscious process into a conscious process. As a result, actors ideally become more receptive to the dynamics generated by their performance and specific actions;

c) enable actors to select and utilise the dynamic awareness and focus systematically and creatively in their performance;

d) help actors to utilise the enacted dynamics in creating an emotionally dynamic performance as a whole.



4. Creativity/Creative process; the process of establishing and embodying actions beyond the level of ideation. From the Buddhist perspective discussed earlier in the chapter, creativity can be viewed as a process of de-activating already established and hence familiar patterns that are inherently part of processes of perception and cognition – the two dominant modes of making sense of any object at hand. In other words, during the creative process – whether in the context of performing art or in a broader sense – one tries to find ways to act that are, *though not completely independent of*, less governed by established and familiar patterns. My research assumes that one way to begin the creative process as such is by paying attention to and acknowledging the non-conscious processes operating in one's performance process.

5. Organicity/Organic process: My research assumes that the actor's creative process is an organic process where the actor approaches that process, not in terms of linearity, but in terms of organic interaction between the actor and the environment. The actor embodies the actions incorporating the environment in which the actor is situated *in each moment* of performing. From this perspective, the actor engages each moment in each stage of her creative process – from the very first rehearsal through to the end of the last performance – primarily in relation to what happens 'there and then', rather than causally in terms of applying what happened previously to the present moment of playing in an attempt to re-generate the outcome selected from the previous stage.

Thus far, I have outlined the importance of the actor developing the ability to break down complex orchestration into distinct processes that together generate emotion

process as a whole. This ideally occurs from the initial contact with an object/stimulus and other concurrent operations of the subject including physiological changes, through *perception* of sensory states and mental formations in processing that perception, finally to selecting or creating an appropriate reaction. This understanding of the nature of emotion process as such in turn reveals the relationship between those distinct processes. If and when the nature and operating mechanism of each element involved the process is sufficiently examined, and with the particular context of acting and/or directing emotion in mind, one may begin examining the actor's process of manifesting emotional dynamics and/or the director's process of creating an emotionally dynamic theatrical event.

With the focus on examining the relationship among those distinct processes constituent to occurrence of emotion, my primary focus in examining emotion and performance processes will be primarily on exploring possible ways in which the actors are grounded in their performance that in turn may allow them to develop a heightened awareness and sensitivity to what is happening in each moment of playing.

Through discussion on the three practical projects in the following chapters, I will argue that in order for such resonance to occur, an 'expansion' of space in the process of acting and directing may be necessary. Borrowing the Buddhist notion of *ghong* (*śūnyatā*/emptiness) this 'expansion' can be described as the process of emptying: an emptying of the subjective self and of the objective space. The actor's state of being doing which may be achieved in/through the process of emptying as such might be described as follows:

In the seen, there is only the seen,  
in the heard, there is only the heard,  
in the sensed, there is only the sensed,  
in the cognised, there is only the cognised.

Thus you should see that

indeed there is no thing there [...].<sup>99</sup>

If/when one is able to operate in the state as such where in her doing there is only the done etc., can we work beyond the limitations of the conceptual separation between action (physical) and emotion (mental). Furthermore, how might this perspective relate to acting and directing emotion? In the following chapters, I will elaborate how I utilised 'simple' task-based actions as a means of creating appropriate condition(s) for the actors as to help them achieve the state described above, i.e., the states of being doing the task-based actions that may allow the actors to directly enter into an 'emotional' state of being doing without obstacles created by the conceptual boundary between emotion and action. In so doing, how emotion in acting is understood may be redefined.

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<sup>99</sup>Bodhivagga (Awakening chapter) in *Udana*

## CHAPTER 2 *-ing*: playing (no)self in devised performance

I have thus far discussed how the dominant understanding of emotion is highly problematic when it comes to acting and directing emotion in the context of theatre practice since it cannot account to the complexities in emotion process, and therefore cannot provide an adequate account of emotion. Based on the Buddhist philosophy of Mind and Heidegger's ontology of Being, I have proposed that emotion as mental phenomena and action as physical phenomena be viewed in terms of their interdependent relationship. This approach to emotion rejects the notion of objectification of emotion and therefore rejects the nominal categorization and characterization of emotion which focuses on emotional expressions and behaviours such as the notion of 'the basic/universal human emotions.' Instead, *-ing* approaches emotion in relation to the actors' 'sensory states of being doing'. This chapter discusses how I, as the director, utilised a set of task-based actions in order to facilitate the actors' process of engaging their senses and sensory awareness as fully through which certain sensory states may be generated.

My first practical project, *-ing*, was initiated as part of the Poor Theatre Series 2009 of The Theatre Practice, Singapore. It was an international collaboration of Theatre P'yut from Korea, Fat Bird Theatre from China and The Theatre Practice from Singapore. As seen in the self-explanatory name, the Poor Theatre Series works with minimal resources and therefore "challenges an artist to draw on his imagination to get around or find new ways to overcome the lack of actual resources."<sup>100</sup> As a director, I worked with a cast of three female actors – two Singaporean and one Korean. We

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<sup>100</sup> The Theatre Practice, 2009.

created and rehearsed the piece for eight weeks and the piece was realised in thirteen performances in Singapore, two performances at the International Shanghai Performing Arts Festival in Shanghai and another three at the University of Shenzhen in Shenzhen, China in November and December 2009.

*-Ing* is a semi-devised multi-lingual piece performed in English, Korean and Mandarin based on a text I wrote. There are no character names – just three figures – and each of them speaks in more than one language switching from one to the other, i.e., English to Korean, or English to Mandarin. There is no linear narrative either: the piece is composed of thirteen units with no apparent “through line” between each of them. For most of the transitions between each of the thirteen units, there is a black out, and in each unit the actors are often found/seen in a state of doing a set of actions with no apparent relation to that of the previous unit. What is in the text, however, is a series of images, sounds/voices and actions through which the actors work within themselves and/or interact with each other. It is also through this process that the piece is realised as a whole in a performance, which will be discussed in more detail in a later part of this chapter.

As mentioned above, this project approaches emotion in relation to the actors’ sensory states of being doing, and its primary purpose is to examine whether and how I, as the director, can facilitate the actors’ process of engaging with the performance towards achieving certain states of being doing. For this purpose, I selected four specific senses; a sense of longing, a sense of emptiness, a sense of being lost, and a sense of playfulness/’innocence’. Specific research questions guiding the process of exploration are as follows:

- 1) What issues arise when acting each of the four sensory states this production set out to explore?
- 2) What are way(s) of creating and embodying an 'emotionally' dynamic performance that provides an alternative to traditional modes of representation?
- 3) Whether and how the tasks-based actions that the actors are required to perform is related to shaping their sensory states of playing; and how this, in turn, may be related to embodiment of the four selected sensory states?

With the four sensory states as a beginning point, I wrote an initial piece of writing, constituting a series of images and actions. This initial writing was introduced to the actors during the first stage of the rehearsal period and was explored mainly through improvisation 'exercises' as well as other creative means, such as writing and drawing. Selected materials from this stage were then used in order to turn the initial writing into a performance text and then to develop performance score. At the end of the second stage, the structure of the text was again revised and edited based on our work from this stage of rehearsing. During the third and final stage of the rehearsal period, the actors continued to rehearse their scores, incorporating the changes made in the previous stages. It was also at this point in the process when the whole performance text was rehearsed without interruption for the first time in the rehearsal process, and the transitions between each of the units were practiced.

In the remainder of the chapter, I reflect on the process of creating and rehearsing – *ing* as follows: the first section discusses how creating a performance is viewed in this specific practical project in order to clarify the process of creating –*ing*; with the performance paradigm discussed in the first section, the second section discusses my

process of writing the text of *-ing*; the third section reflects in three parts the three stages of the rehearsal period, with each part focusing on selected issues experienced during the rehearsals, the improvisation process, and detailed discussion of the actors' performance in selected sections of *-ing*.

### Performance as the manifestation of a (fictional) world

First of all, it is necessary to clarify how performance-making is approached in this practical project: if/as the certain notions of time, space, subject/character, and emotions that make up a narrative are taken away, what other means are left in creating a 'story' and/or drama on stage? Examining the question as such is inherently an inquiry of how performance-making might be viewed in a broader sense. If performance-making is considered the creation of a (fictional/aesthetic) world in the context of theatre practice, then the inquiry firstly becomes an examination of how a world might be created and secondly how that approach could be utilised in performance practice in the process of creating a performance.

According to Buddhism, 'a world' is the manifestation of different' but connected *ki* – life energies – as they interact interdependently. In Buddhism, there are two 'truths' as to how the world as such is viewed; one is the conventional truth and the other is the ultimate truth. The conventional truth is related to the phenomenal world as we see it in the everyday environment, whereas the ultimate truth refers to the underlying relationship through which the phenomenal world comes to be seen. However, these two truths must not be seen as separate or opposite. Wonhyo, through his notion of

*ilshim-yimoon*, describes both the conventional and the ultimate *moons* (gates) that lead to the world as *ilshim* (one-Mind) as they are fundamentally interconnected. More specifically, Wonhyo's notion of *bhulilyibhulyi* (not one and not two) describes how the world is manifested as a result of the weaving of the two. This notion, both as the structure and nature of the world, states that in all beings, being and not-being coexist; from this perspective, manifestation of a being – either animated or non-animated – cannot be considered separate from the dormant – the ‘unseen’ energies. In order for a life and then a world to manifest itself, it needs both existence and non-existence, i.e., life manifests in relation to death. In the same way, such a view of being and the world refuses all metaphysical binaries, which might seem factual in terms of the conventional truth, since they do not reflect the ultimate truth – the underlying relationship of factual phenomena.

Furthermore, the two – the conventional and the ultimate – truths are not considered as relational in a sense that one enables the other to be. Rather, Buddhism states that one is the other, or, in other words, the two are neither the same nor dissimilar. The notion of *joongdho* (the middle way) in Buddhism does not refer to the middle between the two points of a polar; instead, it states that the two points are not separate, thereby rejecting the polar all together. Furthermore, it is this *ilshim* through which Wonhyo describes the nature/mechanism of *ghong* (*śūnyatā*/emptiness). In his *Exposition of the Vajrasamādhi Sūtra*, Wonhyo describes such a nature of *ghong* as *beejoongyiyibyeon* – English translation – and subversively states that *ghak* (awakening/enlightenment) and *bhoolghak* (non-enlightenment) are neither not one nor not two.



Such openness and freedom of *ghong* operates as the ab-ground through which all *ki*-s are manifested, and the manifestation of beings, including the phenomenal world, is considered the most 'authentic' manifestation of the *ki*-s. The Buddhist notion of *seongki* – rising of nature/characteristics – describes the nature of all phenomena as in the worldly dimension--/the conventional truth of the world as *ilshim*. All matters/beings in their 'authentic' manifestation as *seongki* can be paralleled with Heidegger's notion of *Ereignis* (event) in a sense that the authenticity of each being/matter is revealed as ultimate truth. In this sense, the notion of *sahsahmooae* refers to the obstacle-free nature among the various characteristics in phenomenal manifestations of all beings. *Sah* here refers to beings/matters as *Ereignis* – the manifestation of authentic *ki* – rather than an objectified thing, since every being/matter is manifested with *ghong* as its ab-ground, thereby rejecting any polar. In other words, in the mode of be-ing as *sah* and/or *Ereignis*, there cannot be a polar of the subject and object, only through which objectification would be possible.

Such deconstruction of (the ground of) objectification is important in relation to my approach to *-ing*. If manifestation of a world is considered to be an authentic process of weaving the manifestation of *ki*-s and their 'non-manifestation', how can this double reality/non-reality be utilised in the process of making *-ing* as a means to create a (fictional/aesthetic) world that is 'fuller' by its more organic manifestation? Moreover, what does the refusal of objectification of beings/matters mean in relation to 'directing emotion', and how is such related to the process of creating *-ing*? The underlying principles of such performance paradigm as discussed above informed my process of

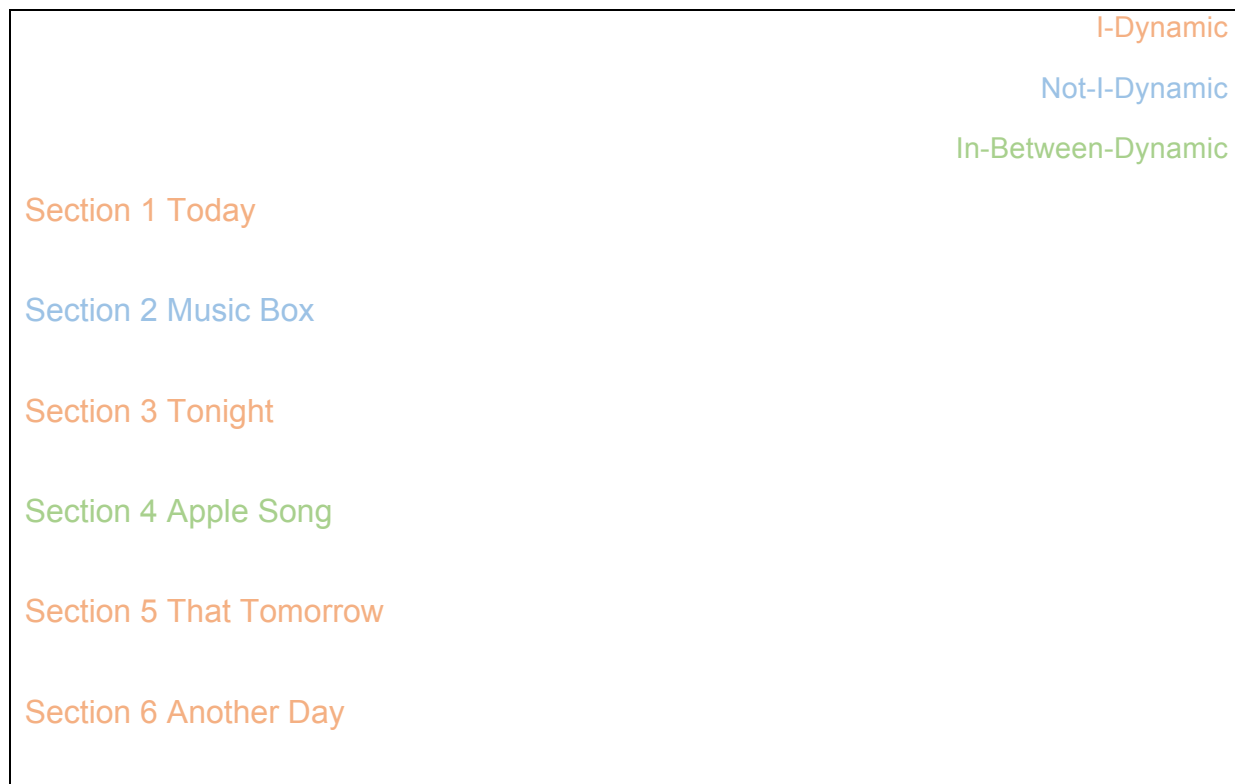
writing *-ing*. In the following section of the chapter, I discuss how the text of *-ing* was developed in order to create certain characteristics of the world of *-ing*.

### The script: creating a story beyond narrative

In *-ing*, there are three kinds of psychophysical dynamics that underlie and drive the three Figures' journey across thirteen sections in which they experience the following states of being: I Dynamic, Not-I Dynamic and In-Between Dynamic. The actors were not told of these three dynamics as they were: they were strictly for me, as the director, to develop the task-based actions that make up the performance text for the actors. The task-based actions were intended to induce in the actors certain states of being doing where the four sensory states may arise in the moment of the actors' performance of the actions. For instance, in the I-Dynamic sections, the task-based actions the actors were asked to perform were designed to direct the actors' attention and focus primarily to their body, e.g., sensing specific parts of their body. Performing the I-Dynamic sections, therefore, may generate a strong sense of self, regardless of "whose" self that might be. Further, this engagement with their body may help the actors to engage with the immediate time and space of the performance. On the other hand, the Not-I-Dynamic sections were designed to take the actors' awareness of the immediate time and space of the performance. Therefore, the actors' primary focus in the moment of playing the task-based actions in those sections is taken away from their bodies, and is directed to the stimuli outside the boundaries of their physical body, e.g., listening to the voice being played. Lastly, the task-based actions for the In-Between-Dynamic sections

utilised both ways of directing the actors' (primary) focus; doing the specific actions in these sections were designed to put the actors into a state of playing where they were required to initiate and sustain the equal level of attention on both to themselves and to the surroundings. Hence, the In-Between-Dynamic sections utilises a lot more of explicit interactions between the actors whereas the other sections (of I-Dynamic and of Not-I-Dynamic) primarily utilise each actor's individual relationship with themselves and their surroundings.

Directorially speaking, it is in the interweaving of these different relationships with space and time, that are generated by the actors' playing of the task-based actions, that the four selected sense may arise. Therefore, the order in which the thirteen sections were placed was also important with regards to the generation of the four senses. The order of the sections was as follows:



Section 7 Doll – Falling

Section 8 My Ideal Companion

Section 9 Oh My God I Ate You

Section 10 At Oracle's

Section 11 Gingerbread House

Section 12 Injury

Section 13 Prayer

As seen in the above table, throughout *-ing*, the actors crossed the boundaries of three psychophysical dynamic states across thirteen sections, or at times, within the same section. Although the actors were not informed of these underlying dynamics that shaped the task-based actions they were performing, the actors were in effect enacting and shifting among different qualities in their relationship to themselves and to the space. Moreover, these enactments were not consciously initiated by the actors. Similarly, whatever the sensory states that such enactment may have generated were not psychologically motivated by the actors. For example, performing certain task-based actions may have deprived the actors of a sense of control, which, as it kept occurring to them, may have generated a sense of being unsettled. But if/when such generation of sensory states happened, it was related primarily to the actors' state of playing those actions rather than psychological, disembodied motivations or narratives that might have also been being generated. Further, in this sense, the four sensory states of

longing-ness, emptiness, lost-ness and of playfulness/innocent-ness differ from the subjective emotion of the actors. From the directorial/creative perspective, the Figures' journey and their 'emotional' experience during that journey in the (fictional/aesthetic) world of *-ing* directly relates to the three Dynamics through which the actors enact certain qualities in their relationship to themselves and to the space, and therefore to the performance.

In exploring a non-narrative means of creating a 'story' through the three psychophysical dynamics, it could be said that *-ing* attempts to deconstruct four metaphysical – therefore dualistic – notions as follows: linear time, objective physical space, character as a subjective self, and the nominal categorisation of emotion.

Firstly, in relation to the notion of linear time, the thirteen sections of *-ing* are paralleled, and a black-out is placed in some of the transitions from one section to the next. In doing so, the sense of linear time is blurred, and as a result there might arise a sense of *interrupted time*. Furthermore, in interrupting the sense of linear time as such, I wanted to explore a sense of repetition. Although the Figures dwell in only one realm of the three psychophysical dynamic states at a time, the presence of the other two are always there. I wanted to examine whether and how the sense of repetition might be related to a sense of accumulation; in other words, linear time might be blurred but there is still a sense of temporality for the audience. The sense of accumulated time in a non-linear manner was explored partly as a means of intensifying the tension between I Dynamic sections and Not-I Dynamic sections, and through such intensified tension, the thirteen sections can be connected together. In terms of the lack of overt relationship between each section, they could be described as seeming random and/or out-of-

context. However, by having the three psychophysical dynamic states, the Figures repeatedly go back and forth among the states, and by building tension between any two given states, I examined whether and how it might be possible to create a dynamic drama alternative to the typical means of creative narrative and structure.

The three psychophysical dynamic states were utilised not only in terms of exploring an alternative way of creating a sense of temporal dynamics – interrupted yet repeated/accumulated time – but also that of spatial dynamics. Awareness along with a lack of the immediate here and now – each corresponding to I-Dynamic and Not-I Dynamic – can create a sense of the Figures being in different ‘places’. More specifically, if the strong awareness of the present in I Dynamic creates a sense of a place that belongs ‘here’, the loss of this here then creates the possibility for there to exist a sense of not-here—a sense of ‘somewhere else’. From the audience’s perspective, these two seemingly separate spaces of here and not-here can be connected, not in terms of a narrative through-line but via the underlying psychophysical dynamics that create specific spatial and temporal characteristics of the world of *-ing*.

As discussed earlier, *-ing* is composed of **thirteen** parallel sections which intentionally is structured in order to potentially blur the sense of linear time as well as subject and object space. This potential blurring was a self-conscious creative choice I made in order to investigate whether the complex ways in which humans relate to the world -- which are manifested through certain (interpretations of) spatiotemporal characteristics -- can be approached beyond the metaphysical concepts of time and space.

Similarly, *-ing* attempts to blur the notion of a 'character' by working with the actors as figures where each has no independent identity or history. I self-consciously worked toward this goal in relation to each of the three actors by breaking the metaphysical characteristics of 'subject'. First of all, *-ing* rejects the notion that there is an 'essence' of the Figure which is a fixed entity that is independent of the 'physical' elements of the being, e.g., the body and of the dynamic states they enter. I worked with the actors on rejecting the notion of any of them possessing an identity characterised by the seemingly never-changing part of the self, also termed 'I'. Secondly, *-ing* rejects the hierarchy of body/form and mind/meaning as advocated by the metaphysical frame of the superior fixed-and-independent essence – be it the God-given-soul or pure reason – and the sub-elements. It also means that the ability/right to control the sub-elements granted to the superior 'I' is rejected as well. Such rejections of the metaphysical views on human beings were made for two reasons: Firstly, such views can be problematic, since they bring about an objectification of the sub-elements that the subject "I" possesses. The purpose of such an examination is also related to whether and how fuller manifestation of the world of *-ing* might be possible through a more organic mode of actor performance beyond the simplified hierarchical relationship of subject-object.

Moreover, this choice was intended to examine whether and how this particular view of the being human is related to processes of 'acting emotion' in relation to creating a dynamic performance. In investigating an alternative way through which a dynamic 'story'/performance might be created, I also explored deconstructing emotions themselves. As described earlier, in creating *-ing*, I began with four specific emotions as the sensory states: a sense of being lost, longing, playfulness and innocence. However,

in order to examine whether and how these sensory states might be approached through performance practice, I started by deconstructing what are considered to be 'human emotions' as informed by my research on the nature of emotion as discussed in the previous chapter. The research showed that the metaphysical view of a human being that posits the body/the physical and the mind/the mental as separate, often opposite, has influenced the dominant understanding of emotion therefore the very categorisations as well as compartmentalisation of certain dynamics that are considered to be the human emotions. *Emotion or not, the four sensory states that -ing is set to explore share the emotion process*: that is, although the labels by which the human emotions are categorised can be useful for certain types of communication, if/when the emotions are identified and understood only with their nominal compartmentalised categories, complex dynamics of emotion can be lost.

From this perspective, deconstructing previously held characteristics and categorisation of emotion in the process of making *-ing* can be considered a means of restoring the rich complexity of emotion. For instance, a sense of being lost can in one way be associated with a situation where one is trying to find his way to somewhere. It could alternately be considered in the context of not knowing what to do in certain situations. Similarly, one might have a sense of longing for a loved one, or one might have a sense of longing towards something that is not necessarily a person or toward that which is already known to one. There can be many contexts and situations by which the compartmentalisation and categorisation of emotions have been both informed and used to characterise. It is this closed cycle – which both was influenced by and influenced the nominal objectification of emotion – that can be highly problematic



for the process of ‘acting emotions’, as it can prevent the complexity of emotions from becoming manifest.

Moreover, such nominal categorisation is also problematic in that it encourages a representational approach to acting emotions, since emotions become ‘objects’ that the actor has to ‘portray’. It creates a further problem, since it is contradictory to the notion of emotion as ‘non-form’; emotions cannot be objectified when they are considered in ‘essence/meaning’ as opposed to bodily actions, and yet they do become objects to be controlled, manipulated, and/or portrayed by the acting subject—the actor. These contradictory views on the relationship between emotions and self create practical problems that require the need for an alternative.

In the process of making such a performance, the structure of the performance becomes an important focus, although this (non)structure is irrelevant in the context of structuralism. Instead, the thirteen sections were placed in order to create a *chiasmic*<sup>101</sup> relationship among the three states of I, the non-I and the in-between psychophysical dynamics, as the driving force for the Figures on their journey of *-ing*. The operation of the thirteen sections and the underlying psychophysical dynamics is of chiasmic (non) structure of the performance; the thirteen sections of *-ing* are not sub-elements meant to serve *-ing* as a whole; therefore, it is much more relevant to ask *how they operate* rather than what they are.

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<sup>101</sup>In a chiasmic relationship as such, the characteristics of each of the three psychophysical dynamics manifest inter-dependently among themselves rather than with one enabling another in hierarchical sense. For instance, the I dynamic would only be what it is when it is paralleled with the non-I dynamic and/or the in-between dynamic would only bare its characteristics when paralleled with the inter-related I and non-I dynamics. In this sense, in the chiasmic structure of *-ing*, the thirteen sections cannot be compartmentalised and considered separate from each other, despite that they were developed with specific sense of the four senses: accordingly, the four sense manifest only in relation to each other.

Through the chiasmic relationship as such, each of the thirteen sections leaves a trace, and through these traces as such, they are woven together. As much as they on their own may seem ‘out-of-context’ on the one hand, each section is inherently ‘perfumed’<sup>102</sup> by another section and therefore by the all. For instance, what the Figures may hear in Section 2 together with a sense of urgency at the end of the section is woven with the frustration of “not being able to sleep” in Section 3, which is again interwoven with the singing and dancing of Section 3. Then, in Section 5, the sense of urgency in Section 2 resonates again, but this time slightly differently. Similarly, all thirteen sections are interwoven with one another, and the trace of one section always re-appears into another section.

Such traces/tracing function in two ways in *–ing*; one is that they connect one section to the next, and the other is that in connecting, they constitute the performance per se. Unlike the metaphysical opposition of structure and meaning and of expression and essence, the traces as such are considered to be both. They are both the “structure and meaning”, because they negate being either. Furthermore, in this perspective, I and Not-I dynamics are not opposite dynamics in a sense that they are not considered to be the two ends of a polar, which, by the definition, cannot occupy the same space and time and can never “meet”. In this sense, In-Between-Dynamic does not mean a reduction of the two or the middle point on the polar.

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<sup>102</sup>The expression of being perfumed here is used in relation to the Buddhist notion of the interconnected relationship between the eight consciousnesses. Vasubadhu, in *Thirty verses on manifestation of consciousness*, states that, due to such relationship, one of the eight is inherently ‘perfumed’ by another; therefore, the eight consciousnesses are not separate, i.e., the first five consciousnesses are perfumed by the sixth consciousness, which is perfumed by the seventh consciousness – *manas* – and so on. See chapter one for a detailed discussion on the Buddhist paradigm of eight consciousnesses and of interdependent arising.

Also in relation to the chiasmic (non)structure of *-ing*, the overall paralleling of the thirteen sections as a whole was created in such a way that the three psychodynamics are never fully comprehended. The switches between the three psychodynamics were situated to interrupt each other; therefore, the Figures never reach any intellectual comprehension of any of the two worlds—of their psychodynamic states. On the one hand, the Figures are thrown into different worlds, but on the other hand, it might be that they repeatedly drive themselves from one to the other. The awareness of “here” brings in them a sense, not of “here” but of “there”, and therefore the Figures’ swaying between the two are perhaps implicit in the mode of their existence.

From this perspective, the three psychophysical dynamic states are not some kind of psychological motivations or subjective emotions of either the Figures or the actors. The two ‘places’ – the here of I Dynamic and there of Not-I Dynamic – may be viewed as different spatiotemporal dimensions that *interdependently exist* in the world of *-ing* as a whole, which is beyond the dichotomy of objective/physical space and the subjective/non-physical realm. Such a perspective on spatiality is also connected to the blurring of the sense of linear time in the sense that such a world operates beyond linear time as if the Figures exist through both distancing and de-distancing simultaneously.

Thus far, I have discussed how *-ing* was structured and created to blur the notion of linear time, of single-dimensional space, of the simplified notion of subject and object as well as of the nominal categorisation and compartmentalisation of emotions. As the first stage of the process of creating a dynamic performance alternative to metaphysically derived representations and/or narratives of emotion, I utilised the three psychophysical

dynamics as the primary means of creating the performance in my work with the actors. This approach to performance practice, however, need not encourage yet another metaphysical view of performance-making. It is not to separate the process from the result, treating the process as a means to an end that is the (fictional) world of *-ing*. Rather, I viewed this practical project as a process itself of the manifestation of the 'end' – and/or vice versa – as the actors came to embody the performance score over the course of the performance. Therefore, the rehearsal process began with and focused on the question of how to translate the underlying principles into acting language so that such traces could be manifest through the actors' embodiment of actions.

#### Rehearsal process; application of the three psychophysical dynamics

The actors were not informed of the three psychodynamics as I have contextualised them in the discussion above. Instead, the three psychophysical dynamics were utilised in creating the acting score for each of the thirteen sections in and as the process of manifestation of *-ing*, in relation to its three particular constitutions: space, the Figures, and the four dominant senses in the world of *-ing*.

##### 1. Space of *-ing*

The primary focus of the actors in the Not-I Dynamic is their body (i.e., in the Music Box section, where in the body the music was coming from and/or in the Doll-Falling, where the focus is extended to engage with the 'objective' space of the theatre around them, particularly in the physical shape and changes in the shape. On the other hand, for the I-Dynamic sections, the actors begin with the space while the body is slowly

coming into their awareness. For instance, in the transition between Section 8 and Section 9, I intentionally let the actors be seen by not turning out the lights; at the end of Section 8 – My Ideal Companion – the actors picking up the black cubes and moving into the next section (arranging the cubes and taking their place for Section 9) is all shown. In such a ‘setting’, the objective space of the theatre may be seen more; however, due to the chiasmic (non) structure of *-ing*, it may also resonate with the traces of what has happened in the space before. Also, the expansion of the physical space as such may be the strongest in the In-Between-Dynamic sections in which the shift between the other two states is more sudden and rapid.

In all three, the actors work with the basic awareness of themselves, the co-actors, and the space – with the audience in the space – throughout the performance. The beginning points of focus that are different for I Dynamic, Not-I Dynamic and In-Between Dynamic, however, provide more specific and perhaps more tangible means with which the actors can begin their scores for each section. As the actors enter each section, the space of the theatre may become more imaginative rather than as seen just through the physical characteristics of the space. Therefore, by focusing specifically on an entry point to embody each section, the actors are not required to ‘think about’ creating whatever meanings/concepts there might be in each section and in *-ing* as a whole.

The points of focus as a way of engaging the space also operate similarly to the actions in a sense that, like actions, they leave traces. For instance, in Section 11, the actors begin with their focus on the voice before they extend it onto the body, so as to raise the awareness of the body, and in the raised awareness of body is the trace of the voice. In this perspective, each action either within the same section or across the

thirteen sections can be considered a *dissemination* of the ‘same’ action rather than two separate static actions (i.e., action 1 then action 1-1 and so on, rather than action 1 then action 2). Such dissemination happens also in the operation of dual- or multiple-sensory awareness which the actors are required to sustain as the process of embodying each score/action. For example, in the case of Section 11 – Gingerbread House, the process can be described as follows:

Awareness of the space—A1	Awareness of the Body—A2
A1 Listen to the voice—the first line; “welcome, (...).”	
A1-1 Listen to the voice—“( . . .), your skin is too dark.”	A1-1/A2 Sense the skin in a specific part of the body
A2/A1-2	A1-2/A2-2
A2-2/A1-3	A1-3/A2-3
	.
	.
	.

As well as showing how one action might be disseminated (A1, A1-1, A1-2 and so on), the above also shows how the two seemingly separate points of awareness in the

objective space might be all-engaged and related simultaneously in the space of the actors' awareness, through which the expansion of the physical space as described above may also occur.

## 2. Engaging with the Figure.

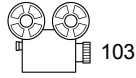
In the same way, both the actor and the Figure that the actor performs can exist simultaneously. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the freedom of creative empty space for the subjective psychological self can enable the obstacle-free co-existence of seemingly different and separate beings without the manipulation or suppression of each being's or their unique *ki* – characteristics (if this is possible at all). In this perspective, no uniqueness of each actor needs to disappear in order to become the Figure they perform; however, this does not mean that the actor when performing the Figure plays herself. This double identity of the actor, particularly in the context of devised theatre, is possible due to the now-expanded space where the actor is reduced to neither just the actor nor just the Figure. In the same way that the space of *-ing* manifests itself, while the objective space expands beyond its physical characteristics, the Figure of *-ing* is manifested as the space of the actor's 'mind' is expanded, releasing the space previously occupied by the subjective psychological self. In this sense, the Figure is the actor's psychophysical experience of such expansion, both of the objective space and the space of her 'mind', as shaped by the script or performance score that is always in process.

## 3. Manifestation of the four emotions

Manifestation of four underlying ‘emotions’ of the Figures was also approached through the same principle that rejects the materialistic objectivist view of space, time, and person. Therefore, the four underlying emotions are not absolute entities that the actor, or her performance, represents. For the actor in *-ing*, *these emotions are not something to be acted*. Through the three psychophysical dynamics, the actors create a particular spatiotemporal relation to their reality of performing, to which they, their fellow performers, as well as the audience members are related. Also, as the actors sustain this relation throughout the process of executing the actions—the acting score—they experience the Figure as they embody their score. Therefore, in this sense, the four emotions of the Figure may be viewed as the actor’s processual experience of executing the actions. The actors in the process of acting emotions as such do not create the dilemma of whether or not they must feel the emotions since in this model of acting, experiencing emotion and an emotional experience are two quite different phenomena. The manifestation of the four emotions of the Figures in *-ing* does not require the actors to think about the emotions; instead, it requires the actors to stay present in their reality of performing their specific tasks or actions in each specific context.

The director’s primary task in relation to this model of acting emotion then becomes how the actor’s experience of the actions across the thirteen sections of *-ing* might be better interwoven together in accordance with the chiasmic operational mode of this particular theatrical event. I now detail further the process of creating *-ing* with selected sections.





For this section, the main task of the actors was to perform a set of psychophysical actions. Through rehearsals, the set of actions became a more tight performance score as follows:

Looking ahead, sense the space. Begin to hear a sound without knowing from where it is coming. Realise that the sound is coming from within – decide on a particular part of the body. Start listening attentively, and as you listen, the music is getting louder. As the sound gets louder, recognise the music/song – decide on a particular piece of music/song (the three actors may be listening to different music/songs, as which music/song each of them was hearing was not pre-determined). As the music/song gets louder and louder, it spreads through the body, moving the body. As the music takes the whole body, the movement becomes bigger. Upon reaching the biggest level of the body shape (the final shape was determined by each of the actors during rehearsals), the music/song stops abruptly. Sense the silence. After a short period of sensing the silence, speak the lines.

Apart from the pre-determined actions, the remainder of the score was left open for the actors to decide, i.e., which music/song they were hearing and/or in which part of their body the music box was located. Many details of the shape of the actions were also left for the actors to devise. For instance, for the particular action of sensing the space at the beginning of the section, the direction of their gaze was left open for the

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<sup>103</sup> DVD 1; Music Box

actors, except that they were asked not to look at each other. As a result, during this particular moment, one actor might look around the space while another keeps his/her gaze on the same spot. Similarly, the level of the fullest body as reached by the music and how soon after this point the music stops was left to the decision of each actor as well. This open space in the actors' processes of performing the actions was important primarily for two reasons. Firstly, it helps to create conceptual layers within the bigger frame in terms of the relationships of the actors: the Figures, dressed in similar clothes, may seem to go through the same experience and yet the different details in each of the actors' embodiments of the actions meant that their experiences might be different. Secondly, as each of them go through different experiences while performing the same score, it can help create layers in terms of the number of worlds in which the actors/Figures reside: they are in the same physical/objective space of the theatre, but in terms of *experiential space*, they are in different places. Therefore, from the director's (and audience's) perspective, there can be three different worlds: the space of the theatre, the collective space of the three Figures and the experiential space of each Figure within this collective space.

In order to encourage such multiple layering, as the director I focused on examining whether and how different relationships to the space might be created through the actors' performance. First of all, there is a particular contrast between the silence and the (non)sound of the music and then the sound of the actors' own voices. Since the music is heard only by the actors, the contrast only takes place through the actors' embodiment of the score. From the director's perspective, I wanted to examine how the unseen journey of the actors' might be related to the manifestation of certain

spatiotemporal characteristics of the world of *-ing*. For the actors, this meant that through the process of embodying the score, they create different relationships to the space. At the very beginning of the section, before they hear the music, the relationship between the actors and the space is most neutral in the way that they are not related to each other in any particular way. Then, as the actors start focusing on the music, the physical space of the theatre is minimised. As the music spreads through the body, the actors are more absorbed by the music, and as a result, the physical space retreats further from their awareness. After the music has stopped suddenly, the physical space returns to the actors' perception as they embody the score, "(...) the music/song stops abruptly. Sense the silence." However, at this moment, their relationship to the space has been changed from the initial neutral perspective, due to their experience of the score. In other words, traces of the actors' psychophysical experience of the score can transform the space: it is the same objective/physical space of the theatre on the one hand but may not be in terms of the energies in the space that the traces have generated. Similarly, it is silent both before and after the music – when the actors are not listening to the music – but in a different way, since after the music, the dynamics have changed: the actors start sensing what has just happened in relation to the silence.

From the director's perspective, it can be said that the dynamics of the music are deferred. Further, as the actors speak at the moment of realisation, the dynamics of the lines are deferred in a similar way to how the (dynamics of the) music was deferred. However, in order for such deferral to occur, the actors must stay completely in each moment and with each action of the score, without anticipating the next and/or thinking

about what they are doing. It is through the process as such that the dynamics/energies of the actors' psychophysical embodiments of the score can be generated and manifested in the space. However, as soon as the actors start sensing the space differently following their musical experience, and as their thoughts – the lines – come, the section ends in order to interrupt further comprehension.

## Section 12 Injury <sup>104</sup>

Section 12 makes particular use of active images. In *Psychophysical Acting*, Zarrilli states:

Active images are not static pictures. (. . .) Rather, they are active in that each provides a simple but clear point of entry into *developing and sustaining a relationship to the exercises while doing them*. When fully engaging an active image, the mind does not wander, but is active as one enters and embodies the image. Rather than thinking about an image or end-gaining, when embodying the image the doer enters a relationship to the image and exercise that actively engages both mind and body as one. Active images thereby help awaken and activate energy and awareness while doing the exercises<sup>105</sup>

Based on the underlying principles of Zarrilli's active images, I selected images from the poem, *Obsolete World* by Jeannie Lynn Paske as the primary means to create the following sections: 1) "(an old world made up of) endless fields, distant hills and timeworn cliffs"; 2) "(a place where) the sun is always setting"; 3) (a land in which)

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<sup>104</sup> DVD 1; Injury  
<sup>105</sup> Zarrilli 2009: 90

extinct, slow-moving monsters and elegant, gentle-faced creatures of all shapes and sizes (reside)”; 4) (...) the vast richly textured skies.<sup>106</sup>

I placed the images in certain places in the theatre so as to provide the actors with specific points of external focus. Together with the specific points of focus where specific images were placed, the actors performed the following score in a specific shape that they together created:

At the end of Section 11, look at the sweet-decorated chair. Continue looking and sense the body – the traces of the “make over” it has just gone through. Continue sensing the body and move the chair away. Continue sensing the body as you start walking over to the black cube. As you walk, sense the feet and the contact with the floor. Pick up the black cube, bring it back to where the chairs were and place it on the (pre-determined) spot. Keep sensing the body and the contact with the floor as you take your place. In place, with the external focus on Point 1, begin the first cycle of in-breath and out-breath—three cycles of breathing in your own time; the breathing does not have to be in absolute sync with the others'. As you finish the last out-breath, sense the space to your right. Bring the external focus to Point 2, followed by two further cycles of in-breath and out-breath. The first image is of the “endless fields, distant hills and timeworn cliffs” with the external focus either moving along the landscape or on a particular spot of the image. Sense the space to your right as you are looking at the landscape over the duration of the two cycles of breathing. At the end of the last out-breath, bring the external focus away from where you have just been looking to Point 3 to your

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<sup>106</sup> *Obsolete world*, a poem by Jeannie Lynn Paske

right (of which you have been keeping awareness). The second image is of the sun setting. Keep the external focus on the same point with three further cycles of in-breath and out-breath before bringing the external back to Point 1. As the focus reaches Point 1, sense the weight of your body and the contact with the other body and with the floor/cube, while doing two cycles of in-breath and out-breath. The third image is of “extinct slow-moving monsters and elegant gentle-faced creatures of all shapes and sizes”. As the last out-breath finishes, bring the external focus to Point 4. The fourth image is of “the vast richly textured skies”.

The use of breathing was explored first of all as a means to stop the mind from wandering. Since the section lasted for a considerable period of time, it could be challenging for the actors to sustain their concentration for the whole duration. Secondly, it was used as a means to help the actors to sustain their awareness of the body and thereby to prevent getting mindlessly drawn into the images. The actors need the mind and yet have to keep it from taking its ‘natural’ course—wandering off. Although the actors are engaged with the performative images, they are engaged with the space of the theatre at the same time by sensing the body and the physical contact with another actor and with the floor/cube. Furthermore, as the actors remain with the fictional world – the images – with the awareness of the space, there can be created a space that would otherwise be occupied with thoughts/images/feelings if/when the mind interferes with the process of performing the score. The empty space as such can be characterised as the creative space where the fictional world (of the images) might resonate as the actor goes through the process of embodying the score without the mind's interference. The actors may or may not feel any emotions while performing the

score, but, as the creative empty space enables the images to resonate through their body/mind, it can be said that the energies the actors generate are already weaved with the images and the unique being of each actor.

Furthermore, what might manifest from the actor's embodiment of the score – the images together with breathing – was also related to the underlying state of the actors. Of the three psychodynamics, this section utilises the In-Between Dynamic where the figure of *-ing* switches between I Dynamic and Not-I Dynamic. Translated into the actors' score, it means that, unlike the section of I Dynamic and/or Not-I Dynamic, the level of their engagement with the performative images and the level of their awareness of the performing moment are equally strong, although one is stronger than the other at particular moments of the section. From the director's point of view, this means that the two worlds exist simultaneously through the actors' body/minds, and the relationship between the two worlds can be neither characterised as integration into one nor rupturing into two separates.

### Section 13 Prayer <sup>107</sup>

The initial writing for Section 13 was as follows:

Sometimes tears just come. There is this lump of tears in my throat, and I try to swallow it down and be calm. But sometimes it doesn't work – doesn't matter how hard I try to swallow it, it stubbornly crawls up the throat, to the back of my mouth. And just as I clench my fists in my desperate attempt not to let the tears

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<sup>107</sup> DVD 1; Prayer

come through, the lump bursts inside my cheekbones and the tears spill out of my eyes.

However, I decided not to use this writing as the actors' spoken text for two reasons: first of all, I wanted to examine whether a stronger energy might be created through the writing when it remained unsaid. This meant that the actors were to embody the writing, and whatever dynamics it may generate in the process, without means of generating energy through verbalisation. Secondly, similar to the case of Section 12, I wanted to further explore how the creative empty space discussed above – as released from the subjective self – might weave together the two worlds—the world of the theatre and the (fictional) world in the writing. For these two reasons, the initial writing was translated into an acting score as follows:

In place, with the external focus on Point 1, bring the hands towards the chest, palms together. Sense the abdomen area through the palms. Keep sensing the (inside of the) abdomen and begin singing in your own time. As you sing, sense the song resonating through the body, aware of your breathing. Sense the (dim) lighting on you – “look” from the abdomen as a warm glow. As you continue singing from the abdomen, sense the glow slowly dying. As the glow dies out, listen to your and others' voices of singing. When the glow is out, stop singing. Sense the silence and absence of the (warmth of) glow. At the same time, sense the on-going breathing and its resonance through your body: bring the external focus slowly to Point 2 and the hands down towards your lap. When the focus and the hands have arrived on Point 2, sense the space around you – silence,



the breathing, and the touch of the hands in your lap. In your own time, begin singing (the same song) again. Slowly bring the external focus back to Point 1.

The song is a Chinese children's folk song, and the actors sang the part; "walk, walk, walk, little hands holding little hands [. . .] the white clouds floating gracefully, the sun is warm and the scenery is so beautiful. Walk, walk, walk, little hands holding little hands [. . .]." For the actors, singing of the song can provide a physical means to generate more perceptual energy as it physically resonates through their bodies. From the director's perspective, it was in order to examine whether and how certain dynamics could be created, particularly in relation to the contrast and/or the gap between seemingly the same physical world – the breathing, the voice, the body and the space – and the actors' psychophysical experiences of doing the score.

#### Playing (no) self; emotion in the context of devising theatre

This project did not include any kind of actor training as a pre-performative preparation for the actors. Instead, we went straight into the rehearsals; although the first phase of the rehearsal process was focused mainly on improvisations, the actors in this phase operated in the mode of performer. A preparatory training prior to performative rehearsal processes has various purposes and/or functions. One important reason is that it provides the actors and the director with a common language in their practice, especially in cases of certain open vocabularies/terms which are used in various ways, either in everyday conversation or in the context of acting. Therefore, going right into the rehearsal process with the actors without the preparatory training

meant that there could be possible confusions among the actors and the director over the language(s) they use during the creative process. This was true of our process of making *-ing* at times but not unique to our process.

There are various assumptions – or paradigms – of acting and directing, and those regarding what the actor/director’s task might be which every actor and director brings with them into the rehearsal process. In this sense, acting/directing ‘problems’ encountered during the creative process are helpful firstly in clarifying the assumptions that the actors and the director have brought in –either consciously or unconsciously – and secondly in examining whether and how those assumptions are related to the problems. For example, one actor found it difficult to engage with some of the actions, since they did not evoke any feelings or emotions in her. Another actor at a point in the rehearsals asked, “Is it anger or sadness (that I am supposed to perform)?” Of course, the nature of such issues is complex, and my purpose in citing these issues is not to criticise the actors. Putting aside the question of whether or not it is necessary to have feelings or emotions in order to ‘act’ emotions, what these issues primarily reflect is the notion of emotion as an objectified entity that exists independently not only from the actions themselves, which then become separate tasks – or objectives – for the actor to actualise, but also from different emotions. Interestingly, these issues were not relevant in rehearsals before we started working on the script.

Before going into the process of applying the three psychophysical dynamics as a means of developing and performing *-ing*, during the first phase of the rehearsal process, the actors worked mostly through improvisation exercises. Although the actors had been given the initial text for *-ing* at the beginning of the process, many of the

improvisation exercises were not directly related to the text. The improvisation exercises were utilised in order to investigate what it might mean to be creative and therefore what that might require of the actors. Improvisational performance can be viewed as the least restricting and/or limiting circumstance for the actors' performance in a sense that the space is released from pre-determined elements of performance—the actions, the images, etc. Although it could also be a challenging condition for the actor if/when she feels as though there is not enough to move on with, it can be said that there is more space in which to play. In relation to the issues that the actor(s) experience as described above, what became clear was that there seemed to be a gap between the actor as self and the actor as a performer, especially when mental engagement, i.e., emotion was a matter of concern. Actors in improvisations and devising processes do not ask which emotion(s) are the 'right' ones and/or how they should feel, since they are free to play themselves. These questions appear when the other that is not the self (of the actor) appears, such as the Figures and the four emotions in *-ing*. Then the question for the actor becomes what the relationship is between these two.

From this perspective, performing *-ing* can be considered as playing (no)self in a sense that there are the selves of the actors that are actively engaged in *-ing*. Yet, there is not a self as the *subject* that plays: the selves of the actors are not only actively engaged as the sources of performance materials in improvisation and devising processes but they are also actively engaged in the process of executing the actions. However, at the same time, these selves of the actors are *absent* in a sense that they do operate as the subject of their performances. In short, the actors are present in the process of experiencing the reality of performing rather than the subject overlooking the

performance. The actions in this operational mode resonate with the actors in all dimensions of their being. From the perspective that considers the body and mind as an interconnected – and inter-dependent – whole, the actions cannot be considered as only physical actions or only mental emotions. Again, an important condition for such resonance to occur is that creative empty space in the actor be present. From a Buddhist perspective, any space is created by the subjective psychological self, not by creating a separate space but by releasing the space that has been previously occupied by some other activities. Furthermore, the four emotions that underlie the Figures and – *ing* as a whole cannot be reduced only to either mental phenomena or physical actions.

#### Summary of –*ing*

By providing specific points in their tasks to which they can direct their primary attention, I was trying to see whether this approach helped the actors sharpen their attention and be more concentrated. Moreover, by providing directions that can combine several specific points, e.g., a point of external focus and a point of touch, in their playing, I was exploring whether or not that would increase the level of attention already established and the energy of their concentration by sustaining the attention on those specific tasks. When the actors were more concentrated and were able to sustain the level of concentration, more energy was generated, and, since the actors' actions – whether through movement and/or verbal expressions – were done simultaneously along with the task of directing attentions to specific points, the heightened energy of their focus and the actions together amplified their state of being playing and that

consequently created certain dynamics in the moment of playing as a whole. The next stage for me was to explore how those dynamics may be best montaged by layering and shaping those dynamics created by the actors' playing (actions through the clear attention and concentrated energy) in relation to the four sensory states and emotions that the piece as a whole explores. In summary, what became clear was: first, by working with specific sensory points of focus together with sustained awareness of the breath in doing their acting score allowed the actors to enter the state of heightened awareness; secondly, this state of heightened awareness generated concentrated energy which enabled their actions to be more dynamic; thirdly, by paralleling the individual structure that together make up *-ing* as a whole in the way discussed earlier in the chapter, the four sensory states can be manifested directly by the actors' actions.

In the following chapter, I examine whether and how such heightened state of being doing can be helpful in acting a character and in manifesting the character's emotional states. When there are seemingly more rigid pre-determined form – the character – than there may be in the context of devising theatres, how might the actor negotiate the relationship between the character and herself and/or her emotional states and that of the character's? Moreover, the notion of releasing the psychological self to allow more space in the actor in the process of acting emotion will further explored in discussing my process of playing Solange in *(Playing) The Maids*, I elaborate how this creative free space may help the actor to play the seeming stranger – the character.

### **CHPATER 3 (*Playing*) *The Maids*; emotion in the context of ‘character acting’**

Through the previous practical investigation, it became clear that the predominant understanding of emotion is problematic. It also became clear that many of the issues surrounding ‘the acting of emotion’ are the result of the long standing dualistic and hierarchical frame of thinking. I argued that this tradition has created unnecessary dilemmas and obstacles for both actors and directors; therefore, an alternative approach to emotion, one that more effectively creates drama on stage, is necessary. The preceding investigation also showed that the prevailing categorisation of emotions merits reconsideration. With reference to Buddhist principles and Heidegger’s ontology of Being, I argued that the dominant characterisation of emotions is highly problematic, especially in the context of creating a theatrical event, as a manifestation of a (fictional) world. With this as my point of departure, I continued to investigate emotion and performance processes with a second practical project, (*Playing*) *The Maids*, focusing particularly on the actor’s points of view.

This chapter discusses my practice-based research on emotion and performance processes within the context of Zarrilli’s production of Genet’s *The Maids*. I participated in (*Playing*) *The Maids* as one of the maids, Solange. Therefore, I focus here on my work on Solange’s character and relate my perspective as an actor to the particularities of Zarrilli’s production. To provide the foundational framework through which I approached my research on emotion and performance processes in (*Playing*) *The Maids*, this chapter includes discussion of theories and principles of Buddhism. I also

detail how some of the choices I made while playing Solange were informed by this theoretical framework.

This chapter consists of six sections. The first section provides a brief introduction to and analysis of Genet's *The Maids*, concentrating on the (emotional) dynamics among the play's three characters, Solange/Claire (the two maids) and Madame. In the second section, I discuss the complexities of Solange's inner world. With a focus on Solange's feelings towards Madame, Claire and herself, I explain that this inner world is made up of conflicting feelings and emotions. The third section discusses the context of Zarrilli's production, focusing on three directorial decisions and the challenges they created for the play's actors: the use of multi-casting, the use of multiple languages, and the director' calling out during performances to tell the actors on which stage to play. The fourth section discusses the theoretical framework through which my playing of the character was approached. With a focus on the principles and methods of Buddhist meditation, I discuss how 'character acting' and the actor-character relationship might be reconsidered. In the fifth section, I reflect critically on my playing of Solange. In relation to the notion of character acting and the actor-character relationship, I detail my use of the *meditative mode of acting/performing* with certain acting problems, such as the challenges of embodying Solange's complex inner world. The final part, as a preliminary conclusion, provides further analysis of this process. I discuss how the notion of acting a character and 'acting (the character's) emotion' might be reconsidered from the Buddhist perspective, arguing that a character's emotion may be considered a processual manifestation of the actor's experiencing of the character, rather than an end-product for the actor to represent.

## Synopsis and analysis of Jean Genet's play, *The Maids*

*The Maids* is a play written by the French playwright, Jean Genet. The first version of the script was presented to the director Louis Jouvet in 1946. Jouvet suggested that changes be made to the script. However, he agreed to produce the play. The script was then condensed into a one-act version of the play by Genet, to which further significant changes were made during rehearsals. Genet called this version of the play the *version jouée*. The *version jouée* was first performed on 17 April 1947 at the Théâtre de l'Athénée in Paris. In 1947, Genet published another version of *The Maids* in the literary journal, *L'Arbalète*. This version is referred to in *Theatre Complet* (2002, Gallimard) as the *version publiée en 1947*. The *version publiée en 1947* is Genet's reworking of his various manuscripts, in order to preserve his original concept of the play.

Bernard Frechtman published the first English translation of *The Maids*, based on the *version publiée*, for Grove Press in 1953, and Peter Zadek directed the play's first production in English on 5 June 1956 at the New Lindsey Theatre Club. In 1954, Jean-Jacques Pauvert published both the *version jouée* and *version publiée en 1947* in the same volume, with a preface by the author. While the *version jouée* remains the standard French edition of the text, the Frechtman translation of the *version publiée* remained the standard version of the play in English until Martin Crimp's translation in 1999. The play has also been adapted and made into a film (1974) and an opera (1994).

The second practical project made use of the *version publiée*; therefore, following synopsis and analysis based on the Frechtman English version.



## 1.1 Synopsis

*The Maids* begins with two maids, Solange and Claire, role-playing in Madame's bedroom in the absence of Madame. Claire is playing Madame, and Solange is playing the role of a maid. It is clear from the text that they have played this ceremony many times, and each time they play they take turns to play Madame and a maid' when Claire plays the role of the maid, she plays Solange, and when Solange plays the role of the maid, she plays Claire. The characters' attention to details and the strict rules of their ceremonious game also show that they have played it numerous times. However, they have never succeeded in actualising their plot to murder Madame, which is their ultimate fantasy: to be freed from their social identity – as servants – and become mistresses themselves. Through role-playing, Solange and Claire indulge in the fantasy both of being maid and/or Madame: in playing the maid, they indulge in the release of their hatred for Madame. Their game is interrupted when they receive a telephone call from Monsieur, who they had reported to the police for an alleged robbery, and told that Monsieur has been released from police custody. Panicking, they put Madame's things back in place, erasing all traces of their play from Madame's bedroom. On Madame's return to the house, Claire brings her a cup of (poisoned) tea, which Madame fails to drink before leaving again to meet Monsieur. After Madame's departure, Claire insists that she and Solange resume their play and, this time, continue to the point at which Madame is killed. The play ends with Claire (playing Madame) drinking the cup of (poisoned) tea that she had brought for Madame earlier.

## 1.2 Analysis

At the end of *The Maids*, it is unclear if Claire has actually killed herself and/or what happens to Solange afterwards. The play's open ending aside, however, a clear theme runs throughout; role-playing. Genet's original intention was that the three characters – Madame, Solange and Claire – be played by male actors. This 'statement' alone shows Genet's interest in role-playing. Role-playing may be seen in many places in the play, and is often multi-layered. The most obvious role-playing occurs during the maids' ceremony; for example, when Claire plays Madame and Solange plays Claire. However, even outside of their fantasy world – the ceremony – and when they are seemingly themselves – the maids – in Madame's presence, there is a strong sense that Solange and Claire are actually playing the role of maid, rather than being themselves. They are hiding their true feelings and desires towards Madame, to each other, and perhaps to themselves. There is also another layer to this role-playing, in which Solange and Claire act as partners in crime: that of the unhappy and dissatisfied servant. In this sense, Solange and Claire are never truly themselves; their frustration with always having to perform and their dissatisfaction with who they are together constitute the fundamental dynamics that drive behind the fantastical game that frees them from disillusionment. The complex nature of Solange and Claire's role-playing, thus, is the result of and reflects the complexities of each character.

Solange and the complexities of her emotion

There are three dominant layers of Solange's complex inner world. The emotion that most obviously constructs this world is Solange's hatred of Madame, which, on the other hand, reflects her admiration of Madame. Solange's hatred of Madame is expressed explicitly: "I hate her. Oh, I hate her!" The second layer of Solange's inner world is closely related to her relationship with Claire and her conflicted feelings for her. Much as Solange has mixed feelings toward Madame, Solange has contradictory feelings toward Claire. It is apparent that Solange has strong feelings for Claire, but, at the same time, Claire's presence reminds Solange of the impossibility of fulfilling her desires, since Claire represents Solange's reality as a maid. Christopher Lane in his article "The voided role: on Genet" states:

Claire and Solange oscillate in power and dominance, but the gains of one fundamentally deplete those of the other. Such depletion might "exalt" Solange, but she, in fact, experiences abjection; the result is not sublation.<sup>108</sup>

Whether Solange's feelings for Claire are a sisterly love or are of a romantic nature, it is clear that she is extremely attached to Claire. This attachment can be understood in terms of three significant features of Solange's life. First, although it is unclear for how long, exactly, Solange and Claire have been living together, they have been sharing the maids room, and perhaps the same bed, for some time. Second, they are in the same position as maids; they have been put in the same 'category' and have been given the

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<sup>108</sup>Lane, Christopher. The Voided Role: On Genet in *MLN*, Vol.112, No.5, Comparative Literature Issue. December 1997:879

same 'identity'. Third, through their time together as maids, they have developed important common emotional ground, which includes their envy and jealousy toward Madame, their wanting to escape from their identities as maids, and the abjection brought on by the impossibility of doing so. Sharing complex emotions, Solange and Claire have developed a strong arguably symbiotic bond. Although, at times, it is this bond that they resent so much, as it gives them "a mirror image of themselves", it also seems to provide them with a sense of comfort; the comfort that they are not alone in the horrible trap of servitude to Madame.

Solange's bond with and attachment to Claire is significant to understanding Solange's complex inner world. On the one hand, the seeming comfort that the relationship with Claire provides reinforces Solange's attachment to Claire, to the point that this attachment becomes an obsession and evolves into a power struggle between the maids. On the other hand, it is this relationship that continues to remind Solange of who she is and of her reality as a maid. Through her attachment to Claire, Solange is reminded of the impossibility of freeing herself. It does not actually matter, therefore, who plays Madame and who plays the role of the maid in Claire and Solange's final game. Playing the role of Madame might, at first, have given Claire and Solange a chance to express their anger and hatred of Madame, as well as opportunity to indulge themselves in their fantasy of being a mistress. However, as the game is repeated and evolves into a ceremony, what they experiences is "abjection", regardless of who plays which role. Their repetitive cycle of failure – their oscillation between being high and then being crushed – releases nothing. In fact, as the ritualistic game is repeated, and as Solange's obsession becomes stronger, Solange experiences a diminished sense of

release and pleasure; the ceremony, as a cyclical failure to realise her desire, becomes pure frustration. Moreover, this frustration unsettles Solange's relationship with Claire, threatening any sense of love and comfort that keeps Solange's world from falling apart.

There is yet another layer to Solange's complex inner world. Mingled with her hatred of Madame and her feelings for Claire, there seems to be a strong sense of helplessness, self-pity/hatred, and denial. It appears that the tragedy of Solange does not lie only in the impossibility of taking 'vengeance' on Madame or of becoming free from the identity that she seems to resent so much. Solange's tragedy lies mostly with her conflicted self, her desire for the sense of love and togetherness that Claire represents and her resentment of her reality.

Solange's hatred of Madame, her feelings for Claire and her self-denial – not separately, but together – shape the inner world of Solange's character, and reflect the fundamental problem with which Solange struggles most – the conflict between her desires and the impossibility of fulfilling those desires. Genet's *The Maids* not only demands of the actor the ability to embody Solange's conflicting emotions, but also requires the ability to do so in such a way that the intensity of those emotions is not reduced or lost. Certain elements particular to Zarrilli's production of the play created further challenges when I played Solange's troubled, complicated character.

The production context of Phillip Zarrilli's (*Playing*) *The Maids* and challenges of the actors

*(Playing) The Maids* is an adaptation of Jean Genet's play, *The Maids*, adapted and directed by Phillip Zarrilli as a part of the Performer Training module at the University of Exeter. The play was rehearsed for approximately five weeks during October and November 2010, and three performances were put on from 26-27 November 2010. In this production, I played Solange, alongside sixteen other undergraduate and postgraduate student actors. The *version publiée* of Genet's *The Maids* was used, which Zarrilli broke into twenty two sections.

Zarrilli's realisation of *(Playing) The Maids* was a multicasst production in which five trios of 'Solange, Claire and Madame' were played simultaneously on five stages, while two 'dress-up stage' actors-as-sisters freely moved among and interacted with the five trios. Although the five trios were on stage at the same time, there were three general rules or ways in which the text was delivered; (1) the very opening short scene between Claire-as Madame and Solange-as-Claire the maid was delivered serially; (2) some sections of the text were rehearsed to be delivered chorally by the five actors playing each role along with the two sisters; and (3) for other pre-determined sections of the text individual stages would play a section before another stage played the next section. The Solanges, Claires and Madames who were not playing at a given moment – but were still on stage – were free to decide whether to be still or moving. However, they were only allowed to move within the physical boundaries of their stage. The two actors on the 'dress-up stage' were the only actors who could move freely between the five stages

*(Playing) The Maids* was also a multi-lingual piece performed in seven languages: although English was the primary language, substantive use was also made of: Korean, Mandarin, Hindi, Malay, Welsh, and Greek. Some of the twenty two sections of the text

were performed entirely in languages other than English, without translation while other sections were performed in two languages, such as Hindi/Malay. On the stage where I played Solange to Eunjoo's Claire, the two of us spoke either in English or Korean, while our Madame spoke in Mandarin and English.

Also particular to Zarrilli's production was the undetermined sequence by which the play unfolded across the five stages; apart from the pre-rehearsed choral parts, where specific lines were allocated to specific actors, the director called out over a microphone the number of the stage that was to play a given section of the performance. Although the actors knew the beginning and end of each of the twenty two sections, as regards the indeterminate centres of these sections, the actors did not know what they were going to perform.

The specific production context of Zarrilli's (*Playing*) *The Maids* created unique challenges for the actors involved. First, it required the actors not only to perform their characters, but to perform them with other actors. The actors needed to be able to sustain their acting even when not assigned delivery of text; for example, when one actor was performing Solange, the other four actors who were cast as the same character needed to sustain the active state of their performing. This was necessary principally because it allowed each actor to pick up the queue when called upon, without losing the flow or dynamic that had been accumulated collectively by the other actors. Sustaining an active readiness throughout the performance also allowed the actors to maintain a flow when performing their characters. In (*Playing*) *The Maids*, the actors struck many poses during 'gaps' in their performances, when the characters they

performed were being played by other actors. The task in such moments was for the non-speaking actors to keep active.

The challenge of maintaining an active performing state when not overtly delivering lines itself involves a further challenge. When an actor is performing, even though silent and/or still, when not playing, she must remain aware that she is part of the collective, whether consciously or not. She must relate with and negotiate a multitude of sensory stimuli. Although free to move when other stages are playing, she needs to do so in a way that does not create tension or calls attention to herself. She must also not get distracted by the other stimuli available on the other stages.

Furthermore, the playing of a single character by multiple actors requires negotiation amongst multiple versions of the (same) character. Zarrilli did not require the absolute synchronisation of the actors performing the choral parts of the text. Moreover, it was not required that the actors have the same 'interpretations' and/or 'understandings' of their characters and the text. Although the specific dynamics of the characters and their actions were discussed together by the whole cast, the undetermined space in the actor's understandings of the characters and the text meant that there could be different interpretations of the text and/or of the characters, which could result in different nuances in performance. Therefore, the actors in *(Playing) The Maids* were required to negotiate the possible differences in/through their performances.

Meditative mode of performing; 'character acting' from a Buddhist perspective



According to Buddhism, when one's mind contacts an object, that is, when the mind perceives an object, an image or an association arises in the mind, which, in turn, is projected onto the object, resulting in a *perception* of the object. From this perspective, a performer's encounter with a character – through such means as verbalisation of text and/or physicalisation of bodily movements – can be viewed as the making of contact between the performer and the character/play. Then, it can also be said that image(s)/association(s) arise when such contact takes place between the performer and the character/play. In fact, contact is made even before the performer begins the process of embodying the character. Contact is first made when the performer reads the text, in the case of text-based performances. Interpretations of the text, and of the character, on which the performer initially bases her characterisation, can then be considered to reflect not only the playwright's text, but also the person the performer is. Buddhism states that in every perception – whatever the form this perception may take – there is always a perceiver and a perceived; the part the perceiver plays in determining the perception is not as little as it is usually considered to be. In other words, both the performer and the text are at play when text is read, and, therefore, the performer at this stage of rehearsals is carried onto the process of embodying the character in the later stage of rehearsals. It is important to acknowledge the part the performer plays in understanding and performing the play, since it is only then that fuller examination on the role of the performer can be carried out.

Therefore, my question, in regards to the performer's role when playing the character, focuses primarily on the relationship between the perceiver and the perceived; between the performer and the character she performs and between the

performer and her performance. Whether in the initial stage of interpreting/analysing the text or in the stage of embodiment in rehearsals, if the performer's contact with the character inherently reflects the performer, how may the relationship between the performer and the character be viewed? What is clear, from the Buddhist perspective on contact between the perceiver (the performer) and the perceived (the character), is that there cannot be a notion of subject/host and object/guest. In order for contact to take place, both must be active participants, that is, one does not hold control over the other. From this vantage point, the relationship between the performer and the character can be viewed in dialogue or conversation in that each is an equal participant in the making of the performance. The performer is not considered to be the subject of the host of the performance, just as the character is not the object of the performance. Moreover, the same applies to all compositional elements of the character; the physical shape, movements, and voice as well as the emotion(s) of the character are not passive objects to be controlled, or manipulated. Furthermore, the notion of acting as representation becomes irrelevant, since the character becomes manifest via this dialectic rather than being represented as an end product.

The notion that the actor is a co-participant in the performance-as-conversation calls for a particular approach to the actor's task of performing the character, as well as the use of a particular 'acting technique'. In order for the character to manifest more *organically*, rather than be (re)presented, in which case the character would become an object, the character needs to be made more active: or rather, from the Buddhist perspective, the character needs to be left to be. Therefore the question becomes how the performer can be made aware of and minimise undesired interference in the

process of manifesting the character—especially when it is through the performer that such manifestation happens. In other words, how can the performer remain an active participant in the manifestation of the character and, at the same time, not become an imposing authority? Furthermore, perhaps more importantly, regarding the operational mode of performance-as-conversation what is required of the actor in her work of creating a more dynamic character?

The Buddhist notion of *gwahn*—to look into—is helpful in investigating this particular mode of performing, as well as exploring how it might be achieved in practice.<sup>109</sup> According to Buddhism, this mode of looking enables one to see the object of one’s perception without imposing upon it preconceived notions and/or concepts, regardless of whether the object is a being in the world or an image/thought in the mind. What is revealed as a result of such looking is the inter-dependent relationship between the perceiver and the perceived and, therefore, the insubstantiality of both.<sup>110</sup> The principle of *gwahn* can, thus, shed light on the performer-character relationship in a performance-as-conversation and can suggest to the performer the means of achieving the particular mode of performance required. As described in detail in *Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*, the principle of *gwahn* is, in practice, paired with the principle of *ji*, which is “the meditative practice of calming the mind in order to rest free from the disturbance of thought”.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup>Gwahn (Snskr. vipaśyanā Pali. vipassanā) and jeong (Snskr. Samādhi Pali. samāpatti) are considered to be the two principles that all Buddhist meditation and meditation methods are based on. Kwan can be translated as ‘to look into’ and its function is to attain insight, and jeong describes the state of absolute focused-ness.

<sup>110</sup>In Buddhism, this mode of looking does not apply only to the visual perception but also to all sensory perceptions and to thoughts as perception. It aspires to ultimately achieve the state where “In seeing, there is only the seen and in hearing there is only the heard”, through which True Thusness (Snskr. Bhūtatathatā) is revealed to the practitioner – as the practitioner comes to see the co-rising relationship of all beings therefore the insubstantiality in them. See also the discussion on emptiness.

<sup>111</sup>Seogwahng. 2003

The assiduous practice of *ji-gwahn* (Sanskrit: *shamatha-vipashyanā*) meditation, over time, enables the practitioner to attain both concentration and insight and ultimately “the union of tranquillity of mind and penetrative insight.”<sup>112</sup> Although the focuses of different meditation methods vary, the practitioner in *ji-gwahn* first utilises her breath to bring the body and mind together. The unified state of the body and mind helps the practitioner stay in the moment, and, as a result, renders her focus clearer and more sustained. The practitioner then takes a part of her body as her focus, maintaining, her awareness of her breath, in order to look into that part of the body—the ‘object’ of consciousness.<sup>113</sup> In looking, the practitioner observes the relationship between her looking into (the act of perceiving) and its effect on both herself (the perceiver) and the body (the perceived). When *ji-gwahn* is practiced, usually over a lengthy period of time, the practitioner develops multiple awarenesses, through which she is able to ‘see’ her entire body simultaneously, that is, to see her body as a whole. As she continues the practice of *ji-gwahn*, she expands her multiple awarenesses to space and, in the optimal state, comes to ‘see’ the body in relation to its surrounding, and the dependency of one upon the other. Throughout her looking, the awareness of the practitioner’s breathing is sustained and supports the *ji-gwahn* practice.

Like the practitioner of *ji-gwahn* meditation, the actor who plays a character in a theatrical performance initiates contact/conversation with the character and stays grounded in each moment of the conversation. She does so by maintaining, focused and uninterrupted awareness of herself and of her surroundings. Like meditation, the

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<sup>112</sup>ibid

<sup>113</sup>Consciousness utilised here is the sixth consciousness in the eight consciousnesses model of Yogacara Buddhism. According to the paradigm, the sixth consciousness is the only one of the eight consciousnesses that one can access directly: therefore it is the first ‘gate’ through which the practitioner begins the process of meditation.

meditative mode of performing can help the performer develop multiple awarenesses: she is aware of the relationship between the character and herself and sees how the two affect each other. As a result, the performer becomes able to free herself from the blocking that may occur when images/associations/thoughts arise as the result of contact with her character. In this process, it is critically important that the performer does not intuit feedback from any of these images/associations, thoughts and/or feelings. In other words, the performer does not think about those concurrent by-products but carries on with the initial task(s) in that particular moment of playing. Like the practitioner of *ji-gwahn*, the theatrical performer sees the comings and goings of these by-products but does not process them into information that would then constitute feedback. This is significant, first, because it prevents the performer from losing simultaneous-multiple awarenesses; if the performer begins processing any of the images/associations/thoughts/feelings, she will lose awareness of her breathing and body and her surroundings as a whole. Second, the performer's ambivalence to the images/associations/thoughts/feelings evoked by her character prevents the performer's focus from drifting away from the body that is her anchor in the here and now: if her focus is only in the realm of the images/associations/feelings, the body and mind, as a whole, are lost, and, therefore, the intense energy that the unified body-mind generates is dispersed and debilitated.

With the meditative mode of performing, the performer is 'completely' engaged in the act of performing, since both the physical and mental dimensions of her being are working as a whole or gestalt. This mode of performing also provides the means through which the performer actively initiates and participates in the conversation – in

the performance of her character – and through which a more organic and, therefore, more dynamic performance of the character can be manifested. From this perspective, what manifests in the performer’s process of performing the character is the *performer-character*, and in the performer-character’s manifestation, the performer is ever-retreating. As in the Buddhist paradigm of *ghong* (*śūnyāta*/emptiness) the retreat of the performer’s subjective self allows for a more open and dynamic manifestation of the character—in the form of the performer-character. The meditative mode of performing can then be understood in relation to the underlying principle and the state of the Buddhist paradigm of *muh-ah*, or no-self. What enables this mode of performing and the manifestation of the performer-character is, as seen in *ji-gwahn* practice, not the actor’s intent or determination in discriminating between what to do and what not to do. Rather, the meditative mode of performing is achieved when the actor, in each moment, maintains focused and sustained awareness of her body-mind as situated in the surroundings, without presenting the performance while performing.

Since perceiving is considered to be always in process, the practitioner’s having fixed perceptions of an (artificial) end product means that the perceiver is not present in the act of perceiving. The practitioner of Buddhist meditation persists in the act of looking, observing the object *without having a perception of it*. Similarly, in the meditative mode of performing, the actor’s task is to continue performing but not to determine her performance in so doing.

The character and her inner dynamics, or ‘emotions’, are a processual manifestation of the performer’s meditative mode of performing. Through the following reflection on my playing of Solange, I will discuss how I, as the actor, approached the task of

generating the energy informative of this character's complex inner world through the meditative mode of performing. In so doing, I will argue that this mode of performing can help the actor to create her character in a more imaginative and creative way.

### The process of playing Solange

#### Stage 1: developing a form of the character

In the first stage of rehearsals, I decided to focus on constructing a form of the character Solange as the first step toward manifesting the performer-character. My primary task was to 'physicalise' the pre-determined characteristics of Solange, while focusing on creating and developing 'appropriate' bodily movement. The bodily actions through which I shaped the character were created by all the physical movements that were perceived externally, including the character's movements on stage/stage directions, my physical interactions with my fellow performers, my handling of props, the movements of my external gaze and my verbalisation of the text. I built a series of bodily actions that were in accordance with the pre-determined characteristics of the character and with my interpretation/understanding of the text/play.

As in meditation, I first focused on my breathing as I executed bodily movements, so as to bring my mind and body together and develop a clear and undispersed concentration. I used the 'watching-I' while observing the 'doing-I' to develop heightened awareness of exactly what I was doing. At this stage, my watching-I was focused solely on the execution of my bodily movements and was not yet attuned to either observation of its effect on my body-mind or of my surroundings.

At the same time, my doing-I began the process of sensing particular parts of my body; the soles of my feet, my palms and my lower abdomen. Eventually, I came to see my whole body simultaneously by connecting those initial points of focus. The watching-I observed how the doing-I moved when executing bodily actions, and awareness of the whole body developed as awareness of my various body parts connected. I utilised the watching-I for two purposes. First, it was a means of checking the accuracy and precision of each of my actions and of initiating any changes required; for instance, by the director in the delivery of my line(s) and/or any changes that may have arisen during discussion with fellow actors. Second, the watching-I helped me sustain awareness of my breathing while executing bodily actions. Once again, images/associations/feelings arose as I performed these actions. However, although challenging to remain aware of my breathing, by so doing, I was able to maintain my relation to my character, instead of slipping into the realm of the performer, as I might if I had focused on those by-products, which would have broken the performer-character connection.

Maintaining awareness of my breathing, the watching-I monitored each action I executed, so that my actions were as detailed as possible. Moreover, this allowed me to see and reduce any unnecessary movements. In other words, the watching-I enabled me to be acutely aware of what I was doing, so that I, as the actor, could leave as little of my performance as possible to chance. My sustained awareness of my breathing and, therefore, unobstructed focus meant that I developed a heightened awareness, that helped me to act in relation to the character, rather than by habit<sup>114</sup>: I was exploring

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<sup>114</sup> Buddhism states that all sentient beings are conditioned by its habit therefore without conscious effort to transform the cause-effect cycle through a heightened awareness one lives its life 'passively' driven by the habit energy.



how Solange might walk, how Solange might speak, how Solange might look, etc., in practice.

The series of bodily actions that I developed and rehearsed formed Solange as a combination of a method of speaking and of handling objects, as well as a bodily shape (including moments of stillness) and a point of external foci. Developing precise actions was important, since these made the act of repetition in rehearsal possible; in other words, they made available a form of the character to support the actor in her exploration of the character during rehearsals. It was when I had a level of exactitude of form that I was able to begin the process of embodying the character, which supported a more systematic process of manifesting the performer-character. Moreover, it was also through the attentive repetition of form that I became capable of more thoroughly examining what was generated by the embodiment of form, as well as how this might be related to the overall manifestation of Solange's character.

Stage 2: embodying the character; generating character-energy through form

a) Generation of 'character-energy'

The second stage of rehearsal focused on embodying the form of Solange's character as constructed and developed in the previous state. Such embodiment generated energy that was informed by and particular to the characteristics of Solange, thereby forwarding the manifestation of the performer-character.

I began by repeating the form of Solange's character. It was important that I sustain my awareness of my whole body in each repetition and that I repeat the form as precisely as possible each time, so that I could eventually execute actions precisely but

without paying too much attention. In other words, through repetition, my body-mind learned the form which freed the watching-I from having to check whether the form stayed in accordance with the character. Once I achieved a certain level of automaticity with the form, and, since executing the form no longer required the watching-I's close monitoring, the watching-I became available for focusing on observing its 'effect'. Through the doing-I's sensory awareness, the watching-I was able to see the comings and goings of the images/associations/feelings and/or emotions that arose as the result of my executing Solange's actions.

The important task, at this point, as in *ji-gwahn* meditation, was that I not process those by-products: although I was seeing what my contact with the form was generating – in the form of images/associations/feelings/emotions – by sustaining my awareness of my body, my watching-I was able to stay focused on the execution of Solange's form. My sustained awareness of my body grounded me in my body-mind and prevented my watching-I from involuntarily focusing on those images/associations/feelings/emotions. Although it was challenging to sustain awareness of my body in and through repetition, I was able to make the form of Solange more solid, concrete, and consistent.

Apart from the images/associations/feelings/emotions created by my contact with the form of Solange's character, my execution of this form also generated energy, which I could sense, due to heightened awareness. Moreover, the clarity and concreteness of the form meant that I was able to produce a similar level and 'kind' of energy each time I rehearsed the form. It was quite clear that when I was able to let those by-products 'just be' and not intuit feedback from them, my energy was 'stronger' and undispersed.

b) Incorporating the surroundings in the embodiment: performer-character-in-the-space

Once I reached a level of performer-character state as described above, I began the process of extending my points of looking-into from within the physical boundary of my body to my surroundings. These points had been parts of my body and then became my whole body, initiating contact between the character and myself, as the actor. When I felt that I had reached a degree of character embodiment through the form within the physical boundaries of my body, I began the process of incorporating my surroundings. As a way of developing a character-performer who was particular to the environment of the performance, I returned to the body parts on which I initially focused. Through my lower abdominal area, I started sensing the space behind me. Through my feet, I started sensing the floor, and through the palms of my hands, I started sensing the space to my sides. It was also around this time that we started rehearsing as group; all five trios of Solange, Claire and Madame, with the two dress-up stage actors. Then, I started experiencing some acting 'problems'.

First, I found that I was unable to negotiate the multiple sensory stimuli and impulses that I suddenly found myself experiencing. The opening of my awareness to my surroundings meant that I perceived a lot more of the sensory stimuli that were in my environment. For example, the various voices of my fellow actors – their different manners of speaking and, different tones and voice-volumes as well as their movements and the sheer number of their bodies in the performing space meant that there were energies of varying quantity and quality. I felt that I was unable to orientate myself in this 'pool' of sensory stimuli, and as I did not know how to relate to them in my

playing. I could sense no flow. I also often felt strong impulses to react to the stimuli – either playing to them or playing against them. Moreover, I realised that my contact with the stimuli brought about images/associations/feelings, and that I was reacting to some of the stimuli involuntarily. For example, once I found myself suddenly lowering my voice, when, in the previous moment, I had been speaking loudly, and turning around, as if to block certain stimuli. I also forgot my lines, which I had perfectly memorised. Once exposed to this environment of a multitude of stimuli, I found myself having to think about what my lines were—both in advance, as well as when speaking. This created yet another problem. I found myself anticipating what came next, instead of staying present. I could sense that, as a result, I was pushing the lines, and it became difficult to sense any connection to what I was saying. The third problem was that I lost awareness of my body, and the generation of energy that I sense previous to this stage of rehearsals was debilitated, if not lost. As a result, my actions did not flow; I felt static, even though I was physically moving.

Since the playing of sections of the text was partitioned amongst the five trios, I tried to connect my actions with those of the actors' on the stage that had performed previously; however, I could not sense a connection to or flow between my playing and the other four stages'. I could not sense the collective and felt as though the form through which I was playing Solange was colliding with (the forms of) the other four Solanges.

Stage 3: creating space

In an attempt to work on the problems I encountered in Stage 2, I decided to go back to the principles of *ji-gwahn* practice. Although I was unsure of the nature of these problems, I decided to do so for two purposes. First, I needed to strengthen my weakened awareness of my body, so as to centre myself within the chaotic sea of sensory stimuli, which was what the performing space felt like. Second, I wanted to explore whether the *ji-gwahn* way of operation would help me sense the performing space as a whole, while remaining aware of each of my action. As the meditative performing mode had enabled me to be simultaneously aware of both my whole body and each action I took in the previous stage of rehearsals, I wanted to explore whether it would help me sense all the stimuli I was perceiving comprehensively in Stage 3.

I went back to focusing on my breathing and the parts of my body I initially began sensing. Sustaining this heightened awareness of breathing and body was challenging when thrown into the performing environment. However, I was able to do so for a while and was slowly beginning to settle into my body again. Once calm, I tried to open my awareness to my surroundings. However, as soon as I did so, the sensory stimuli swept in from all directions. I continued sensing my body in relation to my breathing and tried to extend my awareness even further out to the space beyond the boundaries of the space. At first, this slowed the pace of my playing; I was slow to pick up my lines/queues and missed some of the choral lines. What I found interesting was that by developing more sustained and stronger awareness of my body in relation to my breathing, I was better able to sense the performing space as a whole. I could sense the stimuli from the other actor's playing, as before, but, when I was able to maintain their relation to my body – by sustaining awareness of my breathing – I felt as though there

was more space, or that the quality of the space was somehow changed. The space no longer felt 'aggressive', although the sensory stimuli were still there. I was slowly beginning to settle into the space and what the environment offered. Much as I had sensed my whole body by connecting the parts of my body to my breathing, I was able to sense the space – and the stimuli within – through my body. Moreover, at this stage in the process I was able to catch the impulses arising in response to the stimuli. The change in the quality of the space, or having more space, enabled me to sense those impulses in slowed time. Whereas I was immediately influenced by the sensory stimuli when I first opened to my surroundings, I now had a choice of whether to incorporate the stimuli directly into my playing or to leave them in the space.

It was important that I sustained the connection between my body and my breathing, using the body as a kind of anchor in the performing space. In time, the meditative performing mode in which I was engaged with the whole group – and the accompanying sensory stimuli – required less of the watching-I. As I became aware of my surroundings more as a whole, rather than swayed by individual stimuli, the chaotic sea of sensory stimuli became more of an *integrated chaos*; it was still chaotic in the sense that there was no (pre)determined order to the stimuli, but it was also integrated in the sense that I was able to apprehend the space as a whole. Then, the form of Solange slowly came back. Moreover, the further the watching-I was from the doing-I, greater was my sense of more space, which helped me to perform Solange among the other performers and the by-products they generated.

When reflecting on the acting problems discussed above, I realised that the main issue for me was the lack of flow in my playing, as well as the lack of flow in the

collective performance space. The sense of 'clash' I felt when I first opened up to the other stages' playing suggested that the way I was working with the form of my character – as a means of embodying her – needed to change when working with the group, I had to release the watching-I from the parts of my body of which I was first aware in order to sense the body as a whole and, in order for me to be aware of the other stages' playing not as separate stimuli, but as parts of the collective space. I had to release the form. The notion of performer-character in performance-as-conversation applies to the relationship between performer-character and performance space. The character Solange, as written by Genet, and I, as the actor, could only be both actively engaged when I did not intuit feedback from the images/associations/feelings/emotions that arose as I played Solange. Only when I let this feedback come and go I was able to sense the dynamics in my embodiment of the character. From this perspective, the lack of flow – the static state – that I perceived can be considered a lack of 'conversation' between my playing and the space – and others within the space. By holding on to individual stimuli, I lost my connection to the doing-I, and, as a result, the organic whole of my body and mind was broken. The loss of the form and dynamics in my playing can also be viewed in terms of this broken body-mind unity.

Detailed account of my process of playing Solange; an example of a specific moment of the performance

In order to demonstrate my process of playing Solange in the moment of playing, I will now provide a detailed example of my playing Solange in a specific moment of the performance.

a. The whole space is lit, and I sense the brightness of the lights. Through the now more exposed space, I can sense the presence of the others in the space more strongly. I do not know who they are but I know that they are there; similarly, I am not clear of my relationship to them but my awareness of them is clear. I am not looking at any specific point or person while I sense the space and the others.

b. I sense Eunjoo/Claire in relation to all the others in the space and I take one step away from Claire, turning toward the centre of the space, and say, "*I didn't kill anyone*". As I speak, I sense my lips moving and I hear my own voice.

c. Then, I hear a voice, "*I was a coward, you realise*" coming from one direction. Then I hear another voice, "*I did the best I could*" which comes from a different direction from the previous voice, and another voice from another direction saying, "*but she turned over in her sleep.*" I attentively listen to these voices and where in the space each of the voices was coming from; as I follow the voices traveling in that 'circle' around me, I sense my breathing.

d. This whole time, I have my external focus on a point ahead of me; I am not looking at anything specific, and my primary attention is on listening to the voices and on sensing my breathing. I am stationary; I sense this stillness in contrast with the moving voices in relation to the movement of my breath within my body. Sensing both the stillness (of my body) and movement (of the voices and my breath), I bring my hands together. I hear yet another voice speak, "*She was breathing softly.*"

e. I brush one hand with the other hand, and sense the touch – the tangibility and immediacy of my hands/body – in relation to the less tangible/immediate voices. And I



say, “*She swelled out the sheets*”. My task, in this particular moment, is to sustain the awareness of both the space which I physically occupy, and the space where the voices travelled; optimally, I am present simultaneously both in the here and there as I am actively engaged simultaneously in the touching and the listening. An important task in sustaining the balance between my awarenesses as such is that I do not drift into either one: that is, I do not ideate what may come with the touching, e.g., the feel of the hands, or what may come with the listening, e.g., whose voices they might have been. As I turn to Eunjoo/Claire, I let go of my hands and say, “*Madame.*”

f. I see Eunjoo/Claire – still sat on the bed – turning away from me as she says, “*Stop it*”. I hear the multiple voices as the line (*stop it*) is spoken chorally among all Claires. Then I hear the director’s voice over the microphone saying “1”, calling our stage to play the following section. On hearing all these voices, I have strong sense of the space that is now behind and beside me with Eunjoo/Claire in front of me.

g. *Transition:* Looking directly at Eunjoo/Claire, I also sense the lights on other stages go dark, leaving just our stage lit. In this brief transitory moment from the previous section to the next, my primary stays focused on the light on Eunjoo’s face and sustaining my awareness of the space behind and beside me. Optimally, I sustain the embodied dynamics of the previous scene then carry them into the next scene without being interrupted and/or disconnected by my perception of the light change and/or the director’s voice.

h. On seeing Eunjoo’s/Claire’s face and her body slightly turned away from me, I let go of my hands and say, “*Now you want to stop me. You wanted to know, didn’t you.*”

*Well, I've got some more to tell you.*" I remain looking at Eunjoo/Claire's lit face, as I walk toward her. I sit down on the bed next to Eunjoo/Claire and continue playing the section:

*"You'll see what your sister's made of. What stuff she's made of. What a servant girl really is. I wanted to strangle her—"*

During these lines, my focus is on listening to myself speak, and on sensing my voice and breath traveling through my body as I speak. In doing so, my sense of my body grows stronger and my awareness of Eunjoo/Claire is momentarily withdrawn; even in the moment when I hear her speak, my focus remains on my breath and body. As I continue speaking, I am more drawn to my voice and its resonance within my body. The resonance accumulates, it 'pushes' me from the inside; I abruptly stand up, turn and walk away from Eunjoo/Claire. I continue:

*"Nothing comes after. I'm sick and tired of kneeling in pews. In church I'd have had the red velvet of abbesses or the stone of the penitents, but my bearing at least would have been noble."*

i. In my periphery, I sense the chair and the table – Madame's chair and Madame's dressing table. As I turn towards them, I withdraw my awareness of Claire. Though my attention is on the chair and the table, I am not looking at either the chair or the table: I gaze 'vacantly' into the empty space between them and speak, "*Look*". I slowly take a step toward the chair and continue:

*"just look at how she suffers. How she suffers in beauty. Grief transfigures her, doesn't it? Beatifies her?"*

As I speak I sense the light above. I do not look at the light directly but I sense its brightness and I am also aware of the distance between the light and myself; it brings my external focus up, and I am now vacantly gazing into the space ahead me. Continue sensing the bright, distant light, I speak:

*“When she learned that her lover was a thief, she stood up to the police. She exulted. Now she is forlorn and splendid, supported under each arm by two devoted servants whose hearts bleed to see her grief. Did you see it? Her grief sparkling with the glint of her jewels, with the satin of her gowns, in the glow of the chandelier!”*

j. As I continue sensing the light on me, I can sense the warmth of the light growing, and as I continue sensing the movement/resonance of my voice in and through my body, I can *feel* the warmth (of the light) through the whole body. It builds up and moves me; I turn to Claire and speak:

*“Claire, I wanted to make up for the poverty of my grief by the splendour of my crime. Afterward, I’d have set fire to the lot.”*

k. Eunjoo/Claire speaks, and although I hear what she is saying, my primary focus is still on the *heat* (of the light) traveling through my body. While I sense this heat, my external focus is on the space ahead of me but not focused on anything specific. I speak:

*“I know everything. I kept my eye and ear to the keyhole. No servant ever listened at door as I did. I know everything.”*

I. I take a moment shifting my attention: from primarily sensing the heat (of the light), my voice and my breath traveling and resonating through my body to my embodied memory of the space above me where the light was. This shift in my sensory awareness from my immediate body to the distant light calms my breathing. And with the calmed breathing, I bring my arms together, and speak, *“Incendiary! It’s a splendid title.”*

### Emotions as Processual Manifestation through Dynamic Actions

The manifestation of a character and all her components is carried by and through the energy that a performer’s actions generate. The performer’s actions, executed through the focused and uninterrupted awareness of the body-mind in relation to the particular environment of the production, can generate clear and unobstructed energy. As the performer stays fully present in the moment, energy is generated through both physical action and seeming non-physical actions: in Buddhist terms, any form of body and/or mind engagement is considered to be an action and is, therefore, understood to be an energy-generating activity.

As shown in the description of my process in the moment of playing, I select certain stimuli to work with, which are in accordance with the pre-determined characteristics of Solange and with the dynamics in the particular scenes I am playing. By directing my primary attention to those selected stimuli and engaging the sensory awareness, I may come to the state where my concentration, hence my level of engagement with the actions, can be made strong and heightened. In turn, this can enable my (doing of) actions to generate certain dynamics as informed by Solange in the played

scenes/situations. For example, my sensory engagement with the others in the space, e.g, hearing their voices, may relate to my “inner” experience of the sense of being watched by someone/something that I cannot actually see. This, in turn, may contribute to the growing sense of frustration that I/Solange experience. Similarly, my sensory engagement with the light, also in relation to my breathing, resonates with my speaking of the “the glow of the chandelier” as I hear myself speak. This, together with the previously experienced sense of frustration, can contribute to the growing sense of Solange’s hatred of her reality of being a maid and/or of Madame.

What I, as the performer, do not address in the moment of playing is whether or how my “inner” experience of this sense of warmth (of the light) is actually related to the “glow of chandelier”, that is, my primary task is to sense the (warmth) of the light, keeping the external focus on the pre-determined point and hear the line as I say it. Similarly, if/when an image of Madame appears in my mind as I say, “look, look how she suffers in beauty”, I sustain my primary attention to my task of gazing into the *vacant* space rather than to seeing the image of Madame. This clarity in my actions enables me to sustain the level of my sensory engagement and concentration in the moment of playing. By leaving those “by-products” of my engagement with the selected stimuli, i.e, thoughts, images, and/or associations, I am able to stay on my immediate tasks. Moreover, this clarity in my actions can reinforce the clarity of the dynamics that have been generated in/through my performance.

The process by which I played Solange shows that the unification of a performer’s body and mind is required to generate dynamic actions. In enacting the meditative mode of performing, informed by the principles of *ji-gwahn* practice, I observed that,

once I lost the connection to my body and to the performance space as a collective whole, I was not only unable to negotiate the other stages' playing, but I also lost 'my' character all together. This resulted in my taking arbitrary actions and experiencing unnecessary hindrances to my performance. Maintaining focus on individual stimuli sustains the balance in the performer-character relationship. The meditative mode of performing can help the actor see that there is a span of time, however short, between her contact with her character, and her contact with her surroundings. It may also help her 'see' the arousal of associations/images/feelings/emotions to which such contact may give rise. Furthermore, the meditative mode of performing helps the actor to catch and 'control' impulsive, habitual reactions to those 'by-products'.

If/when an actor is fully present in each moment of actions, she is in the process of experiencing each action: what her action may, or may not, 'signify' becomes evident after further processing, not while experiencing. From this perspective, it can also be said that there are different stages of an actor's work on a character's emotion(s). The actor determines the underlying dynamics of the character, but this process of determination differs from the generation of the actual dynamics: deciding whether something, or someone, is 'emotional' or not is different from actually experiencing those emotions. Therefore, in this context, the actor's focus is on the act of experiencing, instead of on processing the information that experiencing generates.

### Summary of *(Playing) the Maids*

Since no research on my performance was conducted, e.g., asking the audience for their response, I cannot say whether my performance created the 'right' emotional dynamics or not. Instead, I can analyse whether and how the process of my executing the actions was grounded, concentrated, and sustained in relation to the question: how may that help the actor to minimise any undesired interference that the actor may have with the actions in order to generate and sustain the emotional dynamics called for by the character in given moments?

Firstly, the question of being grounded in the moment of acting can be examined in terms of how I was able, or not able, to perform my tasks in a given moment of acting. Secondly, in terms of establishing a state of concentration can be examined in relation to the level of the *felt* intensity that my acting was generating in each moment of playing. Thirdly, the question of whether or not I was able to sustain can be examined in terms of the sense of flow: that is, whether there was any moment that I had to bring the watching-I to the fore during the performance. If there was none, it can be said, at least for me, the performance flowed as a whole; on the other hand if there were such moments, it can be said I was in and out of the performance without my intention to do so – in other words, I was not fully present for the entire performance. However, in practice, these three characteristics of acting process are not separate: in my process of playing Solange, I found that they are inter-related as to enable one another. I do not suggest that these three characteristics of the state of my acting are identical to the emotional dynamics of Solange in the performance. However, they are necessary elements without which the process of generating the emotional dynamics of Solange cannot even begin.

Moreover, the utilisation of the meditative mode of acting as discussed earlier in the chapter allowed me to negotiate the process building my relationship with the character. In turn, this allowed me to have a conscious 'control' over the process of generating the emotions called for by Solange and *the Maids* in the complex of performing environment of *(Playing) the Maids* without undesired interference of the actor's self.

In the following chapter, this actor's creative process of generating emotional dynamics will be further discuss in the context of playing an unknown emotion, Unlike the first and second practical studies of the process, the third project examines a seemingly culture-specific emotion – *han*. Given this specificity, how may the actor's process of generating emotional dynamics be approached?



#### **CHAPTER 4 MOTHER PROJECT; playing a 'foreign emotion', *han***

*Mother Project* was the last of the three practical projects that have a place in the centre of my research into emotion in the context of performance practice. The aim of this final practical project was, ultimately, to see whether and how theatre-making processes might be a practice of theories, and the extent to which performances are reflections of these theories. Although there should always be a framework for a research project, it also requires a subtle balance between the pre-determined framework and work that will be discovered. With this nature of the relationship between theory and practice in mind, I began the first stage of *Mother project*: determining which elements of the project were to be developed prior to the rehearsals and which other elements were to be left open, to be discovered in the rehearsal process.

This chapter discusses the method and the process through which *Mother Project* was developed and carried out. Regarding the process, *Mother Project* was developed largely in two stages. The first stage was to develop a framework for *Mother Project* in order primarily to gain a clear direction for the project and to allow the rehearsal process to be approached and to progress as systematically and efficiently as possible. This first stage consisted of three parts: 1) exploration of *han* as the primary emotion/sentiment/theme of the project; 2) exploration of the play, *Mother*, in relation to this specific emotion/sentiment and how this emotion/sentiment is related to a Buddhist notion of self; and 3) adaptation of the play and development of a dramatic text for *Mother Project*. The second stage of *Mother Project* was to apply the developed framework to practice in creating a theatre performance. The rehearsal process consisted of four parts: 1) development of three character-ly bodies and three actor-ly

states; 2) finding the three character-ly bodies and embodying the three actor-ly states in practice; 3) rehearsals of the dramatic structures of the adapted text; and 4) development and rehearsals of a performance text for the work-in-progress-showing. Looking back on the process, it was the constant exchange and negotiation between the framework and the practicing of the framework that became *Mother Project*.

### Synopsis of Oh Tae-Seok's play, *Mother*

The play, *Mother*, was written in 1982 by a Korean playwright and theatre director Tae-Seok Oh. Oh has written over thirty plays since his first play, *Wedding Dress* in 1967 and was the first Korean theatre director to show his work outside Korea. Among various place, his work has been shown also in the U.K. including at Edinburgh Festival and at the Barbican Centre in London. *Mother Project* is my adaptation of Oh's play, *Mother*.

The play begins with the Mother speaking of an incident that happened during her son's last visit home. Having nothing 'proper' to feed her son, she stole and sold some seaweed from the village seaweed farm where she was working as a diver so that she could buy ingredients to cook ox-tail broth for her son. Having broken the regulations of the farm, she went to the head of the village and told him what she had done and asked him to postpone the punishment until after her son left to return to the military. But, as other workers of the farm in the village found out what had happened, the punishment was carried out the following evening in the village square. Later in the play, after she has learnt the news of her son's death (his suicide), she cries out:

Did you die seeing your mother being publicly punished, seeing your mother steal to make you a bowl of soup having seen your mother being punished? Jeong-soon's mother told me that she saw you throwing up, crouching on the edge of the rice paddies, throwing up the ox-tale broth, and crying. Baby, did you do the stupid thing after seeing your stupid mother do a stupid thing? What has happened?<sup>115</sup>

We also learn how she raised her son as a single mother, how she had to tie him as a baby to the pillar of the house when she had to go to work, how the baby could not suck her breast when she came back from work and tried to feed him, and how the baby would be 'lifeless' from the exhaustion of having struggled to untie himself all day. After shooting two of his seniors in the military, after having been made fun of because of a love letter that his girlfriend had sent him, the son has killed himself. The Mother decides to hold a spirit wedding for her dead son, saying,

I can't send my son like this. My husband and I never had a wedding ceremony and now having to send my unmarried son like this - how can I face the father and the son as a mother? [...] After all, didn't the boy die because of love? It's my duty as a mother at least to marry him somehow.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>OH 1994: 125 (My translation)

<sup>116</sup>ibid.: 125-126 (My translation)

The Mother decides to seek 'a suitor', a spirit of a female who has died unmarried, and to hold the spirit wedding before the son's funeral, before the final sending off. During her journey to look for a suitable female spirit, she encounters a blind 'mudang' (Korean shaman) and hears about her dead daughter, whose spirit, after having found no other female spirit, the Mother marries to her son's spirit. The play concludes with the Mother's final sending off her deceased son, now with the company of his 'wife'.

### Han ( Korean한 Chinese恨 )

*Mother Project* was first conceptualised during the beginning stage of my PhD. Although I was still in the process of developing the theoretical framework of my PhD at this initial stage of my research, I was certain that I wanted to explore the unique Korean 'emotion' termed *han*. In order to examine the process through which *Mother Project* was carried out, three years after the initial conceptualisation; it is helpful to examine the unique characteristics that make up *han*. Furthermore, an examination of *han* can help us further understand the nature of emotion and of emotion in performance practice.

*Han* has always been regarded as an emotion or a sentiment that is unique to Korean people. Its appearance can be found in every form of arts in Korea including literature, performing arts and music. The use of the term *han* can be found from as early as the Kochoseon period (BC 2333 – BC 108) until today, and is used in various contexts from academic discourses to everyday conversations. As the range of contexts in which *han* is used shows, defining *han*, especially as found in academic discourses,

has often been done in close relation to particular historic socio-political contexts. To provide an idea of how *han* might be understood, I will briefly introduce some of more dominant contexts in which *han* is often discussed.

YiDoo Cheon's categorisation of the contexts in make-up of *han* provides a useful overview of the sentiment. In Cheon's analysis, *han* is identified through five principle types of *han* manifest in specific contexts. The first is the discourse of *han* in the context of the sentiment of *jeong-han*, which emphasises the sense of loss and longing in *han* that is a result of one's affection for another. Cheon states that, in the context of *jeong-han* discourse, implicit in the sense of *han* is grief and sorrow toward the helpless self. This type of *han* is directed to the past.

The second of Cheon's five categorisations of *han* is *won-han* discourse. The *won* (원 願 / to desire)-*han* discourse emphasises the conflict between man's limited conditions in life and man's desires beyond the limits of life. In the notion of *won-han* there is a strong sense of discouragement and frustration. In contrast to *jeong-han* discourse, the sentiment of *han* here is related more to a sense of hope and is therefore more future-directed.

The third categorisation in Cheon's analysis of *han* is based on Jongeun Kim's understanding of *han*, which emphasises a sense of guilt in a person. Kim argues that a strong sense of *han* is created by the antagonism that a person feels toward someone whom s/he feels he should actually feel respect and affection toward.

The fourth of the five categorisations of *han* is *won* (원 怨 / to resent)-*han* discourse. Different from the second category, *won* in this *won-han* discourse means to

blame and/or to resent. This approach to *han* is closely related to the history of Korea where the people have been constantly invaded by foreign forces, and, therefore, is related to the strong sense of blame of others as well as the accompanying victim-mentality. However, since the sense of hardship of Korean life has been embedded for thousands of years in the Korean peoples' collective (un)consciousness, an equally strong need for release of such a negative energy has also been created and reinforced. Therefore, *han* in this *won-han* discourse indicates a possibility for transcendence of *han*.

The final category in Cheon's analysis of *han* is also closely related to the collective (un)consciousness of Korean people as suppressed *minjoong* (the people). The *minjoong* discourse, however, is less related to the suppression by foreign forces of the peninsula but to the suppression by the domestic ruling classes of their own people. In this understanding of *han*, the dynamics created by the suppressed *minjoong* may erupt through outwardly uprising or be transformed through compassion.

Despite difficulties in translating the term *han* into non-Korean contexts, as well as different focuses within definitions of the sentiment, *han* should be understood not as "a single emotional state but a complex emotional and cognitive condition". O-ryeng Lee points out that *han* implies a mixture of "sorrow and joy, and grief and hope". In my view, there are certain conditions that need to be present in a (Korean) person in order for her/him to perceive a sense of *han*. Firstly, there needs to be an extreme situation. This extreme situation – whether an event in the past or an event in the present – is a continuing and on-going issue for the person, not because of its temporal immediacy but in terms of the tension it creates that remains present in the person. Secondly, there

needs be a realisation of the harsh reality for the person facing an extreme situation. The individual in this situation experiences extreme tension because s/he is helpless and unable to change the situation. Thirdly, there needs to be a further realisation of the reality that she still has a life to live and of the fact that this life requires the release of the tension. Therefore, there needs to be some type of reconciliation or resolution. However, typically there may be no complete release of tension;; however, she must come to terms with the tension and eventually with the situation itself. It is this realisation and acceptance of the nature of life and of a human being that a strong sense of *han* 'requires'; hence, the difference between *han* and mere anger and/or resentment. Furthermore, it is also the understanding of life as such that grants *han* the dynamics of seemingly opposite emotions within itself.

#### The concept of time, space and person/character in Oh's *Mother*

Before looking at the process through which the play was adapted, and some of the decisions I made in the process of adapting the play, I will first discuss the research questions informing *Mother Project*.

I chose to work with Oh's play, *Mother*, largely for two reasons: the sentiment of *han* through which the character of the Mother and her life can be characterised and understood, and the form of the play in and through which the notions of time, space and self are challenged in relation to creating a performance.

As discussed in an earlier section of this chapter, it can be said that, in order for the sentiment of *han* to be manifest, certain conditions are necessary. Often inherent in *han*

is the sense of accumulation over a long period of time. *Han* is always triggered by extreme situations challenging the capability of coping with life; however, this characteristic alone might not raise the sense of *han*. For example, if the Mother had not gone through life the way she had, the situation of the son's death, despite its extreme nature, might not be characterised as full of *han*—as *han-ful*. Had she not gone through the days of raising the child as single mother; had she not gone through the traumatic days of losing her husband just four days after living together as a couple; had she not gone through the days of living in financial hardship; and/or had she not gone through the days of diving into the deep sea to make a living, etc. *han* may not have arisen. The repeated challenges that she endured over the course of her life intensify the tension between the impossibilities for life and the inescapability of life, and it is when this accumulated tension is met with yet another impossible situation – the son's suicide – her life may then be characterised as *han-ful*.

In this sense, *han* is different from the sense of sadness; the sentiment of *han* carries with it the sense of accumulated tension over a long period of time and, therefore, might be characterised as multi-dimensional. Throughout the play, through the old female figure of the Mother, and glimpses of her at other times, both the present moment and the past can be seen simultaneously: a twelve-year-old girl learning to dive for the first time from her diver mother; a seventeen-year-old woman losing her husband to the sea; an eighteen-year old single mother giving birth to a son, and/or moments of her life afterwards as a single mother for which she “lived only for the son”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Oh 1982: 120



*Mother Project* explores this sense of accumulated and multi-dimensional time. It explores the notion that inherent in any given time may be other dimensions of time, and whether and how the view of time as such is related to the previously held assumptions of linear characteristics of time. As a moment of a life reveals and encompasses within it other moments of life, can the Mother's life as a whole be somehow embodied and communicated in/through each action/moment of the performance? Is it possible to create a performance in which each action of the performer and each moment of the fictional life of the Mother that she performs reflect the character and her life as a whole? As a *han*-ful moment is manifest and perceived in relation to other moments of the life and to life as a whole, the very concept of *han* itself challenges the notion of linear time; therefore, I wanted to examine the possible ways of making a performance without a narrative arc that is constructed by the notion of linear time and functions as a way of communicating the performance to the spectator.

Oh's play also challenges the previously held assumptions of space and of a 'character'. For example, there are no stage directions that indicate changes of place: the Mother takes a few steps and she is at the place of the *mudang* (the shaman) or out on the road searching for a suitable female spirit. In the play, the notion of character is also challenged: the Mother at some point becomes the *mudang* (the shaman), and at another point she acts as though the spirit wedding is a wedding for her and her husband. As is often the case in traditional Korean performing arts, Oh's play also blurs the boundary between the performer and the spectator; at times the Mother speaks directly to the spectator and at other times to the other (invisible) characters, i.e., her

husband, her son, the *mudang*, and/or the young mother. At one point in the play she becomes the *mudang* (the shaman).

Not only does the Mother go through the transformation of characters but Oh's play also challenges the spatial relationship between the performer, the spectator and the stage/theatre. I wanted to explore this notion of blurred boundaries between the subject and object: the boundary between the characters – the fictional world – on one level, and the boundary between the performer and the spectator – the 'real' world. In particular, I wanted to examine the possible ways of communicating the fictional world of the Mother to the present space and time of the theatre/performance, and to the spectators (the 'others') also present in that same space and time. What is the relationship between the fictional world of the play and the 'real' world? How are they related through the medium of theatre? Which of the two worlds does the performer belong to and what is her role in the process of the meeting of the two?

In the process of adapting Oh's play for performance *Mother Project*, I utilised the Buddhist notion of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) of space as the *ab-ground*, and this emptiness as both a necessary condition and the nature of all beings' way of existence. This paradigm is characterised by is the constant play between phenomenal manifestation and retreat from the phenomenal world. How might the notion of space as such be related to the notion of blurred boundaries—across the mother as old woman as young girl, and/or as *mudang* (the shaman); between the fictional world of Oh's play and of the mother's life and the world of the theatre (the here and now); between the performer and the 'characters' she crosses during her performance; between the performer and the audience?

## Adapting *Mother*: developing the performance text

Having examined the nature of the sentiment *han*, I further broke down Oh's play by selecting key elements and dynamics around which to focus the performance score. First of all, I selected a few key elements: the news of the son's suicide, the letter, the spirit wedding/the dolls and the element of the sea/water. I kept these elements from the play as a way of entering the character and the world of the Mother. I then (re)arranged these elements in a sequence different to the one in Oh's play: with these elements as departure points, and added new elements, I constructed nine dramatic structures as follows:

1. The letter 1: The figure (an old woman) finds/receives the letter which tells the news of the death/suicide of her son. In the envelope is a yellow thread, which she recognises.
2. The walk 1: The figure now as a young girl walks into the water/sea. Transformation of the physical form – from a young girl to the old woman – as she walks.
3. At the sea 1: The old woman sees the sea. As she touches the water, she changes into the young girl who plays with the water.
4. The walk 2: Repetition of the same as the walk 1.
5. The spirit wedding: The old woman performs a spirit wedding. For the ritual, she prepares two dolls – one male and one female – some dates, money, and the yellow thread.
6. The letter 2: She finds the letter— still on her. She reads it again, and holds it in her hands.

7. The walk 3: Repetition of the walk as in 1.

8. At the sea 2

9. Final send-off; *gut*: The old woman sees a flower. As she watches the flower, she goes through a physical transformation – from the old woman to the young girl to a figure in-between the old woman and the young girl, and final changes back into the old woman.

There were two aspects on which I focused at this stage of adapting Oh's play. Firstly, I focused on how to build and develop the Mother's *han*-ful life through the simplification of the selected elements; this simplified form does not tell the story of the play in a representational manner. I wanted to explore alternative ways of creating a performance that might be *suggestive* of the Mother's *han* rather than presenting it through narrative; whether and how the Mother's experience of her son's suicide can be glimpsed through her engagement with the obituary/the letter; whether and how her relationship with her deceased son might be suggested through her engagement with a simple object—the yellow thread; whether and how the Mother's relationship to the sea, and the harshness of the water that she has experienced as a diver, might be glimpsed through the sea/water suggested through the acting; whether and how the Mother's struggle to continue her life after the loss of her son might be shared through the repeated walk.

This exploration through simplifying the objects and elements of Oh's play and on breaking down the play's narrative was for two purposes. Firstly, it was an attempt to create a performance that might convey the sense of multi-dimensional time that is the

Mother's life, and the accumulated tension over the course of her life which can be characterised as the Mother's *han*. Can the yellow thread suggest something that happened in the Mother's (and the son's) life that we do not witness in the performance and/or can the Mother's daily life be glimpsed through 'mundane' acts such as walking? By breaking down the narrative and making it simple, can it create a denser, and therefore, more intense performance than when a story is told/communicated in a representational manner?

Secondly, I wanted to explore ways of communicating this seemingly culture-specific sentiment of *han* with an audience which may not have the same level of access (as Koreans) to the concept of *han*. For example, is the Mother's sadness and/or her hope for her dead son sensed as different to sadness and/or being hopeful in general? How might this difference be actualised in and through the performance without 'explanation' and/or 'description' through narrative? At this stage, I also decided to exclude the objects in Oh's play that are extrinsically related to the *mudang* (the shaman), i.e., the bells and/or the silk cloth, as they are culturally specific to the Korean shamanistic traditions. I did not want to focus on the representation of the Korean shamanistic traditions in exploring the Mother's transformation into the *mudang* and/or vice versa. Instead, as my focus was on exploring the mother's *han* and her *han*-ful life, I focused on the role/function of a *mudang* to care for people's pain and help them release their pain. Therefore, I excluded the story of the *mudang* in Oh's play: the blind *mudang*, her deceased daughter who was also blind, her argument with the mother over the suitability between her daughter and the mother's son, etc.

Although the concept of *han* cannot be separated from Korea and Korean culture, I wanted to minimise specific representations of the culture in an attempt to direct possible engagement (primarily of the spectator) with the cultural aspect of the *mudang* – and Oh’s play – to other elements that make up the performance. For the same purpose, I excluded most of the elements in Oh’s play that are direct presentations of Korean culture, e.g., the Mother’s act of putting layers of paper with glue on her face, which is one of the traditional Korean ways of execution and/or the use of object of *duleongbak*, which *haenyeos* (female divers) typically use when going into the sea to gather shell fish, etc.

The other point I focused on at this stage of adapting Oh’s play concerned the order in which the selected, and newly added, elements of the performance might be put together in a sequence that operates outside the mechanism of narrative and representation. I wanted to explore an alternative form which might enable those particular elements to operate in a certain way that in turn can help the performance suggest but not represent *han*. How might the simple act of reading the letter, for example, be intensified so that its level of suggestiveness, and therefore whatever it might suggest, can be stronger?

What other ways might be possible to embody the mother’s life and her *han* on the stage/in the space in this exploration of an alternative performance mechanism, I focused on the notions of natural flow of time and of ‘boundaries’ between the ‘real’ and the fictional. Interrupting the sense of linearity in time through repetition of the same sequence of actions over the course of the performance, i.e., the walk and the reading of the letter were explored in relation to the notion of accumulated time. I intentionally

arranged the figures at different ages – the figure as old woman and the figure as young girl – in a sequence that challenges the notion of linear time. That is, by working outside the sense of natural flow of events, I examined whether and how the sense of unsettledness might be manifest.

This sense of unsettledness was explored in relation to two points of focus: firstly, through the sense of being unsettled, the sense of being lost in the reality of life that the mother experiences may be examined; secondly, by putting the nine structures in the order indicated above, the performance itself may be made unsettling, so that the mother's experience – of feeling lost and/or of struggling between her desires and the reality of her life – might be better communicated to the spectators. How do you, in creating a theatrical performance, bring out and communicate 'heavy' emotions/sentiments such as *han*, and do so in a way that their weight is not reduced to an intellectual interpretation and/or to some simplified signs or symbols? Further, I also wanted to keep each of the nine structures at relatively similar length and put blackouts between each structure. By examining further the interruption of the seemingly natural sense of time, I explored how the one dimensional time of the theatre in the here and now, in which each moment of performance takes place, might resonate with other times of the performance, and therefore, how one moment of the Mother's life embodied in one action of the performer might resonate with other moments in the Mother's life.

My focus was not to investigate levels of openness or determined-ness in exploring the above question; rather, it was to explore whether and how different ways of communication might be manifest as a result of engaging with such emotions/sentiments in certain ways. In other words, the issue of communicating such

emotions/sentiments with space for their potential weight was, in *Mother Project*, related to some extent to actualising the emotions/sentiments on the stage, and to a greater extent to creating the space on the stage wherein the Mother's world and the 'real' world outside of her world can come face to face. I approached the stage as space that belongs to neither the performer nor the audience. As a director, I saw both the fictional world of the mother and the world of the theatre/the stage as participants, not as hosts. I viewed the spectators as active participants who come to take part in the process of the meeting of their worlds with the world of the mother, not as guests who have come to 'sightsee' the stage and the performance.

If/as the performance comes into the space – the theatre – as such, the question then becomes how it might have to change its operating system in order to meet and communicate with the others – the spectators. In this sense, my role as a director was to shape and adjust the form in which my adaptation of Oh's play can be introduced. The process of adapting Oh's play and developing the performance text as a whole can then be understood as an exploration of a performance communication mechanism that might allow different worlds to meet and, in turn, allow all participants to experience the Mother's world.

The sense of accumulated/multi-dimensional time was also explored through playing with the boundary of the self. The physical transformations across different ages –the old woman, the young girl and the in-between – might suggest the mother at different times and/or different moments in her life. However, what I was more interested in exploring how the sense of a character might be released all together. Does the deconstructed narrative, together with the sense of unsettled 'natural' time, change the



way that the three age states are related to each other? If so, how might this affect the sense of a self? What is it that might determine the sense of these three age states to be of one person/character? Ultimately, by investigating these questions in/around the sense of a self, I was simultaneously exploring the perception of the self and its relationship to emotions, i.e. how the Mother's *han* might be approached in practice.

Adapting Oh's play and developing the performance text focused primarily on deconstructing the narrative of the play and developing an alternative performance communication mechanism in order to better understand, embody and share the mother's experience of *han*. , As mentioned above, I selected a few elements of the play and pulled them out of their original context—out of the logic through which they operated in Oh's play. Therefore, the elements of Oh's play that were retained needed a new context through which they might make sense for an audience in *Mother Project*. My decision to add the new elements and repetitions of the same elements in developing the performance text was intended to performatively foreground the issues of unsettled time and the sense of being lost. My intention of course was not to make the participants – the he performer and/or the spectator – actually 'get lost' in the performance. In other words, my research on emotion (*han*) and performance in *Mother Project* was not an exploration of how to make either performer or spectator be 'consumed' by the emotion—the Mother's *han*.

In commonly held assumptions, one dimension of time cannot co-exist with other dimensions of the time, i.e., the present is what comes after the past and the future is what comes next to the present; therefore, these dimensions cannot exist in one moment. However, on the one hand, as found in the Buddhist paradigm, these

seemingly separate dimensions of time might actually be able to exist together, i.e., the past and future are only possible in the present moment. My intension was not to explore ways of creating a performance that somehow transforms the here and now into something else, something that is not the here and now; I did not want the performer, or the spectator, to become the Mother herself in order to share the Mother's experience in the fictional world of the play. Rather, *Mother Project* explores ways of creating a performance that may allow its participants to remain aware of themselves' watching the performance so that the encounter between them and the Mother's world might be possible. Can the notion of emptiness and the inter-dependence of the seemingly opposites help this process of creating a performance – a performance as a way of shaping the space wherein different worlds, of different times and space, can be shared?

#### Rehearsal phase 1: Developing three character-ly bodies and three actor-ly states

The rehearsals took place in Exeter for approximately for four weeks during in February, 2012 with Jing Hong Kuo as the actor. One showing of *Mother Project* in progress was shared along with a short presentation at the University of Exeter on **the 1<sup>st</sup> March** 2012.

Since the performance text was developed to explore an alternative performance mechanism that might enable the encounter between worlds of different times and spaces – this section focuses on the process of developing a system through which the performer might engage with the world of the Mother and of the space/theatre. If a

performance is seen as creating a space where the different times and spaces can come together, then the performer's role in this performance can be seen as a kind of bridge—a bridge that connects here(s) and there(s). Therefore, the performer as such cannot be seen as belonging to either the here(s) or the there(s): the bridge is connected to and connects the two but she herself is always in-between the two. My directorial strategy was to work with the actor to develop three character-ly bodies and three actor-ly states as a way of exploring the performer's role. The character-ly bodies are vehicles through which the performer can enter the world of the Mother, and the three actor-ly states as a way of engaging with the space of the theatre including the event of the performance with the audience present in that space. It is only when the actor is grounded in both that together they can be brought into a performance.

The three character-ly bodies constitute the figure of the old woman, the young girl and the form/body between the two. Less definitive in shape, the in-between is the moment(s) where the actor is in the body of neither the old woman nor the young girl; it is a state where the Mother's awareness of her son's death is at its strongest. The in-between was utilised not only during the transitional moments between the old woman and the young girl, e.g., during *The Walk*, but also during the prolonged moments when the Mother's awareness of her son's death was strong, e.g., during *Final Send-off*.

All three bodies were developed through an improvisation exercise—a butoh walk. I first encountered this exercise when participating in a butoh workshop with Fran Barbe in 2002. Since then, I have utilised this improvisation in my previous research projects. For the exercise of butoh walk in *Mother Project* rehearsals, the actor walked to and from two points in the space in a straight line, changing the physical form first at each of

the two points. In doing the improvisational exercise, I as the facilitator played some music, often letting it run for the whole duration of the exercise. The music I played varied but was incorporated in the exercise as a stimulus for the actor in her walk across the space. The melodies, the rhythms, the sounds and the vibrations that each piece of music played stimulates the actor psychophysically, which, in turn, allows the actor to simultaneously change and be changed. In this sense, the moments of her transformation —of her physical shape — can be characterised as an organic process of discovering the three character-ly bodies.

In each walk Jing Hong was aware of which of the three bodies she was working on; at the same time, it was important that each of the three bodies were approached as the actor's way of engaging with the various facets of the Mother. This way of finding the character can allow the actor the space wherein the double-layered sense of self can simultaneously exist together: first, the actor's sense of the self as the actor is sustained due to her awareness of the task/rules in the exercise, i.e., to change the physical shape at the end of each walk according to which of the three states of the character (the old woman, the young girl and the in-between); secondly, as the shapes and walks are informed by the character, the actor as the character's sense of self is discovered and developed. Through this double-layered sense of self, the 'boundary' between Jing Hon and the Mother may be blurred, and the different times and spaces of the theatre/studio and of the drama may be bridged.

From my directorial perspective, the model I assumed for the actor's work was that she did not *carry* the world of the drama and is not a representation of that world; rather, the Mother and her world are being *channelled* through Jing Hong as a medium.

Therefore, Jing Hong's process of finding the three character-ly bodies was itself an encounter of different worlds—of the drama and of Jing Hong as the actor herself. Utilisation of the butoh walk in the way described above was a means to provide Jing Hong the space required for this encounter.

In the first phase of the rehearsal process different versions of the three character-ly bodies appeared and disappeared. I did not have a specific shape/form in mind for any of the three. Therefore, which of the bodies were to be kept as the three character-ly bodies – the old woman, the young girl and the in-between – as determined primarily by Jing Hong. Once determined, the butoh walk was utilised not to find the bodies but to temporally deepen the encounter during the walk. By temporally extending the duration of each of the three walks, Jing Hong solidified both the shape and inner experience of her relationship to each walk.

At this stage, Jing Hong was not concerned with the world of the drama—the character of the mother; she was taking the time to experience the activity of walking in each specific body. This process allowed time for Jing Hong to become mindful of the simple act of each unique walk as embodied in/through time. Without engaging her imagination or her mind, Jing Hong was able to experience the walk and to encounter an alternative world of time and space. This alternative world was manifest in Jing Hong's experience; therefore, it was neither fictional nor 'real'. It arose from the exercise as equally Jing Hong's world and that of the Mother in her three bodies. In this process the actor and 'character' are woven together through the three bodies as a multi-dimensional web.

The three actor-ly states were developed as a way of examining the subtle changes of awareness that were the direct result of Jing Hong's different ways of engagement with the space around her. The process of developing the three actor-ly states focused on three sensory elements: 1) different ways of looking, e.g., looking-at, or looking through; 2) Jing Hong's auditory relationship to her own breathing, i.e., whether or not she actively listens to the sound of her breathing; and 3) Jing Hong's bodily awareness of the space around her, e.g. the actor's tactile awareness through her feet.

In exploring different ways of encountering the space, I was able to witness the immediate changes in Jing Hong's relationship with the space, particularly the sense of distance between the actor and the space. Different points of focus in Jing Hong's awareness immediately brought about a sense of distance to and from the rehearsal space. When asked to sense more of her feet in the walk, for example, and as she directed her focus more to the sensing of her feet, the sense that she was somehow 'closer' to the space and to myself was evident. This brought about a sense that the space within which Jing Hong was walking was not different from that where I was sitting and watching. As we explored the different levels of her awareness of the feet, I was able to witness various degrees of distance between Jing Hong and the space. Similarly, different extents of Jing Hong's awareness of the space behind her created the sense of different levels of distance. When Jing Hong focused more on her sensing of the space behind, it seemed as though she was somehow further away from where I was watching her. Different degrees in Jing Hong's listening to the sound of her breathing also created different levels of perceived distance between her and the space and the spectator. For example, when doing the walk, as she focused more on listening

to her breath, Jing Hong seemed further away. Furthermore, interestingly, it also created a sense of closed-ness to her walk. Through her closed, but, importantly, still visible walk there was manifest a sense of the unreachable. I further explored this sense of visible yet unreachable place in examining the sense of different worlds, of different times and spaces. How might this sense of the closed and/or the 'unreachable', which is still visible, though in far distance, be related to exploring multi-dimensionality in a performance—the performance that allows different worlds with alternative times and spaces, i.e., the world of fiction and the world of the here and now?

Exploration of bringing different worlds of times and spaces into performance was further examined through the actor's different ways of visual engagement with the space, as well as all objects in the space. To the outside eye, the changes in the quality of Jing Hong's gaze were immediate as she changed the way she was visually engaging with the space/objects. For example, when Jing Hong was looking directly at the floor when doing the butoh walk exercise, there did not seem to be any other space beyond that dimension of the floor, and this, in turn, brought out a sense that we – Jing Hong and the outside eye/spectator – were in the same dimension. As soon as Jing Hong shifted her way of looking from directly gazing at the floor to looking through the floor, it seemed as though there was another space beyond that dimension of the floor, which is different from the space I was in.

This stage of rehearsal process was primarily focused on whether and how different ways of the actor's engagement with the space might be related to exploring the multi-dimensional space and time. By working with the specific ways of engaging the space through sensory awareness, Jing Hong was able to work systematically, and therefore,

was able to concentrate more fully on each task. In this way, the energy she generated was stronger and, therefore, her actions became more energetic. Furthermore, the way of engaging with the space brought about various kinds of spatial dynamics, i.e., the figure is further away from the space of here and now and there seems to be another space behind this dimension of the space, etc. In other words, Jing Hong was able not only to energise the space more strongly but also managed to bring about various kinds of spatial dynamics. It was also helpful that Jing Hong was able to do so without having to self-consciously engage with her mind. She was able to concentrate and focus un-self-consciously without intention and thereby generated a more concentrated/stronger energy without the intention to do so. This allowed Jing Hong to bring clarity and consistency to what she was required to do.

My task was to further develop and articulate the actor-ly states related to and sufficient for the exploration of embodying the various worlds created in a space that is the performance—the world of the Mother as interpreted and recreated by the director, the world of the space of the theatre and the audience in the event of the performance, and the world of the performer. The three actor-ly states for *Mother Project* as follows were developed and refined as follows:

1. State 1: Looking through, sensing the space behind, sensing the hands and the feet and sensing the breathing.
2. State 2: Continue with 1 but this time, listening to the breathing.
3. State 3: Continue with 2; shifting the focus to looking-directly-at.



These three actor-ly states were developed by exploring different combinations of the sensory elements of the actor, as utilised in the examination of Jing Hong's relationship with the space. Informed by the observation on different spatial dynamics manifest as a result of Jing Hong's different ways of engaging with the space, each of the three states focused on manifesting each of the worlds in order to enable the interactions/exchanges across them. For example, Jing Hong's awareness of the space in the first state is the 'biggest' in terms of the perceived space that might be covered by her sensory awareness of the space. In this state, Jing Hong was also farthest away among the three stages in terms of my perceived sense of the distance between me/the spectator and Jing Hong/the actor. Then the question became whether and how the notion of perceived sense of 'big' space might be helpful in terms of exploring the sense of a dimension that is different from the space of the theatre. Might this notion of big space as perceived through the actor's spatial awareness also be related to the perceived sense of time? In State1, Jing Hong also seemed the most 'neutral', especially when adopting the state without taking on any of the character-ly bodies. With the first state as a basic state that underlies the other two states.

State 2 was developed as a possible way of creating a sense of yet another world that is internal to the actor. The challenge for Jing Hong here was not only raising and sustaining the auditory awareness of her breathing but also not to lose the level of her awareness of the space as in State1. The notion of an internal world could be explored only in relation to the notion of the external world. If Jing Hong loses the (big) space previously manifest through her awareness of the space, she is no longer able to establish her internal world, since she has lost the external world. However, when the

previously established external world was kept and, at the same time, Jing Hong's awareness of her own breathing was strong, the changes in the dynamics in her actions and in the space were immediately evident.

State 3 was developed to take State 2 further in an attempt to bring the internal world more to the fore. If the internal world and the external world were kept in balance in State 2, in State 3 this balance was broken by bringing the actor's external focus more directly to a specific point, often on a specific object, e.g. the envelope or the yellow thread. As in State 2, it was extremely important that Jing Hong was able to sustain the level of awareness of the space achieved in the previous state. However, it was important, not in relation to establishing the two different worlds – the internal and the external – as in State 2, but in terms of sustaining the space 'within' the actor. Jing Hong, by keeping this empty space within her, was able to stay with the world of the here and now thereby serving as the bridge.

Although State 3 was developed with a focus on bringing the internal world forward and letting the external retreat, the actor can not go over completely into the internal world as this would disable the encounter between the world of the dimension of here and now and that of other dimensions, previously described as "further away", "beyond this dimension", "unreachable yet visible", and/or the internal world. More importantly, losing the empty space within the actor would also mean that the actor herself would be unable to encounter the world of the drama, which will be discussed in later sections of the chapter.

To summarise, the three actor-ly states were developed as a way of exploring whether and how different kinds of spatial dynamics might be manifested through a systematic use of the actor's sensory awareness in her engagement with the space. Further, it was also an exploration of how the various spatial dynamics might be utilised in creating a space wherein different worlds of times and spaces are brought in for interaction and exchange that is a performance.

### Rehearsal Phase 2: Rehearsing the four selected dramatic structures and developing the performance score

In this phase of the rehearsal process, Jing Hong's task was, first, to continue working on the three character-ly bodies and with the actor-ly states to the point that she is able to move in and out of each of the bodies and shift among them, without having to engage with any of these at a self-conscious level. When able to do so, the character-ly bodies themselves became clear—the differences between the old woman and the young girl became clear and noticeable. It is only when each body is clear and 'concrete' – in the sense that there is a consistency in the actor's embodiment of each body – that the actor is able to work on the transitions between them. Similarly, it is only when the actor is able to move freely in and out of each of the three actor-ly states that she becomes able to start working on a more complex score.

As we began working on actual structures, another task for Jing Hong was to keep her awareness at the same level as when she was just working on the actor-ly states alone without having to go through the dramatic structures. Since the Mother's *han* and

her *han*-ful life were approached as manifest through the various applications of spatio-temporal dynamics, the dramatic actions/structures had to be carried out in relation to the qualities of Jing Hong's relationship with the space. Jing Hong's process of embodying the dramatic actions/structures was also important in keeping her from being completely 'consumed' by the actions/structures. My role, as the director, was then primarily to develop a score of the actor-ly states for each of the dramatic actions/structures by arranging the various worlds and dimensions of the drama for actor/the action in relation to the theatrical space. By facilitating and observing the process of Jing Hong's embodiment of the four dramatic structures, the performance score was developed with specific actor-ly state and character-ly body designated for each of Jing Hong's actions with a specific duration for each action and a specific level of Jing Hong's various sensory awarenesses. In the following reflection on the development of the performance score, I discuss how each of the four dramatic structures was scored as an attempt to bring the mother's experience out of the actor's body and into the space of the theatre.

### *The Performance Score*

From the start of studio work on the 6th of February 2012 to the public sharing of the work-in-progress on 1st of March 2012, there were twenty one rehearsals in studio, each lasting for approximately four hours. Due to the limited time, I decided to work on five selected structures for the sharing of the work on 1st of March; however, later in the rehearsal process, I decided to focus the time left on only four of the original five:

- 1) The letter 1: The figure (an old woman) finds/receives the letter, which tells the news of the death/suicide of her son. In the envelope is a yellow thread, which she recognises.
- 2) The walk 1: The figure, now as a young girl, walks into the water/sea. Change of physical form – from a young girl to the old woman – as she walks.
- 3) At the sea 1: The old woman sees the sea. As she touches the water, she changes into the young girl, who plays with the water.
- 4) The spirit wedding: The old woman performs a spirit wedding: for the ritual, she prepares/has two dolls – one male and one female – some dates, money, and the yellow thread.

The first structure introduced the extreme situation facing the Mother; in the second structure we glimpse her struggle through her encounter with the water; the third structure was intended to reinforce the sense of struggle through a sense of interrupted and/or 'broken time' at the sea; and the fourth structure sees the mother still struggling even when she has made a decision and acted upon it. The four structures selected for the sharing of the work-in-progress focused on exploring the Mother's lasting struggle between the impossibility and necessity of attempting to overcome her extreme situation—including her son's death (suicide).

Once we had set and structured these four structures, the first rehearsals of the four structures focused on Jing Hong's learning of the fourfold dramatic structure. At the beginning of this process, the structures were introduced to Jing Hong through more open improvisations. The improvisations were more open in comparison to the later stage when the previously determined three character-ly bodies and the three actor-ly states were incorporated in Jing Hong's process of embodying the structures. At first,

Jing Hong was asked to listen to my verbal instructions for the actions and to respond psychophysically to them without having to pre-plan her acting score. For the latter structure, I utilised Zarrilli's model of structured improvisations where the doer initially works with specific points of external focus, incorporating the breathing in executing a series of psychophysical actions.<sup>118</sup> For example, for the first structure –the Letter 1 – the series of actions that were given for the initial improvisation were as follows:

a) Sitting on the piece of cloth, find an envelope.

b) Decide whether to open the envelope or not.

(If/when the actor decides to open the envelope, then I continue.)

c) Find a letter in the envelope, decide whether or not to read the letter.

(If/when the actor decides to read the letter, I continue.)

d) Finish reading the letter. Put the letter back.

e) Is there anything else in the envelope?

(If/when the actor finds the yellow thread I had put in earlier, I continue.)

f) Take the thread out and hold it in your hands.

g) Sense the thread and respond.

h) Decide to put it back into the envelope.

As mentioned, at this point in the rehearsals, the structure was looser and more open. It meant that it had less of the Mother's world, as adapted in my performance text rather than as in Oh's play, and more of the actor. In the (structured) improvisation, the focus is more on the doer and how she reacts and responds to the stimuli, i.e., the letter and/or the yellow thread. This is an important stage both for the actor herself and the

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<sup>118</sup> Zarrilli. *The Psychophysical Actor at Work* 2008: 99-114

director. In this first encounter with the drama, the actor responds to the drama less as the performer but more as herself in her everyday environment. Here, in this first encounter with the drama, the actor can be considered somewhat similar to a reader reading a book or a spectator watching a performance. In this state, the actor has little awareness of the here and now as she primarily exists in the world of the fiction. Although this state was inappropriate for the work intended, it was important that this process of the performer's journey was acknowledged—it is the same person regardless of whether she is encountering the drama as the performer or as a non-performer. The performer's body and mind are not something that can be separated from the body and mind of that person when not performing. They cannot be controlled or manipulated, neither are they tools that are at the actor's disposal that she can take and use according to her will. In other words, it is important to go through and acknowledge this first stage of encountering the drama per se since it involves the whole of the performer's bodymind that cannot be manipulated in accordance with the performance text by her intention and/or will.

For instance, when Jing Hong first went through my verbal instructions in the manner of structured improvisation, she was extremely affected by the yellow thread. When she first saw the thread, something inside her was immediately triggered and she was in tears. It was necessary that Jing-Hong went through this personal process since the drama – the yellow thread, in this case – touched a particular dimension of her bodymind in such a strong way that it could not be ignored. However, as the rehearsals went on, the balance between the performer/here and the drama/there had to be adjusted. Only when the initial encounter with the yellow thread—the drama/there –

passed, was Jing Hong able to work on the task as a path/bridge between them—the performer/here and the dramatic world/there.

The three character-ly bodies and the three actor-ly states were incorporated into the dramatic structures at this point, past the initial encounter with all four structures. In Jing Hong's initial encounter with the yellow thread, there was only Jing Hong and her world in memory triggered by the thread. However, the process of incorporating the three character-ly bodies and the three actor-ly states into the structures brings Jing Hong out of her world in memory to the here and now. Only then could she perform the task of bringing together the world of the drama/the mother and the world of the here and now. Through this process, the (memory) world that was evoked in Jing Hong by the initial encounter with the yellow thread retreated rather than disappeared, and was still in the performer as energy that is dormant rather than overtly manifest.

As Jing Hong began the process of incorporating the three character-ly bodies and the three actor-ly states in doing the actions in each of the four selected structures, the process of blurring the boundary of her everyday self began, as her (memory) world(s) retreated and as she started making a path to the world of the mother. For example, when doing the actions with the yellow thread this time, she was asked to take State 1: looking through the yellow thread, sense the space behind, sense the hands and the feet and sense your own breathing. The overt physical actions were the same but what was manifest in the performer immediately changed. There still was a sense of intimacy in her relationship with the thread as before but the strong presence of Jing Hong in her crying was dispersed. When watching Jing Hong in her first encounter with the thread, my attention was much more called to Jing Hong, which resulted in the retreat of the



thread; however, when she opened her actor-ly awareness as she took State 1, her presence was not only contained within her body but dispersed out into the space, through the thread. Therefore, in this embodiment of the actions, the performer did not call the spectator's attention only to her body but allowed it to look through her body. By engaging the space beyond the boundary of the body, the performer expands the spectator's perspective, and only then is she able to take the spectator beyond the world of herself to the world of the mother and the world of the here and now. After observing several runs of each of the four selected structures in corporation with the actor-ly states, I adjusted my verbal instructions. For example, my instructions for the first structure – Letter 1 – became as follows:

*Letter*

- a) in the character-ly body of the old woman, sit on a piece of cloth, with an external focus down on the floor
- b) a (imaginary) sound of a bird from behind diagonal to the stage left; bring the focus up to a point ahead
- c) strong sense of the space to the right. Sense the letter on the floor in that direction, keeping the external focus on the point ahead
- d) look at the letter and pick up the letter
- e) open the envelope, take out the letter and read the letter
- f) finish reading the letter, put it back into the envelope
- g) in the action of putting the letter back, find an object at the bottom of the envelope
- h) find and recognise the yellow thread

- i) take the yellow thread out of the envelope
- j) hold the yellow thread in your hands
- k) bring the focus away from the thread to the point ahead
- l) finger the thread, keeping the focus on the same point ahead
- m) stop fingering the thread then bring the focus back to the thread
- n) look at the thread then decide to put it in a purse worn at your waist
- o) in putting the thread in the purse, find a smaller purse inside the bigger purse then put the thread in the smaller purse
- p) finish putting in the thread and close the purse
- q) put the letter back in the envelope then close the envelope
- r) get up, fold the piece of cloth and take it in your arms
- s) now standing, look around
- t) standing still, sense the purse and touch the purse
- u) bring your hand back to the cloth and stand still
- v) turn, leave stage right

The structure now became tighter, encouraging the performer to make a path further away from her – from her (memory) world(s) – and more towards the world of the drama—the world of the mother, as she moved beyond the boundary of herself by engaging with the space through the actor-ly state(s). Working through the actor-ly states is also helpful in terms of grounding the performer in the here and now. When Jing Hong initially encountered the yellow thread, she was taken away from the here

and now: by keeping the awareness of the feet, hands, her breathing, and the space, she is brought back to the here and now.

Working with the simple points of focus and through specific sensory awareness points enables the actor to work systematically, which enables the actor to re-establish her relationship to the space as well as to herself each time. Although the three character-ly bodies and the three actor-ly states are established through the actor's 'bodily' awareness, what may be created through the awareness is not limited to the body alone. As discussed in the previous section, the changes in the actor's relation to the space can create – and shifts between – different spatial dynamics on the stage and in the space of the theatre. The revised instructions for each dramatic structure were developed from the various spatial dynamics that I observed as manifest in the performer's embodiment of the actions as the result of the incorporation with the actor-ly states.

By reshaping the actions, I explored whether and how the space can be shaped through the spatial dynamics, and further, the sense of temporality that might manifest itself as a result of those different spatial dynamics. For instance, when Jing Hong fingers the yellow thread with the external focus ahead, away from the thread, and when she is touching the thread, actually looking at the thread, in effect, she is shifting from State 1 to State 3: shifting not only the point of focus but her entire relationship with the space as a result. The result was a change in spatio-temporal dynamics. In State 1 when looking ahead, away from the thread towards the front/the audience, there was a sense of space that was beyond the body, and when shifted to State 3, the 'extended space' was brought more to the body/the thread. In other words, it can be said that Jing

Hong's embodiment of the actions in State 1 brings out the sense of a world other than the one of the theatre, which, in this case, is the world of the Mother that is not presented on stage through other theatrical means than acting.

My intention of shifting the actor-ly states in the actions with the yellow thread in Letter 1 structure was to examine whether the sense of the mother's memory/past – here entered through the yellow thread – and the sense of the present can be manifest through the actor-ly states. In this way, a sense of a continued journey might be created through Jing Hong's actions, which also, on the whole, might create a sense of character and/or a story in the spectator's perception.

Through the process the set of actions for each of the four structures was developed as follows:

#### *The Walk*

- a) In the body of the young girl, look at the (imaginary) sea in front of you; sense the fingers and the mouth/lips
- b) Decide to walk into the sea
- c) Start walking
- d) Sense the foot touching the water as stepping into the sea then bring the other foot into the water
- e) Continue the walk in a straight line; hold the skirt
- f) Continue the walk, sense the water rising above waist level then let go of the skirt
- g) No longer in the body of the young girl, continue the walk and sense the weight and movement of the water

- h) Continue the walk and, when the (previously determined) point on the line is reached, start to turn
- i) Turning, sense the water level rise to and above the neck
- j) Keep turning, sense the water rise above the head
- k) Continue turning, sense the body going completely under the water
- l) Finish the turn then start walking (back) with the external focus on a point ahead
- m) Continue the walk
- n) Walking, start going into the body of the old woman
- o) Continue walking and continue moving into the old woman

*At the sea*

- a) In the body of the old woman, with the external focus ahead, look at the (imaginary) sea
- b) Bring the focus down on the floor and see the waves
- c) Watch the waves come and go to and from the shore
- d) watching the water, walk towards the water
- e) Continue watching and go down to touch the water
- f) Squatting, keep looking at the water and touch the water
- g) Sense the touch of the water then immediately come out of the body of the old woman
- h) Play with the water
- i) Continue playing with the water

- j) Stop, look ahead, and turn to the stage left
- k) Turn back to the front then continue playing with the water
- l) Stop, look ahead, and turn to the same point behind, to the stage left
- m) Take longer than the previous time before turning back to the front
- n) Continue playing with the water
- o) Take less time than the previous two times, before stopping
- p) In standing, look at the (same) point ahead and move a hand to touch the purse
- q) Continue touching the purse and start taking the body of the old woman
- r) Continue going into the body of the old woman and start turning toward to stage left to exit
- s) Continue turning then start walking to leave

### *Spirit wedding*

- a) Sitting on the piece of cloth, pick up the doll in front and start completing the doll
- b) When complete, check the doll and see it complete
- c) Bring the focus away from the doll to a point ahead
- d) Still holding the doll, bring the focus back to the doll.
- e) Look at the doll then bring the focus back to the point ahead
- f) As in the Letter structure, hear the (imaginary) sound of a bird from behind, diagonal to the stage left then sense the space to the right
- g) Look to the right and see the envelope on the floor
- h) Take the envelope and look at it

- i) Open the envelope and see a doll inside
- j) Take the doll out of the envelope then look at the doll
- k) With both dolls in your hands, look at the dolls
- l) Get up and walk off the cloth
- m) Kneel down and lay the dolls on the cloth
- n) Finish laying the dolls down then bring the focus away from the dolls to a point ahead, bringing the hands together in front
- o) A small bow with the eyes closed
- p) On finishing the bow, move slightly further away from the cloth
- q) Take the dates, wrapped in a small piece of cloth, from the purse
- r) Throw the dates, one by one, into the space over the dolls on the cloth
- s) Finish throwing the dates then continue the action of throwing empty handed, looking at the dolls
- t) Bring back the focus to the cloth and realise there are no more dates
- u) Fold back the small cloth and lay it down on the floor, on top of the envelope
- v) Take the money from the purse, move closer to the cloth/the dolls and put the money on the cloth in-between the dolls
- w) With external focus off the dolls, move one hand to touch the purse
- x) Bring the other hand to the purse, and, with both hands holding the purse, take out the smaller purse inside the (bigger) purse
- y) Hold the smaller purse in both hands and bring the focus to the smaller purse
- z) Take the yellow thread out of the smaller purse, with the focus on the yellow thread

- aa) Fingering the thread, bring the focus away from the thread to a point on the floor ahead
- bb) Bring the focus back to the thread, open further thread
- cc) Bring the focus away from the thread to the same point on the floor
- dd) Sense the weight of the thread getting heavier
- ee) Bring the focus off the floor to a point ahead and bring the thread, in both hands, closer to the chest

There were times when the duration of some of the actions was adjusted by the director observing from outside, but the duration of most of the actions was left to Jing Hong as the performer. As the rehearsals went on, certain rhythms and tempos emerged. By the end of this stage of rehearsals, all four selected structures were introduced through the instructions of the actions, and rehearsed along with the three character-ly bodies and the three actor-ly states. Further development took place by working on the actions in relation to tempo and rhythm, and for the entire performance score.

The rehearsal process discussed above shows how the performer engaged with the world of the drama—the character of the mother and her life as adapted in the performance text. The primary focus in the process of rehearsing the four structures was to develop a performance score for the performer in embodying the dramatic structures. The way of working on the (performance) text as such was mainly for two purposes: first, to explore whether and how the various spatial dynamics as found in the previous rehearsal phase can be applied in creating two different dimensions within the Mother's world—her internal and her external world; secondly, to examine whether and



how the spatial dynamics can be related to creating various temporal characteristics in and across each of the four structures.

### Playing a 'foreign' emotion

As discussed in the earlier section of this chapter, the sentiment of *han* manifests itself through one's experience of an extreme situation in relation to life as a whole. From this perspective, the Mother's *han* and her *han*-ful life were explored in *Mother Project* by utilising the spatial dynamics in the embodiment of the dramatic structures/actions. For example, the sense of the Mother's struggle between the impossibility and necessity of overcoming the son's death was approached and explored through the sense of an 'internal' and 'external' world, which resulted from the different ways of engaging with the space. Can the Mother's experience of her life in contrast with the end of (the son's) life be embodied through the sense of internal and external worlds? Can the two worlds be paralleled in and across each of the four structures, and how might the paralleling of the internal and external world of the Mother be related in her experience of *han*? Moreover, creating the sense of accumulated time that is fundamental to the manifestation of *han* was explored through the sense of multi-dimensional time: for example, can the sense of being close and/or further away to/from the dimension of here and now be utilised in creating a sense of there and/or not-now? These notions of here and not-here and/or now and not-now were also explored through the application of three actor-ly states into the process of embodying the dramatic structure.

The sentiment of *han* in *Mother Project* was approached through the notion of multi-dimensional time and space with a focus on the Mother's struggle between the impossibility and necessity of overcoming the extreme situation of her son's death. Developing the performance score through incorporating the three character-ly bodies and the three actor-ly states into the dramatic structures through the means of structured improvisation was to explore the mother's *han-ful* life through the various spatio-temporal dynamics, manifested as a result of the particular way of embodying the dramatic actions. With the exception of any Koreans at the sharing, whether the non-Koreans in the audience at the work-in-progress could differentiate between the Korean emotion of *han* and more familiar emotions of sadness, etc. will remain an open question. My purpose directorially was to examine whether and how such approach would enable me to create a performance, which, in turn, may allow the actor (and perhaps the audience) to engage with the emotional world of the Mother beyond the conceptual and interpretational means of understanding of and engagement with emotion.

### Summary of *Mother Project*

As a director, my focus was similar to *-ing*, that is exploring whether and how the action score can be shaped in order to allow the actor to directly enter the heightened awareness and sustained concentration, which in turn enable her actions to be more dynamic. However, in this project, I added the element of specific points of awareness in the performing space in order to create a sense of distance and/or closeness in terms

of space and/or distance and/or immediacy in terms of time. In doing so, the three actor-ly states were developed and utilised, and as a result, a sense of trans-linear time and of non-localised space manifested that are inherent in the notion of *han*. Moreover, by creating the three character-ly bodies and utilisation of the selected elements based and/or drawn from the original play, *Mother*, the actor's actions were shaped by her encounter with the drama rather than solely by her encounter with the performing space.

Shaping the way that the actor consciously engages with herself, the performing environment, and the realm of the drama helped the actor to engage with the so-called foreign emotion directly through her actions. The specific points of focus in the body situated in the performing space and the particular shape of the character-ly bodies were threaded by the actor's sustained awareness of her breath. As a result, the performance of *Mother Project* created a space and time wherein the seemingly foreign emotion, place, and/or culture was brought out and encountered. In such encounter, the emotion of *han* is not reduced to concepts a priori but becomes an experience of the dynamics generated by the (actor's experience of) actions, which is the fundamental principle of the notion of *han*.

## CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

I began this inquiry into emotion and performance processes by pointing out that dominant views of emotion are often framed within a dualistic understanding of the mental-physical relationship. This dualist framework has dominated both commonplace understandings of emotion and much of the academic discourse on emotion across disciplines, including theatre practice. This dualistic opposition between mental and physical phenomena is fundamental to the nature of some of the most extensively discussed issues about emotion in acting and directing. When speaking about a performative theatrical event, it is commonplace to hear that the actor genuinely performed the emotions of her character and/or that the emotions were effectively directed. In this sense, the limitations of a dualistic view on mental and physical phenomena creates (unnecessary) problems not only for actors but also for directors. The fundamental problem that this research set out to address is how to bridge the gap between those two seemingly opposite realms of the physical and mental. I have argued that such gap is a conceptual notion and is not sufficient for an examination of the phenomena of acting from the perspective of the first-person experience of the actor. If and when such a dualistic understanding of the physical-mental relationship is assumed by practitioners in the studio, it is an unhelpful approach to acting and directing emotion in theatrical performances as it posits emotional states and bodily states as separate, if not opposite. Further, the failure to realise the interconnected relationship between the mental and physical in the actor results in, not only the dualistic understanding of the actor's bodily state and emotional state, but also the

dualistic differentiation between the actor and the character and the emotion of the actor and the character.

This *conceptual* gap between the actor and her character, or between the actor's emotional states and that of the character's, exists firstly because a being such as the actor or the character is considered as an absolute, discrete and separate entity; and secondly because physical phenomena, i.e., the actor's actions, and seeming non-physical dynamics, i.e., emotions, are too often objectified. Whether approaching acting and directing from an objective perspective advocating a distance between the actor and emotions or from an essentialist perspective advocating the actor's 'transformation' into her character, the two approaches are not different in principle in the sense that they both stem from and are based on the same conceptual framing of the nature of emotion. Therefore, what is required is a shift in the basic frame of reference. An alternative understanding of the mental-physical relationship is vital to exploring possible ways of creating more creative, imaginative, and (emotionally) dynamic theatre. The perspectives offered by Buddhism and Heidegger's ontology on the nature of a (human) being can be helpful because both offer an alternative paradigm through which the distinct faculties/operations that constitute the emotion process can be illuminated. However, the most helpful perspective that they provide is of the relationship among these distinct faculties/operations: unlike the dualistic differentiation and hierarchical categorisation of the constituent parts of emotion process, the alternative perspective sheds light on the interaction among them through which emotion processes occur.

From this perspective, the view that actions can be objectively observed and emotion cannot is neither fully correct nor sufficient in granting such differentiation in the creative process of acting/directing emotion. As the neuroscientist Damasio states, “Whether one likes it or not, *all* the contents in our minds are subjective”<sup>119</sup> Furthermore, if the conscious mind is required in observing the action in the first place, the observed action itself is inherently inter-related to consciousness, and therefore subjective: as in the Buddhism notion of *ilcheyusimjo* which can be translated literally as “all things are that which the mind builds.” However, neither the neuroscientist nor the Buddhist denies the existence of physical phenomena: the actions can and do exist in the first place regardless of the existence of the observing consciousness or not, but those (unobserved) actions are not the same when consciousness interferes by its active observation.

Therefore my research on acting and directing emotion focused firstly on examining the distinct faculties and their operations that together make up the complex orchestration of emotion process: from the initial contact with the object, generating an image – the perception – of the object, conscious knowing of the (perception of) object through to the process of executing an external response. However, in examining acting emotion and performance making processes, particularities of emotion process in the context of extra-daily performative theatrical events must be accounted for. The complex orchestration of emotion process as such happens largely non-consciously under normal circumstances whereas the manifestation of emotional dynamics in a theatrical event is a result of the actor’s conscious engagement with her acting score as

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<sup>119</sup> Damasio 1999: 83

related to the role/scene/drama. Moreover, the perception of the object and the response executed in the context of non-conscious processes are shaped by the previously learnt and appropriated information accumulated by the subject's previous experiences as a form of embodied information.

Based on the view of emotion and the particularities of emotion manifestation process in acting and directing, the three research projects examined whether and how the actor's emotional state of being doing can be directly entered her embodiment of the actions and whether and how the emotional dynamic generated in/through the actions can be systematically and creatively utilised in creating an emotionally dynamic theatrical event.

Some recent studies of mental phenomena in science, i.e., science of mind, science of consciousness, and cognitive science etc., also support the notion of an interconnected relationship between mental and physical phenomena. These new paradigms and discoveries need to be approached with due caution when applying them to the context of acting/directing. For instance, in the most conventional amongst the various operative paradigms guiding cognitive scientists as the field was first developing, the notion that mental phenomena such as consciousness can be explained through neurological activities inside the brain as computer-like can bring about yet another materialisation and therefore objectification of the mental phenomenon. As Wallace points out:

[...], a growing number of cognitive scientists conclude that mental phenomena are real, but they insist that in order to causally interact with the brain, the mind must be physical.<sup>120</sup>

While new discoveries in science about cognition, perception, and awareness have already encouraged, and continue to encourage, reconsideration of the nature of emotion as well as acting/directing emotions, I remain certain that they will be fruitful only when they are applied outside the still often dominant essentialist/ hierarchical frame of reference; that is, as long as they do not create yet another protagonist in understanding mental phenomena. This may lead to a problematic view that reduces phenomena such as emotion to the brain or certain “locations” in the brain such as in the case of computational neuroscience. Therefore, the inadequacy of mental-physical/subjective-objective dualism in understanding the ‘natural’ mode of being human remains. As Wallace points out:

Some scientists and philosophers of mind envision brain functions as having a dual identity, as both objective physical processes and subjective mental events. But they offer no explanation of what about the brain enables it to generate or even influence mental events, let alone allows specific neural processes to take on this dual identity.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Wallace, A. B. 2010

<sup>121</sup>ibid.



Emotions are multi-layered complex phenomena. They arise organically through a complex web of psychophysical experience(s) in certain situations. But Buddhism states that there is a subtle, but important, difference between the 'existence' of emotion and the perception of emotion. Perception of emotion is cognitively processed information, and, although there are other factors at play in the process of its generation which also underlies the generated 'emotion,' the perception of that emotion does not include such factors since it occurs only on the level of consciousness. As Wallace explains:

[...] discrepancy between appearances and reality is that certain mental states, such as joy and elation, may appear to be intrinsically satisfying, but upon more careful examination are found to be misleading. No mental state that arises from moment to moment in dependence upon sensory or intellectual stimuli is inherently satisfying. Every affective state is experienced as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral only in relation to a complex of attitudes and desires.<sup>122</sup>

Understanding 'emotion' through these appearances, which accompany the perception of emotion, therefore offers a 'flatter' account of what might be going on. Therefore, focusing on these predetermined characteristics of emotions in acting/directing emotion is not very helpful in creating a 'fuller' theatrical experience, since, in this perspective, if/when an actor or director focuses on the appearances of her character's emotions(s), she may be merely performing/directing her perception of the character. Furthermore, in

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<sup>122</sup>ibid:44-45

such a mode of acting/directing, the actor/director may only exist as a single, essentialist, individual self.

However, no acting or directing is free from the actor or the director, and no actor or director can work independently of her cognitive frame of reference. The work of theatre and performance is inter-subjective and takes place within a specific living/breathing human environment. As Wallace states in discussing the inseparable relationship between *what we know* and *what we know*:

The only invariant across all these cognitive frames of reference is that nothing exists by its own nature, independent of all means of detecting it or conceiving of it. In other words, there is no way to separate the universe we know from the information we have about it.<sup>123</sup>

Based on this practice-based study, the notion of reality in the context of theatre practice is rejected; that is, the notion of theatre as a representation of a pre-determined 'universal' reality is rejected. The 'real-ness' in/of the performance may be related more to the actor's ability to be as fully present as possible in her *reality of performing* and to the director's ability to help the actor to do so, instead of crafting the performance to reflect a pre-determined reality. In this sense, the issue of the 'real-ness' of the acting and the directing has less to do with the laws of the 'physical' world as currently understood, and may become irrelevant all together.

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<sup>123</sup> *ibid*:72

Instead of viewing acting and performance processes as representations of the world as a pre-determined absolute entity, acting may be viewed as playing and performance making as expanding the boundaries of the physical body, time, and space, regardless of acting 'styles' and performance 'genres'. The first practical project, devising theatre, the second practical project, 'character acting' in a text-based performance, and the third project, working through a 'foreign' emotion, all underwent 'different' processes. However, underlying all three processes was this notion of 'expansion' of physical boundaries of body, time, and space.

The physical boundaries of body, time, and space often shape how the notion of an objective reality is manifested, and this raises the notion of the subjective self, and the realm of mental phenomena. However, as seen in the processes of the three projects, the physical characteristics of the body, time, and space expand in the process of performing and the manifestation of the performance. The realm in which the actor or the performance exists is neither the (actor's/director's) subjective space alone nor the objective/physical space of the character/play/the score alone. Despite the differences, the underlying process of all three projects was in principle the same. That is, in these processes, the relationship between the two realms were not considered hierarchical; in terms of their active-ness, the two were in balance. Therefore, it cannot be said that one plays the role of the subject-host and the other is the object-guest, regardless of which of the two is seen as which.

Based on this study, I propose a model that identifies acting and performance making as playing in a 'conflict-free' realm. It is conflict-free because in this mode of being the notion of the subjective/objective and mental/physical dimensions are blurred,

and therefore the accompanying tensions become irrelevant. As in the Buddhist view of the world as *sasamueah*, in this model of acting and performance, there need be no conflicting tensions between the subjective and objective realms. Once these boundaries are surpassed, the conceptual distance between the actor and her character (or a performed figure), mental phenomena such as emotion, and physical phenomena such as movements, the physical space of the theatre, and the 'fictional' space of the performance/drama, can disappear.

However, this model of acting and directing requires one important condition. Although one cannot work independently of one's cognitive frame of reference, and those conflict/tension-creating boundaries arise in accordance with one's cognitive frame of reference, this fact does not automatically render the acting and/or the performance as a cognitively processed perception. Therefore, the manner in which one realises, acknowledges, and works with the limitations/restrictions that this cognitive frame of reference may cause in one's creative process becomes an important question. Borrowing the Buddhist notion of emptiness, I view this process as an emptying of the self. As seen in the three projects, this emptying can be achieved by establishing and sustaining a psychophysical relationship to the body and the space. Both as director and actor, in all three projects, my utilisation of actions was intended precisely to help the actors, including myself in the second project, to achieve this process of psychophysical engagement – that is, to be fully present – in the *reality of performing*. Given that the actors have learned the actions on a certain level, it is this establishment and sustaining of psychophysical engagement with what they are doing (performing) that blurs those conflict/tension-creating boundaries. From this perspective,

no 'transformation' actually happens, either in the actor or in the space of performance—no change or compromise is necessary to experience the performance in the moment of performing. To embody the 'physical' actions themselves ideally always means a simultaneous embodiment of the mental/cognitive processes that are necessarily part of and reflection of that experience of embodiment.

This notion of expanded space was applied not only to the space in/of the actor, but to the space of the performance—the theatre space. Because the actions were considered a means of grounding the actors in the reality of performing, I saw the actors as an 'anchor' that grounded the performance in that performance space. Likewise, the actions were utilised as a means of 'emptying' the subjective self so that the expanded space would allow them to play more freely and creatively. By focusing primarily on the actors alone in terms of staging, the conceptual distance between the 'physical' space of the theatre and the 'fictional' space of the drama/performance can be woven together without requiring an aggressive change in either. Just as the expansion in/of the actors' space enables freer and more creative play, the expansion in the performance space can allow for a freer and more imaginative manifestation of the performance. Instead of filling up the space – either in acting or directing – to 'show' a pre-determined, and therefore closed, theatre 'piece', this model of acting and directing may allow more organic and creative play. Inherent in this model of acting and directing is the notion that a performance is an (theatrical) *event*, as in the Buddhist notion of *sungki* or Heidegger's notion of event<sup>124</sup>. Rather than a (re)presentation, or portrayal, of a predetermined entity, whether physical or mental, that is independent of the acting

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<sup>124</sup>See the section Performance as Manifestation of (fictional) World in Chapter 3.

and/or the performance itself. This model of acting and directing as a process of emptying raises fruitful discussions of aesthetics that intersect with those often found in East Asian art discourses, such as the Korean *aesthetics of marginal space*.

This study began by rejecting the viewpoint that sees emotion in terms of mental and physical dualistic opposition. The primary purpose of this study was simple: to explore how an alternative view of emotion might help us practice theatre in more creative and imaginative ways. In demonstrating the inter-dependent relationship between mental and physical phenomena, I proposed that emotion in the context of theatre practice be viewed as a form of dynamic resonance that occurs in the process of the psychophysical embodiment of actions as executed through the actor's heightened awareness and sustained focus in each moment of being doing. I argued that in order for such resonance to occur, an *expansion of space* in the process of acting and directing may be necessary. Borrowing the Buddhist notion of *śūnyatā*, I have called this the process of emptying; an emptying of the subjective self and the objective space in order to encourage a freer, more creative, and more imaginative form of play (the acting) and event (the performance) that moves beyond the restrictions and limitations of any individual cognitive frame. Of course, I do not intend to claim a universal theory of acting/directing emotion. Rather, I wish to go back to perhaps the most fundamental characteristic of the theatrical event and start (again) from there—the ephemeral nature of performance. The experience of each moment of performance there and then is where 'everything' happens – not before or after – while the actor is performing and while the performance is being actualised. In order to enable a fuller experience, including 'emotional' resonance, whatever the acting style or performance genre might

be, perhaps one of the most fundamental tasks is to be there: the entirety of the body-mind must exist in the entirety of the physical-mental time and space, therefore manifesting the real-fictional world.

I conclude by reconsidering the relationship between action (physical) and emotion (non-physical) and the nature of performance as a site of emotional experience manifestation, by borrowing Wonhyo's writing on *ilshim*:

[...] 非中而離邊

故不有之法不即住無

不無之相不即住有

不一二融二

故非真之事未始爲俗

非俗之理未始爲真也

融二而不一

故真俗之性而無所不立

染淨之相莫不備焉

Because it is not located at the middle and yet is far from extremes,

dharmas that are nonexistent do not linger in nonexistence

and characteristics that are not-nonexistent do not linger in existence.

Because it is not unitary and yet subsumes dualities,

those phenomena that are not absolute need not be conventional

and those principles that are not conventional need not be absolute.

Because it subsumes dualities and yet is not unitary,

there are none of its absolute or conventional qualities that are not established

and none of its tainted or pure characteristics that are not furnished therein.



## APPENDIX

*Thirty Verses on Manifestation on Consciousness Only* by Vasubandhu. <sup>125</sup>

### VERSE 1

The metaphor of 'Self' and 'Elements', which functions in several ways  
Is upon the transformation of consciousness. This transformation is of three kinds;

### VERSE 2

(1) Retribution, (2) Mentation, and (3) perception of the **sense**-fields,  
Among them, retribution is the so-called store-consciousness, which has all the seeds.

### VERSE 3

Its appropriation and its perception of location are not discerned consciously.  
It is always associated with contact, [attention], sensation, ideation, and volition.

### VERSE 4

In it, the sensation is indifference and it is pure and morally neutral.  
The same for contact, etc. It flows on like the current of a river.

### VERSE 5

Its reversal takes place in the state of Arhatship. Based on it, there functions,

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<sup>125</sup> Translation by Robinson in Seogwang, *Hyeondaeshimleehakeulo puleobhon yushik samshipsong*, Seoul : Bulkwang, 2007, pp. 227-273

With it as object, the consciousness called mind, which consists of mentation.

#### VERSE 6

It is always accompanied by four passions which are impure but morally neutral,  
Known as notion of self, delusion of self, pride of self, and love of self.

#### VERSE 7

With those from where it is born, also with others—contact, etc. It doesn't exist in the  
Arhat, In the attainment of cessation, nor in the supra-mundane path.

#### VERSE 8

This is the second transformation. The third is the sixfold. Perception of the sense-field,  
which is good, bad, or neither.

#### VERSE 9

And associated with the universal mental (elements), specially determined, and goo,  
And also with the passions and sub-passions. It has three sensations.

#### VERSE 10

The first are contact, et. Desire, decision, memory,  
Concentration, and intelligence are determined. Faith, conscience, shame,

#### VERSE 11

Greedlessness, with the two others, energy, serenity, vigilance's companion  
(indifference),

And harmlessness are the good (elements). The passions are lust, ill-will, delusion,

#### VERSE 12

Pride, wrong views, doubt, anger, resentment, Dissimulation, sarcasm, envy, avarice,  
along with deceit,

#### VERSE 13

Hypocrisy, vanity, violence, lack of conscience, shame-lessness, torpor, dissatisfaction,

#### VERSE 14

Distraction, wrong judgement, remorse, torpor, Reflection and investigation are the  
sub-passions, two pairs in two ways.

#### VERSE 15

On the fundamental consciousness, the five conscious-senses originate according to  
conditioning factors,

Whether all together or otherwise, as the waves arise upon the water.

#### VERSE 16

There is co-existence of mental consciousness always except in non-ideation,

The two cessations, and torpor and fainting, where there is no awareness.

VERSE 17

The transformation of consciousness is imagination. What is imagined  
By it does not exist. Therefore everything is representation-only.

VERSE 18

For consciousness is the seed of everything. Transformation in such and such ways  
Proceeds through mutual influence, so that such and such imagination is born.

VERSE 19

The impressions from action, together with the impressions from the twofold grasping  
When the former retributions are exhausted, produce other retributions.

VERSE 20

Whatever thing is imagined by whatever imagining  
Is of an imaginary own-nature, and non-existent.

VERSE 21

The relative own-nature is an imagination arising out of condition factors.  
The absolute is the latter when it is forever separated from the former

VERSE 22

Thus it is neither other than nor not other than the relative.

It must be considered like impermanence, etc. When the one hasn't been perceived, the other isn't perceived.

#### VERSE 23

The no-own-nature of all the elements was only preached in connection with  
The threefold no-own-nature of the threefold own-nature.

#### VERSE 24

The first is without own-nature by its very characteristic. The second is o because it does not exist by itself. The third is without own-nature.

#### VERSE 25

Because it is the absoluteness of the elements and their suchness,  
Because it is 'so' forever. It alone is perception-only-ness.

#### VERSE 26

So long as consciousness does not remain in the state of representation-only,  
The residues of the twofold grasping will not cease to function.

#### VERSE 27

Even in recognizing 'it is representation-only' of whatever you make stop before you,  
you fail to remain in 'that only'.

VERSE 28

But when consciousness no longer recognizes an object,

Then it rests in representation-only, because when there is nothing to grasp, there is no grasping.

VERSE 29

It is without thought, without cognition, supramundane knowledge,

Revolution of the basis through elimination of the two kinds of denseness.

VERSE 30

It is the uncontaminated, inconceivable, good, immutable and blessed realm,

The Liberation body (i.e., Dharma) of the great sage.

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