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This is the author-version of article published as:

Stock, Cheryl (2005) *The Interval Between...The Space Between...: Concepts of Time and Space in Asian Art and Performance*, in Sarkar Munsri, Urmimala, Eds. *Time and Space in Asian context: Contemporary Dance in Asia*, pages pp. 17-38. World Dance Alliance.

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***the interval between
the space between....***

concepts of time and space in Asian art & performance

Stock, C. (2005) 'The Interval Between...The Space Between...: Concepts of Time and Space in Asian Art and Performance', in Sarkar Munsri, U. (ed.) *Time and Space in Asian context: Contemporary Dance in Asia*, Kolkata: World Dance Alliance – West Bengal, pp.17-38

....emptiness that is essential to our being....the emptiness is full....it is a dance of meaning, a dance which, according to Heidegger's description, is "time's removing" and "space's throwing open" in a "play of stillness".
David Miller (in Pilgrim, 1995: 75)

Whilst time and space are common to all human experience, our perceptions of time and space are shaped by our world views and philosophies, whether culturally constructed or differentiated within cultural constructs. It is the descriptors which often acknowledge how we think of time either as individuals, cultures or in certain contexts. Time can be described as cyclical, durational or measured, and space as limitless, contained or metaphysical; yet our experiences of both remain simultaneously concrete and elusive and their interrelationships complex and contingent.

GENERIC CONCEPTS OF TIME

Definitions of time normally differentiate between abstract and concrete concepts. In its broadest philosophical sense, time is deemed to consist of past, present and future regarded as a continuous whole, as well as describing an indefinite continued progress of existence. In our attempt to quantify and objectify time it can be defined both as a quantity measuring duration (rotation of the earth, hours and minutes, days and months, beats in a bar) and an interval or period. (Collins Concise Dictionary: 1010; Concise Oxford Dictionary: 1459). Past, present and future are convenient separations into which we divide our human understanding of time. Chinese dance scholar and psychologist, Ping Xin (2004:19) suggests that 'sensation and memory are directed to the past, thinking and ideas are to the present and only imagination and ideal to the future'. However, past and future also appear inextricably contained in the present in what Ping Xin (2004: 18) refers to as 'psyche time' dealing with the 'perceptive now'.

GENERIC CONCEPTS OF SPACE

Time is often referred to in spatial terms such as 'linear' or 'cyclical' and indeed it is often difficult to extrapolate time from space concepts, for in our experiencing the world they are interdependent. Space, like time, can be viewed from many perspectives. It has been described as 'the unlimited continuous three-dimensional expanse in which all objects exist' as well as 'an interval of distance or time between two points, objects or events' (Collins Concise Dictionary: 924). Space also refers to the region beyond the earth's atmosphere (Concise Oxford Dictionary: 1330-1).

Whilst space, like time, can be perceived as measurable it is also perceived as an absence in the sense of an empty or blank area. In relation to our sense of space in performance and the arts, Tufnell and Crickmay (1990:82) believe that 'like silence and stillness we experience space as an absence, an interval or relationship between things.' Just as spatialisation of time is fundamental to our understanding, the corollary occurs in the temporal nature of space, where the experiencing of spaces between things and events contains simultaneously an experience of time. Cooper (1996: 298) points out that, together, space and time shape our intuition and 'conditions of sensibility', without which we cannot envisage perceiving any object. All objects are therefore spatio-temporal, for if not, we could not experience them (ibid).

Beyond the experiential, Ping Xin (2004: 18) speaks of 'psyche space' by which he means the 'space of sensation, space of thinking and space of imagination'; by nature 'imaginary and virtual'. This is the space which artists understand intuitively, a space which Tufnell and Crickmay suggest is experienced kinetically as well as visually, aurally and cognitively:

Space includes us; it is seldom the focus of our attention – we don't so much look at it, as look from within it. The sense of space is only partially visual – we experience it also through movement, touch and sound.

(1990: 82)

SPACE, TIME, MOVEMENT AND DANCE

Whilst all of us experience time and space through bodily sensations, it is the art form of dance that lays claim to a particular and intense relationship between these elements. Whilst dance definitions are always hotly contested, few would argue that in its most elemental sense dance consists of the body moving through time and space.

Kealiinohomoku's (1983: 541) expands on this basic premise defining dance as:

a transient mode of expression, performed in a given form and style by the human body moving in space. Dance occurs through purposefully selected and controlled rhythmic movements.

Dance is not just physical, however, and as already suggested, space in dance can be experienced both literally and metaphorically. Tufnell and Crickmay (1990:1) describe a way of preparing the dancing mind and body through moving from the inside of the body to the outside, referring to time and space in the following way:

Allow the sensations their own time and expression.....waiting for a space between the thoughts, an unlocking of parts of the body – a gap into which something new can emerge.

The notion of a gap into and from which something can emerge, although expressed above in relation to dance, is a key concept in various Asian philosophies and cultural perceptions, which shall be explored later in this paper.

Ping's reference to the 'perceptive now' (op. cit.: 18) finds a resonance with dance maker Eva Karczag (in Tufnell and Crickmay,1990:48) in her articulation of being in the moment of now that dance improvisation requires:

...it's as if I stand back, inside myself
and observe...
Available to constant flow and change,
I can balance
at the edge of the unknown,
and experience fearlessness.

This concurs with Ping Xin's idea (2004: 14) that the 'nature of dance does not lie [solely] in the physical body, but [in] the "metaphysical" imagery, artistic representation, spiritual phenomenon' and the conceptualisation of ideas. The spiritual plays an essential role in Asian dance definitions including that of Ping Xin (2004: 19) who describes dance as 'a movement and kinaesthetic relationship between body and soul'. Although this definition makes no specific reference to time and space, as we shall see, both form the building blocks of how the body/soul relationship is made manifest.

HINDUISM AND SPATIOTEMPORAL PERCEPTIONS

Notions of metaphysical and cosmic time and space are commonly found throughout the world, particularly in major Asian philosophical and religious traditions. In South Asia a world view shaped to a large extent by Hinduism has impacted on spatiotemporal perceptions. Hindu theories of

time and space deal with cycles of expansion and collapse and with polarities of energy where creation is balanced by destruction (Devi: 1990, Banerjee: 1992). A complex spiritual philosophy (based on an ancient text c. 800 BC, the *Upanishads*), Hinduism embraces Vishnu, the supreme being, who is the invisible 'manifestation of an impersonal cosmic principle' (Cooper, 1996: 15) but whose worldly incarnations include thousands of Hindu gods. Hinduism, like Buddhism, espouses the concept of *karma* in which our deeds dictate the kind of lives we will lead through the *samsara* or cycle of rebirth. This cycle is both temporal and spatial and liberation from this endless cycle is through *moksa* in which one enters a timeless, formless enlightened state.

The predominant visual representation of this journey is the *bhavacakra* or 'wheel of life' consisting of the 6 realms of rebirth (*samsara*). Depictions of the wheel of life illustrate how cyclical concepts of time and space inform Hindu and Buddhist spirituality and their artistic manifestations. (<http://www.bremen.de/info/nepal/Gallery-2/Wheel/Wheel-Expl.htm>). Whilst it is not possible here to engage with the complex metaphysical manifestations of divisions of time and space represented in the *bhavacakra*, it is significant to note how space is depicted in the wheel of life as activated and filled, whereas moving beyond the wheel of life to an enlightened state, is a realm devoid of space and time.

TIME AND SPACE IN ARTS PRACTICE

In relation to the arts and performance the above concepts form the central tenets of traditional aesthetics. It is well understood that spirituality is central to the form and content of Indian traditional arts. In visual arts and dance, in particular, the rhythm, flow and geometry of form are all related to the universal laws of harmony, in which the cosmic circle informs spatiotemporal concepts. Much Indian classical dance reflects the cyclical patterns, especially within the body, which represent the circling of the spheres and the union of the soul (*atman*) with Vishnu (Banerjee, 1992: 35). Incarnations of Vishnu, such as Shiva Nataraja (Lord of the Dance) and Krishna remain prominent in most classical Indian dance forms. Indeed, according to Wright (1995: 53), dance is at the centre of spirituality in Hindu cultures and, through its 'merging spiritual and physical control', has 'the power to transport both dancer and viewer' to a new space.

It might be argued that in Indian arts practice, spatial considerations become somewhat subservient to the more dominant time elements. Seminal dance scholar Kapila Vatsyayan (1983: 4), with reference to classical Indian dance, talks of a shift from the physical to the metaphysical, 'from time actual to time transcendental. In this conception, naturally time is not linear, but it is cyclic with a constant rhythm of

evolution and devolution'. Similarly Kuchipudi dancer Padma Menon, suggests that 'one never talks about movement in terms of body and space but always movement in terms of meaning and time' (1997:123). In addition to the centrality of the spiritual, time elements predominate through the extraordinary complexity of rhythms and the symbiotic relationship of music and movement in Indian classical dance forms. The importance of metaphysically-based temporal concepts is reinforced by Sumatran artist Pirous, in describing the creative process of his Hindu visual arts practice:

To create is to visualise the harmony between the ticking of nature's clock and the ticking of the heart in our body. It is a close recording of the life of the soul, in its completeness.

A. D. Pirous (1933), in Wright (1995: 58)

On the other hand, it could be argued that space is the dominant concern in many Western dance forms, particularly ballet and contemporary dance. In describing dancers it is common to refer to their 'eating up', 'commanding' or even 'attacking' the space, as if it were an external element to be conquered. Hay (1994: 153-155) proposes that the Western sense of space is tied to the paradigms of science, in particular geometry; manifest in parallelism, convergence and intersection of lines. Extended lines through space are closely associated to the sense of 'cutting through' or dominating space, rather than filling or inhabiting space is the case in many forms of Asian dance. Selma Jean Cohen (1983: 91) makes a similar observation in comparing Western and Japanese dance:

Generally Western dance does tend to be more spacious than Japanese; we are accustomed to outstretched limbs, to steps that carry the performer through space, giving the illusion that he has covered a greater expanse than he actually has.

Perhaps it is the largely Western sense of space as a scientific precept rather than one predominantly associated with metaphysical and spiritual notions as in much of Asia, which is a defining difference between approaches to space of some Western and Asian artists. In relation to certain contemporary South-East Asian arts practices, Paras-Perez (1994: 66-74) notes that space is seen as an "emptiness" to be filled but at the same time there is a 'value attached to the fullness of things' and the sensibility of an 'overall activation' of space. This parallels the earlier notions of space as described in the Hindu 'wheel of life'.

Spatial realms of rebirth depicted by the 'wheel of life' also appear in Buddhist iconography. Buddhism, with its origins in India, shares many of the same interpretations of the world as Hinduism, such as the central concepts of *karma* and *nirvana* (*moksa*) or enlightenment. A spatiotemporal portrayal of these philosophies in Buddhism occurs in

Tibetan mandalas or cosmic diagrams which depict the spheres and realms of metaphysical space through harmonious abstract patterns. Mandalas represent the three spheres of existence, in which the lowest is that of the senses inhabited by man and other creatures, the middle is the sphere of pure form inhabited by gods living in a spiritual state, and the highest is the sphere of formlessness where beings are believed to exist as pure energy. In the sphere of formlessness, space and time are infinite (Keown: 1996, Thompson: 1979). Spatiotemporal concepts emanating from these complex theories appear to have influenced Asian artistic practices, albeit subliminally.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE COSMIC CIRCLE

Buddhist mandalas, the Hindu wheel of life and the Taoist symbol of *yin/yang* all reinforce the central presence of the cosmic circle and its metaphor of unified harmony. In Chinese culture *yuan* (notion of circularity) represents the universe/cosmos and is therefore an important spatial and temporal concept. With no beginning or end, a circle as encapsulated in the theory of *yuan*, is the ideal symbol of balance and harmony, encapsulating the essence of beauty and perfection.

In Chinese classical dance representations of *yuan* are its most defining characteristics, in particular the predominantly circular movements which ensure a seamless flow of *chi* or energy. Spatially *yuan* informs quintessential Chinese movements such as horizontal and vertical circles, figures of 8 and 'S' shapes with parts of the body and in spatial patterns. In portraying this cosmic harmony, there is a tendency for movements to be slow and continuous, gentle and relaxed.

In my work with Vietnamese dancers in Hanoi from 1988-2000 this sense of circularity was also very strong. The concept of 'filling the space' was often achieved through spiral and circular designs in space both within the body and within the space the body occupied. The dancers with whom I worked, when dancing my somewhat expansive choreography, seemed to etch out spatial patterns lightly and with a sense of containment and intimacy. One of the dancers, Tran Bich Huong (1997: 5), spoke of a sense of restraint in Vietnamese traditional dance in comparison with Western contemporary dance 'like you have to stay in a tiny space, in a frame'. When the Vietnamese dancers interpreted Western contemporary choreography (despite 7 years of full-time classical ballet training) I observed that elongated curves became more closed and that there was a preference for bringing the movement back into itself rather than extending it out into space. Chinese Australian choreographer and dancer Sun Ping, who worked with me on a project with the Vietnam Opera Ballet Theatre in Hanoi, traced this spatial 'contraction' to the notion of circularity in their 'cultural aesthetics' which he described as 'always coming to a curly pose'

(1997: 3). Such physical manifestations of *yuan* are strongly connected to the philosophical and spiritual theories which influence Sino-Asian cultural aesthetics. *Yuan* is represented by the Taoist *yin/yang* symbol for harmony – specifically the harmony of opposites (Cooper, 1996: 80).

YIN/YANG - THE HARMONY OF OPPOSITES

In Buddhism, the harmony of opposites refers to the dual aspects of the extinction of desire that causes suffering through attachment to the world, and enlightenment (*nirvana*) brought about by love and compassion (*karuna*) (Keown: 1996). In many Asian countries Buddhism has also incorporated the Taoist Chinese philosophy of *yin/yang* of which the basic premise is the continual balancing of opposites through a duality which is ternary rather than binary. This *yin/yang* bipolarity of nature and balance of opposites is perhaps best exemplified by the waxing and waning of the moon. Trinh T. Minh-Ha (1991: 7) explains that the full moon ‘represents the conjunction of *yin* and *yang*, of stillness and action, which brings about an ‘in-between state of mind’ (the third or ternary element). The notion of *yin/yang* thus comprises oppositional qualities which are continually replacing each other to maintain balance and harmony, where elements interpenetrate one another, as in shadow and brightness, and where one cannot exist without the other. The apparent oppositional forces are thus unified, interactive and in an infinite process of transformation. It is in the place and time of transformation that the invisible gap or ternary notion of *yin/yang* exists – as an invisible area of possibilities, creation and essences out of which something else/new may emerge.

THE VOID: BEING / NON-BEING, THE FULLNESS OF EMPTINESS

One of the most crucial aspects of Taoist and Buddhist philosophy is the concept of the middle way which can be argued to be symbolised by the space/time between the *yin* and the *yang*. Trinh (1991: 233) refers to this as the void or the ‘interval between the *yin* and the *yang*’ which creates ‘the oneness of the *yin/yang* circle’. In Zen, which is practised in Mahayana Buddhism, the void - the fullness of emptiness – can be achieved through the path of meditation, thus attaining detachment from worldly distractions. Pilgrim (1995: 72) refers to this ‘third place between all two-ness’ or between being and non-being as “chaosmos” – a theory ‘incorporating both chaos as a pregnant nothing and cosmos as an ordered something while standing prior to and somehow in between *yin* and *yang* or any two-ness’ (ibid: 71). In order to achieve such a state Buddhists aspire to the ‘subtle body’, constructed through meditation and philosophy; a body which can reflect the essence of things and which is mapped by *ch’i* or energy flows (Solomon, 1995:260).

In contemporary dance practice a form of the 'subtle body' can be argued to be exemplified in the work of Taiwan's *Cloudgate Dance Theatre* founded and directed by Lin Hwai-min. In describing the seminal work *Songs of the Wanderers*, Guido Johannes Joerg (1999) suggests:

The journey towards tranquillity, therefore, is equated with a journey through the cyclical essence of time; indeed it even transcends the bounds of time to a point where all moments in time and all things will be one.

The ability to portray such a mystical experience lies not only in the refined sensibility of Lin and his dancers but in their preparation for the work. Lin Hwai-min (1999) states that 'we use meditation to centre the body and mind', creating movements of 'active meditation'. In preparing for this work he describes each choreographic session as beginning with two hours of meditation followed by closed eyes *tai chi* movement into improvisation and finally the formation of the movement sequences for the choreography. The resulting sensation for the viewer who enters the world created by *Songs of the Wanderers* is of transcendent time and limitless space in which we may indeed experience the fullness of emptiness.

Many Japanese and Chinese arts – traditional and contemporary – directly reflect these *zen* philosophies in relation to their aspiration to capture the essence of things and the 'betweenness' of space and time. The following Japanese Haiku poem is a striking example.

clouds now and then
give relief
from moon viewing

Images found in calligraphy, haiku and Chinese traditional dance often depict floating clouds and flowing water. Ping Xin (2004: 15) refers to these as symbols of 'being with nothingness' the result of which is the forgetting of form through the sensation of the image. This notion can also be found in contemporary Chinese artists such as Beijing based installation artist Song Dong with his meditative and transient performances, and performance artist Zhu Ming whose work is described 'as a kind of conceptualism verging on Zen absorption into the object or into the trance of the performance' (John Clark, 2003: <http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?1258>). Such artists reveal subtle influences of spatiotemporal metaphysical essences of their country's traditional cultures. Hong Kong artist Young Hay (2003) in talking about his white canvases says:

emptiness is often neglected in daily life. I paint my canvas white deliberately, to let this emptiness re-enter human awareness....emptiness stands for nothingness, the undecided, the silent.

<http://www.culturebase.net/artist.php?149>).

Japanese and Chinese aesthetics embrace an ambiguity which fuses traditional and contemporary sensibilities with what Ping Xin (2004: 3) refers to as 'the theory of distant past', drawing on the 'space of imagination, space of mind and time of mind'. In relation to dance, Ping Xin (2004:3) articulates the importance of 'movement imagery and [the] artistic imagination of active space relating to body and spirit'. Ideas of essence / spirit, which appear in Asian descriptors about dance are rarely mentioned in Western definitions, even though these qualities may be strongly present in some forms of Western dance.

MA - THE SUN SHINING THROUGH THE GATE

Many of the fundamental concepts relating to space and time discussed thus far relating to Buddhism, Taoism and Chinese aesthetics can be seen to culminate in the Japanese spatial-temporal phenomenon *ma*. With its links to Shintoism, *ma* shares a common understanding with the philosophies above in that spiritual power is revealed 'in the gaps and intervals of time, space and being' (Pilgrim, 1995: 65). *Ma*, described as 'rich in ambiguity', is a reflection of a Japanese "way of seeing" and 'basically means an "interval" between two or more spatial or temporal things or events' (Pilgrim, 1995: 56).

From the religious viewpoint of Shintoism, Pilgrim (1995: 62) describes *ma* 'as a "no-man's land", a gap or crevice between two worlds' into which the 'formless energy' (*ki* or in Chinese *ch'i*) enters and fills. The Shinto concept of *kami*, not unlike the Buddhist/Taoist void is 'a place entirely void of matter' but through which light may shine (ibid: 63).

Ma is graphically represented by its Chinese ideogram depicting the character for gate or door (*mon*) with the character for sun (*hi*) or moon (*tsuki*) passing through. The founder of the traditional theatre form of *Noh* Zeami Motokiyo (in Pilgrim, 1995: 58-59) explains that the light shining through (literally and/or metaphorically) the gate/opening of *ma* is linked to spiritual strength and reveals itself during moments of 'non-action'. *Ma* can be experienced as both a static and a dynamic state since the gate is a fixed object and the sun or moon are moving bodies. The sun/moon shining through the gate also pre-supposes something invisible and indefinable, something abstract yet somehow concrete.

This 'passing through' also implies a dynamic relationship with both space and time. As contemporary architect Arata Isozaki (in Pilgrim, 1995: 56) points out:

While in the West the space-time concept gave rise to absolutely fixed images of a homogeneous and infinite continuum, as presented in Descartes, In Japan space and time were never fully separated but were conceived as correlative and omnipresent....Space could never be perceived independently of the element of time [and] time was not abstracted as a regulated homogeneous flow, but rather was believed to exist in only in relation to movements in space....space was recognised only in its relation to time-flow.

This notion obviously has strong aesthetic and kinetic resonances with movement based arts. The traditional dance/theatre form of *Noh* is strongly connected to *ma*. *Noh* actor Kunio Komparu (1983:70) refers to three meanings of *ma* as 'time, space and space-time', pointing out that *ma*'s 'multiplicity of meanings' is contained in 'the conciseness of the single word that makes *ma* a unique conceptual term.' The *ma* concept of 'space-time' is strongly present in all art forms. In music, normally defined as a time-based art form, Japanese contemporary composer Toru Takamitsu, provides an example of *ma* with music which 'configures tones that float in space' (Fraleigh, 1999: 203).

Considered the corner-stone of Japanese aesthetics - 'an aesthetics of stillness and motion' - *ma* is the 'way of sensing the moment of movement' (Matsuoka in Pilgrim, 1995: 68), and an 'expectant stillness' (ibid, 1995: 69). Pilgrim (1995: 67) refers to a 'sense of suspension between interpenetrating spaces', resonating with a 'spiritual energy called *ke* (*ki*, *ch'i*) or "vital breath", which, while formless permeates and animates life'. Like Ping Xin, Matsuoko and Pilgrim (1995: 63-68) mention the importance of the morphology of clouds in relation to these ideas in that they 'represent the moving, changing ephemeral condensation of *ch'i* (*ki*)' as the living energy of *kami*' (a 'place entirely devoid of matter') in a 'culture of transformations'.

Closely allied to the ideas surrounding interval and suspension in relation to *ma* is the concept of 'betweenness' itself. The Japanese term for person (*ningen*) is made up of the words 'man' and 'between'. Cooper (1996: 382) reminds us that the concept of 'betweenness' in Japanese culture refers not only to the relationship between things and ideas or between each other in space and time, but also to our social relationships with each other. Okuno Takeo (in Pilgrim, 1995: 67) links the concept of *kankeiso* or 'inbetweenness' with *ma* in terms of a 'relational sensitivity – a sense of standing in the midst of or between reality rather than over against reality "out there".' This sense of being between this and that which the above two terms encapsulate, has infused Japanese culture by creating 'a sensitivity to the immediate processual world; to a world of shading and shadows, moon and mist, clouds and haze and to *ki*' (Okono, in Pilgrim, 1995: 67). Pilgrim summarises the marrying of these two central tenets of Japanese culture suggesting:

Ma constitutes a “between world” as a particular sensitivity and atmosphere that arises when one empties the self (and subject/object distinctions) into the interstices of being. The world is at once temporal and spatial, aesthetic (poetic) and religious (spiritual).

(1995: 67)

Spiritually and philosophically, as well as aesthetically, the myriad interpretations surrounding *ma* contain striking similarities to the theories of being and non-being, of the fullness of emptiness and of the void or interval between *yin* and *yang* in Buddhism and Taoism. All three dissolve boundaries and operate ‘experientially at the interstices of being’ (Pilgrim, 1995: 57). East/West differences in beliefs about the nature of being are discussed by Octavio Paz (in Girardot, 1983:2) who claims that the West ‘teaches us that being is dissolved into meaning, and the East that meaning is dissolved into something which is neither being or non-being’.

Similarly, in the context of the arts, architect Gunter Nitschke (in Pilgrim, 1995: 66) suggests that *ma* is an “experiential” place containing form and non-form, and exists in the ‘mysterious atmosphere caused by the external distribution of symbols’. He further suggests that these experiential places are characterised ‘by a dynamic, active, changing, poetic immediacy’ or as Joseph Kitagawa (ibid.) has described *ma*:

....an opening or emptying of oneself into the immediacy of the ever-changing moment beyond distinctions and in between the “this and that” world.

Ma is practiced in the art forms of brush calligraphy, ikebana flower arrangement, tea ceremony and in the performing arts such as *kabuki*, *noh* and *kyogen*. In these forms *ma* becomes an imaginary space or ‘a negative space/time “filled” by the imagination more than by some thing’ (Pilgrim, 1995: 59). *Butoh*, the Japanese dance theatre form founded in the 1950s and 1960s by Tatsumi Hijikata and Kazuo Ohno, provides a contemporary example of *ma*. Derived from the term *ankokubuto* or ‘dark soul dance’ *Butoh*, according to Fraleigh (1999: 14), ‘exists in mythological time’ encompassing a sense of *zen* emptiness and a cathartic aesthetic’. She goes on to remark that ‘like meditational time, time in *Butoh* is always *Now*’ and that it ‘unfolds states of being’ (ibid: 23). Hijikata (1990) reveals through his work *Butoh* as a dramatic embodiment of *ma* operating at the interstices of being and non-being in an often dangerous territory of dark unknowing.

Whilst this paper has only been able to provide a brief overview of spatiotemporal concepts embedded in four major Asian world views, it has uncovered similarities in elemental approaches to time and space which are culturally significant, particularly in their influences on arts practice and

appreciation. The overarching concept is that of the indivisibility of time and space or in *ma* terminology 'space-time'. The centrality of transcendental and metaphysical time particularly in the performing arts and its link to the importance of the spiritual (in whatever form it is manifest in a specific culture) in the act of creating and performing artistic work permeates not only traditional practices, but also have resonances in the work of contemporary artists. In its various permutations and combinations, many Asian (and non-Asian) artists engage with a sensibility which embraces the ideas of a contemplative /creative 'void' or 'inbetweenness' through which the essence of the art work passes. It is also a space for the viewer or listener to pass through; the quintessential experience of what lies between the words, the steps, the notes or the images of the work. This space-time of 'pregnant nothing' or the 'interval between' allows the passage of a creative / energy flow *ch'i (ki)* of being and non-being; traces of which infuse the experience of both creator and receiver with intuitive understandings about themselves and the world. For a dance artist this spatiotemporal passing through in the moment of 'now' occurs kinaesthetically as well as imaginatively and spiritually. Fraleigh echoes many dancers' understanding about life that our 'knowing' of space-time provides:

More and more, I understand life as a dance-in-the-making, a choreography wherein my steps and turns are laying down a traceable ground pattern. They show where I have been, but more importantly, they are the foundation for where I go now – into the moment.'

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