

Qi-arising Space:
The Embodiment of *Qi*
in Taiwanese Hypermedial Theatre

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Abstract

This dissertation aims to establish a philosophical framework, described from the spectator's viewpoint, for the analysis of the embodiment process of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works, which subtly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. This traditional Chinese aesthetic based on the idea of *Qi* suggests that the spectator participates in the development of certain *Qi*-energy, which is inherent in and continuously transmitted between humans and various other beings or things. The establishment of the spectator-work relation with respect to *Qi*-energy suggests that there are potential communication pathways between humans and the cosmos. I explore how the world model based on *Qi* is realised in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre through the spatial configuration of the spectator-work relation. I argue that this world model based on *Qi* indicates a mode of existence in which both the spectator and the multiple media used in the work are transformed and become certain beings that are cultivated by *Qi* and originally merge with each other. The spectator's reactions to a theatre work emerge, as I contend, as performative acts that interact with and continue the flow of *Qi*. Furthermore, these acts generate a performative space that corresponds to a spiritual and cosmological aspect of *Qi*.

This framework provides a complement to the phenomenological discourses of performative space in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies. In Chapter 2, I examine the correlation between the constitution of performative space and the channelling of agency in contemporary Western theatre. Based on this examination, I propose that in the course of such

constitution, three aesthetic actions of agency occur: sharing agency between the spectator and the work leads to the inter-activity between the two sides; meanwhile, it also leads to the spectator's embodiment and presence in the mixed realms of the physical and the mediated. Chapter 3 elucidates the philosophical concepts, spatial implications, and practices of *Qi* in the context of Confucianism. I propose a connection between *Qi* and agency without substituting the latter entirely with the former, as the operations of the two systems respectively lead to different world models.

With reference to Chiang Nien-feng's phenomenological interpretation of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) and Mathias Obert's research into *Qi*'s performative feature in Chapter 4, I explore two issues. First, I examine how the poetic arising of *Qi* is expressed in the spectator's performative acts in an encounter with a theatre work; secondly, I investigate how this poetic arising of *Qi* gives rise to the constitution of performative space through the spatial configuration of the spectator-work relation based on the *Qi* world model. I then develop a framework of *Qi*-arising Space for my further analysis of the constitution of performative space in relation to the embodiment of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedia theatre works and discussion of the three aesthetic actions of agency from the *Qi* worldview. Finally, in Chapter 5, with three case studies in this genre of the theatre, I analyse the similarities and differences between the operations of agency and *Qi* regarding the constitution of performative space and interrogate the characteristics of the aesthetic actions of agency and *Qi*. This study proves the value of the knowledge of *Qi* in the field of hypermedial theatre and offers an intercultural understanding to the existing notions in the field.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 The Nature of the Research Inquiry

This thesis investigates the embodiment process of *Qi* and its spatial implications in Taiwanese¹ hypermedial theatre works, indicative of a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. By hypermedial theatre, I mean a performance that emphasises the spectator's awareness of the interaction between computer-oriented and other media (such as stage props) and the performer.² As various traditional Chinese classics describe it, *Qi* is a certain energy or force that combines the physical and the spiritual and operates in between diverse pairs of polarities (e.g., the perceiver and the perceived). Specifically, the circulation of *Qi* is conceived of as communication pathways between humans and various other beings/things in the cosmos. If the circulation is unblocked, the interaction and correspondence between the two sides are possible. The embodiment process of *Qi* is originally understood as involving the active participation of humans in their reciprocal symbiosis with various other beings and things. Thus, the two sides interact as co-subjects in unity.

Embodying the flow of *Qi* through the use of computer technologies in performance is the subject matter of this thesis. From the early twenty-first century, in order to interrogate how the Chinese concept of *Qi* could be

¹ There are various reasons for my choice of Taiwanese theatre as my research subject. The first and perhaps most obvious is my Taiwanese nationality. I have worked in Taiwan as a

² The term hypermedial theatre comes from Andy Lavender (2006). I will further explain it later in page the third section of this chapter (see pp.31-37). A further elucidation of the term is in Chapter 2 (p. 48 *et seqq.*).

transformed into the visible and perceivable on stage, a number of Taiwanese artists have no longer merely depended on the performer's bodily expressions with respect to *taichi-dowing*,³ *qigong*⁴ or martial arts, but they have also adopted computer technologies within the *mise-en-scène*. Creators of these works demonstrate an awareness of the hybridity of traditional Chinese and contemporary Western cultures (i.e., using the form of the Western black box theatre to present traditional Chinese drama).

This phenomenon indicates the irreplaceable role of a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* in Taiwanese performances that use computer technologies. The dynamics of the *Qi*-infused, mediated environment provides the potential for transforming the encounters between the spectator and the work into a

³ The term *taichi-dowing* [太極導引] is a contemporary form of Taichichuan, founded by Xiong Wei, a master of Taichichuan in Taiwan. *Dowing* indicates 'guiding and stretching' (Zhang and Rose, 2001: 121). It is regarded as 'a method for conducting *qi* throughout the body, accumulating and cultivating *qi* to harmonize the practitioner with the forces of nature through the unseen but evident power of *qi*' (ibid.). According to Xiong, *taichi-dowing* applies the Daoist notion of the circulation of *ying-yang* energy to develop movement patterns which form a curved and spiral shape of the body. He claims that *taichi-dowing* is a better method for people today to maintain health and reach the state of the unity of the inner and the outer (<http://www.taichi-dowing.org.tw/front/bin/ptlist.phtml?Category=255635>).

⁴ The term *qigong* [氣功] arose and developed in the twentieth century to indicate 'a complex system of meditations and breath control, diets, gymnastics and other longevity techniques (both medical and Daoist), as well as martial arts and healing by the laying-on of hands' (Kohn, 2001: 193). Yet, without the technical term, in ancient China this system was of passionate interest in diverse schools in the fields of philosophy and medicine (see Peng, 2005). It is believed that the specific exercises of deep breathing would enhance and activate the operation and flow of *Qi*, namely, a certain energy, inherent in and among people and various other beings/things in the cosmos. The exercises thus aim to help people to be aware of the interconnection between the health of body and tranquil state of mind. Optimally, the exercises also lead people to establish their reciprocal relationship with the cosmos.

coexisting space in the course of performances. Through the use of computer technologies, the spectator has possibilities to become an agent whose perceptions and responses may elicit the dynamics of the mediated environment that affect multiple interpretations and outcomes of the work. The spatiality engendered by the spectator's interaction to the work, which exists in both physical and virtual realms, is brought to the foreground. The spatiality can be seen as no longer a performance space, but rather a performative space.

I realise the dynamics as achieved through the channeling of agency, since in various articles and books in new media and game studies (e.g. Klich and Scheer, 2012; Hansen, 2006; Lavender, 2006; and Murray, 1997) agency is identified as a certain energy or force of an embodied agent. The embodiment of agency is seen as efficacious and indispensable to the generation of performative acts. Furthermore, the channelling of agency may lead to the connection between perceptions and movements, and between subject and object, optimally to a state of co-subjectivities during the course of interactions.

A fundamental issue of this thesis with respect to the embodiment process of *Qi* is the spectator's use of *performative spaces*. This study analyses spatiality created by the transmission of *Qi*, which induces the spectator's active responses, namely, performative acts, to the work in the mediated environment. That is to say, how the spectator "senses" trajectories or traces of circulating *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre is the major concern in this thesis.

I refer to performative spaces within the context of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre as “*Qi*-arising Space”.⁵ By this, I mean that performative spaces are created through certain embodiment process of *Qi*, shaped by the computer-generated *mise-en-scène* in the course of performance. The embodiment process of *Qi* is a process not only of transmitting energy, which leads to the spectator’s reactions to the integration of physical and virtual realms in performance, but also of experiencing the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t’ien-jen ho-yi*) in a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*.

In this vein, a parallel can be drawn between the dynamics of the mediated environment and the operation of *Qi*. Thus, an examination of agency and *Qi* may elicit similarities between performative space and *Qi*-arising Space.

I propose that this issue of performative spaces that are concerned with agency underpins other relevant issues, including the process of interactivity, embodiment and presence. It is because according to the previously-mentioned new media and game studies, the spectator’s ability to react to and co-perform with the work is a dominant factor in the creation of the two parties’ coexisting space. I use a discussion of these issues (i.e. interactivity, embodiment and presence) to provide an examination of the transmission of agency and the constitution of performative space. Furthermore, through the discussion, I will offer a rethinking of a cultural

⁵ By ‘*Qi*-arising’, I mean a phenomenon of ‘*hsin-fa*’ [興發], which is derived from the articles of Chiang Nien-feng (1992, 1995) and Mathias Obert (2008). Chiang translates ‘*hsin-fa*’ as ‘poetic arising’ of *Qi* in English. In this thesis, I adopt Chiang’s terminology to create this term ‘*Qi*-arising’. I will elucidate it in depth in Chapter 4

phenomenon, that is, representing a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

Underlying this thesis is the main research question: How does the flow of *Qi* in traditional Chinese aesthetics create a performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre that also provides the potential for new interactions between the spectator and the work from the spectator's point of view? My concern with the spiritual and cosmological facet of performance energy, which specifically refers to the embodiment of *Qi* with the help of computer technology, is an original reading of hypermedial theatre. What makes this original is the fact that the latter has generally emphasized the material and socio-cultural aspects of performativity and agency.

I consider the questions below in order to discuss the main research question:

- 1) What are traditional Chinese aesthetics and what is the role of *Qi* in those aesthetics?
- 2) Can the spatial implications of *Qi* in traditional Chinese aesthetics be understood as an ancient notion of 'mixed reality'⁶?

⁶ The term *mixed reality* comes from Paul Milgram and Fumio Kishino (1994) originating in computer science. It is defined by the two scholars as certain reality-virtuality continuum, where the real environment co-exists with the virtual environment. In his book *Virtual Art: From illusion to immersion* (2003), Oliver Grau provides an historical overview of virtual reality through examining strategies of immersive image spaces in ancient Roman art and contemporary media art. Grau suggests on this basis that certain phenomenon where the physical and the virtual, and original and simulacrum, are inseparable from each other can be seen as 'mixed realities'. Similarly, Mark B. N. Hansen defines all reality as 'mixed reality', which refers to the convergence of physical and virtual realms, in his book *Bodies in Code: Interfaces with digital media* (2006). According to Hansen, the term *mixed reality* is borrowed from artists Monika Fleischmann and Wolfgang Strauss, who argue that 'the interactive media

- 3) Through the point of view of traditional Chinese aesthetics, what is the relationship between those aesthetics and the artistic forms (especially relating to structured improvisation) generated in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre?
- 4) How might the *Qi*-cultivated relationship between the spectator and the work influence the constitution of performative spaces in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre?
- 5) Is the approach of the existing media and theatre theories and philosophies suitable for exploring the embodiment of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre?
- 6) How can the findings of the aesthetics and spatial implications of *Qi* in this thesis contribute as a complement to the discourses of agency and performative space in media and theatre studies?
- 7) Can the constitution of performative space become more diversified through the dislocation of viewpoint from the spectator, and, if so, how might that come about?

1.1.1 Examining the nature of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre

The nature of *Qi* has been explored in depth in traditional Chinese philosophy. However, the ways of applying the idea of *Qi* to multimedia art and the

are supporting the multisensory mechanisms of the body and are thus extending man's space for play and action' (in Hansen, 2006: 2). With the foregrounding of motor activity, which is achieved through the embodiment of human agency, a person's encounter with interactive media gives rise to a sense of a shifting between multiple and mixed spaces. With the help of this notion, I regard the 'mixed reality' in this thesis as the hybrid spaces of memories, imaginations, the mediated and the live. Moreover, the viewpoint from which I rethink the 'mixed reality' is that of traditional Chinese aesthetics. The aim of this comparison is to find out parallels between performative spaces in hypermedial theatre and *Qi*-cultivated spaces.

significances of doing so have not been widely investigated in the field of hypermedial theatre in Taiwan. Most relevant literature that references traditional Chinese aesthetics consists of journal reviews and generally lacks an in-depth examination of the role of *Qi* (e.g., Kai, 2007; Bai, 2010; Chen, 2011). The obscure meaning of *Qi* presented in those reviews seems to indicate that *Qi* becomes a cultural symbol speaking for itself; hence, there have been few investigations and interpretations of the idea of *Qi*. For instance, as Bai Fai-Lang says in her review of the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan's *Water Stains on the Wall*, 'the traditional Chinese painting usually [...] replaces verisimilitude with the sublime, the transcendent mood' (Bai, 2010, my translation). But what this kind of 'mood' is and how the physical is transformed into the 'transcendent' are not further explained in the article. It seems that without mentioning the idea of *Qi*, the reader knows that it is the flow of *Qi* that presents as the mood and facilitates the transformation in the painting and viewing.

Systematic research into *Qi* has been conducted in psychophysical training and acting in performance studies, particularly by Phillip Zarrilli (2009). He subscribes to a post-Stanislovskian adaptation of yoga and combines it with the notion of *Qi* in Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Indian philosophies. However, few systematic investigations examine the aesthetic influence of the notion of *Qi* upon the construction of contemporary Taiwanese artworks. For instance, Mathias Obert (2010, 2011) theorises *Qi* in relationship to an aesthetic analysis of photography and dance in Taiwan. The investigations of Zarrilli and Obert (and those of many writers like them) draw on phenomenological methodologies, particularly the reflections of Maurice

Merleau-Ponty, to examine the transformation of the body and self in a world shaped by the flow of *Qi*. For them, the flow of *Qi* opens up artists' bodies and heart-mind connections with their surroundings so that the artist and the world are inseparable from *Qi*.

In addition to the relationship between an individual and the world, the flow of *Qi* in Chinese philosophy is predominantly concerned with *the relationship between a person and the cosmos (t'ien)*. The term *cosmos* in this thesis refers either to *heaven* in the specific sense or to *heaven (or heavens)* in the more general sense, which is relevant to the *Qi* worldview in Chinese philosophy. My reason for using *cosmos* rather than *heaven (or heavens)* is to avoid any connection with the term's use in Western culture. According to Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, '*tian* is often used as an abbreviation for *tiandi* 天地 – “the heavens and the earth” – suggesting that *tian* is not independent of this world. Denoting the world as it turns around us, it is bottomless, ever advancing, and always novel' (2001: 79).⁷ This indicates that the heavens for the Chinese have a very close and reciprocal relationship with humans' dwelling environments. Ultimately, '*tian* in classical Chinese *is* the world. *Tian* is both *what* our world is and *how* it is', as Ames and Hall suggest (ibid.: 80, original emphasis). This means that humans and various other beings/things are constitutive of the cosmos. This may explain why the Chinese believe in humans' continuous efforts to become integrated with various other beings/things in their dwelling environments, that is, in the unity of the cosmos

⁷ The term *tiandi* here uses the romanisation system of Mandarin Chinese. In Taiwan, as most academic and official writings still use the system of Tong-yong Pinyin, I adopt the system and translate the term into *t'ien-di* in this thesis.

with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*). I highlight two points here: the cosmos is regarded as the emergent orders of the constituents of our world; and the cosmos refers to both the social and the natural worlds (see *ibid.*). That is, as various Confucian classical texts show (e.g., the *Chung-yung*, the *Analects* and the *Book of Changes*), humans are encouraged to understand the rhythms of both the social and the natural worlds and to participate in the generation and development of their rhythms.

In this thesis, the approach for investigating the performance of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre draws not only on the Chinese philosophy of the idea of *Qi* but also on Maurice Merleau-Ponty's as well as Martin Heidegger's concepts, in order to examine the embodiment process of *Qi* in the mediated environment. The phenomenological insights into the spatial implications of *Qi* will be of value for the investigation of hypermedial theatre works in Taiwan along with a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*.

1.1.2 Phenomenology as the Strategy of the Research Inquiry

Phenomenology serves as a viable pathway for research into the embodiment process of *Qi* and its spatial implications in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works. *Qi*, as expressed in the works of arts by ancient elites, is concerned with spatial atmospheres, and more importantly, with the cultivation of the relationship between human beings and the cosmos. To this day the persistent theme of *Qi* is still hidden in various genres of Taiwanese artworks, which show the artists' quest for traditional Chinese aesthetics through diverse media.

The embodiment process of *Qi* in Taiwanese theatre and performance works is shown in various modes: for example, in the use of the performer's corporeality to express energetic rhythms, as in *Sound of the Ocean* by Utheatre (1998) and *Song of Pensive Beholding* by Legend Lin Dance Theatre (2008); in the employment of the visual elements of Chinese calligraphy and landscape paintings to create an atmosphere of flowing energy, as in Cloud Gate's *Cursive I and II* (2003); and in the intensifying of the improvisation of the spectator and the work according to the work's structure, as in Image in Motion Theatre's *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, flowers, snow and moon* (2010) and Industrial Technology Research Institute's *Flow of Qi* (2007).

In this thesis I focus on the mode of structured improvisation, as the primary concern of my research is neither the expression of the performer's body nor the appropriation of the cultural symbols of *Qi*. Rather, it concerns the spectators' interactive relationship to the work and their embodied agency in the meaning-making process of the work. I suggest that studied in phenomenology, particularly Merleau-Ponty's notions of 'body schema' and 'flesh' and Heidegger's notions of 'technics' and 'mood', will help me to articulate the interactive relationship and embodied agency. In approaching Merleau-Ponty's body schema, I concentrate on the issues that concern the potentiality of the corporeal and human motility plus the relationship between embodied motility and spatiality. I also adopt his other concept, flesh, in this thesis. I understand it as an ontological form of the human body that is indivisible from human life and nature. As for Heidegger's notions of technics and mood, I discuss the issues that relate to the interconnection between the use of tools and the state of being-in-the-world, along with spatial perceptions

generated by the flowing-alike mode of existence.

The works I chose to analyse for this thesis entail a combination of Western innovation and traditional Chinese culture in the context of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. I will argue that practices of traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works can be seen as phenomenological experiences of *Qi* for the spectator. Such practices address aesthetic concerns about the flow of *Qi*, which entails the interweaving among the spectator's movements and perceptions and the work: this is spatialised as the hypermedial *mise-en-scène* in the context of the spectator's structured improvisation.

In what follows, I will briefly review the application of phenomenology to dance, theatre and performance studies. In the late 1960s, paleoanthropologist Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (1966) used a phenomenological methodology which combined the ideas of Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, in her research on dance performance. With these as aids, Sheets-Johnstone extended the prevailing perspectives that highlighted the concept of referential codification in linguistics and semiology to the corporeal and perceptual aspects of dance performance. Similarly, Sandra Fraleigh (1991) claims that, through the lens of phenomenology, the focus of dance studies returns back to dance phenomenon, the performing body. For her, the body in dance is an aesthetic phenomenon that is generated by the dialectics between the perspectives of the dancer and the spectator.

In theatre and performance studies, philosopher Bruce Wilshire (1982)

theorises about the spectator's reception of staged performances. For him, the experience of theatre is akin to that of life. Identities constructed on stage suggest phenomena: the ways that we construct our identities in reality. A similar spectator perspective is seen in Bert O. States's work (1985) that takes a phenomenological approach and links it with studies in semiology. He addresses perception in text-based theatre performance, rather than aspects of signifier and signified in the genre that was limited by the predominated framework of semiotics and linguistics in the 1980s. Stanton Garner (1994) and Alice Rayner (2006) also conduct phenomenological research into the experience of the theatre viewer. The former uses the phenomenological ideas of Husserl and Merleau-Ponty and semiotics; this creates in a spectator a better understanding of a character's body in dramatic texts rather than that of the actor's body on stage. However, Rayner focuses on the ghostly experience in theatre performance, which refers to the interpenetration of the fictional and the physical and to multiple temporalities. She proposes that this investigation can be understood through a dialogue between phenomenology and Lacanian psychoanalysis. For her, omissions of our real world are overcome and foregrounded in theatre performance. The research draws forth attention to the mysteries of reality. Unlike the investigations mentioned above, Phillip B. Zarrilli (2004, 2009) begins from the perspective of the practitioner. He applies post-Merleau-Ponty phenomenology as a methodological tool to the exploration of the actor's modes of embodiment. Taking this approach, he develops a pragmatic use in theatre performance concerning psychophysical training and the acting of the actor.

Since the 1990s, there has been a tendency to use phenomenological

methodologies in both performance and new media studies. Susan Kozel (1994) applies phenomenology, specifically Merleau-Ponty's notion of flesh, to analyse her dancing practices that integrate computer technologies. To her, phenomenology offers not only a methodological tool but also a way of experiencing her own digital performance works. This approach gives rise to an embodied analysis about the intersection of her dancing practices with technology. Simultaneously, for spectators of her works, the approach enables the potential for multiple perceptions and interpretations of what the audience sees. Based on the insights of Husserl's phenomenology, Gabriella Giannachi and Nick Kaye (2011) propose a phenomenological framework of presence for examining the relationship between performance and technology. With this, they identify presence as a process constituted by the interactions between the performer and the spectator, both of which work as inter-subjectivities in the course of performances.

Unlike its development in the West, phenomenology was only introduced by East Asian scholars for research on *Qi* in terms of philosophical thinking in the 1980s. As various traditional Chinese classics (e.g., *Mencius*, *Chuangtzu* and *Huangti Neiching*) showed, *Qi* is regarded as indivisible from the human body and heart-mind. Through the circulation of *Qi*, human beings are involved in a biosphere where they and various other beings and things coexist with each other. This understanding has strong similarities to the key concerns of phenomenology. It is in this sense that the ground for the dialogues between phenomenology and the philosophy of *Qi* are established and developed.

Yuasa Yasuo (1987, 1993) proposes a theory of the body based on the

Japanese concept of *Qi* by reworking Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. The body is characterised as not only a spatial product of the flow of *Qi* in which physical space overlaps psychological space but also as a transformative process by which *Dao* [the Way] is actualised and embodied. Chiang Nien-Feng draws on Heidegger's hermeneutics to propose that the Confucian way of thinking is characterised as a 'spiritual phenomenology of the *poetic arising*' of *Qi* (Chiang, 1992: 63, original emphasis). The Confucian view of *Qi* is that it highlights the cosmic resonances between oneself and one's surroundings. The 'poetic arising' of *Qi* in Chiang's terms is understood as the constitution of a phenomenological site in which the generation of emotions, relationships between self and others, and spatial-temporal senses are affected by the flow of *Qi*. By defining Heidegger's mood as atmosphere, Ogawa Tadashi (1998) proposes a 'phenomenology of wind', a proposition whereby a parallel between mood and *Qi* is then justifiable. This is because neither mood nor *Qi* is regarded as an individual's mental or psychological events, but rather as a medium that permeates between human beings and the world. Both mood and *Qi* tend to yield dynamic sites. Similarly, Zhang Xianglong (2004) suggests that phenomenology has various similarities to the ancient Chinese philosophy of *Qi*, as the central issues of the two are about our world, which is indivisible from humans and constantly reconstituted by human activities.

Little research into artwork has been conducted under the phenomenological framework for examining the potential contribution of the Chinese philosophical idea of *Qi* towards the understanding of contemporary European aesthetics. As mentioned previously, Obert (2010, 2011) applies

phenomenology to his analysis of that contemporary photography and dance in Taiwan which implicitly show logics of traditional Chinese aesthetics. This analytic pathway that Obert takes is developed from his investigation into the aesthetics of Chinese landscape painting and calligraphy, concerned with how the flow of *Qi* leads to the unity of the human body and heart-mind and the integration of the human and the natural worlds. Based on the phenomenological reflections of Merleau-Ponty, Obert (2008, 2012) provides an aesthetic framework that comprises a phenomenology of the lived body and the Chinese concept of *Qi*. Furthermore, with the help of transformative phenomenology, he suggests that the creation and reception of traditional Chinese artwork (as ways towards self-cultivation of *Qi*) can be seen as a transformative process for the artist's and the viewer's bodies and hearts-minds on the socio-cultural level.

However, a study that bridges the concept of *Qi* existing in traditional Chinese aesthetics and the analytical theories of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre from a phenomenological perspective has not yet been proposed. This thesis makes an original contribution to knowledge by providing a viewpoint of *Qi* on the phenomenological understanding of the relationship between performative space and technology in hypermedial theatre. That is to say, I employ phenomenology as a theoretical methodology to link the Chinese concept of *Qi* to contemporary new media and hypermedial theatre research.

This *Qi*-based phenomenological approach will help to examine whether spatiality engendered by the embodiment process of *Qi* can be regarded as a performative space, one wherein the transmission of agency elicits an

interactive loop between the spectator and the work. Furthermore, the approach will help us grasp the aesthetic of *Qi* and its spatial implications as well as help us examine and complement the discourses of performative space and agency in terms of hypermedial theatre studies within an intercultural context in present day Taiwan. For these reasons, I develop a philosophical framework that analyses those Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which concern the embodiment process of *Qi* in the course of performances.

1.1.3 Performative space as a fundamental issue

The concept of performativity has been investigated in the studies of language philosophy (e.g., John Langshaw Austin, 1963, 1970; Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky, 1995), culture (e.g., Judith Butler, 1990), performance (e.g., Erika Fischer-Lichte, 2008), and new media (e.g., Mark B. N. Hansen, 2006). These investigations generally indicate the importance of potentiality and efficacy in the transformative process.

The term *performative* is derived from the lecture given by John Langshaw Austin on linguistic philosophy in 1955, better known as *How to Do Things With Words* (1962). His theory suggests that when an utterance alters the circumstances in which the speaker exists and then leads to a new reality, it is no longer a statement. Rather, this kind of utterance is characterized as performative, as it demonstrates the speaker's acts. Speech-acts in Austin's term thus can be seen as the 'performance of a social act' that 'entails a transformative power' (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 24-25). For example, 'I do' from the marriage ceremony, 'I christen this boat' when it is ready to launch, or 'I declare you guilty' in a courtroom all qualify as performative. These

performative utterances undermine the dichotomous nature of form and content, establishing a relationship network for their conditions. The performative gives an impression of uncertainty, affected by the given conditions under which the utterances function.

By introducing the concept of the performative to cultural philosophy, Judith Butler (1990) shifts the attention of previous cultural studies away from decoding texts and toward bodily acts. Contrary to Austin's theory highlighting the functional conditions for the success of speech acts, Butler's concern here shifts to the physical actions that embody identity. She proposes a dialogue between phenomenology and feminism and, through this, identifies bodily performative acts as a process of generating the sexual and cultural identity of a person's body. In the sense that these acts are caused by a community and are repetitive, Butler claims a parallel between the acts of generating identity and theatre performance. Her research focuses mainly on human daily life, rather than on the artistic process of theatre performance.

Examining the theories of Austin and Butler, Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008) suggests that there is a necessity for developing an aesthetic of the performative in order to grasp the relationship between performativity and performance that has not been elucidated in those theories. Instead of following the predominant approach of sociology and culture studies, Fischer-Lichte draws on theatre studies for the investigation of the aesthetics of the performative, examining the aesthetic concept of performance and the nature of the performative. Basing her findings predominantly upon the theatrical theory of Max Herrmann, Fischer-Lichte identifies performance as an

event, where the performer and the spectator physically participate and coexist (see *ibid*: 32-40). In the course of performances, the performer and the spectator, plus the spectator and other spectators, mutually mediate and transform each other's perceptions and emotions. The mediation and transformation indicate the use of performativity. To Fischer-Lichte, *mise-en-scène* in the context of aesthetics of performativity is also characterized as an event—that is, 'a process that aims at the reenchantment of the world and the metamorphosis of the performance's participants' (*ibid*: 189). This indicates that *mise-en-scène* offers an efficacious impact on the dynamic interactions between the performer and the spectator.

Nonetheless, with reference to the concept of mixed reality, Hansen (2006) proposes an 'operational perspective' to investigate the use of performativity, a sense that contrasts with the social perspectives offered by Butler and Fischer-Lichte. According to Hansen, the primacy of performativity in mixed reality is on the 'primordial level of bodily, or organismic, processing' (*Ibid.*: 13). This indicates that performatives are generated from the bodily exercise, which is affected by the dynamic merging of physical and virtual worlds. In other words, the performatives along with the bodily agency, which leads to a person's identification with the hybrid worlds, do not reveal spaces for bodily exercise through their operation beneath the content of social images. Rather, they generate spaces from a person's ever-changing reactions to the hybrid worlds.

The term *performative* has also been discussed by Mathias Obert (2008) in his research into traditional Chinese aesthetics, with respect to the Chinese

concept of *Qi*. Given Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Obert proposes that the viewing of traditional Chinese paintings, which are fundamentally shaped by the Chinese concept of *Qi*, is a 'performative act' (ibid: 59, my translation). He identifies the performative act as having 'the resonance with the cosmos' and a 'responsiveness process' (ibid., my translation) that occurs between the painting and the viewer via the flow of *Qi*. Here, the encounter between the painting and the viewer can be thought of as a set of mutual incitements generated by the development of the effectiveness inherent in the painting. It is *Qi* that works as such effectiveness, so that viewing a painting would lead to the interflow of *Qi* between the viewer's world and the image world. This interflow then stimulates the viewer's psychophysical responses. Optimally, through this process of responses, the viewer's world would be transformed into a dynamic field in which the viewer performs in tune with the respiration of the cosmos. In other words, the creation and perception are understood as a process of realizing the integration of humanity and the cosmos.

As my thesis concentrates on works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre which subtly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*, I suggest that not only the transmission of agency but also that of *Qi* are prerequisite to the spectator's performative acts in the course of performance. A clarification of the meanings of *Qi* and agency in Chinese and Western philosophies from a phenomenological perspective will help to understand the constitution of performative spaces in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre in relationship to discourses of performativity and hypermedial theatre in contemporary Taiwan.

1.1.4 Aspects involved in the embodiment process of *Qi*

As mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, the justification for a comparison between agency and *Qi* lies in the situation in which agency in new media and game studies through the phenomenological lens is characterised as performative energy or force, which predominantly influences ways and degrees of the spectator's responses to the work. I discuss three aspects of the spectator's performative acts in the embodiment process of *Qi*: 1) interactivity; 2) embodiment; and 3) presence. This discussion aims to explore in depth the potential connection between the constitution of performative spaces and the embodiment process of *Qi*, and between agency and *Qi*.

I regard the first aspect, that is, interactivity, as situations in which performative acts are generated. Comparing to agency, *Qi* in Chinese philosophy is also regarded as certain flowing energy or force that is able to elicit the interaction between the perceiving subject and the perceived object. In this sense, I propose that the arising of *Qi* may be thought of as some phenomenon similar to the spectator's agency that offers the creative potential for performative acts to occur in the course of hypermedial performances.

The embodiment of the spectator's phenomenal body in a mixed space of the physical and the virtual may occur as well when the spectator interacts with the work. This is the second aspect of the spectator's performative acts. According to theories of contemporary Western theatre and new media, I understand such an embodiment here in hypermedial performance as the coupling of movements and perceptions concomitant with the transmission of agency

between the spectator and the work. Similarly, in Chinese philosophy, the arising of *Qi* involves people's integrating their bodies and hearts-minds into their surroundings. This process may enable an understanding of performative acts in hypermedial theatre, since these acts require the spectator's psychophysical participation in performances.

At the same time, the spectator's experience of presence is the third aspect of the spectator's performative acts. The presence in theories of contemporary Western theatre and new media is created while the coexistence of the spectator and the work is constituted through the transmission of agency as a dynamic formation. This gives an impression of the spatial-temporal feature of the performative acts. This form of presence also can be found in Chinese philosophy where the flow of *Qi* leads to certain ever-renewing situations in which the perceiving subject coexists with the perceived object. Thus, I propose that a comparison between agency and *Qi* can provide a reflection on the multiple layers of interactions and collapse the boundaries between the spectator and the work; it can be a result of feedback loops in performative acts that occur in hypermedial theatre.

In this thesis, the issue of performative spaces is discussed from a perspective affected by the Chinese concept of *Qi*, not as a Western value or as the standard for finding a universal principle of aesthetics. The works that subtly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* is a unique phenomena in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. It is due to that the concept of *Qi* is a cultural heritage in present day Taiwan, various Taiwanese spectators would tend to possess culturally-predicated sensitivity to *Qi* to some extent when they

encounter these hypermedial works. In this sense, the way these works manifest may be more clearly explained by the premises of *Qi* philosophy.

Hence, I argue this is the case that the embodiment of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre has any similarity to the agency operation mentioned in this introduction. I also argue that the constitution of performative spaces along with a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* could not be fully analysed through the concept of agency and we may need a complementary discourse given from the perspective of *Qi*. Therefore, I want to provide a more comprehensive view of performative spaces, since the concept of *Qi* can complement our knowledge of the spectator's psychophysical participation in performance.

1.2 The Aims of the Research

I have seven objectives in raising my research questions, described as follows:

- 1) To elucidate the cultural and philosophical context of *Qi* and its spatial implications and, then, through this elucidation to clarify how *Qi* operates in terms of living environments and cultural phenomena.
- 2) To introduce phenomenology as a research strategy for the examination of the embodiment of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.
- 3) To explicate the parallels between energy transmission in *Qi* and in agency, which exists respectively in works of traditional Chinese arts and literature and in examples of contemporary hypermedial theatre and, in addition, to compare the embodiment process of *Qi* to the constitution of performative spaces in the course of performances.
- 4) To justify the potential role of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works

which implicitly show traditional Chinese aesthetic logics and to establish a framework of *Qi*-arising Space for the analysis of these works.

- 5) To expound on potential connections between the spatial implications of Heidegger's 'mood', Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh' and my framework *Qi*-arising Space and, through this, to prove that *Qi*-arising Space can be identified as an energetic and liminal space in which performative acts are achieved communally by the perceiving subject and the perceived object.
- 6) To explain other central issues in relation to the issue of performative spaces from the spectator's perspective in an intercultural context of present day Taiwan.
- 7) To elucidate how the flow of *Qi* is embodied in the computer-affected *mise-en-scène*, applying the framework of *Qi*-arising Space to the analysis of the case studies selected for this thesis.

1.3 Taiwanese Hypermedial Theatre

In this thesis, I understand hypermedial *mise-en-scène* as a spatial configuration of the spectator-work relation that mainly relies on the use of technological media. I adopt the concept from Andy Lavender (2006), and the concept implies that what a hypermedial performance configures are routes of interaction not only among various media shown on stage but also between these media and the spectator. In Taiwan, works which are characterized by this mode of configuration are usually described as 'new media arts', 'digital art', 'tech art' or 'interdisciplinary multimedia art'. These terms indicate certain alternative experiences of encountering artworks that are affected by the incorporation of technological media. The reason that I am not using the existing terms but rather the term hypermedial is because my thesis focuses

on the spectator's performative acts, rather than the development of technological media. Here, I shall offer a brief history of this kind of work, as this will lay the groundwork for understanding how the concept of hypermedial mise-en-scène has been realized in Taiwanese performance and participatory arts.

In Taiwan, the incorporation of new media arts into theatre arts in order to enhance the viewer's awareness of the multiplicity among the staged elements can be traced to the art exhibit *Hsi Rang* (1986-1999),⁸ which was organised as a protest against the Taiwanese government's interference in art creation. This protest was triggered by the art exhibition, *Avant-garde, Installation and Space*, hosted by the Taipei Fine Arts Museum in 1985.⁹ The museum's deputy director, Su Ray-ping, commanded the artists who were invited to present their works to modify or even to remove their artworks (see Lin, 1997: 11-15; Lee, 2002: 15). Artist Chang Chien-fu expressed his disagreement by taking legal action, and some other artists withdrew from the exhibition (see Lin, 1997: 15-17; Lee, 2002: 15). Then, in 1986 a group of artists including Chen Chie-jen, Lin Ju, Kao Chong-li and Wang Jun-jieh held an art exhibition, entitled *Hsi Rang*, in an unused flat in Taipei. They thereby effectively announced that their art activities, which differed in nature from the activities of artists who adhered to the then-government-dominated art consciousness,

⁸ The name of the art exhibition *Hsi Rang* comes from a classical Chinese novel, *Collections of the Mountains and Seas* [山海經]. According to the novel, 'hsi rang' refers to mystical soil that is extremely rich and eternally sustainable (see Lee, 2002: 15).

⁹ In 1985, when the art exhibition, *Avant-garde, Installation and Space*, took place, Taiwan was under martial law. It was this way until 1987, when the government lifted martial law. The restraint on media ended the following year.

would continue indefinitely (see Lee, 2002: 15). In the following years through 2001, these artists held four more group exhibitions and a retrospective show in empty flats and private studios in Taipei (see Wu, 2001: 38). During this time, artists Chen, Lin and Wang, who were devoted to computer graphics and video art, were in close contact with Taiwan's experimental theatre groups and members of the political parties not in office (see *ibid.*).¹⁰ They collaborated on experimental theatre works with these people and presented their works in exhibitions. Their collaboration heralded the convergence of video art, theatre arts and new media technologies in Taiwan.

Turning to the twenty-first century, Taiwanese new media arts were inspired and supported by the highly-developed environments of high-tech Taiwanese industries. In 2001 the Image in Motion Theatre Company, founded by new media artist Chen Yao and choreographer Ku Ming-shen, produced the dance works *Not a Love Story* and *@ Dream*, which featured scenery created by projecting digital animations onto pre-set boards and platforms on stage. Chen and Ku are regarded as pioneers in the incorporation of new media technologies into theatrical performances.

In the following years, an increasing number of Taiwanese theatre and dance works experimented with such incorporation. For instance, *Where is Home?* (2004) by Shakespeare's Wild Sisters Group created a soundscape by broadcasting twenty-six characters' lines through sixteen speakers placed around the auditorium. The recordings juxtaposed with the solo actor's

¹⁰ By the political parties not in office, I mean the parties which are differentiated from the governing party, Kuomintang (KMT).

performance on stage. This configuration, encompassing the audience by multi-layered and travelling voices and sounds, activated the audience to imagine a dynamic soundscape and led to the blurring of boundaries between the audience and the work. Moreover, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan's *Wind Shadow* (2006) presented a large-scale work of installation art in theatre with an abstract and minimalist form. Multiple media such as flags, kites, fabrics and projection incorporated dancers to show the interdependent relationship between the physical and the mediated in terms of the notion of *Qi*. Without the props and projection; the dancers, however, would not be embodied in the performance. The artists intended that, at the moment of discerning such a relationship, the audience would become involved in the development of the performance.

Since 2007, some theatre and new media artists have turned to philosophically interrogating the nature of technological media employed in their works. In so doing, they have rethought the relationship between humans and technology. *Flow of Qi* (2007) by the Industrial Technology Research Institute, Taiwan; *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, Flowers, Snow and Moon* (2008) by Chen and Ku's Image in Motion Theatre Company; *Loop Me* (2009) by Su Wen-Chi and *SPIN 2010* (2010) by Huang Yi are four influential examples. The first work used sensing technology that could detect human breath to present the classical Chinese worldview of *Qi* in a theatrical space. By virtue of the technology, participants could experience a cyclical process, where their breath was transmitted to others and to projected images. *CHANCEFORMATION* experimented with the structure of dance improvisation, allowing the audience to vote on the order of scenes when they

entered the performance venue. Through this, what the audience perceived in the course of the performance might not be merely artists' and dancers' improvisation to multiple media used on stage. Instead, the configuration might evoke a sense, whether the performance according to the result of the vote matches the audience's expectation.

The latter two works, *Loop Me* and *SPIN 2010* depend on the features of video camera in their interrogation into the embodiment of the live performer. *Loop Me* highlighted the tension between the live and the mediated performers. This work juxtaposed Su Wen-Chi, its creator and sole performer, against a projection board that showed a composite of real-time and mediated pictures of Su's live performance. As for *SPIN*, its dancers are surrounded by a spinning camera that was held by a mechanical arm hung from a ceiling. Real-time pictures of the dancers' live performances were instantly edited as mirror or close-up images and were projected onto the four walls of the auditorium. The sets of these two works exposed the necessity of rethinking the audience's experience of viewing and their perceptions in the course of the performance.

Mobile devices and social network have become an essential part of urban life in Taiwan these days. Accordingly, various artists employ these factors in their works to reveal the tensions between reality and the virtual world. Chou Shu-Yi's *Emptied Memories* (2012), Chou Tung-Yen's *Teatime with me, myself and I* (2013) and Huang Yi's *Special Order* (2014) are works that exemplify that trend. In *Emptied Memories*, five large light boxes, which consist of dimming film and mechanic equipment, were set up on an empty stage.

Through the mobile movement of the boxes and changes in light, the boxes were turned into projection screens and augmented spaces on stage. The performer interacted with pre-recorded videos and his real-time images and shadows that were projected onto the boxes. Through the interaction, the piece created a space in-between actuality, dream and memories.

In *Teatime with me, myself and I*, performers constantly used smart phones to take selfie photos. The photos were instantly shown on the screens of the performers' smart phones as well as various projection screens and a laptop computer's screen all of which were set up on stage. Through this, the performers' images multiply and appear on and shift among the screens. By viewing the dynamic encounter between the live performers and their images, the technique seeks to make the audience aware of the layering of space and time in actual and virtual realms. In contrast to focusing on visual scenery, *Special Order* places audio media in a leading role in the course of the performance. However, the content of the work is not Huang's personal creation; it comes from the audience's projects that were submitted to the artist a few months before the premiere. During the course of the performance, the audience can have opportunity of participating in the performance via sets of earphones in the auditorium. The audience members can hear performers' words, conversations between artists backstage and music; and through this the work attempted to activate them to make their own decisions and interpretations.

The previously-mentioned works briefly describe the development of hypermedial theatre in Taiwan. Yet, in my understanding, only *Wind Shadow*,

Flow of Qi and *CHANCEFORMATION*, rather than all of the works, convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. My reason is that the three works seem to create certain performative spaces, which implicitly reveal the *Qi* worldview in Chinese philosophy. Therefore, I will use the three works as the case studies for this thesis to manifest my hypothesis of *Qi*-arising Space.

1.4 Research Methodology

I bring my skills as a stage and costume designer for theatrical performances and my 16 years of experience with Chinese landscape painting and calligraphy to this research. This background has affected the focus of my inquiry. From the classical Chinese worldview of *Qi*, into the spatial implications of the energy transmitted between the spectator and the work in the course of performance. I have become particularly interested in exploring the philosophical structures of performative spaces, in examining how performative spaces can be interpreted and realized by considering the spectator-work relation in a *Qi* world model.

In completing this thesis, the methodology that I have employed here to investigate the embodiment process of *Qi* contains two areas of particular interest: 1) an examination of Western and Chinese theories and philosophy and 2) an analysis of practices of *mise-en-scène* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. The first area may shed light on the subject matter of this thesis – that is, the possible connection between the constitution of performative space and the transmission of energy in a mixture of actual and virtual realms. The second area explores how the idea of *Qi* could be applied to design for the spatial configuration of hypermedial performance through a comparison

between the Western and Chinese perspectives.

1.4.1 Western and Chinese theories and philosophies

As the area of new media studies is taken to be the foundation of the concept of performative space in hypermedial theatre, an examination of theories in the field becomes the first layer of my research methodology. My understanding of agency mainly adopts the concept of Janet H. Murray (1997), which regards agency as a power that can intensify motivations and intentions to make decisions and to take actions in the course of using technological media. This helps me to develop a definition of the viewer's agency in hypermedial theatre. Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin's (2000) concept of hypermediacy suggests a spatial logic that concerns a process of multiple mediation and connection among diverse media. Drawing inspiration from this concept, I assume that the interaction between the viewer and the work may be seen as an in-between structure through which the transmission of agency between the actual and the virtual occurs. With reference to the 'body schema' and 'technics' in Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, Mark B. Hansen (2006) interprets the viewer's body in new media art as a prerequisite for achieving the interlinkage between the actual and the virtual. This allows me to investigate in depth the embodiment of the viewer in the mediated environment. Don Ihde's (2010) studies in Heidegger's notion of praxis offers a phenomenological view on being in an encounter with technological media. I suggest that this can be applied to examine the viewer's presence in hypermedial theatre.

In addition, the field of theatre studies is another source on which I draw in this

thesis. I adopt Lavender's (2006) idea of hypermedial theatre, which indicates a process by which the spectator's feedback is transformed by computer-oriented mise-en-scène into certain efficacious reactions to the development of the work. This helps me to investigate how the transmission of agency may lead to the constitution of performative space in hypermedial theatre. Moreover, with the help of Gabriella Giannachi and Nick Kaye's (2011) research, which asserts that an individual's presence may emerge in the performative encounter with others, and Sita Popat's (2011) proposition of the transmission of agency as the certain connection between the human body and the media other, I address the issue of how the transmission of agency affects the viewer's presence in hypermedial theatre. Despite Fischer-Lichte's (2008) notion of performative space, which refers to the genre of theatre that focuses on the physical performance, her suggestion of three strategies of generating performative space is useful to my examination of the configuration of hypermedial performance. This also allows me to think about possible strategies of creating *Qi*-arising Space.

Further complementing my investigation of performative space in this thesis is phenomenology. The reason for this is not only the reliance on phenomenology by the above-mentioned scholars in their studies but also its regard as an appropriate approach to examine phenomena of *Qi*, which I have indicated earlier in this introduction. I specifically apply Heidegger's notion of 'mood' (1929/30) and Merleau-Ponty's definition of 'flesh' (1964) to an exploration of the embodiment process of *Qi* in traditional Chinese arts and literature. I regard this transfer as justified. I think this is an interesting proposition. I argue that both mood and *Qi* are a kind of energy that fills and

creates a meeting space of humans and things. Moreover, I conceive both flesh and the *Qi* embodiment as a field where human life is interwoven with nature.

However, since my hypothesis in this thesis regards the constitution of performative space as an embodiment process of not only agency but also of *Qi*, I also suggest that the perspective of *Qi*, which is used in Chinese philosophy, theory of art and literature studies, may be useful in an interrogation into processes of how ancient Chinese artists realised the conception of *Qi* in their artworks. In this thesis I choose *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, because the school's core concept of *Qi* has various characteristics similar to those of my proposition of the embodiment of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. The ancient Confucian scholars' interpretations of *Qi* to which I refer in this thesis are mainly the works of Mencius (372-289 BC) and his followers Chang Tsai (1020-1077) and Wang Fu-chih (1619-1692). In the line of Mencius, the cultivation of *Qi* is regarded as a process of constantly renewing the interconnection of the human body and heart-mind with the environment and, optimally, with the cosmos. This allows me to investigate the spatiality that is created by the flow of *Qi*.

I also draw on the studies of contemporary philosophers, including Chiang Nien-feng (1992), Tu Wei-ming (1985) and Yang Rurbin (1996), who contribute to developing a non-materialist and monistic view of the idea of *Qi* in Confucianism. Chiang proposes a phenomenology of 'the poetic arising [*hsing*]' (Chiang, 1992), which indicates the communal participation of people and their surroundings in the circulation of *Qi* between the phenomenal world and the

cosmos. Meanwhile, Tu suggests that the worldview outlined by the Confucian vision of humanity can be interpreted as reflecting an ‘anthropocosmic perspective’ (Tu, 1985: 10). This means that the interaction between people and their surroundings reflects the relationship with the cosmos. Yang interprets Mencius’s thoughts about the unity of the human body, human heart-mind and *Qi* as a ‘sense of the realising Body [*chien-hsing guan*]’ (Yang, 1996, my translation), a process of constituting the phenomenal body in-between the living environment and the cosmos. These scholars’ concepts let me assume that the spatial configuration of the spectator-work relation operates under an anthropocosmic logic.

As for Chinese theories of art and literature studies, I mainly refer to the concepts of Obert (2009) and Xiao Chi (2007), as their views on *Qi* proximately correspond to Mencius’s idea of *Qi* to certain extent. In Obert’s research, the viewer’s contemplation of Chinese landscape painting implies a performative act, chasing the vibration, breathing of the cosmos. For Xiao, reading poems indicates a way of presenting the self in a network with respect to the respiration of the cosmos. These concepts become specifically important when I develop a hypothesis of *Qi*-arising Space – that is, in hypermedial theatre the viewer’s participation in the development of the work’s effectiveness can be seen as a kind of performative act and the very act may establish a possible relationship with the cosmos.

1.4.2 Analysis of hypermedial mise-en-scène

My aim in this thesis is to offer a framework for analysing the embodiment of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. As it is important to consider whether this

framework can be employed to analyse the works selected for this thesis, analysis of hypermedial mise-en-scène is one of the main research methods used here. The principle sources for my analysis are video recordings of specific works and interviews with the works' creators. Programmes, production notes and reviews of the works serve as supplementary references.

Three factors affected my decision to draw on video recordings. First, because of the complexity of high-tech apparatuses and huge production budgets, some of the works analysed within this thesis appeared only at festivals. Second, very few venues in Taiwan are specifically designed for the presentation of new media artworks. Due to this, these works are not often performed. Third, some of the works analysed within this thesis were performed when I was studying in Japan (2007-2008). Hence, I have been unable to see all of these works' while they were staged or exhibited and must analyse some works with the help of video recordings.

As I explained at the beginning of this introduction, I understand the embodiment process of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre to be the constitution of performative spaces that are generated by the interaction between the spectator and the work. I assume that the constitution is highly concerned with the spatial configuration of the spectator-work relationship. Therefore, my analysis of the works selected for this thesis mainly focuses on philosophical readings of their mise-en-scène. For this reason, I suggest that video recordings offer access to an examination of the potential for the interaction between the spectator and the work in the course of the performance. Moreover, the video recordings that I analysed were mainly shot

by immobile cameras set up at the back of or in the midst of auditoriums and include long takes of entire stages. In other words, with the exception of rare instances in which post-production editing took place, these recordings for the most part show full views of a performance and seldom partial ones.

1.5 A Perspective from the Spectator's Position

This thesis is concerned mainly with the experience of the spectator. The emphasis is placed on the importance of the efficacious, performative interactions between the spectator and the work, which lead to the constitution of performative spaces, which allow the two to coexist. My concern is different from other discourses that focus on the energy of the performer's corporeality (e.g., Jerzy Grotowski, 1968), the energy preserved in physical environments or buildings applied as performance venues (e.g., Richard Schechner, 1973; Peter Brook, 1968) and the energy produced by events within a socio-cultural context (e.g., Fischer-Lichte, 2008). Rather, I look at the embodiment of the energy (refers to both agency and *Qi* in this thesis) that is affected by the interconnection between the use of computer technologies and the spectator's performative acts. This implies that the constitution of performative space is understood as a creative process by which the responses of the spectator become dynamic and prerequisite elements for performance works.

1.6 Format of this Thesis

The thesis is written in tripartite format. Part I and II provides definitions of performative space and certain energy that exists in the space respectively from the Western and Chinese perspectives (Chapters 2 and 3). Part III establishes a framework of *Qi*-arising Space for analyzing the embodiment

process of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre (Chapter 4). Part IV employs both perspectives to analyse three case studies (Chapter 5). The analysis shows that the framework coincides with the phenomenological discourses of performative space.

1.6.1 The contents of each chapter

Chapter 2 examines the phenomenological aspect of performative space in Western discourse, looking specifically at theatre and media studies. This offers a background for phenomenology as a methodology for analysis theatre and performance. Then, I expand the interpretation of agency as a performative energy or force for establishing the interactive relationship between the spectator and the *mis-en-scene* in hypermedial theatre. This offers insight into the issues relevant to the issue of performative space, including the aesthetic actions of inter-activity, embodiment and presence.

Chapter 3 reviews the literature on the concept of *Qi* in Confucian philosophy, focusing specifically on the line of Mencius's interpretation of *Qi*. This review prepares for an exploration of the relationship between the spectator and the mediated environment in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. At the end of the chapter, I question whether agency can work as *Qi*.

Subsequently, in Chapter 4 I link Mencius's interpretation of *Qi* with phenomenological aspects for the development of a framework for *Qi*-arising Space: that is done for an in-depth analysis of the embodiment process of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly show a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. I compare the experiences of agency to that of *Qi* and

interrogate the spatiality of performative acts within the context of *Qi*. The comparison and interrogation lay the foundation of my argument in this thesis – that is, the embodiment process of *Qi* as the constitution of performative spaces. In addition, I use the combined approach to offer a rethinking of the issues of inter-activity, embodiment and presence. By so doing, I will highlight what the use of *Qi* energy can bring to an analysis of the performative space in hypermedial theatre.

The following chapter (Chapter 5) analyses three case studies, respectively comprised of different forms of the viewer's performative acts in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. This chapter discusses each of the three aesthetic actions of inter-activity, embodiment and presence separately and show their relationship to the constitution of performative space and the transmission of performative energy from the Western and Chinese perspectives elucidated in Parts I and II. All three aesthetic actions can be found in these works, but I only use one to expand on them here.

1.6.2 The case studies

The works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre chosen as research material for this thesis are listed below:

- Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan: *Wind Shadow* (2006)
- Chen Yao and Ku Ming-shen: *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, Flowers, Snow and Moon* (2008)
- Industrial Technology Research Institute, Taiwan: *Flow of Qi* (2007).

As my research is grounded in the present-day culture in Taiwan, my choice of case studies is based on the need to examine the works of Taiwanese artists. To examine my hypothesis, that is, whether the flow of *Qi* in traditional Chinese aesthetics creates a performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre, I have chosen research material that includes choreographed work (e.g., *Wind Shadow*), dance improvisation (e.g., *CHANCEFORMATION*) and new media installation (e.g., *Flow of Qi*).

Of the works selected, *Wind Shadow* and *Flow of Qi* are explicitly associated with a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. As its title indicates, *CHANCEFORMATION* is concerned with natural phenomena. Yet, using my framework of *Qi*-arising Space, I consider the embodiment of *Qi* to occur in each selected work, as, here, the utilisation of technological media brings forth a configuration wherein the viewer and the work originally open up to and consist of each other, an existence mode offered by the *Qi* world model.

I consider the case studies examined here to be examples of hypermedial theatre, as their computer-based media play major roles in the course of the performances. Moreover, the dynamic relationships between the media and the spectator are vital prerequisites to the spatial configurations of the performances. For instance, *Wind Shadow* and *CHANCEFORMATION* are works in which the dynamic development of the performances are related not only to the performer's improvisation in reaction to the media on stage but also to various interpretations of the spectator. Furthermore, in *Flow of Qi*, the participants' breath is instantly transformed into projected images on the floor. Meanwhile, the subsequent adjustment of the participants' breath is constantly

affected by the appearing images. In each of these three works, the spectator is regarded as capable of pondering what is shown, generating perceptions and making decisions in the course of the performances. The incorporation of the spectator in the *mis-en-scene* is a characteristic of hypermedial theatre.

Another factor that informed my selection of artworks for analysis relates to the mode of interaction between the spectator and the work. By this, I mean various complex degrees of the spectator's responses to the work. I chose *Wind Shadow* because, through the interplay of light and shadows, the work creates a certain atmosphere that draws the audience members in towards the flux of the cosmos in their dynamic interpretation of the performance. *CHANCEFORMATION* rethinks the use of the viewers' bodies through the viewer vote and their responses to the improvisation performance. As for *Flow of Qi*, the participant physically alters outcomes of projected images on the floor by virtue of a computerised sensing system.

Part I: The Western perspective and aesthetic context

Chapter 2: Performativity and its spatiality

In Chapter 2, Part I of this thesis, I elucidate the Western viewpoint on the key issue of this study, namely, performative space, through which I refer to spatiality in hypermedial theatre that is created by performative acts created through technology. My discussion focuses on the way in which the constitution of performative space in question elicits a very specific aesthetic experience among viewers. I will examine in depth how the transmission of energy or forces between the viewer and the work is spatialised through the use of media technologies that induce performative acts. This leads to an initial contextualisation of the main research question: how does the circulation of *Qi* in traditional Chinese aesthetics create performative spaces in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre and how does the circulation of *Qi* also provide the potential for new interactions between the spectator and the work from the spectator's point of view? (see Introduction, p. 13). In order to support the connection between the two perspectives, it is necessary to examine the practices and theories of performative space in contemporary Western theatre.

This chapter starts with an overview of performative space in relation to energy in the context of the kind of contemporary Western theatre which foregrounds viewers' responses to the work through experimenting with the spatial arrangement of the viewer-work relationship (see 2.1).

In the second section (see 2.2) I examine four issues relating to performative space: agency, inter-activity, embodiment, and presence, which inform my

conceptualization of performative space for hypermedial theatre. Mainly relying on Janet H. Murray's (1997) notion of agency and Andy Lavender's concept (2006) of a hypermedial *mise-en-scène*, I develop a working definition of the viewer's agency and explore different forms of that agency that operates upon the viewer's encounter with the hypermedial work (see 2.2.1). Then, on this basis, I characterise the other three, interrelated issues that are seen to stem from the viewer's agency, but each have their own specific aesthetic impact. I name them as three aesthetic actions of agency. Firstly, I discuss Jay David Bolter and Diane Gromala's idea of performative relationships (2003), Heidegger's (1962) phenomenology and Bolter and Richard Grusin's (2000) concept of hypermediacy. This allows me to show that the interactions between the viewer and the hypermedial work, which are affected by the transmission of agency, may generate a structure in-between actuality and virtuality (see 2.2.2). Secondly, I elaborate on how these interactions may lead to the embodiment of the viewer's phenomenal body in the merging of the two realms. The elaboration is with reference to Mark B. Hansen's (2006) interpretation of the 'body schema' and 'technics' in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology (see 2.2.3). The third issue is about the presence of the viewer's phenomenal body and its spatial implications, which may be realised through performative encounters. I mainly apply Gabriella Giannachi and Nick Kaye's (2011) definition of presence, Don Ihde's (2010) research into Heidegger's notion of praxis and Sita Popat's (2011) interpretation of liveness and agency to the examination (see 2.2.4).

The final section provides a summary of my findings and explains a possible linkage between the performative space in relation to the viewer's agency and the dynamic space that exists in the worldview of *Qi* (see 2.3).

2.1 Defining performative space in hypermedial theatre

I define performative space in hypermedial theatre as *spatiality created by performative acts that are conducted by the transmission of energy/force between the viewer and a computer-based theatrical work*. I propose that the performative space is constituted under the condition in which the operation of energy/force intensifies the reciprocal interactions between the viewer and the work. Such a space is different from concrete buildings, which offer performance venues and still exist after performances finish. Moreover, the definition does not refer to the space that is constitutive of the bodily co-presence of the audience and the performer without the disturbance of media, which is characterised by Erica Fischer-Lichte (2008). It also does not imply the 'event-space' that Dorita Hannah (2011) interprets as a space generated by the socio-cultural relationships between performances and buildings/venues in which the performances take place. I propose that this definition of performative space in hypermedial theatre is similar to the operation of *Qi* in practices of traditional Chinese aesthetics, as both aesthetic perspectives concern the induction and realization of the potential for interaction.

In the introduction, I have briefly explicated the term *performativity*, which is derived from Austin's speech act theory (1963). Furthermore, I have elucidated

that the issue of performativity in hypermedial theatre studies concerns the audience's awareness of the spatial configuration of the interactive relationships between a computer-based medium and other media and the performer (e.g., Lavender, 2006). This concern is the focus of my research on performativity. I distinguish it from the social aspects that are emphasized by existing scholarship in performance studies (e.g., Fischer-Lichte, 2008). In this section I offer a further examination of the performative space and its role in hypermedial theatre. This examination may help us to understand how the operation of certain efficacious energy or force affects the interconnections between performative acts and the viewer-work relationship in hypermedial theatre.

Before focusing on the impact of computer technologies upon theatre since the 1990s, I examine the styles of avant-garde theatre in the 1920s and 1960s, where the use of performativity is implicitly emphasised along with artists' experiments on spectatorship. I suggest that there is a significant factor that unites these clusters of performance styles. That issue is a concern with taking a laboratory-like approach to experiment on the viewer's participation in the circulation of energy. Indeed, the works of the artists in the different generations represent various attitudes towards technology, from regarding it as an obstacle to accepting it as another performer on stage and an extension of the viewer's body. These attitudes all lead to a highlighting of spatial configuration of the performance that aims to intensify the circulation of energy alongside the opening up of the actor-audience relationship.

The term *avant-garde* was originally the title of an anarchist magazine named by Bakunin and published in Switzerland in 1878 (see Innes, 1993: 1). Due to the revolutionary context, the spirit of *avant-garde* was adopted by artists during that era who sought to eliminate artistic tradition in Continental Europe and simultaneously to create new forms. In this respect, *avant-garde* art attacked the cultural and economic system and hegemony and claimed that '[p]ersonal liberation came to be conceived psychologically or even spiritually, rather than as an external condition' (Innes, 1993: 6).

Christopher Innes suggests that such a revolutionary spirit is defined by 'primitivism', which refers 'to [a] return to man's "roots", whether in the psyche or prehistory' (Innes, 1993: 3) instead of to the development of technology.¹¹ As Innes analyses, psychological return can be identified with the exploration of dreams and subconsciousness, while prehistorical return can be characterised by an emphasis on ritual forms and myths (see *ibid.*). The two are complementary to each other in works of *avant-garde* theatre; moreover, they were shared and recurrent specifically in the 1920s and 1960s (see *ibid.*: 2).

The approaches that these theatre practitioners employed were to 'experiment with different types of theatre spaces [from ancient times or remote places] and restructured concepts of movement and perception as well as the relationships between actors and spectators' (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 109, my

¹¹ According to this interpretation of primitivism, the spirituality that *avant-garde* artists searched for indicates an original state without restrictions caused by reasons, languages and orders (see Innes, 1993: 3).

addition). These approaches aimed at examining the nature of theatre and creating fresh forms different from traditional ones. Through such approaches the interconnections between the spectator and the work were fostered, and, simultaneously, a certain transcendence already existing in the living world was revealed. Thus, the works in the avant-garde style regarded 'artistic creation as "process", in place of presenting a theatrical "product", substituted for the notion of "becoming" versus "being"' (Innes, 1993: 7). Both the performer and the spectator participated in the development of works in which a symbiotic community was generated.

Fischer-Lichte (2008) asserts that the focus of the participation of the audience in avant-garde theatre that recurred in the 1920s and the 1960s can be conceived of as a turn of performativity. She proposes that performative acts exist under a condition where 'the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators' is achieved (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 38). This proposition frames an aesthetic of performativity. The frame resides in creating a communal field for the two parties who function as co-subjectivities to develop 'various modes of mutual, physical *contact* that help explore the interplay between proximity and distance, public and private, or visual and tactile contact' (ibid.: 40, original emphasis). The multiple roles, positions and functions of the spectators in such a democratic mechanism lead to the foregrounding of the potential to develop the constant interactions and interconnections that exist between the spectators and the ever-altering situations that they encounter in the course of performances.

In addition to taking the spectator's participation as pivotal to the creation of performative spaces, inspired by Gernot Bohme's aesthetics of atmosphere, Fischer-Lichte suggests that 'the particular atmospheres [that] these spaces exude' generate a certain spatiality of performativity in performance (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 114, my addition). As Bohme states, atmospheres can be identified as 'spaces insofar as they are tinged by the presence of things, people, or their surrounding constellations' (Bohme, 1995: 33, translated by Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 115). As such, atmospheres can be thought of as certain morphogenetic spheres, neither 'objective, like certain properties that things have', nor 'subjective, such as a mental state of mind' (ibid.). Viewed the other way round, atmospheres are radiated from things and simultaneously permeate a perceiver's body and mind. They are constantly regenerated by both the things and their perceivers. In this respect, according to Fischer-Lichte, 'atmospheres appertain to the performative' (2008: 115), as they are shared by things and perceivers through the reactions between the two parties. Atmospheric spaces are concurrent with performative spaces when the things and the perceivers support each other's appearing in these spaces.

In her discussion of performative spaces, Fischer-Lichte carefully articulates why Bohme further defines atmospheres as the 'ecstasy of things' (2008: 115-116). The term *ecstasy*, according to Bohme, is regarded as 'the spheres of presence of something else – their [specific] reality [for people who perceive them] in space' (Bohme, 1995: 33, translated by Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 115, my addition). Fischer-Lichte explains ecstasy as 'the special manner in which a thing appears present to a perceiver', or a state in which 'things have an

immense effect on anyone perceiving them because they appear as particularly present' (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 116). This explanation indicates that, when either atmosphere or ecstasy emerges, certain liminal space where things and perceivers reveal themselves to each other is foregrounded. That is to say, within an atmospheric space, things physically connect with perceivers through a certain oscillation – their interactive and performative relationships. These relationships themselves shape spatiality, where the things become present with the perceivers.

In this context, Fischer-Lichte identifies the state of ecstasy as 'an energy generated by things' (2008: 116). Conceived as such, the ecstasy can be thought of as 'something, which pours itself out into the performative space *between* the things and the perceiving subject – a specific atmosphere' (ibid., original emphasis). That is, with ecstasy, the energy or force belongs to things, and yet also act as part of the person. Her view implies certain possible linkage between a person's own feelings and the things when their shared energy or force permeates along with performative acts. In other words, in theatre performance the audience does not play a role of observer extrinsic to the situation they encounter. Rather, the audience is involved in and actively gives feedback (whether mentally or physically) to what they sense.

I accept Fischer-Lichte's view that implies performative space as related to the transmission of energy between the audience and the performance. Due to the circulating energy, it is impossible to separate the meaning-making process from bodily experiences. However, the investigation by Fischer-Lichte, as discussed previously, concentrates on the materiality of performance (i.e., the

corporeality of the actor, the physical conditions of the performance space and the bodily encounters between the actor and the audience in the course of performances). Due to this perspective, Fischer-Lichte asserts that the use of technology obstructs feedback loops between the performer and the audience (2008: 67-74). Performative spaces, in this sense, may not be generated without the live performer. This account indicates a condition in which the live/actual overpowers the mediated/virtual.

In contrast, I am suspicious of the monopolistic primacy of live performance when some works require the reciprocal and mutual influences among the organic bodies of the performer, the viewer and the mediated set. Especially in cases of hypermedial theatre, the live performer is usually deliberately juxtaposed with audiovisual media to interrogate the potential for interactions between the physical, the virtual and the viewer's worlds. Not only the live but also the mediated are crucial to the achievement of performative spaces.

On this basis, I would assume the above-mentioned discourses of atmosphere and ecstasy with respect to performative space as a perspective that brings forth an implicit focus on how the transmission of energy or force between the viewer and the work affects the spatial implications of performativity. The transmission carves out shared performative spaces of the live/physical and the mediated/virtual. I suggest that it is in the aspect of the potential for interactions that this perspective in the context of contemporary Western theatre has some parallels to a *Qi* worldview that is expressed in practices of traditional Chinese aesthetics. I will show in due course in the second part of this thesis how these parallels are explored in a number of Chinese classics.

Put another way, if we place the focus on *how* the potential energy or force transmits in the mediated environment rather than on *what* the perceivable content, materiality, condition or intensity are given, it seems that the physical and the virtual can be seen as various forms of the energy/force operation rather than two entities that are opposite each other. The critical question that arises here concerns the way the transmission of the energy/force could affect the spatial configuration of diverse media when the viewer interacts with the work. This is a more appropriate question than asking whether the live functions more strongly than the mediated to achieve the interaction. The information exchange between the mind and the body, between the virtual and the physical, does result in the dynamic creation of the work.

I look at the issue of performative space in this thesis neither from the angle of how the development of theatre architectures and lighting and recording equipment affect the arrangement of the performance space (e.g., Baugh, 2005) nor from how the renewal of art forms impacts the viewer's perceptions on the socio-cultural level (e.g., Bishop, 2012). The space of human society that is structured through human wills and power (e.g., Michel Foucault, 1975) is never my concern here. Instead, the accepted position on the issue assumes that *the transmission of energy/force between the viewer and diverse media in multiple spaces and times may be achieved and heightened through the use of computer technology, which aims at expressing the psychophysical energy in performance*. By this, I mean that the operation of energy/force, with respect to the potential to increase the viewer's bodily and psychological activities in the mediated environment, can be considered a factor indispensable to the constitution of performative spaces. In Chapter 4 I will

show that my assumption of performative spaces in hypermedial theatre has an implicit linkage with the notion of *Qi* in Chinese philosophy. This is a hypothesis in which both the operations of energy or force in hypermedial theatre and *Qi* in Chinese philosophy are able to engender performative acts either physically or psychologically.

I argue from this angle that the earlier-discussed characteristics of avant-garde theatre – that is, merging the primitive, the exotic and the dream-like and involving the viewer's reactions – can be interpreted as the generation process of certain energy or force which is efficacious to the constitution of liminal spaces for the co-subjectivities, namely, the viewer and the work. The artists' various experiments with the participation of the viewer have extended not only the avant-garde spirit and the use of performativity but also the function of the energy or force. According to Christopher Baugh (2005), with the invention of computer technologies after the 1960s, theatre practices have gradually developed in two opposite directions: 'rejection' and 'embrace' of technology. The former indicates the belief in the failure of the performer-spectator feedback loop caused by the use of technology, whereas the latter reflects a recognition of the possibilities that the nature of technology provides for treating technological media as co-performers (see Baugh, 2005: 212). With reference to Baugh's view, I suggest that the tendency to deny technology results in works that focus on the operation of performative energy or forces upon the human body itself and upon material realities. In contrast, the incorporation of technology can be conceived of as leading to works that have the dynamic influence of performative energy or force on the creation of mixed realms, in which the physical/live and the virtual/mediated coexist.

The acting concept of Jerzy Grotowski is regarded as a paragon of the 'rejection' group (see Baugh, 2005: 191-197; Dixon, 2007: 27-28). His theatre practice emphasises 'an eradication of blocks [between inner impulse and outer reaction]' (Grotowski, 1968: 16; cited by Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 82, my addition). The impulse and reaction are concurrent. The performer's body is 'converted into energy through acting' (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 82). In this sense, the use of the body is characterised as generating performativity, rather than as a symbolic tool. The inner is not separated from the outer; instead, they associate with each other through the flow of energy.

Grotowski's way of realising the actor's communion with the audience in performance is to exploit the textures of simple materials and lighting with a minimal form (see Baugh, 2005: 194-196; Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 111). For instance, in *Kordian* (1961) audiences randomly sat on three sickbeds dispersed in a ward while actors performed on the sickbeds and around the place. *The Constant Prince* (1965) took place within a rectangular stage encompassed by a wall, which was made of timber planks and approximately as high as the position of a sitting adult's chin. Audiences sat behind the wall on the four sides to view the actors' performance on the stage. These two works, according to Fischer-Lichte, indicate a strategy of demonstrating how 'the restrictions of the spatial arrangements channelled the energy circulating in the performative space' (2008: 111).¹² The energy here derives from the

¹² This strategy to achieve the constitution of performative spaces in the course of performances focuses on the ways of arranging an (almost) empty space that enable possible movements of actors and spectators (see Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 110). In addition to this, Fischer-Lichte suggests two other strategies. One is about 'the creation of spatial arrangements enabling so far unexplored possibilities for the negotiation of relationships

performance of both the actors and the audience. That is, the given structure of the performance space foregrounds not the scenery but rather a certain architectonic process in which the actors and the audience constantly receive and radiate each other's energy and feelings. It is through the limited arrangement of space that the spatiality created by the performative acts of the actors and the audience is made possible.

In addition, the works of Peter Brook and Richard Schechner are also regarded as exhibiting negative attitudes toward technology (see Baugh, 2005: 185, 197-198; Innes, 1993: 125-136, 173-178).¹³ The two directors apply Grotowski's energy concept – namely, the body as the embodying mind – to the use of the performance space and to break the actor-audience hierarchy. Brook's thesis, *The Empty Space*, (1968) shows that an examination of the material realities of places and buildings where performances take place is necessary. He asserts that this is necessary because the realities here are relevant to historical, atmospheric and sensory features of the performance space. For Brook, there is energy engendered in the course of associating those environmental constituents. As he suggests, disclosing spaces for acting

between actors and spectators, movement and perception' (ibid.). The other is about 'the experimentation with given spaces usually fulfilling other purposes' (ibid.).

¹³ Eugenio Barba is considered by Grotowski as his leading disciple (see Innes, 1993: 168). I do not mention Barba here because the key concern of his theory of acting seems to less relevant in relation to my thesis. His neurophysiological analysis focuses on the actor's voice and improvisation techniques, the behaviours and expressions of the human body affected by multi-cultures as well as the impact of the work on human society (see ibid.: 11, 168). My thesis, on the other hand, mainly investigates the relationship between the operation of energy and the spatial arrangements of theatre works. Hence, I focus on Brook and Schechner rather than on Barba in this section.

is a process '[whose] aim [...] is to make the "inner" and the "outer" merge, to convert a "show" into an "experience"' (Brook in Todd and Lecat, 2003: 33; cited by Baugh, 2005: 170, my addition). That is to say, it does matter how the spatial arrangements of an empty space motivate and induce the transmission of energy or force between the inner and the outer, namely, the spectator's participation in the performance event. In this sense, Brook's approach can be thought of as parallel to the first strategy of creating performative spaces, as indicated previously (see pp. 59-60).

Expounding upon his research into aboriginal ritual, Schechner's book, *Environmental Theatre* (1978), identifies spectators' acts as participants and community members in religious activities. Their acts in this sense consist of the environment of acting itself. Schechner asserts that 'the ambition to make theatre into ritual is nothing other than a wish to make performance efficacious, to use [theatrical] events to change people' (Schechner, 1971: 62; cited by and with additions from Innes, 1993: 11). This implies that certain energy or forces shift among the spectators/participants, through their joining in rituals. The joining can be interpreted as performative acts, since it asks the active and constant responses of the spectators/participants to situations that they encounter. Through the process, the reality in which the spectators/participants exist may be altered. Furthermore, performative spaces generated by the performative acts here could be seen as spaces that are structured by using the bodies of the performers and the spectators/participants as part of the places where performances take place. Again, similar to the concepts espoused by Grotowski and Brook, Schechner's environmental theatre highlights the framing of the live performance and the

bodily presences of both the actor and the spectator as constitutive of the performance space. Thus, we can say that the constitution of performative spaces in his theatre can be characterised as the first strategy proposed by Fischer-Lichte (2008).

During the late 1970s, through the introduction of IBM's Personal Computer to theatre, a kind of performance mode which adopted multi-disciplinary fields and took mediated images to the foreground emerged (see Baugh, 2005: 209). According to Innes, various 'avant garde productions tend to be expensive, and require the full resources of the illusionistic stage' (1993: 215). The use of computer technologies in performance has become a prevailing method to popularise and sometimes commercialise theatre. Furthermore, the complicated control system creates augmented layers of scenery and audiovisual landscapes to reinforce the emotional aspect of narratives. The mediated environment provides the spectator certain experiences akin to seeing film. Such a viewpoint can be seen as established on the functional concern of technology – that is, how the effects of technological media work on the viewer's perception.

However, here my understanding of the use of computer technology in theatre is primarily affected by the phenomenological research of Lavender (2006) and Hansen (2006) on the interaction between the spectator and the work from the perspective of the spectator. The standpoint that the two scholars apply can be characterised as the '*operational*', rather than the '*observational*', to use Hansen's terms (Hansen, 2006: 12). Lavender's interpretation of hypermedial theatre highlights a process by which computer-oriented mise-en-scène

transforms the spectator's feedback into certain reactions which are capable to affect the development of the work (see Lavender, 2006: 63-64). This does not indicate that technology and the mediated realm overpower performers and the physical realm. Rather, the source of energy or forces operating in hypermedial theatre comes from the bodily association of both the spectator and the performer with the computerised and non-computerised media. That is, the reciprocal interactions between these multiple elements can be characterised as an activity communal and natural to these elements.

As to Hansen, his concept of mixed reality identifies the body as 'the central role [...] in the interface to the virtual' (Hansen, 2006: 2). Yet, in contrast to Fischer-Lichte, for Hansen the use of the body shifts the focus away from the intensity of live performance towards a process of imaging that requires that the spectator exist in physical and virtual realms simultaneously. The responses of the spectator to the work are conceived of as certain 'perceptuomotor activity', which refers to the person's 'most primitive perceptual capacities' (ibid.: 3). Put another way, in the course of interaction, the presence of the spectator embodies the linkage of actuality and virtuality. Moreover, due to the interaction, the presence of technological media brings forth to a certain extent the spectator's ability to function in the mingled realms.

I propose that the above-discussed modes of interaction can be characterised as the use of performativity in hypermedial theatre. In it the approach of employing computer technology in performance is intended to generate the potential for the spectator to participate actively in the merging of the physical and the virtual. Spatiality that is created by performative acts is radically

related to the degree and ability of the spectators' bodily and psychological reactions to what they encounter. In other words, performative spaces in the context of hypermedial theatre can be thought of as certain *spaces in which the spectator freely travels in-between the physical and the virtual and, at once, is capable to affect and be affected by the movements of multiple media.*

The achievement of the 'most primitive perceptual capacities' through the use of computer technology is exemplified by the works of Robert Wilson, *The Builders Association* and *The Blast Theory*. The criteria that I use when selecting these artists are based on the way in which computer technologies in these works operate as a co-performer that incorporates with the spectator, the performer and other media.¹⁴ The operation of computer technology is indispensable to the incitement of the spectator's interpretations or physical involvement in the becoming process of mixed reality. I argue that the three strategies to create performative spaces proposed by Fischer-Lichte (2008) can be applied in the analysis of the computer-oriented works. I do not embrace Fischer-Lichte's view that mainly focuses on the viewer's identification with the bodily presence of the performer on the socio-cultural level. Instead, I assume that the use of technological media intensifies the energy transmission, namely, the potential for interactions between the perceiving subject and what is shown on stage. In this context of embracing

¹⁴ In addition to resting on the leading role of computer technology in performance, my selection depends on a careful consideration of the different art forms of these works. Wilson's productions represent the experiments of technological media on physical stages (e.g., theatre, stadium and interior spaces). The works of *The Builders Association* can be seen as probing into the depth of the projection space and *The Blast Theory* example expands the performance space into people's lived space and the Internet.

technology, the use of the concept of *Qi* may complement our knowledge of the viewer-work relation that exists in a space where the physical/live mixes with the virtual/mediated. I will discuss the operation of *Qi* in this context later in Chapter 4.

The following discussion will explicate the various ways that the use of technological media in the works of Wilson, *The Builders Association* and *The Blast Theory* intensifies the energy transmission, which is related to the potential for interactions. First, Wilson's works are usually characterised as having the slow tempo of and trafficking in a collage of dream-like images. Wilson's aim in assembling various seemingly unrelated matters is to produce 'the interior reflection' (Wilson, 1987: 116; cited by Innes, 1993: 202). That is, the course of performances operates as a psychological therapy by which spectators are guided to see their own psyches. For Wilson, it is only 'on the level of subliminal association' that '[e]ach spectator has to make his own "sense" out of this stream of consciousness' (Innes, 1993: 203). The emphasis of those works is shifted away from the coherence of theatrical forms and language towards the connections and flows of latent and potential fragments. Wilson employs technological media to disclose the deepest part of the mind. With this approach, the disclosing process implies a way that certain performative spaces could be constituted through the spectator's participation in the reorganisation of the physical and the virtual shown on stage.

For instance, *CIVIL warS: a tree is best measured when it is down*¹⁵ by Wilson, a 12-to-20-hour theatre work, consists of various sections that apply multiple languages and media. In one scene presented in a production of the American Repertory Theatre [ART] (1985), two Scribes in black and white colours perform extremely slow movements on the opposite sides of a long and narrow stage. Meanwhile, two polar bears are laid down by a spaceship onto a platform extended from the right side of the stage; and they then waltz in slow motion. Along the front of the stage is a chorus, whose members expose only their heads from hatches of the floor, and on the stage backdrop is a video projection of a waterfall.

I believe that the previously-discussed strategy of generating performative space proposed by Fischer-Lichte (2008) – that is, that the circulation of the energy between actors and spectators is channelled by the spatial arrangements of an (almost) empty space – may be applied to the mediated performance of *CIVIL warS*. Different from the works of Grotowski, Brook and Schechner, which emphasise the physical condition of empty spaces, the minimal form of the physical stage in *CIVIL warS* carries multilayered images and imageries to constitute performative spaces. I suggest that the almost empty space is transformed by the use of technological media into a certain

¹⁵ The original intention was to have *CIVIL warS: a tree is best measured when it is down* take place at the 1984 Olympics Arts Festival. However, due to the work's \$ 2.5 million price tag and the complex techniques required, the performance was cancelled (see Innes, 1993: 209). A few segments of the work were revealed in the years before and after the festival: 'Act I, scene B in Rotterdam (1983), Sections I, A; III, E; IV, A and the Epilogue in Cologne (repeated without Act I at ART in 1985), plus Act V in Rome; and the thirteen short entr'actes, *The Knee Plays*, in Minneapolis (1984)' (ibid.: 205).

environment which is imbued with energy or force that creates an ever-changing feedback loop. The juxtaposition of the various components of the stage seems to give rise to an energetic implication, where a spatiotemporal interlinkage is generated and developed in accordance with spectators' respective perceptions of the work. In other words, the reorganisation of the images and mediated environment may facilitate the circulation of the energy or forces between the spectator and the work.

The Builders Association takes a theatrical mode of narrative to explore the impact of media and computer technologies on contemporary cultures and daily life. The company usually employs the projection of various images, including real-time shooting, recorded videos and film footage, onto large-scale screens while the live actors perform on stage. By addressing a contradiction between places and non-places, the stage space and the image space is at once separated and overlapped.

The company's *Super Vision* (2005), which addresses issues of personal information and identity, can illustrate the features of the company's usage of technology in performance. The work sets up a wide screen as the stage for both projections and live performances. A long table is situated below the screen stage that is used both as a working site for computer technicians and simultaneously as an extended space for the actors' performances with video cameras. The above-mentioned configuration indicates 'an organization of places for performance [...] that explicitly enacts "media space" as palimpsest, as the performance proceeds through a continual writing over of real, virtual and simulated spaces and events' (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 197). In other

words, the projection screen is transformed into an event place in which different spaces and times interconnect with each other. The physical and the virtual in the interconnecting process are not only transformed into each other but also mutually support each other's embodiment.

I suggest that the interconnecting process in *Super Vision* may be discerned as the second strategy of generating performative spaces described in Fischer-Lichte's research – namely, 'the creation of spatial arrangements enabling so far unexplored possibilities for the negotiation of relationships between actors and spectators, movement and perception' (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 110). The strategy in Fischer-Lichte's terms indicates an interrogation of how, via the dynamic use of the performance space, the energy circulation between the spectator and the work would renew the actor-spectator relationship and the body-mind interaction. Different from Fischer-Lichte's focus on the performer's bodily presence, the indispensable condition under which *Super Vision* creates its spatial arrangements is the function that computer technology plays. The site for constituting performative spaces turns out to be the threshold between the physical and the virtual rather than the places where the live performance and immediate perceptions occur. In this respect, we can say that the way redefining the live with the help of the mediated can be interpreted as a becoming process of performative spaces. This is based on the fact that the spectators' respective responses to what is shown on stage seem to create certain dynamic circuits of energy or force in performance. These constantly renew the interactive relationship between the physical and the virtual. The projected images are not restricted within the

frame of the screen but rather may expand into realms that mix the physical with the mediated.

The Blast Theory also examines the nature of technological media in their works. But this group draws on game studies and the spectator's active intervention in the progression of performances. As artist Matt Adams suggests, the group's works concern the potential of places for activating the mutual dialogues of the spectator with the places (see Adams in O'Grady, 2011: 158). Moreover, the aim of their works is not only to evoke the spectators' awareness of the borders between themselves and the performers, but the pieces also seek to motivate the spectators to get across the borders (see *ibid.*). As a result, the group employs various kinds of sites that may increase the intensity and extents of interaction in the context of pop culture, including computer games, the Internet and public venues.

In what follows, I will discuss the group's works, *Desert Rain* (1999), *Can You See Me Now?* (2001) and *Rider Spoke* (2007). *Desert Rain* can explicate how the application of computer technology could realise Fischer-Lichte's second strategy for the creation of performative spaces, while *Can You See Me Now?* and *Rider Spoke* illustrate the third strategy.

Desert Rain (1999) is the group's collaboration with the University of Nottingham Mixed Reality Lab. It applies 'computer game logic of find, retrieve, kill or rescue' (Clarke, 2001: 44; cited by Giannachi, 2004: 117) in order to design a war game that simulates a virtual environment based on the first Gulf War. Each time it is played, the game has six viewers and some performers,

who support the progression of the game. The viewers work as players; through changing the balance of the weight of both their feet on footpads, they manipulate their avatars' encounters with others' avatars and characters in the story. Meanwhile, the viewers and the performers can hear each other's voices. Such an organisation 'attempts to articulate the ways in which the real, the virtual, the fictional and the imaginary have become increasingly entwined' (Adams in Blast Theory, 2002; cited by Giannachi, 2004: 116). This hybrid sense is even intensified in one moment, where a performer hands cards to the viewers through a rain-screen projected with the virtual scenes. According to the analysis of Giannachi, the set of the interface 'brought the viewers right back from the virtual into the "real", and from there into the world of performance' (Giannachi, 2004: 118). The interactions between diverse media lead to constant dislocations of the players in the mixed worlds.

Like *Super Vision* by The Builders Association, the arrangement of the mixed worlds in *Desert Rain* explores certain inventive situations in which the audiences encounter the work. The creation of spatial arrangements provides an impression of dislocation – that is, the audiences become aware of their multi-layered presence in the mixed worlds. With the foregrounding of the dislocation, the mediated interactions that embrace the movements of both the audience members and performers can be thought of as a process by which certain energy or force circulates along with performative acts of the audiences and performers. As a result, performative spaces develop within the combined worlds.

The two other works, *Can You See Me Now?* (2001) and *Rider Spoke* (2007), transform cities into stages on which the performances take place, with the use of a GPS system to track the shifting locations of the performers and audience members. The transformation in these two works brings forth a liminal situation in which players (i.e., audiences and performers) shift between the virtual and the real, past and present. *Can You See Me Now?* lets some players run around a city and some play online. Via their computers, these players try to catch each other by asking people's degree of physical or virtual presence. This game structure shows the players' crossing of boundaries between the two worlds (see O'Grady, 2011: 170). In *Rider Spoke*, the audience members ride bikes on the street, again with GPS devices. The work sets up a threshold whereby participants are able to come in the game (i.e. the performance) and listen to other participants' statements. Through this, each member actively participates in the creation of the work, and the presentation of the statements turns public realm into a private one, and the other way round (see Adams in O'Grady, 2011: 163).

Computer technologies used in *Can You See Me Now?* and *Rider Spoke*, similar to the situation in *Desert Rain*, are prerequisites for developing the potential for the interactions between the participants and the mediated performance, and they at once create performative spaces. However, the strategy for the creation of performative spaces employed by the former two works differs from that of *Desert Rain*. I suggest that the strategy in *Can You See Me Now?* and *Rider Spoke* may be interpreted as a process – spatiality of a mixing of physical and virtual realms is created through the superimposition of the virtual on the physical. My interpretation is developed from the third kind

of approach to constitute performative spaces, as defined by Fischer-Lichte (2008). According to her, the approach is 'the experimentation with given spaces usually fulfilling other purposes' (Fischer-Lichte, 2008: 110). This account implies a way that relies on the use of the actor's corporeality to increase the potential for augmenting the historical and material context of performance places. Yet, for hypermedial theatre, computer technology plays a crucial role that makes the creation of performative spaces possible.

With reference to the concepts of Lavender, Hansen and other like-minded scholars (e.g., Laurel, 1993; Murray, 1997; Wood, 2011; Klich and Scheer, 2012) in new media and game studies, I identify the energy and force relating to the potential for interaction between the spectator and the work as agency throughout my thesis. The operation of agency has been regarded as primarily relevant to the aesthetic issue of performativity within the context of the above-mentioned concepts and studies. Similar to my discussion of energy and force in this section, agency has been regarded as being transmitted between the spectator and the hypermedial work through the work's *mise-en-scène* and its intensity as being capable of directly affecting the spectator's reactions to and perceptions of the work. I will provide an in-depth examination of agency in the next section.

To sum up, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, I hypothesize that the operation of energy, which is generated through the potential for interactions between the spectator and the hypermedial work, has similarities with the operation of *Qi* that is described in Chinese philosophy. For this reason, I have elucidated in this section the meaning and forms of the energy

circulation through examining the relationship between the spectator and the work in contemporary Western theatre. Taking this energy circulation as a major premise, I have articulated how the operation of energy/force brings forth and expands performative spaces in which the spectator functions as an active participant in performance. I have offered an interpretation of performative spaces within the context of hypermedial theatre and have explained that the spaces, in this sense, can be characterised as liminality in which movements and perceptions, the live and the mediated, and the physical and the virtual reciprocally incorporate each other. The focus of my discussion is on the spatialisation of the viewer's performative acts along with the transmission of energy/force. In the following sections, I will explicate the meaning of the transmitting energy/force, namely, agency and its three aesthetic actions, which are influenced by the performative encounters between the spectator and the work.

2.2 Issues Relating to Performative Space

In this section, I elaborate on the spatial characteristics of the energy or force that are related to the potential for the spectator's performative acts in hypermedial theatre. The energy or force is identified as agency in this thesis, because, in the phenomenological perspective, agency has been regarded in game and new media studies as significant to the coupling of movement and perception that exists in the mediated environment. In this context, I suggest and expatiate that due to the close interrelation between the operation of agency and the creation of the hypermedial work, the viewers' activities that are generated through their performative encounters with the work can be

framed as aesthetic actions of agency, including inter-activity, embodiment and presence.

2.2.1 Agency

In this thesis, agency is the first central issue that relates to the substance of the performative space in hypermedial theatre. In recent years, the phenomenology of agency has been highlighted in the philosophical fields of psychopathology, cognitive science and mind studies (see Bayne, 2008).¹⁶ The investigations in these fields concern the phenomena of perceiving the other as an agent and that other's doing as agency. In this section, I will elaborate on the ways that various researchers in studies of computer, media and performance (e.g., Murray, 1997; Hansen, 2006; Lavender, 2006; Popat, 2011) have defined the role of audience/players and their agency in the course of performances by applying this phenomenological view. I focus on the account of agency which maintains that agency is indispensable in the design of *mise-en-scène* in hypermedial theatre. That is, agency is related to the spatial configuration of the environment created by hypermedia performance. I suggest that the dynamic interplay of multiple media in this genre of theatre shows the operation of agency – the agent's movements and perceptions that

¹⁶ In his article 'The Phenomenology of Agency' (2008), Tim Bayne explains that nowadays the phenomenology of agency is a cross-disciplinary study: 'philosophers of psychopathology are speculating about the role that unusual experiences of agency might play in accounting for disorders of thought and action; cognitive scientists are developing models of how the phenomenology of agency is generated; and philosophers of mind are drawing connections between the phenomenology of agency and the nature of introspection, phenomenal character, and agency itself' (Bayne, 2008: 182).

result in and, at once, are derived from potentials for influencing the meaning-making process.

A number of studies in computer science, including interactive system design, discuss the design of augmented or mixed reality environments in relation to agency. Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores's book *Understanding Computers and Cognition: A New Foundation for Design* (1986) may exemplify the arguments put forward by a number of them. Winograd and Flores introduce speech act theory, as developed by Austin and John Searle, to computer studies examining how the central role of action in language creates and affects the constitution of our living world. The influence of action on the communication between humans and computer may turn out to be the main focus in computer system design.

Pavel Zahorik and Rick L. Jenison's (1998) article, 'Presence as Being-in-the-World', also follows this trend but from the point of view of phenomenology. By combining Heideggerian and Gibsonian concepts, the two scholars offer an alternative method that shifts attention away from the dichotomous structure of the mental/subjective and physical/objective domains which underlie rationalist tradition and looks towards the dynamic interaction between perceiver and environment. This statement can be considered to analogise the perceiver/performer's dynamics in the virtual environment with those in the actual environment, both of which are generated in an ecological system.

Such a concern for the object's potentials for interaction with the

perceiver/performer in the analysis of Zahorik and Jenison implies that the lawfulness of the coupling between perception and action is contingent upon the extent to which the environment supports the generation of the potentials. In this sense, an alternative aesthetics emerges: '[t]he art-work is more and more embodied in the interface, in the articulation of a space where the art-work as an artefact seems to disappear altogether and only communication between the viewers remains' (Shaw in Duguest, Klotz and Weibel, 1997: 157). When the environment affords more dynamics, actions provoked by the dynamics may be more unexpected. The constitution of the hypermedial work relies on the viewer's responses to what that viewer perceives in open-ended modes of communication.

This concern with dynamics of the mediated environment is closely related to the notion of agency, which places agency as the foremost factor of computer-based artworks and computer system design. The concern may also be affected by the influence of the research on the phenomenology of first-person agency in both the philosophy of psychopathology and mind and in studies of cognitive science¹⁷. Agency that associates with dynamics and potentials is used to describe a particular attitude towards instability and indetermination in the course of performances. That is, subjects experience themselves as active agents who are deliberating about their responses to what is going on in the mediated environment. It is likely that, when *Qi* operates, emphasis falls on a process in which the perceiving subject contemplates and then takes action. This similarity will be further discussed in

¹⁷ My reference is based on Bayne's article 'The Phenomenology of Agency' (2008), which I have mentioned in Footnote 16 (see p. 74).

Chapter 4. Now, I use the respective research of Murray, Brenda Laurel, Jessica Wood and Lavender to explicate what I mean by agency in this thesis.

According to her book, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (1998), Murray draws parallels between computer games and theatre. She maintains that 'agency is the satisfying power to take meaningful action and see the results of our decisions and choices' (ibid.: 126). This indicates that agency does not merely refer to the user's activities and participation that occur in response to the information coming from a system (e.g., moving a joystick according to a computer game's command). Rather, the user's motivations and intentions to make decisions and to take actions are crucial to the experience of agency (e.g., playing a computational chess game). The creation of such a feeling of agency is the aim of the design for interactive environment:

Agency results when the interactor's expectations are aroused by the design of the environment, causing them to act in a way that results in an appropriate response by the well-designed computational system. This matching of the interactor's participatory expectations and actions to the procedural scriptings of the machine creates the pleasurable experience of agency. (Murray, 2012: 12)

The central concern of the design is the agency transmission (i.e. the sharing of energy or forces between the audience and the work due to the blurring of boundaries between the physical and the virtual) and its performance (i.e., the artistic forms that provide and are affected by the potential for the audience's (re)actions in the mediated environment). Agency in this respect functions as an 'aesthetic pleasure' (Murray, 1998: 128). It is with regard to the stimulation

of imagination in motion, rather than merely to a reaction to a stimulus. As Murray illustrates, the sense of agency is 'as if the entire dance hall is at our command [...] we can be both the dancer and the caller of the dance' (ibid.). That is, agency can be understood as efficacious energy or forces through which users play an active role to provoke, ponder on, participate in and perform the configuration of their spatial relationships with the electronic environment. In this sense, Murray suggests that '[o]ne form of agency not dependent on game structure yet characteristic of digital environments is spatial navigation' (ibid.: 129). That is to say, agency does is not created by rules of interaction in a game that sets up conditions for the user's reactions. Instead, it is about the involvement of the user in a process by which, through their exploratory acts in the computer-generated environments, the users perceive the interconnections between multiple media and make decisions on what to respond to and where to move.

Agency in this context is now the term widely employed by researchers who focus on computer studies to articulate this concept of the perception-action relationship. It is worthy of note that in computer-generated environments, according to Murray, it is the users' experience of agency that is emphasised rather than authorship (see ibid.: 153). This occurs because the artist/designer is the author of the interactive system, the one who sets up the conditions of the system, whereas what the user/player decides is the development of performances within that environment.

In addition to Murray, Laurel in her book, *Computers as Theatre* (1993), also innovatively proposes that human-computer interaction (HCI) can de

described as a form of theatre. Similar to Murray's argument that draws on drama and various other elements from dramaturgical theory, Laurel speaks of agency with respect to the significance of action: 'the effect the player's action has on the plot needs to be substantial' (2004: 19). It is said that, when players view themselves as a videogame avatar and character to act within the becoming of a game environment, the player experiences agency.

Furthermore, according to Wood, the feelings of agency are related to some moments in which 'the player feels involved as an agent within the action' (Wood, 2011: 119). That is to say, agency occurs when the player identifies with the game world. Only when the actions alter the outcome of performances can the actions be identified as the operation of agency. With the operation, the performances become dynamic compositions that depend on the player's reactions.

The notion of agency is not only understood today as the potential for action in the electronic environment in terms of computer studies. Rather, it is seen as a dynamic prerequisite for dialogues between the spectator and computer-oriented theatre performance. Applying Murray's discourse of agency, Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer in their book, *Multimedia Performance* (2012), use the term agency to describe the dynamics of multimedia performance which is able to produce interactivity between the spectator and the work (see 153). As the two researchers indicate, without agency the constitution of performative space is impossible. I argue that this is due to the features of the movement-perception coupling and the spectator's aesthetic experience, notions of agency and performative space may be seen

as connecting to the operation of *Qi* in Chinese philosophy. I will come back to this argument in Chapter 4.

Agency is further defined as relating to the context of hypermedial *mise-en-scène* in media and performance studies by Lavender (2006). The scholar comes to an understanding of agency through his reflections on Bolter and Grusin's consideration of hypermediacy and immediacy¹⁸ and Patrice Pavis's concept of *mise-en-scène*. In his article, '*Mise en scène, Hypermediacy and the Sensorium*', Lavender contends that *mise-en-scène* in Pavis's terms refers to 'an engine for spectatorship, configured according to the press of the cultural moment. It organises space for spectating and thereby redistributes meaning and effect' (Lavender, 2006: 63). This perspective implies a spectator's involvement in the dynamic interplay of the live/physical and the mediated/virtual, a state which shows the mutual supports between the spectator's performative acts and the existence of multiple media. Such a spatial structure may arouse the reflection of the spectators on their own memories, imaginations and reality.

¹⁸ In the introduction of this thesis, when defining hypermedial theatre, I have elaborated on the two terms, *immediacy* and *hypermediacy*, with reference to Bolter and Grusin's (2000) book, *Remediation*. The two terms are defined as a double logic of remediation, that is, 'eras[ing] its media in the very act of multiplying them' (Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 5). Immediacy on this basis is identified as a logic in which 'the medium itself should disappear and leave us in the presence of the thing represented' (ibid.: 6). Meanwhile, hypermediacy is regarded as a logic that shows the interactive traces between all media that consist of a digital or mediated environment (see ibid.: 6-14). This logic can be seen in various interactive websites on which texts, images, videos and other related links are connected with hyperlinks.

According to Lavender, '[Hypermedial *m*]ise en scène [...] is the continuum that gives staged elements their effective relation one to another and, thereby, their affective relation to the spectator' (Lavender, 2006: 63, my addition). Here, the 'effective relation' between multiple media indicates potentials for how the spectator sees the incorporation of the performer and the staged elements. Meanwhile, the 'affective relation' between the staged elements and the spectator means potential for the spectator's perceptions of and responses to the (re)mediation between spectator members and the elements. The hypermedial *mise-en-scène* can thus be seen as concentrating on *the spectators' awareness* both of the interrelationships between a computer-based medium and the other media and of the potential engagement of their own and other audience members' reactions to the media in the course of performances.

Lavender explains on this basis that agency with hypermedial *mise-en-scène* can be considered to be 'the simultaneous agency of *hypermediality* (structured around simultaneity) and immediacy' (Lavender, 2006: 56, original emphasis). This simultaneous structure of feeling agency indicates that the mutual dependence between hypermediacy and immediacy, which is characterised by Bolter and Grusin (Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 5), may affect the incorporation of the mediated and the live performances. That is, the two kinds of agency operate with each other when the viewer simultaneously exists in physical and virtual realms. The agency with the hypermedial characteristic can induce the viewer's awareness of multiplicity and intermediation of the media that are used in performance. Simultaneously, with the immediate characteristic the agency leads the viewer to immediately perceive what takes

place on stage. The twin functions of the agency seem able to link the viewer's reality with the virtual world and at the same time to deepen the physical world. Perceiving the interactions between the multiple media while feeling a merging with the mediated environment may hence be thought of as a process in which both the hypermedial and immediate agency are transmitted in-between and distributed to the perceiving subject and the perceived object.

As we have discussed in the case of Murray, Lavender's account of agency concerns the spectator's aesthetic experience; the spectator is aware of the pleasure of being involved in a process of generating meaning and effect. Yet, for Lavender, the experience of agency in hypermedial theatre occurs in certain liminal spaces, where the physical merges with the virtual and the importance of the former is equivalent to that of the latter. This implication of liminality is different from Murray's immersion in virtual reality.

Drawing inspiration from Murray and Lavender's notions of liminality, I suggest that in hypermedial theatre *the feeling of agency may be understood as the awareness of how the operation of a certain energy or force, in relation to the dynamics of the mediated environment, motivates and incites the audience to actively join in and perform the interconnections between a computer-based medium and other media*. By this, I mean that in the interaction process, spectators experience the moment at which their bodily and psychological activities are interwoven with theatrical time and space, and this interweaving (re)creates meanings of what is shown in performances. Such an induction of the audience's active participation and performance is characteristic of the

operation of *Qi* that is described in Chinese philosophy. I will offer an in-depth analysis in Chapter 4.

The extent of the audience's agency (caused by the dynamic interactions of the audience with multiple media) may alter the spatiality of performative acts. In other words, performative spaces can be thought of as a composition of energetic relationships between the physical and the virtual, one in which the layering of their interactions is emphasised. While media technologies increase the complexity of the modes of dynamic interactions between the spectator and the work, the performative spaces in which the two merge with each other can be constantly renewed.

In conclusion, according to the above-discussed notions in computer, media and performance studies, agency as a key element in the constitution of performative space in hypermedial theatre is understood through the combination of perception and action and the process of multiple (re)mediation. The aesthetic experience of agency is linked to the spatial configuration of the interactive relationships between the computer-based medium and other media. When agency operates, the spectator works as an agent who actively participates in the creation of a performance event. The operation of agency in this thesis is presumed to consist of three aesthetic actions: the capabilities of inter-activity, embodiment and presence. In the following sections, I will define these three aesthetic actions and examine their relations with performative spaces.

2.2.2 Inter-activity

This section examines the characteristics of the interaction between the audience and the work when the audience experiences agency in the course of hypermedial performances. I understand the term inter-activity as referring to certain in-between structures by which the flow of agency between the viewer and the work leads to an interweaving of the physical and the mediated. Both agency and inter-activity in this respect are indispensable to the generation of performative space. To begin, I will first explain the association between agency and interaction.

In their book, *Multimedia Performance*, Klich and Scheer suggest that '[a]s soon as an audience member has the agency to alter the work or elicit a reaction to its assertions, the relationship between the viewer and the work can be classified as interactive' (2012: 153). In this thesis, as defined previously in 2.2.1, agency can be regarded as a kind of energy or force that relates to the dynamics of the mediated environment in hypermedial works. Due to this relation, the operation of agency leads to a state in which the audience has the potential to function as an agent that actively takes performative acts. The characteristic relationship, namely, 'interactivity[,] is therefore a mechanism through which the distinctions between artist and audience may be blurred' (Barry, 1996: 139). This means that when the interactive mechanism increases the audience's agency, the mechanism invites and induces the audience to join in the development process of the work. Audience members are capable of giving out their individual decisions to interpret the content of the performance or even alter its course.

However, Bolter and Gromala assert in their book, *Windows and Mirrors: Interaction Design, Digital Art, and the Myth of Transparency* (2003), that the viewer's relationship with the computer-oriented work should be precisely identified as a 'performative relationship':

[d]igital art is about performance, which is perhaps an even better word than interaction to describe the significance of digital design in general. As users, we enter into a *performative relationship* with a digital design: we *perform* the design, as we would a musical instrument. Digital artists and designers create instruments that the user will play. (Bolter and Gromala, 2003: 160, my emphasis)

This implies that the burden of the development to create the mode of interaction falls on the coupling of perception and action rather than on the use of devices with interactive systems. Relying on this understanding, the way the performative relationship in hypermedial theatre could be achieved depends on the viewer's involvement in the multiple (re)mediation between the computer-manipulated medium and the other media. Agency, which means having the potential to generate performative acts and expectations in motion, gives the spectator the capability to play a role as co-performer. It is due to agency, which means that having the potential to generate performative acts and expectations in motion, the spectator is capable of playing the role of co-performer. I propose that, by this perspective, agency here operates in a similar way to *Qi*, as described in Chinese philosophy. I will examine this in the third chapter of this thesis and explain how it could complement our understanding of the structure of the viewer-work relationship.

In addition, in her discussion about the importance of the role of the audience in interactive works, Alice O'Grady maintains that '[t]o create interactive work, one has to be committed to the potential creativity of the state of being "inbetween"' (O'Grady, 2011: 172). The performer and the audience in the creation process are situated in a 'liminal space [which] is a slippery area of unpredictability, uncertainty and movement' (ibid., my addition). The performer is thus not the only interpreter of the work, while the audience is no longer a passive recipient of the information offered by the work. The blurred boundaries between the two sides are indicative of a spatial implication of liminality in which the physical/live and the virtual/mediated interlink with each other. O'Grady proposes on this basis that the spectator can be interpreted as an 'inter-actor' (ibid.).¹⁹ The fore part of this term, *inter*, 'comes from the Latin meaning "between", "among", "mutual" and "reciprocal"' (ibid.: 157). Inter-actor on this basis refers not only to the audience's free and constant travelling between the work and their own reality but also to their ability to incorporate various media that are used on stage.

¹⁹ In her discussion of 'inter-actor', O'Grady also mentions the term 'spect-actor' that is created by John Somers in his article, 'Boalian Perspectives on Interactivity in Theatre' (2011). With reference to Augusto Boal's concept of performance (1979), Somers explains that 'Forum Theatre encouraged audience members to become actors (spect-actors) and not spectators, using theatre as a way to seek and practise solutions to their problems' (Somers, 2011: 151). The audience works as a potential performer in the work. This term lies in a theatre style that seeks to evoke the audience's physical actions through the performer's acting and words that challenge the audience's belief. However, my research of the concept of interactivity is about hypermedial theatre which concerns the interaction between computer-based medium and other media. Therefore, I do not include the term and idea of 'spect-actor' in this section.

In this sense, the key role played by the audience in interactive work shows a double layer of generating meaning and sensorium. First, in a work that highlights the interaction between itself and the audience, '[t]he performance receives a greater proportion of its meaning from the audience, and audience participation becomes vital to the content of it' (Barry, 1996: 139). This means that, in the course of the performance, the audience detects various possible interconnections between themselves and the various media used in the performance. The audience comes to have and rely upon an ever-altering feedback loop to redeploy or bring forth an understanding of what takes place on stage. If there is no audience, the meaning-making process becomes impossible.

Second, through the opening up of the audience and media to each other, the audience's perceptions and feelings about a performance event may also become variable. This is the result of the audience being interwoven within the shared context as part of the whole. This 'sensorial layer' of the audience's role is about how the audience members 'activate and apply their own experiences, knowledge, skills, prejudices, and backgrounds – all of which are certainly framed and impregnated by social-cultural discourses' (Boenisch, 2006: 109-110). This implies that the operation of agency in performance may incite not only the mental and intellectual activities but also the emotions, imaginations, and sensorium of the audience. If this is the case, 'we need to accept that *mediation is an act, a performance*, where both medium and spectator create meaningful spatial realities and invoke a sensorial, phenomenological experience' (ibid.: 110, original emphasis). These spatial and sensorial experiences are not the production of personal feeling, but rather

emotions and actions that result from the information exchange between the spectator and the medium.

With reference to the above-discussed concept of the performative relationship, I propose that the interaction process between the viewer and the work can be interpreted as a form of inter-activity. This inter-activity refers to certain in-between structures with which the shared agency, which belongs to the viewer and which is also part of the work, operates. The combination of the terms *inter* and *activity* indicates two characteristics: one is the mutual and reciprocal influence that exists between the viewer and the work; the other is spatiality resulting from the viewer's performing of the work (whether physically or psychologically). On this basis, I suggest that inter-activity can be seen as an aesthetic action of agency. By this, I mean that viewers function as active agents and at the same time as co-performers and inter-actors when they interact with the work. The performative aspect of the encounter between the two sides is foregrounded. During this encounter, not only the two-way exchange of information but also the merging of the physical and the virtual may be achieved through the engagement of the movements and perceptions of the viewer. Thus, the inter-activity brings forth a liminal field that consists of the physical and virtual elements, the live and mediated performances and the viewer's self-referential feedback loop.

My proposition of inter-activity is also inspired by Ihde's (2010) research on the tool analysis and 'ready-to-hand' in Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time*. According to Ihde's book, *Heidegger's Technologies: Postphenomenological Perspectives*, Heidegger acknowledged that 'all so-called conscious activities

are equally intentional, including such phenomena as moods and emotion and, what is more, bodily movement' (Ihde, 2010: 43, original emphasis). On this basis, Heidegger asserted 'praxis' as the fundamental existential stratum that underlies the relationship between a person and the world (see *ibid.*). This means that individuals engage with their surroundings through their mental, physical and psychological activities and experiences. A person does not act under the condition of body/mind and object/subject dichotomy but rather as a totality while that person encounters things in the world.

For Heidegger, things in this world model are regarded as ontological existences and the mode of their relationships with humans as 'ready-to-hand', which is defined as 'belong[ing] to the stratum of productive use or other forms of active engagement that characterize *praxis*' (Ihde, 2010: 44, original emphasis).²⁰ Things exist as entities within a context that is shared with humans rather than separate from them. Ihde notes that the approach that Heidegger takes to the analysis of tools is to identify intentionality with 'practical knowledge' (*ibid.*: 45). In addition to Husserl's mental concerns, this approach tends to put a highlight on the bodily movements *per se*. The employment of things forms the union of perception and action – establishing symbiosis

²⁰ According to Heidegger (1962), the characteristic relation between people and things can be divided into two kinds, the 'present-to-hand' and the 'ready-to-hand'. As Ihde interprets them, "the "present-to-hand" relation [...] is one in which entities (beings) appear as "just there" and as having certain qualities or predicates. They are "theoretically determined." Contrarily, the "ready-to-hand" belongs to the stratum of productive use or other forms of active engagement that characterize *praxis*. And Heidegger's strategy in *Being and Time* is to show that these are not merely two alternate modes of relation, but that one is founded upon the other, in this case the "present-at-hand" upon the "ready-to-hand." This is, in effect, an action theory of ontology' (Ihde, 2010: 44, original emphasis).

between humans and the world via conscious activities of the body and the mind.

In my view, the praxical knowledge may be thought of as influenced by feedback loops which result from the operation of agency, in consonance with my previous discussion about the relation between agency and the action-perception coupling. By this, I mean that the way that mediates interconnections and communications between humans and tools to become a whole may be interpreted as a way of praxical ready-to-hand. This exists through reciprocal engagement rather than the overpowering of either side by the other. This is where an inter-active field where the two parties mutually support and incorporate each other is constituted. There are performative relationships between the two, established and constantly developing with the activities and experiences of a person's body and mind.

Applying Heidegger's notion of praxical ready-to-hand in order to examine the interaction between the viewer and the hypermedial work, my proposition of understanding interactivity as inter-activity is justifiable, as not only the mutual communications but also the layering of in-betweenness is emphasised when the viewer is aware of the dynamic interplay between computer-manipulated medium and the other media. In hypermedial theatre viewers are situated in a circumstance in which they cannot be separated from the staged elements, as their feelings and movements become main sources of the creation of the work. In what follows, I apply Bolter and Grusin's (2000) concept of interactivity with

regard to hypermediacy²¹ to further support my suggestion. In their book *Remediation*, the two researchers contend that

[i]n digital technology [...] hypermediacy expresses itself as multiplicity. If the logic of immediacy leads one either to erase or to render automatic the act of representation, the logic of hypermediacy acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible. Where immediacy suggests a unified visual space, contemporary hypermediacy offers a heterogeneous space, in which representation is conceived of not as a window on the world, but rather as windowed itself—with windows that open on to other representations or other media. The logic of hypermediacy multiplies the signs of mediation and in this way tries to reproduce the rich sensorium of human experience. (Bolter and Grusin, 2000: 33-34)

Representation as the action of something that ‘windowed itself’ indicates that the relation between the viewer and the multiple staged media can be seen as a praxical ready-to-hand mode, because in the process of multiple mediation, viewers’ deliberations about, perceptions of and reactions to the development of their engagement with the media are emphasised. The deliberation, perceptions and reactions, as elaborated in 2.2.1 in this thesis, imply the experience of agency in mixed reality. In this sense, we may say that in hypermedial theatre the induction of a series of interactions between the viewer and the media – namely, the spatial configuration of performative relationships –can be seen as an agency network. In this configuration, the viewer and the media incorporate and reference each other in accordance with the channelling of certain energy or force between the two parties.

²¹ Please refer to Footnote 18 where I have explained the terms *hypermediacy* and *immediacy* (see p. 80).

The viewer's responses to that which takes place on stage become a key element of the design of mise-en-scène for the interactive work. As Popat (2006) suggests, 'If the communication between artist(s) and viewers is to be two-way with mutual effect, then the focus of the artwork shifts. Instead of a completed product, the interactive artist designs a framework that contains the potential for the creative experience of the participant' (Popat, 2006: 34). Put another way, if the structure of the work lies in the multiple mediation between the viewer and the media, the work is neither completed merely by the artist's creation nor produced only at the performing moment. Rather, the work should be seen as a process of continuously composing performative relationships.

In addition to the individual viewer's experience, the mutual influence among the audience members is also very important to the constitution of the work. In her book, *Virtual Theatre* (2004), Giannachi investigates the viewer's interaction with the work of art. Yet, the theorist emphasises the interactions among the viewers themselves. Giannachi proposes that interactive art can be regarded as 'a social phenomenon' (ibid.: 28). Drawing on the research of Söke Dinkla (1997), she suggests that 'most interactive art aims to "socialise" the relationship between the recipient and the computer system' (Giannachi, 2004: 28). The interactive artwork focuses not only on the mutual communications between the viewer and the work but also on a community of the two elements. Inspired by Giannachi's notion, I argue that agency in performance operates as a certain energy or force that lead to the potential for evoking and engaging the viewer's and other viewers' imagination, memories and reflections on the physical world. On this basis, the experience of inter-activity is indispensable for the viewer's integration in the community. The

community itself may be generated through the viewer's praxis of transferring agency to other viewers and the media, with respect to the dynamics of the mediated environment.

Inter-activity occurs when an audience physically manipulates a medium 'even if [the] audience's side of the interaction is largely silent' (O'Grady, 2011:167, my addition). Audience members individually interpret the content of a work according to their individual and other audience members' perceptions and feelings of the performance as well as according to performers' sense of the audience's instant responses to the performance. There are various degrees and modes of inter-activity due to the extent to which audiences involve themselves in the development of their performative relationships with the work. Steve Dixon in his book, *Digital Performance*, categorises four frameworks of interactivity: navigation, participation, conversation, and collaboration, according to the modes of interaction from simple to complex (see Dixon, 2007: 563). Focusing on the performative feature of the relationship between the audience and the work, Klich and Scheer identify these four frameworks as relating to the degree of agency (see Klich and Scheer, 2012: 154). In this respect, the greater the potential for creativity, the more complicated the structure of interaction generated becomes.

The first framework, navigation, offers the audience agency that lets them determine their own navigational paths in the theatrical environment and visual attentions to the work; yet, they are unable to control the configuration of the work (see Klich and Scheer, 2012: 154-155). Participation, which is the second framework, refers to 'literally a "joining in", where audiences might vote, input

ideas or respond to the action without altering it significantly' (O'Grady, 2011: 167-168). The third kind, conversation, indicates mutual exchange of information. Klich and Scheer characterise this participation and conversation as 'response-based interaction', which refers to a situation in which 'the audience has agency and engages in a process of action-reaction with a responsive environment, object, or agent' (Klich and Scheer, 2012: 157). Finally, collaboration is the most complex structure through which both the audience and media 'have agency and the ability to assert creative intelligence' (ibid.: 164).

With reference to these frameworks, we may say that the constitution of the interactive work depends on the dynamics of the mediated environment that provide the potential for the performative encounters between the viewer and the work. In the framework of navigation, the audience mainly relies on visual or aural perceptions to explore and interpret the texture of the given performance space. In the frameworks of participation and conversation, by giving out their bodily and mental responses to the work, the audience organises the constituents of the performance space. Through the framework of collaboration, the audience and media together create unpredictable and ever-renewing outcomes of the work. In these frameworks, the performative encounters between the audience and the work, which generate the flow of data, provide the audience with informationally rich environments to foster their perceptions and reactions to the work and to expand the network of their relationships with the media.

In summary, my discussion about the interaction between the viewer and various media in hypermedial theatre is mainly based on Bolter and Gromala's idea of performative relationships (2003), Ihde's (2010) interpretation of Heidegger's phenomenological notion of praxis and Bolter and Grusin's (2000) notion of interactivity with respect to hypermediacy. I have identified on this basis that the interaction occurs in a context of praxical knowledge in which the physical and the mediated become in-between. Within this context, I have defined the interaction process as inter-activity, an aesthetic action of agency. With the transmission of agency, viewers' reactions to the work constitute an in-between structure by which their engagement with the media is characterised as integral, reciprocal and ever-altering. The viewers in this condition function as active agents and at the same time as co-performers and inter-actors who reciprocally interact with staged media while dislocating their positions in-between the physical and the mediated worlds. The bilateral way of transferring agency leads to the interconnection between the viewer's performative acts and the development of the work. As I have suggested in the introduction of this thesis, the operation of agency in the context of hypermedial theatre has similarities to the operation of *Qi* as described in Chinese philosophy. Further probing into the interactive and performative relationships between humans and other various beings/things in the *Qi* world model would enable our understanding of the idea of inter-activity, discussed in this section. What follows is an articulation of the second aesthetic action of agency, that is, embodiment.

2.2.3 Embodiment

In the previous sections, I have identified the operation of agency in hypermedial theatre from the perspective of the viewer as certain energy or forces that motivate and activate the potential for the performative reactions to multiple media in performance. I have elaborated that, through a transferral of agency, the audience becomes intertwined with the mediated environment. My approach adopts Hansen's (2006) 'operational perspective of perceptuomotor activation', which suggests that the viewer's active responses are regarded as prerequisite to and simultaneously affected by the dynamics of the digital artwork. This perspective indicates that, without the embodiment of the bodily agency, the liminal space in which the physical and the virtual become overlaid with each other may not be achieved. Due to this, I propose embodiment as one of the aesthetic actions of agency in hypermedial theatre. The following discussion mainly lies in Hansen's interpretation of the 'body schema' and 'technics' in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. Moreover, I adopt Hansen's concept of the *body-in-code* with respect to his account of mixed reality. With reference to his interpretation, I will clarify the relation between the viewer's primal energy/forces and embodiment. I will also examine the bodily aspect of perception which is mainly caused by the use of technological media. This analysis of the action of agency is significant for my analysis of *Qi* in Chapter 4, as both perspectives regard the viewer's body as a dynamic space constituted through the operation of agency or *Qi* in-between the physical and the mediated worlds.

First, I explain the meanings of imaging and embodiment in Hansen's terms. Hansen's investigation into digital art (2006) rejects the Cartesian perspective

that asserts the disembodiment of the body in virtual reality. To Hansen, digital images 'can no longer be restricted to the level of surface appearance, but must be extended to encompass the entire process by which information is made perceivable through embodied experience' (ibid.: 10). The entire process can be identified as an imaging process that cannot be achieved without the embodied viewer's active participation in the creation of the work. The dynamic role of the viewer can be thought of as an agent whose active responses to the work lead to the visualisation and spatialisation of the transferred information.

The highlighting on the potentials and subjectivity of the viewer's body in motion is characterised by Hansen as the 'operational perspective'²² of the embodied organism (ibid.: 39). His view is affected by Shaun Gallagher's (1995) interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's body schema in the chapter, "The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motility" from *The Phenomenology of Perception*. According to Gallagher, the body schema 'is not a perception, a belief, or an attitude. Rather, it is a system of motor and postural functions that

²² According to Merleau-Ponty's original text, the operational perspective is different from the observational perspective: '[t]his conception of the phenomenal body as a kind of primary access to the world (a world that includes the body) resonates with the privilege of the operational perspective granted the living (human) organism in autopoietic theory. Specifically, it establishes the phenomenal body and its operational perspective, not as a correlate of the objective body and the observational perspective, but rather as the source of both perspectives, indeed of the very possibility of having a perspective as such: it is not a question of how the soul acts on the objective body, since it is not on the latter that it acts, but on the phenomenal body. So the question has to be reframed, and we must ask why there are two views of me and of my body: my body for me and my body for others, and how these two systems can exist together [...] since the "for me" and the "for others" coexist in one and the same world' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 106; cited by Hansen, 2006: 41, emphasis added).

operate below the level of self-referential intentionality' (Gallagher, 1995: 371; cited by Hansen, 2006: 39-40). The interpretation implies that the body schema concerns the dynamic outcomes of the bodily movements that contain a certain potential for interaction. Hansen suggests on this basis that the body schema can be regarded as 'a flexible, plastic, systemic form of distributed agency encompassing what takes place within the boundaries of the body proper (the skin) as well as the entirety of the spatiality of embodied motility' (Hansen, 2006: 38). That is to say, the body schema can be seen as an energetic construction of the body by which the agent and that individual's surroundings constantly respond to each other's movements and renew the organisation of their shared spatiality.

Furthermore, Gallagher's interpretation notes that the body schema in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology differs from the body image in Husserlian phenomenology. The scholar states 'the human body on both sides of the intentional relation' (Gallagher, 1995: 228; cited by Hansen, 2006: 39). The double-sided examination doubts the acceptable logic – the domination of the mind over the body. As Gallagher argues, 'In contrast to the intentional (and sometimes conscious) nature of the body image, a *body schema* involves an extraintentional operation carried out prior to or outside of intentional awareness' (Gallagher, 1995: 228; cited by Hansen, 2006: 39, emphasis added). For the structure of the body image, intentions and consciousness take the leading role. However, a body-thinking process is brought to the foreground within the context of the body schema.

With the help of Gallagher's statement, Hansen puts forth the interpretation that the concept of the body image regards 'the body as the object or content of intentional (or noetic) consciousness' (Hansen, 2006: 39) that is generated via visual grasp and intelligent activities. In contrast, the concept of the body schema characterises 'the body as a "pre-noetic" function, a kind of infra-empirical or sensible-transcendental basis for intentional operation' (ibid.). It is with such a motile function and basis that a person is able to affect and be affected by surroundings. In other words, certain 'primal' interconnections between people and their surroundings are essential to the body schema. Through these interconnections, people are embodied as organisms that actively participate in the becoming of the environment in which the people and the surroundings coexist.²³

The concept of the body schema, according to Hansen, can be applied to media studies. When a person interconnects with the environment via mutual responses, the embodied body has three characteristics:

first, the body is always in excess over itself; second, this excess involves the body's coupling with an external environment; and third, because such coupling is

²³ Likewise, both Anna Munster (2006) and Popat (2011) suggest that digital images visualise the inner part of the human body. Adapting baroque aesthetics as her research approach, Munster proposes a notion of digital embodiment, which indicates that 'embodiment is produced through the relations between the participants' bodily capacities and the operations and limitations of the particular information technologies' (Munster, 2006: 4). The focus of aesthetic production in this context shifts away from the dualities of the body and mind to actions and temporality. From the phenomenological perspective Popat suggests that 'technology in performance can heighten and stimulate bodily awareness' (Popat, 2011: 133). For Popat, the digital image existing in an environment that mixes the virtual and the actual can be seen as the extended embodiment of the human body.

increasingly accomplished through technical means, this excess (which has certainly always been *potentially* technical) can increasingly be actualized only with the explicit aid of technics. (Hansen, 2006: 39)²⁴

These three points imply that the viewer's body as an organism is not only indivisible from the mediated environment but is also augmented *within* the environment. That is, what is embodied in performance is no longer the corporeality but rather the phenomenal body. By this, I mean that, with the use of technologies, the dynamics of the mediated environment that is related to the transferring of the viewer's agency provides certain potential for interaction. The viewer's body is extended to a virtual realm and transformed into a dynamic constitution. The focus of embodiment thus shifts away from the live body towards technical means that viewers take to cultivate their reciprocal relationships with the mediated environment. This kind of embodiment interrogates the bodily aspect of perception that exists in the viewer's interaction with technological media.

It is necessary to elaborate how Hansen interprets Merleau-Ponty's concept of technics here. According to Hansen, Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment shows 'a philosophy of embodied technics in which the excess [over the body itself] constitutive of embodiment—the horizon of potentiality associated with the body schema – forms a ready conduit for incorporating the

²⁴ Hansen suggests that, when 'technologies work to expand the body's motile, tactile, and visual interface with the environment', the role of the body is called upon 'as an "invariant," a fundamental access onto the world, what psychologists and phenomenologists have called the "body schema"' (Hansen, 2006: 26). This indicates that the body schema can be thought of as a dynamic unity which is generated by the operation of the embodied agency upon the interactions between the body and multiple media.

technical at the heart of human motility' (Hansen, 2006: 39, my addition). Hansen's interpretation indicates that the technics involve certain primal and originary energy/forces (namely, agency, in this thesis) that operate upon the viewer's existence within and are coupled to the mediated environment. The technics include active observations and movements that are generated in accordance with the interactions between the viewer and the environment. Thus, the experience of embodiment can be seen as a process, the way that the coupling of the viewer and the environment in the system of body schema can be realised through the viewer's reactions to the environment.

In this context, the concept of body schema 'marks the operation of a "transcendental sensibility" at the heart of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of embodiment and, specifically, of his concept of the "phenomenal body"' (Hansen, 2006: 40). The term transcendental refers to some states that are beyond intentions and intelligence. Meanwhile, the sensibility means not merely visual perception but also other sensorial perceptions such as tactility and hearing. When the transcendental sensibility (or sensible transcendence) operates, the body is transformed into a state in which the body has both its subjectivity and capability to establish the mutual communication between inside and outside. In other words, the transcendental sensibility may be seen as something prerequisite to the forming of the body and able to affect a person's coupling with the environment.

This something, as Hansen interprets, is related to motility of the body that 'precedes and informs the constitution of the objective domain (including the body as object, or the body image) and the correlative demarcation of the

subjective' (Hansen, 2006: 40). With the motility, the embodied body can be thought of as a spatiotemporal continuum in which the knowledge gained through praxis embraces the inter-active²⁵ relationships between the self and others. The self and others reciprocally work together to form each other, so that they enter a liminal space where neither party can separate from the other. In this kind of inter-active situation, '[o]ur bodily experience of movement [...] provides us with a way of access to the world and the object' as Merleau-Ponty asserted (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 140). Put another way, without the ability to actively respond, we may not exist with others and even could not find our positions in the world. The liminal space where a person's and others' bodies are embodied, in this sense, can be thought of as a space for co-subjectivities. An individual's motile body constitutes a path to the world *with* the inner and the outer and, at the same time, this constitution is affected by others' reactions to the body when the others operate as co-subjects.

Furthermore, a structure of mixed reality is brought to the foreground in Hansen's interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's body schema and technics. Hansen proposes a parallel between the phenomenal body in the world mode of technics and a '*body-in-code*' in new media art. He defines the '*body-in-code*' as 'a body submitted to *and constituted by* an unavoidable and empowering technical deterritorialization—a body whose embodiment is realized, *and can only be realized*, in conjunction with technics' (Hansen, 2006: 20, original emphasis). The body links and is entwined with the mediated environment. Yet, it is not 'a purely informational body or a digital disembodiment of the everyday

²⁵ Please refer to 2.2.2 (see p. 84 *et seqq*), I have identified the term interactivity as inter-activity.

body' (ibid.). The focus is placed on the process of constituting the body in-between the physical and the virtual. The body operates as an interface between mixed worlds so that the body experiences its constant transferring to the thresholds of these worlds. The generation of the subjective body's movements and perceptions are affected by the mutual responses between the user and technological media. In this sense, the embodiment of the '*body-in-code*' shows an imaging process rather than a process of decoding symbols. That is to say, the employment of images in the artwork from the operational perspective does not mean the one-way, direct input of information into the viewer. Rather, individual viewers who operate as organisms are capable of interpreting and reorganising the information when they interact with the artwork.

In such an imaging process, technics performed by the *body-in-code* are regarded as highly associated not only with the viewer's embodied agency but also with sensation, according to Hansen's examination of embodiment. Here, sensation 'is the analog in a sense close to the technical meaning, [that is,] as a continuously variable impulse or momentum that can cross from one qualitatively different medium into another' (Hansen, 2006: 6, my addition). This is to say that, as viewers work as a motile agent that embodies their *body-in-code* through dislocating in mixed realms, the viewers' sensations may be also affected by how agency is transmitted between themselves and other media on stage. Conceived as such, the viewer's sensation with respect to agency can be illustrated as: 'Like electricity into sound waves. Or heat into pain. Or light waves into vision. Or vision into imagination. Or noise in the ear into music in the heart. *Or outside coming in*' (ibid., original emphasis). That is,

the sensation can be seen as a situation in which the potential is transformed into various forms of energy. The viewer's sensation is thus affected by the performative relationships between the viewer and multiple media in performance.

Within this context, '[t]he body, sensor of change, is a transducer of the virtual' (Masumi, 2002: 135; cited by Hansen, 2006: 6). This happens because, when the viewer plays the role of co-performer and inter-actor in the course of inter-activity, the viewer's body becomes a site in which the physical and the virtual encounter and transfer into each other. The function of converting the physical and the virtual is also a characteristic for the notion of the human body with respect to *Qi*. Similarly, the body there functions as a site where the dynamic becoming of different worlds into each other occurs. I will elucidate this in the third chapter. Now, from Hansen's perspective of *body-in-code*, the viewer's body can be characterised as certain 'new technical environments [that] afford nothing less than an opportunity to *suspend* habitual causal patterns and, subsequently, to *forge* new patterns through the medium of embodiment—that is, by tapping into the flexibility (or potentiality) that characterizes humans as fundamentally embodied creatures' (Hansen, 2006: 29, my addition). With the transformation of the bodily motility, the bodily site possesses multilayered and ever-altering meanings as it is created in-between various situations.

I propose that this understanding of the viewer's body as a dynamic site generated by the distribution of the bodily motility indicates a point. That is, the embodiment of the phenomenal body can be seen as an aesthetic action of

agency. By this, I mean that from the energetic and operational perspective the experience of embodiment can be interpreted as a process in which the viewer's body becomes a praxical site of agency. As I have discussed in the sections on agency and inter-activity (see 2.2.1 and 2.2.2), when the inter-activity between the viewer and the work is achieved, the viewer becomes not only a co-performer and inter-actor but also part of liminal space where the two parties incorporate each other. With these multiple roles, taking performative acts by viewers shows how viewers extend and transfer their agency to multiple media to generate their phenomenal body in mixed reality. Thus, embodiment in hypermedial theatre has its aesthetic relation to the operation of agency.

In conclusion, I have examined the definition of embodiment from an operational perspective that emphasises the transmission of agency in hypermedial theatre. With reference to Hansen's (2006) interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's notions of body schema and technics, I have expatiated that what is embodied in the genre of theatre is the phenomenal body, which Hansen terms as a *body-in-code*. That is, the viewer works as an embodied agent that constitutes the access to the mixed realms of the physical and the virtual through their performative reactions to multiple media in performance. Due to the nature of technological media that offer the potential for interaction, the motile movements and sensations of the viewer are highlighted in the course of performance. An ever-altering pattern of the body's motility rather than body images becomes prerequisite to the constitution of the work. Concomitantly, the viewer's body functions as an experimental and praxical site of agency. The extent of the agency is related to the capability and limits of

the viewer's body that reacts to mixed realms. This discussion raises another issue – the viewer's presence in mixed reality. In the next section, I will examine this issue, which is proposed as the third aesthetic action of agency.

2.2.4 Presence

Maintaining the perspective of phenomenology, this section examines the third aesthetic action of agency in hypermedial theatre, namely presence. The focus is placed on the viewer's subjective experience – that is, when interacting with the work, viewers experience certain processes by which they become present in mixed reality and, simultaneously, interconnect with the presence of that which they encounter. I assume that, when the viewer works as a constitutive element of mixed reality, this presence might be inextricably related to not only performative acts but also the operation of agency, both of which could be intensified via the use of technological media in performance. My examination begins with a discussion of the notions of time in modern Western thought. I primarily rely on Giannachi and Kaye's (2011) etymological analysis of presence to articulate the significance of performativity in the phenomenological account of presence. Furthermore, I use both Ihde's (2010) research on Heidegger's notion of praxis and Popat's interpretation of liveness and agency (2011), with regard to new media practices in order to elaborate how agency affects the emergence of presence. Like the other two aesthetic actions of agency, namely, inter-activity and embodiment, which I have examined previously (see 2.2.2 and 2.2.3), here this discussion of presence with respect to the viewer's performative relationship with the work helps to

draw some parallels between agency in hypermedial theatre and *Qi* in practices of traditional Chinese aesthetics.

Support for my assumption of the viewer's presence requires attention to the various notions of time in modern Western thought at the beginning of this section. I divide those notions of time into three kinds of structures: 1) the point-to-point line which considers each present point as stable and discrete, 2) the flowing line that regards each present moment as linking to its past, and 3) the networked lines in which the similarities and differences of the physical and the virtual are interwoven. First, I discuss the structure of the point-to-point line. With reference to Tim Ingold's *Lines: A Brief History* (2007), the notions of time in modern Western thought, including those of Charles Darwin and various anthropologists, indicate 'the dotted line – the line that is not a line – a succession of instants in which nothing moves or grows' (Ingold, 2007: 3). That is to say, ascribed to the impact of science and industrial techniques, the time structure in the era could be featured as both chronological and chronometric. The passage of time thus could be thought of as jumping from one isolated and disconnected spot to the next one. Although these spots are linked up as a development direction, the transition between them is out of consideration.

In contradistinction to the evolutionary point of view, which took organisms as observed objects, Henri Bergson proposed in his thesis, *Creative Evolution* (1911), that each organism should be seen as 'a progress' – that is, 'the very permanence of its form is only the outline of a movement' (cited by Ingold, 2007: 117). Bergson's vision shows an innovative idea of time in which the being of an organism is affected by the organism's activities in the world that is

shared with others. The time structure, as Bergson suggested in his influential book, *Matter and Memory* (1896), is like a flux in which ‘what I call “my present” has one foot in my past, and another in the future’ (cited by Rush 1999: 12; Dixon, 2011: 93). From this, what we call ‘now’ could be seen as the points of time that are constantly pushed forwards and altered by the past. Bergson’s concept of the flux of time deeply influences the creation of the European and American artists during the first half of the twentieth century who used new technology to explore the nature of art and issues relating to temporality (see Dixon, 2011: 93).

Since the late 1950s, the issue of presence with respect to material reality of the performer’s body has become a key concern in studies and practices of avant-garde and postmodern theatre (see Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 1). According to those studies and practices, presence is seen as intrinsic to the live performance and the sharing of physical space by the performer and the viewer. Thus, presence is associated with the present moments that refer to transcendental signifiers, authenticity and authority.²⁶ In the 1970s the postmodern notions of time denied not only ‘the possibility of anything new [but] also [...] the possibility of a future; time is theorized as a recurrent present which envelops and is saturated by the past, but never looks toward the future’

²⁶ As I have discussed in 2.1, in opposition to the embracing of technology there is an attitude of rejecting technology in the development of avant-garde concepts. For instance, ‘Erika Fischer-Lichte’s subsequent elaboration of presence in performance has sought to restore the “now” point and so self-presence and authority of the performer’ (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 19). This account suspects that the performer’s body would be dissolved in the mediated world. For Fischer-Lichte the use of technology seems to hinder the authenticity and empowerment of the physical body. In other words, the ‘self-presence’ in terms of this negative attitude may be achieved only through the live performance.

(Dixon, 2011: 91, my addition).²⁷ The rejection can be interpreted as ‘flattening’ the depth of time. By this, I mean that the recurrent present cuts off the path in front and at once juxtaposes side-by-side the now-points with the passing points. This structure of lateral connection seems to show that in the present moments there is no space to turn to face the past or to embrace the future.

With the advent of technological media, various artists and practitioners have shifted their focus away from the produce of artefacts towards the encounters between the participant and the mediated work, between the trace and the event. This tendency has given rise to a re-examination of presence; many investigations and practices ‘have invariably aligned phenomena of presence to engagements with processes of performance and notions of performativity’ (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 1). Due to the incorporation of technological media, the performer onstage is no longer the monopolistic criterion and interpreter of theatrical time and space. Rather, the viewer, with the help of technological media, becomes a co-performer and inter-actor in the course of performance. The impact of the media on the viewer’s perceptions of and reactions to the work may rephrase the structure of presence.

²⁷ In his article, ‘Theatre, Technology and Time’, Steve Dixon suggests that postmodern notions of time ‘might be summarized here as: a rejection of the linear “grand narratives” of history – as suggested by Jean-François Lyotard in *The Postmodern Condition* (1984)’ (Dixon, 2011: 90). According to Dixon’s elaboration, the rejection implicates certain ‘doubts about whether the present can ever fully replace the past, and with it a suspicion about any claims of originality or innovation in the arts, which is often expressed in a blurring of “old” and “new” forms, or a self-conscious “quotation” of the past in the present’ (ibid.). In this mode of thought, the postmodern notions of time tend to challenge and undermine the foundation of the present through bringing the past into the present.

In their book, *Performing Presence: Between the Live and the Simulated* (2011), Giannachi and Kaye propose a phenomenological framework to analyse the computer-oriented production and enactment of presence that have been emphasised in various contemporary interdisciplinary performances, research efforts and experiments which combine the fields of art, science and technology (see Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 2). The two scholars primarily adopt Husserl's phenomenological account of time, which regards "the present" as always subject to a direction of travel' (ibid.: 11), to interrogate the construction of presence that links up the past, the present and the future. This approach reveals a process in which perceivers present themselves in combined worlds of the physical and the virtual through their interactions with that which they encounter. Presence is thus identified 'as both practice and experience: as phenomena realized in performative encounters with images, objects, technologies, bodies, sites, acts and events' (ibid.: 2).²⁸

²⁸ With regard to new media arts and performances, Dixon names his concept of time, as the 'extratemporal' perspective. According to Dixon's analysis, 'Changes in conceptions of time within contemporary technological culture (and not simply in technological performance) emphasize a new sense of pre-medieval "mythic atemporality" which may be theorized not only as a challenge to linear, chronometric time but also as a type of return to earlier notions of time as static, mythic, cyclical or sacred. This is now reflected acutely within digital performance practice, where time is commonly seen to operate within a new and dynamic relationship [...] between the secular and the sacred' (Dixon, 2011: 91). On this basis Dixon suggests the 'extratemporal' perspective that indicates 'a system moving outside of [the reality of] time (at least, conceptually and metaphorically) opens a different and equally fertile analytical landscape' (Dixon, 2011: 92, my addition). The temporal system seems to show certain temporality that transcends the existence of the live performer on stage and the viewer in reality. Yet, Dixon uses the term 'catharsis' in his explanation of the incorporation of new media and the performer: '[i]n multimedia theatre and dance, the bombardment of different time-based projections working in conjunction with the live bodies of performers is frequently used to similar ends; that is, to disrupt cognition of time's linearity in order to achieve moments (particularly climactic ones) of extratemporal catharsis' (Dixon, 2011: 93). The catharsis here

That is, presence may emerge only under a condition where the perceiver is constantly induced to generate responses that alter the association of the physical and the virtual worlds.

By examining the etymology of presence, Giannachi and Kaye interpret the performative aspect of presence. According to them, the noun 'presence' can be seen as an association of the two words '*prae* (before) and *sens* (past [sic] participle of *sum*, "I am")' (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 4). The noun presence, in this respect, refers to "“before I am”, or that which is “in front” of me or “in view” of me' (ibid.). The latter word *sens* in the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2009) also means 'present participle of *esse* (to be), which indicates “in actual existence; opposed to *in posse*, in potentiality” (ibid.). With reference to the definitions of these terms, the two scholars suggest that presence shows 'a distinct tense – the present participle – which marks the present in the act of its unfolding' (ibid.). This foregrounding of dynamic movements indicates not only a temporal structure that regards time as a flux, linking the going and the coming, but also a certain spatiality that concerns the perceiving subject's being and identification with others. A similar kind of time happens in the *Qi* world model, where the perceiver's presence emerges in the encounter between physical and virtual realms. The presence can be seen in relation to the continuity of *Qi*, namely, Floodlike *Qi*, to use Mencius's terms. I will come back to this point later in Chapter 4.

seems to implicate the importance of mental and intellectual understanding of the work. Because the issue of presence is not of concern in this thesis, I do not mention his notion in the text of my discussion.

Following the above-indicated etymological context of presence, Giannachi and Kaye further interrogate how the notion of the present contributes to the temporal structure of presence. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2009), presence is defined as: 1) 'in or into the presence of someone'; 2) 'of the present time'; 3) 'in the immediate vicinity'; and 4) 'at the present time, now; immediately, instantly, at once' (cited by Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 5). Presence can be thought of as a point that constantly moves from the past and towards the future. Such a time structure implies the intertwining of interrelationships, rather than the connection of discrete spots.

Furthermore, the spatial implications of presence can be seen in the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1975) as: 1) 'the fact or condition of being present; the state of being before, in front of, or in the same place with a person or thing; being there'; 2) 'the portion of space in front of a person'; and 3) 'the company or society of someone' (cited by Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 5). As Giannachi and Kaye interpret them, these definitions 'can indicate both a state and its condition in space and time but also a sociality; that is, one is present to something else or in the presence of something else' (ibid.). It seems that the experience of presence offers a place for individuals to situate *within* their movements by which the one responds to and is stimulated by what is in front of or before. That is to say, presence as a place is not occupied by any individual but rather constantly constituted and altered by a person's interactions with others.

The very place where presence emerges, as Giannachi and Kaye propose, can be characterised as 'the ecology or network that inexorably ties the "I am"

with its past and future and that forces “I am” to confront itself with what is other from “it” (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 5). Either ecology or network indicates a certain morphogenetic field in which the self and alterity work as organisms to coexist in a merging of their environments. Situating within the ecology and network implies ‘a relational movement or change [...] [by which] our perception and reception of “presence” vary in time and space’ (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 5, my addition). In other words, the experience of presence concerns neither observation by an onlooker nor private feelings. In contrast, the experience is better described as a communal performance of the self and others in which the latter becomes the extension of the former.

Presence also relates to the adjective *present* and the noun *presentation* (see Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 5-6). Since the two terms refer to people’s perceptions and acceptance of their encounters with others as defined in dictionaries,²⁹ Giannachi and Kaye suggest that ‘[p]resence thus also implies awareness, self-awareness, consciousness and even alertness, all of which contribute to the unfolding of the “I am” in relation to which an object of attention is located spatially and temporally’ (ibid.: 6). That is to say, when

²⁹ According to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (1975), the adjective *present* means: 1) ‘express[es] a local or temporary relation to a person or thing which is the point of reference’; 2) ‘senses relating to place’; 3) indicates ‘being in the place considered or mentioned’; 4) indicates ‘existing in the thing, class, or case mentioned or under consideration’; 5) suggests that ‘of which one is conscious; directly thought of, remembered or imagined’; and 6) indicates ‘having presence of mind, collected, self-possessed’; ‘prompt to perceive or act, ready, quick’ (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 5-6). Meanwhile, the idea of *presentation*, as the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (2009) writes, implies: 1) ‘the formal or ceremonial introduction of a person to another, esp. a superior; spec. the presenting of a person at court’; and 2) ‘something offered for acceptance; a present, a gift’ (ibid.: 6).

people experience presence, they are aware that their ability of perception may be affected by the interconnections between themselves and others. Individuals open themselves to the outside world in order to relocate in the ecology or network in which the two elements coexist and interact with each other. We can say in this respect that not only individuals' reactions to others, but also their memories, imaginations and expectations are constitutive of the state of becoming present.

The opening of one's self leads to an access to others and, at once, brings the information from others back to the self. Here, the bi-directional communication indicates a representation process. As Giannachi and Kaye suggest, 'whereas presentation implies a positioning of presence in space and time, a positioning that forms an ecology of relationships between the "I am" and that which is in front or before, *representation* suggests the return, or "homecoming", of this other to oneself' (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 6). In addition to a person's responses to others, how and what these others give feedback to and transfer to the individual seem to become underlying factors for the emergence of presence. Furthermore, the return or homecoming indicates an "interactive" mechanism between the "I am" and what is in front of or before [that] is crucial to the reading of the operation of presence in performance, as well as interactive, media and new media arts' (ibid., my addition). That is to say, becoming present shows a dialectic of dynamic positioning that is contingent on an ever-altering feedback loop between one person and others.

However, the interactive mechanism with regard to the experience of presence cannot be characterised as 'neutral but rather charged, fraught with tension' (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 7). Giannachi and Kaye apply Marcel Mauss's (2000) etymological analysis of *gifts* to explain this characteristic. According to Giannachi and Kaye, "gifts" carry the "poisonous" obligation of reciprocation (*Gift* in German means both present [sic] and poison)' (ibid.). Presence, in a sense of becoming present, can be interpreted as 'conceal[ing] a "poisonous" but necessary relationship' (ibid., my addition). It is poisonous, as the interaction process does not aim to unify differences but rather to intensify the actions of 'taking a place', that which is in front of or before 'I am', the actions of making the 'faces' of both 'I am' and alterity clearer. This is necessary due to the sharing space of 'I am' and alterity in which the two parties experience "neighborhood", meaning "dwelling in nearness" (Heidegger 1971: 93; cited by Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 11). The self-contradictory relationship implicates a dynamic equilibrium in which the perceiving subject constantly oscillates between opposition and identification. Within this equilibrium, the potential for negotiation is activated and realised in the encounters between the two sides.

The returning from and, at once, communing with others indicates an alternative attitude to locating within the ecology/network of the relationship between the subject and the object. Daniel Birnbaum asserts in *The Hospitality of Presence* (2008) that '[t]he phenomenological reduction implies a radical shift of attitude, from a focus on objects – typical of the "natural attitude" – to a focus on the *modes of givenness* of objects' (Birnbaum 2008: 13, original emphasis; cited by Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 10). This means that, in the

course of realising presence, the subject does not play a role that makes meaning through observations. Instead, it is through the presenting of the object itself to the subject that the meaning-making is made possible. In this sense '[t]he present is permeated by absence and otherness; only when letting in what is other than itself, can it remain what it is' (Birnbaum 2008: 181; cited by Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 11). Here, absence can be thought of as a potential space in which the subject can move forward and inside to interact with the object and then return to its 'home'. Meanwhile, the permeation of otherness indicates various possible contestations and mutual influences through the face-to-face interactions. In this hospitality situation, 'the self [is] in *co-presence* with that which is other to itself' (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 11, original emphasis, my addition). The lack of final meanings and the concomitant exchange of information between a person and others lead to a dynamic construction of presence.

This sense of presence emphasises the importance of absence and otherness in the emergence course of presence. Conceived as such, the realisation of a person's presence requires the incorporation of that person and others. When there is no transcendental signified, 'the claim to "presence" [...] has no final foundation but can only be "performative"' (Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 15). That is, the claim 'enacts that to which it refers' (Pearson and Shanks, 2001: 69; cited by Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 15). This enactment implies that each performative act comes from negotiation and hence is able to affect the spatial and temporal positioning of a person and others in their relationship ecology/network. In this sense, the 'absence itself is the possibility of future movement; so, paradoxically, presence is based not only in the present, but in

our expectation of the future' (Erickson 1998: 62; cited by Giannachi and Kaye, 2011: 18). Instead of a stable state, presence should be seen as a state in-between the going and the coming whose development relies on dynamics of mixed realms that are shared by a person and others.

I propose that the experience of presence, which is interpreted previously as realised via enactment and performative acts, indicates an aesthetic action of agency which is concomitant with the incorporation of the physical and the virtual in performance. I suggest that Ihde's interpretation of Heidegger's concept of praxis (which is based on his theory of *being-in-the-world*) can be employed to support this proposition, as the praxical knowledge is highly related to the performative relationships between 'I am' and that which is in front or before. Heidegger asserted that, in the world mode of praxical ready-to-hand,³⁰ things exist within an operational context which is shared by these things and users:

[t]aken strictly, there "is" no such thing as *an* equipment. To the Being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is. Equipment is essentially "something-in-order-to." [...] A totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the "in-order-to" such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability. (Heidegger, 1962: 97, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson, original emphasis; cited by Ihde, 2010: 45)

As Ihde proposes, the 'in-order-to' structure implies 'the model of how [the] world is "already discovered" in hidden and latent form through the use of a

³⁰ I have explained Ihde's interpretation of Heidegger's notions of the 'present-to-hand' and the 'ready-to-hand' in Footnote 20 (see p. 89).

piece of equipment' (Ihde, 2010: 45, my addition). The existence of a thing depends on a network of operation by which the thing may influence and be influenced by its related things and users. This phenomenological analysis of dealings between things and users shows a fact – that is, because '[t]he everyday world is the experienced environment (world-as-environment) [...] what is first or primary [in the dealings] is the *praxical*' (Ihde, 2010: 43, original emphasis, my addition). The understanding of things can be gained through performative encounters between users and things, namely, through a dynamic process of interactions, contestations and compromises.

The praxical concern shows a way of probing into the human presence through unfolding the presence of things. By this, I mean that the co-subjectivity of people and things may be revealed in the process of using and/or generating things. According to Heidegger, '[w]hen we deal with them [things] by using them and manipulating them, this activity is not a blind one; it has its own kind of sight, by which our manipulation is guided and from which it acquires its specific Thingly character' (Heidegger, 1962: 98, translated by Macquarrie and Robinson; cited by Ihde, 2010: 46, my addition). The very 'Thingly character' is related to the mutual responses between things and their users in the operation process.

Ihde interprets this to mean that the 'Thingly character' indicates 'a praxical sight', the opposite of 'a theoretical observation' (Ihde, 2010: 46). From the praxical sight, '[e]quipment in use appears as partially transparent, as hidden from *direct* observation' (Ihde, 2010: 48, original emphasis). That is to say, the value and meanings of a tool are given via the user's knowledge that is gained

from an operation process, namely, from the establishment of the ready-to-hand relation. This indirect approach affects not only the unfolding of the tool's features but also the identification of the user with the tool to a certain extent. That which is in use can thus be seen as another subject that shares the common relationship ecology/network with the user.

The praxical sight, in my opinion, seems to be parallel to the 'operational perspective' proposed by Hansen (2009) in his analysis of new media practices. As I have mentioned in 2.2.3 (see p. 96), from the operational perspective the viewer and various media (including those that are computer-manipulated and other kinds) in hypermedial theatre work as co-performers within a liminal space in which the two parties incorporate with each other. Unpredictable performative acts that are activated and motivated by the dynamics of the mediated environment become prerequisites to the outcomes of the performance. In this sense, the operational perspective implicates a process, how viewers present themselves through performative acts in their encounters with the work. There is a praxical linkage between the viewer and various media rather than merely the viewer's awareness of sharing a period of time with the performer in the performance space.

In addition to Ihde's praxical sight, I suggest that Popat's (2011) interpretation of liveness and agency in her article, 'Performance and Technology: The Myth of Disembodiment', helps to elaborate the presence of the viewer in hypermedial theatre. Through the phenomenological lens, Popat examines the appearing experience of the body in mixed reality. Although the article is mainly about embodiment in new media arts, I think that her account indicates

various spatial and temporal characteristics of presence, with respect to hypermedial theatre. Popat applies Philip Auslander's concept of liveness (2002), which means 'a temporal relationship, a relationship of simultaneity' (Auslander, 2002: 21; cited by Popat, 2011: 138), to elaborate the intensification of the phenomenal body in performance via the juxtaposition of the live and the mediated. Popat suggests that 'Auslander's perspective relates closely to our concern with mixed reality, where the body is the primary mode of access to a lived environment that incorporates digital and physical elements' (Popat, 2011: 138). The suggestion emphasises participants' dynamic responses to and influences of their constant locating in virtual and at the same time in physical worlds. In other words, when the boundaries between inside and outside are blurred, when the live and the mediated together generate a space that welcomes the participants to show their reactions, the presence of the participants is indispensable for the relationship between movement and perception.

Relying on this respect, Popat later in the article uses Hansen's (2006) investigation into the impact of agency upon the constitution of mixed reality to complement the motile aspect of the viewer's encounters with the work. As Popat maintains, Hansen 'proposes that body motor activity lies at the heart of connections between physical and virtual worlds, since agency is created when we move and see our avatars move as a corresponding result' (Popat, 2011: 140). Agency, as explained previously in this chapter, can be thought of as a kind of energy or forces that work to induce the viewer to constantly take meaningful reactions (whether physically or mentally) to what takes place in the course of performances. With reference to this explanation, viewers'

encounters with the work in Popat's terms, which focuses on the operation of agency in mixed reality, implies a dynamic process in which viewers experience the becoming present of their phenomenal bodies in mixed reality while they actively make decisions or interpret that which takes place on stage. The operation of agency can be seen as certain 'essential ties that connect my physical senses directly to my digital representation in the virtual world' (Popat, 2011: 140). Concomitantly, 'my presence in that [virtual] world is severed if my extended embodiment is not borne out by my sensory experience' (ibid., my addition). It seems to be through simultaneously transforming agency into the qualities of the live and the mediated performance that the viewer is able to identify with that which is in front or before.

With reference to the previous discussions, I suggest that presence can thus be interpreted as an aesthetic action of agency, because the presence may be affected by the operation of agency upon the viewer's performative acts to the hypermedial work. By this, I mean that presence in hypermedial theatre can be thought of as an experience of how the viewer as an agent enacts and performs the channelling of energy/forces between physical and virtual realms. The emergence of presence may be parallel to constantly relocating oneself in the spatiotemporal network of the performative relationships between the viewer and that which is in front or before. The viewer's actions engage with perceptions to explore unsettled, dialectical and potential implications of interactions between the two sides. Such an experience of presence with respect to agency has a parallel to a person's presence in the *Qi* world model. My reason is that either the operation of agency or that of *Qi* brings forth a

multi-layered structure of space and time, that which is ever-developing in accordance with a person's contestation and negotiation with others.

To conclude, this section has offered a discussion about the phenomenological account of presence (i.e., Giannachi and Kaye, 2011; Ihde, 2010 and Popat 2011), which is opposite to the postmodern and deconstructionist notions that indicate suspensions of authority and quests for authenticity. The account's emphasis on praxical methods challenges whether the performance of the live performer is a valid criterion for defining the experience of presence in the interdisciplinary and computer-oriented practices. It brings not only the participant but also media technology to the fore; that is, the two function as co-subjectivities that have the capability to affect the creation of the performance. In this sense, it may be better to regard presence as the ecology or network that can be realised through contestations and negotiations between the physical and the virtual. For viewers, their presence is highly related to their performative acts, concomitant with the transmission of agency, that give rise to an access to the merging of different worlds. I have proposed on this basis that presence can be interpreted as an aesthetic action of agency in hypermedial theatre. On the one hand, viewers constantly relocate themselves in the ever-evolving ecology/network through their reactions to the work. On the other hand, the mediated environment provides dynamics for possible (re)mediation of the interactive relationships between the viewer and the work. Furthermore, the highlighting of the performative impetus, which is essential to the viewer's presence in hypermedial theatre, offers a means to engage the experience of becoming present that occurs in the *Qi* world mode.

2.3 Summary

This chapter has interrogated my assumption that the constitution of performative space might be highly related to the operation of the viewer's agency within a liminal space between the physical and the virtual. The interrogation provides a contemporary Western theoretical ground with respect to the phenomenological view on the energetic characteristics of the relationship between the viewer and the work in hypermedial theatre.

In 2.1, I have examined the development of the concepts of performativity and its spatiality in contemporary Western theatre and performance studies and practices. By probing into the primary concern with the transmission of the performance energy in the works of avant-garde theatre, I have elaborated that these works' emphasis on the viewer's reactions in the course of performances shows certain performative features. The advent of technology has split avant-garde artists into two groups. One rejects technology and acknowledges the privileged power of the live performer. The other uses technology as a prerequisite factor to intensify the interconnections between the potential for interactions and dynamics of the mediated environment. Adapting the positive attitude toward technology, I have rephrased Fischer-Lichte's (2008) notion, which is about how to increase the circulation of the live performer's energy/force in performative spaces into justifiable strategies for the viewer's active responses to hypermedial theatre works. My analysis has shown that the generation of the viewer's performative acts can be regarded as indispensable to the transformation of energy/force between the viewer and

the work. Furthermore, the extent of the transformation can be altered in accordance with the complexity of technology that is used in performance.

In 2.2.1, I have proposed that the above-mentioned concern with the energy/force can be parallel to notions of agency in computer game and new media studies. Mainly relying on Murray's (1997) concept of agency and Lavender's suggestion (2006) of hypermedial *mise-en-scène*, I have argued that the feelings of agency may be understood as the audience's awareness of how, in relation to dynamics of the mediated environment, the operation of certain energy/force motivates and incites the viewer to actively join in and perform the interconnections between a computer-based medium and other media. Agency is experienced not merely as bodily actions that are stimulated by what the viewer encounters but also as perceptions by which the viewer identifies with the combined worlds of the physical and the virtual. In other words, in hypermedial theatre, agency can be characterised as operating under a condition in which the viewers work as agents who are able to connect the physical and the virtual and to affect the outcomes of the performance event via their decisions and meaningful actions. In this context, since the transmission of agency may affect the interactions between the viewer and the hypermedial work and the constant relocating of the viewer's phenomenal body in the merging worlds, I have suggested that the operation of agency indicates three aesthetic actions: inter-activity, embodiment and presence. In the following three sections, I have examined and elaborated the three actions respectively.

In 2.2.2, I have undertaken the discussion of inter-activity, an aesthetic action of agency, through applying Bolter and Gromala's idea of performative relationships (2003), Heidegger's (1962) phenomenological notion of the ready-to-hand and Bolter and Grusin's (2000) notion of interactivity with respect to hypermediacy. By inter-activity, I mean that the interactions between the viewer and the hypermedial work may generate an in-between structure by which the viewer enlists the multiple roles of co-performer and inter-actor to reciprocally engage and incorporate with various media used in performance. The induction of the viewer's agency becomes the major aim of the design for hypermedial *mise-en-scène* that provides an inter-active mechanism which challenges the hierarchical structure of performance. With this focus on agency, while the viewer functions as an agent to take performative acts, viewers not only produce their own interpretations of the work but also engage with the physical and the virtual worlds. Thus, a certain spatiality of liminality that is created by the two-way influences and mediation of the relationships between the viewer and the work is brought to the foreground.

Subsequently, 2.2.3 discusses the second aesthetic action of agency, namely, embodiment. With reference to Hansen's (2006) interpretation of the 'body schema' and 'technics' in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, I have explained that the reciprocal incorporation of the viewer and technological media may lead to the embodiment of the viewer's phenomenal body, namely, a *body-in-code*, to use Hansen's terms (2006), in mixed reality. Instead of emphasising mediated images of the body, an imaging process – that which is related to performative acts' coupling with perceptions and entails the

transformation of bodily motility between the physical and the virtual worlds – is highlighted in the performative encounter between the viewer and the work. Neither the physical nor the mediated dominates the outcomes of the performance. Rather, the channelling of the viewer’s agency in-between the two worlds leads to a dynamic development of the work. The viewer’s interaction with the work thus can be seen as extending the agent’s body to the mediated environment. When the embodiment is achieved, the viewer’s body functions as a site that gives access to the combined worlds.

Finally, in 2.2.4 I interrogated the issue of presence, which is assumed as the third aesthetic action of agency in this thesis. I have first used Giannachi and Kaye’s (2011) concept of presence, which takes a phenomenological approach to interpret presence as an experienced ecology or network that can only be realised through performative encounters. The experience of presence in this sense can be said to be giving rise not merely to the opening up of the viewer and the work to each other but also to their negotiations and contestations. Then, I have employed Ihde’s (2010) research in Heidegger’s notion of praxis and Popat’s (2011) interpretation of liveness and agency to prove the motile aspect of the presence experience. On the basis of these researchers’ findings, I have suggested that the viewer’s presence can be identified as emerging through the transmission of agency in multi-layered spaces and times. That is to say, the viewer becomes present when that viewer obtains a certain extent of agency which enables a performative reaction to the work. Thus, the presence shows a dynamic constitution which is altered in accordance with the viewer’s relocating in the network of the performative relationship.

I have mentioned in the three sections respectively three major similarities between agency and *Qi*. In the section of inter-activity, the transmission of agency between the physical and the virtual worlds leads to the viewer's multiple roles as motile agent, co-performer and inter-actor. The transmission also gives rise to the dynamic constitution of the viewer's body with the mediated, as I have indicated in the section of embodiment. When examining the viewer's presence, I have shown that the transmission of agency brings forth a multi-layered structure of space and time in motion. These phenomena, where the viewer's perceptions and movements combine with the mediated environment, are also the main foci of the aesthetic practices of *Qi*. A perspective of material energy in the field of physics explicitly underlies the concept of agency in hypermedial theatre, whereas this perspective is not suitable to the understanding of *Qi* (see Tu, 1985; Yang, 1996; and Oberts, 2009). This raises a radical question: If some Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works implicitly show a quest for embodying *Qi* in the course of performances, does this mean that we need to draw on the Chinese philosophy of *Qi* in order to complement the discourses of agency? Therefore, in this thesis, I propose a framework that combines the knowledge of agency and *Qi* to analyse this kind of Taiwanese work. The next chapter will introduce the Chinese philosophy of *Qi*.

Part II: The Chinese perspective and aesthetic context

Chapter 3: *Qi* and its spatial connotations in Confucian thought

This Part introduces the Chinese philosophy of *Qi*, which concerns the altering and becoming of the interactive relationship between pairs of polarities (e.g. humans and various other beings/things in the universe). This chapter elaborates on the spatial implications of *Qi* and the energetic characteristics of space, both of which are mainly consistent with the line of Mencius's (ca. 372-289 BCE) concept of *Qi*. I identify *Qi* as a factor that, not just physically but spiritually, cultivates and influences the integration of the social and the natural worlds. I also postulate on this basis that the dyadic relationship between various pairs of polarities is indispensable to the constitution of space. This chapter seeks to tackle two questions, as mentioned in the introduction (see p. 12): What are traditional Chinese aesthetics and what is the role of *Qi* in those aesthetics.

This chapter starts by looking at the etymological and philosophical development of the concept of *Qi* (see 3.1). I then narrow down my discussion to the interpretation of *Qi* by the scholars who (have) placed the notion of *Qi* at the centre of their theories (see 3.2). I refer to this interpretation as *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy in this thesis. The third section of Chapter 2 (see 3.3) explicates why the methods and goals of cultivating *Qi* in Confucians' daily lives indicate the embodiment process of *Qi*. These methods and goals have helped to establish a kind of *Qi* worldview in Chinese culture. By what follows, I explore how this worldview is reflected in people's perceptions of space (see 3.4). Finally, departing from the observation of *Qi*, I draw a hypothesis that postulates the notion of *Qi* as a complement to our understanding of the

existing accounts of the issue of performative spaces and other related issues, including agency, inter-activity, embodiment and presence, in new media and hypermedial theatre studies (see 3.5).

3.1 Etymology of *Qi*

The notion of *Qi* evolved from Chinese cosmology over thousands of years. Examining the structure of the character of *Qi*, this section analyses the origin of *Qi* and its influence on the classical Chinese worldview.³¹ The perspective that I take here focuses on the spatial aspects of *Qi* rather than the more conventional approach of focusing on its material and functional characteristics. On the one hand, this spatial perspective further explains why and how the Chinese believe that *Qi* pervades diverse phases of human life and affects the dynamic relationships that exist between humans and various beings/things. On the other hand, the perspective implies the research focus of this thesis, namely, the potential impact of the uninterrupted flow of *Qi* on the constitution of performative spaces that are shared by the perceivers and their surroundings.

The term *Qi* (氣), according to Han Dynasty scholar Hsü Shen (ca. 58 – 147) in his *Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters*,³² originally referred to ‘the sending of provisions to other people’ (n.p., my translation). The character *Qi* includes the radical *mi* (rice, 米), which signals *Qi*’s

³¹ By classical, I mean a period relative to westernized China that lasted until the end of Ch’ing Dynasty (around the end of the nineteenth century).

³² *Explaining Simple and Analyzing Compound Characters* [說文解字], compiled by Hsü Shen [許慎] in the Han Dynasty, was the first Chinese dictionary that organized the Chinese characters by radicals and analysed the structure and etymology of the characters.

etymological relation to grains and indicates nourishment and vital energy. It also contains a graph of cloud-like vapour, namely, *qi*³³ (气) (see Zhang and Rose, 2003: 5), which has something to do with the ancients' observations of the steam and smoke that emanate from cooking food and burning sacrificial offerings (see Chen, 2009: 29). In this context, the character *Qi* has been associated with the character *qi*.³⁴ As the scholar Duan Yu-cai (1735-1815) in the Ch'ing Dynasty noted that since the replacement of *qi* with *Qi*, the original meaning of *Qi* has been represented by another word with a similar sound, the character *si* (餽) (see Duan, 2009: n.p., my translation). Thus, the altered significance of *Qi* refers to certain efficacious interconnection between the human and the living environment, that is, the cosmos.³⁵

In reference to the diachronic development of the definitions of the term *Qi* in imperial China, modern Confucian scholar Chang Li-wen (1994) lists four historical periods: (1) before the Han Dynasty (206 CE – 221 BCE), *Qi* was identified not only as mist/cloud but also as a person's essence and awe-inspiring righteousness; (2) during the Han Dynasty, the debate on *Qi* focused on the Original *Qi* (*yuan-qi*), which indicates certain cosmic substance that consists of *yin* and *yang*; (3) from the Wei Dynasty (386-534) to the Tang

³³ In this thesis, I use the lowercase letter '*qi*' to indicate the Chinese character '气' in order to distinguish it from another character '氣' (*Qi*).

³⁴ There are two aspects of the structure of the Chinese characters. One is the pictographic feature, which indicates that the form of characters. It is usually constructed by symbolic patterns. The other aspect is the phenomenon of '*tong jia zi*' [通假字], which indicates an appropriation or transfiguration between two characters with partially congruent shapes, sounds and denotations (see Zhang and Rose, 2003: 5). The structure of the character *Qi* has these two aspects in its development process.

³⁵ I have explained the term *the cosmos* in the introduction of this thesis (see pp. 16-17).

Dynasty (618-907), *Qi* was regarded as prerequisite to the dynamic relationship between absence and presence, comprehension of the environment and the guidance of spirituality; and (4) after the Sung (960-1279) and Ming (1368-1644) Dynasties, *Qi* was conceptualized as the constant operation of creativity itself, namely, the Great Vacuity (*t'ai-hsü*), while being applied to interpret electric induction in scientific observations (see Chang, 1994: 1; cited by Wu, 2006: 137-150, my translation). According to this statement, the notion of *Qi* went from being an elusive matter during ancient times to a radial substratum of the rhythms of nature since the Han Dynasty – and thereafter became an anthropocosmic³⁶ method for grasping the ever-altering interaction between inside and outside, between being and non-being in the universe.

I suggest that Chang Li-wen's observation indicates not only the metaphysical aspect but also the spatial aspect of the flow of *Qi*. The spatial implications can inform our understanding of humans' coexistence and spatial relationships with various beings/things. By this, I mean a perspective that concerns the operation of *Qi* upon the encounters and integration between differences. From this perspective, when *Qi* was initially conceived of as a mist/cloud in ancient times, the operation of *Qi* might have been interpreted as revealing the passage between the cosmos and the earth. Subsequently, with the notion of Original *Qi* (*yuan-qi*), *Qi* might be seen to operate as the linkage between

³⁶ Tu Wei-ming (1985) has suggested that the worldview outlined by the Confucian vision of humanity can be interpreted as reflecting an 'anthropocosmic perspective' (Tu, 1985: 10). The view implies that humans are regarded as an integral part of the open-ended flow of *Qi*. It is believed that the emanation and receipt of *Qi* may bring people's existence into concert with other beings and things.

various pairs of counterparts. Shifting focus away from the physical realm towards the spiritual realm, the operation of *Qi* then might come to be interpreted as pervading both substantial and insubstantial fields. Finally, with reference to the notion of Great Vacuity (*t'ai-hsü*) and scientific observations, *Qi* might be envisaged as a phenomenon where potential spaces for constantly transforming pairs of counterparts into each other are generated and activated. Conceived as such, I suggest that the etymological interpretations of *Qi* offered to date can be re-categorized as follows:

1) *Qi* operates as the environmental interaction when it indicates:

- cloudy or gaseous matter (see Hsü, 2010: n.p.);
- the notions of climate phenomena that have been broadened to include the theory of Six Climatic Features³⁷ (*liu-qi*), where people's activities and illnesses interconnect with their living environment (see Chen, 2009: 140);

³⁷ The Six Climatic Features (*liu-qi*), also known as the Six Pernicious Influences (*liu-yin*), translated by T. J. Kaptchuk in his *Chinese Medicine: The web that has no weaver* (2000). These signify six emblems of climatic phenomena, including wind, cold, summer heat, dampness, dryness and fire. Every emblematic type of weather has its own pervading time and way it is designated in a year. It is used in association with the Five Phases (*wu-hsing*) in order to observe not only the environment but also the correlative features and causalities among climate, the human body and humans' lifestyles. It is believed that, only when the balance between *yin* and *yang* is disturbed, can the interaction among climate, the environment and health become disharmonious (see Kaptchuk, 2000: 146-157; Chen, 2009: 140-149). For the term Five Phases, I adapt Confucian scholar Chou Tun-I's (1017-1073) notion, which is interpreted by Tu Wei-ming. According to Chou, 'by the transformation of *yang* and its union with *yin*, the Five Agents [the Five Phases] of Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth arise' and 'the Five Agents [the Five Phases] constitute a system of *yin* and *yang*' (Tu, 1985: 44, my italicization and addition). That is to say, the Five Phases are not able to be disassociated from the interplay of *yin* and *yang* *Qi*. The operation of the Five Phases, as Chou suggested, is able to affect human deeds: '[By receiving the Five Phases, a person's] physical form appears, and his spirit develops consciousness. The five moral principles of his nature

- the Twenty-four Solar Terms³⁸ (*ershi-si jie-qi*), which cooperate with the Six Climatic Features (see *ibid.*: 143).

2) *Qi* operates as the information conduits while it suggests:

- breathing in and out, the circulation of vital essence that keeps beings alive (see Hsü, 2010: n. pag.);
- the rising smoke of burning sacrificial offerings that symbolizes invisible paths and agents that transfer human worship from earth to the cosmos (see Chen, 2009: 29);
- the propensities or inclinations of beings and things (see Kaptchuk, 2000: 44) through which the microcosmic reciprocally interconnects with the macrocosmic;
- the fundamental and nutritional elements that flow within the human body while sending the information between the inside and the outside (see Chen, 2009: 77-81);
- the material force of every organ in and the texture of the human body (such as Lung *Qi*) that work to maintain the body's function and activities (see Kaptchuk, 2000: 48-49).

(humanity, rightness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness) are aroused by and react to the external world and engage in activity; good and evil are distinguished; and human affairs take place' (*ibid.*, my addition). The 'phases' in this sense do not mean 'elemental perspective on things' (Ames and Hall, 2001: 20). Instead, 'the Chinese phasal explanations describe phases and functions within ongoing processes rather than quantitative or measurable elements' (*ibid.*).

³⁸ Based on the observation of agriculture, climate and the living environment, the ancient Chinese divided one year into twenty-four Solar Terms (*ershi-si jie-qi*). Each solar term has its own quality of *Qi* that leads and corresponds to the reciprocal interactions between the human and the natural worlds during the specific term (see Chen, 2009: 143).

3) *Qi* operates as the ground from which the interrelationship between the cosmos and humans is established if it refers to:

- the Original *Qi*, the Great Unity or *yin* and *yang Qi* – that is, the circulation of *Qi* that leads to the unpredictable merging of numerous beings and things in the universe (see Hsü, 2010: n. pag.);
- a person's own 'Floodlike *Qi*'³⁹ (see Tu, 1985: 105-106; Li, 1996: 68-71) that implies an inextricable engagement between the moral deeds of humans and the rhythms of the universe;
- the moral value of a chain of interactive occasions in which a person is burdened with lofty integrity, responsibility and aspirations while attempting to reciprocally respond to the rhythms of nature (see Hsü, 2010: n.p.);
- the mediation of the conflicts between people's deeds and society's tendencies and customs (see *ibid.*).

³⁹ The term Floodlike *Qi* [*how-jan-chih-qi*] was created by Mencius to connote the primary characteristic of *Qi* as correlating moral sense with vital sensibility (see Li, 1999: 69). This is regarded as the key notion in Mencius's thought and as having great influence on traditional Chinese culture and aesthetics, as suggested by numerous modern scholars (e.g., Chang, 1980; Ye, 1985; Yi, 1988; Chiang, 1990; and Ogawa, 1998). The original text in *Mencius*, the chapter of 'Gong Sun Chou, Part 1' ['公孫丑上'] reads: '[...] Mencius told him, "I understand words. I am good at nourishing my vast, flowing *Qi* [floodlike *Qi*, *how-jan-chih-qi*]." (Chou pursued this.) "May I presume to ask what is meant by 'vast, flowing *Qi*'?" The reply was "It is difficult to speak of it. This is *Qi*: it is consummately great and consummately strong. If one nourishes it with uprightness and does not injure it, it will fill the space between Heaven and Earth. This is *Qi*: it is the companion of rightness and the Way, in the absence of which it starves. It is born from an accumulation of rightness rather than appropriated through an isolated display. If one's actions cause the mind [and heart] to be disquieted, it starves.'" (translated by de Bary and Bloom, 1999: 127, my addition). The term 'vast, flowing *Qi*' is translated as 'floodlike *ch'i*' in Tu Wei-ming's terminology (Tu, 1985: 105). I adapt Tu's terminology 'floodlike' in this thesis.

4) *Qi* operates as the site of perception when it expresses:

- the atmospheres that encompass a person, such as temperament, talent, style of artworks as well as appearance and lifestyle (see Hsü, 2010: n.p.);
- certain criteria for evaluating a person's spiritual state and attitude towards life or work (e.g., brave and high-spirited) (see *ibid.*);
- people's feelings in reaction to that which they face (see *ibid.*);
- destiny as harmonious or disharmonious (see *ibid.*);
- the landscape of illness – that is, showing symptoms and conditions of an illness via physiological and psychological activities (see Cheng, 2005: 417).

5) *Qi* operates as emotional atmospheres that encompass objects if it implies:

- the dynamic encounter between the perceiving subject and the perceived object that conduces a certain unbroken landscape in traditional Chinese painting in which the two sides intermingle with each other (see Tu, 1985: 37-38; Kaptchuk, 2000: 70), arousing sentiment or through personification;
- the smell of beings and things (see Hsü, 2010: n.p.).

The above-discussed spatial features of *Qi* indicate that for the Chinese the flow of *Qi* is interwoven with the social and the natural worlds. Despite the fact that a number of conceptual incompatibilities exist between the different schools of thought on *Qi*, the *Qi* has always been held by these schools as the factor most indispensable to the understanding Chinese culture. It is believed that the operation of *Qi* leads to the organic configuration of diverse constituents of the universe, so that *Qi* has to be thought of in dynamic terms. It is not proper to describe *Qi* as a static conceptual framework. In contrast, *Qi*

is better described as certain energy or forces that have material and spiritual qualities. Furthermore, it indicates a perceivable phenomenon where humans are induced by the information circulating between their living environment and the cosmos to psycho-physiologically participate in the relentless transformation of the cosmic whole.

To sum up, in this section, my spatial readings of *Qi* discourse are crucial to my original thinking in this thesis about how the embodiment process of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works may be related to and affect the constitution of performative spaces in performance. When conceptualising the embodiment process of *Qi*, two areas need to be examined: the *Qi* worldview and the spatial relationships between someone and that individual's surroundings. The first concerns the model of the world by which people coexist and interact with various beings/things via *Qi*. This world model provides clues about how perceiving subjects could situate themselves and act within the *Qi* biospheres. The second area indicates the necessity of thinking about space with respect to a kind of dyadic relationship between humans and various beings/things in the cosmos. The examination of the two areas may inform our understanding of how performative spaces in hypermedial theatre are affected by the technology-intensified transmission of agency between the viewer and that which takes place on stage. In the next section, I will explore the worldview of *Qi* within the context of *Qi*-centred Confucian thought.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ I have mentioned in the introduction of this thesis (see pp. 40-41) the reason why I apply Confucian thought rather than that of Taoism or other schools.

3.2 The perspective of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy

This section offers a deeper understanding of how the spatial aspects of *Qi*, as discussed in the previous section, have fundamentally affected the Chinese worldview. I specifically focus on the notions that are contributed by the scholars from imperial China to modern times who have regarded *Qi* as transforming itself continuously into the substances and functions of various constituents in the universe and as the expressions of the human body, heart-mind⁴¹ and spirit (e.g., Mencius, Chang Tsai, Wang Yang-ming and Wang Fu-chih). I refer to these notions as ‘*Qi*-based Confucian philosophy’ in the course of this thesis. I assume that this perspective may disclose the psycho-physiological⁴² characteristics of the *Qi* operation.

I divide the development of the notions of *Qi* in Confucian thought into five main stages. My exploration begins with how the notion of *Qi* was understood in antiquity as inert matter and then gradually came to be known as a metaphysical essence that possesses moral and aesthetic effectiveness.

1) The Chou Dynasty (1045-256 BCE)

⁴¹ The term *hsin* is translated as ‘heart-mind’ in Tu Wei-ming’s (1985) terminology. He explains that ‘the Confucian *hsin* must be glossed as “heart-mind” because it involves both cognitive and affective dimensions of human awareness’ (ibid.: 32). This Chinese character *hsin* can usually be replaced by *zhi* (will) (see Yang, 1993: 431). I adopt Tu’s terminology heart-mind in this thesis.

⁴² This term psycho-physiological (*shen-hsin*) refers to the twofold feature of *Qi*, in the line of Mencius’s interpretation, that functions to link and transform spirituality and matter as a whole. I adapt Tu Wei-ming’s (1985) terminology ‘psychophysiological’ in his research on *Qi*. A hyphen is added in order to indicate, at once, the unity of the human body and heart-mind and the functioning of the two as inter-subjectivities. I will further elaborate on the reason why I use this term psycho-physiological, rather than psychophysical in Chapter 4.

The chapter 'Biao Chi' of the *Book of Rites*, one of the Confucian classics, records that in the Chou Dynasty the Chinese 'honoured the ceremonial usages and set a high value on bestowing (favours); they served the manes and respected Spiritual Beings, yet keeping them at a distance; they brought the people near, and made them loyal' (Legge, 1885: n.p.), original capitalization). The ethical tradition of *li* (rituals)⁴³ and *yue* (music) in the Chou Dynasty transformed fear of the unknown into the moral deeds of human beings. During the Chou Dynasty people believed that the legitimacy of monarchies hinged on their attainment of *te* (virtue), which refers to moral power/forces/tendency that associate with *Qi* (see Ames and Hall, 1987: 226). Without the *te*, monarchies could not receive further power/forces and responsibility from the cosmos (*t'ien*), namely, the 'Mandate of The cosmos' (*t'ien-ming*)⁴⁴ (see Chen, 2009: 6, my translation). This linkage between *Qi*, human virtue and nature represented the beginning of the moralization and personalization of natural power/forces. The linkage had a radical influence on the relationship between the socio-political and the natural domains.

⁴³ *Li* (rituals) is a key notion of Confucian teaching that refers particularly to a process of cosmologically interweaving the flow of *Qi* with the communication network that exists in the social world through practising *li* in daily life. In this thesis, my use of the term refers to this term's aesthetic interpretation (e.g., Tu Wei-ming, 1985; Chu Ping-tzu, 1993; Li Zehou, 1996; and Chen Chao-ying, 2007), which indicates an awareness of maintaining a dynamic equilibrium in the interrelationships between the heavens and humans.

⁴⁴ The 'Mandate of Heaven' (*t'ien-ming*) in Chinese culture means a ceaselessly evolving process of how people receive capacity and power from the heavens/the cosmos (*t'ien*) and then fulfill their responsibility to the heavens/the cosmos through continuous effort (see Tu, 1985: 46). For an explanation of the term heaven/the heavens/the cosmos, please refer to the introduction (see pp. 2-3).

2) The Spring and Autumn Period (770-476 BCE) and the Warring States Period (476-221 BCE)

During the Spring and Autumn and the Warring States Periods, the relationship between humans and nature with respect to the notion of *Qi* became much more intimate. This relationship was marked by the overwhelming influence of Confucian thinking on various areas of people's lives. The engagement of *Qi* went from the conducting of the ritualistic worship of gods and ghosts to the cultivating of personal ceremonial behaviour and the observance of appropriate interpersonal relationships. In this respect, Confucian scholars were convinced that *Qi* could be seen as the movement of respiration that is parallel to the rhythms of nature. That is, *Qi* was seen as an organic substratum of the whole universe, which could be perceived as inseparable from the human body and nature. For the scholars, apprehension of nature and the universe helped guide both social and moral conduct; thus, cultivating *Qi* might allow humans and other beings/things to reciprocally coexist (see Li, 1999: 87; Berthrong, 2003: 375-376).⁴⁵

For instance, the influential Confucian work, the *Book of Changes*, depicted the mutual dependence between people and various constituents in the universe by associating *Qi* with the system of *yin* and *yang* and the Five Phases (*wu-hsing*) (see Berthrong, 2006: 244). This view provided the

⁴⁵ Contrary to the Confucian vision, Taoist scholars in ancient China believed that it is imperative to eliminate socialisation (see Li, 1999: 87). Chuang Tzu (ca. 369-286 BC), for instance, suggested nature (including one's nature and the natural environment) as the home of spiritual transcendence (see *ibid.*: 94-97). Separating from human society, the operation of *Qi* in life indicates the inevitable circulation between fertility and decline (see Chen, 2003: 68). Yet, the movement of *Qi* for Confucians is characterized as enlivening and vigorous.

metaphysical grounds for a kind of *Qi* worldview, which focused on the balancing of the interactive relationship between humans and nature. Furthermore, Mencius's (ca. 372-289 BCE) notion of cultivating 'Floodlike *Qi*' (*how-jan-chih-qi*)⁴⁶ in his book, *Mencius*, connected perceptual and vital forces with the rhythms of nature (see Li, 1999: 67-68, my translation). With Floodlike *Qi*, the body and heart-mind are transformed into a state of resonance with the cosmos. Another leading Confucian scholar, Hsün Tzu (ca. 313-238 BCE), suggested that a variety of constituents in the world are generated from and affected by the interplay between *yin* and *yang Qi* (see Berthrong, 2003: 378). In the same vein, the *Commentary of Chuo* suggested that, as *Qi* possesses Six Climatic Features (*liu-qi*)⁴⁷, a working framework within which the links and interactive relationships among diverse forms of matter that exist in the personal, political, social and natural spheres are made intelligible (see Chen, 2009: 33; Berthrong, 2006: 244). The *Discourses of the States* describe how the interplay of *yin* and *yang Qi* affects people's minds and society by shifting the patterns of the cosmos (see Chen, 2009: 33-34; Berthrong, 2006: 244). In the chapter 'Inner Cultivation' of *Guan Tzu*,⁴⁸ Essential *Qi* (*jin-qi*) is thought of as the common substratum of various constituents in the world that provides the life, spirit and intelligence to these constituents (see Chen, 2009: 41).

⁴⁶ Please refer to footnote 39 (see p. 134).

⁴⁷ Please refer to footnote 37 (see pp. 132-133).

⁴⁸ According to Yang Rurbin, *Guan Tzu*, the chapter 'Inner Cultivation' ['*Nei-ye*', '内業'], has to be seen as the Mencian text (see Yang, 1996: 6), rather than as the Taoist text to which most of modern Taoist scholars subscribe. Yang suggests that, as the terms and arguments about the interrelationships among the human body and heart-mind and *Qi* in the chapter 'Inner Cultivation', is extremely similar to those in the *Mencius*, there should be philosophical linkage between these two books (see *ibid.*).

3) The Han Dynasty (202 BCE-220 CE)

The synthesis of the observations on *Qi* (such as in the *Book of Change* and the *Commentary of Chuo*) and the Confucian social and ethical thinking during the Han Dynasty is usually described as the development of a 'correlative philosophy or cosmology' (Berthrong, 2003: 380). Notwithstanding the hegemonic position of Confucian thought in Chinese philosophy, Confucians in this era still re-evaluated the classic literature of previous dynasties and formed a theory of *Qi* that assimilated elements of Taoism and the School of Naturalists (*Yin-yang-chia*) in studies of Chinese medicine and cosmology (see Berthrong, 2003: 380, 2006: 246; Chen, 2009: 14).

For instance, Tung Chung-shu (179-104 BCE) used the idea of *yin* and *yang* *Qi* and the Five Phases system, which was established and developed in the Warring States Period (476-221 BCE), to form an encompassing vision of social ethics and cosmology that spotlighted the well-known notion of 'the resonance between the cosmos and humans' (*t'ien-jen kan-ying*)⁴⁹ (see Li,

⁴⁹ The term *kan-ying* is translated by Tu Wei-ming as 'affect and response' (Tu, 1985: 47) and by Tony Watling (2009) as 'cosmic resonance'. In the course of this thesis, I interpret *kan-ying* as 'resonance of the cosmos' to convey these two scholars' ideas. In his *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals* [*Ch'un-ch'iu Fan-lou*, 春秋繁露], Tung Chung-shu (179-104 BCE) interpreted the correlative network of *Qi* as follows: 'Beautiful things can draw forth beautiful kinds; evil things can draw forth evil kinds. This is what the cosmic resonance between diverse beings/things connected by such interdependent relationships' (cited by Li, 1996: 77, my translation). For Tu, *kan-ying* indicates a cyclical process in which pairs of polarities constantly respond to affections that are created by each other, concomitant with the circulation of *Qi*. According to Watling, the 'cosmic resonance' is explained as 'a non-linear causality whereby different things and events influence each other (via *qi*, the coming and going of vital essence, connecting thoughts and actions)' (Watling, 2009: 92-93). That is, 'such resonance involves mutual/reciprocal response to myriad things (to movements of *qi* in the world, which responds to "vibrations" from things and events)' (ibid.: 93). In these senses,

1996: 77-78, my translation). The notion of *Qi* was woven into the fabric of traditional Confucian rituals and music (*li-yue*) in order to explore the harmoniousness of the network that is formed by the social and, ultimately, the natural worlds. Tung's approach implied that the rhythms of the universe and nature are internalized as the operations of human bodies and hearts-minds and human affairs (see *ibid.*). The internalization posited a parallel between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic. Through this process *Qi* does not manifest itself only in the matrix of nature. Rather, human relations in society also suggest connections with nature via the flow of *Qi*. In other words, the *Qi* was thought of as certain effectiveness where the virtues of not merely vitality but also harmony, integrity and tolerance are also emphasized.

4) The Sung (960-1279), Ming (1368-1644) and Ch'ing (1636-1912) Dynasties
Due to the prevailing influence of Taoism in the Wei and Jin Dynasties (220-589) as well as the influence of the newly imported Buddhist religion in the Tang Dynasty (618-907), Confucian philosophy and its *Qi* theory were not revived until the first half of the Sung Dynasty.⁵⁰ Chou Tun-I (1017-1073) and Chang Tsai (1020-1077), who both thought innovatively about *Qi*, are believed to be two of the most important Confucian scholars of this period.

kan-ying can be seen as mutual responses and reciprocal companionship between the self and the self's surroundings that may be achieved through the transmission of *Qi* between the two sides. Diverse constituents of the universe are paired and interconnected with each other via the flow of *Qi*. Both John Berthrong and Li Zehou have pointed out that Tung Chung-shu's account of *Qi*-based cosmology has left a lasting influence on Chinese culture (see Berthrong, 2003: 379; Li, 1996: 78).

⁵⁰ The first half of the Sung Dynasty is usually known as the Northern Sung Dynasty.

In his book, *Explanation of the 'Diagram of the Supreme Polarity'*, Chou applied the core notion of concern-consciousness⁵¹ in Confucian philosophy – which suggests the dynamic balancing of reciprocal concerns between self⁵² and others in the world – to a rereading of the 'Diagram of the Supreme

⁵¹ The notion of concern-consciousness is identified by the contemporary Confucian master Mou Tsung-san in his book, *Special Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy* [中國哲學的特質] (1994), as the most significant trait of Confucian thinking about being, including the themes of capacity and responsibility loaded by the cosmos (*t'ien-ming*), humanity/benevolence (*jen*), heart-mind (*hsin*) and the nature of beings/things (*hsing*) (see Berthrong, 2006: 255). This concern-consciousness is regarded as cultivating interactive concerns for numerous beings/things in the world in order to constitute a reciprocal living field (see *ibid.*: 251).

⁵² In this thesis, by the self, I do not refer to the Western individualistic tendencies but rather to a classical Chinese world scheme in which humans and various beings/things engage with one another through the flow of *Qi*, in the sense of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy. I regard the self, on this basis, as the state of having *Qi* concentrated on oneself. In this state, the self functions as a focus of energy fields created by the flow of *Qi*. Yet, this self also cosmologically transforms with various beings/things as a constituent of the cosmos. This definition is inspired by research of Tu Wei-ming (1985) and Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall (2001) on the Confucian self, both of which are in keeping with the Mencius's line of Confucian thought. Tu defines 'the meaning of Confucian selfhood as creative transformation' (Tu, 1985: 7). This is so because, for Confucians, a person's body is cosmologically comprised of various beings/things in its dwelling world and resonates with the rhythms of the world (see *ibid.*: 10). That is to say, the self can be conceived of as analogous to a life process in the whole universe that ceaselessly develops and cannot be separated from various correlative beings/things involved in such a process. Entailed here is the emphasis of dyadic relationships between various pairs of polarities (such as the self and others). The realisation of the self, thus, can be regarded as 'a communal act' (*ibid.*: 113) that requires others' participation. Ames and Hall use the *Mencius* passage 'everything is here in me' to define the Confucian self as 'the most integral [intensive] focus of the most extensive field of *qi*' (Ames and Hall, 2001: 24). As the two scholars explain, since *Qi* is understood as 'a continuous field', this *Mencius* passage 'everything is here in me' can be interpreted as: 'The field of *qi* is focused by me, and thus all *qi* is here in me' (*ibid.*: 25). This interpretation highlights equal emphasis on 'everything' and 'me', as these two are regarded as, at once, generated by and integral to the flow of *Qi*. In this sense, 'me' (the self) is raised by its reciprocal symbiosis with 'everything' (its surroundings). Therefore, combining Tu's and Ames and Hall's notions, I regard the self in this thesis as a focus of the ever-transforming fields of *Qi* that are originally shared with others.

Polarity' (*t'ai-chi tu-shuo*) drawn in the Han Dynasty (see Berthrong, 2003: 382). As the 'Diagram of the Supreme Polarity' shows, *yin* and *yang Qi* incessantly flow from two polarities, namely *yin* and *yang*, and integrate into each other. In Chou's terms, 'the interaction of these two *ch'i* [*Qi*] engenders and transforms myriad things. The myriad things produce and reproduce, resulting in an unending transformation' (cited and translated by Tu, 1985: 44, my addition). That is to say, the self-other relation and human-nature relation can be thought of as analogous to the interplay between rival but interdependent polarities, namely *yin* and *yang*, through the circulation of *Qi*. With the circulation, a kind of isomorphic and energetic field in which individuals experience and perceive the cosmic resonance between themselves and others is constituted.

Similarly, the other scholar Chang explained in his book *Western Inscription*, '[...] that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature' (cited and translated by Tu, 1985: 43).⁵³ This *Qi*-connected network, wherein humans psycho-physiologically engage with the universe as a whole, shows Chang's 'profound awareness of moral ecology' (ibid.).⁵⁴ That is, the Confucian notion of concern-consciousness further expands here: each being can find its own position and resonant

⁵³ The original text in Chang Tsai's *Western Inscription* [*Hsi-ming*, 西銘] is: 'Heaven is my father and earth is my mother, and even such a small being as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore, that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions' (Tu, 1985: 42-43).

⁵⁴ Tu Wei-ming suggests that Chang Tsai's humanistic vision 'contrasts sharply with the Taoist idea of non-interference on the one hand and the Buddhist concept of detachment on the other' (Tu, 1985: 43).

polarities through the ceaseless interactions between its self and others, along with the circulation of *Qi*. Perceiving the interactions as ecology, the inside and outside, the constituents of the universe/cosmos and the universe/cosmos itself, are thought of as one unity in which both sides are inseparable from each other and are able to affect each other's constant altering.

However, the development of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy was obstructed by Neo-Confucianism, which began during the Southern Sung Dynasty.⁵⁵ Chu Hsi's (1130-1200) School of *Li* (principle) posited the dichotomy of *Li* and *Qi*, departing from previously monistic cosmology (see Wu, 1995: 147). That is to say, *Qi* possesses an emotional and downcast propensity and has to be refined by the Heavenly Principle (*t'ien-li*), a transcendental rule that goes beyond human affairs (see Mabuchi, 2005: 162-163, my translation). Reciprocal interactions cannot be established between oneself and one's surroundings without taking into regard the Heavenly Principle (see Wu, 1995: 147).

The dualistic vision marked a watershed in the development of Confucian philosophy and subsequently divided arguments about *Qi* into two schools of thought: while some remained focused on the physical substance that follows Chu's vision, others explored the metaphysical essence, which resisted the overpowering of any transcendental principle or rule (see Berthrong, 2006: 247). A small group of Confucian scholars remained faithful to the double movements of *Qi* – that is, *Qi* works as the ecology in which things exist while

⁵⁵ The Southern Sung Dynasty refers to the second half of the Sung Dynasty.

also becoming those things. These scholars revisited ancient literature and were convinced that Chu Hsi's attempt to dichotomize *Li* and *Qi* underestimated the Taoist and Buddhist influences on Confucian philosophy (see Berthrong, 2003: 386-387). Yet, most scholars still abandoned the original connotation of *Qi* and revised their opinions with the Taoist and Buddhist notions.

Until the mid-Ming Dynasty, Wang Yang-ming's (1472-1528) School of *Hsin* (heart-mind) resisted Chu's prevailing philosophy. According to Wang's Confucian interpretation, the human heart-mind cosmologically reflects the essence of the universe (see Yang, 1996: 370-371). Although this view indicates the dissolution of the boundary between *Qi* and *Li*, *Qi* was not the main concern of Wang's philosophy and was interpreted as an expression of the activities of the human heart-mind.

Departing from Wang Yang-ming's interpretation of *Qi*, Wang Ting-hsiang (1474-1544) and Wang Fu-chih (1619-1692) followed *Qi*-centred Confucian thought and, especially, Sung Confucian scholar Chang Tsai's statement of *Qi*. In so doing, they sought to discover the 'primal' Confucian quality of human-nature relations. Wang Ting-hsiang conceived of *Qi* as the common substratum of diverse constituents in the universe (see Yang, 1996: 390-391). That is to say, when *Qi* flows, it could create something in-between the material and the immaterial. According to Wang Fu-chih, *yin* and *yang Qi* ceaselessly flow into and pervade every phase of the cosmos and earth (see

Chen, 2005: 69).⁵⁶ This implies that the interplay of *yin* and *yang Qi* may be thought of as dynamic and creative, underscoring the temporal features of *Qi*. The operation of *Qi* might generate the multi-layered relationships between humans and various beings/things in the universe.

During the Ch'ing Dynasty, Tai Chen (1724-1777), armed with his commentary on ancient texts on the definition of *Li* (principle), fought Chu's attempt to dichotomize *Li* and *Qi* (see Yang, 1996: 398-399). Reviving the Han Confucian notion of *Qi*, Tai interpreted *Qi* as Original *Qi* (*yuan-qi*) that has natural and primitive characteristics and could be gradually cultivated through a person's efforts (see Liu, 2005: 208-209, my translation). Hence, *Qi* from the Confucian point of view was neither unrealistic nor inaccessible but was constantly performing and becoming during the course of daily life.

5) The Contemporary Period

At the beginning of the last century, and out of a desire to break away from the autocratic monarchy that had dominated China for thousands of years, an overwhelming eagerness for Westernised modernity emerged during the rule of the Kuo-ming-tang government in Mainland China. After the regime change of 1949, the Chinese Communist government implemented efforts to eliminate traditional Chinese culture (see Berthrong, 2003: 389; 2006: 237-238). Materialist philosophy became the lens through which people comprehended

⁵⁶ As Chen Jung-chuo observes, Chang Tsai and Wang Fu-chih's interpretations of *Qi* can be lauded for providing an 'anti-substantialist turn' in Chinese philosophy (see Chen, 2005: 48). This indicates that the world can be thought of as a becoming process, which is continuously constituted and transformed via *Qi*.

the world. As political factors dominated collective ideology in Mainland China, studies of the Confucian philosophy of *Qi* turned to the debate between materialism, which was preferred by academia in Mainland China, and non-materialism, which was preferred by academia in Taiwan. Although a group of scholars, namely, New Confucianism,⁵⁷ who have contributed to the revival of Confucianism and have persistently attempted to preserve classical Chinese literature and philosophy, *Qi* has increasingly been interpreted from a materialist perspective as material energy or matter (see Liu, 2005: 205). As a result, the Confucian philosophy of *Qi* in Confucianism studies, which is distinguished from Chu's School of *Li* (principle) and Wang's School of *Hsin* (heart-mind), has become a school in its own right (see Liu, 2005: 203-204). In this context, the *Qi* connotes the politically correct expression of materialist thinking.

The political climate makes Taiwanese academics who specialize in Confucianism studies opposed to materialist readings (see Liu, 2005: 211). Most scholars are committed to the traditional doctrines of Confucian philosophy, which assert the transcendence of *Li* (principle) and *Hsin* (heart-mind). In this respect, they have generally degraded the Confucian philosophy of *Qi*. For instance, leading Confucian scholar Mou Tsung-san's

⁵⁷ New Confucian scholars, not only in China but also in the pan-East Asian countries, divide themselves from the classical and Neo Confucianism (see Berthrong, 2003: 389). They propose innovative applications of Confucianism in the contemporary world. For instance, they fuse the traditional views of nature with those of the modern physical ones (see *ibid.*). Furthermore, the stream of New Confucianism and ecological crisis convergence has been expanded to include the social, philosophic and religious concerns in terms of social science studies (see *ibid.*).

interpretation of *Qi* strongly rejects the materialist view of *Qi* and stands on a hierarchic construct that regards *Qi* as lacking metaphysical essence and being subject to domination by the human heart-mind (see Chen, 2005: 47-53; Ho, 2005: 82-83; Cheng, 2005: 260).

Only a few Taiwanese scholars (e.g., Tu Wei-ming, 1985; Yang Rurbin, 1993, 2005) in the past three decades have sought the context of *Qi* in ancient Confucian literature, with the aim of developing a non-materialist view of the Confucian philosophy of *Qi*, and have persisted in exploring the positive and monistic features of *Qi*-fertilised cosmology. As this still emerging research area has not developed a proper terminology, I refer to this kind of *Qi*-centred Confucian thought in this thesis as *Qi-based Confucian philosophy*, implying a worldview that revolves around *Qi* which is characterized as the psycho-physiological dynamics, as addressed by Mencius, Chang Tsai, Wang Yang-ming and Wang Fu-chih.

Both Tu Wei-ming (1985) and Yang Rurbin (1993, 2005) contend that Confucius and Mencius should be understood in terms of Wang Yang-ming's analysis rather than Chu Hsi's. Instead of concentrating merely on the meaning of the human heart-mind, as does Wang's School of *Hsin*, Tu and Yang delve into the link between Wang's and Chang Tsai and Wang Fu-chih's interpretations of *Qi*. According to Tu, *Qi* is defined as 'the psychophysiological stuff' that suffuses the universe (Tu, 1985: 38). Examining the classical Chinese worldview from this perspective, Tu explains a mode of thinking that emphasizes the correlations between 'part/whole, inner/outer, surface/depth, root/branches, substance/function and The cosmos/[hu]man' rather than 'the

familiar dichotomies of self/society, body/mind [...] culture/nature' (ibid.: 8-9, original capitalization and my addition). This indicates that *Qi* acts as an intermediation between diverse pairs of constituents in the universe. By the same token, Yang suggests a '*Qi-Body*⁵⁸ theory' that refers to the indivisible correlations between *Qi* and the human body and heart-mind (see Yang, 1993: 3; 2005: ii-iii, my translation). This theory explores the role of *Qi* in Confucian philosophy and the importance of *Qi* to the classical Chinese worldview (see ibid.). According to the theory, *Qi* is incessantly transmitted between the social and the natural worlds so that this very transmission cultivates the cosmologically ideal Body.⁵⁹

In conclusion, the way in which Confucians see the world, as explained in this section, implicates a *Qi*-centred model of the world. This way, what I have named in this thesis as *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy enables an understanding of the engagement of the flow of *Qi* with a person's modality of existence. My analysis of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, as understood by the line of thought of Mencius, Chang Tsai and Wang Fu-chih, has shown that the *Qi*-centred model of the world has existed since the era of imperial China

⁵⁸ My purpose in using the uppercase letter B when referring to the term *Body* is to distinguish it from *the body*. In keeping with Mencian thought, *Body* refers to the cosmologically ideal body that is formed by the association of the human body (*shen*) and heart-mind (*hsin*) through their intermediary, namely *Qi*. The other term, *the body*, refers to the physical body or the human body.

⁵⁹ In addition to Tu Wei-ming's and Yang Rurbin's interpretations of *Qi*, in contemporary times *Qi* is interpreted as: a transformation between matter and energy for Homer H. Dubs and Ted J. Kaptchuk (see Tu, 1985: 105; Kaptchuk, 2000: 43; Zarilli, 2009: 74), a mixing of vitality and spirituality in Frederick W. Mote's formulation (see Tu, 1985: 105); and the 'biospirituality' in Russell Kirkland's term (see Kirkland, 2005: 33; Miller, 2005: 57).

and that this model reflects the Chinese worldview of *Qi*. The vision of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy regards *Qi* not merely as certain psycho-physiological stuff that comprises the universe but also as some energetic rhythms or orders by which the universe is constituted. I adapt this vision in this thesis to investigate and interpret the spatial implications of the *Qi* operation upon the interactions between rival yet interdependent polarities (such as humans and various other beings/things). Moreover, in the due course of this thesis, this vision is applied to develop a framework for analysing the hypermedial theatre works in Taiwan that indicate a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. In the next section, I consider how Confucians practise and embody *Qi* in their ordinary lives.

3.3 Self-cultivation of *Qi* as the embodiment process of *Qi*

Within the context of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, this section discusses Confucian ideas about the self-cultivation of *Qi*, which refers to practices that help preserve and circulate *Qi* both inside and outside of the human body. I focus on three goals of the cultivation that aim to embody *Qi* in people's living environments and ordinary lives. I assume that the discussion of the goals, on the one hand, unfolds the interconnections among the human body and heart-mind and the social and the natural worlds. On the other hand, it probes into the aesthetic perceptions that are influenced by the Chinese worldview of *Qi* over thousands of years.

The Confucian terminology *self-cultivation* was originally termed '*kung-fu*' in Chinese, which implies ceaseless effort to associate people's bodies and

hearts-minds with their surroundings (see Yang, 2005: ii, my translation).⁶⁰ Yet, this self-cultivation of *Qi* requires people's active participation in the reciprocal interactions between the social and the natural worlds instead of the departure from things secular and civilized on which the Taoists insist (see Peng, 2005: 24, 30). In other words, through the self-cultivation of *Qi*, humans and various other beings/things may communally constitute certain *Qi* biospheres that traverse the two interconnected worlds.

I suggest that there are three key goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi* relating to a person's psycho-physiological participation in the constitution of the *Qi* biospheres – namely, the uniting of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*), the uniting of the human body with the human heart-mind (*shen-hsin ho-yi*) and the association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining). These goals show how the self-cultivation of *Qi* guides practitioners to expand their exploration of human-nature relations, body-mind relations and ways of becoming present in

⁶⁰ As Yang Rurbin observed, although the Confucian scholars paid great attention to the practices of storing and circulating *Qi* in and out the human body, there was no specific terminology for these practices (see Yang, 2005: ii). Until the Sung Dynasty (960-1279), the term *self-cultivation* (*kung-fu*) appeared in Confucian texts and was used to describe those practices (see *ibid.*). During the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644), this term *self-cultivation* became the terminology of classical Confucian theories about methods of attaining virtue (see *ibid.*). The notion of self-cultivation of *Qi* can be found not only in a Confucian, Taoist or Buddhist metaphysical quest but also in health concerns, such as martial arts, *qi-kung* and medical therapy. In folk Taoist practice, martial arts and *qi-kung*, the ultimate state of cultivating *Qi* is usually described as maintaining good health and longevity (see Kohn, 2001: 51-54, 117; Zhang and Rose, 2001: 120-121, 124, 143). Despite every area having its own different motivations for and aims in practising the self-cultivation of *Qi*, the interpretations of self-cultivation in different thoughts and schools commonly refer to the practices of breathing as well as sitting still and meditating with a peaceful mind.

the universe. In other words, cultivation leads to the *Qi* embodiment in numerous phases of human life.

1) The unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*)⁶¹

The unity of the cosmos with humanity refers to the reciprocal blending of the natural and the social worlds. It indicates that Confucian thinking about nature has been expanded to include aesthetic views of ecological and social ethics. That is to say, perceptions of nature have been thought of as analogous to interpersonal sensibilities, and the order of the universe has been seen as parallel with the brotherly relations between senior and junior siblings. For instance, in the *Analects*, Confucius (551-479 BC) compared personal aspiration to a perpetually flowing stream: 'It passes on just like this, not ceasing day or night' (Legge, 1861: n.p.). Although Confucius's teachings never explicitly discussed the idea of *Qi*, they did indicate that the considerable praise of the becoming and transformation of nature could be thought of as fostering an intimate engagement between nature and humanity.

⁶¹ The notion of the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*) has become one of the most significant issues in Chinese culture. However, this notion has been commonly misinterpreted by Taoist monopolistic thought. Chuang Tzu's teaching is the best-known example of this incomplete understanding. As the contemporary Taoist scholar Russell Kirkland comments, 'with the apparent exception of Mencius—whose call for a cultivation of "a flood-like *ch'i*" [Floodlike *Qi*] might seem to qualify him as a Taoist—Confucians have seldom been very interested in exploring the transformative implications of the body's own energies, or the connectedness of those energies with the life-field in which our lives are intrinsically embedded' (Kirkland, 2005: 193, original emphasis and my addition). I doubt this parallel between Mencius and the Taoist, as the quality of the *Qi* movements and the correlation between these movements and the constitution of the world in Confucian thought are fundamentally different from those in Taoist thought.

I suggest that the focus of the blending of nature and humanity is placed on the liminality of *Qi*, that is, on establishing certain interactive pathways, via the flow of *Qi*, for the dynamic encounter between the two sides. By the pathways, I mean that, when people become aware of the interweaving of their existence within *Qi* biospheres, they may develop and realise the means to reciprocally interact with what is encountered. Such pathways can be seen as embedded in reality and intersecting with the ever-becoming patterns of the interrelationships between individuals and their surroundings.

Engagement between nature and humanity also can be found in Confucian scholar Ch'eng Hao's (1032-1085) 'Recorded Sayings':

[a] book on medicine describes paralysis of the four limbs as absence of humanity (*pu jen*). [...] The man of humanity regards heaven and earth and all things as one body. To him, there is nothing that is not himself. Since he has recognized all things as himself, can there be any limit to his humanity? [...] As in the case of paralysis of the four limbs, the vital force (*ch'i*) [*Qi*] no longer penetrates them, and therefore, they are no longer parts of the self. (cited and translated by Tu, 1985: 45, my addition)

Again, the passage implies that certain liminal space between the person, heaven (namely, the cosmos), earth and all things is created along with the flow of *Qi*. By cultivating *Qi*, the person works as part of the whole universe while other constituents in the universe interact with this person not merely as extension of but as originally included within the person's body. In this sense, the involvement of humans in the constitution of a reciprocal, communal, living field with that which differs from them can be regarded as relevant to the Confucian notion of concern-consciousness, which indicates the reflection of

humanistic cares upon the *Qi*-affected sensibilities of the universe. It is the transmission of *Qi*, instead of certain transcendental will or human power, that leads to the interactive pathways between the social and the natural worlds. If *Qi* is experienced in this way of effectiveness, a person's responses to his/her surroundings can be seen as a process where s/he is induced to undertake a mission to fulfill the resonance and unity with the cosmos.

2) The unity of the body with the heart-mind (*shen-hsin ho-yi*)

The indivisibility between nature and humanity indicates the intimate inter-connectedness between the human body and heart-mind. This is because the notion of humanity (*jen*), which is the principle teaching of Confucian thinking, refers to the merging of the human body and heart-mind. That this is so has been proven by the unearthing of ancient literature in Guodian, China, in 1993, which showed that the ancient character *jen* was originally composed of the word *shen* (the body) on top and the word *hsin* (the heart-mind) below (see Yang, 2005: 3; Chen, 2007: 74). Mencius's influential notion of the 'great body' (*ta-t'i*) and the 'small body' (*hsiao-t'i*) can exemplify the implications of the character *jen*. According to Mencius's thinking, the 'great body' indicates the human heart-mind, as the heart-mind is imbued with 'the most refined and subtle *ch'i* [*Qi*] of the human body' (Tu, 1985: 47, my addition). With such a quality of *Qi*, a person's heart-mind can be enlarged infinitely. By contrast, a person's physical form has its limitations, even though it is also cultivated by the common *Qi*; thus, it is named as the 'small body' (ibid.: 102). Yet, due to the circulation of *Qi*, the two bodies incorporate each other rather than encumber each other's development.

I suggest that the focus here is on embodying *Qi* as the indivisible association between a person's perceptions and movements and the environment. By this, I mean that the circulation of *Qi* elicits some kind of psycho-physiological activities when someone encounters others. As Mencius's well-known teachings suggested, without cultivating *Qi*, humans' 'bodily designs' cannot be fully realized (*chien-hsing*) and, simultaneously, their hearts-minds cannot be fully developed (*ching-hsin*)' (see Tu, 1985: 72). That is to say, the circulation of *Qi* between inside and outside reveals awareness of others to be awareness of the self. When the *Qi* brings the information toward and back from others, the circulation of *Qi* intensifies the self's psycho-physiological identification with others.

Within this context, the structure of the character *jen*, which consists of the word *shen* (the body) and the word *hsin* (the heart-mind), implies a two-way movement by which a being turns itself inward while opening itself outward. The inward turning suggests a process of strengthening the interlinkage of a person's own body with heart-mind. Meanwhile, the outward opening indicates a process of enlarging the bodily space that synthesizes the self and others. Both the inward and the outward are concurrent and recurrent through the circulation of *Qi* between inside and outside. Thus, to Confucians, the human body and heart-mind can be thought of as together embodied with *Qi* in the network of interactive relationships between humans and their surroundings.

3) The association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining)

The process of getting virtue (*te-te*) has always been a metaphysical motif in the Confucian notion of self-cultivation. This motif has been employed with

respect not only to the moral integrity but also, and more importantly, to the becoming present of one's self⁶² in a *Qi*-cultivated environment. As the *Book of Changes* notes, '[t]he daily renovation, which it [the movement of *yin* and *yang* polarities] produces, is what is meant by "the abundance of its virtue" [*sheng-te*]. Production and reproduction is what is called (the process of) change' (Legge, 1899: n.p., my addition). This implicitly shows that the efficacy of nature, which exists in the interplay of *yin* and *yang Qi*, is what humans should learn and internalize in order to cultivate their own virtue. The very efficacy, in my opinion, can be interpreted as a certain rhythmic structure of the *Qi* transmission between humans and their surroundings. When a person is capable of apprehending this rhythmic structure, that human being is locating itself in the ever-becoming network of the human-nature relationship, that is, optimally, embodying *Qi* as that individual's own virtue.

Getting virtue (*te-te*) in this sense is much more related to activating certain *Qi* fields that inherently embrace and at once are shared by the self and others than to the causal relationship between good and evil. That is to say, due to the feature of the *yin-yang* interplay, *Qi* operates as a certain effectiveness by which someone's perceptions and movements are juxtaposed with others who share the same rhythms of *Qi* transmission. The *Qi* fields are transformed into liminal spaces where some unpredictable but omnipresent, the subtlest but strongest interconnections and correlations between the self and others are concomitant with the grasping of the rhythms of the *Qi* transmission. If the *Qi*

⁶² Please refer to footnote 52 (see p. 143).

fields are achieved, a person may be able to integrate into and be in tune with the cosmic whole.

In such a process of getting virtue, the presence of others is indispensable to the presence of a person's self. The so-called virtue, for Confucians, thus, cosmologically implies an ever-altering state of existence – that is, 'nature and humans can only present and perceive each other in motion' (Li, 1996: 75, my translation). The sense of presence is better understood as related to an embodiment process of *Qi* than to the opposite of absence. Furthermore, the presence emerges not merely through the contestation and negotiation between the self and others but through integration into the circulation of *Qi* in multilayered spaces and times. That is to say, when someone's *Qi* field is unable to coextend with others' *Qi* fields, that person may not become present without support from others, and the other way round.

In summary, with reference to *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, I have elaborated the three key goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi* – that is, the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*), the unity of the human body with the human heart-mind (*shen-hsin ho-yi*) and the association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining) – those lead to the embodiment of *Qi* in the Confucian practitioner's ordinary life. Foregrounding on spatial readings of *Qi* discourse, I have interpreted the three goals as guidance for the practitioner to psycho-physiologically realize human-nature relations, body-mind relations and ways of becoming present. In this thesis, the embodiment process of *Qi* is proposed as being critical to understanding the creation of performative spaces in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works that indicate a traditional

Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. It may offer a new layer of meaning to the interaction between the viewer and the work and the embodiment and presence of the viewer's phenomenal body in the course of performances. Based on these discussions, the next section will examine how the Confucian idea of *Qi* bears upon the definition of space in classical Chinese art and literature.

3.4 The construction of space activated by *Qi*

This section interprets the meaning of space through the lens of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy. If *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy has fostered the reciprocal integration of humans into the social and the natural worlds as well as the dyadic relationship between the self's and others' *Qi* fields, as indicated in the previous sections, then how the notion of space is constructed needs to be examined in this particular context. I put forth such a rethinking of spatial relationships in this section.

To explain the effects of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy on the construction of space, I propose two movements of establishing the dyadic relationships between the self and its surroundings with regard to the circulation of *Qi* between the two sides. The first is a horizontal disclosure of space where the self broadens itself with others. Meanwhile, the second is a vertical disclosure of space by which the self deepens its inner world with others. With these two movements, the construction of space may be seen as the construction of in-betweenness.

The English term *space* is translated into modern Chinese as the term *kung-ch'ien* (空間). It is rare to find associations of the two characters *kung* and *ch'ien* in classical Chinese literature, but, even so, ancient Chinese civilisation has its own interpretations of *space* that are usually related to the Chinese philosophy of the idea of *Qi*. This is also an observable phenomenon in *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy. According to Chang Tsai's (1020-1077) *Correcting Youthful Ignorance*, the movement of *Qi* is defined as the inner logic of the constitution of the universe:

Ch'i [Qi] moves and flows in all directions and in all manners. Its two elements (yin and yang) unite and give rise to the concrete. Thus, the multiplicity of things and human beings is produced. In their ceaseless successions, the two elements of yin and yang constitute the great principles of the universe. (cited and translated by Tu, 1985: 41-42, my addition and italicisation)

As Tu Wei-ming suggests, Chang's ideas about the *Qi* movement indicate that, since the human body and various forms of beings/things result from the integration of *yin* and *yang Qi*, 'human life is part of a continuous flow of the blood and breath that constitutes the cosmic process' (Tu, 1985: 43). That is to say, people's existences engage not merely with the animated but also 'with rocks [and] trees' (ibid., my addition), as *Qi* permeates through all these elements. Furthermore, their existence is closely related to the inclusiveness of the past, the present and the becoming. Space, in this sense, has to be thought of as a flux-like structure wherein the constituents of the space are constantly affected by and respond to their counterparts through the interplay of *yin* and *yang Qi*.

This flux implication, with respect to the interplay of *yin* and *yang Qi*, leads to another characteristic of space with which the interconnection between interdependent yet opposite polarities (such as humans and various other beings/things) may alter the generation of space. This polaristic interconnection is explained by Chang as:

[n]othing can exist without being interconnected to others; nothing can be engendered without dialectical relationships between resemblance and difference, between nothingness and fullness, between ending and beginning. Otherwise, a thing cannot manifest itself as existing in the world. (Chang, 1076: n.p., my translation)

This indicates that, due to constant dialectics and changes, a person's existence refers to not a static point of time and space but rather to a dynamic and becoming within the network of the dyadic relationship between self and others. Thus, a space that is constituted by this kind of polaristic interconnection functions as a medium for bringing differences between various pairs of polarities into congruence with each other through the circulation of *Qi*.

This space, within the polaristic context, may be also related to how the self cultivates itself via *Qi* if we refer back to our discussion of the self-cultivation of *Qi* in the previous section (see p. 151 *et seqq.*). As Tu observes, 'the [human] body provides the context and the resources for [the] ultimate self-transformation' of the body 'as a private ego to the body as an all-encompassing self' (Tu, 1985: 172, 175, my addition). The human body here works as neither an observed corporeality nor an anthropocentric being

but as a symbiotic site that embraces its self and that which it encounters. Tu identifies this transforming process of the body as a process of broadening and deepening the self (see *ibid.*: 175-180). With reference to this broadening and deepening, the bodily space may be thought of as the product of incessantly developing historical and familial connections between humans and various beings/things in the universe instead of merely as a privatized sensitivity or an abstraction. Thus, the meaning of space deepens, merging with individual sentiments of time that accumulate with time's passage.

I suggest that 'the broadening process of the self', in Tu's terms, reveals a horizontal perspective of space, while 'the deepening process of the self' refers to a vertical perspective of space. First, and in regards to broadening, as Tu explains, the self is thought of as the centre of a network of dyadic relationships, which includes 'the family, neighbourhood, kinship, clan, state and world' (Tu, 1985: 176). That is to say, the space of the self expands gradually, in accordance with the interactions between it and its surroundings. This broadening can be regarded as a horizontal disclosure of space. Second, as the self deepens, it embraces the world within the field of itself (see *ibid.*: 179). The outer layers of the network that revolve around the self in the broadening process become the inner layers of a network which emerges from the deepening process. This deepening of the self indicates a vertical disclosure of space that is related to the Confucian notion of the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*). Humanity 'is predicated on an "anthropocosmic" vision',⁶³ because it is believed that 'the full measure of

⁶³ For an explanation of this term *anthropocosmic*, please refer to footnote 36 (see p. 131).

one's humanity cannot be accommodated without a reference to Heaven' (ibid.: 180, original capitalization). In this vision, the deepening thus turns the external world into a person's deepest internal world.

The concurrence of the horizontal and vertical disclosure of space brings forth a spatial implication of in-betweenness. That is, the *Qi* transmission leads to the blurring of boundaries between the self and others. Instead of being enveloped, the space of the self is opened to and shared with others. The self constantly negotiates with others and relocates itself in an ever-altering network of its dyadic relationships with others. For this reason, the concurrent disclosure implies a dialectical process by which certain in-between space is created through the interactions between the self and its surroundings, concomitant with the circulation of *Qi*. If people cannot respond to and cosmically resonate⁶⁴ with others, if people cannot embody *Qi*, no space could be created.

In short, from the perspective of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, the construction of space can be explained as the dynamic broadening and deepening of oneself through one's surroundings. It is through the movement of *yin* and *yang Qi*, which presents the mutuality and interdependence of various pairs of polarities, that the space is imbued with human emotions and intersects with the dyadic relationships between humans and various other beings/things. The transmission of *Qi* gives rise to a participatory and anthropocosmic understanding of space rather than to an imposition of self on

⁶⁴ Please refer to footnote 49 (pp. 141-142) for the explanation of the terms *the resonance between the cosmos and humans (t'ien-jen kan-ying)* and *cosmic resonance*.

others. Such an understanding echoes my assumption, stated in the introduction of this thesis, of the necessity of thinking about the constitution of performative spaces in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre with respect to the embodiment process of *Qi* when the works subtly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. However, as indicated in 2.2.1, from the perspective of contemporary Western aesthetics, agency is identified as a prerequisite to the generation of performative spaces in hypermedial theatre. Some questions about the similarities and differences between *Qi* and agency are raised here. In the next section, I will propose a hypothesis to explain whether *Qi* can work as agency.

3.5 Hypothesis: The connection of *Qi* to agency

In this chapter, I have examined the Chinese philosophy of the idea of *Qi* and its aesthetic context by interpreting the texts that are related to or grounded in *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy. The method that I have used is spatial readings of *Qi* discourse. With this method, the examination has given rise to an innovative understanding of the spatial implications of *Qi* and the energetic characteristics of space. It begins with re-categorizing the etymological interpretations of *Qi*, which are offered from ancient times to contemporary ones, according to the spatial perspective. Through this, I have shown that *Qi* is essential to the creation of dynamic biospheres in which a person and what that person encounters, that is, diverse paired polarities, reciprocally incorporate and negotiate with each other. The notion of *Qi* has fundamentally influenced the Chinese way of viewing the world, namely, an anthropocosmic point of view.

Subsequently, I have analysed the contribution of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy to the development of the notion of *Qi* in Confucian thought. *Qi* in this school is interpreted as having both material and spiritual qualities and its operation as essential not only to the cultivation of various constituents in the universe but also to the universe's constitution itself. I have positioned this school's interpretation of *Qi* as the main source of the metaphysical understanding of *Qi*-flowing spaces in this thesis.

The following section has elucidated how Confucians practise and realise the operation of *Qi* in their ordinary lives through probing into three key goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi* in the sense of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy. The three goals include the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*), the unity of the body with the heart-mind (*shen-hsin ho-yi*) and the association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining). With reference to the observation of these practises, I have proposed and explained that the self-cultivation of *Qi* can be thought of as the embodiment process of *Qi* by which people's active participation in the transmission of *Qi* may lead to their psycho-physiological interaction with others and to the mutual embodiment and presence of the two sides.

Finally, I have examined the construction of space that is activated by *Qi*, within the context of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy. I specifically draw on Tu Wei-ming's interpretation of Chang Tsai's writings about the role of *Qi* in the interconnection between interdependent yet opposite polarities (such as humans and various other beings/things) to show that how a space is created through *Qi*'s incessant penetration into a person's inside and outside and

through its interflow within the spatial-temporal network. Due to the polaristic movements of *Qi*, this kind of space can be interpreted as a constantly evolving medium through which the self is broadened and deepened to become interconnected with and opening to others.

Drawing on these findings, I now hypothesise: it is from this performative aspect of the potential for interactions that a connection of *Qi* to agency is possible. As I have shown in Chapters 2 and 3, *Qi* and agency have some similarities. Referring back to Chapter 2, my examination of the issue of performative spaces and its related issues in hypermedial theatre that is grounded on contemporary Western aesthetics, agency has been defined as performative energy or forces in relation to the potential for interactions between the viewer and the work. As I have discussed, when agency is channeled, the viewer functions as a motile agent and turns into a co-performer and inter-actor with that which takes place on stage. In this sense, the agency transforms the viewer's decisions and perceptions into performative acts and the spatiality created by the acts into a performative space.

Similar to agency, it seems that, when *Qi* operates, the perceiver is motivated and activated to take meaningful reactions to that which is encountered. I propose that the spatial implications of *Qi* and the energetic characteristics of space, as discussed in this current chapter, indicate that *Qi* operates as a certain effectiveness which has a performative feature, that is, the potential for interaction and merging multiple realms. When *Qi* is transmitted between the self and its counterparts, some mutual responses may be induced by the

transmission. These responses can be characterized as performative acts, because they constantly alter the constitution of a space that is shared by pairs of polarities (i.e., the perceiver and that which is encountered).

However, despite to these similarities, there seem to be two fundamental differences between *Qi* and agency, as I have indicated in Chapters 2 and 3. One concerns their movement modes. *Qi* could not be interpreted as a form of physical energy, whereas agency lies in the field of physics. The other point centers on their worldviews. When *Qi* follows an anthropocosmic vision that charges the viewer with a mission to achieve unity with the cosmos, agency implicates a democratic mechanism where the blurred boundaries and reciprocal interaction between the viewer and the work are highlighted. I doubt whether our knowledge of agency can fully analyse works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre which implicitly reflect the above-mentioned features of *Qi*. If this is possible, the idea of *Qi* may provide an alternative view on the issues of agency and performative space and other related issues including inter-activity, embodiment and presence with respect to the use of technological media.

For this reason, I suggest in this thesis that it is worthwhile to apply the concept of *Qi* to examine the hypermedial theatre works within present-day Taiwanese culture, which combines both traditional Chinese values and Westernized innovation. I assume that this kind of work is grounded in the intercultural tendencies and has its own meaning-making context that may require a phenomenological reflection not merely on the philosophical thinking of *Qi* and its cultural and historical development but also on the exploration of people's

experiences from living in such a hybrid situation. This is because, as mentioned in the introduction of this thesis, phenomenology was introduced in the 1980s by East Asian scholars for investigations into the philosophy of *Qi* and has since been used to develop viable frameworks for engaging theatre and performance studies with the *Qi* philosophy.

Despite those developments over the past 30 years, a study that bridges the concept of *Qi* and the analytical theories of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre from a phenomenological perspective has not yet been proposed. Thus, in the next chapter, I will develop an innovative philosophical framework that employs a viewpoint of *Qi* on the phenomenological understanding of the relationship between performative space and technology, specifically with respect to the audience's experiences, to analyse Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works. I will use phenomenology as my theoretical methodology for interpreting the operation of *Qi* as having a certain performative effectiveness that may have some similarities to and differences from agency. Meanwhile, with the help of phenomenology, I will identify spaces that are activated by *Qi* as performative spaces. On this basis, I will continuously show how to apply a phenomenology of *Qi* to rephrase the three aesthetic actions of agency – that is, inter-activity, embodiment and presence – as three kinds of *Qi*-transforming movements.

Part III: Towards a phenomenological framework for *Qi*-arising Space

Chapter 4: *Qi*-arising Space: a phenomenological approach to the embodiment of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre

In this part of this thesis, I develop a framework of *Qi*-arising Space for analyzing the embodiment process of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works, which implicitly embody a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. The framework utilises aspects of phenomenology as a research strategy and Mencius's concept of *Qi* as a viewpoint. I propose that the convergence of phenomenology and *Qi* may help to uncover the role that the aesthetic phenomenon of *Qi* plays in the emergence of performative spaces in such hypermedial works. By this I mean that the viewer's active reactions to what takes place in performance could be interpreted as the 'poetic arising of *Qi*' (*hsing*), a common aesthetic phenomenon in Chinese culture (see Chiang, 1992). My research focuses on how the spatial arrangement of technological media could lead to the interconnections and correlations between the viewer and the work, which suggest certain comparisons to the human-cosmos relation, the body-heart/mind relation and the self-other relation in Mencius's concept of *Qi*.

This part undertakes three questions that I mentioned previously in the introduction of this thesis. They all relate to the operation of *Qi* and its aesthetic in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. First, I examine whether the spatial implications of *Qi* in traditional Chinese aesthetics could be understood as an

ancient notion of 'mixed reality' (Hansen, 2006).⁶⁵ The second question concerns the matter of whether the approach of the existing Western new media and hypermedial theatre theories and philosophies is suitable for exploring the aesthetic and spatial implications of *Qi*. Finally, I tackle how the findings of the aesthetic and spatial implications of *Qi* contribute as a complement to the discourses of performative space and agency in new media and hypermedial theatre studies. Dealing with these questions can lead to a new understanding of the new media and hypermedial theatre theories and notions within a hybrid cultural context.

The first section of Chapter 4 provides a rethinking of *Qi* through a phenomenological approach. It employs the phenomenology of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to show that the embodiment process of *Qi* can be interpreted as a phenomenological conception (see 4.1.1 and 4.1.2). I show the value of applying Mencius's concept of *Qi* to this investigation into the performative space and agency and the related issues.

Subsequently, in the following sections I persist with this phenomenological strategy to develop the framework of *Qi*-arising Space. Inspired by Obert's (2009, 2012) phenomenological research into traditional Chinese aesthetics, I propose and explicate that certain performative effectiveness that constantly arises through the interaction between the viewer and the work in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre can be interpreted as the poetic arising of *Qi* (see 4.2). This interpretation may complement our understanding of agency in new

⁶⁵ I use the term *mixed reality* from Mark B. Hansen's new media studies. I have explained it in 2.1 (see p. 50 *et seq.*).

media and hypermedial theatre studies. Following this line of inquiry, I suggest that the space from which the performative effectiveness arises can be envisaged as a *Qi*-arising Space, namely, an aesthetic phenomenon of performative space (see 4.3). Then, in the next three sections I discuss from the perspective of *Qi* an interpretation of the three aesthetic actions of agency – namely, inter-activity, embodiment and presence, as examined in Chapter 1 – as *Qi*-transforming actions (see 4.4-4.6). Finally, a summary reviews the findings in this chapter (see 4.7).

4.1 The embodiment process of *Qi* as a phenomenological conception

In this chapter, I use phenomenology to analyse the spatiality, which is generated when the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*), a common aesthetic phenomenon in Chinese culture (see Chiang, 1992), emerges in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. I assume that the poetic arising of *Qi* can be thought of as the dynamic creation or improvisation of the hypermedial performance by which new layers of interconnections and interactions between the viewer's acts and perceptions and what takes place onstage are constantly created. Two visions can facilitate our phenomenological examination of *Qi*. The first is Heidegger's 'mood', which may help in an investigation into the environmental aspect of the poetic arising of *Qi*. The other is Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh' that can be used to interrogate the role of *Qi* in the association of the human body and heart-mind with the world, which is shared by people and their surroundings. I consider the convergence of phenomenology and *Qi* as a justifiable method that grasps the embodiment process of *Qi* in hypermedial performance as a perceivable phenomenon. Instead of emphasizing the live performance, this

method can help to show that, from an operational perspective, the embodiment of *Qi* relies on the use of technological media which aims to intensify the viewer's psycho-physiological responses to the work.

4.1.1 Heidegger's Mood as the Poetic Arising of *Qi* in the World

From the perspective of *Qi* in *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, this section examines the comparison between Heidegger's 'mood' and the concept of the 'poetic arising of *Qi*' (*hsing*) in Confucius's Poetry teaching (*shih-chiao*). First, I explain a possible similarity between *Qi*, mood, atmosphere and wind, with reference to Tadashi Ogawa's (1998) 'phenomenology of wind'. Subsequently, I draw an analogy between wind and *Qi* by analyzing Chiang Nien-feng's research (1992) into the etymology and development of the term *hsing* (興, the poetic arising). It is from this angle of *hsing* that I assume some similarity and dissimilarity between the poetic arising of *Qi* and mood. The examination may help us understand whether the mediated environment in hypermedial theatre can be interpreted as a field in which *Qi* is embodied.

Contemporary Japanese philosopher Tadashi Ogawa in his article, '*Qi* and Phenomenology of Wind' (1998) suggests that Heidegger's mood can be understood as 'atmosphere' and, from this perspective, can be developed into a 'phenomenology of wind' that links phenomenology to the idea of *Qi*. According to Ogawa, this combined framework is justifiable due to certain similarities between the manners of being in phenomenology and in East Asian thought which both consider humans and various other beings/things as interconnected with each other and constitutive of a whole through some dynamic medium (see Ogawa, 1998: 326, 330). The very medium for

phenomenology is called ‘mood [*Stimmung*] in Heidegger, and “Atmosphere” in Schmitz, and last but not least “Fundamental Mood” [*Grundstimmung*] (Klaus Held)’; meanwhile, ‘[t]his type of thinking is originally found in East Asia, too – qi/ki’, namely, *Qi* (ibid.: 326, original italicization). An intercultural phenomenon with regard to the manners of being is implied here. In what follows, I will first explain the notion of mood and its relation to atmosphere.

As Ogawa notes, Heidegger defined mood in his lectures on *Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik* [*The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*] (1929/30):

[...] first, moods are not beings, not things that somehow simply appear in the soul; second, moods are not that which is most inconstant and fleeting either, contrary to what people think. [...] [M]ood is not at all inside, in some sort of soul of the Other, and [...] it is not at all somewhere alongside in our soul. Instead we have to say, and do say, that mood imposes itself on everything [...] Mood is not some being that appears in the soul as an experience, but the way of our being there with one another [...] mood is infectious. [...] moods are a fundamental manner, the *fundamental way in which Dasein is as Dasein*. [...] Moods are the fundamental ways in which we *find* ourselves *disposed* in such and such a way. (Heidegger, 1995, translated by McNeill and Walker: 65-67; cited and italicised by Ogawa, 1998: 328)

Mood, as conceived by Heidegger, operates inbetween self and others and able to lead to the emergence of and interactions between the two in their shared environment. Ogawa interprets mood as something that fills at once inside and outside and links the two sides (see ibid.: 326). That is to say, the mood operates as a medium through which individuals become aware of the interdependence between themselves and their surroundings.

Ogawa asserts on this basis that mood can be seen as atmosphere: '[t]hrown into a mood and an atmosphere, everyone – finding himself or herself in a situational mood or atmosphere will be projected to understand and to elucidate the sense of being' (Ogawa, 1998: 326). People perceive some kind of encompassment of themselves by flux-like mood or atmosphere so that the self's responses to its encounters can be seen as affected by the mood or atmosphere that pervades the gap between the two sides. The mood or atmosphere itself incessantly changes in accordance with various situations; meanwhile, it is able to constantly affect perceiving subjects' understanding of their state of being within the mood or atmosphere.

Building on this, Ogawa further explores the meaning of atmosphere and its possible association with mood. By interpreting Böhme's concept of atmosphere as indicating 'the mode of thing-appearance in the tradition of Husserl-interpretation', Ogawa regards the appearing of a thing as related to its 'radiation', its 'reach[ing] out into the environmental atmosphere' (Ogawa, 1998: 330). It is due to this penetration of the atmosphere that the boundaries between the thing and its perceiving subject are blurred and turned into certain liminal sites in which the two parties merge with each other. Such an '[a]tmosphere is a kind of horizon', as Ogawa suggests (ibid.). If a person perceives an atmosphere, that person also perceives the appearing of other beings/things in the atmosphere. Atmosphere is therefore similar to mood, as both have material and affective qualities that are able to alter bodily and psychological feelings.

Ogawa claims that the phenomenological method of interpreting Heidegger's

mood as atmosphere can be used to analyse the sense of being with respect to the idea of *Qi* and, through this, to develop a phenomenology of wind. As he explains, this can be done because ‘both [mood and *Qi*] mean the sphere of mist or steam around a person’ (Ogawa, 1998: 327, my addition). For him, *Qi* connotes a kind of “energy” and “power” (ibid.: 326) that are transmitted between an individual and that person’s surroundings and able to affect the interactions of both. The flow of *Qi* itself thus indicates a process of windowing through by which inside and outside contact each other.

Although *Qi* is invisible, its operation upon humans and various other beings/things is conceived of as phenomena of breathing and wind in East-Asian thinking (see Ogawa, 1998: 324). Along this line, as Ogawa suggests, *Qi* seems also to be a perceivable phenomenon by people in other cultures (see ibid.). An example he uses is Jesus’s statement in the New Testament: ‘The wind blows where it will, and you hear the voice of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit’ (John 3: 8; cited by Ogawa, 1998: 324). The original Greek word for wind is *pneuma*, which refers to not only wind but also spirit. So, on this basis Ogawa interprets it as – ‘persons are human beings like the wind, they are the children of the spiritual wind from God’ (Ogawa, 1998: 324). This indicates a possible connection between *Qi*, wind and *pneuma*. That is, *Qi* operates as wind that travels and transfers the information between inside and outside, between humans and the cosmos/heaven.

Thus, with reference to Ogawa’s phenomenology of wind, there seems to be a similarity between mood and *Qi*. This is so because for Ogawa both mood and

Qi work as a medium that activates the interaction between the perceiving subject and the perceived object while creating a liminal space that exists between the two sides. In this sense, we can say that humans and various other beings/things are thrown into a dynamic field of mood or *Qi*. Meanwhile, this mood or *Qi* penetrates the human bodies and the other beings/things that coexist in the field. The humans and the other beings/things interact like wind, like atmosphere and air.

Since Ogawa's phenomenology of wind focuses on the phenomenological analysis of the substantial features of *Qi*, his discourse shows a particular concern with the extent to which *Qi* as physical energy or power can be perceived. I suggest that contemporary Confucian scholar Chiang Nien-feng's (1992) 'spiritual phenomenology of the poetic arising' (*hsing te ching-shen shien-hsiang-hsüeh*) can offer a complementary discussion about the insubstantialist aspect of *Qi* from the standpoint of traditional Chinese culture. This 'poetic arising' (*hsing*) indicates a prominent phenomenon through which, since the time of ancient China, the author and the viewer of Chinese artworks have communally maintained the flow of *Qi* between physical and fictional realms. Applying Chiang's phenomenological studies, I will examine and reveal the spatial construction of the flow of *Qi*.

In his article, 'An Examination of the Hermeneutic Foundation of the Traditional Text-interpretation of *Chun-Chiu Scripture* from the Viewpoint of the Spiritual Phenomenology of the Poetic Arising' (1992), Chiang proposes this research approach to the poetic arising (*hsing*) to interrogate the common 'thinking way [that is] filled with poetic images' (Chiang, 1992: 27, 63, my addition) in

numerous Confucian classics and their commentaries⁶⁶. This way of thinking implies a kind of creative process in which *Qi* constantly stirs and induces the potential interconnections and interactions between people and that which they encounter.⁶⁷ As Chiang indicates, the clues to his approach come from his findings of the ‘primordial language’ that was held by ancient Confucianism and continuously succeeded by Chinese poetry works as ‘poetic words’ (ibid.: 29, 63). This specific language ‘expressed itself as *wind-blowing*, a [*Qi*-cultivated] ontological action, through which things then begin to exist’ (ibid., original italicisation, my addition). Due to such a way of thinking – of the poetic arising, people’s living environment merges with the fictional world.

In order to prove the ontological implication of *Qi*’s poetic arising as wind-blowing, Chiang employs Chou Tse-tsung’s (1986) etymological research of the terms *hsing* (the poetic arising) and *feng* (wind) that shows the internal links between the two terms’ original meanings. The word *hsing* (the poetic arising) originally meant ‘drumming on or surrounding around the plates or salvers, where sacrifices are placed, while singing and dancing’ (Chou, 1986: 216; cited by Chiang, 1992: 31, my translation). It connotes the early people’s responses and imaginations to what was happening or what they wished to happen. With this connotation, Chou interprets *hsing* as a kind of activity – by

⁶⁶ The traditional Chinese way of thinking that concerns the process of *Qi* arising in between two parties, a person and what this person faces, is named as the thinking mode of the ‘Poetic Arising’ in Chiang Nien-feng (1992) and as the mode of the ‘co-relative thinking’ in Huang Chun-chieh (2006).

⁶⁷ The Confucian classics conventionally refer to the Six Books, include the *Book of Songs*, the *Book of Changes*, *Chun-Chiu Scripture*, the *Book of History*, the *Book of Rites* and the *Book of Music* and the commentaries on these books.

using the things that are on hand to associate with the themes of ritual events, the participants in the events create congratulatory speech or prayers that collocate with their instantly induced singing and dancing to express the emotions which are indicated in their sayings (see Chou, 1986: 228; see Chiang, 1992: 31). *Hsing* thus can be seen as a succession of the perceiver's improvisatory reactions to the perceived.⁶⁸

As for the meaning of wind, according to Chou, the verse 'the *Qi* of the cosmos and earth combine to generate wind' in *Master Lü's Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Lü-shih Chun-Chiu*) connotes that 'the ancient people believed that every kind of being and the whole cosmos is imbued with *Qi*. They regarded all changes of and resonances among all beings in the cosmos as expressions of the operation of *Qi*. If *Qi* arises, wind is formed; therefore, if wind blows, sounds are produced' (Chou, 1986: 205-206; cited by Chiang, 1992: 30, my translation). It is believed that the experience of wind can be seen as the experience of *Qi*. Wind-blowing is concomitant with the circulation of *Qi* throughout the cosmos to affect the development of the interrelationships between various constituents of the cosmos.

The customs of *hsing* (the poetic arising) gradually 'evolved into a poetry method, namely, "*ji-wu-chi-hsing*"' (Chou, 1986: 228; cited by Chiang, 1992: 31, my translation). The method in Chinese literally means arising out of a mood for creating (poems) through contacting the perceived object. What could be used in *hsing* for association and creation depends on everyone's

⁶⁸ In modern Chinese, *hsing* (the poetic arising) is used to describe improvisational activities, such as *chi-hsing wu-dao*, which means dance improvisation.

perceptions of what is encountered that might have direct or indirect relations with the creation themes (see *ibid.*). With this view, Chou concludes that *hsing* is closely related to the word *wind*, because '[...] wind is invisible, but when we see the moving of a weathervane or hear the sound of wind bells, it is as if we see the form of wind' (Chou, 1986: 230; cited by Chiang, 1992: 31, my translation). That is to say, the operation of *hsing* is likened to the operation of wind, because both are able to incite numerous possible interconnections and correlations between the perceiving subject and the perceived object. It is for this reason that Chiang interprets the concept of *hsing* as an ontological action with respect to wind-blowing and translates it as the *poetic arising* in English.

In addition, in another article, 'Mencius' Thoughts of Poetry Teaching Interpreted from the Viewpoint of the "Arising" (1990), Chiang applies Chen Shih-hsiang's etymological research into the word *hsing* (the poetic arising) to elucidate the activities of *hsing* as the ceaseless effort to generate and maintain a certain kind of high-spirited atmosphere. As Chen explains, *hsing* in ancient times indicated 'the voices of a group of people [in a ceremony] who worked as one to lift up a sacrificial object together while dancing and revolving around the object with a glowing and lively atmosphere' (Chen, 1972: 237; cited by Chiang, 1990: 320-321, my translation and addition). The practices of *hsing* lead to participation in the arising, infection and pervading of the atmosphere. In this sense, the phenomenon of *hsing* seems to have a parallel to the circulation of wind or *Qi* through which a person interacts with the surroundings in their shared world. *Hsing*, thus, again, can be conceived as the improvisatory creation itself. In the interaction process, an atmospheric, liminal field is established for someone and that individual's surroundings to

incorporate each other.

The concept of *hsing* (the poetic arising) can be found in numerous Confucian classics and their commentaries from ancient times on. For instance, as Chiang suggests, the *Book of Songs*, a collection of poems and songs, shows the phenomenon of the poetic arising of *Qi*, because the poems and songs use primordial poetic images (e.g., birds, fishes, trees and fictional animals)⁶⁹ to blur the boundaries between the reader and the fictional world (see Chiang, 1992: 34-35). In the *Book of Changes*, the method of the poetic arising of *Qi* uses a poetic form to present natural phenomena as portents of things to come (see *ibid.*: 35). The poetic form implicates the deep correlation between changes in nature and personal relationships. The history book, *Chun-Chiu Scripture*, and its commentary, the *Chronicle of Tso*, are characterised as quoting out of context or garbling statements from the *Book of Songs* to conclude their critiques of the controversial people and events in Chinese history (see *ibid.*: 39). This way seems to create a dynamic space in which the creative associations between irrelevant poetic images and historical figures and stories take place. Thus, the phenomenon of the poetic arising of *Qi*

⁶⁹ Chaio Pei-lin in his book, *The Origin of Hsing: The Accumulation of History and the Art of Poetry*, suggests that 'in the beginning, *hsing* (the poetic arising) indicates certain primordial poetic images that are founded upon religious ideas rather than artistic forms and rules of poetry' (Chaio, 1987: 67; cited by Chiang, 1992: 34, my translation). According to his study of the *Book of Songs*, Chaio divides the primordial poetic images into four groups: the birds, the fishes, the trees and the fictional animals. Chiang Nien-feng interprets these four groups of poetic images as 'gathered up in the early people's beliefs and sensibilities so that they were turned into something to which the people could commit their emotions [...] These associations of the religious images and ideas with people's emotions gradually became the conventional modes of poetry. As a result, the primordial poetic images were developed into the artistic forms of *hsin* (the poetic arising)' (Chiang, 1992: 34-35, my translation).

occurs here.

Moreover, Confucius expresses the firm conviction in the *Analects* that ‘the *Book of Songs* can lead to the poetic arising’ (*‘Shih-ke-yi-hsing’*), which indicates that reading poems enables the ‘opening of people’s spiritual life’ (Chiang, 1990: 305, my translation). That is to say, when readers are awakened or activated by the encounter with poetic works, their reading is transformed into an improvisatory contact with what is perceived. The influence of the aesthetic action, with respect to the creation, interpretation and appreciation of poems, is like ‘wind-blowing’ that prevails over various layers of the contact. The ever-altering development of the dyadic relationships between the reader and the work hence arise from that very aesthetic action.

As Chiang suggests, the most prominent instance of the poetic arising of *Qi* might be Mencius’s ‘Floodlike *Qi*’ (*‘hao-jan-tzu-qi’*)⁷⁰. Following Confucius’s idea, ‘the *Book of Songs* can lead to the poetic arising’, Mencius’s thoughts are imbued with the spirit of the poetic arising and developed into his own thinking approach, the ‘Floodlike *Qi*’ (see Chiang, 1990: 302, my translation). In his writings, Mencius liked using poetic images of flowing water to depict the phenomena in which *Qi* arises when a person perceives the virtues of sages and nature, such as, ‘Floodlike *Qi*’, ‘[t]he abundant teaching of virtue [would be like water that] overflows into the four seas’ (*‘pei-jan-te-chiao yi-hu-si-hai’*) and ‘[t]he submission of people would be like water that always flows towards the lower places’ (*‘min-kui-tzu yo-shui-tzu-jo-sha’*) (Chiang, 1990: 307, my

⁷⁰ Please refer to my elucidation of the term *Floodlike Qi* in footnote 39 (see p. 134) and 3.2 (see p. 137 *et seq.*).

translation and addition). Similar to the analogy of 'wind-blowing', these terms with the flowing images indicate an imagery that is full of vitality and creativity.

These instances in relation to the poetic arising of *Qi* imply a process of mutual association and reference that gives rise to certain implicit traces of wind-blowing (and water-flowing) which freely penetrate and link up not only the physical and the fictional worlds but also to the past, the present and the future. In my opinion, it is in such an aspect of wind-blowing that a space filled with mood with respect to Ogawa's phenomenology of wind may have a connection to a space that is generated by the poetic arising of *Qi*. I illustrate the space filled with mood as Figure 1 (see p. 199). When mood emerges, the perceiving subject and the perceived object open up to each other. Through this, the boundaries between the two sides become blurred. On the other hand, the space that is generated by the poetic arising of *Qi* is shown as Figure 2 (see p. 200). Reactions to what is perceived in the *Qi* world model can be thought of as a kind of "wind-like" ontological actions with the quality of poetic creativity. We could say that the "forming of wind", that is, the creation of the artwork, relies not only on the author but also on the viewer. That is, the "perception of wind", namely, the interpretation and appreciation of the artwork, could be seen as affected by the interactions between the author, the viewer and that which is expressed in the artworks.

As the Figures 1 and 2 imply, I propose that, through the permeation of mood or *Qi*, the horizontal disclosure of the self's space is emphasized. In 3.4, I have elucidated that in the *Qi* world model, the self functions as the centre of an ever-expanding network of the relationship between the self and others, when

the self actively communicates with others. The space of the self is constantly altered in accordance with the development of the network. It is likely that, if mood pervades a space where the self is interconnected with others, the self may perceive others as an extension of itself. This extension can be seen as a process of horizontally disclosing the self's space.

However, I assume that there seems to be dissimilarity between mood and *Qi*, as they indicate different constructions of a space inbetween. As discussed earlier in this section, through the mediation of mood, the perceiving subject and the perceived object create a shared space *in their encounter* with each other (see fig. 1). In contrast, the integration of the perceiving subject and the perceived object takes place not only in the encounter but also *within* the two parties respectively (see fig. 2). This is because, as I have explicated in Chapter 3, the Confucian way of seeing the world refers to an anthropocosmic perspective from which the perceiving subject and the perceived object, through the circulation of *Qi*, are regarded as the same kind of being that is cultivated and activated by one common *Qi*.

The spatial construction of such interactive relationships may be articulated by the well-known saying – ‘All the myriads of things are there *within* me’ (*wan-wu chie-bei-yü-wo*) in *Mencius*, the chapter of ‘*Ching-hsin*’ (my translation and emphasis). This indicates that as *Qi* circulates around the world in which the self coexists with others, ‘grasping the nature of “all the myriads of things” (the whole) can be seen as grasping the nature of “me” (parts); meanwhile, the characteristics of “all the myriads of things” (the whole) can be found in the characteristics of “me” (parts)’ (Huang, 2006: 317, my translation).

The space of me indicates a morphogenetic space that inherently contains other beings/things within itself and vice versa.

Furthermore, the concepts of the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*) and the association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining), which I have discussed in 3.3, can exemplify the above-mentioned spatial construction, where humans and various other beings/things act as common *Qi*-kind beings. I have identified these concepts as two goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi*. In my discussion of the goal towards the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*), I have quoted Ch'eng Hao's interpretation of 'paralysis of the four limbs as absence of humanity' (*'ma-mu pu-jen'*) to explain how *Qi* operates upon the relationship network within which constituents of the cosmos (including humans and various other beings/things) correlate with each other. Since *Qi* is regarded as the substratum of the cosmos, humans and various other beings/things can be seen as the same *Qi*-kind beings. With reference to the above-discussed concept of *hsing* (the poetic arising), the interaction between these *Qi*-cultivated constituents of the cosmos induces a process by which the poetic arising of *Qi* emerges.

Moreover, citing the verse 'Production and reproduction is what is called the process of change' (*'sheng-sheng pu-shi'*) in the *Book of Changes*, I have interpreted another goal of *Qi* cultivation, namely, the association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining) as an event where the co-presence of self and others with respect to resonance with the cosmos is achieved. This co-presence, in my opinion, also connotes a phenomenon of the poetic arising of *Qi*. By this, I mean that people are urged to grasp the circulation rhythms of *Qi* between

their individual selves and others. Through this, an individual may be able to take responsive and yet communal acts with others in the course of their dynamic contacts.

These instances of the poetic arising of *Qi* show a complement to the phenomenological discourses of the interactive relationship between the self and others in a space full of mood. It seems that, from the angle of mood, a space full of mood implies a gap which waits to be bridged, to be occupied by the perceiving subject and the perceived object (see fig. 1). That is to say, through the infection of mood, an individual may be aware of new contacts with others and experience the steeping of self in a space shared with others.

In contrast to that, the shared space in terms of the poetic arising of *Qi* indicates a field that is originally generated *within the shared bodies* of self and others via the circulation of *Qi* rather than emerging from the encounter between the two parties. This is because the circulation of *Qi* brings forth a process of communally arising self from others and others from self. It is believed that the self through this process is able to have a concern-consciousness⁷¹ with others, namely, a sense of originally opening

⁷¹ According to his *Special Characteristics of Chinese Philosophy* [中國哲學的特質] (1994), Mou Tsung-san suggested that the notion of concern-consciousness is the most significant trait of Confucian thinking about being, including the themes of capacity and responsibility demanded from the cosmos/heavens (*t'ien-ming*, 天命), humanity/benevolence (*jen*, 仁), heart-mind (*hsin*, 心) and the nature of beings/things (*hsing*, 性) (see Berthrong, 2006: 255). This concern-consciousness is regarded as cultivating interactive concerns for numerous beings/things in the world in order to constitute a harmonious living field (see *ibid.*: 251). With this, others are regarded as the extension of one's self. The interaction between the two parties can be considered as the dynamic equilibrium of *yin* and *yang Qi*.

up to others instead of merely interconnecting with and contacting others. This seems to indicate an indivisibility between forming of self and forming of the cosmos so that the ontological actions of the self are regarded as corresponding to the rhythms of the world and, optimally, the rhythms of the cosmos.

The examination of the poetic arising of *Qi* in this section shifts the focus of self-opening away from having the individual ability to imagine, perceive and join in a flux-like world towards a communal yet improvisatory act to reach resonance with the cosmos. This examination helps us to identify whether the poetic arising of *Qi* could be embodied as the viewer's interactions with what takes place on stage in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. In the next section, I will focus on the role that the human body and heart-mind play in the embodiment process of *Qi* and use Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological concept of 'flesh' to interpret it.

4.1.2 Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh' as an experimental field where the body and heart-mind couple with the world via *Qi*

As I have examined in the previous section, the Confucian concept and way of thinking of the 'poetic arising' of *Qi* (*hsing*) has been developed into a fundamental, probably the most prominent, factor in traditional Chinese culture. With reference to Chiang Nien-feng's (1990) phenomenology, I have interpreted the poetic arising of *Qi* as a phenomenon in which people actively participate in the maintenance of the free flow of *Qi* between themselves and their surroundings and, optimally, towards the cosmos through improvisatory

interactions. This raises a question: What kind of body and self does a person have and work when perceiving the spatiality that is created by the poetic arising of *Qi*? I assume that Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh' and Obert's 'experimental field of the bodily movements' in relation to *Qi* are suitable for probing into the question, as both concepts are concerned with how the movement of the body itself could affect the combination of the self's inside and the world outside. The association of the two concepts may lead to an understanding by which viewers see their movements and perceptions as interwoven with the hypermedial work.

To begin, I explain Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh'. As the philosopher showed in his thesis, *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968), the term *flesh* indicates an ontological manner by which the perceiving subject and the perceived object coexist as a whole. I quote two passages from the book to discuss the concept:

[t]he visible can fill me and occupy me only because I who see it do not see it from the depths of nothingness, but from the midst of itself; I the seer am also visible. (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 152-153)

It suffices for us for the moment to note that he who sees cannot possess the visible unless he is possessed by it, unless he is of it, unless in principle, according to what is required by the articulation of the look with the things, he is one of the visibles, capable, by a singular reversal, of seeing them – he who is one of them. (ibid.: 177-178)

Merleau-Ponty argued a reversible feature of the relationship between seeing and being seen. This occurs if humans and various other beings/things appear as indispensable elements of their shared world. In the doubling process of seeing and being seen, an individual is turned toward being interconnected

with others. What someone perceives can be said to be as something that contains that person's self inside. The emergence of the flesh is not dominated by the intelligible. Rather, it relies on the interplay between the intelligible and the sensible. Furthermore, the human world is inseparable from the natural world.

Conceived as such, a person's body works as prerequisite to forming the interconnection between inside and outside, between humans and nature, and between the self and others. I now explicate the role that the human body performs by drawing on Hansen's interpretation of the flesh in his article, 'The Embryology of the (In)visible' (2005). The approach that Hansen takes to interpret the flesh is analysing Merleau-Ponty's notion of life, which identifies nature as communing with human life in the phenomenological context. Hansen suggests that, for the notion of life, 'nature lies beneath the division of consciousness and extension, thinking and incarnation, which means that it provides a basis for an account of the human body as both emergent and prior to this division' (Hansen, 2005: 235). Nature is defined as a source of the community in which individuals' bodily movements are intimately interconnected with their own perceptions and with other humans and various other beings/things. In this sense, the body does not spatially implicate an enveloped unit but is rather inseparable from nature throughout daily life. With such a living relationship, the body functions as an access to the world that is shared by the self and others.

It is necessary to elucidate here that this sense of wholeness and opening up with respect to the flesh may preserve the perceiver's differentiation from the

perceived (see Johnson, 1990: xx). This is because, in the existence mode of the flesh, becoming visible may be achieved if there is a distance between the perceiver and the perceived. Otherwise, the perceiver would be restricted to only personal feelings and unable to contact the world. It is in such an in-between dimension, where the incorporation and negotiation are highlighted, that the perceiver's body extends into the perceived and the world, and vice versa.

The in-between dimension, with respect to the emergence of the flesh in life, indicates a kind of 'vertical' (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 338/271) perspective through which the relationship that exists between movements and perceptions and the external world cannot be characterized as a person's private matter. In contrast, the vertical perspective 'calls for a "bottom-up" conception of perception as emergent from our life as natural history' (Hansen, 2005: 237). Here, with reference to the previously-mentioned concept of nature in phenomenology, the 'bottom-up' implies a movement of proceeding upward from the bottom, namely, nature, to a stage at which the flesh emerges. I illustrate this movement in relation to the flesh in Figure 3 (see p. 201). When the flesh emerges as a dynamic and becoming structure, movements and perceptions within the structure may at once constantly affect and be affected by the alternation of other beings/things.

In Merleau-Ponty's terms, the dynamic convergence of parts as a totality, with regard to the emergence of the flesh in life, can be thought of as 'a true electric

field'⁷² (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 200/150; cited by Hansen, 2005: 241). The 'electric field' is interpreted by Hansen as a status that is related to 'the endogenous origin of the organism's animation' (Hansen, 2005: 241). It seems that the mutual induction between each element in the electric field is brought to the foreground. The transmission of energy between parts and whole in the electric field may be compared with the information exchange between the body and mind and the emerging flesh.

Building on this, I propose that Merleau-Ponty's flesh can be thought of as a process by which the self immerses itself in a space filled with mood, with reference to Ogawa's phenomenology of wind. As discussed in 4.1.1, Ogawa interprets Heidegger's mood as atmosphere and suggests its similarity to *Qi*, since these indicate a kind of energy and power that permeates humans and various other beings/things and leads to the blurred boundaries between the two parties. From this perspective, when a space is infused with mood or *Qi*, the space may be thought of as the emerging flesh where movements and perceptions are interconnected with that which the individual encounters.⁷³

However, adopting Chiang Nien-feng's (1990) research into the phenomenon of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) since the epoch of ancient China, I have

⁷² I will further elucidate in 4.2 whether *Qi* can be understood as energy as identified in physics.

⁷³ Numerous scholars (e.g., Obert, 2010, 2011, 2012; Yuasa Yasuo, 1987, 1993; and Phillip Zarrilli, 2009) who have contributed to the studies of *Qi*-related issues have proved that the notions of the body in phenomenology and in the Chinese sense of *Qi* have a lot of similarities. It is because both of them concern the movement of the body itself and regard the coupling of the body-mind with the world as a method of being that is capable of disclosing the invisible side of the self, which hides in between visible matters.

elucidated in 4.1.1 that it may not be proper to interpret a space shared by the self and others as created in the encounter between the two sides. Instead, it may be better to describe the space as a space where the self and others are originally integrated into each other. Here, the emphasis falls on the identification between the self and others as the common *Qi*-kind beings. In some ways a bodily field created here may be not much like the above-indicated flesh but instead has a radical relation to a person's practices of the poetic arising of *Qi*.

Following this line of thought (i.e., the poetic arising of *Qi*), I suggest that Obert's 'experimental field of the bodily movements' (2012) can be applied to examine the bodily field with regard to the poetic arising of *Qi*. As Obert points out, 'the "body" in phenomenology can be deciphered neither as any single factor of "*hsing-Qi-shen*" [namely, the unity of the bodily form, *Qi* and spirit] nor as a certain state of "the body-heart/mind⁷⁴ unity", or "the bodily form-spirit unity"' (Obert, 2012: 176, my translation and addition). Such analogies may over-simplify the body as some container of *Qi*, as another thinking subjectivity that contacts and yet differs from the heart-mind.

In contrast, the association of the notions of the body in phenomenology and in the Chinese sense of *Qi* may be achieved if we see the human body as a kind of field for experimenting with how the body could be induced to take action by the transmission of *Qi* (see Obert, 2012: 176). That is to say, people work as *Qi*-cultivated agents that reciprocally incorporate other *Qi*-cultivated

⁷⁴ Please refer to footnote 41 (see p. 137) in which I have explained the reason for translating the Chinese term 心 (*hsin*) as *heart-mind*, rather than just *mind*.

beings/things and optimally resonate with the cosmos while they bring the circulating information back to the self. It seems that experimenting with bodily movements puts focus on a mission of maintaining the poetic arising of *Qi* rather than on the ability and authority of the body.

Obert defines these kinds of bodily movements induced by *Qi* as ‘reversal and retraction’ [*ni-chuang shou-hwui*] that ‘indicates the quality of the bodily movements in calligraphy art, which is concomitant with the arising of *Qi* between inside and outside’ (ibid.: 177, my translation). This alternative concept highlights not only the happening of psycho-physiological activities but also a dynamic structure of time and space by which the human body simultaneously appears with the self in the course of opening up the world. The use of the physical body is interlinked with perceptions of a person’s surroundings. Thus, bodily movements with respect to *Qi* require constant experimentation in order to find a proper access to the world.

I suggest that Obert’s proposition of the human body as an experimental field for reversing and retracting *Qi* can be further articulated through the notion of the unity of the human body and heart-mind (*shen-hsin ho-yi*), a goal of the self-cultivation of *Qi* in Confucian practitioners’ daily life, which I have discussed in 3.3. This is because, as I have explained, the practice of the self-cultivation of *Qi* aims to achieve the circulation of *Qi* between body and heart-mind and various other beings/things. I now exemplify the point with the concept of the Six Arts (*liu-i*) in Confucian education and Mencius’s ‘sense of

the realizing Body⁷⁵ (*'chien-hsing-kuan'*, my translation).

The Six Arts (*liu-i*) in Confucian education, which refer to the practices of ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy and arithmetic, are regarded as ways of 'transform[ing] the body from its original state where [...] it has merely the "buds" and "sprouts" of human possibility, into a centre of fruitful relationships [via the circulation of *Qi* between self and others]' (Tu, 1985: 99, my addition). Due to the belief in *Qi*, the Six Arts aim at perfecting the reciprocal interaction between a person's body and heart-mind and that which that person faces rather than at mastering personal abilities. Optimally, the ritual practitioner, for instance, is capable of "reversing" and "retracting" the focus of ceremonial exercise away from the performing body towards bodily movement itself. Through this, the practitioner's bodily movement may generate an experimental field in which the receiver may be affected by and affect the atmosphere created by the practitioner. The practitioner may have due respect from the receiver.

Furthermore, as various research into traditional Chinese aesthetics has pointed out, practising calligraphy is not merely an exercise of the hand that holds the brush but also an exercise of circulating *Qi* between the calligraphy practitioner and that person's surroundings. The practitioner in the course of writing constantly "reverses" and "retracts" the hand in order to let the self be able to move with the proper rhythms of writing, which are seen as

⁷⁵ As I have explained in footnote 58 (see p. 150), I use the capital letter B to distinguish Mencius's sense of the Body, which refers to a unity of the human body and heart-mind and *Qi*, from the term *body*, which indicates the materiality of the human body.

corresponding to rhythms of the flow of *Qi*. It is only via focusing on the grasping of the rhythms in which the practitioner's entire body and heart-mind are involved that the dialogue between the practitioner and what is encountered is possible. The practitioner's body in this sense is constantly metamorphosed and morphogeneticised in accordance with the circulation of *Qi* between the internal and the external.

One more example is Mencius's 'sense of the realising Body' ('*chien-hsing-kuan*', my translation), which refers to the unity of the human bodily form⁷⁶ and heart-mind with *Qi*. The sense follows Confucius's Poetry teaching with respect to the concept of the poetic arising (*hsing*). In my opinion, the realising Body can be interpreted as a process of practicing the reversal and retraction of *Qi*. My interpretation relies on Yang Rurbin's investigation into Mencius's thoughts. According to Yang's book, *The Confucian Sense of the Body* (1996), the use of the term realising (*chien*) stresses that the constitution of the Body requires incessant effort to associate the body and heart-mind with various external beings/things via maintaining an unblocked flow of *Qi* between inside and outside. Again, spatiality of the body is related to the responses to and perceptions of that which is encountered and, radically, to a person's active participation in the free flow of *Qi*.

In response to the trinity, namely, the human bodily form, the human

⁷⁶ I translate the term *hsing* 形 as 'bodily form' with the help of Tu Wei-Ming's terminology *bodily designs*, *human forms* and *physical form* (Tu, 1985: 72, 99). *Hsing* usually can be replaced by another characters 'ti' (體, the human body, substance) or 'shen' (身, the human body) (see Yang, 1993: 431, my translation).

heart-mind and *Qi*, Mencius proposed three interrelated methods to achieve the realising Body, namely ‘the full realisation of human bodily form’ (*‘chien-hsing’*), ‘the full development of human heart-mind’ (*‘ching-hsin’*) and ‘the full cultivation of Floodlike *Qi*’ (*‘yang-Qi’*) (see Yang, 1996: 49, my translation). Mencius meant for these three methods to be practised and fulfilled at the same time. When the bodily form is fully realised, it is comprised of ‘not only the anatomy of human corporeality but, more importantly, *Qi*; that is, *Qi* fills the human body’ (Yang, 1996: 25, my translation). Meanwhile, this *Qi* refers to the Floodlike *Qi* that constantly transmits information between an individual’s inside and various other external things (see Yang, 1996: 23). After filling with the Floodlike *Qi*, the human heart-mind is transformed into a state where ‘all the myriads of things are there *within* me’, as Mencius puts it (see Yang, 1996: 23, my translation and emphasis). Through these processes, the human body and heart-mind and ‘all the myriads of things’ function as the *Qi*-cultivated constituents. Humans and things become united and coincident with each other.

In this sense, someone who achieves the realising Body may at the same time experience the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*). That is, the course of the realising Body indicates a process of the ‘simultaneous arising of the body and spirit [from the circulation of *Qi*]’ (Chen, 1972: 240; cited by Chiang, 1990: 320-321, my translation and addition). The realising Body thus spatially implicates an experimental field where a person psycho-physiologically practices the ‘reversal and retraction’ of *Qi* between the self and others.

According to the discussion of these instances, the indivisibility of the social

and the natural worlds seems to be emphasized in the 'experimental field of the bodily movements' with respect to the poetic arising of *Qi*. I suggest in this point that there may be a connection between the experimental field and the 'flesh' in Merleau-Ponty's terms. By this, I mean that practices of the 'reversal and retraction' of *Qi* between self and others indicate active participation in the permeation of *Qi* or mood/atmosphere around multiple spaces and times in the cosmos. Through the practices of the 'reversal and retraction', a person's acts and perceptions may be interconnected with the mutual opening of the social and the natural worlds.

On this basis of a mixture of the social and the natural worlds, I suggest that, similar to the flesh, the experimental field of the bodily movements also indicates certain vertical expansion. According to my examination of the energetic implications of space in *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy (see 3.4), I have proposed that the construction of the self's space in the deepening process of the self can be considered as a vertical disclosure of bodily space. Comparing this to the broadening process of the self in which the self works as a centre of a network of dyadic relationships that welcomes other selves to communicate with it, here in this vertical structure the self appears as the periphery of the network that embraces other selves in its sensitivity. The case of the experimental field of bodily movements can be interpreted as this deepening process of the self, as the encounters between the self and others' selves show a complementary process of the becoming of the two parties into each other. By this deepening process, there is certain upward movement that embraces others within the space of this self and turns these others into the innermost part of the self.

Yet, I propose that, if we further interrogate the connotations of nature in phenomenology and in *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, we may see dissimilarity between the vertical expansions that respectively occur in the flesh and in the experimental field of the bodily movements. As indicated earlier, the emergence of the flesh brings forth a bottom-up movement – that is, nature functions as the source that offers the interaction between humans and various other beings/things (see fig. 3, p. 201). Comparably, in the experimental field of the bodily movements, as my illustration of the experimental field shows (see fig. 4, p. 202), there seems to be a *Qi*-cultivated feedback loop in which the flow of *Qi* rises upward from the environment to humans while descending downward from the cosmos into them, and the other way around. The focus of the vertical expansion here falls on resonance with the cosmos. This is because in *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, the cosmos is not regarded as the transcendent power that pours the heavenly spirit into humans, a point which I have explained in the second chapter. Instead, the cosmos is seen as inseparable from and corresponding to the synthesis of the environment, the world, nature, and the heaven.⁷⁷ In the *Qi* world model, the human body should be seen as comprising and comprised of not only the social and the natural worlds but also the cosmos. For this reason, the interweaving between a person and that person's surroundings reflects the individual's resonance with the cosmos.

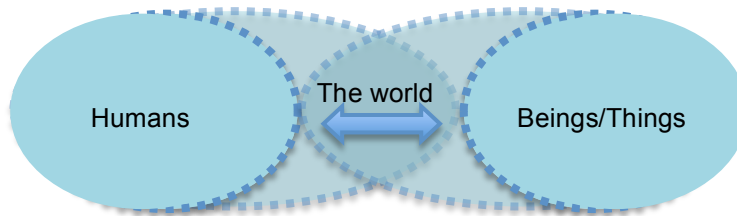
Therefore, in reference to the concept of the poetic arising of *Qi*, my interpretation of the experimental field of the bodily movements offers a

⁷⁷ Please also refer to an elucidation of the term *cosmos* in Introduction (pp. 16-17).

complement to the phenomenological approach to interrogating the spatial implications of the human body. Individuals' involvement in the social and the natural worlds is intertwined with the circulation of *Qi* between the self and the cosmos. This helps us to notice how a person's body is formed through the effort to practice and maintain the poetic arising of *Qi*.

To sum up, in this section (4.1.1 and 4.1.2) I have drawn a connection between Heidegger's 'mood' and *Qi* and between Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh' and Obert's (2012) 'experimental field of the bodily movements' through examining the phenomena of the poetic arising of *Qi* in traditional Chinese aesthetics. On this basis I have explicated a phenomenological interpretation of *Qi* in line with Mencius's thought and its aesthetic implications. The explication may help to develop a research approach that combines phenomenological aspects and *Qi* for the analysis of the *Qi* embodiment in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works. It is therefore culturally specific. I assume that the poetic arising of *Qi* can be interpreted as a kind of performative effectiveness. I further make the assumption that people's ceaseless effort to achieve the circulation of *Qi* between their bodies and heart-minds and whatever they may encounter can be conceived of as performative actions. In the next section, therefore, I will explain this assumption in depth and examine whether *Qi* can be understood as agency in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

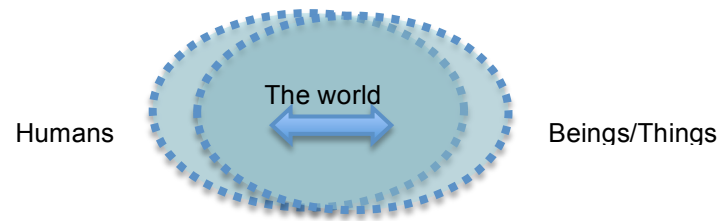
Fig. 1



The constitution of the world in phenomenology. Illustration: Wu Yi-Chen.

This figure shows a generation process of the world shared by humans and various other beings/things in phenomenology. In this world model, humans and various other beings/things are regarded as different kinds of being who contact each other. Their boundaries become blurred and their appearance horizons may be altered when they interact with each other. Through the interaction, a certain dynamic world in between the two groups may be created. The world is seen as a flux-like world full of mood or atmosphere through which humans and various other beings/things reach out to each other. In this figure, the interaction between

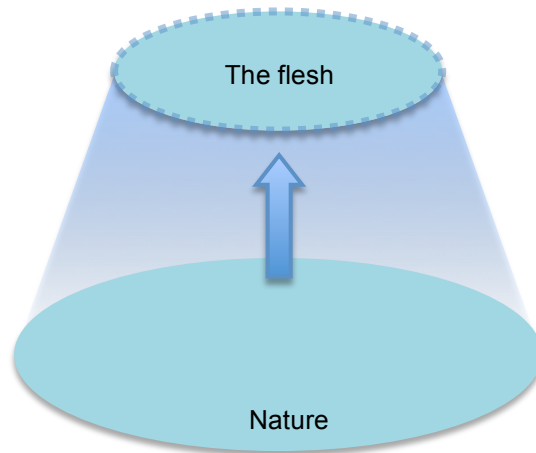
Fig. 2



The constitution of the world in the notion of *Qi*. Illustration: Wu Yi-Chen.

From the perspective of *Qi*, the world in which humans and various other beings/things are interwoven with and open up to each other is constituted *within* the shared bodies of the two groups rather than in the encounter between the two. This is because, through the circulation of *Qi* between humans and various other beings/things, the two groups are transformed into the common *Qi*-kind beings. The generation of the world thus can be seen as a communal act fulfilled by humans and various other beings/things to maintain the arising of *Qi*. As shown in the figure, the *Qi*-cultivated world is presented as the overlapping area of the two

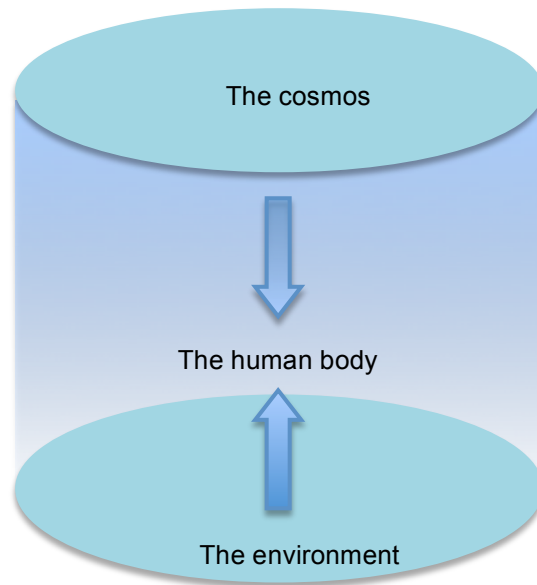
Fig. 3



The emergence of the flesh in the world model of phenomenology. Illustration: Wu Yi-Chen.

The flesh in the world model of phenomenology spatially implicates a field where humans actively participate in the disclosing of the world. Since humans in this world model work as part of nature, a person's actions and perceptions are seen as correlated with the convergence of human life and nature. This correlation can be seen as a bottom-up movement – that is, nature is regarded as the source that supports the development of humans and various other beings/things. A certain intensifying level generated by the movement may lead to the emergence of the flesh. In the figure, the upward arrow presents the bottom-up movement and the fluctuating and interlacing lines imply the convergence of human life and nature. Meanwhile, the circle with dotted lines that is placed on the top of the arrow

Fig. 4



The forming of the human body in the *Qi* world model. Illustration: Wu Yi-Chen.

The forming of the human body in the *Qi* world model can be seen as a *Qi*-cultivated feedback loop by which the flow of *Qi* comes upward from the environment and downward from the cosmos and the other way round. This occurs because the cosmos from this view is seen as corresponding to the environment, the world, nature, and heavens. The human body thus emerges as a dynamic field in which a person's movements and perceptions are interwoven with not only the environment but also the cosmos. In this figure, I use the fluctuating and interlacing lines to indicate the interweaving that is concomitant with the circulation of *Qi* between the environment and the cosmos. The ascent and descent movements of *Qi* are illustrated by the two arrows. The field in which the human body is formed is shown as the translucent area between the two circles in the figure.

4.2 The poetic arising of *Qi* as a performative act

Drawing on an approach that combines phenomenology and *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, this section examines whether there is a possible connection between *Qi*, which exists in Chinese art and literature, and the agency that is experienced by the viewer in hypermedial theatre. My discussion adopts Obert's (2009) research into traditional Chinese theory of art that regards Chinese landscape painting as a form of expressing certain performative effectiveness, namely, *Qi*, by tracing the brush movements shown in the artwork. I link this interpretation of *Qi* as performative effectiveness with the notion of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*), which I elucidated in 4.1.1. I suggest on this basis that the viewer's responses to the work in hypermedial theatre can be seen as realising a certain aspiration or utterance of keeping *Qi* constantly arising and circulating in between the viewer and the work. Viewers' participation in the development of the work's effectiveness indicates their enactment of the poetic arising of *Qi*. This discussion may help justify the potential role of *Qi* and complement our knowledge of agency in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly show a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*.

I start the discussion by introducing the traditional Chinese theory of art, particularly its dominant theme – how 'by actually contemplating pictures [i.e. Chinese landscape paintings] we may attain access to the real world', rather than by 'perception' or by 'imagination' (Obert, 2009: 118, my addition). My reason of using Obert's investigation in Chinese landscape painting is because the painting has been seen as certain performing arts since ancient China (see Obert, 2009: 131; Li, 1996: 75). This theme in the traditional Chinese theory of

art, the viewer's aesthetic contemplation, aesthetically indicates a dynamic process in which the viewer ponders what is encountered and then takes action. Furthermore, the realization of the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*) seems to be put into the focus in the Chinese theory of art.

In his article, 'Imagination or Response? Some Remarks on the Understanding of Images and Pictures in Pre-modern China' (2009), Obert suggests that the viewer's aesthetic contemplation can be interpreted as 'a bodily performed attunement to the living "vibration" of the universe', instead of to 'the consciousness or the imaginative capacity of the spectator' (ibid.). That is to say, in the course of contemplation, the viewer is neither immersed in nor overpowers the pictorial world. Rather, the viewer functions as an active agent who joins in the mutual opening of the physical and the pictorial worlds. The viewer's movements and perceptions are interwoven with the mixed worlds.

Meanwhile, cosmologically, the viewer's attunement to 'a living "vibration" of the universe' in the course of contemplation may refer to the viewer's involvement in the circulation of *Qi* between humans and various other beings/things in the universe/the cosmos. According to Obert's examination, '[t]he image in a painted picture is [...] primarily perceived with respect to [...] some operativeness or efficiency inherent in it as an image' (Obert, 2009: 121). The 'operativeness or efficiency' indicates a certain effectiveness by which the artist and the viewer together explore and represent the free flow of *Qi*. Through developing that effectiveness, the viewer's psycho-physiological participation in the circulation of *Qi*, namely, an imaging and embodiment process of *Qi*, is brought to the foreground.

Referring back to Chiang Nien-feng's research into the concept of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) (see 4.1.1), I suggest that the viewer's aesthetic contemplation in Chinese landscape paintings can be interpreted as a practice of the poetic arising of *Qi*, that is, a practice of keeping *Qi* constantly arising in between the perceiver and the perceived. As Chiang's research indicates, due to the fundamental influence of *hsing* on traditional Chinese aesthetics and ways of thinking, various works of Chinese art and literature interrogated possible ways of releasing the blockage of *Qi* in order to reach the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*). The arrangements of elements constitutive of these works can be seen as chasing the circulation traces of *Qi*. Within this context, contemplating a painting may be better understood as a process of the way the viewer is incited by the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the painting to generate a new interflow of *Qi*.

Obert claims that the viewer's aesthetic contemplation in the Chinese theory of art can be characterized as a 'performative contemplation', because 'the picture being a living media [links] the bodily existence of the painter to the bodily existence of the spectator' (Obert, 2009: 119, my addition). With reference to Austin's (1963) speech act theory, discussed in the introduction of this thesis (see p. 24-25), a performative act is defined as a kind of act by which the agent performs an utterance or aspiration while the surrounding reality changes. Now, the process of contemplating Chinese landscape paintings implicates the viewer's effort to maintain the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) between the physical and the pictorial worlds. That is, the viewer's responses can be seen as essential to the artist's embodiment of *Qi*.

Relying on the concept of performative contemplation which is looked upon within the context of the poetic arising of *Qi*, I propose that the viewer's practices of the poetic arising of *Qi* may be interpreted as performative acts. In the course of the performative contemplation, the viewer is induced to undertake an aspiration or utterance similar to the artist's aspiration or utterance that aims to let the poetic arising of *Qi* continuously emerge. That the viewer is induced by the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the picture to give feedback and generate perceptions means that the viewer may act as part of the circulation rhythms of *Qi* so as to perform the poetic arising of *Qi* with the artist. This performing in relation to *Qi* thus can be described as performative acts.⁷⁸

The means of performative contemplation is characterized by Obert as a 'way of *Leibmimesis* – a mimetic behaviour carried out with the body and inside our bodily existence – [...] We have to somehow mimetically re-enact the movements of the brush within ourselves' (Obert, 2009: 119). That is to say, the viewer incorporates the work to fulfill a communal action of chasing the traces of the flow of *Qi* that exists in between the physical and the pictorial worlds. As Obert suggests, what actions the viewer takes can be identified as

⁷⁸ Furthermore, the image, which consists of *Qi*'s operativeness or efficiency inherent in the moving brushstrokes, is interpreted by Obert as 'act[ing] in a "per-formative" manner' (Obert, 2009: 121). I understand 'per' as all-over and everywhere, and 'formative' as constantly forming, becoming and developing. The "per-formative" manner' of the image in this respect may be seen as a manner by which the viewer is invited to participate in the constant formation and becoming of not only the picture but also the universe, namely, the cosmos, heavens, and nature. In this sense, the generation of the image is indivisible from the viewers' experiences of their motile bodies by means of addressing the operation of *Qi* upon the mutual transformation of the pictorial and the physical worlds.

“co-performing” and perpetuating those dynamic characteristics of the pictorial configuration which had previously been delivered by the artist’s bodily performance of the movements of his brush’ (Obert, 2009: 118). Involved in such an imitation process, the viewer plays a role of co-performer who psycho-physiologically represents the circulation traces of *Qi* via exploring possible associations between painted lines and dots in the picture. The co-performance can be seen as a process in which the viewer helps to develop the dyadic relationships between constituents and the cosmic whole.

After examining the performative feature of the poetic arising of *Qi*, now I turn to proving my assumption indicated in the beginning of this section, to wit, whether the poetic arising of *Qi* in Chinese art and literature could be connected to the experiences of agency in hypermedial theatre. By this, I mean that the poetic arising of *Qi* can be seen as the viewer’s enactment of the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the artwork. Comparably, the experiences of agency refer to the viewer’s participation in the performance of dynamics of the mediated environment.

With reference to my examination of agency in the context of hypermedial theatre in 2.2.1, which mainly applies Lavender’s (2006) concept of hypermedial *mise-en-scène*, there are three key points that support my assumption of the connection between the poetic arising of *Qi* and the experiences of agency. The first is tied to my definition of agency as related to the dynamics of the mediated environment. Second, is the operational structure of agency. The final point concerns my understanding of agency as an aesthetic experience. In what follows, I will explain these points

respectively.

First, agency is regarded as a certain energy or force that is channelled between the viewer and the hypermedial work to motivate and activate the viewer to join in actively and perform the interconnections between computer-manipulated medium and the other media. The viewers' feelings of agency indicate neither the viewers' act of carrying out some orders that they receive nor their instant reactions to external stimuli. Rather, the feelings are generated when the viewers are able to envisage themselves as involved in the performance after pondering the information that they obtain in the course of the performance. With the help of the design for the hypermedial *mise-en-scène*, the dynamics of the mediated environment may be increased and thus give rise to the potential for the interaction between the viewer and the work. A viewer's holding of agency makes the work become a dynamic composition that relies on that viewer's responses and interpretations.

Qi is conceived as some kind of performative effectiveness inherent and expressed in Chinese landscape painting. The poetic arising of *Qi* can be seen as closely concerned to the viewer's joining in the dynamic development of the effectiveness in the painting. When the viewer contemplates the painting, the viewer's responses to and interpretations of the painting are interconnected with the possible transmission of *Qi* between the physical and the pictorial worlds. The viewer's contemplation is turned into a dynamic interaction, if the viewer enacts the poetic arising of *Qi*. Thus, the poetic arising of *Qi*, in a sense of intensifying the viewer's active participation and blurring the boundaries between the viewer and the work, can be seen as comparable to the

experiences of agency.

The second point, which may help to draw a possible connection between the poetic arising of *Qi* and the experiences of agency, is related to the operational structure of agency. As I have examined in 2.2.1, the structure indicates that agency in hypermedial theatre serves twin functions of hypermediacy and immediacy. By the hypermedial function, the viewer may be aware of the multiplicity of and interconnection among the media that are used in performance. Meanwhile, by the function of immediacy, the viewer may immediately perceive what takes place on stage.

In my opinion, the poetic arising of *Qi* in the course of the viewer's performative contemplation also implicates a two-fold structure similar to the above-mentioned structure of agency. This happens because, when the viewer contemplates a painting, the viewer may be sensitive and responsive to the dyadic relationship between each painted line and dot, which implicitly corresponds to the artist's resonance with the cosmos. This may imply a hypermedial function. At the same time, function of immediacy may be emphasized, because the viewer directly sees these painted lines and dots without obstruction. From the perspectives of agency or *Qi*, the viewer as a co-performer is capable of travelling freely between physical and virtual realms within the distributive assignment of agency or *Qi* to the two realms.

As for the final point, the interpretation of agency as an aesthetic experience, which I have mentioned in 2.2.1, may help us to disclose a connection between the poetic arising of *Qi* and the experiences of agency. I have

suggested that the experiences of agency indicate a process whereby viewers gain pleasure at finding that their reactions and perceptions lead to and result from the development of the work in hypermedial theatre. Viewers see and feel as if they move within the work. Put another way, the work becomes an extension of the viewers' bodies.

Similarly, a viewer's enactment of the poetic arising of *Qi* in the course of contemplating a Chinese landscape painting also indicates a pleasure-gaining process. This occurs because, according to the previously-discussed Chinese theory of art, in the course of contemplation the viewers are induced to take meaningful acts towards the establishment of their performative relationship with the painting. Viewers may feel satisfied with their involvement in the unfolding of traces of the flow of *Qi* that exists in-between the physical and the pictorial worlds. The poetic arising of *Qi* thus can be characterised as an aesthetic experience.

According to these observations, we may say that the experiences of agency are comparable to the poetic arising of *Qi*. The channelling of the viewer's agency leads to the viewer's performative reactions to the work; meanwhile, the unblocking of *Qi* is related to the viewer's co-performance with the landscape painting.

Based on this ground, I propose that a further examination of the world models respectively in relation to agency and *Qi* may help to show the value of the knowledge of *Qi*. I first discuss a fundamental, yet critical, question – whether the channelings of agency and *Qi* indicate a similar view on the movement of

energy. As mentioned earlier, agency can be possessed by and transferred between the viewer and the work. It seems that the transference of agency is suitably interpreted through modern physics. This transpires because, for the Western readers 'energy in modern times, specifically with regard to the application of physics, refers to power, effects or momentum that can be contained inside the object and not yet released' (Obert, 2012: 182, my translation). Similar to the distribution of energy, when the greater amount of agency is held by the viewer, the viewer receives the larger amount of information and is motivated to perform more unexpected and complex responses.

Yet, the *Qi* worldview may provide an alternative interpretation of the circulating energy. As I have implied in Chapter 3 with reference to *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, *Qi* does not exist as a material that can be contained or possessed. The movement of *Qi* in this sense is characterised by Obert as the 'cosmic resonance of *Qi*' (*qi-kan*),⁷⁹ which means the '*occurrence of a certain interaction and correspondence* rather than "transference" and the result of that transference, namely, the altering quality and quantity of energy' (ibid., my translation and italicization). For instance, saying that someone is full of '*Qi* with happiness' (*shi-qi*), '*Qi* with vitality' (*tsao-qi*) or '*Qi* with spirit' (*lin-qi*) does not mean that such a person has a specific kind or degree of *Qi*. Instead, these expressions of *Qi* imply various becoming situations whereby a person is induced by the flow of *Qi* to react. The flow of *Qi* seems to be 'more like the

⁷⁹ In this thesis I parallel this term, *qi-kan*, with the term *kan-ying* (cosmic resonance/resonance with the cosmos), which I have discussed in footnote 49 (see pp. 141-142). Therefore, I also translate *qi-kan* as 'resonance of the cosmos'.

“mediation” or “becoming” itself that brings forth the interactive relationships between self and others’ (ibid., my translation). How to perpetuate the arising of *Qi* in between the self and others rather than how to increase and preserve *Qi* within the self may be a better way to interpret performative acts in the *Qi* world model.

I suggest that the different movement modes of agency and *Qi* may lead to their different aesthetic concerns. As I have discussed in 2.2.1, it seems that the aesthetic concern of agency is to focus on the viewer’s bodily capability in hypermedial performance. This may be due to a perspective that connects the dynamics of the mediated environment with the viewer’s unpredictable responses to the work. Contrarily, it seems that the poetic arising of *Qi* pays more aesthetic attention to the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t’ien-jen ho-yi*). As explained in Chapter 3 and the first section of Chapter 4, the term *the cosmos* in the *Qi* world model corresponds to nature, heavens and the universe. Not only on the physiological and psychological levels but also on the spiritual level, the cosmos is constitutive of and constitutes humans and various other beings/things through the free flow of *Qi*. For this reason, the viewer’s practices of the poetic arising of *Qi* can be seen as a process of reaching resonance with the cosmos.

Building on these observations, I suggest that the poetic arising of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre can be characterized by the viewer’s performative acts. That is to say, the poetic arising of *Qi* is realised as the viewer’s participation in the development of the effectiveness expressed and inherent in the work. With such a spiritual focus, the viewer’s performative acts

may be seen as an effort to reach that resonance with the cosmos through having an interaction with the work. I assume that *Qi* cannot be replaced by agency, as the knowledge of *Qi* offers an alternative interpretation of the movement of energy and aesthetic concern. This discussion prepares us for further explorations of the issue of performative spaces and other relevant issues. In the next section, I will explicate the possible relationship between the poetic arising of *Qi* and the constitution of performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

4.3 *Qi*-arising Space as a performative space

In the last section, I have interpreted the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) as a performative act – that is, the viewer realizes an aspiration or utterance of perpetuating the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) when encountering the work. From this angle, I assume that the spatiality that is generated by activities of the poetic arising of *Qi* can be interpreted as a performative space. I frame this spatiality in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which subtly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* as *Qi*-arising Space in this thesis. I will use Obert's (2009) research into the Chinese theory of art, specifically the spatial configuration of Chinese landscape painting, to support my assumption in this section. As I have explained in 4.2, the reason is because contemplating artworks in ancient China is regarded as participating performing arts to an extent. This discussion will enable our analysis of the constitution of performative space with respect to agency in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works.

As I have indicated in 4.2, the main concern of Chinese landscape painting

indicates the viewer's performative contemplation. I have interpreted the performative contemplation as practices of the poetic arising of *Qi*. Following this line of thought, I now assume that, when the viewer undertakes performative contemplation, a performative space with respect to the poetic arising of *Qi* is generated. Moreover, this generation may be affected by the spatial configuration of Chinese landscape painting. According to Obert, 'Chinese [landscape] painting is particularly famous for its subtle wrangling between configuration and emptiness' (Obert, 2009: 122, my addition). The configuration here refers to positions of figurative images that are presented with painted lines and dots, while the emptiness implies bland parts of the painting (see fig. 5). In the *Qi* world model, the configuration and the emptiness should not be understood as opposite states, as something versus nothing. Instead, it may be better to think of the configuration and the emptiness as rival yet interdependent polarities that are constantly transformed into each other. The subtle wrangling between the two can be seen as a process of reaching a certain dynamic equilibrium between the polarities. That is, the appeared (i.e., figurative images) and the appearing (i.e., bland parts) together present the circulatory traces of *Qi*.

As various theses of Chinese landscape painting have suggested, the spatial configuration is conducted by a means of 'profundity' whose form is shown as becoming plain and blank 'in a background which is qualitatively different from [...] images' (Obert, 2009: 123). In contrast to using figurative images as foci, the configuration of Chinese landscape painting relies on the distribution of the effectiveness in the appeared (i.e., figurative images) and the appearing (i.e., bland parts). The means of profundity can be identified as 'a temporalized

“depth of the world” (ibid.) in relation to the continuity of *Qi*. That is to say, what Chinese landscape painting performs refers to a process of developing the effectiveness.

While encountering Chinese landscape painting, the viewer functions as a



Fig. 5 An instance of the subtle wrangling between configuration and emptiness in Chinese landscape painting. *Storied Mountains and Dense Forests* by Juran (fl. 10th century), in the collection of National Palace Museum, Taipei. Hanging Scroll, ink on silk (144x55.4 cm).

co-performer, as I have implied in 4.2. In this sense, the profundity-conducted configuration of Chinese landscape painting enables the viewer's participation in the development of the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the painting. I propose that this participation may give rise to a performative space wherein the viewer practices the poetic arising of *Qi*. By this, I mean that the viewer's exploration of the association of painted dots and lines can be seen as a process – how the viewer's acts and perceptions incarnate the flow of *Qi* between physical and pictorial realms.

In 2.1 and 2.2 I have elucidated the meaning of performative space in hypermedial theatre and the importance of agency to the space's constitution, with reference to new media and hypermedial theatre studies. I have discerned the performative space as created by viewers' performative acts that are conducted by their experiences of agency, influenced by the dynamic arrangement of the computer-manipulated media and the other media in the course of performance. My discussion highlights an attitude that embraces media technology while foregrounding the co-performance of the viewer and the work. The channelling of agency via the incorporation of the physical and the mediated carves out a shared and energetic space in which the potential for the performative interaction between the viewer and the work is intensified.

I propose that my interpretation of a space, which is generated by the viewer's practices of the poetic arising of *Qi*, as a performative space seems to show certain spiritual implications more than the concept of performative space in new media and hypermedial theatre studies. Referring back to the comparison between agency and *Qi* in 4.2, I have shown that the two notions indicate

different worldviews. The former can be explained in reference to modern physics that concerns individuals' performance of their preserved energy, whereas the latter relies on an anthropocosmic perspective that emphasises a becoming process where the interactive relationship and correspondence between a person and the cosmos are established. The performative space in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies may be created through activating the viewer's imagination as motion (e.g., viewers are able to imagine their moving within the work or to generate various interpretations of the work through the interaction process). In contrast, the performative space from the *Qi* worldview calls for an anthropocosmic⁸⁰ scheme – that is, an “internalization” process during which viewers psycho-physiologically enact the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the work. Optimally, the viewers would be transformed into a unity with the cosmos, namely, a unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*), through their performative contemplation.

On this ground, I propose a framework of *Qi*-arising Space in this thesis for analysing performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly show a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. By bringing in *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy and the related concept of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*), the framework may offer a complement to our knowledge of performative space and agency in new media and hypermedial theatre studies. Furthermore, this framework appropriates the viewer's stance in order to examine the viewer's experiences of agency and the poetic arising of *Qi* in

⁸⁰ I have explained this term *anthropocosmic* in the footnote 36 (see p. 131).

terms of the spatial configuration of the interactive relationships between the viewer and the hypermedial work.

I define *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre as a performative space constituted in an anthropocosmic scheme, with reference to the profundity-conducted configuration of Chinese landscape painting, mentioned earlier in this section. I propose that *Qi*-arising Space may emerge in a condition under which the spatial configuration of the hypermedial work may activate the viewer members to be sensitive or responsive to the relationship between themselves and the cosmos. In other words, if the viewer's performative interaction with the hypermedial work indicates the viewer's effort to achieve resonance with the cosmos, a space created by the performative interaction might be interpreted as *Qi*-arising Space.

In the following parts of this study, I provide a further discussion of what I mean by *Qi*-arising Space through comparing it with Heidegger's 'mood', Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh' and Obert's 'experimental field of the bodily movements' (2012), examined in 4.1. I will prove that *Qi*-arising Space is more suitable than the other three concepts to analyse the embodiment process of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

First, as mentioned in 4.1.1, in his 'phenomenology of wind', Ogawa interprets Heidegger's mood as atmosphere and *Qi* because all these elements fill the world in which humans and various other beings/things coexist. On this basis, the spatiality of mood can be thought of as 'a melting space of things, human bodies, and human perception' (Ogawa, 1998: 328). An individual is regarded

as being thrown *into* some atmospheric space that is constantly changed according to the radiation of energy between a person and that individual's surroundings (see fig. 1, p. 199). The spatiality of mood implies a material and substantial view from which different states of mood perceived by someone may lead to that person's different responses to what is encountered. Contrary to that, the concept of the poetic arising of *Qi*, which I adopt to frame *Qi*-arising Space, indicates an insubstantial view, because it focuses on the effort to maintain the circulation of *Qi* between the individual and the cosmos. Applying this view, *Qi*-arising Space refers not merely to certain flowing and infectious space where the viewer is interwoven and interacts with the work. Rather, it may be better to describe *Qi*-arising Space as a space where the viewer tries to reach resonance with the cosmos.

Second, I have examined Merleau-Ponty's flesh in 4.1.2 through Hansen's (2005) interpretation of the notion. The flesh emerges in life through active participation in the opening of the living environment, which is inseparable from nature. The spatiality of the flesh is characterized by Merleau-Ponty as analogous to 'a true electric field' (Merleau-Ponty, 1995: 200/150; cited by Hansen, 2005: 241). That is, similar to the flow of energy between transmitter and recipient that leads to an energetic field, the interweaving of movements and perceptions with the environment also generates a liminal space in which a person and the environment support each other's appearing. The spatiality indicates a bottom-up structure, because nature is seen as the ground and source that may bring forth the emergence of the flesh (see fig. 3). In contrast, *Qi*-arising Space implies a cyclical structure where the flow of *Qi* descends from the cosmos and, at the same time, rises from the environment. The

emphasis here is on progress towards resonance with the cosmos.

Qi-arising Space may be more similar to what Obert describes as an experimental field of the bodily movements (2012), as both are concerned with the mission to maintain the circulation of *Qi* between the self and others. In 4.2, with reference to Obert's concept, the experimental field is created by the practitioner's experiments of 'reversing and retracting' the flow of *Qi*. I have shown that such experiments can be interpreted as practices of the poetic arising of *Qi*. The experimental field's emphasis is on how the practitioner's moral behaviours are able to affect other human beings. However, *Qi*-arising Space pays more attention to how the spatial configuration of the interactive relationships between the viewer and the work could incite the viewer's performative acts.

Now, we can see that the hypothesis of *Qi*-arising Space is more applicable to the analysis of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works that implicitly show a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. The hypothesis intends to grasp the phenomenon, where the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) is embodied in the kind of works particular to this type of theatre. That is, the viewers' improvisation with the works, which is related to the development of the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the works, can be thought of as generating a space where *Qi* keeps circulating between themselves and the work.

I suggest that my proposition of the three strategies of constituting performative space in hypermedial theatre in 2.1 can be used to examine the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space. I have interpreted the first strategy as

employing the spatial arrangements of an (almost) empty space to channel the circulation of energy (namely, agency) between the viewer and the hypermedial work. I have regarded the second strategy of constituting performative space as addressing how the circulation of energy (namely, agency) between the viewer and the work via the dynamic use of the performance space would renew the performer-viewer relationship and the body-mind interaction. The final strategy that I have analysed is about how the transmission of energy (namely, agency) between the physical and the mediated is achieved through altering the original uses of the venues where performances take place. Inspired by the three strategies, I propose that *Qi*-arising Space could be constituted through similar means, including using an (almost) empty space, dynamically arranging the space shared by the viewer and the work and juxtaposing multiple spaces and times.

I suggest that the profundity-conducted configuration of Chinese landscape painting can be employed to explain the first strategy of constituting *Qi*-arising Space. As I have indicated, the means of profundity highlights the importance of emptiness in the spatial configuration of the painting. While exploring the possible association between figurative images and the becoming, blank part in the painting, the viewer is induced to participate in the development of the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the painting. In cases of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre, this strategy of using an (almost) empty space may lead to a minimalist form that carries multi-layered projected images. If the viewer is induced to ponder the possible interconnection between the physical and the mediated, we may say that the viewer tries to reach resonance with the cosmos.

This strategy of generating *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre by limiting spatial use can be illustrated by a scene in Cloud Gate Dance Company Taiwan's *Wind Shadow* (2006). The scene's spatial configuration creates a sense of the cosmic whole through projecting black-and-white images of fireworks onto dancers who randomly wave big white flags on stage. The shifting bodies and the waving flags lead to the fragmentation of the images. The spatial configuration seems to create certain interactive rhythms that may be interpreted by the viewer in various ways. In this process, the viewer's interaction with the performance may be seen as a cosmic becoming process.

I propose the second strategy of constituting *Qi*-arising Space as dynamically arranging the space shared by the viewer and the work. This proposition also can be articulated through the profundity-conducted configuration of Chinese landscape painting. Here I refer to its characteristic of blurring the boundaries between the viewer and the work. The viewer's movements and perceptions interconnect with the distribution of the effectiveness in the work's painted dots and lines. When viewers perform as participants in the development of the painting's effectiveness, optimally, they may be aware of the performative relationship between themselves and the cosmic whole. This strategy may be presented in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre as a form of structured improvisation where the viewer is activated by the work's structure to interact with the work. We may say that the viewers participate in a becoming process of the cosmos, if they are induced to associate their movements and perceptions with the mediated environment.

CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, flowers, snow and moon (2008), created

by Image in Motion Theatre Company, successfully shows this kind of dynamic use of space with a form of structured improvisation. The order of the scenes of the performance, namely, wind, flowers, snow and moon, are decided by the votes of the audience members when they enter the auditorium. The artists (including dancers and lighting, music and image designers) learn the result before the performance. The work's structure gives rise to an impression of the cosmic whole. That is, the audience, the dancers, the artists and the media together function as essential parts of a certain becoming process (which refers to nature and life in this work) through the structure. The audience's vote and their interpretation of the performance (i.e., the artists' and dancers' instant feelings and mediation) can be seen as their participation in a becoming process of the cosmos.

The final strategy of constituting *Qi*-arising Space indicates a way of juxtaposing multi-layered spaces and times. My proposition is with reference to the profundity-conducted configuration of Chinese landscape painting. I have explained that, through juxtaposing the near with the far depicted in a painting, the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the painting may be extended to multilayered spaces and times. This configuration can be made possible in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre with the help of computer technology that may generate dialogues between the past, the present and the future. The viewer's involvement in the dialogues implies a progression of reaching resonance with the cosmos.

The strategy of juxtaposing multi-layered spaces and times can be exemplified by Industrial Technology Research Institute of Taiwan's *Flow of Qi* (2007). This

new media installation applies ultra wideband (UWB) technology to instantly transform the data of a pair of participants' real-time breath into the replication of some calligraphy masterworks projected onto the floor in front of the couple. The participants are required to respectively adjust the speed and depth of their breath in order to correspond with the state of breathing that the ancient masters had when writing. This configuration engenders a sense of the cosmic whole, because the participants interconnect not only with each other and the projected images but also with the masters via exploring a harmony of the participants' and the masters' breathing and writing rhythms. The interconnection indicates the participants' involvement in a process, wherein the masters used their brushstrokes to grasp the respiration of the cosmos. Thus, we can say that certain *Qi*-arising Space may emerge in the course of breathing.

I suggest that the framework of *Qi*-arising Space consists of three aesthetic actions of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*): *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, *Qi*-transforming embodiment and *Qi*-transforming presence. This suggestion is developed from the three aesthetic actions of agency and the three goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi*, which I have indicated in 2.2 and 3.3 respectively.

In my discussion of the three aesthetic actions of agency, inter-activity, embodiment and presence, I have suggested that the three actions are interconnected in the course of constituting performative space in hypermedial theatre. When the viewer and the work reciprocally interact with each other, the two parties come to support each other's embodiment and presence in a field where the actual and the virtual merge with each other. Subsequently,

reflecting the three aesthetic actions of agency, I have examined the three key goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi* – namely, the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*), the unity of the human body with the human heart-mind (*shen-hsin ho-yi*) and the association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining). My examination has shown a process wherein the free flow of *Qi* may affect the reciprocal interaction between human beings and the environment, the embodiment of the human body in mixed realms and the co-presence of self and others in multi-layered spaces and times.

Following this line of argument, I now identify the three aesthetic actions of the poetic arising of *Qi* as a tri-partite process, and I use the term *Qi-transforming* to implicate an anthropocosmic level of the three aesthetic actions, that is, an existence mode as the common *Qi*-kind beings and resonance with the cosmos. The first action, *Qi-transforming inter-activity*, refers to a process of grasping traces of the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. The second action, *Qi-transforming embodiment*, implies the incarnation of the circulation of *Qi*. The final action, *Qi-transforming presence* offers hints as to how the viewer's becoming present in both actual and virtual realms may reveal the spatial-temporal structuring of the circulation of *Qi*. In what follows, I briefly explain the three *Qi-transforming* actions.

1) *Qi-transforming inter-activity*

I frame *Qi-transforming inter-activity* as an aesthetic action of the poetic arising of *Qi* that consists of *Qi-arising Space*. I define the action as a spatial progression by which viewers grasp traces of the circulation of *Qi* between themselves and the cosmos. The definition is in line with the notion of the *Qi*

movements of *kan* (stirrings) and *tong* (responses), which regards the perceiver's responses to the perceived as a communal act, in relation to the circulation of *Qi*, fulfilled by the perceiver and the perceived. On this basis of *Qi*, I characterise *Qi*-transforming inter-activity in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre as a structure of a bipolar unity by which the viewer and the work reciprocally interact with and are integrated into each other.

2) *Qi*-transforming embodiment

The second aesthetic action of *Qi*, namely, *Qi*-transforming embodiment, re-examines the spatial implications of the viewer's phenomenal body in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. I define *Qi*-transforming embodiment as the incarnation of the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. The notion that I draw on is the Confucian notion of *chung-yung* (centrality and commonality), which regards the human body as a synthesis of rival yet interdependent polarities. The self and others are simultaneously embodied as dynamic centres in an ever-altering field of *Qi* that is shared by the self and others. With reference to this notion, *Qi*-transforming embodiment may be characterised as a process whereby the viewer's body is used as a means to disclose the original opening of the actual and the mediated to each other. Cosmologically, the viewer's phenomenal body can be interpreted as the shared body of the cosmic whole.

3) *Qi*-transforming presence

Qi-transforming presence shows an interpretation of the viewer's presence in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre through the lens of *Qi*. I mainly rely on Xiao Chi's (2007) 'the poetics of "affection of breath in the organic universe"' (*Qi-lei*

kan-ying), which suggests the interconnection between a person's presence and the flow of *Qi*. It is believed that concomitant with the flow of *Qi*, feelings stirred at the present are juxtaposed with sentiments accumulated in various other spaces and times. If the space-time awareness of *Qi* is raised, the self may be able to become present in a network of the relationship between itself and others. This dynamic foregrounds the co-presence of a person and that person's surroundings. With the help of the poetics, *Qi*-transforming presence can be defined as the spatial-temporal structuring of the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. It may be characterised as a sense of cosmic historicity, where presence refers to some place where the viewer already exists and is juxtaposed with the coming and the going.

In short, this section has proposed and described the framework of *Qi*-arising Space, an anthropocosmic scheme, for the analysis of performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly show the logic of traditional Chinese aesthetics. I have employed the notion of the poetic arising of *Qi* and the Chinese theory of art to explore whether a spatiality created by the viewer's psycho-physiological co-performance with the work can be interpreted as a space generated by that viewer's practicing of the poetic arising of the poetic arising of *Qi*. Moreover, I have framed *Qi*-arising Space as three aesthetic actions of *Qi*, including *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, *Qi*-transforming embodiment and *Qi*-transforming presence, in order to reflect the three aesthetic actions of agency and the three key goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi*, which I have discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. These aesthetic actions of *Qi* reveal possibilities of representing the circulation of *Qi* as the viewer's participation in the development of the effectiveness expressed

and inherent in the hypermedial work. The framework of *Qi*-arising Space can help us rethink an intercultural view on the issue of performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. Holding this view, the following three sections will further explicate the three actions of *Qi* respectively.

4.4 *Qi*-transforming inter-activity

In this section, I explicate *Qi*-transforming inter-activity which is framed as one of the three aesthetic actions of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) that lead to *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. I define the action as a spatial progression by which viewers grasp traces of the circulation of *Qi* between themselves and the cosmos. I propose that *Qi*-transforming inter-activity can be characterised as a structure of a bipolar unity by which the viewer and the work reciprocally interact with and are integrated into each other. The discussion of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity may show us an alternative interpretation of the inter-activity between the viewer and the work in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies that I have examined in 2.2.2.

I suggest that the emergence of the inter-activity in works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre which implicitly show a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* can be interpreted as *Qi*-transforming inter-activity. That is, the reciprocal interaction between the viewer and the work indicates a communal action of maintaining the poetic arising of *Qi*. *Qi*-transforming inter-activity can be seen as a spatial progression by which the viewer grasps traces of the circulation of *Qi* in order to aesthetically achieve resonance with the cosmos. By grasping traces of the circulation of *Qi*, I mean that viewers participate in the

development of the work's effectiveness through interpreting or reorganising the spatial relationship between themselves and the work. This interaction mode with respect to the circulation of *Qi* is explicitly described in the classical Confucian text, *Record of Music* (c. 1050-256 BC):

[The occurrence of a person's activity shows itself as a process by which] that person's internal world is stirred (*kan*) by external things and then responses are generated (*tong*) after these stirrings. Stirrings and responses thus produced are manifested in the sounds that are uttered. Then, changes in the sounds are generated by the way in which these sounds are incited by each other. (n.p., my translation)

This excerpt refers to the creation of music – from a person's stirrings by external things to that person's responses to the things and then to the same person's production of sounds. It states a means that relates the coupling of actions and perceptions to the *Qi* movements of *kan* (stirrings) and *tong* (responses). It is by virtue of the circulation of *Qi* between the internal world and the external world rather than of someone's instant reactions to stimuli that the sounds are generated.

I suggest that the *Qi* movements of *kan* (stirrings) and *tong* (responses) imply a *Qi*-cultivated process of interaction. That is to say, someone and the other beings/things that that person encountered communally develop their relationship network. The greater the extent of the circulation of *Qi* involved, the more information a person is able to grasp from the surroundings. Feedbacks can be seen as a person's effort to maintain the poetic arising of *Qi* between the self and the cosmos.

For example, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, in Chinese landscape

painting the configuration of painted lines and dots in a picture is regarded as transformed by the flow of *Qi*. What the painting expresses is the distribution of the effectiveness in physical and virtual realms. In the course of the encounter, the viewer is activated to represent traces of the flow of *Qi* through participating in the development of the effectiveness. The active participation of the viewer may bring forth a liminal space in which the viewer and the work reciprocally interact with each other to fulfill the poetic arising of *Qi*.

The above-interpreted action of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity with respect to the poetic arising of *Qi* has similarities to the processes describes as inter-active in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies, because both characterize an in-between structure by which the viewer and the work reciprocally interact and co-perform with each other. There are feedback loops between the viewer and the work generated in the process of interaction and co-performance. On the one hand, the viewer's responses to the work are motivated by what takes place in performance. On the other hand, the responses are prerequisite to the development of the performance.

Nonetheless, I suggest that it may be better to characterize *Qi*-transforming inter-activity as a structure of bipolar unity. I do this because, from a *Qi* worldview, the interaction between the viewer and the work indicates a process of renewing the association between *Qi*-kind beings that originally open up to and are included within each other. This interaction mode seems to be different from the mode of the inter-activity in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies. As discussed in 2.2.2, the modes of the inter-activity are divided according to the amount of the viewer's agency. This indicates a deal of

physical energy; agency can be preserved by and emanated from the viewer. If the viewer has more agency, the viewer is able to produce more complex levels of reactions. In comparing the *Qi* world model with that, it is important to note that the extent of the viewer's responses to the work is not related to the states or amount of *Qi*. Instead, the situation highlights a becoming process of establishing the interactive relationships and correspondence between rival yet interdependent polarities (e.g., humans and various other beings/things), between *Qi*-kind beings.

The structure of a bipolar unity finds mention in various literary genres such as rhapsody (*fu*), Songs of *Ch'u* (the *Ch'u tz'u*), parallel prose (*p'ien-wen*) and poetry (*shih*), all of which emphasise the use of syntactic parallelism, couplets, vague similitude and binomial interpretation (see Strassberg, 1994, translated with Annotations: 24-25, 27). Moreover, the term *thing* in Chinese literally refers to the association of bipolarised characters *tong* (east) and *hsi* (west); the term *landscape* literally refers to the association of *san* (mountain) and *shui* (water) (see Jullien, 2000: 376; Strassberg, 1994: 25) or of *feng* (wind) and *jing* (scene). These literary genres and terms, consisting of a pair of antithetical images, imply that the structure of a bipolar unity can be thought of as a process of mediating dynamic equilibrium while maintaining diversity within the unity.

Applying the world model of *Qi*, I suggest that the viewer-work relation in works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre which subtly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* operates in a framework of polarity. Through participating in the development of the effectiveness inherent in the work, the viewer and the work

perform as rival yet interdependent polarities that consist of each other as *Qi*-kind beings. Moreover, due to an anthropocosmic concern, the viewer's responses to the work imply a process of reaching toward the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*). Conceived in this way, it may be more suitable to interpret the interactive relationship between the viewer and the work a bipolar unity, a structure that links the viewer with the cosmos. The interactive relationships may help to release the blockage of *Qi* cosmologically rather than merely to establish communication pathways between the viewer and the work.

In this sense, *Qi*-transforming inter-activity can be seen as a process in which '[e]ach movement [of *Qi*] contains within itself the seeds of its polar complement' (Kasoff, 2002: 49, my addition). When the viewer acts as a polarity that reacts to the other polarity in which the work exists, the two are originally entwined and integral to each other as a unity. The structure of a bipolar unity brings forth a creative activity by which the viewer grasps a certain internal logic of the resonance between the cosmos and humans (*t'ien-jen kan-tong*). In other words, the interaction between the viewer and the work may be seen as a creative transformation of the self through which viewers contemplate performative relationships with the cosmos. The interaction may give rise to a kind of *Qi* biosphere in which the viewer incorporates the work *from within*, as both the viewer and the work interact with each other as *Qi*-kind beings to certain extent.

The elucidation in this section offers a rethinking of the concept of inter-activity in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies. The next section will discuss the second aesthetic action of the poetic arising of *Qi*.

4.5 *Qi*-transforming embodiment

This section explicates the second aesthetic action of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*), that is, *Qi*-transforming embodiment. I rely on the *Qi* worldview to interpret the aesthetic action of the embodiment in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies, as mentioned earlier in 2.2.3. A perspective that may help our interpretation is the Confucian notion of *chung-yung* (centrality and commonality), specifically the commentary of Tu Wei-ming (1989). According to this scholar, the *chung-yung* offers a way of forming the human body through a person's performative acts with regard to the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*). I believe that the explication would help along an understanding of an intercultural experience of the embodiment from the viewer's standpoint.

Comparing this with the concept of embodiment discussed in 2.2.3, I propose now that there could be a kind of *Qi*-transforming embodiment existing in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. I suggest that the emergence of the viewer's phenomenal body can be interpreted as a process of incarnating the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. This suggestion follows my interpretation of the viewer-work relationship in the emergence of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity as a structure of a bipolar unity, which has been explained in 4.4. In the *Qi* world model, the viewer and the work perform as

rival yet interdependent polarities that reciprocally interact with and are integrated into each other. That is to say, the viewer and the work interact as certain *Qi*-kind beings. The bodily space of the viewer, on this basis, may be thought of as constantly developed in accordance with a process of reaching dynamic equilibrium.

I apply the investigation of Tu Wei-ming (1989) into the notion of *chung-yung* (centrality and commonality) to articulate my suggestion of *Qi*-transforming embodiment. According to Tu's book, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung-yung* (1989), the *chung-yung* indicates a cyclical movement of centrality and commonality through which someone learns to be human. That is, through 'delving into his[/her] own ground of existence [namely, centrality], [a person] discovers his[/her] true subjectivity not as an isolated selfhood but as a great source of creative transformation [that enables commonality]' (Tu, 1989: 91, my addition). Here, the cyclical movement of centrality and commonality emphasises a process of forming the human body with the cosmos. It is because from the *Qi* worldview there is the common *Qi* that flows *inherently within* bodies of humans and various beings/things so that both humans and various other beings/things act as multiple foci of these elements' relationship network. The emergence of multiple foci refers to the *Qi* movement of *chung* (centrality), which may lead to the deepening of the space of the self. At the same time, concomitant with the circulation of *Qi*, the space of the self may be extended to other selves' spaces. The extension refers to the *Qi* movement of *yung* (commonality). Thus, in the course of the *chung-yung*, a person is embodied as a shifting position that constantly oscillates between the becoming of foci and the becoming of commonality.

I suggest that this way of forming the human body with the cosmos could be further illustrated by Figure 4 in 4.1.2 (see p. 202), which indicates the constitution of bodily space through the poetic arising of *Qi*. As the figure has shown, the human body functions as an experimental field where the individual practices both how to free the flow of *Qi* between part and whole and how to achieve resonance with the cosmos. The practicing here seems to reveal certain bilateral developments of the space of self. In the *Qi* world model, humans and various other beings/things act as *Qi*-kind beings that originally contain each other within. Meanwhile, humans and various other beings/things together consist of the cosmos in which the circulation of *Qi* takes place. Relying on the existence mode, an individual may not be embodied as a complete entity but rather as an ever-evolving constitution that is interwoven with the cosmic whole.

Adapting Tu's interpretation of the *chung-yung* and its spatial implications of embodiment, I suggest that *Qi*-transforming embodiment in works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre which implicitly show a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* indicates an anthropocosmic scheme for analyzing the emergence of the viewer's phenomenal body. By anthropocosmic scheme, I mean that in traditional Chinese aesthetics *Qi*-transforming embodiment is concerned with disclosing the above-examined process of forming the human body with the cosmos. With this scheme, the viewer's psycho-physiological participation in the development of the effectiveness inherent in the work can be interpreted as a process of incarnating the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos.

Similar to the experience of the embodiment in the phenomenological context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies, *Qi*-transforming embodiment can be achieved when the viewer's movements and perceptions are coupled with the mediated environment. The emergence of the viewer's phenomenal body becomes affected by the potential for the dynamic incorporation of the viewer and the work. However, the viewer's phenomenal body, from the *Qi* worldview, refers to a shared body of the cosmic whole. In the course of extending the body in the mediated environment, an awareness of the cosmos-human relation and a sense of 'the realizing Body', to use Mencius's terms, may be increased.

I suggest that a condition for *Qi*-transforming embodiment is taking the viewer's body as a means to disclose the original opening of the physical and the mediated to each other rather than to examine the limit of the bodily ability in the encounter between the viewer and the work. As mentioned in the first chapter, the concept of embodiment in the phenomenological context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies takes the human body as a research subject to interrogate the relationship between an individual and the world, which is grounded in the knowledge of praxis. As Merleau-Ponty asserted, '[o]ur bodily experience of movement [...] provides us with a way of access to the world and the object' (Merleau-Ponty, 1962: 140; cited by Hansen, 2006: 40). This indicates that, by virtue of the body in motion, we may undertake our thinking and know others in the world. The body plays a twofold role, a problematic object and a subject that has the capability to solve the problem.

In contrast, in Chinese philosophy of *Qi*, the human body has never constituted

a problem (see 1993, Yang: 19). Rather, the release of *Qi* has been regarded as the major focus of the issues related to the human body. For instance, as discussed in 3.2, the three key goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi*, the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*), the unity of the human body with the human heart-mind (*shen-shin ho-yi*) and the association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining), imply that psycho-physiological activities are indivisible from any effort to help the free flow of *Qi* between the self and others. The human body that is formed in the *Qi* world model could be seen as a means that puts the notions with respect to the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) into practice. The body is realized as a kind of flux that unites with the cosmos and originally merges with the physical and the virtual.

The characteristic of *Qi*-transforming embodiment, namely, taking the viewer's body as a means to disclose the original opening of the physical and the mediated to each other, can also be found in various classic Chinese lyrics. In her article, 'From frail body to the individual: The "bodily *Qi*" and the theory of early lyrics' (2005), Cheng Yu-yu examines the phenomena of the bodily *Qi* in the Chinese lyric tradition:

'[Lyrics] [...] might be developed out of a concern for healing disease and relieving disorder and thus could be seen as a therapy for freeing the flow of the bodily *Qi*. [Writing and reading] lyrics might show feelings and perceptions of the magnitude of *Qi*, which constantly oscillates between the limpid and the dense. In other words, the so-called 'lyrics' could be interpreted as embracing various aspects of the *Qi* oscillation [...] and embodying an existence world in which a person's emotions reflect these aspects. (Cheng, 2005: 418, my translation)

This indicates that classic Chinese lyrics aim to release the blockage of *Qi* between a person and that person's surroundings rather than focus on a person's self-consciousness and feelings. In this sense, writing and reading lyrics can be seen as some kind of performing arts. The human body is used as a means to probe the releasing states of *Qi*, that is, whether there is something hindering the becoming relationship between the self and its surroundings. Through inducing performative acts, individuals may realize a proper form of their bodies.

Holding this *Qi*-based view on the human body, I suggest that viewers' phenomenal bodies in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre can be described as the integration of their live bodies and the work that reflects a shared body of the cosmic whole. The primary focus of *Qi*-transforming embodiment may not be described as intensifying the authority of the viewer's bodily movements in performance. Instead, it takes greater interest in a mission of unblocking the flow of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. What is put into question should be described as how the viewer's body presents the unity of the physical and the virtual rather than how the extent of the viewer's body would be affected by technological media.

This discussion of *Qi*-transforming embodiment provides an opportunity to apply a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* to the analysis of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. The next section will examine the presence of the viewer in a mixture of phyrical and virtual realms from the *Qi* worldview.

4.6 *Qi*-transforming presence

I discuss in this section the third aesthetic action of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*), that is, *Qi*-transforming presence, which could lead to the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. I assume *Qi*-transforming presence as a re-examination of the viewer's presence, which I have examined in 2.2.4 with reference to the studies of new media and hypermedial theatre. I will use the investigation of Xiao Chi (2007) into the presence of the self in a *Qi*-cultivated relationship network to undertake the discussion. The investigation can be seen as linking a person's practices of the poetic arising of *Qi* with the self's perceptions of space and time.

The spatial-temporal structure of the viewer's presence in the studies of new media and hypermedial theatre may be interpreted as a process of retrieving a gap in which the viewer is divided from but still in contact with the work. The spatial-temporal structure seems to emphasise an ambivalent sense of becoming present but not at home. In the *Qi* world model, however, the viewer's presence may not be regarded as a gap that is waiting to be occupied by the viewer and the work. Rather, it may be better to describe the viewer's presence as already included *within* the viewer and the work. This is because in the *Qi* world model, humans and various other beings/things are regarded as *Qi*-kind beings that inherently consist of each other, as I have illustrated in Fig. 2 in 4.1 (see p. 200).

In this thesis, I call the viewer's presence *Qi*-transforming presence, which indicates a process, whereby the spatial-temporal structuring of the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos occurs. I mean that, through

inducing the viewer's participation in the development of the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the work, the viewer may gain access to multi-layered spaces and times with respect to the cosmic whole. The viewer's becoming present could be interpreted as a process of constantly locating in a *Qi*-cultivated network where the viewer and the work originally open up to each other.

Xiao Chi's (2007) observations on the Chinese lyric tradition may help to articulate my proposition of *Qi*-transforming presence. Xiao interprets the expressions of *Qi* phenomena by lyric minds as 'the poetics of "affection of breath in the organic universe"' (*Qi-lei kan-ying*) (Xiao, 2007: 80). The two terms *Qi-lei* and *kan-ying* have been respectively translated into *Qi*-kind being in 4.1.1 and the resonance of *Qi* with the cosmos in 3.2 and Footnote 49 (see pp. 141-142). Persisting with the quest for the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*), as Xiao suggests, 'the life rhythm of the cosmos is reflected in a person's presence through the common *Qi*' (ibid.: 70, my translation). That is to say, the mutual communication and interaction between humans and various other beings/things can be interpreted as a communal breathing movement that needs to be undertaken by humans and various other beings/things. This is because humans and various other beings/things are regarded as cultivated by their common substratum, namely, *Qi*. Without involving itself in the communal breathing movement, the self may not become present. Grasping the cyclical rhythm of *Qi* indicates an indispensable way to express someone's locating and becoming present in the universe.

The indivisible connection between an individual's presence and the flowing of

Qi is framed by Xiao as a ‘lyric concept of “stirring-and-response”’ (Xiao, 2007: 80). This concept implies that a person may be sensible to the information exchange when the circulation of *Qi* works in concert with that person and the surroundings. Comparable to this lyric concept, I have offered a discussion about the stirring and response in 4.4 above, in the section on *Qi*-transforming inter-activity. According to the discussion, the reciprocal interactions between the self and what that self encounters can be identified as a process of performing the *Qi* movements of *kan* (stirrings) and *tong* (responses). The discussion focuses on examining the interactive mechanism in the encounter process. Yet, Xiao’s lyric concept of stirring-and-response highlights the perceptions of space and time – according to which ‘the stirring at “present” could be combined with sentiment about durable, continuous time [through the flow of *Qi*]’ (ibid., my addition). I propose that Chiang Nien-feng’s (1990) phenomenological account of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*), as mentioned in 4.1.1, may help to engage Xiao’s lyric concept with my interpretation of *kan* and *tong*. That is, the poetics of breathing in Xiao’s terms could be interpreted as closely related to Confucius’s Poetry teaching, which regards writing, reading and producing commentary on poems as ontological actions that aim to maintain the poetic arising of *Qi* in various situations. Breathing in this sense may poetically indicate the experiment and enactment of the circulation of *Qi* between the past, the present and the future.

Holding Xiao’s lyric concept of stirring-and-response, I suggest that *Qi*-transforming presence may emerge if the relationship between the viewer and the work shows a structure of a bipolar unity. In my discussion of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity in 4.4, I proposed that the reciprocal interaction

between the viewer and the work can be interpreted as dynamic equilibrium between rival yet interdependent polarities. Following this line of thought, I suggest that a liminal space created by the interaction between the viewer and the work may be described as a space where the viewer and the work become present. The contact and negotiation between the two sides brings about their co-presence. This is a characteristic similar to the concept of the viewer's presence in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies, as mentioned earlier in this section.

Instead of featuring a liminal space, I suggest that it may be more proper to characterise *Qi*-transforming presence as an action full of a sense of cosmic historicity. It is from an anthropocosmic perspective that the viewer's feelings stirred in the present are interlinked with the cosmos where the continuous flow of *Qi* occurs. For this reason, the viewer's presence in the *Qi* world model may be better explained as a space simultaneously *within* the viewer and the cosmos than as a space before or in front of the viewer. In some ways both the viewer and the artist/performer share a mission of maintaining the poetic arising of *Qi*. The emergence of the co-presence of the viewer and the work can thus be said as leading to the continuous flow of *Qi* in different spaces and times, in a cosmic whole.

The characteristic of cosmic historicity could be exemplified by poet Wang Hsi-chih's (ca. 303-ca. 361) *Preface to Collected Poems from the Orchid Pavilion*:

[t]his was a day when the sky was bright and the air was pure. A

gentle breeze warmed us. Upward we gazed to contemplate the immensity of the universe; downward we peered to scrutinize the abundance of living things. In this way, we let pure eyes roam and our emotions *become aroused* so that we enjoyed to the fullest these sights and sounds. This was happiness, indeed! [...] What they had taken pleasure in has now passed away in an instant, so how can their hearts not *give rise* to longing? [...] Whenever I read of the causes of melancholy felt by men [the poets] of the past, *it is like joining together two halves of [a] tally* [...] Future readers will look back on today just as we look back at the past [...] Therefore, I have recorded my contemporaries and transcribed what they have written. *Over distant generations and changing events, what gives rise to melancholy will be the same.* Future readers will also feel moved by these writings. (in Strassberg, 1994: 66, my addition and emphasis)

The *Preface* proposes the interconnections between the existence of trans-individual selves and their emotions tied to the respiration of the cosmos. This proposition may indicate Confucius's Poetry teaching if we use Chiang's (1990) phenomenological research into the concept of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*), as mentioned in 4.1, to examine the generation process of emotions. That is, the arousing of emotions, hearts, melancholy and feelings through the interactions, as the preface depicts, can be seen as activities of the poetic arising of *Qi in which the poets participated and their future readers will as well.* The arousing invites the readers to simultaneously enact the poetic arising of *Qi* and, through the enactment, to develop the space-time awareness of *Qi*. In this sense, certain historical dialogues with respect to a quest for the unity of the cosmos with humanity are engendered when the reader chases and becomes involved in the circulation of *Qi* between the past, the present and the future.

This rethinking of the viewer's experience of presence from the *Qi* worldview might grasp some far-reaching implications of intercultural situations. In Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works, the feature of cosmic historicity may become apparent while an expression of the juxtaposition of the present and the past is generated through the viewer's participation in the development of the work's effectiveness. In this circumstance, the viewer and the work may not perform as opposites but rather as each other's inherent constituents. The viewer's presence does not indicate some place that the viewer is approaching. Instead, presence can be seen as somewhere in which the viewer already exists and interconnects with the past and the future. In case of *Qi*-transforming presence, we need to take an aspiration of becoming sensitive to a cosmic community of *Qi* between trans-individual selves and the cosmos into account.

4.7 Summary

This chapter develops a framework of *Qi*-arising Space for analysing the embodiment process of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly show a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. The framework takes phenomenological aspects as a research strategy and Mencius's thought of *Qi* as a fundamental worldview. The aim of the combined approach is to examine whether the *Qi* worldview could offer a complement to our knowledge of performative space and agency in new media and hypermedial theatre studies.

The first section, which consists of 4.1.1 and 4.1.2, explicates a phenomenological interpretation of *Qi* in consonance with Mencius's line of

thought and its aesthetic implications. In 4.1.1, I have drawn on Heidegger's 'mood' to interrogate into the environmental aspect of *Qi*. I have shown a similarity between mood and *Qi* with reference to Tadashi Ogawa's (1998) 'phenomenology of wind'. This indicates a material, substantial perspective from which both mood and *Qi* function as a medium and energy that fill a space in-between humans and other beings/things and activate the dynamic interactions between the two groups. Yet, inspired by Chiang's (1992) 'spiritual phenomenology of the poetic arising', I have proposed that there may be dissimilarity between *Qi* and mood, because a space full of *Qi* refers to a liminal space which exists within the originally shared bodies of humans and various other beings/things rather than something created in the encounter between the two groups. In the *Qi* world model, it may be better to describe humans and various other beings/things as common *Qi*-kind beings.

Following the thinking, which adopts the concept of the poetic arising of *Qi*, I have suggested in 4.1.2 a possible connection between Hansen's (2005) interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's 'flesh' and Obert's (2012) 'experimental field of the bodily movements'. These are suitable for revealing the spatial implications of the human body in the course of a person's coupling acts and perceptions and the environment. However, the experimental field of the bodily movements seems to put more focus on resonance with the cosmos than on the human body's capability and authority, in the coupling process. This is because in the *Qi* world model, the cosmos is seen as inseparable from and corresponding to the synthesis of the world, nature and the universe. Thus, it may be better to describe the forming of the human body as a *Qi*-cultivated feedback loop in which the flow of *Qi* rises upward from the environment to

humans while descending downward from the cosmos into them and the other way around.

Subsequently, with reference to Obert's research into the viewer's contemplation in Chinese landscape painting in 4.2, I have suggested that *Qi* is expressed as a certain performative effectiveness in the work. The poetic arising of *Qi* in the course of contemplating a painting can be interpreted as performative acts. Due to this performative feature, the poetic arising of *Qi* can be seen as connected to the experiences of agency in hypermedial theatre. I have proposed three points of similarity between the two perspectives. Both perspectives emphasise the performative interaction between the viewer and the work, a double function of hypermediacy and immediacy and an aesthetic experience. In addition, I have examined certain dissimilarity between these two perspectives from two aspects, including the movement mode of energy and the aesthetic concern. The poetic arising of *Qi* indicates a becoming process wherein the interactive relationship and the correspondence between self and others are established instead of changes in the quality or quantity of energy. Because of this movement mode of *Qi*, the poetic arising of *Qi* pays more aesthetic attention to a mission to achieve the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*).

In 4.3, I have framed a space that is created by the viewer's practicing of the poetic arising of *Qi* as *Qi*-arising Space and drawn its parallels with a performative space in hypermedial theatre. I have proposed that *Qi*-arising Space not only associates with the three aesthetic actions of agency, namely, inter-activity, embodiment and presence, in the context of new media and

hypermedial theatre studies, as interpreted in Chapter 2. It also reflects the three goals of the self-cultivation of *Qi* including the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*tien-jen ho-yi*), the unity of the human body with the human heart-mind (*shen-hsin ho-yi*) and the association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining), in the *Qi* world model, as mentioned in Chapter 3. Due to this association and reflection, I identify the *Qi*-arising Space's constitution as three aesthetic actions of the poetic arising of *Qi*: *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, *Qi*-transforming embodiment and *Qi*-transforming presence. *Qi*-arising Space may be realized if the spatial configuration of the work creates a sense of the cosmic whole. Through this, the viewer's participation in the development of the effectiveness inherent and expressed in the work could be interpreted as a process of grasping, incarnating and structuring the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. The framework is thus indicative of an anthropocosmic scheme through which the viewer's resonance with the cosmos may be achieved.

In the following three sections (4.4-4.6), I have offered a discussion of the three aesthetic actions of the poetic arising of *Qi* and compared them with the three aesthetic actions of agency. In 4.4, I defined the action of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity as a spatial progression where the viewer grasps traces of the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos, by drawing on an observation of the *Qi* movements of *kan* (stirrings) and *tong* (responses) in Confucian classics. I have characterized *Qi*-transforming inter-activity as a structure of a bipolar unity, since the interaction between the viewer and the work indicates the dynamic equilibrium between *Qi*-kind beings that originally open up to and consist of each other. Instead of focusing on the

interconnection between the amount and quality of agency and the limits of the viewer's interactive ability, *Qi*-transforming inter-activity has more interest in the viewer's resonance with the cosmos.

Then, in 4.5, I interpreted the emergence of the viewer's phenomenal body in works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre, which subtly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*, as *Qi*-transforming embodiment. By holding onto the research of Tu (1989) into the Confucian notion of *chung-yung* (centrality and commonality), I have defined *Qi*-transforming embodiment as a process of incarnating the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. The viewer's phenomenal body can be thought of as a synthesis which consists of rival yet interdependent polarities (i.e., the live body and the media) rather than any specific polarity. The aesthetic action emerges in a condition under which the viewer's body is used as a means to disclose the original opening of the physical and the mediated to each other. This may lead to an awareness of a shared body of the cosmic whole.

Finally, I proposed in 4.6 that *Qi*-transforming presence is defined by a process of representing the spatial-temporal structure of the flow of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. The elucidation can contribute to the concept of presence in the phenomenological context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies. Similarly, *Qi*-transforming presence can be seen as an in-between field or state that is created by the performative encounters between the viewer and the work. However, instead of indicating somewhere that the viewer is approaching, *Qi*-transforming presence refers to somewhere in which the viewer already exists and interconnects with the past and the

future. This involves foregrounding of a characteristic of cosmic historicity. Through participating in the development of the work's effectiveness, the viewer may become aware of the accumulation of trans-individual selves' emotions that are tied to the respiration of the cosmos.

This framework of *Qi*-arising Space calls forth a transcultural apprehension of the viewer's performances of inter-activity, embodiment, and presence in the *Qi* world model. It indicates that the framework can offer complements to the existing phenomenological methodology with respect to the examination of performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. Not only concerned with what the viewer enacts that constitutes performative spaces with the work in the course of performances, the framework, more importantly, also delves into aesthetic meanings of the viewer's enactments in relation to the concept of *Qi*. That is to say, applying the framework to this kind of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works could result in seeing the viewer's performance as certain experiments and experiences of an ethical aesthetic, namely, the resonance with the cosmos (*t'ien*) in the *Qi* worldview. Through this point of view, the spatial and temporal dimensions of the viewer's performance, which imply the original existence of humans and various other beings/things within each other in the cosmos, become an imperative that characterises performative spaces in these works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

On the other hand, my framework of *Qi*-arising Space also implicates an extension to the interpretations of *Qi*. As this chapter has shown, the phenomenological concepts of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty help us catch

the possibilities of the embodiment of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works. Through this study's phenomenological strategy, which is based on an examination of the viewer's agency, *Qi* no longer functions as a cultural symbol or invisible matter in the works. Rather, *Qi* can be explained as a certain energy that is able to be pursued and perceived by the viewer in the course of performances, if the works reveal a *Qi* world model through the spatial configuration of the works. Moreover, thanks for this phenomenological strategy, my framework turns the major focus of the concept of *Qi* with respect to the studies in performance and theatre from the movements and perceptions of the actor/dancer to those of the viewer. Different from other studies that mainly concentrate on how the actor/dancer grasps and presents the *Qi*-energy, as mentioned in the Introduction, this framework emphasises the importance of the viewer's role. I suggest that this shifting of the research focus raises more significant ideas in a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*, that is, ideas in relation to the viewer's aesthetic contemplation of the work and to the viewer's reactions to the artist's grasping of the *Qi* that flows in the cosmos.

In the next chapter, I will employ the framework of *Qi*-arising Space in the analysis of the three case studies selected for this research and provide evidence for the claim that the poetic arising of *Qi* could be embodied via the hypermedial *mise-en-scène*.

PART IV: CASE STUDIES FOR THE EMBODIMENT OF *Qi* IN TAIWANESE HYPERMEDIAL THEATRE

Chapter 5: Case studies

Part I has explained the major subject of this thesis, performative space, a term with which I refer to a space in hypermedial theatre that is generated through the transmission of agency between the viewer and the work. Furthermore, Part I also examined the spatial implications of *Qi* and the *Qi*-affected construction of space in *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy. Subsequently, in Part II, I suggested an approach that combines phenomenological aspects and *Qi* for analyzing Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly show the logic of traditional Chinese aesthetics. With this approach, a *Qi* world model in which the viewer and the work do not dwell in the mediated environment merely as coexistent beings but as *Qi*-kind ones comes into the foreground. I have proposed that *Qi* is represented as a certain performative effectiveness inherent in the work. Furthermore, the viewer's practices of the poetic arising of *Qi* in the course of performance can be seen as performative acts and the space created by the practices as a *Qi*-arising Space, a performative space. In order to reflect the viewers' experiences of interacting with the work and performing their phenomenal body and presence, I have framed *Qi*-arising Space as defined by three aesthetic actions including *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, *Qi*-transforming embodiment and *Qi*-transforming presence. Following this context in this fifth chapter, I provide three case studies that respectively concentrate on those three aesthetic actions. Through these case studies, I will show the different facets of the embodiment process of *Qi* and the value of this to understanding hypermedial theatre in Taiwan.

An analysis of Cloud Gate Dance Company Taiwan's *Wind Shadow* will serve as a case study to demonstrate my proposition about *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, which I will discuss in section 5.1. I will explain how a process of grasping the circulation of *Qi* between a person and the cosmos could be represented through the interaction between the audience and the work. Then, in section 5.2, I will elaborate on *Qi*-transforming embodiment through a case study of *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, flowers, snow and moon* by Image in Motion Theatre Company. The viewers' acts here lead to a process of incarnating the circulation of *Qi*. In the third section, namely, section 5.3, my examination of *Flow of Qi* by The Industrial Technology Research Institute of Taiwan is an example of *Qi*-transforming Presence, which represents the spatial-temporal structuring of the circulation of *Qi*. Finally, I will draw the explorations of these case studies together in a summary, which is section 5.4.

5.1 Case study for *Qi*-transforming Inter-activity: *Wind Shadow* by Cloud Gate Dance Company Taiwan (2006)

Cloud Gate Dance Company Taiwan's⁸¹ *Wind Shadow* premiered in 2006 and has been performed in various Asian and European countries and in America.

⁸¹ Lin Hwai-min is an internationally renowned Taiwanese choreographer. In 1973, he founded Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, the first contemporary dance company in any Chinese-speaking community, in Taipei, Taiwan. Lin's choreographies show the adoption of diverse cultures in Taiwan (see Lin, 2011b). He never divides the East from the West, or Taiwanese culture from Chinese culture; for him, these are inherent in his living experiences in Taiwan (see Chen, 2008: 48). Thus, his representative works are associated with the development of political and cultural situations in Taiwan. For instance, *The Tale of the White Serpent* (1975) searches for the source of Chinese culture; *Legacy* (1978) explores the identification of the Taiwanese through referencing traditional Chinese culture; *Songs of the Wonderers* (1994) is concerned with the folklore and aesthetics in Asia; and *Water Stains on the Wall* (2010) shows Lin's philosophical perspective, which is deeply affected by calligraphy

My analysis concentrates on the performance that I saw in 2009 at London's Barbican Theatre. The company's founder and choreographer, Lin Hwai-min, invited Cai Guo-Qiang, an internationally known visual artist, to create the work's concept and scenography. *Wind Shadow* interrogates 'the ambivalent relationship between a person and his/her shadow' (Cai, 2006) by using the traditional Chinese aesthetic concept of *i-xiàng*, which indicates a way of creating a meaningful appearance through the dynamic interaction between the perceiver and the perceived.⁸² That is, *Wind Shadow* places its focus on an issue of the *Qi* world model, where tangible and intangible interweave with each other as a unity. Through the employment of multimedia, the work is

and Hsiung Wei's *taichi daoyin* (a style of the practice of *Qi* that emphasises the flow of *Qi* around every part of the body). Choreographer Lin (2010) and some critics (e.g. Chen, 2008; Lin, 2005; Houseal, 2005) have suggested that the notion of *Qi* is a prerequisite to Cloud Gate's trainings and choreography.

⁸² The term *yi-xiàng* is a notion in traditional Chinese aesthetics. It literally means that the artist uses his/her perceptions (*yi*) to depict the appearance (*xiàng*) of that which the artist has encountered. This kind of *yi* is seen as a certain creative rhythm or flavour in relation to *Qi*, namely, *qi-yun* or *yi-wei*. Li Zehou interprets *qi-yun* as a state of creation that is beyond consciousness (see 1996: 120). The reaching of the state requires the cultivation of an individual's resonance with the cosmos (see *ibid.*). Li exemplifies the concept through Chinese calligraphy, wherein brush lines 'do not represent and express the concrete outlines of the tangible but rather dynamics of the cosmos, the vitality of life, and the "Way"' (*ibid.*: 123, my translation). I take François Jullien's research into traditional Chinese aesthetics to explain the meaning of *yi-wei*. As Jullien suggests, traditional Chinese aesthetics can be characterised as 'blandness', which 'is the most basic and authentic of flavours: that of the "root" of things' (2004: 53). This is to say that traditional Chinese art has 'the "lingering" or "leftover flavour" (*yíwei*) [that] evokes a potential, inexhaustible value' (*ibid.*: 67, my addition). The 'flavour' constantly and gradually pervades various layers of the relationship between individuals and what they encounter. Therefore, by virtue of the approach of *yi* in traditional Chinese aesthetics, the depiction of the appearance (*xiàng*) of that which is encountered cannot be simply interpreted as an impressionist or abstract form. Instead, it is better described as the artist's apprehension of rhythms of the cosmos through which the network of a *Qi*-cultivated relationship between humans and various other beings/things is constantly developed.

presented as a minimalist form to express Lin's and Cai's views on the above-mentioned issue in traditional Chinese aesthetics (see Fig. 6).

The hypermedial work is presented as a 'journey' (Cloud Gate, 2006: 7) comprised of sixteen scenes titled with numbers that count from one to sixteen. Each scene seems to have no direct connections with the preceding one, but the sequence leads the audience to gradually unveil the mystery of being in the world. For instance, one scene shows a piece of flood-like black curtain that falls from the ceiling to the floor. In another scene, a live dancer and her shadow on the backdrop perform a duet together. Next comes a solo by a male dancer, dressed like a Chinese opera actor, who carries many white flags on his back. In another scene a male dancer wears the same costume but coloured black and performs with his shadow partner on stage. Subsequently, various black kites fly high on stage through a set of portable direct-drive fans. After that, videos of fireworks are projected onto the backdrop as dancers perform on stage moving flags held by them. At the end, a sensation of vertigo is created by a set of green laser lights that move in a whirling motion from the stage's centre. The performance by the various dancers imply the influence of a certain attraction under which the dancers tend to move towards the vertigo.



Fig. 6 *Wind Shadow*: The choreographed work appears as a minimalist form through the use of multimedia to express the artists' view on the issue of the *Qi* world model in traditional Chinese aesthetics. Photo: Liu Chen-Hsiang.

Lin says that '[t]he greatest challenge of *Wind Shadow* is expressing wind and shadow, which are intangible things, through the tangible human body and props [including projection, laser lights, kites, black curtains, white flags and electric fans]' (Lin, 2006, my translation and addition). The mode of expression without interactive devices and a computer system indicates a fundamental concern of traditional Chinese aesthetics that holds onto the interlinkage between the tangible and the intangible while embracing the transcendent in reality (see Li, 1996: 52-71). *Wind Shadow* can be seen as providing an opportunity for the audience to experience the existence mode in traditional Chinese aesthetics. My case study of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity focuses on

the eighth scene of this work, where dancers randomly⁸³ wave translucent white flags as videos of fireworks are simultaneously projected onto the backdrop and dispersed among the dancers' bodies and the flags (see Fig. 7). I choose this because the *mise-en-scène* of scene 8 specifically gives rise to the improvisational interaction between the work (i.e., dancers, projected images and flags) and the audience. The audience here is induced to experience a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* in the work – that is, participating in a process of grasping the circulation of *Qi* with respect to a cosmic whole. I will first examine the scene's spatial configuration, in order to show the audience's agency and how this leads to the constitution of performative space. Moreover, I will discuss a form of inter-activity that appears in this context. Then, I will show the expression of *Qi*-arising Space that bring into focus an anthropocosmic perspective to the audience-work relationship. This enables an exploration of how *Qi*-transforming inter-activity is triggered. The final part of this analysis is dedicated to the characteristic of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity.

⁸³ I describe the movements of the dancers' flag waving as random, because each dancer's waving patterns and directions alter in accordance with those of the other dancers' waving patterns and directions throughout the performance. As I have indicated in the beginning of this analysis, *Wind Shadow* is a choreographed work. Nonetheless, scene 8 shows a certain extent of improvisation due to the dynamic interaction between the staged elements and the audience's awareness of subtle hints of the interaction.



Fig. 7 Scene 8 in *Wind Shadow*: nine dancers respectively hold large white flags shift on stage and randomly wave the flags when videos of fireworks are projected onto the backdrop as well as the moving dancers and their flags. Photo: Liu Chen-Hsiang.

Scene 8 causes an ambivalent feeling; the staged elements seem disparate and at the same time interconnected as a whole. Due to the use of the projection as the only lighting source, dancers' bodies are partially exposed under the dim light and partially covered by the shadows of waving flags. Meanwhile, by means of the shifting of the flags, images of fireworks look like some dynamic, organismic composition, the parts of which multiply and change constantly. The dancers function as part of the images and at the same time the images function as part of the dancers' bodies. Both the dancers and the images doubly perform in physical and mediated realms of the scene.

The fragmented and multi-layered images of fireworks in scene 8 can be thought of as calligraphy brushstrokes that have been repeatedly employed in Lin's other works such as *Cursive* (2001), *Cursive II* (2003), *Wild Cursive* (2005) and *Water Stains on the Wall* (2009). However, different from those works, the spatial configuration of *Wind Shadow's* scene 8 does not aim at showing the content of the images. Rather, the visual scenery is a way of opening up the performance to the audience through the incorporation of the dancers and the images. This is different from Cloud Gate's tradition of using the projected images as subordinated to the dancers. For example, the *Cursive* series arranges the dancers in front of projection curtains on which inky dots and lines of calligraphy gradually appear (see Fig. 8). In *Water Stains*, an animation of flowing ink is projected onto the floor where the dancers perform (see Fig. 8). Those works' projected images appear as extensions of the dancers' bodies, visualizing the semiological meanings of their movements. The dancer-media relationship leads to the audience's inactive role in the course of the performances. By contrast, scene 8 in *Wind Shadow* articulates an 'imaging process' (Hansen, 2006) which applies the audience's active participation in the performance as a requisite and dynamic factor for the association of projected images and dancers on stage. The association can be seen as constantly altering when the audience members' participation enables an ever-changing feedback loop between them and what takes place on stage.

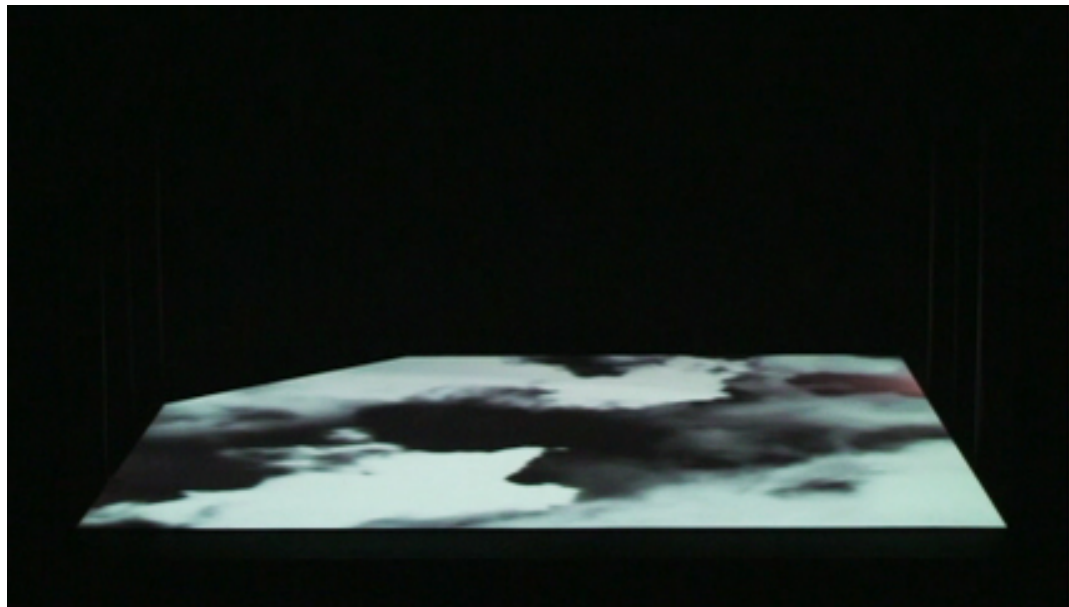


Fig. 8 Video stills of the use of projected images in *Cursive I* and *Water Stains on the Wall*. Top picture: *Cursive I* arranges dancers in front of a projection curtain on which inky dots and lines of calligraphy are gradually appearing. Bottom picture: in *Water Stains*, images of ever-morphing clouds in negative mode are projected onto the floor where dancers perform. Video: Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan.

With the above-indicated way of arranging the audience-work relationship in scene 8, I refer to Lavender's (2006) concept of hypermedial mise-en-scène,

which I have discussed in 2.2.1. I have explained that this kind of *mise-en-scène* is concerned with intensifying the viewer's experiences of agency, namely, the transmission of efficacious energy or power between the viewer and the work. When the viewer shares agency with the work, the viewer is aware of the interaction between the staged elements (including computer-based and other kinds of elements) and is able to respond to this interaction. I suggest that in scene 8 the audience's participation in the performance is a case of shared agency. The dynamic encounters between firework images, randomly moving flags and dancers' bodies imply a sense of improvisational performance. Audience members are prompted to generate their own interpretations. The interpretation process thus can be seen as the channelling of agency between the audience and the work.

Meanwhile, I suggest that this arrangement of the audience-work relationship gives rise to a performative space. By this, I mean that the audience's interpretation of the performance can be seen as a performative act with respect to the transmission of agency between the audience and the performance. These kinds of acts, as I have implied in 2.2.1 with the help of Lavender's research, are provoked by the hypermedial yet immediate function of agency – that is, perceiving the interaction between multiple media while merging with the mediated environment. The performative acts can be thought of as some acts that create a dynamic space full of agency. I suggest that such a performative feature applies to scene 8. As I have mentioned earlier in this analysis, this scene's spatial configuration leads to a dynamic process, where the potential links between fragmented images, flags and dancers' bodies rely on the audience's interpretation of the performance. Meanwhile, the

configuration creates an imaginary of flux in which both the staged elements and the audience are integral to the performance. Due to this fact, the relationship between the audience and the performance in this scene is clearly not only interactive but also performative. When the audience members try to interpret what is shown on stage, they can be seen as co-performers with the dancers and the media to generate a performative space together.

By virtue of this discussion of the audience's agency and performative act, I consider scene 8 a performative moment which emphasizes the audience's function as co-subjects with dancers and media to create their shared performative space. Here, a case of an in-between structure occurs. I have suggested in 2.2.2 that the in-between structure is characteristic for the aesthetic action of the inter-activity in hypermedial theatre. That is, the viewer functions as not merely a co-performer but an inter-actor, which means that the viewer and the work reciprocally interact with each other. In scene 8 the projected images of fireworks are segmented by waving flags into fragments. Meanwhile, the dancers' movements are sometimes exposed under the projection and yet sometimes hidden behind the shadows of the flags (see Fig. 9). Through the spatial configuration, a sense of dynamic composition is generated. It implies an invitation for the audience to a liminal space where the interweaving between the physical and the mediated is in progress. With this invitation, the audience is able to move in between the actual and the mediated realms shown on stage. As a result, the audience and the work open up to and incorporate each other.

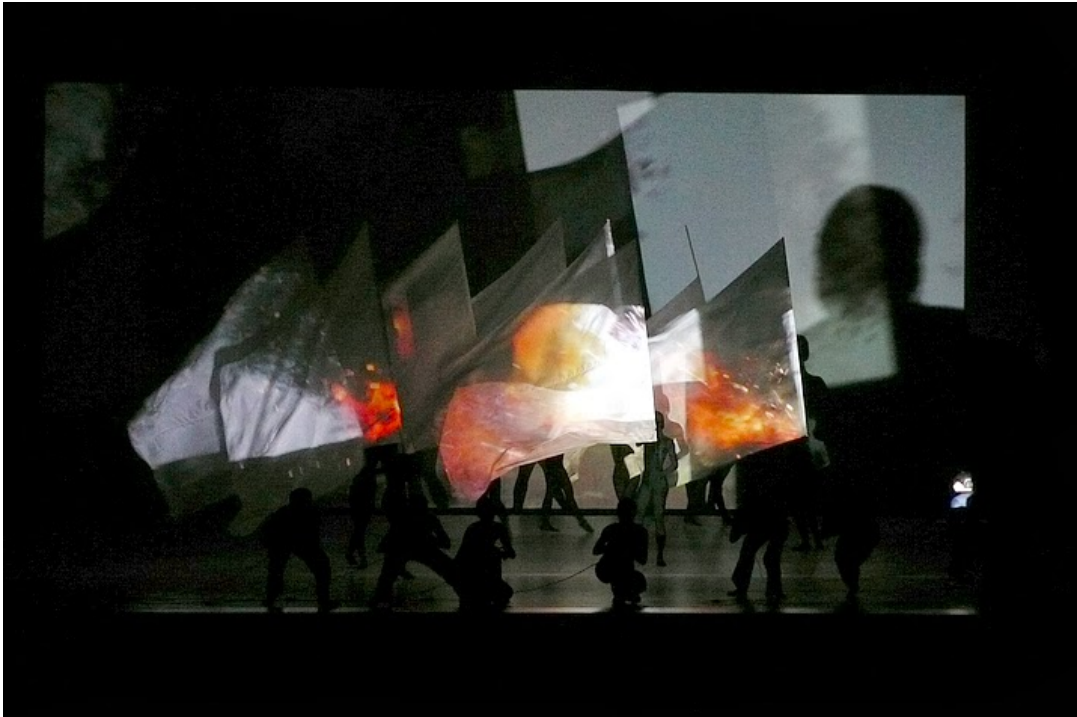


Fig. 9 Scene 8 in *Wind Shadow*: the projected images of fireworks are segmented by waving flags into fragments. Meanwhile, the dancers' movements are sometimes exposed under the projection and yet sometimes hidden behind the shadows of the flags. Through the spatial configuration, a sense of dynamic composition is generated. Photo: Liu Chen-Hsiang.

I propose that in scene 8 a certain effectiveness in relation to the flow of *Qi* rather than merely to agency is foregrounded. In 4.3 I have proposed that comparing the transmission of *Qi* with agency indicates an alternative focus of the movement of energy, with reference to Chiang's and Obert's studies in traditional Chinese aesthetics. The transmission of *Qi* is seen as a becoming process where the correspondence and interactive relationship between a person and the cosmos are established. This spiritual focus emphasises an aesthetic concern for the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*). I suggest that scene 8 is a case in point. Here, the scene's configuration appears to create a seemingly coherent rhythm through assembling dancers'

bodies and flags, which have a randomly-waving tempo, and images of fireworks, which are edited in slow motion. In my opinion, the configuration pays more attention to transforming the audience into part of the rhythm than to intensifying the audience's individual imaginative ability. This occurs because the dynamic encounter between the dancers, flags and images leads the audience to become aware of a phenomenon of the becoming itself, instead of a narrative that waits to be completed. It seems that, when the audience members produce their own interpretations of the performance's rhythm, they are indivisible from the becoming process. Thus, through this, a sense of participating in the development of the cosmos is introduced into this scene.

The above-discussed configuration, which takes the audience's interpretation as an essential factor to the dynamic encounter between the staged elements, accentuates the audience's awareness of a becoming process of the cosmos. This indicates, as I have proposed in 4.3, an anthropocosmic scheme that would lead to *Qi*-arising Space. That is, through the work's spatial configuration, viewers are induced to be sensitive and responsive to the relationship between themselves and the cosmos. I have explained that, with reference to Obert's (2009) studies in the importance of emptiness in the spatial configuration of Chinese landscape painting, this is made possible through using an (almost) empty space that carries multilayered projected images. This indication applies to scene 8, where, through using projector(s) as the only lighting source, the performance of dancers' bodies and flags shifts between light and shadow (see Fig. 9). A tension is generated between the appeared (i.e., parts of the dancers' bodies and flags that are lit by the

projector) and the appearing (i.e., the other parts that are out of the light from the projector or under shadows). That is, the two constantly turn into each other, concomitant with a certain developing effectiveness. By exploring the interplay of light and shadows, the audience may be conducted to a spiritual level, pondering the dynamic constitution of the cosmos. Insofar as this is so, the audience's responses can be seen as a case where the audience enacts the poetic arising of *Qi*.

With the anthropocosmic scheme, the audience's interpretation of the interactive rhythm between dancers, flags and images may bring forth pathways to integrate into the becoming of the cosmos. I suggest, in this respect, that the movement of interpretation can be seen as a process of capturing the development of a certain effectiveness between the audience and the cosmos. Earlier in 4.4 I have proposed that the capturing process refers to *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, which is an aesthetic action of *Qi*-arising Space, with reference to the implication of the *Qi* movements of *kan* (stirrings) and *tong* (responses) in the classical Confucian text *Record of Music* (c. 1050-256 BCE). By this I mean that the information exchange between the viewer and the work can be seen as providing a route to the state of the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*). In scene 8 the audience's interaction with the performance is such as to reflect the possible contact between the audience and the cosmos in a *Qi* world model. Through using projectors as the sole light source, the audience is motivated to associate fragments of the exposed bodies, flags and images. The configuration does not merely lead the way to creating an in-between space for the reciprocal incorporation of the audience and the staged elements, a situation which I

have indicated earlier in this analysis. It also seems to provoke the audience to join in the constitution of the cosmos through observing different moving tempos of the staged elements in the course of the performance.

Conceived as such, the interactive relationship between the audience and the work in scene 8 seems to show a situation in which rival yet interdependent polarities reciprocally interact with and consist of each other. In 4.4, I proposed this kind of audience-work relation as a structure of a bipolar unity, which is characteristic for *Qi*-transforming inter-activity. I have explicated that from the *Qi* worldview the interaction between the viewer and the work can be seen as a process of renewing the association between *Qi*-kind beings that originally open up to each other. Due to the relationship structure, the interaction may lead to the constitution of certain *Qi* biospheres in which the viewer incorporates the work from within, rather than in certain space where their contact each other.

I suggest that such a structure of a bipolar unity evolves in scene 8 through the use of projection as the only lighting source in this scene. As soon as dancers randomly wave flags, the audience is motivated and activated to ponder and interpret what is appeared and appearing in light. The exposing of the staged elements with different moving speeds may elicit various perceptions from the audience members. For instance, some people may feel that the performance shows a tranquil rhythm, whereas some others may view it as fluctuating. It is through this process of interpreting the fleeting fragments of the staged elements that the audience is turned into another element that is constitutive of the performance rhythm. With the relationship structure, audience members

seem to be thrown into a flux-like world where they and the staged elements are integrated into each other. The audience not only moves within the world but “flows” as the world’s rhythm.

In conclusion, I have shown in this analysis of scene 8 in *Wind Shadow* that the audience’s interaction with the performance indicates a case of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity with respect to the *Qi* worldview rather than merely a case of the inter-activity in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies. I have maintained that there is an anthropocosmic scheme in the performance. My observation is grounded in a phenomenon whereby the dynamic encounter between dancers, flags and projected images, in which each performs at a different speed, accentuates the audience members’ awareness of their participation in a becoming process of the cosmos. This configuration emphasises a relationship structure, wherein the audience and the staged elements work as rival yet interdependent polarities that originally open up to and consist of each other. The next case study focuses on the coupling of the viewer’s body and heart-mind with the hypermedial work, where the action of *Qi*-transforming embodiment becomes particularly evident.

5.2 Case study for *Qi*-transforming Embodiment: *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, flowers, snow and moon* (2008) by Image in Motion Theatre Company

The dance improvisation *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, Flowers, Snow and Moon* by the Image in Motion Theatre Company premiered in 2008 in

Taipei and Kaohsiung, Taiwan.⁸⁴ In my analysis here, I refer to one of the performances in Taipei. As the title, *CHANCEFORMATION of Life*, implies, this dance work centres on the becoming process of life. The subtitle, *Wind, Flowers, Snow and Moon*, which is a set phrase in classic Chinese literature, usually refers to the beauty of natural scenery and sometimes indicates love affairs. Thus, *CHANCEFORMATION* interrogates the matter of how the unpredictable journey of life can be represented as a theatrical performance (see Chen, 2010; Ku, 2010).⁸⁵

CHANCEFORMATION is a highly improvisational performance where improvisation plays a key role in the movements of the two dancers (one female and one male) as well as in the use of props, lighting, video and music, and the order of the performance's scenes. *CHANCEFORMATION* is structured on two kinds of lines: unchangeable and changeable. The unchangeable lines indicate the pre-set composition of the entire performance, including sections of introduction, elucidation, development and summary (see Chen, 2010; Ku, 2010). Each section has its props (e.g., a microphone) and instructions (e.g., using the microphone to make sounds) that must be shown in the performance. The changeable lines refer to the renewable sequence of the scenes, namely, wind, flowers, snow and moon, by viewer vote (see *ibid.*).

⁸⁴ Focusing on improvisational dance and technology, the Image in Motion Theatre Company, founded in 2000, is a premier performing arts group in Taiwan that strives to explore the potential of the interdisciplinary performing arts. Ku Ming-shen, one of the two founders of the company, is the most renowned professor and practitioner of improvisational dance in Taiwan. The other founder, Chen Yao, is an expert in digital animation and film effects.

⁸⁵ The interview with Ku Ming-shen took place on 8 July 2010, and the interview with Chen Yao took place on 10 July 2010 in Taipei, Taiwan.

At every performance of *CHANCEFORMATION*, the audience members vote on the order of the four themes when they enter the performance venue. The result is then revealed to all the artists and dancers about five minutes before the performance begins. During the course of the performance, the non-dancing artists, who stay backstage, interact with one another and with the dancers on stage by manipulating technological media. In this way, the performance is a result of interaction between the viewer, backstage artists, dancers and media (including the computer-based ones and other kinds) (see Fig. 10).

I suggest that *CHANCEFORMATION* is an instance of *Qi*-transforming embodiment, which is framed as an aesthetic action that leads to the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space. My analysis focuses on the scene Flowers, which the viewers' votes chose as the second part of the performance on 25 December 2008. I have made this choice because the dynamic encounter between the live and the mediated performances is particularly apparent in the scene. At the beginning of this case study, I elaborate on the scene's spatial configuration and how this leads to the increasing of the viewers' agency in the course of encounter. Then, I discuss the viewers' embodiment in this improvisation performance. Similar to the analysis of *Wind Shadow* in 5.1, the examination of an anthropocosmic scheme in the performance from the *Qi* worldview is crucial in this case study. This examination helps our exploration of why Flowers highlights a form of *Qi*-arising Space. Then, I offer a discussion about the characteristics of *Qi*-transforming embodiment.



Fig. 10 Video still of *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, Flowers, Snow and Moon*. This dance work is notable for the dynamic order of its repertoire, namely, its four themes, which are scheduled at random, according to audience vote, before each performance starts. Video: Chen Yao.

In the scene *Flowers*, the pre-set props include a portable screen stage centre and a microphone that is carried by the male dancer. Through improvisation, the female dancer, brightly lit by a spotlight, performs a solo in front of the screen on which a video of flying flowers appears (see Fig. 11). Then, the male dancer appears behind the right part of the screen. With a dim light, his performance with the projected video is visible through the translucent screen. Yet, due to changes in the light, the male dancer is gradually covered in darkness. At this moment, the male dancer turns his back to the screen and unobtrusively takes out the microphone. When he uses the microphone and



Fig. 11 Video still of scene 'Flowers' in *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, Flowers, Snow and Moon*. The female dancer performs a solo in front of the projection screen while the male dancer improvises with the projected image behind the screen. Video: Chen Yao.

makes noise with his tongue, the female dancer continues to perform her solo in front of the screen (see Fig. 12).

The female dancer seems to lead the development of the scene, as she performs stage centre and in the spotlight. Yet, it also seems that her performance is affected by the male dancer's improvisation with the microphone. Simultaneously, the lighting and projection seem to provide the two dancers with hints on how to interact with each other. This interaction brings the backstage artists, who communicate with the dancers by manipulating the lighting and projection, to the foreground as well.



Fig. 12 Video still of scene 'Flowers' in *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, Flowers, Snow and Moon*. The male dancer who performs behind the projection screen uses a microphone as the instruction of this scene requires. In this moment, the female dancer's performing area is brightly lit. Video: Chen Yao.

I propose that in the scene Flowers the viewers' agency is emphasized through their vote and interpretation of what takes place on stage. In 2.2.1, I explicated that the experience of agency in hypermedial theatre can be understood as certain efficacious energy or forces through which the viewer plays a role that actively participates in the development of the work. That is to say, through the spatial configuration of the work, the transmission of agency induces the viewers' performative acts in the process of interaction. This applies to the scene Flowers, where the viewer's vote results in the setting of the order of the scene and then indirectly affects the backstage artists' and the

dancers' improvisation with media (i.e., microphone, projection screen and light). Through this, the viewer acts as a co-performer in the course of the performance. The viewer's interaction with the performance thus can be seen as sharing part of the backstage artists' and the dancers' agency. The interaction here is similar to scene 8 in *Wind Shadow* that concerns the performative aspect of the viewer's acts in the course of the performance. Whereas the interaction there occurs as the viewer freely navigates the performance with their vision (see pp. 259-260), now the viewer actually joins in and influences the performance's development via voting on the order of the performance's scenes. Moreover, what the viewer encounters here is the instantly mediated setting on stage that comes from the backstage artists' and the dancers' expressions of their real-time perceptions of the scene's theme, flowers.

When considered in this way, the viewers' vote and interpretation of the improvisational performance lead to a feedback loop where the transmission of agency between the physical and the mediated occurs. This feedback loop implies a spatiality that is created by the viewer's performative acts. With reference to Lavender's research discussed previously in this thesis (see 2.2.1), I have identified this spatiality as a performative space that is affected by the double function of agency, namely, the hypermedial and the immediate agency. The former functions to increase the viewer's perceptions of the interaction between multiple media. Meanwhile, the latter operates to intensify the viewer's feelings of merging with the mediated environment. This is the case in the scene Flowers. As mentioned earlier in this analysis, the improvisational performance (i.e., male dancer's use of the microphone,

female dancer's solo, changes in light and projection) leads the viewer to wonder which element dominates the course of the performance. At this moment, the viewer is aware of the interconnection and intermediation between the elements. Furthermore, the content of the performance shows dancers' and backstage artists' real-time perceptions of the scene's theme, flowers. This commandeers the viewer's immediate attention. In my opinion, the dynamic configuration of the auditorium, stage and backstage is a factor that contributes to a performative space in the Flowers scene.

Through sharing dancers and backstage artists' agency, through voting and interpreting, the viewer's body in the scene seems to be extended from auditorium to stage and backstage. In Chapter 2, I proposed this extension, in relation to the viewer's performative acts, as an aesthetic action of agency, namely, embodiment, in hypermedial theatre (see 2.2.3). The viewer's body and the mediated environment are interwoven to constitute a phenomenal body, concomitant with the distribution of agency in the physical and the mediated. Flowers is a case of such an action of embodiment. The viewer's vote and interpretation of the performance establish a performative relationship rather than a semiotic one with backstage artists, dancers and media in the course of the performance. This comes about because the theme, flowers, is expressed as a collective event, where the viewer as well as backstage artists and dancers offer their respective ideas to develop the performance. There is a twofold process. Changes in the media used on stage (i.e., the gesture and timing of using microphone and the effects of the projection and lighting) indicate the disclosing of the backstage artists' and dancers' internal worlds. At these moments the viewer's interpretation of the

changes can be seen as an exploration of certain bodily and emotional landscapes on stage. Through the process the viewer may be embodied as a mixture of the physical and the mediated.

I argue that in *Flowers*, as indicated previously, the extension of the viewer's body to stage and backstage refers not merely to the viewer's bodily capability in relation to the transmission of agency. The extension instead seems to put more attention on a spiritual level of the interaction between the viewer and the performance. The spiritual focus is characteristic of the interpretation of the movement of energy from the *Qi* worldview, which I have elucidated in 4.2 with reference to Obert's (2009) and Chiang's (1992) studies in traditional Chinese aesthetics. I have suggested that unlike agency, which is regarded as physical energy preserved by the viewer, the transmission of *Qi* seems to bring the focus to bear on the correspondence and interactive relationship between the viewer and the cosmos. This implies an aesthetic concern of the unity of the cosmos and humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*).

Further drawing on the above-discussed *Qi* worldview, I suggest that this experience of *Qi* occurs in the scene *Flowers* through the viewers' vote that takes place before the performance. This arrangement involves the viewer in the performance from its very beginning. Due to this arrangement, various viewers said that they were motivated to sense that they played a role prerequisite to what is going on in the performance (see Ku, 2010; Chen, 2010). Furthermore, the unpredictable result of the vote and the performance may create an experience whereby the viewer serves as one of diverse factors that are integral to a dynamic unity (*ibid.*). For these reasons, it seems that the

configuration of the viewer-work relation accentuates a becoming process of the cosmic whole that exists in a *Qi* world model.

I suggest that the spatial configuration of the scene *Flowers*, which represents a becoming process of the cosmic whole on stage, implies an anthropocosmic scheme – that is, a reflection between the viewer-work relation and the viewer-cosmos relation. This is a condition for the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space, which I have explained in 4.3. That is to say, the viewer may become sensitive and responsive to resonance with the cosmos through joining in the development of the effectiveness inherent in the work. In the case study of *Wind Shadow*, I have suggested that a strategy of using an almost empty space may give rise to the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space in scene 8. Yet, in my opinion, such a constitution is achieved in *CHANCEFORMATION*'s *Flowers* through another strategy, namely, dynamically using a space shared by the viewer and the work, which I have proposed in 4.4. I refer here to the scene's form of structured improvisation. In the course of the performance, the viewer constantly wonders 'how artists, dancers and media instantly generate a coherent atmosphere' and 'what a story of nature and life is indicated in the performance' (Ku, 2010), as Ku remarked in an interview with me. These wonders show that, through voting and interpreting the performance, the viewers are aware of their participation in and integration into a becoming process of the cosmic whole. Due to this, a performative space created by the viewers' vote and interpretation seems to implicate a space with respect to the viewers' contemplation of the relationship between themselves and the cosmos.

On this basis of the *Qi* world model, I propose that the viewer's phenomenal body, which I have identified earlier as the extension of the viewer's live body to stage and backstage, seems to have certain anthropocosmic implication. In Chapter 4 (see 4.5), I put forth this kind of phenomenal body as *Qi*-transforming embodiment, an aesthetic action that brings forth *Qi*-arising Space. Inspired by Tu's (1989) interpretation of the Confucian notion of *chung-yung* (centrality and commonality), I have explained that its achievement can be seen as a process of incarnating the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. That is to say, the viewers' performative acts may create a bodily space, which reflects a shared body of the cosmic whole, when the spatial configuration of the work activates viewers to sense their participation in a becoming process of the cosmos. This is possible in *Flowers*, where the viewer votes on the order of scenes before the performance and is induced to explore the dynamic encounter between backstage artists, onstage dancers and media in the course of the performance. Here, due to this arrangement, as indicated earlier in this analysis from the *Qi* worldview, the co-performance between the viewer as well as the backstage artists, the onstage dancers and media shows a spiritual level of the interaction between the viewer and the performance.

The viewer as well as the backstage artists, dancers and media in the performance may be seen as constituents of the cosmos that originally open up to and reciprocally interact with each other. In this situation, the viewers' interpretations, namely, an exploration of the possible development of the performance's effectiveness, can be seen as a process of enacting resonance with the cosmos within themselves. The viewer's bodily space thus implies not

only an association of physical and virtual realms in performance, but also a field in which constituents of the cosmos merge with each other to form an ever-becoming unity.

I propose that the above-discussed process of vote and interpretation may show not merely the viewer's bodily ability to respond to the performance; the process may also highlight the viewer's bodily movements that reveal the original opening up of the physical and the mediated to each other. This way of using the viewer's body is a characteristic of *Qi*-transforming embodiment, which I have suggested in the fourth chapter (see 4.5). From the *Qi* worldview, the embodiment seems to have less interest in measuring the extent of the viewer's corporeality, which may be affected by technological media in the course of encounter. Instead, its core issue is related to how the viewer's body could "prove", that is, realise the integration of the physical and the mediated. I suggest that in *Flowers*, this is possible through the scene's particular configuration. Because viewers vote on the order of the scenes before the performance, whether the result of the vote matches each viewer's expectation, they function as prerequisites to the outcome of the performance. This configuration directs the attention primarily to a communal act of developing the performance's effectiveness fulfilled by the viewer as well as the backstage artists, dancers and media rather than to the individual viewer's reactions in the course of the performance. Due to this, the viewer's bodily movements can be thought of as a mission to reach resonance with the cosmos.

To conclude, my analysis of the scene *Flowers* in *CHANCEFORMATION* has

explained a possibility of interpreting the viewer's performative interaction with the work as *Qi*-transforming embodiment from the *Qi* worldview. I have shown that the spatial configuration of the performance indicates an anthropocosmic scheme, that is, the interaction between the viewer and the performance reflects resonance with the cosmos. I have explained that, due to this scheme, the viewer's phenomenal body can be seen not merely as the extension of the viewer's live body to stage and backstage but also as a shared body of the cosmic whole. Instead of concerning the extent of the viewer's corporeality that may be affected by technological media, this sense of embodiment highlights a communal act that needs to be fulfilled by the viewer as well as the backstage artists, dancers and media. In the following section, I will provide an analysis of a case study for *Qi*-transforming presence, the third aesthetic action that leads to the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space. I will further explore the spatial-temporal structure of the viewer's performative interaction with the work.

5.3 Case study for *Qi*-transforming Presence: *Flow of Qi* (2007) by The Industrial Technology Research Institute of Taiwan

My analysis of *Qi*-transforming Presence focuses on The Industrial Technology Research Institute of Taiwan's *Flow of Qi*. The interactive installation, presented by the Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) of Taiwan, was first exhibited at the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, Austria, in 2007. This artwork is part of the project 'NPM in Action', led by the National Palace Museum (NPM) of Taiwan since 2005, that aims to enhance the viewer's understanding of the NPM's treasured collections of Chinese art

through digital technology (see Wu, 2010).⁸⁶ In *Flow of Qi*, ultra wideband (UWB) sensing technology is introduced into four masterpieces of calligraphy from the Song Dynasty, including Su Tungpo's *The Cold Food Observation*, Huang Tingjian's *Fragrance of Blossoms Album*, Mi Fu's *Tan-yang* and Zhao Ji's *Poem*.

The UWB detectors used in *Flow of Qi* are hidden inside two chairs that are positioned side by side. Two participants sit on the chairs to interact with each other and with the artwork through adjusting their own breathing (see Fig. 13). Their real-time breath rates are transmitted to a PC with customized software and then converted into a projection on the floor in front of the two chairs that shows the replicas of the four calligraphic masterpieces. In the replica process, one of the participants can control the ink density by breathing more deeply or shallowly (see Wu, 2010). Meanwhile, the other participant can alter the writing tempo by breathing more quickly or slowly (see *ibid.*). At the end of each writing course, an image where the participants' replicas overlaps with the original masterpieces is projected on the floor.

⁸⁶ The interview with Wu Shu-min, the concept/creative director of *Flow of Qi*, took place at ITRI, Taiwan, on 30 June 2010.

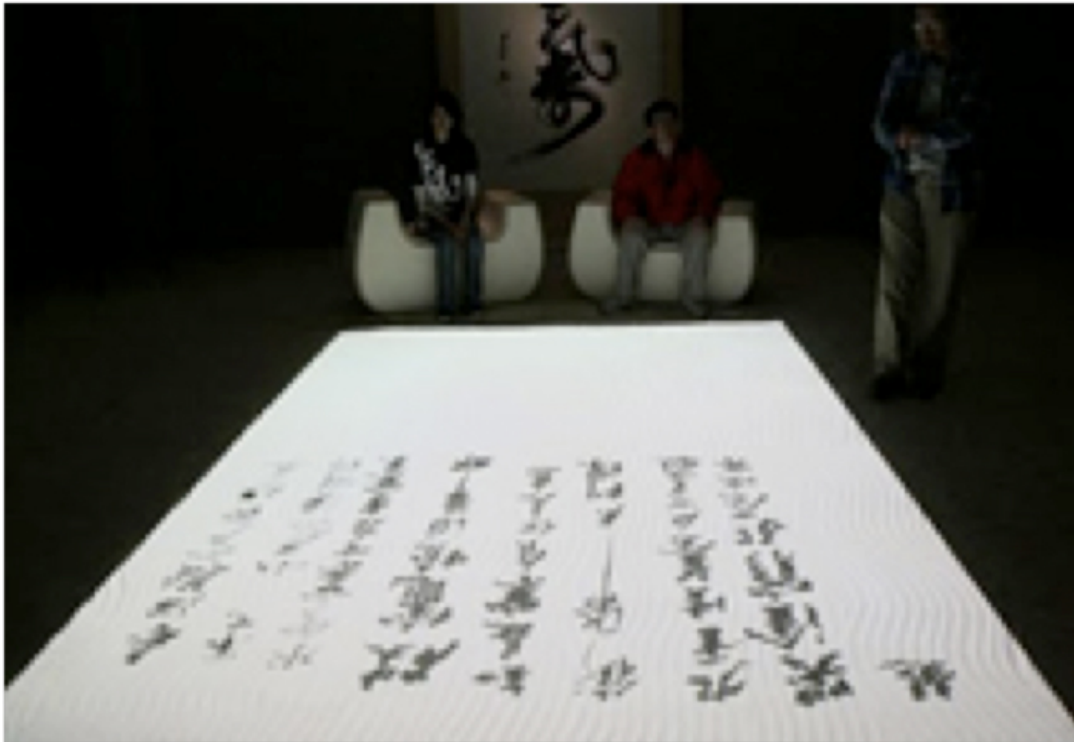


Fig. 13 *Flow of Qi*: the setup of the artwork. Photo: Kipling Chao.

The use of the UWB-sensing system in *Flow of Qi* deals with the approach to contemplate Chinese artworks with respect to the *Qi* worldview. I suggest that this approach is mirrored in the spatial configuration of the interactive installation. I refer here to the situation wherein the UWB-sensing system features the communication between a couple of participants and between the couple and the projection through breathing. Due to the system, *Flow of Qi* not only leads to the interweaving of the corporeal with the media and the mediated but also provides an opportunity to experience the circulation of breathing between the past and the present. I suggest that *Flow of Qi* is an instance of the emergence of *Qi*-transforming presence. My analysis begins with an examination of the artwork's spatial configuration. This enables an elucidation of the relationship between the participants and the projection and also the agency shared by the two parties. Subsequently, I discuss the

presence of the participants in the process of replicating the calligraphy masterpieces, through the lens of new media and hypermedial theatre studies. In the following parts, I explore the interconnection between the participants' breathing and the masterpieces' effectiveness, which is related to the Chinese philosophy of *Qi*, as this understanding is a vital prerequisite for my analysis of *Qi*-arising Space. I will show in this context how *Qi*-transforming presence becomes apparent and discuss its characteristic.

It is taken for granted that all humans need to breathe every second of their lives. In *Flow of Qi* the natural act of breathing functions as the trigger of the UWB-sensing system: one of a pair of participants uses breath to improvise with the other one in order to create a rhythm for the projection onto the floor. I propose that this configuration, places the participants' agency in the foregrounded in *Flow of Qi*. In 2.2.1, I elaborated on agency in hypermedial theatre as a certain efficacious energy or power that is channelled between physical and virtual realms. With this, the viewer functions as an active agent who generates performative acts when being aware of the interaction between the computer-based medium and the other media through the spatial configuration of the viewer-work relation. So far, I have shown that in the first case study *Wind Shadow* the audience's agency is realized through their interpretation of the performance. Then, the second case study *CHANCEFORMATION* presents an instance of interpretation plus voting on the order of the performance's scenes. Now, a more complex performative act occurs in *Flow of Qi*. That is, by means of the UWB-sensing system, a pair of participants physically acts as performers and the source of the projection "on stage". Since the participants use their real-time breathing to alter the rhythm

of the projection, they share a high degree of agency with the artwork. Moreover, this emphasises the participants' interaction with the spectator members. The participants may have seen the previous participants' performance or may be affected by the spectator members' instant reaction (see Fig. 14). Thus, when the participants enact the artwork, a certain efficacious energy with respect to the potential for interaction is generated and transmitted.

By respectively controlling breath speed and density, the participants' communication and multiple mediation with the computer-based media (i.e., UWB detectors, a PC and projectors) become possible. This is a form of the double function of agency, namely, hypermediality and immediacy, which, with reference to Lavender's (2006) research, I have identified in 2.2.1 as contributing to the occurrence of performative space in hypermedial theatre. I have explicated that the experience of agency is not only created when the viewer's response interlinks with the intermediation of the media. Moreover, the viewer's immediate receipt of the mediated content may be intensified through the work's configuration. This is the case in *Flow of Qi*. It is through the intermediation of the projection that a pair of participants is able to adjust their breath. Furthermore, when the participants view calligraphy brushstrokes that are gradually shown in the projection, a sense of instant contact is created. The participants' breathing creates a flow of the information through which the energetic relationship between the participants and the media is established and constantly renewed. Here, the participants and the media can be seen as constitutive of a performative space where the two parties are interwoven with each other.



Fig. 14 *Flow of Qi*: various pairs of participants experience each other's collaboration via breathing. Photo: Kipling Chao.

The interconnection between participants' breathing and changes in the projection can be interpreted as a spatial-temporal relation. I refer here to the transmission of agency between the physical and the mediated that I have identified in 2.2.4 as bringing forth the presence of the viewer. In this context I have suggested, with the help of the research of Giannachi and Kaye (2011), Ihde (2010), Hansen (2006) and Popat (2011), that the experience of presence is related to a multilayered structure of space and time that is generated in the transmission of agency. When involved in a performative network, viewers present as distancing from themselves and, at the same time, returning to the self from their mediated other with an expectation of the consequence of the interaction. In *Flow of Qi*, this multilayered structure of space and time

becomes apparent. Due to the UWB-sensing system, a pair of participants becomes aware of each moment of their breathing when looking at the projection, which is instantly mediated by the breathing. In other words, there occurs an in-between state of presence. Each participant acts in concert with the other through moving with the brushstrokes shown in the projection. At the same time, both have to constantly return from the mediated realm to themselves in order to decide their next responses. In addition, because these participants' breathing replicates the writing process of the original calligraphic masterpieces, a dialogue between the present and the past is created. As a result, it seems that the participants become present in accordance with the spatial-temporal relation between the present breathing, the appearing images on the floor and the writing moments in the past.

By virtue of the UWB-sensing system, the participants' breathing enacts three things: images projected on the floor, the partner's breathing within his/her body and also ancient calligraphy masters' breathing expressed in the masterpieces. This enactment represents a major idea in traditional Chinese aesthetics in relation to the *Qi* worldview. That is, as various studies in the field have suggested (e.g., Li, 1996; Jullien, 2000; and Obert, 2009), the movements of brushstrokes in the artwork are regarded as the artists' responses to the vibration or respiration of the cosmos. From this perspective, the viewer's interpretation is not merely essential to the artwork, more importantly, it shows the viewer's possible participation in a communication with the cosmos. An exploration of certain effectiveness inherent in the artwork may lead to a feeling of exploring how the circulation of *Qi* between the artists and the cosmos is transformed into the movements of brushstrokes. Bearing

this in mind, to a certain extent in *Flow of Qi* the participants' breathing, which is altered in accordance with writing rhythms of the calligraphic masterpieces, may not merely be seen as a result of the transmission of agency. The breathing also seems to put a spiritual level with respect to *Qi* into focus.

Such a focus is a characteristic for the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*) in hypermedial theatre, which I have proposed in 4.3. With the help of Chiang's and Obert's studies in traditional Chinese aesthetics, I have explained that the poetic arising of *Qi* offers an alternative interpretation of the movement of energy. The flow of *Qi* indicates a becoming process that brings forth the correspondence between the viewer and the cosmos. This seems to be different from the channelling of agency, which emphasizes the performance of its possessors (i.e., the viewer and the work). From the *Qi* worldview, an aesthetic attention on the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*) comes to the foreground. I suggest that in *Flow of Qi* the participants adjusting their breath to match the original calligraphy masterpieces is similarly a psycho-physiological act for realising the poetic arising of *Qi*. I propose that the permeation of the participants' breath throughout the projection stands for an access towards not merely a mixture of physical, virtual and pictorial realms but also a becoming process of the cosmic whole. Breathing here becomes a performative utterance. That is, the viewer has a twofold effort to develop the effectiveness in the work (whether in the present or the past) and resonance with the cosmos. In other words, the participants *move as*, rather than *produce*, projected images through their breathing.

I suggest that the above-discussed breathing of the participants in *Flow of Qi*, which shows a spiritual aspect of the becoming process of the cosmos, here leads to a Qi-arising Space. In 4.4, extending my interpretation of the poetic arising of Qi, I have defined Qi-arising Space as a performative space that is constituted through an anthropocosmic scheme. That is, viewers may be activated by the work's spatial configuration to become sensitive and responsive to the relationship between themselves and the cosmos. *Flow of Qi* is a case in point. This is due to a fact that what the participants explore through their breathing is the calligraphy masters' grasping of the vibration or respiration of the cosmos at the moments of writing. The breathing movement seems to be turned into the circulation of the common Qi, which associates the participants as well as the calligraphy masters and their works.

In the analyses of *Wind Shadow* and *CHANCEFORMATION* (see 5.1 and 5.2), I argued that this kind of Qi-arising Space is achieved through two strategies that I proposed in 4.4. In the former case, the use of an almost empty space is emphasized when projection and waving flags with different tempos are employed to induce the audience's interpretation of these elements' performance rhythms. The latter case, where the viewer's vote on the order of scenes and interpretation of the improvisation performance leads to a sense of an original opening between the viewer and the work, shows the dynamic use of space. I propose, however, a third strategy – juxtaposing multi-layered spaces and times – that becomes particularly important in *Flow of Qi*. This is because through the UWB-sensing system, the effectiveness inherent in the calligraphy masterpieces is revived as the projections on the floor. Meanwhile, the ancient masters' breathing, which refers to a communication pathway with

the cosmos, is represented by the participants' breathing. As a result, it seems that dialogues between various spaces and times in a *Qi* world model are experienced when the participants constantly modify their breath.

If this interpretation of the participant-media relationship from a *Qi* worldview is accepted, it may be better to describe the participants' presence as somewhere already contained within the participants and technological media, rather than merely created in the performative encounter. This is because, due to the UWB-sensing system, the participants' breath becomes the source of the media and because at the same time the participants respectively enact projected images and the partner's breath inside their bodies. In 4.6, with reference to Xiao's (2007) studies in the presence of the self in a *Qi*-cultivated relationship network, I have proposed such a space-time structuring as *Qi*-transforming presence, one of the aesthetic actions that constitutes *Qi*-arising Space. I have explained that the viewer's presence can be seen as a process of constantly locating in a *Qi*-cultivated network where the viewer and technological media originally open up to and consist of each other.

I propose that in *Flow of Qi* the participants' adjusting of their breath to match the masters' writing rhythms creates such an action of *Qi*-transforming presence. As Wu Shu-ming (2010), the concept and creative director of *Flow of Qi*, noted in an interview with me, the participants' feedback shows that they are induced to perceive the transformation of themselves and of the projected images into certain beings that are cultivated by breathing. Some people think that, since measurements of breath in the artwork are made in a contactless fashion, breathing is no longer a personal but rather a communal act that is

fulfilled by the participants, the calligraphy masters and technological media. Furthermore, some other people feel that their bodies seem to move within a space where their selves and others (i.e., their partners, the masters and the media) already exist. In this sense, the movement of adjusting breath leads to certain perception of space and time with regard to the *Qi* worldview.

In my opinion, the poetic correspondence of the participants' breathing to the calligraphy masters' breathing via the UWB-sensing system accentuates a sense of cosmic historicity. This happens because the participants are induced to have dialogues with the past and, meanwhile, to represent ancient masters' breathing states, which were generated in their resonance with the cosmos. This is a characteristic of *Qi*-transforming presence, as I explained in 4.6. That is to say, the viewer's presence in a *Qi* world model highlights a mission to expand and deepen trans-individual selves' emotions of the cosmos. In *Flow of Qi*, the participants use their breath not only to perform and develop projected images but also to revive the effectiveness inherent in the calligraphic masterpieces. Through such an arrangement, the participants' breath is technologically mediated and in a sense framed as the calligraphy masters' space-time awareness of *Qi*. Thus, the requirement of constantly modifying breath in the course of the performance can be considered as a task to enact and extend the vibration or respiration of the cosmos.

The feature of cosmic historicity can be articulated, for instance, through the participants' replicas of Su Tung-po's (1036-1101) *The Cold Food Observation* (see Fig. 15). I briefly introduce the piece's creation background in order to help our further discussion. It was created after Su's exile to the state of

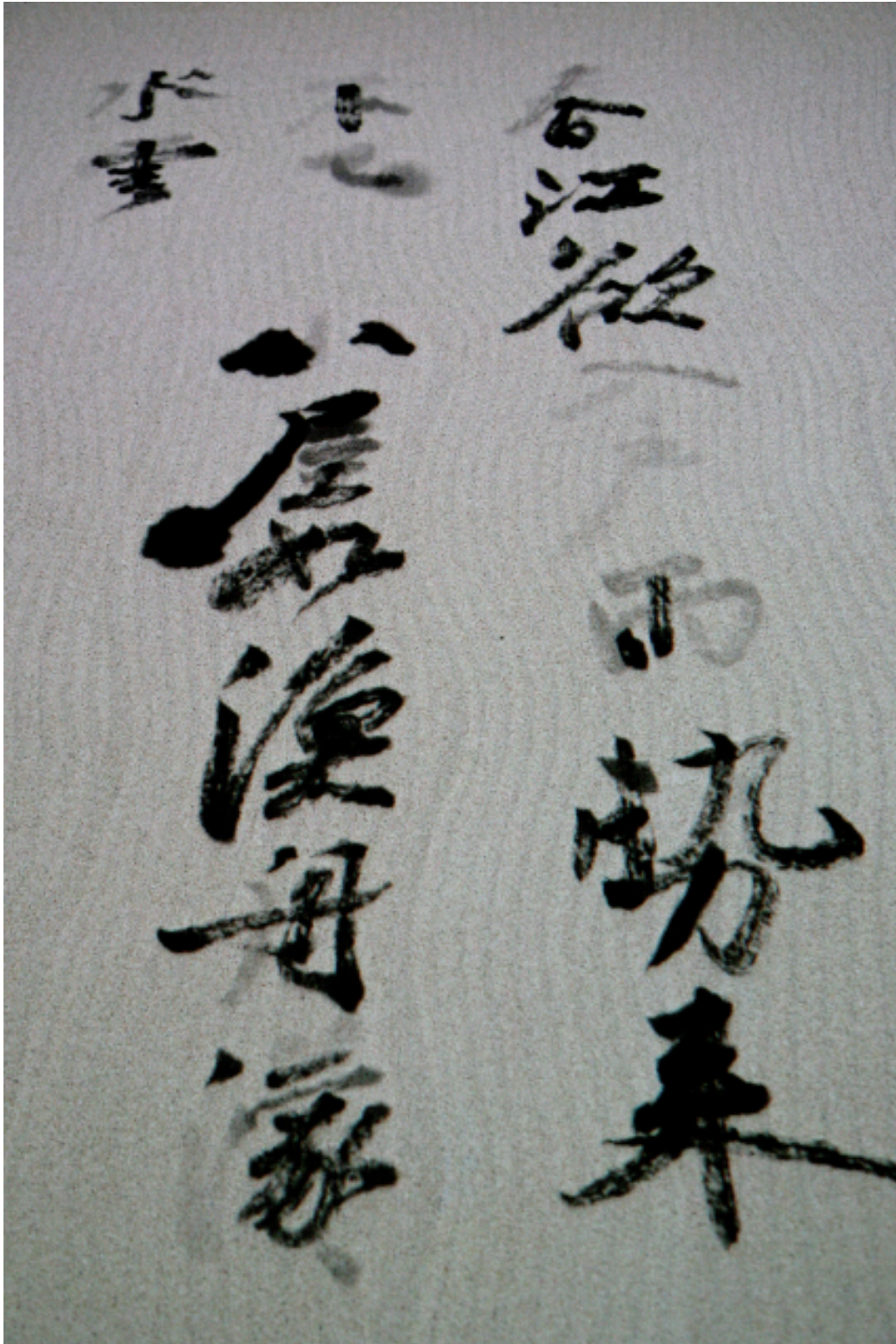


Fig. 15 *Flow of Qi*: the projected image of Su Tungpo's *The Cold Food Observation* overlap a pair of participants' simulation onto the sand floor. The ink of the brush strokes is affected by the two participants' breathing density and speed. Photo: Kipling Chao.

Huang. The transformation of Su's grief and indignation into the ambivalence

of sticky and drifting drawing lines has been criticized (see Wang, 2008: 31). *The Cold Food* shows the calligrapher's sense of dislocation in the cosmos. So, when the participants explore the subtle rhythms of Su's writing traces via breathing, they may experience Su's situation and, more importantly, come to "succeed" in his quest for a flowing communication with the cosmos. To put it another way, the interconnection between the participants' and Su's breaths seems to create an impression in which the present, where the participants exist, is juxtaposed with the past, where Su existed, within a shared body of the cosmos.

In short, my analysis of *Flow of Qi* has presented instances of the participants' presence, which results from the transmission of agency, and also their *Qi*-transforming presence with respect to the *Qi* worldview. Here, the participants appear on stage with projected images as co-performers and inter-actors by virtue of the UWB-sensing system that gives rise to the channelling of agency between the physical and the mediated. Due to this spatial configuration, the participants may become present when the images become present. Furthermore, the configuration accentuates a sense wherein the co-presence indicates a space where the participants and the images already exist and consist of each other. This is because both the participants' body and the images are perfused with certain ever-extending flow of breath. I have argued that the participants' presence emphasises a characteristic of cosmic historicity, as their breathing represents ancient calligraphers' quest for communication with the cosmos.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have used three case studies to explain the three aesthetic actions that constitute *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works that subtly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. My analysis employs the concept of performative space with respect to agency, which I have examined in Chapter 2 and also my hypothesis that combines phenomenology and *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy, as proposed in Chapter 4.

In the first section of this chapter, I have explored the first aesthetic action, *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, with the help of scene 8 in Cloud Gate Dance Company Taiwan's *Wind Shadow*. This *Qi*-transforming inter-activity is characterized by a relationship structure of a bipolar unity – that is, the interaction between the audience and the performance is like the dynamic equilibrium between rival yet interdependent polarities that originally open up to each other. I have examined that the configuration of scene 8 shows a form of the structure. By the work's use of projection as the only lighting source, the randomly moving dancers and flags held by them are constantly exposed in the light and then hidden under shadows. Meanwhile, projected images of fireworks in slow motion appear as fragments overlaid on the dancers' bodies and flags. The configuration creates a seemingly coherent rhythm of the performance. Due to this, the work emphasises more than merely the audience's authority of interpreting the rhythm, alongside the transmission of agency between the physical and the mediated. The configuration represents a phenomenon of becoming, where the audience is simultaneously conducted by and participates in the development of the rhythm. I have explained from

the *Qi* worldview that the ambivalent relation indicates a spiritual attention on the integration of a person's self into a becoming process of the cosmos. Therefore, the audience members' interaction with the performance in scene 8 can be seen as a process of grasping certain effectiveness in between themselves and the cosmic whole.

The second section (see 5.2) has used the scene *Flowers in CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, flowers, snow and moon* by Image in Motion Theatre Company as a second case study, one in which *Qi*-transforming embodiment is generated. I have shown that in this performance, through the inviting of the viewer to vote on the order of scenes and interpret the improvisation performance, constitutes the viewer's phenomenal body that extends from the viewer's live body to the stage and the backstage, concomitant with the distribution of agency in these realms. Departing from this discussion, I have suggested that it may be more accurate to describe the viewer's phenomenal body as a shared body of the cosmic whole. This is because the vote lets the viewer be involved in the performance before it starts. At the same time, viewers may become aware that their selves are one of various factors of a dynamic whole through finding out whether the performance matches their individual votes in the course of the performance. These performative acts indicate that the viewer's body is used to prove and realize the original opening of the physical and the mediated to each other rather than merely to measure the extent of the viewer's corporeality, which could be affected by technological media. I have identified this point as characteristic for *Qi*-transforming embodiment.

The final case study (see 5.3), *Flow of Qi* by The Industrial Technology Research Institute of Taiwan, has demonstrated the third aesthetic action that constitutes *Qi*-arising Space that I have explained as *Qi*-transforming presence, where the spatial-temporal structuring of the circulation of *Qi* becomes apparent. This examination concerns a couple of participants' breath that is instantly transformed into the projection of ancient calligraphic masterpieces on the floor through a UWB-sensing system. Furthermore, each of them modifies breathing in accordance with the appearing of the projection that reveals the breathing states of not only the partner but also the ancient calligraphy masters. The foregrounding of the incorporation between the participants, the masters and the projection results in the revival and development of effectiveness inherent in the original masterpieces. I have shown that this leads to a form of *Qi* world model where the participants' presence no longer only indicates a space that is created in their performative encounter with technological media alongside the transmission of agency between physical and mediated realms. It further highlights a space where the participants and the media already exist and consist of each other. By this, I mean that the participants' replicas of the brushstrokes through their adjustment of their breath initiates a process of continuing the respiration of the cosmos that the masters explored when they were writing. I have elucidated that this way of becoming present has a feature of cosmic historicity. Not only do the participants have a dialogue with the past, they also receive a sense of participating in the masters' resonance with the cosmos.

My analysis of the three case studies in this chapter has shown an anthropocosmic scheme that specifically exists in the works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre which implicitly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. This scheme concerns the viewer's interaction with the work that occurs in a space where self and others originally exist within each other rather than become interwoven through encounter. I have discussed that, due to this kind of interaction in the case studies, the viewer is conducted by and participates in the development of certain effectiveness or interactive rhythms of the work. It is through this twofold process that an experience of resonance with the cosmos is achieved. Therefore, my framework of *Qi*-arising Space can offer a significant tool to analyse Taiwanese works as well as investigate the accounts of performative space and agency in the context of new media and hypermedial theatre studies.

Furthermore, the analysis of the three case studies through my framework of *Qi*-arising Space has indicated how the concept of *Qi* complements the existing phenomenological methodology with respect to the notion of performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre as well as how phenomenology extends the application of the concept of *Qi* to the design of the *mise-en-scène* in the genre of theatre. As I have mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter 4 of this thesis, various studies and analyses of works with respect to *Qi* usually employ phenomenology to examine the effects of *Qi*-energy that are presented by the body of the actor/dancer. In contrast to this approach, my framework of *Qi*-arising Space is grounded in the *Qi* worldview in order to analyse the viewer's aesthetic experiences of *Qi* in the course of performances.

Two key points need to be raised here. One is that the framework accentuates the discursive power of *Qi*, which seems still to be limited in the existing phenomenological methodology. By this I mean that the framework of *Qi*-arising Space does not take the worldview that is implicated in phenomenology as the only criterion by which to judge the constitution of performative space in the work. Instead, the characteristics of a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* are added to the framework to generate a hybrid research methodology. The other key point relates to the leading role of the viewer in hypermedial theatre works. With this, the framework helps us to apprehend the embodiment of *Qi*-energy through analysing the spatial configuration of the work, which can trigger the interactions between the viewer and the work in the course of the performance.

For instance, in the analysis of the first case study, I have explained that, by using my framework of *Qi*-arising Space, the inter-activity between viewers and what occurs on stage implicates aesthetic meanings of *Qi*, which concern more the integration of the self and the cosmos than individual viewers' reactive capabilities that are incited by the work. Such a form of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity that is based on the *Qi* worldview does offer an alternative interpretation of the self-other relation in the phenomenological notions. Through the lens of phenomenology, the viewer and the hypermedial work can be seen as positioned on opposite sides of a continuum, as examined in 2.2.2. When one of the two sides approaches the other more closely, more potential for interactions between the two is created. In addition, in the case study, I have brought in the concept of *Qi* to unveil a cultural situation of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works that implicitly convey a

traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. From the view point of *Qi*, the inter-activity between the viewer and the work indicates a condition under which the viewer and the work perform as dynamic polarities of an ever-evolving unity that originally opens up to both. Yet, this finding would be impossible without the phenomenological studies of new media and theatre that provide knowledge essential to understanding the inter-activity between the viewer and the work. Thus, the analysis of the first case study shows the indispensable combination of the notions of *Qi* and phenomenology.

Similarly, the analysis of the second case study also implies the mutual complements between the concepts of *Qi* and phenomenology. As the analysis has shown, the perspective of phenomenology states a condition under which the interweaving of the viewer and the work occurs when the two interact with each other. In the course of the performance, viewers' bodily fields could be extended to a mediated realm due to artists' improvisational use of media. I have examined this kind of embodiment of the viewer's phenomenal body in hypermedial theatre in 2.2.3. The notion of embodiment in relation to the phenomenological studies of new media and theatre captures the coupling of the viewer's movements and perceptions in a certain mixed space of the physical and the mediated. Meanwhile, in the course of analysing the case study, I have employed my framework of *Qi*-arising Space to prove some other possible definition of the embodiment of the viewer's phenomenal body, which exists in a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi* as well as in this case study. That is, the viewers' bodies can be seen as originally included in the work and vice versa, rather than merely becoming extended in the process of interaction. In this sense, such a *Qi*-transforming embodiment adds a

transcultural understanding to our knowledge of the embodiment of the viewer's phenomenal body while the work presents a *Qi* world model.

Moreover, I suggest that, in the analysis of the third case study, the characteristic of *Qi*-transforming presence, namely, cosmic historicity, offers a complement to the discourses of the time-space relation in the concept of presence in the phenomenological studies of new media and theatre. As I have discussed in 2.2.4, based on the perspective of phenomenology, the viewer's becoming presence implies a kind of constantly relocating process that is generated when the performative encounters between the viewer and the work occur. Here, the flow of agency between the viewer and the work indicates certain constantly interweaving traces of multiple spaces and times. Such traces also can be found in the flow of *Qi*-energy that exists in the *Qi* world model. However, through my framework of *Qi*-arising Space, the analysis of the third case study foregrounds a slightly dissimilar phenomenon of the viewer's presence that exists in the *Qi* world model. From the perspective of *Qi*, the viewer's presence is indivisible from the respiration of the cosmos, which is implicitly presented in the work. The spatial-temporal structuring of *Qi*-energy can be seen as not merely connecting with the moments in which the viewer has performative encounters with the work. Rather, the structuring highlights the original consist of the viewer and the work. As a result, in the course of the performance, an aesthetic action, *Qi*-transforming presence, is made possible by virtue of the adjustment of viewers' breath that is affected not only by projected images in front of them but also by calligraphy masters' resonance with the cosmos in the past.

Therefore, both *Qi* and phenomenology are requisite for the analysis of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works that implicitly convey a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. On the one hand, the phenomenological notions help to indicate that, in the process of the interactions between the viewer and the hypermedial work, the transmission of *Qi* can be parallel to that of agency. Furthermore, the transmission of *Qi* can be described as a series of the viewer's performative acts, and the space which is created by these acts can be seen as a performative space. On the other hand, the concept of *Qi* contributes to extending our understanding of the viewers' movements and perceptions as well as of their sharing energy and space with the work in the phenomenological studies of new media and theatre. These two perspectives link up Western and Eastern, ancient and contemporary aesthetics.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre

In this thesis I have examined the construction of *Qi*-arising Space in a selection of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works. The matter at hand concerns the framing of the embodiment process of *Qi* as a process of constituting performative spaces with respect to the transmission of agency. Here, hypermedial theatre is regarded as a theatre form in which the spectator is aware of the reciprocal interaction between computer-based audiovisual technologies and the other media on stage. This highlights a kind of *mise-en-scène*, namely, a spatial configuration of the performance that includes the performative relationship between the spectator and the staged elements.

From the *Qi* worldview in Mencius's line, this research has aimed to identify how the interconnections between the spectator and the work in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre affect the constitution of performative spaces. By reviewing phenomenological accounts of performative space and agency in media and theatre studies, I have observed that the transmission of agency between the spectator and the work, which is intensified through hypermedial *mise-en-scène*, can lead to a liminal space where the physical merges with the mediated. This takes place because the transmission of agency is related to the dynamics of the mediated environment that can offer the potential for interaction between the spectator and the work. Furthermore, I have observed a spiritual aspect of the liminal space through a comparison between the

experiences of agency and the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*). The poetic arising of *Qi* refers to a certain performative effectiveness inherent in the work that may induce the spectators to maintain the circulation of *Qi* between themselves and the cosmos. Thus, the spectator's active participation in the development of this effectiveness can thus be seen as performing the poetic arising of *Qi*.

On the basis of this observation, I have proposed that interpretations of the constitution of performative spaces must be reconsidered. By this, I mean that this constitution is related not merely to the spectator's performance of agency (namely, the spectator's dynamic responses that are induced by the work) but also to the spectator's effort to reach and maintain a certain resonance with the cosmos.

I have suggested that a dyadic relationship between the spectator and the work with regard to the *Qi* world model is a crucial prerequisite to the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. The interaction between the spectator and the work can be likened to the interplay of rival yet interdependent polarities that originally open up to and consist of each other. Through the spectator's active participation in the development of a certain effectiveness inherent in the work, the spectator and the work do more than incorporate each other. They can also be seen as the common beings cultivated by *Qi*, namely, *Qi*-kind beings, because the spectators' active participation indicates their performing of the poetic arising of *Qi*. This idea is drawn from my observations of studies in the aesthetic phenomenon and spatial implications of the poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*), as evidenced in classical

Chinese literary and art works. Here, the space wherein the spectator and the work coexist is thought of as somewhere within the originally shared bodies of the spectator and the work alongside communication pathways with the cosmos.

This hypothesis of *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre has necessitated an alternative definition of performative spaces that takes into account the *Qi* worldview. Building on these observations, I have developed a definition of *Qi*-arising Space that addresses an anthropocosmic scheme for constituting performative spaces. In this, spectators' participation in the development of the effectiveness inherent in the work can be seen as their effort to achieve resonance with the cosmos. This means that performative spaces can be interpreted as a process of the way that the arising and circulation of *Qi* could be embodied through the spectator's performative interaction with the hypermedial performance. This process indicates a possible way of discussing the coupling of the spectator's acts and perceptions and the mediated environment from the perspective of *Qi*. For this reason I have suggested that *Qi*-arising Space is characterised by the way that the movement mode of the *Qi*-energy pays more attention to the occurring and becoming itself than to the quality and quantity of a person's possessed energy. The latter is indicative in the notion of agency, while the former may lead to the interactive relationship and correspondence between a person and the cosmos.

As a result, I have suggested that *Qi*-arising Space is comprised of three aesthetic actions of *Qi* that are related to each other. These include

Qi-transforming inter-activity, *Qi*-transforming embodiment and *Qi*-transforming presence. I have used this discussion to rethink how the channelling of agency, or *Qi*, may affect the interaction between the spectator and the work. Further, I have reconsidered how, in the course of interaction, the channelling may intensify the spectator's embodiment and presence in between the physical and virtual realms.

I assume the first aesthetic action of *Qi* – *Qi*-transforming inter-activity. This is a process of grasping traces of the circulation of *Qi* that interrogates whether the interaction between the spectator and the Taiwanese hypermedial theatre work can be interpreted as the dynamic equilibrium that exists between *Qi*-kind beings in a *Qi* world model. This reflects the *Qi* movements of *kan* (stirrings) and *tong* (responses), which occur in the course of the encounter between the perceiver and the perceived. This is something that various Confucius classics and literary works have indicated. In the course of this thesis, the *Qi* movements of *kan* and *tong* translate into the spectator's dynamic responses to the hypermedial work. Spectators are situated in a network of performative relationship between themselves and the work. This situation highlights not only mutuality but also a communal effort to reach the circulation of *Qi* between spectators and the cosmos.

I have suggested that *Qi*-transforming inter-activity is similar to the kind of inter-activity that takes place the transmission of agency in the context of media and theatre studies. This occurs because these two both characterize an in-between structure by which the spectator and the work incorporate and engage in co-performance with each other. However, from the *Qi* worldview,

the spectator and the work, as I have indicated previously, function as *Qi*-kind beings. Hence, I have proposed that *Qi*-transforming inter-activity should be characterized as a structure with a bipolar unity. That is to say, the reciprocal interaction between the spectator and the work does not merely result from the dynamic encounter between the two sides, but it also comes about from a condition under which the two originally consist of each other to form a unity. It is with this relationship structure that the spectator may experience and enact resonance with the cosmos.

I chose *Wind Shadow* as a case study of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity. By virtue of multiple media, the choreographed work presents and explores the relationship between the tangible and the intangible in traditional Chinese aesthetics. In scene 8 of this work, each of eight dancers randomly waves a huge white flag, while videos of fireworks are projected in slow motion onto a backdrop. As the lighting source in this scene comes only from projectors that show the videos, the waving flags and dancers' bodies become visible only when they pass through the projection area. At the same time, the projected images are augmented and fragmented, appearing randomly on each flag. The space occupied by these images expands in accordance with the waving and shifting of the flags, from the two-dimensional backdrop to an in-between space that is generated in the encounter between the physical and the mediated. The interaction between the dancers and the images accentuates a possibility for the audience to interpret the performance in various ways. The audience is capable of pondering and organising what is shown on stage, so we can say that the audience members are moving in the in-between space wherein they share part of the staged elements' agency. Employing the

framework of *Qi*-arising Space, I have suggested that this spatial configuration implies an anthropocosmic scheme. This is so because the interplay of the light and shadows in the performance creates a sense that concerns the dynamic equilibrium between rival yet interdependent polarities with respect to a cosmic whole. This configuration induces the audience members' awareness of their involvement not only in the development of an interactive rhythm that exists among the staged elements but also in a becoming process of the cosmos. I have elucidated that through this configuration the relationship between the audience and the staged elements can be characterised as a structure of a bipolar unity. Here the audience and the staged elements function as *Qi*-kind beings that originally open up to and consist of each other. For this reason, in scene 8 the interaction between the audience and the staged elements can be seen as a form of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity.

The second aesthetic action of *Qi*-arising Space discussed in this thesis is *Qi*-transforming embodiment. I have proposed that *Qi*-transforming embodiment concerns the notion of *chung-yung* (centrality and commonality). In Chinese philosophy this refers to a process through which the body and various other constituents of the cosmos take form through the convergence and dispersion of *Qi*. In the course of this thesis, I translate this forming process into the spectator's embodiment in a mixed space of the physical and the mediated in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. On this basis I have defined *Qi*-transforming embodiment as a process of incarnating the circulation of *Qi*. This explores whether the spectator's phenomenal body that emerges in the course of the performance can be interpreted as a body dynamically

constituted according to the interplay of rival yet interdependent polarities in the *Qi* world model.

I have explained that, similar to the concept of the embodiment in the phenomenological context of media and theatre studies, *Qi*-transforming embodiment is fundamentally affected by the potential for the incorporation of the spectator and the work. Due to this, the spectator's body is extended to the media shown on stage. Yet, a comparison of the two perspectives' use of the spectator's body makes apparent a certain dissimilarity. In the *Qi* world model the spectator and the work function as *Qi*-kind beings that originally consist of each other alongside the circulation of *Qi*. I have proposed that in this sense *Qi*-transforming embodiment can be characterised as using the spectator's body as a means to disclose the original opening up of the physical and the mediated to each other. This is more than only an examination of the limitation of the spectator's reactions to the media. Thus, *Qi*-transforming embodiment offers a discussion about the *Qi*-imbued body and its cultural symbolism, which relates to a quest for the unity of the cosmos with humanity in the hybrid cultural situation in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

The case study of *Qi*-transforming embodiment is *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, flower, snow and moon*, which is a work of dance improvisation. Before the performance starts, the audience votes on the order of the work's scenes. In the course of the performance, dancers onstage and artists backstage communicate with each other through their instant responses to and manipulation of technological media that appear on stage. Through this vote and improvisation process the audience actually affects the development

course of the performance. Hence, the audience shares the dancers' and backstage artists' agency. Concomitant with the transmission of agency, the audience's live bodies can be seen as extended to the stage and backstage. Here, the extension indicates the emergence of the audience members' phenomenal bodies. Applying the framework of *Qi*-arising Space, I have suggested that to certain extent the spatial configuration of the performance shows an instance of anthropocosmic scheme, because this configuration reflects the work's theme – that is, a becoming process of nature and life. By this, I mean a fact where through voting, the audience physically involves itself in the performance from its very beginning, and each audience member's interpretation of the improvisation process becomes a prerequisite to the development of the performance. The configuration brings forth an impression of the *Qi* world model in which the audience and the work originally consist of each other. This indicates a form of *Qi*-transforming embodiment which foregrounds the spiritual aspects of the audience's phenomenal body in this performance. What is embodied through the audience's voting and interpretation can be seen as a shared body of the cosmic whole, because this focuses more attention on a communal act that needs to be enacted by the audience as well as by the backstage artists, dancers and media.

The third aesthetic action of *Qi*-arising Space discussed in this thesis is *Qi*-transforming presence. I have defined *Qi*-transforming presence as a process by which the spectator represents the spatial-temporal structure of the flow of *Qi*. This process explores whether the spectator's presence in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre could be interpreted as a form of the existence of *Qi*-kind beings in the *Qi* world model. *Qi*-transforming presence is mainly

derived from the sense of presence in the Chinese lyric tradition – that is, by grasping the rhythms of the circulation of *Qi* between multi-layered spaces and times, individuals are able to locate themselves in a relationship network of the cosmic whole. In the course of this thesis, I translate this dynamic locating to the spectators' becoming present in hypermedial performance.

The discussion of *Qi*-transforming presence can contribute extra features to the concept of the spectator's presence in the phenomenological context of media and theatre studies. The two kinds of presence are similar, as both of them both indicate a liminal field which is created by the performative encounters between the spectator and the work and activate an expectation for the coming when the present engages with the going. However, in the level-of-existence mode, the two kinds are not entirely compatible with each other. *Qi*-transforming presence refers to a place where the spectators already exist rather than somewhere that waits for their return. This is because in the *Qi* world model the spectator and the work function as *Qi*-kind beings that originally coexist with and consist of each other. For this reason, I have characterised *Qi*-transforming presence as cosmic historicity, which indicates the accumulation of trans-individual selves' emotions tied to the respiration of the cosmos. Thus, the spectator's presence in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre can be seen as a process of revealing the spectator's space-time awareness and perceptions of *Qi*.

I have suggested that such a case of *Qi*-transforming presence exists in *Flow of Qi*. This new media art installation features a pair of participants who interact with ultra wideband (UWB) detectors by breathing in order to interrogate the

correlation between four calligraphic masterpieces and their ancient creators' breathing states in the course of creation. Data from the participants' breath are instantly transformed into replicas of the masterpieces, projected onto the floor in front of the participants. Specifically, one of the participants uses breath speed to control the writing tempo while the other uses breath depth to control the density of the ink. This configuration, where the participants appear on stage with projected images as co-performers and inter-actors, leads to the channelling of agency in between the physical and the mediated. What shows on the projection area is the intersection of the breath of the participants and that of the ancient calligraphy masters' with the mediated set so that the participants become present when the images become present. Based on the framework of *Qi*-arising Space, the co-presence spatially implicates some place where the participants and the images already coexist and consist of each other. This occurs because both the participants' bodies and the images are perfused with one common, uninterrupted flow of breath. This configuration provides a clear demonstration of why we can identify this process of becoming co-present as a form of *Qi*-transforming presence. Furthermore, I have argued that, since brushstrokes of calligraphic masterpieces are regarded as transformed from traces of the circulation of *Qi* between masters and the cosmos, the participants' breath does more than merely link the present to the past, that is, the masters' writing moments. The participants' breath also gives rise to a sense of cosmic historicity; that is, their breathing represents the masters' quest for a communication with the cosmos.

Through explorations of *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, *Qi*-transforming embodiment and *Qi*-transforming presence, I have established a philosophical

framework, *Qi*-arising Space, that may be instrumental in understanding the constitution of performative spaces in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. By analysing selected works, including choreographed work (*Wind Shadow*), dance improvisation (*CHANCEFORMATION*) and a new media installation (*Flow of Qi*), I have shown that my framework can be applied to analyses of different forms of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works. Furthermore, I have demonstrated that the framework of *Qi*-arising Space is not confined to works that explicitly aim to display a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. For instance, *Flow of Qi* develops from the concept of *Qi*, and *Wind Shadow* applies a traditional Chinese aesthetic concept relating to the interplay of the tangible and the intangible, whereas *CHANCEFORMATION* adopts the transformative power of the natural world. I have explained that in these works the ways of transmitting energy that result from the spatial configuration of the performances foster a sense of the *Qi* world model.

My case studies clearly show that the framework of *Qi*-arising Space laid out does not focus on proving whether *Qi* operates as material energy that exists in the interaction between the spectator and the work in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. Rather, I have placed attention on the spiritual aspect of *Qi*, i.e., the dyadic relationship between the spectator and the cosmos that may be established in the embodiment process of *Qi*. Taking into account the movement mode and aesthetic concern of *Qi*, I have shown that *Qi*-arising Space as a performative space is marked not merely by the influence of the spectators' performative acts on the development of the work but also by the spectators' mission of maintaining the poetic arising of *Qi* among themselves, the work and the cosmos. This mission indicates that the relationship between

the spectator and the work appears as a bipolar unity structure through which the spectator associates with the cosmos. At the same time, the spectator's phenomenal body emerges as a synthesis of the physical and the mediated while sharing the body with the cosmic whole. Moreover, the spectator's presence shows a juxtaposition of the going and the coming that is related to the accumulation of trans-individual selves' emotions tied to the respiration of the cosmos. This mission (i.e., maintaining the poetic arising of *Qi*) results from a network of dyadic relationship that is generated through an anthropocosmic scheme to configure the spectator-work relation in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre and marks the core of this *Qi*-arising Space. The philosophical framework defined in this thesis provides an approach, based in the *Qi* worldview, to understanding the correlation between the constitution of performative space and the poetic arising of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

Last but not least, in this thesis, the comparison of Western and Eastern philosophies in relation to the notion of performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre indicates that the *Qi* worldview, which is affected by a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*, offers complements to the worldview that is held by phenomenology. These complements enrich the discussions of hybrid cultures in the existing phenomenological studies of new media and theatre. By virtue of the phenomenological notions, which are regarded as highly similar to the concept of *Qi* (see Introduction), this thesis investigates in depth a unique world model that exists in a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. The phenomenological strategy brings about a possible way to analyse and perceive the flow of *Qi*-energy. It also leads me to grasp the viewer's

movements and perceptions, which are activated by the spatial configuration of the work, in the *Qi* world model. Meanwhile, it is through these investigations and findings that the value of the concepts of *Qi* in the phenomenological studies is brought to the foreground. My framework of *Qi*-arising Space demonstrates a fresh way that stands on the *Qi* worldview to analyse the viewer's performance and performative space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works.

6.2 Further development of this research

This thesis has focused on exploring the embodiment process of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre and pursued the question of how to link and transform the idea of *Qi* into a workable concept that philosophically frames and theorises performative spaces that are created by the transmission of energy between the spectator and the work. My contribution to this convergence of traditional Chinese and modern Western ways of seeing the world is the definition of *Qi*-arising Space. With *Qi*-arising Space, I have developed a framework within which the structure of the performative relationship between the spectator and the work in hypermedial theatre reflects a structure of the *Qi* world model. In this model the spectator and the work originally open up to and consist of each other. I have established an understanding that the poetic arising of *Qi* in hypermedial theatre can be realised as the spectator's performative interaction with the work in accordance to the *Qi* world model. By examining various ways of embodying *Qi* within the context of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre, I have framed the characteristics of the spectator's performative interaction. I have also shown how to apply those characteristics to selected case studies. Through my

emphasis on an in-between state in which the spectator and the work are communally comprised of a shared body of the cosmos, I have provided a perspective that shifts attention away from the phenomenological view of the spectator-work relationship and performative spaces and towards an anthropocosmic view of such relationships and such spaces.

The framework of *Qi*-arising Space that I have developed in this thesis raises further questions about the interpretation of *Qi* in Mencius's line. This framework mainly adopts *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy to examine a Chinese world model and elucidate its application in analysis of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. By examining various works of Chinese philosophy, I have suggested that *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy clearly denotes the vigorous feature of *Qi* in Chapter 3 (see p. 137 *et seqq.*). It would be interesting to examine how the framework of *Qi*-arising Space could be interpreted based on the notions of other Chinese philosophical schools such as Taoism, the School of Naturalists (*Yin-yang-chia*) and medical studies. I refer here to each school's fundamental interpretation of *Qi*, which has helped to distinguish its methods of practice, its understanding of the interplay of *yin* and *yang Qi* and its ideas about how the self-cultivation of *Qi* functions in people's relationship with their surroundings. Further exploration is needed into how definitions of *Qi*-arising Space differ in light of these schools' varying interpretations of *Qi*. This entails the additional question of whether the three aesthetic actions of *Qi*, which consist of *Qi*-arising Space, could have multiple definitions.

In addition, in the course of reviewing the literature, I have become aware that various theses on theatrical studies and classical Chinese aesthetics have

adopted the Taoist philosophy of *Qi*. The reason, as I have explained in the third chapter (see pp. 147-149), is political: academia in Taiwan has tended to degrade studies of Confucian philosophy of *Qi* in order to resist the materialist interpretation of this philosophy that has prevailed in academia in Communist China. As a result, in the past three decades, only a few scholars in Taiwan (e.g. Tu, 1985; Yang, 1993, 2005) have sought the context of *Qi* in ancient Confucian literature with the aim of developing a non-materialistic view of the Confucian philosophy of *Qi*. I suggest that my framework of *Qi*-arising Space, which is in line with Mencius's thoughts, could complement the application of Confucian philosophy of *Qi* to studies of Chinese aesthetics. Furthermore, in terms of media and theatre studies, my concepts also can be used as a starting point for explorations of the ways in which the embodiment of *Qi*, in the wake of the development of technological media, can be realised through the spectator's participation in the development of the effectiveness inherent in the hypermedial work.

In this thesis, I have explored the impact of Mencius's interpretation of *Qi* on the philosophical comprehension of works of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre which implicitly show a traditional Chinese aesthetic of *Qi*. My attention is on the interactive and performative relationships between the spectator and the work in two different world models that respectively lie in phenomenology and the idea of *Qi*. The discussion of theories of ecological aesthetics and information arts is an area beyond the scope of this thesis. Yet, during the course of my research, I became aware of Tim Ingold's *The Perception of the Environment: Essays in livelihood, dwelling and skill* (2000), Baz Kershaw's *Theatre Ecology: Environments and performance events* (2007) and Nicolas

Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* (2002). My attention was also drawn to Popat's *Invisible Connections: Dance, technology and internet communities* (2006) and Susan Kozel's *Closer: Performance, technologies, phenomenology* (2007). Reading these books stimulated my development of the framework of Qi-arising Space. For instance, drawing inspiration from Kershaw's (2007) proposition that applies the concept of free radicals to examine performance energy in theatre, I compared the different interpretations of the movement of energy from the perspectives of modern physics and Qi. This illustrates the potential for further comparative discussion in the context of cultural studies that could broaden my research.

In the course of conducting the research for this study, I wondered whether I should further investigate the specific goal of resonance with the cosmos in Chinese philosophy and aesthetics – that is, the embodiment of a person's moral values and self-transformation via contemplating literary or other works of art. This inseparable interlinkage between aesthetics and the ancient sages' moral teachings indicates that contemplating literary or other works of art offers a performative way for people to acquire the ability to *actually alter the reality* wherein they already exist and reach resonance with the cosmos. After reviewing various studies into the construction of space in the fields of Western philosophy and aesthetics (e.g., Henri Lefebvre, 1991; David Krasner and David Z. Saltz, 2006), I found that an examination of the concepts of real and reality in Western culture might raise wider issues of religion and identity. This would direct the focus of my thesis toward the level of ethical aesthetics rather than developing a framework for analysing Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works. I think that, through using the framework of Qi-arising Space in this

thesis as a launching pad, the examination of the concepts of real and reality in the two cultural systems would be an exciting development of my research. I have noticed that Rolf Elberfeld's notion of transformative *Phänomenologie* (2007) could be a workable approach to carry out such research.

One of the main assumptions of this thesis concerns the way in which the spectator experiences the poetic arising of *Qi* in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. The performer's perceptions are not within the scope of this thesis. However, in my interviews with performers for the case studies in this thesis, I noticed that, as a spectator, my observations of the energy transmitted between the audience and the work were not entirely in line with various performers' sense of the same on stage. For instance, Ku Ming-shen, who performed in *CHANCEFORMATION of Life: Wind, Flowers, Snow and Moon* (2008), told me that she did feel that the energy transmitted between herself and projected images generated increasing tension (see Ku, 2010). This was in keeping with my observation of this performance, on which I elaborated in this thesis. Yet, Ku also felt that the transmission of the energy was extended from her practices of improvisational techniques with a male dancer and other artists who participated in the work (see *ibid.*). Such awareness by the performer offers a perspective complementary to my concepts. For this reason, I suggest that further research be carried out on the performer's perceptions of *Qi*-arising Space.

In addition to investigating the performer's perceptions of *Qi*-arising Space, it would be worthwhile to explore the operator's perceptions of the same. As I noted, my analysis of *CHANCEFORMATION* has shown that artists who

manipulate media technologies during the course of performances function as co-performers. Moreover, in my examination of *Flow of Qi*, participants in this piece appear to be operators who use their breath to control changes in images projected on the floor. In these analyses, I have concentrated on the spectator's aesthetic actions of *Qi*-transforming embodiment and presence, which serve as the spectators' performative acts to form their own individual bodily space and become present in a *Qi* world model. Hence, I have not focused on the question of how the operators' role in these case studies could affect the development of the performances. Popat's (2006) and Popat and Palmer's (2008) research on the interactions among the dancer, the participant/operator and media has highlighted how the participant/operator creates and performs dance works by communicating with the dancer via media. Therefore, I suggest that my philosophical framework of *Qi*-arising Space be further developed in explorations of performances where the operator's perceptions of *Qi*-arising Space come to the foreground. It would be interesting to examine how the operator performs not only *Qi*-transforming embodiment and presence but also the other aesthetic action, *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, in the course of performances.

Since my research focused on Taiwanese hypermedial theatre, a natural extension of this focus would be the application of the framework of *Qi*-arising Space to other genres of performance in which performative spaces are generated through the performer's use of props and stages. I refer here to the anthropocosmic perspective in Confucianism, according to which people's stirrings by and responses to the exchange of information between themselves and others through the transmission of *Qi* are part of a process of reaching

dynamic equilibrium in their spatial relationships with others. This notion, with its relational context of movements and emotions, may be applicable to works in which the performer engages with props and stages through psychophysical acts (e.g., Zarrilli, 2009). Moreover, I suggest that the framework of *Qi*-arising Space outlined in this thesis could be examined with respect to non-Taiwanese works of hypermedial theatre. Such studies could interrogate whether this framework operates in other cultural contexts.

This thesis is an initial research that combines the concepts of *Qi* and phenomenology to investigate Taiwanese hypermedial theatre, so I have put focus on examining the existing phenomenological studies of new media and theatre and the interpretations of *Qi* in Mencius's line. There are various heavy theories and philosophies that need to be explicated in this research. Hence, I have used the extremely long length of the thesis to compare the two world models, respectively in relation to *Qi* and phenomenology, and how the viewer performs in these world models. Through the examination and comparison, I have suggested a framework of *Qi*-arising Space, a hybrid methodology that takes a phenomenological strategy to rethink the representation of the *Qi* world model in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. Then, by analysing the case studies selected for this research, I have shown that the two worldviews mutually complement and extend each other. Due to limitations on the total length of this thesis, there is not enough space for exploring more deeply these complements and extensions. In future research, the comparison in this study will provide a basis to further probe into similarities and dissimilarities between *Qi* and phenomenology. Moreover, with new findings of the similarities and dissimilarities, more possibilities of ways to amend the framework and to apply

the amended one to the analysis of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works can be brought to bear. This would permit more precise descriptions of how *Qi* and phenomenology complement and extend each other.

In conclusion, I have established that the goal of this thesis is to build a philosophical framework for the embodiment process of *Qi* and its spatial implications with reference to the *Qi* worldview of and within the context of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. My thesis bridges the gap between Chinese philosophy and the philosophical comprehension of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre by examining the concepts of *Qi* in Mencius's line and Western theories and studies of agency and performative space. I have used knowledge from these areas to frame a unique philosophical framework of *Qi*-arising Space. As far as I know, this investigation into the embodiment process of *Qi* and its spatial implications in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre is in most instances unique within the field of theatre and media studies. In the course of conducting the research behind this thesis, I encountered only a very limited number of essays and theses to which I could refer to develop my framework of *Qi*-arising Space. Having ventured into relatively unknown territory, I have endeavoured to find out similarities and differences between *Qi* and agency and transform the findings into a philosophical framework that is applicable to the types of Taiwanese hypermedial theatre described in this thesis. When *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy is further accepted by and evolves within academia in Taiwan, I believe that more research on Taiwanese hypermedial theatre will adapt the philosophy and provide sources for the further pursuit of my framework. With reference to new sources, new questions regarding the spatial implications of *Qi* and the *Qi*-affected implications of

space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre will arise. Furthermore, the use of technological media in performances will contribute to the development of new ways of staging the spectator and the work and will cause a rethinking of the spatial relationships between the two sides, as discussed in this thesis. I hope that my thesis provides the foundation for further research that has the same direction as my investigation and stimulates a broader revival of *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

Glossary

Anthropocosmic perspective [以天為中心的觀點]: a term developed by Tu Wei-ming (1985) that refers to the worldview outlined by the Confucian vision of humanity. This term indicates that humans are regarded as an integral part of the open-ended flow of *Qi*, bringing their existence into concert with that of various other beings/things.

Anthropocosmic scheme [以天為中心的方法]: a scheme that I propose in this thesis with reference to the anthropocosmic perspective. The anthropocosmic scheme indicates a way that the viewer-work relationship in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre operates under the logic of the *Qi* worldview. With this scheme, the viewer's psycho-physiological participation in the development of the effectiveness inherent in the work can be interpreted as a process of circulating *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos.

body [*shen*, 身]: in this thesis, the human body from the *Qi* worldview refers to the cosmologically ideal body that is formed by a process wherein a person's corporeality and heart-mind and various other beings/things embrace each other from within through their intermediary, namely *Qi*. In keeping with this, I regard the viewer's body in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre as not merely extended to the work but also used as a means to show the original merging of the actual and the mediated in performance.

Bipolar unity [*erh-chi yi-ti*, 二極一體]: a term indicates that humans and various other beings/things do not dissolve into oneness, but rather maintain

their own *Qi*-cultivated modalities of existence while becoming integral to a unity. The term developed from my understanding of the concept of *Qi*. With reference to Françoise Jullien, Chinese literati, especially after the Song Dynasty, usually conceived of the world as operating in a framework of ‘polarity’ – that is, ‘everything comes into the world based on the [inter]play of opposed but correlated energies, *yin* and *yang* [*Qi*]’ (Jullien, 2000, translated by Hawkes: 152, my italicisation and addition). In other words, *yin* and *yang Qi* operate as rival yet interdependent polarities that interconnect with each other as a dynamic unity. The constant interplay between polarities, namely, *yin* and *yang Qi*, can be conceived of as a process of regulating dynamic equilibrium while maintaining diversity within unity. In case of hypermedial theatre, I use this term to mean in a *Qi* world model that the viewer and the work interact as each other’s indispensable constituent and support each other’s embodiment and presence. Please also refer to my explanation of the term *rival yet interdependent polarities* in this Glossary (p. 322).

Concern-consciousness [*yo-huang yi-shih*, 憂患意識]: a term developed by Mou Tsung-san (1994) that refers to cultivating interactive concerns for humans and numerous other beings/things in the cosmos in order to constitute a harmonious living field. This cultivation is related to the dynamic equilibrium of *yin* and *yang Qi* between the self and others and thus regards the self and others as rival yet interdependent polarities that originally consist of each other. Furthermore, the cultivation helps a person to find a proper position in and pathways toward the cosmos via the circulation of *Qi*.

Confucius’s Poetry teaching [*shih-chiao*, 詩教]: a key factor in Confucian

philosophy and also in the Chinese way of thinking. I adopt Chiang Nien-feng's (1990) translation of the term in this thesis. The term is derived from the *Analects*, where Confucius said, 'the *Book of Songs* can lead to the poetic arising' ('*shih-ke-yi-hsing*'), which indicates that reading poems enables the 'opening of people's spiritual life' (Chiang, 1990: 305, my translation). That is to say that, when readers are awakened or activated by their encounter with poetic works, their reading is transformed into an improvisatory contact with what they perceive. The influence of the aesthetic action with respect to the creation, interpretation and appreciation of poems is like 'wind-blowing' that prevails over various layers of the contact.

Floodlike Qi [*hao-jan-tzu-qi*, 浩然之氣]: a term created by Mencius (372–289 BC) that refers to the connection between a person's psycho-physiological energy and rhythms of the cosmos. This term suggests not only the perceptual, vital and moral qualities of *Qi* but also, more importantly, a process of associating the human body and heart-mind with the external world and putting these three in a *Qi*-transforming state. I use Tu Wei-ming's (1985) terminology 'floodlike' in this thesis.

Humanity/benevolence [*jen*, 仁]: the principle teaching of Confucian thinking. It is defined as a viewpoint that emphasises an individual's self-reflection, which can be achieved through associating the human body and heart-mind with the external world and maintaining the circulation of *Qi* among these elements. Meanwhile, the viewpoint highlights a person's reciprocal interactions with other humans and various other beings/things. In

this sense, the practice of humanity/benevolence requires individuals to undertake their own concern-consciousness at the same time.

Heart-mind [*hsin*, 心]: a Confucian term cited from Tu Wei-ming's (1985) terminology that refers not only to cognitive but also to affective dimensions of human awareness.

***Ji-wu-chi-hsing* [即物起興]:** a method for art creation in relation to Confucius's Poetry teachings. The term in Chinese literally means arising out of a mood for creating (poems) through contacting the perceived object. What could be used in *hsing*, that is, in improvisation, depends on everyone's perceptions of what is encountered that might have direct or indirect relations with the creation themes.

Psycho-physiological [*shen-hsin te*, 身心的]: this term refers to the twofold function of *Qi* in the line of Mencius's thought that links and transforms the human heart-mind and the human body as a whole. I adopt Tu Wei-ming's (1985) terminology "psychophysiological" in his research on *Qi*. I have added a hyphen in order to indicate, at once, the unity and the functioning of the two as inter-subjectivities.

***Qi* [*qi*, 氣]:** see *Qi*-based Confucian philosophy.

***Qi*-based Confucian philosophy [*ju-chia qi-lun tse-hsüeh*, 儒家氣論哲學]:** a term created for this thesis that refers to the metaphysical interpretation of the Chinese worldview of *Qi* in the context of *Qi*-centralised Confucian thought.

The scholars that I define as this group and adapt in this thesis include mainly Mencius (372–289 BC), Chang Tsai (1020–1077), Wang Fu-chih (1619–1692), Tu We-ming (1985) and Yang Rurbin (1996). In this philosophy, *Qi* is interpreted as a certain energy or force that has a psycho-physiological function. That is to say, *Qi* performs as the substratum of diverse constituents (i.e., humans and various other beings/things) of the cosmos. Meanwhile, the self-cultivation of *Qi* serves the psychological function of guiding reciprocal interactions between a person and that person's surroundings. Concomitant with the circulation of *Qi*, each constituent originally consists of the others and integrates into a unity. Furthermore, each constituent is mutually transformed while maintaining its own entity.

***Qi*-arising Space [*qi-hsing kong-chien*, 氣興空間]:** a philosophical framework that I propose in this thesis for analysing Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly reflects traditional Chinese aesthetic logics in relation to the idea of *Qi*. *Qi*-arising Space suggests a form of performative space that is created through the viewer's performative interaction with the work within a *Qi* world model. The creation of such space includes the viewer's three aesthetic actions of *Qi* – that is, *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, *Qi*-transforming embodiment and *Qi*-transforming presence.

***Qi*-kind beings [*qi-lai*, 氣類]:** an existence mode in the *Qi* world model. Since *Qi* is regarded as the substratum of the cosmos, humans and various other beings/things can be seen as the same *Qi*-kind beings. That is to say, humans and various other beings/things inherently contain each other within themselves and also open up to each other. Relying on the existence mode, a

person exists as an ever-evolving entity that is interwoven with the cosmic whole. In this thesis, I hold that, in those Taiwanese hypermedial theatre works which implicitly reflect traditional Chinese aesthetic logics, the interaction between the viewer and the work indicates a process of renewing the association between *Qi*-kind beings.

***Qi*-transforming [*qi-hua*, 氣化]:** a term in Chinese philosophy which refers to a state wherein, through the operation of *Qi*, a person and that person's surroundings are in a cyclical process of becoming between matters and energies. I use the term in this thesis to implicate an anthropocosmic level of the viewer's three aesthetic actions of *Qi* that lead to the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space. From the *Qi* worldview, when reaching the *Qi*-transforming state, the viewer and the work coexist as common *Qi*-kind beings, and their incorporation reflects resonance with the cosmos. Furthermore, the focus of the movement mode of *Qi*-energy in this state falls on the becoming and establishing of the interactive relationship and correspondence between the viewer and the cosmos.

***Qi*-transforming inter-activity:** an aesthetic action of *Qi* that leads to *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. I define the action as a spatial progression by which viewers grasp traces of the circulation of *Qi* between themselves and the cosmos. The definition is in line with the notion of the *Qi* movements of *kan* (stirrings) and *tong* (responses), which regards the perceiver's responses to the perceived as a communal act in the circulation of *Qi*, fulfilled by the perceiver and the perceived. On this basis of *Qi*, I characterise *Qi*-transforming inter-activity in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre

as a structure of a bipolar unity by which the viewer and the work reciprocally interact with and are integrated into each other. *Qi*-transforming inter-activity offers an alternative interpretation of the inter-activity between the viewer and the work in the context of media and theatre studies.

***Qi*-transforming embodiment:** one of the three aesthetic actions of *Qi* that constitute *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. I define *Qi*-transforming embodiment as the incarnation of the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. The notion that I draw on is the Confucian notion of *chung-yung* (centrality and commonality), which regards the human body as a synthesis of rival yet interdependent polarities. The self and others are simultaneously embodied as dynamic centres in an ever-altering field of *Qi* that is shared by the self and others. With reference to this notion, *Qi*-transforming embodiment can be characterised as a process whereby the viewer's body is used as a means to disclose the original opening of the actual and the mediated to each other. Cosmologically, the viewer's phenomenal body can be interpreted as the shared body of the cosmic whole. *Qi*-transforming embodiment provides a viewpoint from which to re-examine the spatial implications of the viewer's phenomenal body in the context of media and theatre studies.

***Qi*-transforming presence:** the third aesthetic action of *Qi*. It enables the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre. I define *Qi*-transforming presence as the spatial-temporal structuring of the circulation of *Qi* between the viewer and the cosmos. I mainly rely on Xiao Chi's (2007) concept of 'the poetics of "affection of breath in the organic universe"' (*Qi-lei*

kan-ying), which suggests the interconnection between a person's presence and the flow of *Qi*. In this *Qi* world model, concomitant with the flow of *Qi*, feelings stirred in the present are juxtaposed with sentiments accumulated in various other spaces and times. If the space-time awareness of *Qi* is raised, the self may be able to become present in a network of the relationship between itself and others. This dynamic foregrounds the co-presence of a person and that person's surroundings. With the help of the poetics, I characterise *Qi*-transforming presence as a sense of cosmic historicity, where presence refers to some place where the viewer already exists and is juxtaposed with the coming and the going. *Qi*-transforming presence shows a possible way, from the *Qi* worldview, of interpreting the viewer's presence in the context of media and theatre studies.

***Qi* movements of *kan* and *tong* (stirrings and responses) [*qi te kan-tong*, 氣的感動]:** this refers to a process of generating interaction with respect to the circulation of *Qi*. The cyclical transmission of *Qi* among a person's body and heart-mind and stimuli external to that person leads to the exchange of information among these components. This notion helps me to explore the embodiment of *Qi* in a relational context of the viewer's actions and perceptions that occurs during the course of performances.

***Qi* movements of *chung-yung* (centrality and commonality) [*qi te chung-yung*, 氣的中庸]:** a term with respect to Confucian thought that regards the human body as a synthesis of rival yet interdependent polarities. The self and others are simultaneously embodied as dynamic centres in an ever-altering field of *Qi* that is shared by the self and others. My interpretation

of the term in this thesis is with reference to Tu Wei-ming's book, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung-yung* (1989). According to the scholar, the *chung-yung* indicates a cyclical movement of centrality and commonality through which someone learns to be human. Here, the cyclical movement of centrality and commonality emphasises a process of forming the human body with the cosmos. Through the flow of the common *Qi* that is *inherently within* the bodies of humans and various other beings/things, both humans and various other beings/things act as multiple foci of these elements' relationship network. The emergence of multiple foci refers to the *Qi* movement of *chung* (centrality), which may lead to the deepening of the space of the self. At the same time, concomitant with the circulation of *Qi*, the space of the self may be extended to other selves' spaces. The extension refers to the *Qi* movement of *yung* (commonality). Thus, in the course of the *chung-yung*, a person is embodied as a shifting position that constantly oscillates between the becoming of foci and the becoming of commonality.

Resonance with the cosmos/ cosmic resonance [*kan-ying*, 感應]: a term developed by Tung Tsung-shu (179–104 BC) along with his metaphysical notion of *Yin* and *yang Qi* and Five Phases (*wu-hsing*) system. The term refers to internalising the rhythms of the cosmos in the association of individuals' bodies and hearts-minds and their surroundings. This term thus suggests mutual responses and reciprocal companionship between humans and various other beings/things alongside the circulation of *Qi* between the two sides. I adopt Tony Watling's (2009) terminology 'resonance' in this thesis. In this thesis, I use this term to describe the aesthetic concern of *Qi*-arising Space in

Taiwanese hypermedial theatre, that is, a spiritual level of the viewer's performative responses to the work.

Rival yet interdependent polarities: this refers to the interplay of *yin* and *yang* *Qi* that compete and, at the same time, engage with each other. The polarities are seen as originally consisting of each other and constantly transforming into each other. In the course of exploring the configuration of the viewer-work relation in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre, I use this term to indicate dynamic changes in the spatial relationships between the viewer and the work.

Self-cultivation of *Qi* [*qi te kung-fu-lun*, 氣的功夫論]: for Confucians, this is a daily practice of developing the reciprocal relationships between the human body and heart-mind and the surroundings as well as between the social and the natural world.

The association of *te* (virtue) with *te* (getting, gaining) [*te-te*, 得德]: a key aspect of self-cultivation of *Qi* in Confucian terms listed in this thesis. I adapt Ames and Hall's (1987) interpretation of the Confucian notion of *te* (virtue). Their interpretation refers to a process of people presencing themselves through cultivating their power and the potency of *te*, which can be transmitted within a shared context of the self and others. Since this process develops in accordance with the reciprocal relationship between the self and others, a sense of co-extending the self's and others' *Qi* fields comes to the foreground. Thus, for Confucians, the cultivation of *te* (virtue) is associated with the homophonic nature of *te* (getting, gaining). This notion is a major factor in this

thesis that enables my assumption of a *Qi* world model and *Qi*-transforming presence, which is an aesthetic action necessary to create *Qi*-arising Space.

The *Book of Songs* can lead to the poetic arising [*Shih-ke-yi-hsing*, 詩可以興]: see Confucius's Poetry teaching [*shih-chiao*, 詩教].

The cosmos [*t'ien*, 天]: a term in this thesis refers either to *heaven* in the specific sense or to *heaven* (or *heavens*) in the more general sense, which is relevant to the *Qi* worldview in Chinese philosophy. My reason for using *cosmos* rather than *heaven* (or *heavens*) is to avoid any connection with the term's use in Western culture. According to Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, '*tian* is often used as an abbreviation for *tiandi* 天地 – “the heavens and the earth” – suggesting that *tian* is not independent of this world. Denoting the world as it turns around us, it [*tian*] is bottomless, ever advancing, and always novel' (2001: 79). This indicates that the heavens for the Chinese have a very close and reciprocal relationship with humans' dwelling environments. Ultimately, '*tian* in classical Chinese is the world. *Tian* is both *what* our world is and *how* it is', as Ames and Hall suggest (ibid.: 80, original emphasis). This means that humans and various other beings/things are constitutive of the cosmos. This may explain why the Chinese believe in humans' continuous efforts to become integrated with various other beings/things in their dwelling environments, that is, in the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*). I highlight two points here: (1) the cosmos is regarded as the emergent order of the constituents of our world and (2) the cosmos refers to both the social and the natural worlds (see ibid.). That is, as various Confucian classical texts show (e.g., the *Chung-yung*, the *Analects* and the *Book of Change*), humans

are encouraged to understand the rhythms of both the social and the natural worlds and to participate in the generation and development of their rhythms.

The poetic arising of *Qi* (*hsing*, 興/氣興): a key concept in Confucius's Poetry teaching (*shih-chiao*) and a common aesthetic phenomenon in Chinese culture. The word *hsing* (the poetic arising) originally meant 'drumming on or surrounding around the plates or salvers, where sacrifices are placed, while singing and dancing' (Chou, 1986: 216; cited by Chiang, 1992: 31, my translation). Since the time of ancient China, the practicing of *hsing* has become a prominent phenomenon through which the author and the viewer of Chinese artworks have communally maintained the flow of *Qi* between actual and fictional realms. In this thesis, I adopt Chiang Nien-feng's (1990) translation of the term and use it to indicate the viewer's active, improvisational reactions to what takes place in performance.

The poetics of affection of breath in the organic universe [*Qi-lei kan-ying*, 氣類感應]: a concept proposed by Xiao Chi (2007) in connection with the Chinese lyric tradition. Xiao interprets the expressions of *Qi* phenomena by lyric minds as 'the poetics of "affection of breath in the organic universe"' (*Qi-lei kan-ying*) (Xiao, 2007: 80). In persisting in the quest for the unity of the cosmos with humanity (*t'ien-jen ho-yi*) as Xiao suggests, 'the life rhythm of the cosmos is reflected in a person's presence through the common *Qi*' (ibid.: 70, my translation). That is to say, the mutual communication and interaction between humans and various other beings/things can be interpreted as a communal breathing movement that needs to be undertaken by humans and various other beings/things. This is because humans and various other beings/things

are regarded as cultivated by their common substratum, namely, *Qi*. If it fails to involve itself in the communal breathing movement, the self may not become present. Grasping the cyclical rhythm of *Qi* indicates an indispensable way to express someone's locating and becoming present in the universe. In this thesis, I use Xiao's concept to develop my proposition of *Qi*-transforming presence in Taiwanese hypermedial theatre.

The structure of bi-polar unity: a kind of interactive relationship between the viewer and the work in *Qi*-arising Space that I propose in this thesis. I do this because, from a *Qi* worldview, the interaction between the viewer and the work indicates a process of renewing the association between *Qi*-kind beings that originally open up to and are included within each other. The situation highlights a becoming process of establishing the interactive relationships and correspondence between rival yet interdependent polarities (e.g., humans and various other beings/things).

The unity of the cosmos with humanity [*t'ien-jen ho-yi*, 天人合一]: a key aspect of the Confucian sense of self-cultivation of *Qi* listed in this thesis. This term refers to the harmonious coexistence of the natural and the social worlds. In this context, perceptions of nature are thought of as analogous to interpersonal sensibilities, and the order of the cosmos is seen as analogous to the brotherly relations between senior and junior siblings. Using this notion, I develop my assumption of a *Qi* world model and *Qi*-transforming inter-activity, which is an aesthetic action of *Qi* that generates *Qi*-arising Space.

The unity of the human body with the human heart-mind [*shen-hsin ho-yi*, 身心合一]: a key aspect of the Confucian sense of self-cultivation of *Qi* listed in this thesis. This term refers to the merging of the human body and heart-mind that reveals the circulation of *Qi* between inside and outside. This notion enables me to develop my assumption of a *Qi* world model and *Qi*-transforming embodiment, which is an aesthetic action of *Qi* that leads to the constitution of *Qi*-arising Space.

***Yin and yang Qi* [*yin yu yang tzu qi*, 陰與陽之氣]:** this refers to a pair of rival but interdependent polarities that exist in the operation of *Qi*.

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Published Work

The following paper has been published during the course of my doctoral studies since 2009:

Wu, Y. C. (2011) 'An exploration of the construction of performance spaces: A dialogue with the energy flowing in the spaces' [回歸空間的本質：「表演空間」的能量對話], in *TPEC Dance*, vol. 9, pp. 92-97.