

Forms of Emotion

Human to Nonhuman in Drama,
Theatre and Contemporary Performance

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Introduction

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Introduction

Performance grabs my attention. These moments of attentiveness are intriguing as they seem to both precede and coexist with thought and feeling. I am struck by performance, by the aural and visual effect. But the notion of being stage-struck is synonymous with an infatuation, an emotional feeling. My emotionally felt responses, however, are sporadic and inconsistent although I do routinely think about what is being emotionally communicated. This book ruminates on aspects of drama and theatrical performance that attract attention, sustain interest and, on occasion, elicit an emotionally felt response and even wonder.

Forms of Emotion explores emotion and its diversity in drama, theatre and contemporary performance and the unifying and separating tendencies of the emotions, emotional feeling, mood and affect. I find four concepts for emotion serve theatrical representation more fully than a bipartite distinction between affects and emotions. While theatrical emotion is human-centric, it becomes difficult to ignore how the nonhuman world and its species are frequently part of emotive language in drama, and regularly feature in the settings and staging of theatre and contemporary performance. Forms of theatrical emotion encompass nonhuman entities.

The book's discussion of human and human to nonhuman emotion is anchored in classic dramatic narratives and theatrical interpretations that make ephemeral conditions such as the emotions, emotional feelings, mood and affect comprehensible. Importantly, emotion is constructed within theatrical forms. *Forms of Emotion* affirms that theatrical knowledge and practice reflect – and even precede – changes in historical and philosophical beliefs and debates about emotion as well as approaches evident in psychology, sociology and neuroscience. The concepts grouped under emotion in this book align with those used in other disciplines: the emotions are ideas encapsulated by words; emotional feelings are physiological experiences of varying duration; affect refers to sensitivity to energetic movement and can include embodied sensation that is usually short-lived in awareness; and mood denotes a more sustained aesthetic effect that connects with individual mood and can reflect social mood (see Framing section below; Tait 2021).

2 Introduction

While drama distils the emotions into a written form, theatrical performance expands them with bodily forms and the elements of production. The analysis of theatrical performance needs conceptual approaches that take into account how it presents finely calibrated words and narratives in combination with physical expression, gesture and movement often surrounded by sound, music and the visual effects and material objects of the staging. The process of creating theatrical performance involves deliberately assembling discrete components into a unified whole. As performance is artistically and intentionally arranged, human performers are surrounded with technological effects that contribute to the emotional effects. Thus the combined elements can be challenging to separate out in the reception of performance. In one memorable example, I was intrigued that the character, Winnie (Ruth Cracknell), in a Sydney Theatre Company production of Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* held my attention fully given the performer's restricted movement (see AusStage 2021). The ageing Winnie, buried in earth to her waist then her neck in "poisoned ground" (Kelleher 2015: 128), spoke to her taciturn husband, Willie, cheerfully but also sadly as she conveyed an intractable domestic situation. The aesthetic mood of this particular production, however, was enlivened by subtle lighting that was constantly moving across the nonhuman environment symbolizing human emotional experience. The mood also contributed to attentiveness.

Theatre has long provided a social space where the emotions are displayed and explained; a specific performance gives them a context and connects subjective experience with a collective perspective. As Erin Hurley explains, feeling in performance 'moves us out of ourselves by taking subjective experiences and inserting them into a social context of meaning and relation' (2010: 21). A context makes it possible to interpret emotional experience and its relational circumstances. Theatre history reveals that while performed emotion generally reflected social values, it often overstepped prescribed limits temporarily and offered glimpses of freer emotional experience. Theatre contributes to ideas of the emotions circulating within a society and, as pointed out in this book, to emotional perspectives on humanness and on the nonhuman world.

Form matters; aural and visual elements communicate emotion as they concurrently convey other social significance. Theatrical performance is a culturally fabricated art form that seeks to induce responses through its artistry; it combines big and small, tangible and less tangible forms. *Happy Days* combined human and nonhuman forms to convey metaphoric ideas of living – and dying – as the production evoked spectator affect, mood and possibly emotional feeling. A myriad of visual and aural theatrical forms deliberately or inadvertently accord value to emotion.

Forms of Emotion argues that as discrete forms of emotion converge in drama, theatre and contemporary performance presenting human to nonhuman diversity, they reveal both separating and unifying tendencies and ideas of emotional freedom. As Richard Grusin points out, humans 'coevolved, coexisted, or collaborated with the nonhuman', but defined themselves

as separate within the Western cultural tradition (2015: ix). Beliefs about emotion reinforce separation in the epistemological designation of nature/culture and emotion/reason binaries which allow Western culture to frame humanity as superior. Yet as Jean-Luc Nancy explains, ‘humans, all of a common “kind”, are ‘numerous, dispersed, and indeterminate in its generality’ (2000: 7). Judith Butler disputes ‘a normative notion of the human’ framed in one category as she argues that the diversity and inequity of human lives and deaths must be recognized – and mourned (2004: 33). Emotional feeling both facilitates recognition of the diversity of humanity and supports entrenched beliefs about separation between humans, and from the nonhuman world. Human connections with each other and with the nonhuman nonetheless happen in ways that extend beyond thought and agency. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari contend, humans are not separate from their environments that unfold through assemblages, and ‘becomings are molecular’ in movement that also reaches ‘a given threshold of perception’ and affect (1992: 275, 281). These imperceptible and perceptible energetic movements that flow through and across bodily forms implicate emotion in such unifying processes.

Bodily forms of human emotions are considered porous even with the separations created by social roles (Rosenwein and Cristiani 2018). Accordingly, embodied feeling in theatrical performance creates an impression of movement and instability that is performative and yet confers distinctive identity. Baz Kershaw argues that the co-option of performance as a general paradigm during the twentieth century means that there are ‘societies in which performance is so pervasive that it comes to constitute the human’ without adequate recognition of “‘a performance commons” that it shares with all organisms’ (2007: 14). As Una Chaudhuri points out, theatrical performance is complicit in this denial as it masks nonhuman elements and patterns of ecological destruction, that is, of ‘ecocide’ and of ‘eco-cruelty’ (1994; 2014a). As twenty-first-century performance represents human identity diversity, it also reinterprets and reinvents some of the ways in which theatre has always accorded human emotions to nonhuman worlds and other animal species in both positive and negative ways.

The nonhuman is being used in this book to encompass a general sense of the surrounding living world and other animal species and relevant examples of the symbolic staging of inorganic materials and objects are also included. This is not to reject the recent use of ‘ecology’ to indicate an integrated relational field within performance (e.g. Lavery 2015: 167). I hold that nonhuman forms are selected from the larger environment to be indicative of it, and of human to nonhuman relations within drama, theatre and performance, even when the human is decentred. The natural surroundings including the biological world and its ecological systems are encapsulated by a selective artistic process.

The forms that grab spectator attention in theatrical performance are multidimensional, engaging the emotions, thoughts and sensory feeling as they generate meaning. Emotion, however, is not culturally neutral and the choices of theatre and its specific forms implicitly convey significance. It can

be presented as having a separating effect, as isolating, alienating. At the same time, drama can describe, and theatrical performance can stage, ideas of freedom within unifying emotional experience.

Hannah Arendt contends that to ask ‘what is freedom?’ seems a ‘hopeless enterprise’ given the contradictions of ‘consciousness’ and ‘conscience’ and how human lives face uncontrollable occurrences and external ‘causation’ (1961: 143). Freedom often becomes ‘a mirage of the moment’ and Arendt reiterates that it is not a pure inner sense or an outer sensory phenomenon, and it is not metaphysical and about free will, but neither is it reliant on reason or science, and it arises instead within ‘everyday life experiences’ (1961: 144). Freedom is a process of political action that emerges from the context of natural processes and human evolution, and ‘historical processes that are created and constantly interrupted by human initiative’ (1961: 170). Although the work of Michel Foucault reveals how the body-subject is constituted through cultural constraints that seem inescapable, an everyday freedom emerges from unpredictable capacities that overturn preconceptions (Oksala 2005: 13). As well as pointing out some of the ways emotional feeling is freed-up in responding to the nonhuman world, *Forms of Emotion* explores theatrical recognition of the diversity of human lives in which freedom needs to be experienced through everyday feeling.

Historically, theatre was considered a repository of specialist knowledge about the passions (Roach 1985). The emotions were embodied to be artistically and culturally symbolic. When Susanne Langer writes that ‘[a]rt is the creation of forms symbolic of human feeling (1953: 40), ‘feeling’ is understood as straightforwardly universal. This is no longer the case. Anthropological studies of cultural difference in the emotions and emotional feeling that consolidated during the 1980s challenge the belief that feeling is universal and natural. These proved foundational to the recognition that gender, racial, sexual and cultural identity differences impact on emotional experience (e.g. Lutz 1988). Yet early-twentieth-century political ideas evident in Bertolt Brecht’s (1987) epic theatre had recognized the cultural causation of emotional feeling while adhering to a modernist scientific separation of thought and emotional feeling. Theatre practices undermine belief in human sameness. Furthermore, theatrical performance pre-empted concepts developed in Émile Durkheim’s anthropological study and Erving Goffman’s sociological study that distinguished private feeling from public displays, masks and roles (Plamper 2015: 84). Theatrical performance not only reflects and reacts to the changes in beliefs about the function of emotion, it sometimes precedes them and potentially influences them.

As ideas of the subjective experience of the emotions shifted over time, theatre changed accordingly. In justifying tragedy in theatre, Aristotle expected audiences to think about the emotions of the narrative, reflecting a belief that emotional feelings followed from mental states (see Chapter 2). By 1884, William James with Carl Lange (1967) argued that bodily felt responses precede mental impressions proposing that physiological feeling happens

prior to thought. This reordered psychological emphasis on emotional feeling coincided with early realism and Constantin Stanislavski's adaptation to acting and his active analysis pre-empting later psychological developments (see Chapter 4). Overt and covert beliefs about emotion coincide with recent theatrical experience and its presentation of diverse cultural identities and forms of realness. Artistic forms of emotion coexist with social forms.

Recent theatrical scholarship reflects the spectrum of intellectual developments as it illuminates some key aspects of emotion: the evocation of feeling and in distinct genres (Hurley 2010; Welton 2012); affect in political performance (Dolan 2008; Thompson 2011; Alston 2016; Diamond, Varney and Amich 2017); affect and emotional extremes evoked by contemporary performance (Doyle 2013); the emotions in ancient Greek and Shakespearean theatre (e.g. Escolme 2014; Visvardi 2015; Arab et al. 2015; Dunbar and Harrop 2018); cognition and empathy in audience reception (e.g. McConachie 2008; Shaughnessy 2012); and the acting of feeling and in relation to neuroscientific research (e.g. Blair 2008; Kemp 2012; Neuerburg-Denzer 2014). Some scholarship encompasses a specific emotion. There is a gem about Brecht's embarrassment over his class position cited in Nicholas Ridout's materialist account of the production of the male spectator (2020: 149). Shame is extracted as performers grapple with acting as well as parody it (e.g. Bernstein 2012). The consideration of emotion in theatrical performance offers a wide spectrum of intriguing possibilities.

In the twenty-first century, disciplinary forms of knowledge about the human emotions and emotional feeling in society can be scientific, philosophical, psychological, biological, anthropological and sociological (e.g. Arnold 1960; Lutz 1988; Harré and Parrott 1996; Panksepp 1998; Williams 2001; Damasio 2003; Stets and Turner 2006; Goldie 2012a), as well as political (e.g. Goodwin et al. 2001; Ahmed 2004). The foundational scientific study of physiological emotion, however, is bound up with nonhuman animal experimentation (e.g. LeDoux 1996). When emotional feeling is studied within social communication, it is words that confirm emotions such as love and hate, and attach to individual experience so that interpretations align with cultural learning. A twentieth-century distinction between the physiology of emotional feeling and ideas or impressions of the emotions, however, continues to be the basis of study, even in neuroscience (Damasio 2004). Emotional feeling is considered naturally biological or culturally conditioned or a combination of both (e.g. Ekman and Davidson 1994), so the concept remains unstable even in its study. Clearly biology and culture are intertwined. Studies in the twenty-first century find neurodiversity even in the electrical-chemical impulses by which brain cells and sections communicate (Critchlow 2019).

The quest to establish basic emotions across cultures by mid-twentieth-century empirical studies using posed facial expressions, establish some commonality in expression (Ekman and Friesen 1975). But they do not prove a set number of biological emotions or that physiological experience is universal. The arguments about whether an emotion is both semantic and physiological

are unresolved in studies of facial expression (Parkinson, Fischer and Manstead 2005: 57, 58). Recent neuropsychological research contends that participants infer but often unreliably predict a feeling from a facial expression (Barrett et al. 2019). The recognition that emotional feeling saturates communicative processes and language confirms the challenges of cross cultural analysis (Wierzbicka 1999). There are measurable differences in studies of participant responses to posed versus spontaneous expressions, and professional actors largely display stereotypical expression (Krahmer and Swerts 2011). Moreover, some emotions do not equate with facial expressions and not all cultures are orientated to facial exchange. The divergent interpretation of human emotional experience reflects malleable biological systems and social conditioning. Beliefs and practices within cultures, including those of performance, determine emotional recognition. The understanding of a range of emotions in other species, including empathy – at best an extension of Darwin’s observational studies – is comparatively recent and, even with inherited capacity, these studies suggest that animal emotions can be acculturated in response to humans (e.g. Bekoff 2007; de Waal 2010). While the capacity to interpret a specific emotion from a human facial expression in Western culture remains contested, it is clear that individuals distinguish ‘calm’ from ‘agitated’, ‘pleasant’ from ‘unpleasant’ in what is termed the ‘valence’ of feeling (e.g. Kagan 2007; Barrett 2018: 72). The communication of positive or negative emotion across cultures, even between species, happens in a general way.

The emphasis in this book on Western theatrical traditions reflects the difficulty of interpreting, even translating, specific emotion in different performance cultures. Theatrical emotion benefits from a culturally informed study as a researcher such as myself may recognize a positive or negative effect but overlook inflections and inherent beliefs (see Chapter 6). Yet the value of learning from different cultures is immense. For example, the Indian performance tradition is unquestionably part of twentieth-century theatrical knowledge internationally. For example, in Phillip Zarrilli’s (2009) approach to *kathakali* and *kalaripayattu* in performance training, as well as in Richard Schechner’s (2001) interpretation of *rasa* from *The Nattyashastra*, an ancient text from India (see Tait 2021). While this absorption creates intercultural or transcultural innovations, Jan Plamper points out that the faces displaying each *rasa* in *The Nattyashastra* differ from everyday expression – and differ from the facial expressions used in Paul Ekman’s search for universality – and performed *rasa* in combination with music has a unifying effect, like ‘embodied thought’ (2015: 112). Ideas of *rasa* support longstanding claims for a distinctive domain of emotional experience happening within theatrical performance.

Performance practice involves working with the emotions, emotional feeling and mood and affective sensation, even though these remain challenging to explain. The doing of emotion in performance becomes meaningful. The theatrical languages that present emotion engage with social practices, so emotion can be reproduced without necessarily being cognitively

questioned. The felt responses evoked in the reception of a theatrical performance are commonly acknowledged with a general comment or a first-person description. My initial consideration of affect in performance analysis seemed to come out either as a generalization or a personal statement. I realized that affect – like the theatrical reception of emotional feeling – remains speculative rather than substantiated. A generalization about emotion in theatre obviates the diversity of distinctive performance genres, histories and spaces – not to mention spectators and cultures – whereas a subjective response to a performance may be idiosyncratic rather than attributable to others. To generalize that emotional feeling and affect happen seems self-evident, but to proclaim, even inadvertently, that an audience felt a specific emotional feeling is nonsensical. Unified audience feeling can be one more theatrical illusion.

Emotion, too, is described within a unifying general explanation, even as specific examples of what is individually felt and imagined are recognized. As Elspeth Probyn writes about shame, ‘An epistemological point hovers in the background: a precise emotion demands precise description. It is the precision of a description that allows for the larger comprehension of what affects and emotions can do’ (2005: 137). An emotion such as shame is socially communicated within a particular set of circumstances but these also undergo change over time. Theatrical performance reflects this process as it utilizes specific words and phrases in its creative processes, so that a linguistic interpretation underpins the general effect.

Forms of Emotion contends that the separating and unifying tendencies of the emotions, emotional feelings, mood and affect become evident in the way drama, theatre and contemporary performance present forms that are human and forms that implicate the nonhuman. A tendency to unify or separate can be identified in the tensions between what is general and specific, abstract and actual, impersonal and personal, shared and subjective, inhibited and unrestrained. The book’s thematic emphasis develops as follows. Chapter 1 probes recent **affect** theory about human sensitivity to **unifying** free-flowing non-human energies as it distinguishes **impersonal** affect from the artistic intention of theatrical performance and **personal** feelings. Chapter 2 examines Aristotle’s **unifying** continuum in which thinking of **the emotions** leads to emotional feeling, and facilitates judgement and belief in human **separateness** from nonhuman species and nature. Chapter 3 scrutinizes the long-standing theatrical precept that confessions of subjective **emotional feeling** cannot be trusted and, while oaths of allegiance historically sought to overcome interpersonal **separation**, twentieth-century psychological appraisal theory reconfigures it. Chapter 4 considers how modern drama depicts the bodily phenomena of emotional feeling and mood in an inherently theatre-like exchange as it **unifies** individual and social **moods** within an **aesthetic mood** and points to phenomenological freedoms. Chapter 5 considers twentieth-century dramatic theory that **separates** cognitive thought from emotional feeling to reveal **general** structural forces in society, and while

this supports the separation of trauma's affect, twenty-first century political performance seeks to unify with its evocation of empathy. Chapter 6 probes the convergence of **subjective** and **shared** experiences of love and fear in theatrical performance that champions freedom of emotional feeling as a human right. Chapter 7 investigates how symbolic and living nonhuman birds and animals in drama and performance are framed within anthropocentric emotionalism that, while reflecting a controlling **unifying** perspective, paradoxically also conveys care and concern for animal lives. An exploration of inspiring contemporary Indigenous performance in Chapter 8 reveals how it evokes affect that **unifies** and draws in **subjective** emotional feeling to encourage awareness that humans are inseparable from **the nonhuman** world and its species. Chapter 9 explores how small, incremental shifts in performance create prosodies of movement and emotion and counteract **separating** emotional feelings about climate futures with **unifying** affect and mood. As theatrical forms overcome the perception of separation between human and nonhuman forms, they inspire feelings of emotional freedom.

Chapter summaries

Forms of Emotion explores concepts of emotion including theories of affect in relation to artistic forms of drama, theatre and performance. It outlines ways in which theatrical forms of knowledge about emotion in well-known canonical drama and its performance align with concepts in interdisciplinary studies of emotion. While the expression and display of the emotions is a direct effect of performance, the evocation of emotional feeling is more indirect, and affect and mood arise at the edge of perception. A performance can be evaluated for its separate elements and its unifying synthesis.

Chapter 1, 'Affect Theory and Performance Intention', explores the intersections of affect theory and performance theory about 'live' and 'presence' in relation to the robot actor in Rimini Protokoll's *Uncanny Valley*. It encompasses how affect was formerly interchangeable with emotional feeling but twenty-first-century applications accommodate theory about technology and impersonal energy moving freely across human and nonhuman realms (Massumi 2002; Brennan 2004; Clough 2007a; Blackman 2012). Recent affect theory about unifying nonhuman energies can be distinguished from the personal psychologies presented in performance – and therefore, as Ruth Leys (2011, 2018) argues, from intention. Chapter 2, 'Judging Pity, Fear and Humanness', examines some of the ways in which the emotions are dramatized and precipitate catharsis. In Aristotle's (1995) analysis, the emotions are unified as thought leads to emotional feeling and audiences make judgements about the characters in tragic narratives that arouse pity for someone else and fear for oneself. While political productions of Sophocles' (2004) play *Antigone* continue to invite emotional judgement, it is human separateness from nonhuman species and nature that is maintained by Antigone's compassionate action of burying her brother to restore his human identity.

Chapter 3, 'Appraising Emotional Feeling', explores how Shakespeare's *King Lear*, and productions with a Queen Lear and a First Nations Lear, offer a cautionary warning of the disastrous consequences of believing others who eloquently proclaim feelings of love. While performative speech acts can be duplicitous, nonetheless a performance might inspire feelings of love. Theatre illuminates the separation between the expression of emotional feeling and actual experience, a separation that historical oaths of allegiance sought to overcome (Reddy 2001), and twentieth-century psychological appraisal theory and linguistics reconfigure through the concept of prior orientation (e.g. Lazarus 1991; Frijda 2004). Chapter 4, 'Performing Moods, Tears and Bodily Phenomena', considers drama by Anton Chekhov and Samuel Beckett that presents emotional feeling and mood as embodied experience within a theatrical-like exchange that unifies aesthetic, individual and social moods. Modern drama is thoughtfully analysed for its depiction of nonhuman landscapes and symbolism (e.g. Fuchs and Chaudhuri 2002; Lavery and Finburgh 2015). These dramatic depictions explicitly encompass the way human emotional feeling and mood converge with nonhuman phenomena in psychological precepts, and in ideas of phenomenological feeling and its freedom (Merleau-Ponty 1995; 1996). Chapter 5, 'Political Belief and Social Cognition of Emotions', dissects Bertolt Brecht's (and Margarete Steffin's) *Mother Courage and Her Children* and Caryl Churchill's *Far Away* from the perspective of Brecht's argument for the separation of thought and emotional feeling in his scientific theatre that should elicit cognitive understanding rather than audience empathy. This perspective further supports the theoretical separation of affect and emotional feeling in performance about trauma. Approaches in recent scholarship and in theatre, including Nick Payne's *Incognito*, however, recognize the unifying perspective of brain-body neuroscience and value contradictory emotions in the political evocation of empathy and enjoyment (e.g. Williams 1977; Ahmed 2004; Thompson 2011).

Chapter 6, 'En/Acting Diverse Emotional Freedoms' presents theatrical performance about the human right to freely experience and express emotional feeling as being inseparable from democratic rights. Belarus Free Theatre's *Minsk, 2011: A Reply to Kathy Acker* presented the state repression of emotional expression in theatre about fear, protest and human rights. Productions by Belarus Free Theatre, Split Britches and Liao Yimei's *Rhinoceros in Love* directed by Meng Jinghui indicate how theatrical performance contributes to political struggles for emotional freedom. Chapter 7, 'Animals and Anthropocentric Emotionalism', investigates how symbolic animal forms are framed by anthropocentric emotionalism in drama ranging from *The Birds* by Aristophanes to *Rhinoceros* by Eugène Ionesco, and to offer a unifying human perspective that also paradoxically contains concern for other species. Contemporary performance with living animals that evokes affect challenges the presumption that animals should embody human-like emotions, and yet it reveals how human emotional responses to them can be protective. Chapter 8, 'Enveloping the Nonhuman', considers physical

performance that decentres the human form in movement and presents different patterns of human relations with the nonhuman world. Performances by Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance theatre companies, Marrugeku and Bangarra, reflect an artistic capacity to creatively incorporate nonhuman animals and the environment, and to enhance spectator perception with affect and emotional feeling, as they point to traditional knowledge that the human is inseparable from the nonhuman world and its species. Chapter 9, 'Prosodies of Affect and Emotional Climates', explores how small, incremental shifts in the movement and emotion of contemporary performance create prosodies that counteract separating tendencies and unify through participating action. Everyday practices of walking, talking and moving and immersion in nonhuman worlds evoke emotional and affective responses: in the Fluid States Greenland event co-ordinated by Sisters Hope; in Robert Wilson's performance of John Cage's *Lecture on Nothing*; and through their absence in Latai Taumoepeau's *Repatriate 1*. Performance forms that blur the distinction between spectator and performer require trust and evoke hope with stirring, arousing and inspiring prosodies that counteract moods of eco-anxiety and fear.

Forms of Emotion reflects my ongoing fascination with emotions, emotional feelings, mood, and visceral and bodily sensation, the latter grouped in this book under affect. The capacity to interpret nonhuman animal behaviour through human emotional experience points to the ways in which humans project their emotions on to others and the surrounding environment (Tait 2012; Tait 2015a). The human emotional perception of the nonhuman needs to be questioned in order to understand how it conditions both the destruction and also the preservation of what is vitally important for survival.

Framing the emotions, emotional feeling, mood and affect

Multiple concepts – emotions, emotional feeling, sensation (sensate feeling), affect, mood and passion – are in wide use but with varied application and inconsistent definition. Their usage can be confusing. Marta Figlerowicz contends that there 'is no single definition of affect theory' that spans neuroscience and psychoanalysis, psychology and sociology (2012: 3). Alex Houen discerns that there is interchangeable usage in the humanities between 'feeling', 'emotion' and 'affect' in the current practice of theory (2011: 218). Terms do need to be qualified to avoid confusion, not least because the meaning of 'affect' has expanded with recent theory to encompass the nonhuman world and phenomena that are 'open to effects from contiguous processes' (Blackman and Venn 2010: 7). *Forms of Emotion* distinguishes between 'the emotions', 'emotional feelings', 'mood' and 'affect' under the general label of 'emotion' by combining sensation and sensate visceral responses with affect and recognizing emotional feeling to accommodate personal psychology. 'Passion' is acknowledged as a generic historical term. Emotions have

histories; Aristotle's pride is not the same as gay pride (Gross 2006: 18). The objects of emotions vary historically and culturally. Concepts of emotion are introduced here and discussed further in the chapters of *Forms of Emotions*.

The emotions are fascinating. Ideas of love, sadness, fear, joy, anger and disgust – also shame and despair – remain recognizable in lasting ways, although the general term that encompasses them changed over time. The inclusion of a particular passion (emotion) did vary historically and the English word 'emotion' from the Latin *moveo* that meant 'to move', had appeared by the seventeenth century (Broomhall 2016b; Rosenwein and Cristiani 2018: 11). Lexicons not only reveal omissions and which emotions matter but also the emphasis given to an aspect of meaning that varies over time (Frevert et al. 2014). Theatre reflects the way particular emotions remain interpretable ideas even as the general umbrella term changes, when for example, the word 'emotion' replaced 'passion' and 'sentiment' as the general noun during the nineteenth century, and 'emotional feeling' came into wider use in the twentieth century (also see Tait 2021). Jan Plamper justifies the use of 'emotion' as a 'meta-concept' to reconcile divergent historical and contemporary strands of study while recognizing that it is also used as a synonym for 'feeling' (2015: 12). But as outlined below, theatrical knowledge needs to make a distinction because it cannot assume that performing a specific emotion involves the performer feeling it. *Forms of Emotion* uses 'emotion' as the general unifying category for four concepts to recognize the historical significance of theatre knowledge and its emotional legacies, while including twentieth-century ideas of emotional feeling and artistic mood, and twenty-first-century theory that expands the concept of affect.

Even the use of a unifying term is contested when Joseph LeDoux (1996) argues that fear is not the same as jealousy. But Jerome Kagan contends that it is language that leads to these differing definitions and since verbs for emotions need context (2007: 129). Philip Fisher explains: 'What remained unchanged, when the passions came to be called the emotions, were the words for the specific passions or emotions' (2002: 6). He is confirming that specific emotions remain recognizable, and an idea of pity for others and fear for oneself – in Aristotle's famous example – can be interpreted today, even though 'pity' has largely been supplanted by 'sympathy' from the eighteenth century and thereafter by 'empathy'. In relation to linguistic difference, Brecht's theatre and 'empathy' (coined in English in 1909), David Krasner points to empathy's originating German meaning of "feeling into" in relation to the older concept of sympathy as "feeling with" (Krasner 2006: 264, 266). Understanding of the emotions intersects with developments in cultural language and belief, including those about physical and social freedoms. Historically, beliefs about the body influenced those about emotions, including, for example, medieval bodily humours and nineteenth-century hysteria that were explored in theatre (e.g. Roach 1985; Finney 1989; Paster 2004; Marshall 2016). In a history of the emotions, Barbara Rosenwein and Riccardo Cristiani summarize historical studies of the emotions, and within

overviews of human society, including in the unifying, civilizing process identified by Norbert Elias in the 1930s (2018: 32). Yet a particular emotion such as love or anger within historical drama remains interpretable, irrespective of the originating social circumstances and historically specific beliefs. Cultural processes revive concepts such as that of ‘biophilia’, as they create new words such as ‘solastalgia’, which describes a type of homesickness for what is lost environmentally in the twenty-first century (Albrecht 2019). Although the ‘emotions are not feelings’, they are associatively connected, and since ‘emotions are *about* something’, this gives them intention (Solomon 2003: 57, 58, italics in original). The emotions can be interpreted and explained to others, and while language for specific emotions invariably reduces and objectifies experience – a problem that confronts their study – it nonetheless remains viable for communication. The emotions are delineated by intention, causation and action and can be analyzed.

Emotional feeling implicates physiological experience that is felt, in contrast to how language and a word typifies an emotion. But since emotional feeling is believed to fuel action and behaviour in the moment, it can be theatrically enacted. Martin Welton (2012) describes ‘shows of feeling’ by performers, practices that point to the theatrical interpretation of feeling, which he explains is also evident in its absence. Theatre has long reflected social concern with the consequences of emotional feeling and the traditional idea of succumbing to ‘passion’ depicts feeling that overpowers self-control (Fisher 2002: 6, 7). Theatrical passion presents moral warnings about adverse consequences (Roach 1985). The enactment of feeling that is happening inside the body remains challenging to perform, and knowledge about whether human and nonhuman animal feeling originates in the brain stem or the cortex and how it biochemically happens is less useful to theatrical performance than patterns of interpretation. Philosopher, Robert Solomon, explains that no single mode of analysis holds for emotional feeling, which was traditionally distinguished from a bodily feeling such as thirst, and it can be delineated in at least five ways: through behaviour and/or verbal and bodily expression; within physiology; in perception and its phenomenology; through cognition including appraisal; and within a social context (2004: 13). These aspects of emotional feeling can be identified in theatrical performance through the characterization, narratives, embodied performing and the spectator experience of integrated effects. As Kagan points out, however, research findings on behaviour or brain activity or semantics depend on the framing mode of measurement – and minimizing researcher bias (2007: 139; 190–197). An adjustable framework is also applicable to theatrical performance.

Historically, the emotions were considered to be mental processes that induced emotional feeling (see Chapters 1 and 2). William James with Carl Lange (1967) in what is called the James-Lange theory challenged the prevailing assumption in the study of emotion by arguing that bodily feeling precedes thought. James (1918) draws attention to the physiological changes of the body that precede awareness, but he recognizes highly variable

experience for each instance of feeling. An argument ensued in the twentieth century as to what extent emotional feeling is stimulated within the body's internal physiology or requires external provocation (see Chapter 3). James's approach emphasizing bodily feeling over mental processing was challenged by appraisal theory that finds feeling arises from orientation and cognition (e.g. Lazarus 1991; Frijda 1994; Frijda 2004). Later approaches to appraisal controversially include perception that is a preconscious interpretation of the surrounding environment (Forgas 2000b: 5). Although recent science confirms the neurobiology of, for example, the production of oxytocin and vasopressin in the hypothalamus of humans and animals, bodily feeling is considered inseparable from social (species) circumstances (Kagan 2007: 156–158). Emotional feeling implicates perceptual engagement within the surroundings, including the nonhuman world.

A social idea of an emotion is distinguished from an 'emotional feeling' within the twentieth-century study of emotion – if not in everyday worlds (Damasio 2004). The separation of an idea of an emotion and bodily feeling is helpful for performers and theatre artists. Peter Goldie explains that an emotional feeling in the everyday world can involve a subjective intention, and happens in a complex, dynamic process encompassing 'episodes of an emotional experience, including perceptions, thoughts and feelings of various kinds' and 'the different elements of the emotion are conceived of by us as all being part of the *same* emotion' (2000: 12, 13, italics in original). Emotional feeling can be experienced bodily in ways that can be separated out and analyzed, even as it resists objectification with words. The arousal of an emotional feeling such as fear or anger is intermittent, so it can attract self-awareness – if not self control – as it happens.

An emotional feeling is understood in ways that are individualized and personalized in Western culture, so it has a separating effect. It can be expressed and communicated with words and/or behaviour or it can remain unexamined and undetermined. But even where emotional feeling is associated with a commonly understood word, such as frustration or disappointment, the experience can be questioned by others. Firstly, it is uncertain if the particular emotional feeling happens, even if it is described. Secondly, emotional responses differ between people, so one person is pleased when another is embarrassed. Thirdly, someone might experience an emotion such as disappointment more intensely, or at least claim to do so. Emotional feeling is also associated with the imagination (Morton 2013), and the imagination is crucial in performance and in the acting of emotion (Stanislavski 2010; Kemp 2012). The variability in emotional feeling complicates the delivery and evocation of emotions in performance, and explanations that translate felt experience invariably rely on a presumption that feeling happens.

The ways in which a creative writer translates feeling into words is often simply accepted as an artistic capacity. A linguistic description suffices for the existence of the feeling. Yet how words and sets of words evoke a felt response is a wondrous puzzle – one that besets its linguistic study and troubles the

practice of interpreting drama in performance. Embodied processes are an important part of the artistically created holistic effect but are difficult to separate out as they happen. While the words for the emotions invariably function as cultural markers for what is being felt, performance suggests that feeling is inseparable from the body's expressive muscles and movements; these unifying bodily processes impact on the interpretation and meaning. It is often only possible to explain emotional feeling within the cultural sphere by presupposing the consequence of the process of feeling. A specific word stands in for the process of emotional feeling that imbues and surrounds language.

Mood is less specific than an emotional feeling and considered sharable (Roberts 2003; Felski and Fraiman 2012; Ratcliffe 2012). The word 'mood' has its origins in Anglo-Saxon language and its historical usage originally meant strongly felt states of mind (White 2016). Mood commonly refers to an individual's everyday emotional experience over time, a psychological condition. Kagan describes clinical distinctions in types of mood (2007: 28). But as director Vsevolod Meyerhold (1969) recognizes in the early twentieth century, mood can describe the stylistic effect of a performance. It offers a tantalizing mysterious mood quality in both realist and nonrealist forms that audiences puzzle over. Aesthetic mood refers to the effect of a whole production or a section of the staging that absorbs spectator awareness.

Rita Felski and Susan Fraiman evaluate whether the distinctive qualities of mood can contribute to recent studies of affect, given that mood remains a key concept in everyday use (2012: v). They suggest that the language about affect as 'intensities and flows' does not align with how mood is described as more lasting and creating 'diffuse, hazy and intangible' atmospheres (Felski and Fraiman 2012: v). In explaining how the experience of literature can be mapped as it produces felt responsiveness in a reader, Jonathan Flatley connects feeling with how a text achieves mood (2008: 7). Flatley considers that literary mood emerges fluidly at the nexus of personal and cultural experience. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht (2012) contends that reading induces an inner experiencing of an atmosphere or mood within a continuum that is similar to that of a musical scale (2012: 4). Music is pervasively used in twenty-first-century theatrical performance, and mood is included in the study of emotion in music (e.g. Robinson 2012), and in film (e.g. Smith 2003). In an exploration of cinema's aesthetics of mood, Carl Plantinga explains that artistic mood reflects 'human mood', by which he means capacities for 'seeing', 'experiencing' and 'perceiving' (2012: 469). While mood suggests a synthesis that can take over someone in an audience, a mood effect needs to be sustained for as long as it takes to become recognizable. A reader/spectator makes an effort to connect with what touches felt sensibility. Mood in performance contains the possibility of impacting on individual mood as well as being shared by an audience so it can illuminate social mood.

Aesthetic mood is comprehended even as it eludes possession. Felski and Fraiman suggest that mood can offset the criticisms of affect that it upholds a dichotomy with materiality and does not accommodate subjective feeling.

Mood is pre- and post-cognitive and ‘muddies distinctions between the subjective and the objective’ (Felski and Fraiman 2012: vii). Martin Heidegger (2001) contends that humans are never without mood in the Heideggerian ontology of being and concept of presence (see Chapter 4). Mood can also suggest that the social and society coalesce in different ways and, for example, align with Bruno Latour’s rejection of ‘separateness’ and of ‘a place, a thing, a domain’ and his preference for a ‘movement of new associations’ (1993; 2005: 238). Aesthetic mood can explain a shared experience in performance as it also creates an effect that lingers after a performance finishes.

Affect has expanded in meaning in the twenty-first century to offer a unifying concept that includes ‘in-between-ness’ (Seigworth and Gregg 2010: 1). While some newer usage is clearly associated with an emphasis on the human body, affect’s older significance that was synonymous with emotional feeling has become disrupted and often omitted. There is a bipartite distinction in recent analysis between the emotions (and/or emotional feelings) that are socially and culturally recognized, and bodily feeling – affect – as ‘the biological and physiological experience’ (Probyn 2005: 25). While previously associated with emotional feeling, affect now often refers to physiological responses and processes *per se*. Probyn opts to use affect as a general concept to include ‘innate affects’ of the body in her discussion of social shaming and blushing, because when ‘shame is analyzed from a social point of view, its genesis in the body is denied’ (2005: 27, 29). This criticism can be applied to how the emotions as social concepts are distinguished from emotional feeling as bodily experience. But there is variation in the bipartite distinction and its interpretations (e.g. Scheer et al. 2019). As well, there is a clear tripartite ‘emotion, feeling and affect’ in political analysis (e.g. Hutchinson and Bleiker 2019). In a general analysis of aesthetic form, Noel Carroll distinguishes between feeling and constructed emotion by contrasting artistic and viewer values (1999: 172). In cinema, Carl Plantinga (2012) distinguishes constructed emotional expression and mood from the affect of bodily felt responses in viewer reception. In his explanation of boredom in film viewing, John Rhym points out that it is difficult to discuss affectivity without discussing emotional feeling because of boredom’s refusal to engage with ‘empathy, identification and affective comportment’ (2012: 479). A bipartite distinction between ‘affect’ that identifies bodily feeling and social ideas of ‘emotion’ (e.g. Wetherell 2012) does not fully serve the processes of making performance and audience reception. As Adam Alston recognizes, ‘affect’ and ‘emotion’ in theatre are ‘entwined’, but individuated and specific as an ‘influence’ on thought and behaviour (2014: 222).

An expanded concept of ‘affect’ highlights energetic movements and incorporates ideas of bodily sensations that are not expressly emotional (Massumi 2002; Brennan 2004; Gregg and Seigworth 2010). These are the bodily pulses, tingles, auras, slight involuntary movements and contractions within continuous processes and include those that are preconscious. The intensity of a pulsation might momentarily attract self-awareness. Figlerowicz explains

'affect theory is grounded in movements or flashes of mental or somatic activity rather than causal narratives of their origins and end points', and in constituting knowledge and subjecthood (2012: 4). Significantly, recent affect theory elaborates on thought as a stimulus for bodily feeling (Williams 1977). As affect theory encompasses how thought happens bodily with energetic shifts and tinges, it becomes a useful concept for performers. Raymond Williams explains, 'thought as felt and feeling as thought' creates a structure and a social experience (1977: 132). Theatre, screen and social media expand on the literary forms that reveal what Williams calls 'structures of feeling'. Nigel Thrift reiterates that '*affect is understood as a form of thinking*, often indirect and nonreflective' in his consideration of 'spatialities of feeling' in urban space and the messiness of the world (2008: 175). Thrift describes technology creating a 'new structure of attention' that reveals what was formerly not deemed perceptible and not distinguished in a large number of 'practical knowledges' that design space for an affective response (2008: 186, 187). Technologies that make affect perceptible are used by political groups seeking to gauge the 'intensity of feeling and the general quality of mood' – meaning social mood (2008: 250). Thrift's summary of approaches to affect recognizes that knowledge of specific emotional feelings has often been individualized and separated, the context removed, whereas Deleuzian ideas of affect offer a unifying capacity.

Most importantly, as recent affect theory highlights sensitivity to energetic flows and movements, it obviates the separation of the human body from its surroundings and from others. It flattens or displaces an emphasis on the human body as it recognizes nonhuman objects, natural surroundings and animal species, and technology. But this all-encompassing affect seems too big, too general, for consideration of a theatre performance without further refinement. As Félix Guattari writes, 'as soon as one decides to quantify an affect one loses its qualitative dimensions', and its 'singularization' (1996: 159). Affect 'sticks to subjectivity' since it is not discursive (Guattari 1996: 158). But the converse is also being argued when affect is theorized and consciously used in discourse (e.g. Wetherell 2012).

A tendency to use 'affect' interchangeably with 'subjective feeling' persists. Teresa Brennan usefully specifies 'the things that one feels are affects' but 'one feels with' feelings (Brennan 2004: 23). Affects are products of affective processes. Sara Ahmed uses 'affect' as a noun to mean sensation and/or emotional feeling (2010: 25). At the same time, affect can be defined as a verb (Wetherell 2012). The surroundings can be affecting. But affect is considered an immediate effect rather than a purposeful feeling of the type created with representation. Affect theory is connecting society and nature, body and mind through concepts such as 'assemblage, flow, turbulence, emergence, becoming' and to accommodate 'affective labour' and the 'economization of affect' in a digital algorithmic economy in the twenty-first century (Clough 2007a; Blackman and Venn 2010: 7). Affect allows recognition of non-conscious experience, of 'sensation, memory,

perception, attention and listening’, and addresses Latour’s question “‘What can a body do?’” (Blackman and Venn 2010: 8, 9). This corresponds with the longstanding question in performance: what is the performer doing? Rosenwein and Cristiani explain that ‘as theories of emotions emphasize ever more strongly the “cognitive” nature of emotions, affect theorists have allotted to affects the realm of the irrational, [...] the pre-conscious, pre-emotional, pre-verbal forces in our lives’ (2018: 17). Affect is being theoretically separated from the emotional experience of a psychological self (Blackman 2012). Hence a distinction between emotional feeling and affect in relation to performance allows for personal responses and psychologies to be recognized, as well as sensitivity to affect that is impersonal, even formless (see Chapter 1).

Theatrical performance grabs attention in ways that are assumed rather than discussed, including through energetic movement. Bodily affects are a precondition for theatrical performance, which sets out to draw individual and collective attention. Affect theory suggests paying attention to different types of ‘*attention*’, to expose how culture trains a focus (Blackman and Venn 2010: 9, italics in original). In recognizing the affect of attention, queer theory questions to what extent this happens from conscious choice rather than unconscious, embodied processes (Ahmed 2010).

A separation of bodily sensations and the emotions is not new. Aristotle grappled with how selective emotional feelings might be considered responses to thought and distinguished from precognitive drives or sensations of the body (Fortenbaugh 2002: 9). Neuroscience confirms a separating delay of a fraction of a second in the body’s conscious awareness of electrical impulses and chemical changes in bodily feeling (e.g. Damasio 2003). It reveals feeling being activated in response to a trigger but does not effectively explain the complexity and uniqueness of individual self-awareness and control. Moreover, the capacity for (emotional) feeling within brain–body biology does not disprove cultural habituation. A trajectory of performance within evolutionary biology, in ‘bioculturalism’, only reinforces generalization (Grodal 2009), and can seem incongruous within scientific research based on nonhuman animal emotions (e.g. McConachie 2008). Theatre knowledge would suggest that affective sensation and emotional feeling arise in relation to performance forms, but within the diversely habituated patterns of bodies, events, things and sensory impressions. It confirms James’s ideas of variance for each instance (Barrett 2018: 39). Theatrical performance reveals emotional diversity.

‘Affect’ is being applied as a general umbrella term in the twenty-first century in literary studies (Wehrs and Blake 2017; Ahern 2019). This is an application to the analysis of language-based texts, rather than to visual embodied texts of performance. In sociology, Margaret Wetherell advocates studying patterns of ‘*affective practice*’ that incorporate human emotion, psychology and receptivity to what can be nonhuman, noting that the turn to affect marks ‘ontological and epistemological upheaval’ (2012: 2–4, italics

in original). Similarly, Monique Scheer (2012) also argues for locating the emotional body within social practice. In compiling episodes of momentary ‘ordinary affects’ that can be public and personal, interestingly, Kathleen Stewart notes ‘trajectories, connections and disjunctions’ rather than overall unities (2007: 5). Wetherell points out that abstract theory can undercut some sociological scholarship when it collapses material practices and categories together, ignoring historical legacies, and she criticizes scholars who ‘cherry-pick’ from other disciplines or rely on one theorist (Wetherell 2012: 10). Methodological approaches in affect are questioned (e.g. Blackman and Venn 2010; Leys 2011). Although Wetherell is pointing out that some applications of affect theory can be unconvincing, she argues that affect theory offers a discursive field and with semantic meaning even as it claims non-cognitive bodily processes (2012: 20).

I agree that it is necessary to (discursively) explain how a term such as ‘affect’ is being used, since its general significance has greatly expanded. As Alston contends about immersive performance, ‘affect is not reducible to the orchestration of visceral processes alone’, a faster ‘heartbeat’, ‘goose bumps’ (2016: 42, 44). ‘Affect’ is used in *Forms of Emotion* to acknowledge the sensory processes of the body, and its sensations, viscosity, processes of thought and sensitivity to the surroundings, but decoupled from concepts of emotional feeling while coupled with a general pervasive nonhuman energetic field (see Chapter 1). For example, affect can denote sensory responses to darkness in theatrical space without implicating an emotional (fear) response to the dark (Welton 2012; Alston and Welton 2017). Since performance analysis also needs to convey what is specifically evoked within a social and artistic exchange, it is better served by recognizing multiple types of bodily feeling – from tingling to emotional – and because an artistic effect can have personal and social consequences.

Affect theory offers a unifying concept for feeling and sensation, and larger energetic dynamism that crosses and imbues organic and nonorganic forms (see Chapter 1). Affect circulates across multiple large and small forms in flows that are considered impersonal (Massumi 2002; Brennan 2004). Affect theory reveals connections that are circular and layered rather than linear, and emerge around, within and through social forms. But how these intersect often seems oblique. As affect unifies the energetic field, it is not altogether clear how it connects with specific personal awareness; affect can seem imaginary. Performance analysis needs to do more than assume that performer feeling and spectator engagement converge in the application of affect theory to its materiality and vital energies.

Affect theory and new materialism are among the theoretical approaches of the ‘nonhuman turn’ and Grusin points out that this ‘embodied turn toward the nonhuman world’ in discourse becomes ‘a means of translation or mediation in the Latourian sense’ (2015: xx). Affect in ‘new materialisms’ constitutes vitality and exchanges across and around bodies but is not dependent on human self-feeling (Morton 2007; Bennett 2010). Accordingly, recent

philosophical approaches and new materialisms deploy affect in a generalized effect within nonhuman surroundings and energies. These gain traction, however, by connecting with lived experience and in relation to, for example, fear of something (Massumi 2010). The human emotions shadow affect as it circulates within socio-biological worlds and across nonhuman organic and inorganic materiality. Rosi Braidotti (2013) uses the term ‘the posthuman’ to encompass new materialism, emotions and ideas of becoming machine. While this is applicable to how performance presents objects and technological and unifying cyborgian effects (e.g. Parker-Starbuck 2011), the word ‘nonhuman’ has been used in animal studies over decades to remind humans that they are animals.

Forms of Emotions contends that the movement of affect intersects with the processes for the emotions, emotional feelings and mood in performance that sustain attention and are interpretable. This convergence creates an oscillating spectrum of emotion. The emotions and emotional feeling are presented and expressed within theatrical languages, and even though mood and affect suggest more elusive experience, these, too, can be perceived within the theatrical form. New materialist discourse about flows of affect and intensities revitalize performance knowledge and analysis in the twenty-first century.

Theatrical performance is the result of the collective endeavours of performers and other artists who interpret the text, and the music and technical effects, which encourage the willing involvement of audiences. The overall effect can be greater than the sum of the parts when the accumulative qualities in the visual and aural languages of theatre and performance accord with the sensibilities of an era. Twenty-first-century staging, in conjunction with advanced technological and digital effects and music, shapes how emotion connects performer and spectator and the subjective and shared experience of performance.

Performing is not feeling that emotion

The possibility that a specific emotion such as love or fear can be imitated, expressed and interpreted without being bodily felt is a foundational precept within theatrical performance. An emotional feeling needs to be performed rather than experienced by performers. The gap between acted emotions and what is being felt by the actor is called ‘Diderot’s Paradox’ (Diderot 1957). In the eighteenth century, Denis Diderot (1957) argues that to replicate the bodily signs and sounds of an emotional feeling, a good actor relies on technique to sustain the effect within a dramatic structure. The performer does not feel what is being acted because it would overwhelm the delivery. Diderot recognizes that a performer’s observations of emotional expression in life need to be reproduced through effective acting. Stanislavski recognizes that feeling is difficult to act, and a performer’s bodily feeling differs from that of the character or persona (Tait 2002; Neuerburg-Denzer 2014; Tait 2021). Empirical research interviewing actors conducted in the

late-twentieth-century concluded that the particular emotions of the character are not those being experienced by actors (Konijn 2000).

Theatrical knowledge assumes that performing an emotion is not interchangeable with feeling it, and the context underpins communication of emotional feeling. As Welton reiterates, theatre's capacity to offend historically came from the possibility that actors do not feel what they act (2012: 6). Plato was concerned that performance with its falseness would impact on social behaviour and Aristotle (1995) highlights the narrative, placing less emphasis on a performer's delivery. In the development of his psychological principles, however, James (1918) quotes William Archer's collation of actors' descriptions of physiological change while acting emotional feeling. Theatre has been a source of ideas about emotions as it reflects philosophical arguments including those developing from the 1960s that the subjective feeling of another cannot be experienced (Bedford 2003). While doubt that a particular emotion was being felt became the basis of condemnation of theatre historically, bodily reactions such as tears and facial expressions are performable and recognizable.

A performer's bodily experience during performance remains one of the more perplexing elements of theatre. It is recent affect theory that offers a more nuanced possibility that thought is accompanied by bodily sensations and these are fundamental to performing. Even if a performer is not angry or in love, his or her (their) bodily expression relies on what has been developed in rehearsal (training) so its impact in performance is a compounded effect of bodily striving to embody targeted feeling. The repetitive practice of arousing but containing expressive feeling becomes convincing and it involves intentional change. The carefully crafted elements in theatre and contemporary performance that demonstrate meaning include embodied physiological cues developed during training and preparation. Significantly, then, theatrical performance presents embodied expression derived from the practice of doing feeling. Above all, the interpretation of emotions and emotional feelings in performance relies on a culturally recognizable display.

The possibility that theatrically performed emotion is a distinctive category of physiological and reflective experience remains. It can be intensely felt by audience members and yet differ from that in everyday life. Although the emotional tenor of a historical production remains elusive, theatrical performance has a long tradition of explicitly and implicitly telling its audiences how to respond and stimulating preferred responses, including feelings. The felt responses of spectators are considered fundamental to theatre and performance forms (e.g. Hurley 2010; Welton 2012), and indicative of a willing engagement. Emotional feeling happens in reception.

Audiences respond with feeling to familiar patterns and to their disruption, although styles of expression in performance do change and acquire more (or less) subtly. Changes in emotional delivery seem comparable to how stage design changes over time. Theatre offers what Bruce McConachie terms 'situated cognitions', including in empathetic engagement, and while

he draws on scientific understanding of human physiology, he compares its attraction to the focus achieved with a follow spot (spotlight) (2008: 16, 24). McConachie argues that in general, ‘embodying other’s emotions produces emotions in us’ (2008: 67). But this is not an automatic effect. Theatrical impact relies on artistic intention to gain spectator attention, but the composition of an emotional feeling varies between individuals and theatrical context and identity elicits diverse responses. Removed from the circumstances of an actual performance and its audience members, the proposition that performance evokes feeling remains a general statement of possibility supported by brain–body physiological science. Neuroscience and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) of the brain determine where a feeling response might happen and that the body responds to sensory stimuli. They do not confirm that these actually happened during a performance. The physicality and verbal description of a character(s) or persona(e) contributes to emotional meaning, but even with social ideas and embodied forms, the emotions and emotional feelings can seem paradoxical and contradictory, slippery and mercurial, fluid and nebulous.

I observe that actors – like everyone – often converse about emotions as if they were universal and transparent, and Brecht’s (1987) ideas of their cultural production and decades of studies of gender, racial and cultural difference have not disturbed such precepts (e.g. Lutz 1988; Grima 1992). Performance practices and languages can benefit from interdisciplinary studies of emotion. Actors might need to believe in the transparency of emotional expression, but changes in acting styles over time obviously contradict an assumption of timelessness. The way social languages are embedded within theatrical emotions remains implicit, and thinking about performed emotion long preceded Brechtian distancing. The performance of emotions should not be unexamined imitation and performance-makers need to explore all the imagined spaces of emotion, between and across the general and specific elements of theatre.

Performers need productive ways to think about emotion in relation to embodied practice, and to facilitate working with ideas of the emotions and translating these into bodily expression. Is it bodily sensations accompanying thought and words for love and anger that are being physically trained? My earlier work argues that the emotions and emotional feelings are reasoned and performable in theatrical languages, and that gender identity difference creates a logic for the emotions acted in early realism (Tait 2002). Emotions are performative, their meaning stabilized through, and in, the embodied languages of theatre.

The performer and the spectator are conditioned by exposure to theatrical and cinematic performance over time, although the accumulated systems of knowledge about how to perform emotions are often overlooked in analysis of their impact. Carl Plantinga acknowledges that the emphasis in twentieth-century cinema scholarship has been on meaning and cognitive messages, in line with a scientific rejection of emotion in ‘neo-Brechtian screen

theory' (2009: 4). He explains that since the emotions in film are structured by the narrative and to develop alliances with characters, the emotions invite spectators to pay attention as they respond to form and its convention. But analytical disinterest may also reflect that it is acting theory and practice that have been preoccupied with the emotions in the twentieth century (Tait 2002; Tait 2021). Certainly recent studies of the emotions in cinematic representation illuminate their central importance to analysis of its reception (e.g. Grodal 1997; Smith 2003; Plantinga 2009). The performance of emotions in contemporary live and screen performance in the twenty-first century has significance for the general understanding of emotion and its social manipulation. Performance makes it possible to appreciate beliefs about socially derived emotions and emotional feelings, and their consequences at the limits of expectations and tolerance, without necessarily experiencing them.

The growing influence of affect theory in performance analysis expands concepts of feeling to include bodily sensations – including those accompanying thought – as well as energetic movements across bodies and the conceptualization of human experience in relation to the nonhuman and technology and digital media in the twenty-first century. Ideas of affect confront unpredictability as a practical as well as theoretical artistic problem and are analogous to social and political situations. In practice, theatre and performance involve conscious choices and deliberate intentions for particular effects often based on precedent and imitation. But aesthetic practice also implicates prior patterning and unconscious and involuntary input in relation to the emotions, emotional feelings, mood and affect. In addition, the performance of emotional feeling is not simply interchangeable with audience reception, since artistic intention may or may not succeed, and performance can have unintended effects. Although it is deliberately and carefully created, complex intermediary processes potentially modify, transform and manipulate responses.

An originating (bodily) feeling in theatrical artistry may not exist, but neither does feeling simply circulate freely in a theatrical context. Performance invariably highlights both compliance and defiance in the emotions and emotional feelings, because of its imitative processes, and these connect with mood and affect. It invites performer(s) and viewer(s) to engage in a process with thought or feeling or both that challenges beliefs about emotion.

Forms of Emotion explores theoretical, theatrical and social perspectives of forms of emotion in drama, theatre production and contemporary performance. The analysis encompasses longstanding interpretations in theatre and therefore in society, as well as recent performance practices that subvert convention. Social understanding of diverse human to nonhuman forms of emotion can be illuminated by drama, theatre and performance.