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烏塔哈根表演技巧運用於劇作《意念》中法蒂瑪角色之詮釋

Uta Hagen's Acting Technique in Portraying the Character Fatima
of the Play *Niyyat*

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摘要

本研究是筆者在劇作《意念》中飾演法蒂瑪的表演過程之反思和記錄；該話劇於 2021 年 4 月 15 日在台灣嘉義表演藝術中心首演。本研究透過個人觀察筆記、排練日誌、導演回饋記錄這場畢業製作的排練及演出，並且主要討論筆者如何運用烏塔哈根的表演理論在法蒂瑪的角色詮釋。這項研究將使那些在當代劇場和表演中探索個人表演過程的藝術家受益。

關鍵詞：表演過程、烏塔哈根的表演理論、當代劇場和表演、飾演法蒂瑪



Abstract

This research is a reflection and documentation of my acting processes in portraying Fatima of the play *Niyyat*, which premiered at the Chiayi Performing Arts Centre in Taiwan last April 15, 2021. The discussion of acting technique draws from Uta Hagen's acting theory in portraying the character of Fatima, self-observation notes, rehearsal records, and director's commentaries. This research will benefit those artists who are exploring personal acting processes in contemporary theater and performance.

Keywords: Acting Processes, Uta Hagen's Acting theory, contemporary theater and performance, Play *Niyyat*

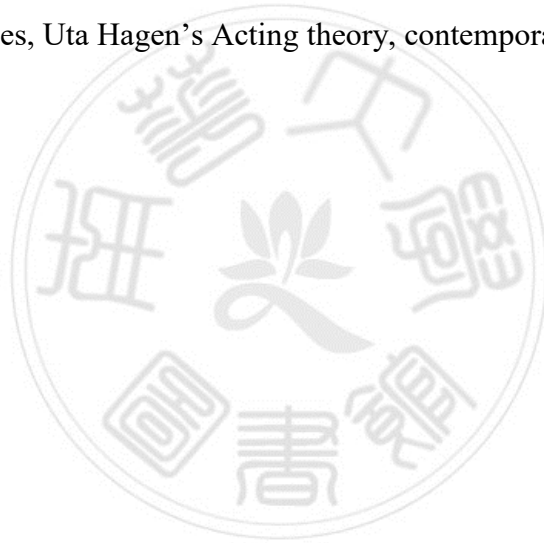


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Chapter I: Introduction

1.1 Motivation

For this Master of Fine Arts (MFA) project, I was chosen to perform the main role of Fatima from the play *Niyyat*, a play written by Heidi Emelo. It exhibits the life of a Muslim woman who is a war refugee that moved to Manila with the hope of gaining freedom from the terror that the war has brought upon them. As Fatima tries to redefine her identity, cracks in her relationship with her family and friends start to appear which causes her to question her faith. Dealing with this character who has a different upbringing in life inspired me to look for other approaches that will help me to further study her identity. I learned that many predecessors, such as Strasberg, Meissner, Chekhov, Adler and Uta Hagen, obtained their inspiration from the Stanislavsky system of acting. Upon reading Uta Hagen elements of acting technique, I learned that human experiences are important input to the character, and that made me interested to apply it.

Even though Hagen was inspired by Stanislavski, she created her own perspective in dealing with a character. She mentioned that she was not the kind of actor who used emotional memories just to embody the character. Hagen wanted her students to look for their daily experiences to substitute and practice it with the exercises that she created. Knowing this information about her acting techniques encouraged me to adopt her approaches to my character Fatima.

1.2 My Acting Journey

The Actor should never worry about his talent, but rather about his lack of technique, his lack of training, and his lack of understanding of the creative process

Michael Chekhov (1993:55)

My genuine passion in acting is my motivation to continue pursuing the path of becoming a theater artist. Since childhood, I have been fond of watching English movies which in turn inspires me to be a part of such industry one day. Despite being exposed to this kind of media, my heart belongs to the world of theater. Theater to me is like a community wherein people are collaborating talents, skills, techniques, artistry, and many more elements to make a story leap to life. It is a platform where our daily lives are mirrored and expressed through performances.

Acting is a reflection of everyday life. It begins when one wakes up in the morning and ends when one sleeps at night. In the course of our daily lives, it is the creation of continuous actions reflecting reality and the authenticity of the scenery. It has always been interesting to me to embody a character from a narrative. More so, acting is genuine; it is true to the content and motivation of the narrative. Each person embodying a character must understand the motivation of their personality, the lines they speak, origin, and intentions in every act.

Being a theater practitioner takes an immense amount of passion, hard work, deep interest, and daily practice. Based on my experience, I needed to work very hard to meet the standards of becoming an actor. I trained my tongue to speak English, and studied how to enunciate words—although English is a twisted sound of my mother tongue language. I also gained skills in doing bold bodily movements and detailed minor acts. Aside from this, feeding the mind with knowledge and awareness of theater ideals is highly important. One has to be knowledgeable enough to

understand the complexities of theater, such as knowing the history, origin, development, and current ideals of the Theater Arts as well as the industry. As an artist, one has to use the body as an instrument that is equipped with proper training, refined skills, endless explorations, and the development of various techniques. These are some of the things that help in giving guidelines to be accurate and suitable, in consideration of distinctive prospects and parameters in theater.

This is just the beginning of my journey as a theater practitioner, which is undeniably not as easy as other people might think. It takes a soul to create and become part of creation, such as theatrical play and other forms of art. Within the world of theater, I learned how to perceive life deeper than I used to. It involves expressing a role coming from diverse lifetimes in literature, where one profoundly comprehends life to let the character use me in expressing a story on stage through performance. In theater, learning is eternal wherein endless explorations and spontaneous discoveries exist. Being part of this unique space in society gives me hope and happiness in aspiring to live better each day.

In 2015, I fortunately received Venerable Master Hsing Yun's scholarship to study at Guang Ming College (GMC), where I took a Bachelor's Degree in Performing Arts Theater. I grabbed this opportunity with the thought that it would be my first step in reaching my dream of becoming an actress. When I started studying theater, I learned about the techniques, elements, philosophies, history, and people who work in the industry. That is why despite my previous expertise as a stage manager, director, and performer in class, I have chosen to become a performer for my final thesis. My bachelor's thesis in acting shaped me to utilize the Stanislavski acting style, which focused on emotional memory, in delivering a monologue about Teodoroa, the mother of our national hero Dr. Jose Rizal. In this act, Teodora is visited by memories from the past decades including all her ambitions, hope, happiness, and pain of being a mother of a revolutionary hero

who was executed during the Spanish regime. To portray it effectively, I used my emotional memory to recall and apply my own painful memories so that I will be able to deliver the right emotions of my character. However, doing this activity led me to remember my traumatic experience in the past because this character demanded to feel the suffering Teodora felt during the Spanish colonization which includes witnessing brutal killings, losing her own child, and experiencing torture and abuse from men. Thus, I learned that by using this method I may not be able to get out of my characterization, especially when at that time, I had to dig into the life experience of my character. For example, I had to recall a somewhat similar experience during my childhood, where I was mentally abused and harassed by one of the members of the family, to relate to Teodora's experiences of abuse and attain this level of feeling and characterization. However, after this process, those memories seemed like happening to me once more which resulted to not coming home for three years. Therefore, I recommend to not over-intellectualize the character and to be careful of what experiences one will be using, especially for those people who have traumatic memories. This also prompted me to explore methods that distance myself from those painful memories.

1.3 Literature Review

Acting includes gestures, movements, moving objects, and express emotions. Acting means to act in a certain situation, whether it is on-stage or in real life. Michael Kirby (1972:3) states that acting means “to feign, stimulate, represent, and impersonate” in a certain action. In this way, acting is a way of imitating personas, animals, forms, or even objects wherein actors need to characterize such. On the other hand, acting is part of the human experience in which actions take place (Benedetti, 2007). Many teachers, including Constantine Stanislavsky, Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, Michael Chekhov, and Uta Hagen, co-founded acting methods. The major purpose of their

acting practice is to develop a believable character that is true to both the actors and the audience. These individuals contribute to the development of a character's truth. Creating a truthful character follows a certain technique. They were able to identify ways of acting approaches for actors that they can practice with a particular role thanks to diverse experiments done by experts in this field. “The essence of acting is the conveyance of truth through the medium of the actor’s mind and body” (Kogan, 2009: xxiii). As a result, acting was used for a variety of purposes in life, including performing on stage, working or moving, ceremonies, the essence of an actor's sincerity, or possibly a personal motive to attain a personal goal or other activities portrayed by individuals.

The Uta Hagen elements of acting techniques are based on past acting masters such as Constantine Stanislavski, Jerzy Grotowski, and Suzuki Tadashi who established the method of acting. In her book *Respect for Acting* (1973), she discussed the elements of acting for actors to serve as the backbone in doing characterization, which entails acting truthfully in every scene. Stanislavski (1995) also addressed building a character is difficult; it needs much research and comprehension of the character to be depicted.

I have utilized Constantin Stanislavski's Acting Technique "Emotional Memory" during my undergraduate studies. My character Fatima in the play *Niyyat* is completely different from who I am; I was raised in the absence of a father figure. Therefore, I encounter a number of challenging issues when it comes to developing the character. When the rehearsals began, I started reading about acting techniques and Uta Hagen's Elements of Acting Technique piqued my curiosity, so I decided to apply Hagen’s acting technique called “Nine Question for Character” (1973:82) to re-create differences and comparison of the personality, as well as “The Ten Object Exercises” (1973:89-90) to practice them during the rehearsal process which was explained in Chapter II.

1.4 Scope and Purpose

This research examines my creative process of acting in the play entitled *Niyyat*, premiered at Chiayi Performing Arts Centre, Taiwan on April 15, 2021. The discussion draws from Uta Hagen's techniques during and after the acting process, as well as the recording data of my self-observations and insights. In addition to this, rehearsals, performance commentaries, and suggestions from the director and professors are documented. Therefore, experience data as an approach, ideals, explorations, and concepts are used to discuss the relationship of my creative process and acting techniques. This research will benefit those artists who are exploring personal acting processes in contemporary theater and performance.



Chapter II

Uta Hagen Key Elements of Acting Technique in Fatima

This chapter initially explains the background of play *Niyyat*, my reflection working with director Heidi Emelo, and exemplifies Uta Hagen's objective exercise, nine questions for character analysis, and five acting technique in my role of Fatima.

2.1 Background of the Play *Niyyat*

Synopsis of the Play:

Fatima is a refugee of the war in Marawi. Her family moves to Manila with the hopes that they will be free from the terror that the war has brought upon them.

As Fatima tries to redefine her identity, cracks in her relationship with family and friends start to appear.¹

Heidi Emelo (2021)

Niyyat, directed and written by Heidi Emelo, is a theatrical play about a Muslim girl named Fatima who struggled as a victim of stereotypes and memories of the war in her hometown. The play was brought to stage in April 15, 2021 consisting of six cast members.

The director knew of my personal experiences and relationships with Muslim people in my hometown. Considering that my experiences could be a significant tool in characterizing the role of the protagonist, I was chosen to perform the role of Fatima in the play. My character Fatima believes that equality is for everyone regardless of religion a person has. It is part of one's identity, embodying a culture, practice, ritual, and lifestyle. Religion is a reflection of life which is highly valuable to Fatima, yet she struggles from freely living her own faith due to the oppression by the

¹ Program Playbill of "*We and Our Contemporary Struggle*" performed in Chaiyi Performing Arts Centre, April 15, 2021. The first play "*Niyyat*" directed by Heidi Emelo (2021).

members of the society. As an approach to this role, I started researching and reflecting on her character. Muslims are often feared as terrorists because of the incessant news of killings around the globe. By this, they are generalized by negative judgements - men, women, and children are all perceived as 'sinful' for most non-Muslim people. Islam, from how it is defined, is a religion of peace that teaches good to people, to give mercy, and to forgive those who have done them wrong. Islam is beautiful as how I understand it, but some people interpret Chapter 9 verse 5 of the Quran differently: "And when the forbidden months have passed, kill the idolaters wherever you find them and take them prisoners, and beleaguered them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush. But if they repent and observe Prayer and pay the Zakat, then leave their way free. Surely, Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful". (Mohammed and Matzen, 2022). In analyzing Fatima's character, internalizing all these facts, understanding the fears of being a Muslim, and imagining Fatima's thoughts from criticisms are some of the important parts of putting her character into life.

In diverse theatrical plays, the accuracy of symbolisms in different forms such as behavior, language, clothing, and setting are highly valuable. These aspects help the audience trace the time of which the story existed. According to Hagen (1973), one of the most essential parts of developing a character is to be well-informed of the character's history and origin. Knowing where, when, and how the character lived within a certain society is imperative in understanding and putting the character's story into life.

2.2 My Reflection working with Director Heidi Emelo

In graduation production of *We and Our Contemporary Struggles*, *Niyyat* is one of the three plays presented. There were no procedures of acting audition due to the shortage of manpower. We are six individuals working on each play in our batch; some directors also work as performers in other plays. Fatima is the lead role in *Niyyat* and my characters in the other two plays are supporting. On the first day of the meeting with the director Heidi Emelo, she let us read the first draft of the script, so we get to know or be familiar with the story. In the real world of theater, the director together with his crew will assist the actors, but because we shall be performing as staff as well in said play, we dispensed with this procedure.

We helped each other including the director when she needed us or our wanted our opinions or suggestions regarding her direction. Sometimes, we suggested her some directions so it can be aligned to what really is intended to happen in the play. It made me realized that there are times when one eye is not enough to see the magic. After a few days of meeting and planning, the three directors had already fixed the schedule. Our weekly schedule was quite difficult since three directors had rehearsed with us on the same day, which gave us loads of work to do. As an actor, I had no right to complain because we did it as a collective, and all I had to do was take a deep breath whenever I encounter hard times like this. I, personally, got mad at my co-actors who were showing their laziness in the rehearsal since our director was patiently waiting for us yet they did not seem to care. However, I can say that there had been no fights in our almost three months of collaboration.

I believe that even in the play *Niyyat*, we were able to share and help one another. If someone gets annoyed, she or he will not show her attitude in front of us to avoid wasting time.

We treasure the time because we only have each other to finish the play. Through these hardships, I was able to adopt what was taught to us in Guang Ming college which is to help one another as it would be beneficial to our own Karma (causes and condition). If we do good things to our fellow men, then it will also redound back to us.

2.3 Uta Hagen's Object Exercise in Fatima Character

Hagen's object exercises are aimed to instill into the actor's creative belief to create every second of life on stage onto their characters, in order to evaluate human behavior (1973). Based on Hagen's object exercise, this section mainly discusses Fatima's character with the following features: history of character, scene's objectives, character actions, and immediacy.

2.3.1 History of the Character

Fatima is a 25-year-old Muslim born in Mindanao. At a very young age, her father started teaching them Koran (Quran) as guidance to daily living. Koran (Quran) is a sacred Islamic book by Allah the God, and Muhammad the Prophet.

Fatima spent her childhood in her hometown with her best friend Zulayka. They were inseparable until Zulayka's family had to move to Manila, a faraway place from their place. Fatima treated her best friend like her own sister for she accepted their differences in religion, that is why it was devastating for them to be separated. Thus, Fatima promised to visit her in Manila and still be in touch and share their daily experiences.

After five years, a war broke out in Mindanao that killed hundreds of lives. Fatima is one of the survivors, along with her parents who protected her and is willing to sacrifice their lives. His father imparted to her that Allah is always watching over them, and he would never abandon them, as long as they believe in him. Her relationship with her father is very strong, since he never fails to guide her when she feels afraid. One of the most important lessons that he emphasized is

the value of *Niyyat* or intentions. Allah protects those who have pure and good intentions within them. After surviving a horrifying rage of war, Zulayka helped Fatima and her family to move to Manila. They knew that change in their lives awaits in the city. Their reunion made them feel relived and joyful, and they spent their time together sharing stories and experiences.

As she started her new life in this new place, she believed that she is free at that moment. However, as a Muslim woman, negative judgments exist everywhere. People stared at her as if she committed grave sins and has no right to be treated humanely. It made her doubt and question her faith since it felt like it was a curse. Because of this, she decided to unveil with the thought that people will accept her without *this* symbol of being a Muslim. Her father was against it, but she was convinced to fulfill this decision. It was the biggest mistake she made for there are still people who treated her badly, even without the veil. Guilt wrapped her heart as she broke her father's trust. She regrets her decision, feeling that she should have chosen to strengthen her faith rather than trying to fit in the society. She should have believed in Allah whatever circumstance she faces. When his father died, she blamed herself for the wrongful deeds she made. It remained to her as a lesson, and realization that she should have learned it all much earlier.

2.3.2 Scene Objective

The actor will not meet her goals and obstacles if she does not have her objective for the character. Table 2.1 presents some of the scenarios that I analyzed and practiced in reaching my objectives. This part of the process was highly valuable in assessing activities that contribute more to attain accuracy in work. I also focused on the growth of my intentions in embodying a character which I learned and explored during progression.

Scenes	Obstacles	Objective
Prologue: Ritual	Break the protocol	To execute it thoroughly
Scene 1: Game, Separation	Departure of my best friend	To pretend that I am okay
Scene 2: The Father's teaching, The War	- To make mistake in reciting the teachings - Separation from the family	-To recite perfectly with the heart - To help my family
Scene 3: Journey to Manila, Office Work	- Fears and discriminations - New colleagues and feeling of discrimination	- To endure -To impress, to fit in
Scene 4: The Bar Unveil	- Peer pressure - Beginning to question my religion	- To fit in - To fight, to revolt
Scene 4:Father's Death	- Broke my father's trust	- To forgive myself

Table 2.1 Fatima's Objective on facing her Obstacles in Respective Scene

2.3.3 Character Action

Part of my character action exercises is studying roles with different characteristics, analyzing, and embodying their traits specified in the narrative. In the play *Niyyat*, I chose two characters Fatima and Zulayka in adopting the character-action exercise to see how different they are in a given circumstances and objectives. In this scenario, I studied the roles of Zulayka and

Fatima. The given circumstances in the play are: both Fatima and Zulayka were invited by their friends in the exclusive bar (see Table 2.2)

Two Characters in the Same Play	Objective	Circumstances	Conflict	Action
Zulayka	To fit in	In the bar, wears blue jean and t-shirt	A guy offers her to dance	She accepts the offer
Fatima	To fit in	In the bar, wears dark jeans and t-shirt	A guy offers her to dance	She refuses the offer

Table 2.2 Presents Character Action Exercise

To describe their physicality, the scene where they went to the bar was considered. Zulayka had her hair treatments done in the salon wearing heavy make-up, while Fatima had her hair cut short wearing a simple make up. Both of them are wearing heels. Upon meeting their friends at the bar, Zulayka was filled with excitement, while Fatima was shy, although both of them loved the loud music. After a few moments, the beat of music changed and a group of men came to their table asking for a dance. Zulayka immediately gave her hand to the man, while Fatima preferred to stay alone while watching her friends dance. Joining her friends to dance crossed Fatima's mind as well, but she chose to get drunk instead. This scenario is an example of exploring distinctive roles that will teach an actor to develop flexibility in embodying a character guided by the narrative. This exercise can be done by exchanging roles and practicing with co-actors. It can also be applied while rehearsing with the director. Based on my personal experience, the director asked me to explore various roles such as Zulayka, who is a very outgoing person, and the character Fatima who is very timid. This also teaches actors how to perform a character from a text and give

life to it through the embodiment of an actor, believing in the character's existence, and creating its world on stage. This exercise can be done one after the other in the same place and circumstances using the same objects (circumstance, objective, obstacle, and action). The goal is to make the characters' different from each other through their action response (Hagen, 1973).

After completing this exercise, I believe it is difficult to play different roles with the same circumstances and barriers with the purpose of coming up with a new reaction to each difficulty. By portraying these two characters, I've realized that people make different choices in life about how to deal with their problems because it also matters with their different characteristics. Like how the other characters in the play *Niyyat* handles various situations, they may have the same obstacles and situations but it is vital to understand how they process the decisions they make. As an actress, it is my obligation to learn more about these different characters.

2.3.4 Immediacy

It is very important that an actor knows how to avoid anticipation in performing a scene. One should go through the process of taking time to naturally act the details leading to the establishment of motivation for the scene. For example, in a scenario where an actor realized that her key is missing, her objective is to find the key. Before the immediate act that the key is missing, which based on the script, the key was under the office table, one has to do the detailed actions to reach the objective. The actor may show facial expressions showing that something is missing. Then the actor will apply actions such as searching from the office drawers, moving back and forth to different blockings, checking in the bag or pouch, and finally, putting an act of sudden remembering, going straight to get the key under the table. Although an actor is aware of the entire happenings in the scenario, rehearsing it for a couple of times would make an actor to be able to express the small details that compose the whole scene; believe and act naturally to express the

objective. One of the examples is the dispute between the father and daughter in the play that I had a tendency to anticipate. Therefore, before it gets to that scenario, I remember returning home and worrying that my father would notice that I was not wearing the hijab, so as I entered the house, I did not glance around for anyone and just assumed that I was exhausted and needed to rest. I have to come up with another reasonable idea that would not lead me to the conclusion that this is a fight scene. Of course, I have an idea about it, but it should not appear obvious for the sake of the audience. The shift in thought allows me to not overthink the following scene; instead, I focused on my current obstacles, which included my head throbbing and my feet hurting, and prompted me to rest in my room. In adopting this exercise, what happened before that scene was acted is the foundation - to not quickly slip into anticipation when using this exercise.

2.4 Uta Hagen's "Nine Questions" for Character Analysis of Fatima during the War

In order to embody and put a character into life, one should analyze the influences that build up a character. An actor should know the entirety of the character including the physicality, way of thinking, origin, time, place, and social relationships. This analysis will contribute to a well-established and realistic way of acting and embodiment. Specific questions are required for actors to practice in recreating a two-minute out of his or her own life in getting to know the character alone.

In addressing these nine questions, I focused on Fatima's experiences during the war. The war scene is particularly my favorite since it inspires my character to fight for her rights after the catastrophe. She wished for everyone to accept her as a member of the community and to respect her as a human being. One of the reasons she wanted to set aside her beliefs and fit into a new environment was because of the effects of the war.

Given Circumstances: Scene: The War

2.4.1 Who am I?

In answering this question, it only informs about the specific behavior and attitude that my character had, not the general history of the character.

(My Character Fatima)

In struggling with her beliefs, my character is intellectually brave. Her faith is being lived through the spiritual guidance of her family, particularly her father. She is nice with individuals she knows, such as her best friend, yet she is shy around strangers.

2.4.2 What time is it?

(On 23rd of May 2017, an attack happened by Muslim Militants affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq)

On the 23rd day of May 2017 at 7 o'clock in the morning, the chaos began between government forces and militants affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq, and the Levant. People were dying from explosions and killings, covered by ashes and smoke. Many were hiding under their houses; they could hear the loud noises of war all over the city, thinking whether or not they could survive or become a hostage.

2.4.3 Where am I?

(A small village in Barangay Bangon in the province of Marawi)

Under their house, she was hiding with her parents showing tremendous fears in their eyes. She could see people holding guns from a small hole inside their hiding place. Her father asked her not to make any noise and hide well. The bombs were falling everywhere but they were fortunately safe at the moment. Taking chances, her father evacuated them to the mountains. On their way, it was dark, seeing their house burning from a fire.

2.4.4 What surrounds me?

(Ruined houses and a group of armed people with guns)

They are surrounded by forests, staying in the mountains for a couple of days until a relative informed them about the evacuation center that was safely guarded by the authorized government officers. They immediately went to the center and saw people suffer from hunger, pain, and loss. They could hear cries from men, women, and children especially those who were injured. There was blood everywhere. She remembered her father told her to strengthen her faith in such situations, and Allah will send protection.

2.4.5 What are the given circumstances? (Past, Present, and Future)

(Destruction of the war, staying in the evacuation center, relocation to Manila)

The war destroyed everything. Lives were changed including that of her family, but she is thankful that she, including her family, survived. Such hideous scenery will leave scars in everyone's hearts and minds. She was staying in the evacuation center, while waiting for a good news from her friend. She was thinking that a new place could offer them a better life.

2.4.6 What is my relationship? (People, her best friend, Allah)

The war in their hometown stopped, yet the fear of living there will never go away. Her best friend helped her family to move and live in Manila for greater chances of peace. The war has caused her to strengthen her faith in Allah, believing that Allah would guide them to a better journey. Upon beginning a life in Manila, their family started putting up a business, making new friends, and traveling places. The new experiences gave them hope and relief as they left their hometown.

2.4.7 What do I want? (Equality)

She prays for acceptance and peace within her heart, mind, and soul. She wants equality despite all the differences that each person has, whether in religion, race, status, labels, culture, and many other aspects. She believes that people share the same blood, living in the same land. She is determined to fight and stand for her rights, live with peace without fear.

2.4.8 What's in my way? (My obstacles)

Knowing each obstacle of the character is one way to reach his or her objective of the play. I have recognized these obstacles in my character and it was harder than I thought because overcoming these struggles gave way to my character's objective. Thus, I believe that having difficulties is always a challenge for a character's journey — a means to exert or show a strong drive to continue reaching his or her goal. I learned that in my process of fulfilling the character's need. This is to challenge herself in difficult situations and relate it into real experiences.

Some of the obstacles that my character faced during the war scenario included remembering how the war destroyed or ruined all of the people's possessions, as well as the severe agony caused by the explosions. It also instilled worry and anxiety in those individuals, particularly my character, because the weapons of war can kill and destroy. Instead of remaining in the evacuation center, she sought assistance from her friend just to ensure the protection of her family.

2.4.9 What do I do to get what I want?

In continuation of my character's obstacles, Fatima called her best friend for assistance despite of the fact that the situation was really bad and compounded by a terrible and weak cell phone signal in the area. Fatima waited a few months before she could call her friend. Finally, Fatima's dearest buddy accepted her call and was able to assist her in relocating to a new city. Fatima wished to seek out any opportunities to begin a new life away from the negative experiences

she has had. This is only the beginning of her journey; the image of the city convinced her that she must be cautious about whom she can trust once more.

2.5 Uta Hagen's Five Elements of Acting Technique in Fatima

I have adopted the five elements of acting techniques of Uta Hagen (1973) namely “substitution”, “transference”, “authenticity”, “specificity” and “preparation” for my character Fatima. Thus, in understanding the process, I shared my experiences on how I practice and apply these elements of acting in said character. In addition, these strategies assisted me in overcoming my obstacles and challenges in portraying Fatima.

Uta Hagen (1973: 11-12) mentioned that “there are two approaches that the actors use; one is where the representational actor deliberately chooses to imitate or illustrate the character's behavior; second, the presentational actor attempts to reveal human behavior through a use of himself, through an understanding of himself.” It seems that Hagen prefers the presentational over the representational approach for actors as she believes that “it is a timeless human experience” This is probably because she believed that what is working for her as a teacher and as an actor will be applicable for the young generation of actors. Knowing about this idea, I was inspired to adopt her principles for acting technique in my characterization of Fatima.

2.5.1 Transference or Substitution

Once we tract of self-discovery in terms of an enlargement of our sense of identity, and we now try to apply this knowledge to an identification with the character in the play, we must make this transference, this finding of the character within ourselves, through a continuing and overlapping series of substitutions from our own experience.

(Hagen, 1973: 34)

“Substitution” comes together with “transference” when giving the circumstances between the character and the images that are recalling (Hagen, 1973). Nevertheless, Mulligan (2014) mentioned that Uta Hagen’s “substitution” has evolved to a new term, “transference”. For some reason, the word “substitution” was not really embraced by some actors, so she suggested that actors start with their own self-analysis and use their five senses.

In addition, Andrew Wood (2021) defines “transference” as “the process of attempting to find counterparts from your own experience for the people, places, and things you interact with within the course of your performance. Dissecting these two definitions from Hagen’s students, my own understanding of transference is applying life experiences into the character’s situation.

Situation from <i>Niyyat</i> Play	Real life Experience
Having a father figure	Having raised by my uncle and grandfather
Embodying a Muslim character	Staying with a Muslim friend back in high school where I witnessed the practices of Islam (e.g wearing hijab, eating Halal product, practicing five times of prayers in a day)
Working in a government office in the city	Working in a fast food chain in the Philippines where I worked with various people who have a different background as me

Table 2.3 Applying Real Life Experience in *Niyyat*

In Table 2.3 I have mentioned several moments from *Niyyat* where applying the real life experience as mentioned in Uta Hagen's "transference" technique may be gleaned. I exemplify the scenario one in the following:

Fatima was raised by a loving father who educated her about the Muslim faith since she was a child. Her relationship with her father is one of the important aspects of Fatima's character. Unlike Fatima, I personally did not experience having a father figure in my life. In the process of creating Fatima's identity, I found it difficult to relate to her character because I did not experience having a father. This is how "transference" came into picture. The real life experience that I have applied to relate with the father-daughter relationship are the memories I had spent with my uncle and grandfather. Although our relationship is not directly as strong as a father-daughter relationship, I found that by using these experiences of having a male relative who looks after me, I was able to embody Fatima's character. This is also how I was able to understand the idea of merely using "substitution", whereas back in college, whenever I encountered a certain scenario for the character I am playing, I just usually watched videos or looked for a sample to copy or replace the character. Although it is also one of the trainings that was introduced to me, I found that in using the transference technique, I was able to deeply dig into my character's identity.

Therefore, applying the transference technique for the father figure is important in my character because of two main reasons. Firstly, the main character's relationship to her father from the play is one with great importance or focus in the story. Secondly, I did not experience having a female figure in real life. Therefore, I only recognized the specificity of using a male figure because I created a special bond with my uncle and grandfather. On the other hand, I was not able to apply the mother figure relationship because I already knew how a mother's character is exhibited when she approaches and holds her daughter and it is easy to relate this to my character.

Overall, specificity is an important approach in applying the transference technique in the character because it digs into the real life experiences of the actor and applies it into the character.

2.5.2 Authenticity in (props, costume and other elements in the play)

One of the notable approaches of Uta Hagen in her training is that she would ask her actors and students to utilize all the props, costumes, and other elements needed in a play. She believed that by using such, the actors will be able to deliver a more realistic approach to acting. This is how authenticity is being explained from the five key elements of Uta Hagen's Acting technique. In the play *Niyyat*, the director's concept does not really require a lot of stage design or props. She only used five blocks and some minimal props to indicate a certain scenario in the play. These props are blocks that can be used as a chair, platform, or box to hide small props such as folders, bags, office stationery, and beer. On the other hand, the director chose to use several costumes for each of the characters. I had several quick changes in the play to indicate the scene changes.

By using some of these elements like props and costumes, I was able to achieve the characterization needed to embody Fatima. In order to portray a Muslim character, I used hijab, a Muslim traditional attire. During rehearsals, my director deemed it necessary that I wear a hijab not only because it is necessary in the scene but she sees that as a very important element in my characterization. By using hijab during rehearsals, I was reminded to portray a Muslim character and to be aware of the action and gestures that I should maintain being a Muslim. While wearing the hijab I felt more secured and protected. I have this idea that Muslim women wears their hijab for their self-protection against harassment. The feeling is mutual and it gives me the sensation of wholeness and respect. Without wearing the hijab, the need of embodying the character is not complete. This is how Hagen's authenticity is being practiced in Fatima's character. By using the costume during rehearsals, I was able "to manifest a naturalistic behavior" (Ates, 2021).

During the rehearsals, one challenge that occurred in staging *Niyyat* was when the actual props arrived a week before moving in the theater, for I found difficulty in adjusting from the substitute props to the actual props. One example is the five blocks that were used in the play. In the rehearsal studio, we used five stools as a substitute for the blocks. These stools are light compared to the actual blocks. I found it awkward using the actual blocks because I got used to carrying a lighter rectangular chair. Having the actual props is one thing that was also emphasized by our adviser in every rehearsal because it affects the portrayal of the character. I was reminded by the idea of ‘muscle memory’ that when we get used to doing an action, we tend to do it naturally without thinking too much about the action.

Authenticity comes in many aspects in the characterization of a certain persona. It can be established by the relationship with the props, presence of the costume, and (but not limited) to architectural features of the stage. It is necessary as it helps the actor to motivate an authentic action that is not imitated from our initial knowledge. From performing Fatima’s character, I just cannot make a realistic performance that is only based on my experiences. Uta Hagen always gives emphasis to any materials or objects that are parts of the play to practice it as if doing it in real life to manifest the authenticity of the action.

Although this technique is one of the important elements of Hagen’s technique, I still found having the props, costumes, and other elements on stage not too necessary. Although it can contribute to the characterization, I was used to making something on stage without any elements. I believe I am still capable of performing Fatima’s character, but I do not disregard this technique altogether because in some situations in the play, I need something to be able to imagine my character. Though I did not initially use the actual props in the rehearsal studio, I overcame the awkwardness of using the authentic props to put Fatima’s persona into life after two to three

rehearsals. Therefore, it only depends on the availability of the real props and costume present on stage.

2.5.3 Specificity in the stated scenarios

“Specificity” according to Uta Hagen (1973) is a way for determining how an object is used to explore in the scene’s context. This technique lets an individual use their senses to interact with the elements or items that are being used in the character. It supports the actor to visualize an image and portray the character's existence. With this, I can explore the specificity of the stated scenarios in the script. For instance, the following lines were spoken by Fatima as a part of her story before the war: “It was supposed to be a peaceful evening. I was looking at the moon from our window when suddenly...” To apply specificity in this line, I dissected the lines by picturing the key words stated in the line. From the words “peaceful evening,” I imagined a typical picture in the province where most people stay inside the house after dusk; crickets start to make noise as the street is slowly covered in darkness. On the other hand, to imagine the moon as what was stated in the line, I pictured a crescent moon with only a few stars that are visible in the sky. This evening, as mentioned by the writer, is a peaceful evening so I imagined it as a typical evening, a night which is just like any other night. No unusual thing is supposed to happen. Of course it was no ordinary night as the sudden blast of the bombs ripped through the silence of the night and in fact, ruined the evening. This line seems to be very short but it is important to indicate Fatima’s experience in this particular event that greatly affected her overall personality. Thus, by applying specificity, I have understood Fatima’s character by digging deeply into the meaning of the lines. Specificity is one way to picture out images that were stated by the character. These lines might not be as highlighted as the other, but it certainly helped to understand the character.

Another scenario in the play was Fatima telling stories about prejudice which happened to her Muslim brothers and sisters after a bombing incident in the city which many believed was carried out by a Muslim terrorist. Table 2.4 presents the lines I stated in this scene, and apply specificity in these lines to dissect the following story.

Lines	Specificity (Picturing the Situation/Character)
A Muslim student was bullied on her way back home, calling her “Pangalan pa lang kriminal na” (She looks like a criminal just by the sound of her name).	A 10-year old girl wears her easy-to-wear maroon hijab, walking toward her home after a half-day class at a public elementary school. She wears her uniform, which is a dirty white top and maroon wrinkled skirt, and a tattered Barbie old bag.
A man in his 30’s was stopped by the security guard from entering a mall because he is a Muslim.	A 30-year-old man is wearing white long sleeves, black slacks, and a white Muslim headgear. He had just gotten off work and was rushing into the mall to buy his son's favorite toy.

<p>Another student who wears her hijab was stopped by a policeman and had her scarf pulled off.</p>	<p>A 15-year-old student wears her red, easy to wear- hijab, and school uniform (white top and blue skirt bottom). She is passing by the street beside a small sari-sari store when a two standing police officer, drinking a bottle of coke, suddenly call her attention.</p>
<p>A Muslim father was stabbed to death one night while walking back home from his small sari-sari store. News said that the man got out-of-control (run among) after hearing the bystanders shouting, “Islam is a religion for demons and that all Muslim are killer.” But the real story is that he confronts them peacefully after hearing those words.</p>	<p>A 65-year-old man wears his favorite blue shirt and black pants. It is starting to get dark as he prepares to pack all his products. He makes sure to lock his small store. Walking toward his home, he sees a group of drunken bystanders, then he heard them talking about the Islam religion.</p>

Table 2.4 Presents the Lines in this Scene, and Apply Specificity in these Lines

“Specificity” helps me to grab the most important detail of each scenario’s characteristics that I stated above. The senses that I used to identify the shapes, color, texture, atmosphere and time are important in creating the character. I believe that being specific is not the only way to enhance the imagination; doing research and observation of the different situations is as good as well. This technique is essential in knowing every detail of the character’s identity.

2.5.4 Preparation

This technique preparation, according to Ates (2021), is for the actors to create their own ground training preparation before the rehearsal starts. It is believed that Uta Hagen (1973) requires

it for her students to be able to give a realistic experience in creating the character. She entails the actor to give her full concentration of the character’s physicality in doing exercises by applying some of her acting techniques outside the space. In relation to this and in the play *Niyyat*, I have undertaken some basic exercises that would aid me in the preparation of the play. These exercises are breathing, vocalization, various facial expressions, and shaking the body. These examples are commonplace in our daily lives. Before the rehearsal begins, these are commonly seen in many acting exercises. Additionally, growth in creating a physical routine will take time, and the system will ultimately become accustomed to it. As a result, it is critical to be well-prepared with a strong desire to complete the work. Table 2.5 presents different exercises in “preparation” for the actor’s physical demands of the performance.

Preparations for Basic Exercises
Breathing
Vocalization
Shaking the body
Different facial expression

Table 2.5 Presents Basic Exercises in “Preparation” for the Actor’s Physical Demands of the Performance

These basic exercises (breathing, vocalization, shaking the body and various facial expressions) are done through the following process. First, as part of my morning routine, I apply breathing exercises with a proper posture and doing inhales and exhales in my nose and mouth, repeating a few times to slow the heart rate and become more relaxed. Second is the vocalization exercise done by humming and doing lip drills to warm up to prevent damage in the vocal cords.

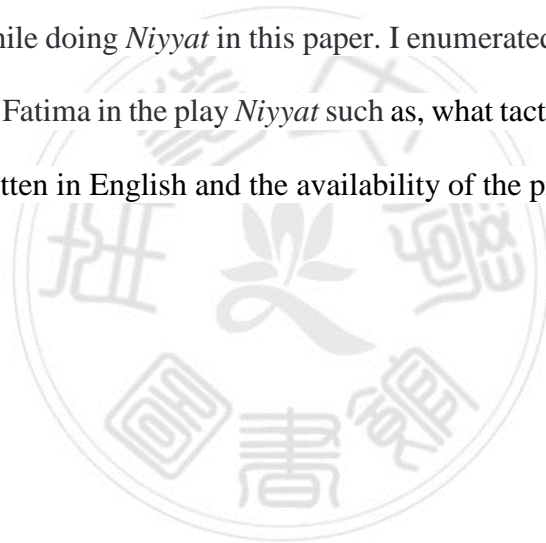
This also helps actors to articulate their lines properly. Third is to shake the body by starting in both hands, arms, and shoulders until the whole body. By quickly moving the body, it releases the internal tensions and anxieties. Lastly, apply various facial expressions while facing the mirror. This exercise requires facial warm-up before jumping to the facial expressions. To loosen the muscles around the jaw, begin massaging the face in a circular motion. Then, like a lion, open the mouth wide, then scrunch the face into a meek, small expression like a mouse. After completing the task, take a five-minute break before moving on to the next exercise, which is the facial expressions. Face the mirror with more facial expressions: sad, happy, angry, sorrow, fear, scared, surprise and more. These are just a few of the fundamental exercises I practiced prior to the rehearsal. Moreover, the basic exercise requires self-observation to get extremely familiarized in applying the expressions to the character. These exercises can be practiced alone, with or without the stage because this is the time that an actor can enhance his own understanding of the environment. Overall, these exercises aid my character in rehearsals for the play and in recreating the scenes as if it were the first time.

2.5.5 Conclusion

Uta Hagen believes that choosing the path of becoming an actor involves both responsibility and self-discipline. Way back in my undergraduate years, I was curious about what acting techniques may be suitable to me. Some of the methods I used were from Constantine Stanislavski Acting Techniques. I found out that it is not applicable all the time in my practice. I realized that I need to find a specific element of technique that will enrich my way of building the character. In most characters I portrayed, I had difficulties in portraying particular situations that I did not encounter yet in real life. In the play *Niyyat*, there are scenes of Fatima with her father, the war, being a Muslim, and even working as an employee. These are but a few challenges I had

in characterizing Fatima. How I should portray her became my main concern. I kept on looking for the right approach which can help me address my concern in terms of embodying the character. Upon searching, I discovered the Elements of the Acting Technique of Uta Hagen that enabled me to explore and discover another approach of processing my acting choice. I do not have actual experience applying her technique yet, but I understood her main objective for acting.

In portraying the character of Fatima, I encountered various difficulties in terms of putting the character into the play. During rehearsals, I struggled a lot in understanding the text as well as in looking for a suitable tactic. As a result, it is critical that I share some of the concerns and obstacles I encountered while doing *Niyyat* in this paper. I enumerated specific challenges I had in portraying the character of Fatima in the play *Niyyat* such as, what tactics are suitable, the obstacles in memorizing a script written in English and the availability of the props and costumes.



Chapter III: Conclusion

After discussing the productivity of using Uta Hagen's Elements of Acting as a guide in the researcher's acting process and performance, this chapter focuses on the closure statements and propositions of this thesis. It also includes the researcher's results in conducting self-analysis through a performance observation process.

Being part of a play requires an actor to take responsibility in embodying and expressing the existence of the character through performance. The actor must deliver the narrative with well-executed actions, motivation in speaking each line, humble demeanor, and being true to the context. An actor may apply gestures, speech, and body movements to express roles in a comic or drama. In processing and performing my role as Fatima in the play *Niyyat*, I also needed to deal with my doubts in doing the part of directing or acting in the play. Considering my colleague's desire to do directing, I chose to act instead. In the beginning of the process, I had disappointments for not pursuing the part of being the director. Besides this, I need to show support to my classmates' choices and efficiently use my time in doing my part as an actor. My mind was unsettled, battling with distinct thoughts which have caused me to lose focus. However, I realized that in most of my performances in theater, I always play the part of being a director. This opportunity to act is a challenge, and I decided to face it to develop my joy, passion, and approach in acting. I was able to recall and apply my ideals in the internalization of role, training, translating emotions in my lines, and performing a character. More so, I was able to face a new set of challenges in a different task which has highly contributed to my growth as an actor. I was able to work doing my critical analysis of the play, memorization of lines, accuracy in pronouncing words, internalizing the motivations as I spoke the narrative, and letting my character realistically be performed on stage. I also contributed to the visualization of the character's costume and props.

Learning in theater is endless. The teachings within it come day by day as I develop myself as a theater practitioner. As an actor, one must not fear exploring a distinctive perspective that is out of their comfort zone. My creative process is not easy, but it has given me enlightenment in various points of view.

Upon reading and researching distinctive techniques and methods, I found the most precise ideals in guiding my creative process and output. In this study, I applied Uta Hagen's objective exercise, nine questions for character analysis, and five acting technique in my role of Fatima.

Uta Hagen's Five Aspects of Acting Method in developing my character namely, substitution/transference, specificity, authenticity, and preparation. This is necessary in enhancing the sense of connection between the actor and the character that he/she needs to portray. It is overwhelming to discover numerous techniques as an approach in establishing a role in a play. However, using Uta Hagen's techniques helped me narrow down the major needs of developing my character. Hagen gave specific elements where I mainly focused on my training. Personally, Hagen's method helped me to be specific in defining my goals in character embodiment and control of emotions in many circumstances. I started practicing and assessing Hagen's object exercises that have strengthened my aspirations in expressing my character. It has provided identifications of my needs and difficulties that helped me see the areas that need improvement. Hagen's techniques have contributed more to my ability to become persistent and confident in performing as Fatima in the play *Niyyat*. More so, it has effectively established my characterization, where I was able to present the best of my skills. I am grateful to the support of my fellow colleagues, director, and professors.

This study shows the productivity and reflections in using Uta Hagen's Acting Techniques in establishing my role as Fatima in the play *Niyyat*. I documented my personal observations and

analysis of the methods used which has resulted in positive results in the process of my characterization. In conclusion, I have come up to recommend the following to strengthen roles in performing: 1) allow specific time to explore Uta Hagen's Object Exercises, 2) manage careful recalling of past experiences for it may arise one's traumatic past, and 3) always journal your thoughts, experiences, and feedbacks, whether it is good or bad.



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Appendixes

Production Journal and Notes

The pre-production is a collection of data from my journal and comments from my director and lecturer. This contains the records of my experience leading up to the play.

18th of January, 2021

(Heidi's Play)

We had a lengthy chat about my character Fatima and my best buddy Zulyka's story, so our director started telling us about each character's backstory as well as their attitudes and behaviors, and I was told that the play was about a Muslim girl.

25th of February, 2021

(All three Productions)

Our teacher (Pao- Chang Tsai) emphasized that before entering the stage, we should know how to set our aim or purpose since it affects the scene and the characters. What makes you want to get up and move? He also stated that in order to assist our director. I must develop my character well.

26th of February, 2021

Because I was still learning my lines, I needed to hurry so that if our director does the blocking, she won't have a difficult time fixing our lines. However, I was having a trouble memorizing it which could be due to the way the content was written.

2nd of March, 2021

I made time to connect with my character now and again. It appeared that I was bored while doing it, possibly because I was not always focused on character preparation. Our directors always reminded us and guided us to come to know our characters throughout the process. It wasn't easy, but it was our obligation as actors to bring the character to life.

3rd of March, 2021

Our teacher said that in order to have a struggle, we have to create an obstacle.

4th of March, 2021

(Heidi's Play)

Our teacher gave this advice: "Lines should be memorized effectively; varied dynamics should be used; the character should not yet be established; and don't stock one's feeling." My director suggested that I try a different emotion to add variety to the scenario."

The first preview was on Jan 27, 2021

The play *Niyyat*, directed by Heidi I Emelo, had its premiere preview on January 27, 2021. We were all nervous on that day since the lines I had memorized were not yet fixed, and most of the movements were not quite accurate, so we were all nervous. However, we were not yet finished because there were two more plays to go. *The Funeral* is the second play, while *The Other Half* is the third. In fact, the three productions were able to demonstrate that day that we could all make it to the Finals. This was only the first round, and there will be many more days in which the directors and performers should work together.

The second preview was on Feb 4, 2021

We were all under pressure that day since we had to show all of the scenes in order to make it to the final show. I was concerned at the time since it was my major role in the first play *Niyyat*, which was a heavy task for me, but I kept thinking that I needed to be prepared at all times, just like my other co-actors. The first play is *Niyyat* and our teacher Pao Chang Tsai commented on my acting that he felt that I was still memorizing the text. That was why the emotion and character were not yet there. He also commented that I only showed one emotion. He felt pity about it because I haven't used any other tactics to show my struggle or obstacles. On the second show, *the Funeral*, I found out that there are a lot of things to fix when it comes to switching the character and what the goal of each character is. The last one is *the Other Half* wherein we had to react to every scene because our faces were not seen from the scene. The important reminder from our director was that we have to always remember our blocking and movements.

The following previews were Feb 5,6,7, 2021

For the following days, it was very hectic because we needed to polish every scene and my director was always reminding me to know my character well especially the Scene 2, the meeting of two best friends. In this scene, I had to find another tactic on how am I could approach my best friend so that there would be another dynamic of emotion. On the second play, *the Funeral*, I had to watch real reporters how they behave on people. As for the third play, *the Other Half*, because I was also switching my character from child to that of a “mirror man,” then what substitution would I be using so that it will be very effective. I was thinking that because the main character is a Muslim, what I did was to watch some videos related to Muslim so that I would be able to understand how they feel. On the other hand, being an activist is not easy. That's why I was watching the news from our country so that I would be able to use it as my battle during the rally scene.

1st Run through Feb 22, 2021

This was the day that we have to show everything to our Department Head. The feeling was a combination of excitement and nervousness because at last, we had finally made it up to her level. Although the three plays were still a lot of things to polish, at least I was very happy that we have come this far. Of course, the comment about me was still about my acting attack on every scene. I know that sometimes I find it hard to memorize the text because the language is different and I have to learn the right pronunciation but it is my responsibility as an actor to push myself harder.

2nd Run Through March 11, 2021

It was during that day that we had to show the development of each play, but during the past few weeks that we were polishing the first half of the three plays, the directors were thinking that would only show half of the play. Because of this reason, I didn't really give time to my other lines on the last scene of *Niyyat* but the result was very disappointing. I wasn't very happy because I know it is my responsibility to learn all my lines but I had forgotten it during the show and it was a mess. I feel like I didn't study acting for four years and that I have neglected my responsibility as an actor. I was very sorry to my director that day although our professor said that the first part of the play *Niyyat* has improved. Nonetheless, I still felt sad about my performance.

Poster

04.15.21

Thu. 19:30

嘉義縣表演藝術中心
實驗劇場

Chiayi Performing Arts Center
Experimental Theatre

本次演出為
英文發音, 中文字幕。

This program is
performed in English
with Chinese subtitles.

指導老師》蔡柏璋

WE AND *our* CONTEMPOR*ary* STRUGGLE

索票請洽→

南華大學民族音樂學系
(05)2721001轉 2271

南華大學
民族音樂學系(所)
戲劇組碩士班畢業公演

Theatre Graduation Production
of Nanhua University
Department of Ethnomusicology

*
我們與當代的
→困←獸之鬥

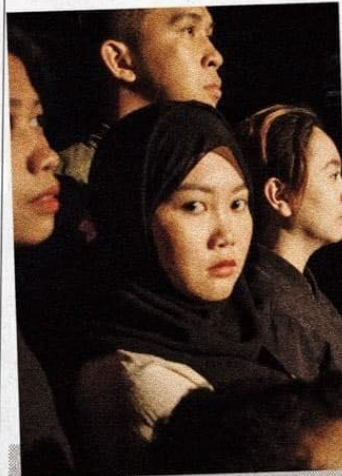
演員》

Mia L. Rafol,
Danica A. Somosa,
Heidi S. Emelo,
Ralph Jade B. Tampal,
Wincy B. Ramilo,
April Mae P. Delgado



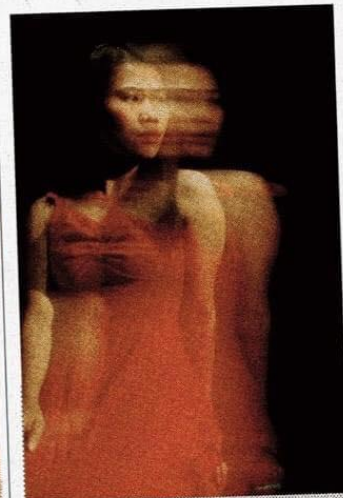
《另一半》
The Other Half

導演
Wincy B. Ramilo



《意念》
Niyyat

導演
Heidi S. Emelo



《葬禮》
The Funeral

導演
Ralph Jade B. Tampal

舞台設計指導→王君雅 舞台監督→陳品璇 技術統籌→林哲宇 舞台設計→April Panaguigon Delgado
燈光設計→宋永鴻、汪文昱 服裝設計→張義宗 平面攝影/影像設計→余絃之 劇照攝影→廖志晏 平面設計→鍾明佳

主辦單位→南華大學 承辦單位→民族音樂學系(所)
協辦單位→嘉義縣表演藝術中心、菲律賓光明大學

Rehearsals Photos

1.1 Previews (Jan 27, 2021)



These photos were taken during the first preview of Niyyat Play and was photograph by my classmate Evangeline Recto in the Dance Studio.

1.2 Technical Dress Rehearsal (TDR)

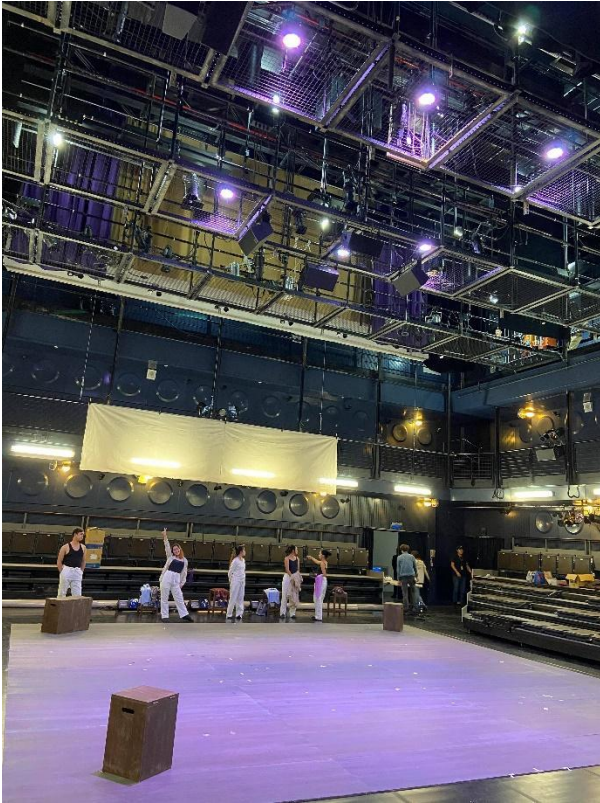


Photo by: Wen Zhong Lin

April 15, 2021

Chaiyi Performing Arts Center. This photo was taken during the show.

