

**Meditation in motion to mindfulness in performance:
a psychophysical approach to actor training
for Thai undergraduate drama programmes**

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Abstract

This thesis explores the ways in which an actor training scheme can be constructed to allow the participants to directly apply the principles of training to their work in the moment of performing. Subsequently, my aim is to employ this actor training approach alongside or as an alternative to the current acting courses in undergraduate drama programmes in Thai universities.

Three practical projects were carried out as part of the research. In the first project, I attempted to identify essential areas of enquiry in a psychophysical actor training approach, and the tasks that needed to be tackled by an actor in rehearsal and performance that allow what may be considered the quality of an actor's presence to emerge. In the second practical project, I examined the function of meditation in motion as an actor training tool that enables the participants to tackle their performance tasks. In the third practical project, I explored the ways in which meditation in motion can be employed in a university actor training course in Thailand to enhance the students' mindfulness in performance.

This thesis argues that Buddhist concepts of meditation and mindfulness are beneficial to the course facilitator in terms of the structuring of an actor training course, and to the students when approaching performance tasks. The main result of this research is a psychophysical approach to actor training, focusing on the practice of meditation in motion and the Buddhist concept of mindfulness of the present, designed specifically for Thai undergraduate drama programmes.

Moreover, this thesis demonstrates a move away from the East-West binary towards a more localised and customised approach to actor training in Thailand and the utilisation of resources within the Thai or the broader Asian culture. It also opens up other possibilities of applying Thai or Asian philosophies to performance training, without relying on the Western perspectives on theatre and performance.

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