

Preprint version. Was later published as:

Bergman Blix, Stina (2009). "Emotional participation: the use of the observer's emotions as a methodological tool when studying professional stage actors rehearsing a role for the stage". *Nordic Theatre Studies*, vol. 21, pp. 29-38.

Emotional participation: the use of the observer's emotions as a methodological tool when studying professional stage actors rehearsing a role for the stage¹

Abstract

This contribution aims to identify and clarify emotional aspects of conducting observation studies. The researcher, in most cases, does not want to interfere with or influence the phenomenon under observation, but uses her/himself as a tool to collect material. Even if the observer does not participate verbally, s/he can be emotionally participative using her/his emotions as a methodological tool, generating reflections and insights relative to the situations and persons that are the object of observation. Earlier contributions from social anthropology and psychotherapy are discussed and compared to examples from observations on the rehearsals of two theatre productions. One crucial point is that the researcher's emotions can be more or less congruent with the situation at hand; a match as well as a mis-match can be used as information in the research process. Furthermore, the emotional expressions displayed by professional actors can be more or less emotionally anchored within them. Do the observer's feelings correlate with the research subjects' felt emotions or their portrayed emotions? Reflections on these issues can be used in interviews with research subjects to attain a more nuanced and tangible interpretation of the studied phenomenon.

Keywords: theatre studies, participant observation, emotions, methodology

Introduction

Stage actors² often refer to their work with a character as “going from outside in”, starting with the body and gestures and then moving into an emotional understanding, or as “going from inside out”, searching for an emotional understanding that can be expressed in congruence with the experience. One way to study these processes is to investigate the relationship between emotional experience and emotional expression. The expression of emotions can be observed by a researcher, but the expression comprises only one side of the coin. How can one study the emotional experience of the actor? Interviews are one way, but although actors are professionals in expressing emotions they are not necessarily similarly adept in reflecting upon their emotional experiences. Furthermore, in studying stage actors the relationship between experience and expression seems even more intricate since, on the stage, their emotional displays are professional, i.e. represent a produced character that originates in, but does not necessarily correspond with, the actor’s emotions. It is important to note that the character in itself does not have emotions; the emotional displays of the actor represent the emotions of the character. On the other hand, in everyday life emotions come spontaneously, while the emotions presented on stage grow out of meticulous rehearsals and it is possible to study them in the making.

The purpose of this paper is to propose and discuss ways to use the researcher’s own emotions as a tool when studying professional stage actors rehearsing, with the primary aim of studying the relationship between emotional experiences and their expressions and the secondary aim of exploring how private experiences relate to professional displays. As we shall see, by reflecting on my emotional experiences as an observer, in relation to the stage actors’ emotional displays, I was able to discover how the relationship between the actors’ experienced and expressed emotions varied during rehearsals.

To study the emotion work that stage actors perform is in many ways to enter a minefield. On the one hand, actors can be admired for their deeply felt interpretations on stage. On the other hand, doing just that can cause them to be dismissed as emotional beings since the presence of emotions still tend to be associated with the lack of reason or capability for reflection. Stage actors evidently use emotions as tools

in their work, but the private and unpredictable connotations that are associated with emotions makes it delicate to talk about. In an interview and observation study to be presented below, some of the actors expressed a wish to talk about the emotional consequences of their work but thought that it would be difficult. Since professional actors are supposed to be able to turn their emotions on and off swiftly, the actors' I interviewed found that discussing any problems associated with this particular aspect of their work may seem unprofessional. I tried to avoid these clichés both when meeting the stage actors and when writing this text. The strategy I employed was to bypass superficial or routine wordings, for example: by undertaking interviews directly following a rehearsal and then focusing on particular events that took place in that rehearsal; avoiding general answers and thereby being able to analyze nuances that emerged gradually in the interviews and observations.

Interviews are an excellent means to learn about people's experiences, but they can also generate rather general and stereotypical answers. In interviewing stage actors, two opposite problems have occurred. Either the actors, used to being interviewed by journalists etc., deliver a canned speech or, coming closer to specific work methods, the actors tell me that they have not talked about this before and have a hard time formulating what they actually do³. Talking about emotions does not necessarily coincide with experiencing emotions, both due to the fact that emotions can be difficult to verbalize and because people are not always aware of what they feel. To study emotions we have to come up with alternative methods.

In the ethnographic literature the researcher's emotions are often seen as important aspects of their field-notes, mainly because emotions affect our relations with interviewees and with the situation in the field as well as with how and what the researcher chooses to observe and interpret⁴. However, used with care, the researcher's emotional reactions can deliberately be made use of to understand the phenomena under investigation⁵. In this paper I will shortly review how observers use their own emotions in the field as developed in social anthropological studies and in psychoanalytical discussions on countertransference, and thereafter discuss how the different roles taken by observer and actor respectively, influence their emotional reactions. Finally, I will present three examples of how I made use of my own

emotional reactions in studying stage actors' emotions when rehearsing a play, followed by reflections on how to use emotional participation to facilitate an understanding of emotions in the field.

The Study

Two field works were carried out with observations of rehearsals, informal talks and interviews with stage actors during the rehearsal period and the first weeks of performance of two theatre productions. These particular productions were selected so as to obtain as rich a variety of acting experience as possible. The chosen projects included actors of both sexes, with a great range of experiences, diverse employment conditions and different ethnic backgrounds. The two projects were situated at the same theatre, but no actor was involved in both projects. The theatre house is one of the largest in Sweden. It has a permanent actor crew, but also employs actors on contracts on a one to two-year basis or for particular projects. Twenty actors – seven women and thirteen men - were involved. Thirty-two interviews were conducted at various stages of the rehearsals and at the beginning of the performance period. Apart from regular interviews more casual conversations took place in between rehearsals, at lunch etc. The first production had a rehearsal period of two months and the second of three months, so all in all I was in the field for five months.

Emotions in the field

There is an ongoing debate among researchers undertaking ethnographic studies as well as in many other disciplines studying emotions, whether emotions are biologically determined or socially constructed, or more specifically within the anthropological discipline; are emotions universal or local? Nevertheless, most researchers would agree that this question does not have an either/or answer but rather that the two traditions have focused on different aspects of emotions. The universalists mainly focus on the experiential and bodily aspects of emotions while the constructionists focus on language and the cultural context⁶. Universalism stems from Darwin's evolutionary emotion theory—in modern times further developed by for example Ekman and Izard⁷—that originally investigated what is common to all men; the boundaries of social influences⁸. Constructionism, as a reaction, emphasized social aspects, both in

studying how emotional displays are learned and how emotions are expressed between rather than within individuals. Somewhat incisively worded, one can say that the universalist can study emotions using empathy since we all share the same basic emotional experiences⁹, while the constructionist regards empathy as a projection that only reveals our own feelings¹⁰.

The deliberate application of empathy, “creating a resonance” between one’s own feelings and those of another person, in order to make use of one’s own emotional experiences to understand others’, started out as an effort not to exoticize the emotional displays of other cultures¹¹. However, this methodological device needs to be analyzed more closely in order to meet the requirements of a suitable analytical tool¹². According to Hollan, empathy assumes a relationship and can only be used in collaboration with the person we try to understand¹³. In the theatre that argument needs to be specified. When an audience watches a theatre production they create an empathic understanding of the characters in the play when the story unfolds on the stage. Everyday life rarely unfolds in such fluent and understandable ways as on the stage and a more active participation is often necessary in order to create resonance in the observer. Another difficulty when observing emotions is that people normally try to control their emotional displays and how they are interpreted by others, that is they both try to hide what they really feel and display emotions different from the ones they experience¹⁴. In her classic, “The Managed Heart”, Hochschild uses acting references to show how people use surface and deep acting in everyday life to manage society’s feeling rules¹⁵. Stage actors both refine and enhance these emotional displays on stage¹⁶.

It is important to note that a lack of empathy, the researcher’s failure to empathically understand a situation, can be a tool to understand differences in perceptions of the field¹⁷. A noteworthy comment made by Leavitt is that, “The problem with empathy is not that it involves feeling, but that it assumes that first impressions are true”¹⁸. The use of empathy can be seen as a process, taking account of the fact that emotions often change over time, both with reflection and with more experiences of the field¹⁹. The overall conclusion is that the observer’s emotions have the potential to be useful tools if used with care: The observer has to consider that the

people s/he observes work with their emotional displays and that the emotional expression is rarely perfectly matched with the corresponding emotional experience. The observer, on the other hand, needs to reflect continuously on her/his own emotions and, if possible, discuss interpretations thereof with the people in the field²⁰.

A more thorough discussion of the relation between the observer and the observed emotions can be found in the psychoanalytic discipline.

In the field of psychoanalysis the discussions on *transference* - the patient's unconscious redirection of feelings from significant persons in his/her early life to the therapist in an analytic session, - and *countertransference* - the analyst's emotional responses to those feelings - can be divided into two opposing approaches: the classical and the totalistic approach²¹. According to the classical approach, countertransference is an unwelcome by-product of the therapist-patient relationship and an indication that the therapist has failed to control her/his own reactions. This view regards the analytic session as one-way directed, analyzing only the patient's interpersonal emotions. On the other hand, the totalistic approach emphasizes the intrapersonal aspects of the session, making all the therapist's emotions relevant. Today, the dominant approach is to use countertransference as a helpful tool in the therapeutic session, i.e. the therapist recognizes and reflects upon his/her own emotions using them as clues to an increased understanding of the patient, particularly if the emotions deviate from the therapist's ordinary spectrum of emotional reactions.

In order to sort out the emotions that are associated with and contain valuable information related to an observation one has to be able to separate private reactions from those that are significant in relation to the current situation. A therapist has gone through therapy to be able to interpret these differences whereas the ethnographer may be less alert in this respect and thus left with more blunt interpretations. Furthermore, in psychotherapy, the focus of the analysis is to change the patient with help from the therapist. In ethnographic studies the goal is rather to consider the changes that inevitably are caused by the presence of the researcher²². Even though the ethnographer's emotions encountered in a short-term field study cannot be dealt with in the same profound way as in psychotherapy it can still be valuable for the researcher to reflect on private versus situational emotions and what they can contribute to her/his

understanding of the field. The use of psychoanalytically informed interpretations of countertransference can be helpful when the researcher spends a vast amount of time in the field, and builds up a relationship with the respondents that is open to reflections on emotional reactions²³. To conclude, the researcher wants to understand some phenomena in a field with help from the people that are engaged in that field, in the present case professional stage actors. In order to further understand the observer's emotions it is necessary to clarify the different roles of the people in the field. In this study I focus on the researcher and the actors, with reference to the audience, as a way to discover differences between the three roles.

The significance of the different orientations of the actors, the researcher and the audience in relation to their emotional experiences
Emotional experiences and expressions are at the core of rehearsing. In order to discuss observations of emotions it is necessary to clarify how one's role, whether one is actor, researcher or spectator, determines one's focus in relation to the rehearsal or the performance as well as how the different orientations relate to emotions. In the next paragraph the different orientations that are associated with these roles will be elucidated in more detail.

The purpose of being an observer colours how emotions are perceived and experienced. The researcher and the audience share the experience of being observers; they are not verbally or physically involved in the performance. The audience, however, is oriented towards following a plot, to understand what is happening and what that implies. The spectators thus are *self-oriented* in the sense that they are focused on making sense of what the emotions mean to themselves, how their own emotions and experiences in a wider sense relate to what is happening on stage. They may avoid the emotions by intellectualizing the story, for instance by referring to other theatre events or to related phenomena in society. The researcher, on the other hand, knows the story and can wholeheartedly focus on the actors, how they trigger, modify and express emotions. The actor's main focus is on making a credible and coherent totality of the character on stage; his/her emotions are thus *gestalten-oriented*²⁴, that is adapted to make experiential as well as bodily aspects of the character come to life. The actor has to display the character's emotions so that the audience can understand

them. The actor also has to perform tasks such as moving props, move according to fixed blockings, go back-stage in one mood and come back on stage in another mood etc. To accomplish these tasks in front of an audience generates emotions by itself²⁵. Both the emotions that are generated by performing in front of an audience and the emotions that correspond with those of the character are *gestalten-oriented*, that is focused on how to express the character's actions or body language in a comprehensive way.

Figure 1

Role	Orientation
Performing Actor	<i>gestalten-oriented</i>
Spectator ²⁶	<i>self-oriented</i>
Emotion Researcher	<i>actor-oriented</i>

The scheme shown in Figure 1 is a simple and summary presentation of the dominant orientations of the different roles. It should be added that in a particular moment several orientations may be applied or actualised more or less simultaneously, for instance when the actor starts out with a *self-oriented* emotion that turns *gestalten-oriented* during the rehearsals, or when the researcher focuses on *actor-oriented* emotions and is struck by *self-oriented* vulnerabilities²⁷. The actor's feeling ashamed at the beginning of the rehearsals²⁸ is an example of a *self-oriented* emotion that turns into *gestalten-oriented* emotions as a result of professional training or practise, making the time *self-oriented* emotions are experienced become shorter after years of work. In every project the actor, by her/his own efforts, becomes fully aware of her/his initial shame reactions, and is able to reflect on and gradually distance her/himself from them thus moving the focus from her/him self to the task at hand.

How these different orientations can make a distinct difference can be exemplified by a story that one of the actors told me. She was acting in a tragic play that involved stories of abuse and death. After performances the actors in the ensemble often went for a beer at the local pub, also frequented by spectators who had been at the theatre. When I have asked actors about the emotional consequences of engaging in

powerful emotions on stage I almost always get the answer that it is exhilarating; the professional anger feels the same as when being angry privately, with the difference that private anger involves frustration, and often shame, whereas on stage the negative consequences are absent; expressing strong emotions rather generates energy when moving out of them. The side effects of performing *gestalten-oriented* emotions are thus often referred to as becoming energetic, feeling “on top of things”. Another aspect that strengthens that feeling is that the actor has had time to go through all the sad emotions of a tragic play during the rehearsal period, and thus is in another phase than the spectator seeing the story for the first time. As a result the actors came into the pub happy, laughing, and in a good mood, only to run into serious, sometimes tearful spectators who had just come from seeing the performance. The obvious clash between what the spectators expected to see (actors sobered by their characters’ experiences), and what the actors really felt (after-work high spirits), forced the actors to restrain themselves and walk in with neutral faces so as not to offend the deeply moved, *self-oriented* spectators.

Another example of how goal-directed, purposeful work with emotions affects the way emotions are handled was particularly instructive in the second production. An actor was playing a character that often shifted quickly between her emotions; angry at one moment, crying at the next etc. This particular actor was close to expressions of sadness and tears, and when rehearsing the scenes the actor’s voice often became thick, the words stuck in her throat and tears ran down her cheeks. When working on a scene there are often longer or shorter interruptions with talks about alterations and different ways into the scene. Actors often stop in the middle of a sequence, asking for example “Did I go left here, or was that later on?”, and after hearing the answer, continue with the scene. When this actor took those breaks she talked with a neutral voice, like anyone asking directions would, but emotions do not wear off that quickly and her voice was sometimes still thick and she had to blow her nose frequently. It was obvious though that everyone in the room interpreted the emotions as *gestalten-oriented* since no one tried to comfort her or talked to her in a way that would have been normal if they had perceived her sadness as *self-oriented*. The director talked about how the character presumably would react and how that would be staged in an

optimal way, while the actor stayed focused listening to him, and suggesting blocking while wiping off some tears that ran down her cheeks. The only sign of anyone paying attention to the strong emotions in the room was that sometimes the co-actors would ask if it was O.K. to run through the scene another time, implicitly acknowledging that working with emotions is hard labour that actors cannot do for too long periods at a time²⁹. With these different orientations in mind we will now move on to my own emotional reactions as an observer.

I was to a large extent a silent observer during rehearsals. Even though I was silent I had to be participative in order not to disturb. Most often the director, two actors, the prompter and I were present. In one of the projects a dramaturge was also present during most of the rehearsals. In a typical situation the director, the prompter and I were sitting against the wall of a large room and two or more actors were on the floor, the prompter and I being silent most of the time. There was an all-embracing focus on the actors. If I were to lose my focus on them it would have disturbed their work; I had to participate in the sense that even though I did not say anything, I was emotionally participative. At first, it was a way not to disturb, but gradually I started to use my own emotions as a methodological tool, generating reflections and insights relative to the situations and the persons that were the object of observation. The following are three examples of how reflections on my own emotions during the rehearsals that I observed enabled me both to understand the phenomena under investigation and to find new ways to describe the field and begin relevant concept formation.

Example one – to snap out of emotions

During a night rehearsal with two actors, the director, the prompter and myself, there was a breakthrough for a scene that had previously been problematic. The script called for two characters to have a quarrel that turned into an attraction between them. During the rehearsal it was evident that the actors experienced the same emotions that their characters expressed. They started to giggle when the attraction started blooming. The director commented “That’s it, the type of attraction that makes them giggle, something is happening to them”. They talked about how not having eye contact in the first half of the scene made the contact more charged when they finally looked at each

other, and how that made one of them sad, when the other one then left. Watching them work made me moved by the obvious, almost palpable attachment between them. I took part in their work, cried when they “connected”, and found myself quietly giggling when they were embarrassed by their obvious attraction. After the rehearsals I wiped my tears and started to leave the rehearsal room, still moved by the last hours of strong emotions.

As I walked out with the actors, I realized that I was in a completely different mood than they were. The moment they left the rehearsal room, they started to talk casually about the difficulties of quitting smoking. As I was still in the grip of the strong emotions created in rehearsal, I could not relate to the smoking discussion and indeed had to make an effort not to show what I felt. As commented on by the director during the rehearsal and confirmed by the actors in interviews afterwards, the actors had been moved when rehearsing; after rehearsal, however, they seemed to just snap out of it. That conspicuous difference between their way of dealing with their emotions and my own helped me start to investigate the actors’ work, not only with moving into emotions, but also with moving out of emotions. I started noticing the transitions from rehearsals to lunch or after rehearsals and I started asking questions to the actors about moving out of emotions. Apart from the actors being used to moving in and out of emotions in rehearsals and performances, a feasible interpretation might be that the *gestalten-oriented* focus places the emotions primarily in the here and now, although they can originate in or ignite from the actors’ private experiences. The emotions are soon taken over by the plot, how the co-actor responds, how the blocking is developing etc, bringing the emotions into the present, leaving the private connotations behind and thereby also making it easier to move out of them when the rehearsal is over and the fiction evaporates.

Example two – private versus professional emotions

Another example is from the first week of the second production. The actors and director sat in a ring and discussed death and how people react to death. I happened to sit in the ring that day and although I could not take notes when I was that close I decided to stay in the ring in order to come closer when they got up on the floor. I could see facial expressions etc. in more detail if I stayed in my seat. The prompter, stage manager and prop woman sat leaning against the back wall. One actor told a long story about the tragic death of a person that had been close to her. The story corresponded to a tragic event in my own life and I became so moved by the story that I considered leaving the room. I cried silently, unable to stop. I decided that my leaving would cause too much focus on me and it did not seem like anyone had noticed my harrowed state. I could not hide by making notes so in an effort to shift my *self-oriented* focus towards the actors I started to watch their reactions to the story even more closely. Their faces were grave and attentive, but no one else cried or seemed privately distraught. They seemed to listen to the story with a focus on the play they were working with. When after the rehearsal I could make notes again and start to reflect about what had happened new questions arose: If in their professional practice they talk about events and experiences that many people would consider private, what then is private to them? There are of course things they would not talk about in rehearsals, but what differentiate those topics from the ones they do discuss? Considering that many plays deal with tragedy, must it not happen that private vulnerabilities sometimes come to the fore in a professional setting? How do they separate between what is private and what is professional when their own body, experiences and emotions are their working tools? I had touched on those types of questions before, but my emotional outburst made the professional versus private aspect obvious and it helped me formulate specific questions in that area.

Example three – ‘just volume’ or ‘with feeling’

The third example involves a scene that I saw rehearsed over a longer period. After one month of rehearsals the actors started to let go of their manuscripts, at least in some scenes. To act without holding a binder in their hands made the physical gestures and

actions come out stronger. The actors began doing their interpretations with more 'volume' and expressions and this also made the dialogue emotionally more intense.

In one scene, two characters in the same family have an argument. One of the characters is usually the stronger party in their relationship and thus, when the other person starts to talk back, she loses control for a while, really letting him have it. Before this particular rehearsal, the actors had more or less read the text and the quarrel had just been outlined, but without the manuscript the director wanted the actors to put in 'full volume'. After a couple of lukewarm run-throughs, the director asked them again to do more, and they went through the episode again screaming at the top of their voices. Afterwards the actor that was supposed to lose control said that she did it 'without feeling'³⁰, just with volume. My difficulty as an observer was that I could not see the difference. The actors are skilled in doing 'just the volume' in a way that looks like it is seriously meant, and there was no way for me to detect the difference.

Several days later, when that particular scene was rehearsed again, the actors entered into the quarrel and began screaming. Since I had seen this several times before, I was surprised when I found myself moved. When the screaming came to an end, the actor who was (in character) supposed to have lost control sat on a chair and was quiet. I could see tears running down her cheeks and hear that her voice was cracking when she spoke again. It was obvious that this time it was not 'just volume'. After that I found that I still did not *observe* any difference between occasions when the actor did the scene with volume only and when she actually felt it, but I could *feel* the difference. Every time I saw tears in her eyes afterwards, I had been moved by the quarrel. She often commented on the times when she only did it with volume, so in that way I got a form of validation of our joint emotions, or lack of them. To refer back to the different orientations that researcher and spectator have when watching a performance my lack of emotions when the actor was doing 'just volume' does not necessarily imply that a spectator also would have been unmoved. I was following the actor, focusing on her building up and expressing emotions, and thus observed the episode without taking the story into consideration. A spectator sees the same emotional outburst in the context of the story and the particular situation the characters

are part of. Through those all-encompassing glasses the audience could be moved to tears even though the actor is not³¹.

Some concluding reflections on emotional participation

The field studies described above were indeed helpful in a heuristic sense, because they helped me to refine the investigative approach of using the researcher's own emotions as a methodological tool. I would note that the emotions that I experienced as an observer were not always interesting in themselves. On occasion they were painful and made it difficult to keep a distance in my position as observer. However, when I was able to step back and reflect upon them consciously and analytically, they were a great help in finding new questions and clarifying the boundaries of the actors' emotion work that I had observed.

Furthermore, as I worked to analyze my emotional participation in these field studies and reflected on the different roles of researcher and stage actor, I found it helped to distinguish the professional components of the stage actors' emotion work in contrast to my own emotional reactions.

The three examples illustrate how my emotional experiences could be used to clarify several aspects of the relationship between the stage actors' experienced and expressed emotions. In example one, the contrast between my holding onto the emotions of the scene and the actors' ability to let them go generated insights on the professional importance of being able to move out of emotions. Subsequently, a differentiation could be made between emotional experiences that are more or less anchored in earlier *self-oriented* private experiences contra the *gestalten-oriented* here and now.

In example two, a similar incongruence between my own and the actors' emotions could be used to further elucidate the private/professional dimension and also suggested specific interview questions on the private consequences of working with emotions. In example three, the congruence between my own emotion and the actor's felt emotion (rather than her displayed emotion) put focus on the difference between displayed and experienced emotions. This example also showed the strength of using emotional participation when exploring emotions, since a professional stage actor's emotional display can be difficult to separate from the corresponding emotional experience; the

stage actor's frustration when not succeeding could only be understood in light of my own lack of emotional experience and not by my observations. As noted above, my emotional participation contributed to an analysis of the relationship between experienced and expressed emotions that would not have been as nuanced without the use of my own emotions as a tool.

To sum up, a crucial point is that the researcher's emotions can be more or less congruent with the situation at hand; a match as well as a mis-match can be used as information in the research process. Furthermore, the emotional expressions displayed by professional actors can be more or less emotionally anchored within the role-player. Do the observer's emotions correspond with the research subjects' felt emotions or with their displayed emotions? Reflections on these issues can be used to accomplish more detailed observations and in interviews with research subjects to attain a more nuanced and tangible interpretation of the studied phenomena. Finally, it seems possible to generalize the use of emotional participation to studies of other professional role-players.

Notes

¹ I want to thank Erica Höghede for her comments on countertransference, the actors who kindly let me in to their rehearsals and told me about their work and Deborah Griesbach who checked my English!

² I refer here to stage actors who, in a broad sense work in a tradition originating from the methods of Stanislavski.

³ In studying knowledge of any kind tacit knowledge is a well-known and disputed concept, first described by Michael Polanyi: "...we can know more than we can tell" (*The Tacit Dimension*, Peter Smith Publications, Gloucester, 1983[1966], p. 4).

⁴ Martin Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, *Ethnography – Principles in Practice*, Routledge, London, 2007, third edition, p. 151.

⁵ Robert M. Emerson, Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw, *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1995, p. 27-29.

⁶ Andrew Beatty, "Emotions in the Field: What are we talking about?" in *Journal of Royal Anthropological Institute*, Vol. 11, 2005, p. 19.

⁷ See for example Paul Ekman, "Universality of emotional expression? A personal history of the dispute" in Charles Darwin, *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, Harper Collins Publishers, London, third edition, 1999[1872], pp. 363-93. and Carroll E. Izard, "Emotions in Personality and Culture" in *Ethos*, Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 305-12.

⁸ This is depicted nicely in an example from Darwin where he stands in front of the thick glass of a snake's cage at the London Zoo trying, unsuccessfully not to jump back when the snake attacks (Darwin, *ibid.*, p. 43.)

⁹ Unni Wikan, "Beyond the Words: The Power of Resonance" in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 19, No. 3, 1992, pp. 460-82.

¹⁰ Clifford Geertz, "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding" in *Culture and Theory: essays on Mind, Self, and Emotion*, Richard A. Shweder and Robert A. Levine, eds., Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984[1974], pp. 123-36. Geertz clearly argues that the best way to study "meaning" is to use the "experience-distant" hermeneutic circle, but he actually does not criticize empathy the way it is defined scientifically (see further note 11), rather some form of attunement, in his words "to get yourself into some inner correspondence of spirit with your informants".

¹¹ Wikan, op.cit., and Renato Rosaldo, "Grief and a Headhunter's Rage" in *Culture and Truth: The Remaking of Social Analysis*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1989[1984], pp. 1-21.

¹² Empathy relates to a process that can be described in three phases: the empathic person (1) receives, resonates and (2) communicates the response to the other person's emotional condition. Finally, the other person (3) receives the processed feelings and reacts to them. In the process cognitive and emotional components correlate. It is important to notice that the empathic person's interpretation of the received emotions does not have to be correct. Studies have shown that the correlation between self-reported empathy and empathic precision (from the other person's perspective) is very low. (Ulla Holm, *Empati: att förstå andra människors känslor*, Natur och kultur, Stockholm, 1987, p. 126.

¹³ Douglas Hollan "Being There: On the Imaginative Aspects of Understanding Others and Being Understood" in *Ethos*, Vol. 36, No. 4, p. 476.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 485.

¹⁵ Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, Univ. of California Press, Berkeley, 1983.

¹⁶ Stina Bergman Blix, "Stage Actors and Emotions at Work" in *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 161-72.

¹⁷ Douglas Hollan and C. Jason Throop, "Whatever happened to empathy?" in *Ethos*, Vol. 36, No. 4, p. 396.

¹⁸ John Leavitt, "Meaning and Feeling in the Anthropology of Emotions" in *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 23, No. 3, p. 530.

¹⁹ Cf. Hollan, op.cit

²⁰ I prefer to call it "emotional participation" since empathy is only one aspect of the emotional reactions that the researcher can use.

²¹ Marc-André Bouchard, Lina Normandin and Maria-Hélène Séguin, "Countertransference as Instrument and Obstacle: a Comprehensive and Descriptive Framework" in *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, LXIV, 1995, pp. 717-45.

²² Hammersley and Atkinson, op. cit., pp. 63-96.

²³ Ronald H. Davidson, "Transference and Countertransference Phenomena: The Problem of The Observer in the Behavioral Sciences" in *The Journal of Psychoanalytical Anthropology*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1986, pp. 269-83.

²⁴ gestalten, (German) (gestalta in Swedish), refers to the actor's work with embodying a character which implies in some sense experiencing the emotions the character has or endures as well as the physical expressions those emotions give rise to.

²⁵ E. A. Konijn, *Acting Emotions – Shaping Emotions on Stage*, Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, 2000.

²⁵ Although the spectator does not act openly, s/he enacts it in her mind, as it were, thus making it comprehensible emotionally and cognitively in a personal way.

²⁷ In a letter to the composer Allan Pettersson, Birgit Cullberg, choreographer and founder of "the Cullberg Ballet", wrote: "I was in shock and started crying in the middle of your ninth symphony at the Opera. Your music is always dance. It is body and movement, dynamic force, and explosive outbursts. And thereafter rest, delightful peace, lightness...I have to create a dance also for the ninth. Thank you for being there" (my translation). The result was "War dances" (L. Barkefors, *Allan Pettersson. Det brinner en eld inom oss - En tonsättares liv och verk*, Sveriges Radios Förlag, Stockholm, 1995, p. 287.). In the quote one can see that Cullberg's emotions are both *self-oriented*; she is overwhelmed and starts to cry as a spectator, and *gestalten-oriented*; seeing the opportunities to make dance to the music.

²⁸ Stina Blix, "Skådespelarens yrkeskunnande- en fenomenologisk studie" (A Phenomenological Study of the Competence of Professional Stage Actors) in *Sociologisk forskning*, No. 1, 2004, pp. 55-74.

²⁹ The energy that was earlier described to be generated during emotion work in performances is less likely to come out of rehearsals since the many re-takes are exhausting.

³⁰ The Swedish expression is "att inte ha täckning", which implies that the actor goes through the scene doing all the gestures, movements and expressions of emotions, but does not feel them; s/he has not reached the point when what s/he feels and thinks is congruent with her/his actions. It can both be due to problems with the interpretation or it can merely be a phase in the building of a character; the director wants to see how the scene is coming on and therefore wants the actors to act it out even though they are not yet ready to fill it with meaning.

³¹ It is commonplace that actors' feelings about how a performance came through and the audience's reactions often do not coincide. Several actors have told me that when they have felt that the performance did not go well and that they had acted without the intensity they would have liked to reach, the audience thought it was wonderful and were greatly moved by it. The different orientations of the two groups might be a key to the different experiences of the same show – the actors are gestalten-oriented, focusing on how the character can be embodied in congruence with her/his emotions and thoughts, while the spectators are self-oriented and thus focus on the story and how it relates to them. The activities on stage can thus be vitalized by the individual spectator's own understanding of the story and its relevance to her/himself.