

THEATRE AND LEARNING: A CASE OF GENDER ISSUE

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THEATRE AND LEARNING: A CASE OF GENDER ISSUE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the role of theatre in bringing about gender learning in the Thai context, as well as to determine factors and conditions related to theatre, audience, social context, and their interaction in influencing the learning. The study has been done through an analysis of three theatre productions regarding gender issue and how they affected gender learning of the audience.

The results of the study reveal that theatre can bring about gender learning at the reception stage. For example, stories related to women's problems in Thai society were shown to the audience, and the audience could perceive some women's perspectives they did not know before. However, these presentations could not lead the audience to the comprehension stage of learning by which the audience could associate women's problems to structural gender power relations. Theatre of gender learning therefore could not reach its goal; that is, it could not bring about a transformation of gender perspective to the audience.

It can be said that theatre cannot bring about a transformation of gender perspective to the audience because it does not challenge the audience's existing gender perspective, resulting in the audience's not questioning what the theatre performance has proposed. Moreover, the form of presentation of the theatre cannot lead the audience to touch or to have emotional identification with characters presented. Therefore, the audience merely receives message of the performance, but does not comprehend nor is it transformed.

Apart from factors related to the theatre, factors related to the audience such as existing gender perspective, previous learning, theatre experience, education, sex, age, and so forth, influence gender learning. These factors have constructed individuals' opinions, and each individual interacts with the theatre differently. Furthermore, there is an interaction between individual gender perspective and structural gender socialisation which is a contextual factor. As a consequence, each group of factors, namely factors related to theatre, individual factors and contextual factors, are complicatedly interrelated, and each group of factors does not interrelate with the learning outcome in a linear manner. It therefore can be said that as an individual audience attends the theatre, the interaction of each individual audience with the performance is unique. Different individual audiences then interact with the theatre differently, resulting in differences in learning outcomes, and these differences also result from the differences of each theatre production.

KEY WORDS: THEATRE / LEARNING / GENDER / TRANSFORMATION

184 pages

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THEATRE AND LEARNING: A CASE OF GENDER ISSUE

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ปร.ด. (ประชากรศึกษา)

คณะกรรมการที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์: เนาวรัตน์ พลายน้อย, กศ.ด., อุทัย คลยเกษม, Ph.D., จิตพร ศิริพันธ์ พันธเสน, Ph.D.

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ในการทำความเข้าใจบทบาทของละครในการสร้างการเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศสถานะในสังคมไทย รวมทั้งทำความเข้าใจว่ามีปัจจัยและเงื่อนไขใดบ้างทั้งในส่วน of ละคร, ผู้ชม, และบริบททางสังคม ตลอดจนปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างปัจจัยทั้ง 3 กลุ่ม ที่ส่งผลต่อการเรียนรู้ดังกล่าว โดยการศึกษากระทำการวิเคราะห์ละครในประเด็นเพศสถานะ 3 เรื่อง และการเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศสถานะที่เกิดขึ้นในกลุ่มผู้ชม

ผลการศึกษาแสดงให้เห็นว่า ละครสามารถสร้างการเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศสถานะได้ในระดับของการรับรู้ (reception) กล่าวคือ ผู้ชมได้รับการบอกเล่าจากละครถึงปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นกับผู้หญิงในสังคมไทย และมองเห็นสิ่งที่เกิดขึ้นกับผู้หญิงในด้านที่ผู้ชมไม่เคยมองเห็นมาก่อน อย่างไรก็ตาม ละครยังไม่สามารถยกระดับการรับรู้ของผู้ชมส่วนใหญ่ไปสู่ความเข้าใจ (comprehension) ที่ผู้ชมจะสามารถเชื่อมโยงปัญหาที่เกิดขึ้นกับผู้หญิงกับโครงสร้างอำนาจทางเพศในสังคมที่เข้ามากำหนดความเป็นไปของผู้หญิง เพื่อที่จะนำไปสู่ความเข้าใจในเรื่องเพศสถานะ ซึ่งนั่นก็คือการที่ละครยังไม่สามารถทำให้ผู้ชมเกิดการปรับเปลี่ยนมุมมองเรื่องเพศสถานะ (transformation of gender perspective) อันเป็นเป้าหมายที่แท้จริงของการเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศสถานะ

การที่ละครยังไม่สามารถสร้างการเรียนรู้ในระดับของการปรับเปลี่ยนมุมมองเรื่องเพศสถานะได้นั้น เป็นเพราะว่าละครยังไม่ได้นำเสนอตัวเรื่องหรือเนื้อหาที่ท้าทาย (challenge) มุมมองเรื่องเพศสถานะชุดเดิมของผู้ชม ส่งผลให้ผู้ชมไม่ตั้งคำถามต่อสิ่งที่ได้รับรู้จากละคร นอกจากนี้ รูปแบบการนำเสนอของละครยังไม่สามารถทำให้ผู้ชมสัมผัสกับความจริงของตัวละครและเกิดความรู้สึกร่วมไปกับละครที่จะทำให้ผู้ชมเกิดการคิดต่อ ส่งผลให้ผู้ชมเพียงแต่รับรู้สิ่งที่ละครเสนอ

นอกเหนือจากปัจจัยด้านละครแล้ว ยังมีปัจจัยด้านผู้ชมที่ส่งผลต่อการเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศสถานะ อาทิ มุมมองหรือการเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศสถานะที่มีมาก่อนดูละคร, ประสบการณ์ทางการละคร, การศึกษา, เพศ, อายุ ฯลฯ ที่ประกอบสร้างผู้ชมแต่ละคนในฐานะปัจเจกบุคคลขึ้น โดยความเป็นปัจเจกบุคคลของผู้ชมแต่ละคนมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กับองค์ประกอบหรือปัจจัยด้านละครแตกต่างกันออกไป นอกจากนี้ ยังมีการเกี่ยวข้องสัมพันธ์กันระหว่างมุมมองเรื่องเพศสถานะอันเป็นปัจจัยระดับบุคคลกับกระบวนการหล่อหลอมทางสังคม (socialisation) ในเรื่องเพศสถานะ ซึ่งเป็นปัจจัยในเชิงบริบท ดังนี้แล้ว ปัจจัยแต่ละส่วนจึงมีปฏิสัมพันธ์กันอย่างซับซ้อนในกระบวนการเรียนรู้เรื่องเพศสถานะผ่านละคร โดยที่ปัจจัยในแต่ละด้านนั้นไม่ได้สัมพันธ์กับผลของการเรียนรู้ในลักษณะเส้นตรง (linear) ดังนี้แล้ว เมื่อผู้ชมแต่ละคนดูละครในประเด็นเพศสถานะ ปฏิสัมพันธ์ระหว่างผู้ชมกับละครจึงแตกต่างกัน ส่งผลให้เกิดการเรียนรู้ที่แตกต่างกันไป และความแตกต่างนั้นก็เป็นผลมาจากความแตกต่างของละครแต่ละเรื่องอีกด้วย ดังนี้แล้ว ปัจจัยของการเรียนรู้แต่ละด้านจึงมิได้แยกขาดจากกัน

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The significance of the problem

The emergence of social movements of various interest groups, for instance, the Assembly of the Poor, the Network of People Living with HIV and AIDS, the Four Regions' Network of Slum People, and so on, mirrors that social injustice still remains in Thai society. Pasuk Pongpaijit (2002: 1) stated that since 1990 there have been many people's protests and demonstrations, and a number of people's organisations have also emerged. In 1990 there were 170 protests and demonstrations which increased to be 998 times in 1994 (Prapas Pintobteang, 1998 quoted in Pasuk Pongpaijit, 2002: 1). Nonetheless, people's movements are not only represented by those protests and demonstrations, but also in the organisation of people's networks questing for their rights and social justice.

If social movements are the reflections of social injustice remaining in Thai society, it then could be said that the injustice still exists as there still be a number of social movements existing, and one of those is of women. As mentioned earlier that social injustice and social movements are two sides of the same coin, women's movement and gender imbalance or gender inequality are therefore opposing one another on the same realm. In the context of population development, gender inequality has been clearly reflected in previous population plans to serve national economic development. From the end of the 2nd to the 5th National Economic and Social Development Plans, the government aimed to reduce population growth. They thought that the increase in population will result in more resources consumption and the degradation of resources will thereby hinder national development and lead to poverty, and the solution is to fully control population growth in every way possible (Supawan Phlainoi & Nawarat Phlainoi, 1985: 13-25). Even though birth control is applicable to both women and men, practically women take more birth control. For

instance, statistics showed that almost a hundred percent of people who had undergone sterilisation as supported by the National Family Planning Program were women (Kritya Archawanitkul, 2004: 6). This is because the explanation about pregnancy, baby delivery, and motherhood is attached to explanation about women despite the fact that pregnancy cannot take place because of women alone (Bunch 1990, quoted in Kritya Archawanitkul, 2004: 5-6). Thus, it can be said that the power in deciding on female reproduction or “reproductive rights” that is supposed to belong to women are, in fact, depending on men due to patriarchal gender discourse.

The social construction of femininity and masculinity has risen and continually developed in Thai society. As can be seen in the past, when a baby boy was born, book and pencil would be placed in the cradle while for a baby girl would be pin and thread (Satheinkoseth, 1996 quoted in Warunee Phurisinsith, 2002: 2). This reflects that Thai society values that men are equivalent to knowledge and education through which men could attain public role, while women are attached to house works. It thus can be seen that men’s space and women’s space are divided; that is, while men are of public, women are of domestic or private. This division of space results women in a tying up with housekeeping, food preparing, child rearing and take caring of husbands who are active in public role. This gender division has been established as the truth with no doubt about men and women through the socialisation process as can be seen from “Proverbs of Good Woman” by Soontornphu which stated that:

“Gratify husband as the love one and be loyal with no questions,
Do not make him angry and attend him when in bed times,
Pay obeisance to him and provide him all his preferences,
Wake up before and sleep after, prepare him water for face watching...

Good woman must be mild-mannered and do things delicately,
Memorise the good things and have a sweet tongue,
Be good in housekeeping and do not argue when being blamed,
Do not do the wrong things and try to be admired...”

This can be seen that women are socially assigned to be under men and must do anything to make men as well as other people satisfied. Additionally, this value is transferred from education system which is the main agent in socialisation process. For example, Dhammajariya Readings of the Education Plan 1956, addressed that “beside the husband no one can support women better because and women must be under husband’s control” (Warunee Phurisinsith, 2002: 7). Moreover, “Lokniti Verse” which students are assigned to read in Thai language class addressed that:

“Men are like the front legs of the elephant,
Women are as the rear ones,
They then must follow their husbands’ thinking,
Just like thread attached to the pin”

This metaphor of elephant’s legs giving emphasis to men as the leaders while women as the followers has become an unquestionable social value in Thai society as it has been reproduced through times through such powerful socialisation mechanism like education system and the media, as Kanchana Kaewthep (2004: 58) mentioned that ancient images of women as “wives, mothers, beautiful creatures and objects of sexual gratification” are repetitively reproduced into modern forms. Although the media attempts to open up a new space for the new set of women’s image as working women or Women’s Movement, arising question is how much content produced by the media will lead to understanding about gender equality (Kanchana Kaewthep, 2004: 58-59). While the image of “working women” makes it appears as if they have spaces outside their homes, the “domestic ideology” is still closely attached. The domestic ideology is the one that asserts that women’s place is at home; they do not need to take important decisions and still need to be protected by men (Kanchana Kaewthep, 2004: 231-232). The evidences which can affirm that these images of women are still reproduced are researches about women’s representation in the media. The researches found that the ideal image of women that is closely tied to their traditional gender roles (Panida Hansawaad, 2001), the presentation of women as objects of sexual gratification (Jintana Ngamsiriporn, 2002; Prasit Yamsri, 2005), the reflection of women’s oppression (Khien Nirunnoot, 2003), and the clear distinction

between good and bad women that fits social definition of traditional gender role (Tantiniranat, 2005) has been recurrently produced. Furthermore, researches about women's place in the society have been conducted. They mentioned that the socially constructed definition of women has excluded women from accessing public sphere where they can progress working outside their homes since it is considered a space for men. If women want to enter the public sphere, they will need to be responsible for their roles in both the public and domestic spheres (Sasitorn Chaichana, 2001; Sasitorn Siriprasertkul, 2002).

It can be seen that Thai society has socially constructed reality about gender through various mechanism such as education system and the media, resulting in unquestionable explanation about femininity and masculinity, and this social construction of reality has caused gender inequality, an inequality between women and men which can be regarded as one among various forms of social injustice. Nevertheless, there have been attempts to bring about gender equality. This can be seen from the emergence of women's movements starting in 1979-1980. The first organisation working on women's rights is "Friends of Women Group" (Friends of Women Foundation at present), following by the establishment of "Centre for News on Women" in 1884 (Foundation for Women at present) (Kritya Archavanitkul & Kanokwan Tarawan, 2002: 43). Furthermore, in academic institutions, Women's Study programme was started at Chiang Mai University in 2000 and at Thammasat University in 2001 (Virada Somsawat, 2006: 171), as well as on the policy side that has attempted to precipitate gender equality through policy process. This can be seen from the fact that policy regarding children and women protection, labour protection policy which includes female labour, and so on, have been officially issued.

Even though there are many interventions to raise gender equality, the inequality still remains. This can be seen from "Thailand Human Development Report" published in 2007 by the United Nations Development Programme mentioned that gender disparity created an unbalanced development. It obstructed women from accessing various important rights and make them vulnerable (United Nations Development Programme, 2007: 17). The vulnerability was reflected through the risk of Thai women getting HIV infection. One reason is due to social perception that good women are supposed to be sexually preserved so they do not have access to sex

education with regards to HIV/AIDS prevention (Virada Somsawat, 2006:59). It could be said that gender inequality still remains despite the works on women's rights of many sectors because those works merely give emphasis to the solutions of women's problems such as the work of Women's Health Advocacy Foundation that merely focuses on sexual health and reproductive rights of women (Woman's Health Advocacy Foundation, 2010: 1-5) and of Friends for Women Foundation which emphasises women's understanding about their rights in order for them to have negotiation power (Friends for Women Foundation, 2010: 1-3) while the root cause of the problem is in fact the social construction of reality which establishes an explanation about women. People then do not question this explanation because they perceive it as the truth, resulting in that people do not recognise the existence of gender inequality. Or if they recognise, they recognise it as naturally constructed, not socially. This can be seen from the fact that gender discrimination still remains even in social policies addressing women's rights (National Human Rights Council, 2010: 1-7).

Hence, bringing about gender equality is difficult as people in general do not perceive that this equality is a problem. They view that inequality between women and men is acceptable. In addition, gender equalising interventions in Thai society still not yet deconstruct social values and beliefs regarding femininity and masculinity which is the root cause of the problem. When comparing gender inequality with other distinguished social injustice such as poverty, it then could be said that solving gender inequality is relatively intricate because people do not view it as a form of social injustice while the more distinguished one like poverty remains unsolved.

Among diverse interventions to rectify gender inequality, namely women's movements, policy process regarding women's rights, and so forth, there is an attempt to bring about gender learning through theatre with the aim that gender learning would precipitate gender equality. This can be seen from the initiation of "Women in the Moon: Women Playwrights and Directors Theatre Festival" in 2007. The festival was the first of its kind that was organised in Thailand. In this Festival, "a group of women were composing. They shared their stories through letters, play scripts, and performances. Writing allowed them to express their inner world to the outside world. It informed others about these women's position in the world and showed what kind of

world they wished for.” (Jarunan Pantachart, 2007: 2). Prior to this, gender plays have been produced continuously as a result of the reanalysis and reinterpretation of female characters in classical literature based on female directors’ perspectives. The aim of the reanalysis and reinterpretation is to raise question to the society about women’s gender role. These plays are, for instance, *Bussaba-Unagun* (1994) by Professor Dr. Mattani Ratnin, *Pimpilalai* (2001) by Parichart Chungwiwattanaporn, and *Through Fire and Flame* (2000) and *Sida-Sriraam?* (2005) by Associate Professor Pornrat Damrhung. Various plays and performances have also been remade so that they fit the contemporary social context. For example, *Venus Party*, which was originally produced in 2004 and reproduced in 2008, displayed examples of daily life situations that women encounter and question back to the society whether those situations are normal.

It could be said that theatre has been utilised as learning medium around the globe for a long time. For instance, it was effectively used by Philippines’ People Theatre Network in the removal of Ferdinand Marcos, the former president of the Philippines known for his dictatorship and suppression on civilians, from power between December 1985 and February 1986. The Network, which comprised 300 community theatre groups, scattered into different communities to perform satirical theatre that reflected problems arising from Marcos’s human rights violation. While the government took total control of other forms of media, public theatre was so pervasive that the governmental power could not control its contents. As a result of the movement, the Network was threatened, arrested and in some cases, murdered. Even though the Network was not the only component in people’s revolutionary movement, the theatre was remarkably influential because they reflected and emphasised on civilians’ suppression experience. The visualisations shown through the theatre encouraged people’s collective action to fight against totalitarian dictatorship and autocracy. Theatre was also performed at the front of public demonstration. The movement successfully drove Marcos into exile on February 25th, 1986 (Erven, 1987: 57-78).

In addition, theatre is used as an educational channel to provide information and raise awareness about HIV/AIDS pandemic in order to encourage people to change their lifestyles and behaviours that make them vulnerable to

infection. For instance, Malawi's Department of Agricultural Extension and Services within the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation realised that the HIV epidemic was predominantly among farmers and felt challenged to raise public awareness about the issue. They thought that theatre could be utilised as an educational tool so in 2001 they cooperated with the Centre for Advanced Training in Rural Development from Germany to conduct an action research to explore possibilities of using theatre to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS. Training of Trainers workshops were organised to enable the participants to conduct theatre in selected areas in order to communicate about the issue. The research result revealed that theatre was more effective compared to other awareness-raising tools. Consequently, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation established a Drama Taskforce to perform extensive work in HIV/AIDS prevention through theatre (Braun, 2001: 50-103).

When considering the use of theatre in learning process, it can be argued that theatre can be used as a learning tool to enable perception and behaviour change among the audience. This is because learning process does not limit itself only to reception by which people receive information and knowledge from various sources, as not to comprehension by which people understand the meaning of information and knowledge and thus connect all the information and knowledge to make some kinds of explanation logically, but learning means a transformation of attitudes, norms, perceptions and behaviour (Uthai Dulyakasem, 2002: 199). This argument complements with that of Orasri Ngamwittayapong (2006: 111-112) who mentioned that learning process is an individual's process or procedure of processing information and knowledge in order to develop it into creative learning. The process requires transformation, which is considered to be the true meaning of learning. If transformation has not yet occurred, it indicates that the learning process is not taking place or is happening minimally. Learning in this sense shares the same definition as transformative learning that Jack Mezirow described as a process that an individual reinterpret and making meaning out of one's own experience, which will lead to understanding and a new set of learning (Mezirow, 1990: 1).

Even though it was only recently that theatre has been utilised as a learning tool about gender issues in Thailand, the attempt has been constant throughout the last 15 years. It has been presented from women's standpoint about

gender issues in Thai society. Literature review about theatre and learning indicates that theatre can be used to encourage learning. Thus, the researcher is interested in exploring the role of theatre in gender learning in Thailand.

Orasri Ngamwittayapong (2006: 5-102) suggested that social norms and styles of learning culture in different society affects learning effectiveness. Besides, literature review also reveals that other factors such as theatre presentation process, background of theatre practitioners and the audience, and so on also affect learning outcomes. Hence, the researcher attempts to find out the role of theatre as gender learning channel in Thai society. The researcher also seeks to understand what other factors and conditions are related to learning gender issues through theatre. Attempts to find out answer to this research question will enable a more extensive utilization of theatre as a learning tool and comprehensive learning about gender, which is significant in creating gender equality within the society.

1.2 Research objectives

1.2.1 To understand the roles of theatre that enable learning gender issues.

1.2.2 To find out what factors and conditions are related to learning gender issues through theatre.

1.3 Research questions

1.3.1 What are the roles of theatre that enable learning gender issues?

1.3.2 Are theatrical factors and conditions related to learning gender issues?

1.3.3 Are factors and conditions regarding the audience related to learning gender issues?

1.3.4 Are contextual factors and conditions related to learning gender issues?

1.3.5 Are interactions between theatrical, audience and contextual factors and conditions related to learning gender issues?

1.4 Operational definition

1.4.1 Theatre means a succession of events performed by characters with purpose to make the audience understand about the presented events. The performance takes place at a specifically organised area. Theatre in this sense refers to Western Modern Theatre formed in the 19th Century based on the Realism philosophy and movement and gradually developed into Anti-realism form.

1.4.2 Form of theatre refers to presentation of a play that can either be open-ended or close-ended, realistic or non-realistic, and the audience can either participate or have no participation in it.

1.4.3 Content of performance/play refers to the process of creating a plot and story for a play, including selecting and analyzing issues to be selected as main focus for the plot, and creating framework that fits well with the selection.

1.4.4 Learning refers to transformation in the way of thinking, values and behaviour as a result of reception and comprehension.

1.4.5 Gender refers to the attributes of femininity and masculinity as constructed by the socio-cultural process, not of being male or female as defined by the biological sex.

1.4.6 Gender learning refers to the comprehension that gender is the social construction of meaning which can be deconstructed. The deconstruction of such meaning can lead to a transformation of gender perspective and behaviour that is connected to social relationship of both genders.

1.4.7 Factors and conditions related to the theatre refer to theatrical components which are content of the play/performance, form of presentation and the interaction of the two affecting gender learning.

1.4.8 Factors related to the audience refer to the components of individual audience, namely sex, age, educational background, previous learning about gender, theatre experience, that affect gender learning.

1.4.9 Contextual factors and conditions refer to the components which are social perceptions regarding gender issue and gender socialisation which affect gender learning.

1.6 Research scope

Learning about gender issues nowadays is not limited solely to understanding the dichotomy between male and female because present-day reality indicates that gender is complex and fluid as demonstrated by homosexuals, transvestites and transgenders (Yos Santasombat, 2005: 161). Consequently, understanding gender issues does not only require understanding of the masculine and feminine attributes in the social and cultural dimensions, but also of how those dimensions view other gender groups and transgenderism (Cook & Jackson, 1999: 3). However, this research only focuses on learning how theatre is used as a gender learning tool in Thai society by confining to different gender roles between men and women in the socio-cultural dimensions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of “Theatre and Learning: A Case of Gender Issue” seeks to find out how theatre can bring about gender learning and what factors are involved in learning about the issue. Thus, literature review in this chapter will focus on reviewing knowledge related to the role of theatre in the context of learning, learning process and factors that affect learning, and analysing gender problems in Thai society. All the knowledge will be synthesised and turn into the theoretical framework for this research.

2.1 The role of theatre in the context of learning

2.1.1 The role of theatre in Thai society

Theatre or any other types of performing arts is viewed as entertainment in Thai society. Pattarawadee Puchadapirom’s research (2007: 1-20), *The Entertainment Culture in Thailand: Change in Entertainment Culture in Bangkok Society from 1948 to 1957*, mentioned that Thai masked dance-drama (Khon), musical folk drama (Li-kay), puppet theatre (Hun Krabok) and so on are parts of Thai entertainment. However, they could be regarded differently. For instance, Ramayana in a form of masked dance-drama contains battle implication between the good and evil, which are represented by Rama and Ravana respectively. It also emphasises the righteousness of demigod status in the monarchy as shown through the character of Rama, who is the incarnated avatar of the Deity Vishnu Narayan. This is because God stands above all human and the sovereign is on the good side. Furthermore, many of the spoken dramas which were introduced in Thailand by King Rama VI contain social implications. For example, Shylock, a Jewish money lender who is greedy and takes advantage of other people, in *Venice Vanich*, King Rama VI’s translation of William Shakespeare’s play, *The Merchants of Venice*, is used as a symbolic representation to criticise and

cynically look down on Chinese, who were having power over Siamese economy during that time. Chinese were then called “Jews of the East”. Therefore, theatre is not just a form of entertainment in Thai society as it also creates social definition.

Pranee Wongthet (1986: 112-120) mentioned that development of theatre in Asia, including Thailand, can be generated into three categories: traditional theatre, medieval theatre, and modern theatre. Traditional theatre is usually presented in the forms of dances, music, and locomotion to express feelings. Storylines are usually taken from Indian Epics such as Ramayana and Mahabharata. Contents are mostly related to religious view and royalty characters. It also focuses on the convention of a performance as seen in puppet performances. Medieval theatre is a combination between traditional and modern theatres such as the Japanese Kabuki, Chinese Opera, Li-kay and Nang Talung (Thai shadow puppet performance). It can be said that medieval theatre is the origin of modern theatre that presents about earthly love and adventurous journey of Everyman. Consequently, theatre in the Middle Age gave rise to “popular theatre”. Because popular theatre belongs to the people, it is used as a tool for political movement as seen in plays against British colonization of India. President Suharto of Indonesia also inserted political messages in Wayang Kulit (popular shadow puppet show) in order to control the people. In Thailand, Nang Talung has also been used to criticise and satirise behaviour of prefects, government officials, and well-known figures in the society. Being afraid of the criticism in Nang Talung, these people tend to avoid corruption (Somtawil Sasisont, 1974: 64-65).

Theatre in the third period is called modern theatre. It was originated around the same time as city formation and the emergence of the middle class (Pranee Wongthet, 1986: 112-120). Modern theatre is dialogue-based and in no way related to the traditional theatre. In Thailand, King Rama VI is the introducer of this type of theatre. Social implications presented in his theatrical works are as previously discussed in this study. However, researches about history of modern theatre in Thailand have indicated that theatre that was truly socially and politically influential were the ones produced by Luang Wijiwatakarn, particularly during the early period of Field Marshall Piboonsongkram’s position as a prime minister (1938-1944).

“Social condition during the early period of Field Marshall Piboonsongkram’s administration (1938-1944) was known as the “formation of the nation” period. In order to lead Thailand to becoming a powerful nation, Field Marshall Piboonsongkram attempted to firmly implant the country’s “nationalism” into the Thai psyche by using all possible channels. He also tried to create faith in the national leader and encourage national pride by using all forms of political psychology, especially via mass suggestion as recommended by Luang Wijiwatakarn. The idea is to implant political policy in the public by making them believe instead of understand as well as stirring emotional empathy rather than using logic... Thus, Luang Wijiwatakarn composed play scripts with purpose to attract public interest and used theatre as a medium to pass on nationalism ideology to the public rather than focusing on its aesthetics value...Regarding play stories, he used important and impressive historical contents and embellished love stories for the main characters...which usually ended with tragedy to impress the audience...Historical plays conducted by Luang Wijiwatakarn during this early period successfully aroused the audience as it had planned, particularly the play called *Leuad Supan* (Blood of Supan People)” (Praornrat Buranamaat, 1985: 270-273).

From the above mentioned, it can be said that theatre has been used as an instrument of state propaganda in order to gain political benefit and for socialisation purposes so that the public’s attitudes are formed in a way that will respond to state apparatus.

On the people’s side, there was a formation of Crescent Moon Theatre Troup to interact with their social condition. The foundation branched from its original Crescent Moon Group formed in 1969 by adolescent university students such as Suchart Sawatsri, Wittayakorn Chiangkoon, Winai Ukrit, Kamron Kunadilok and so on. These people were weary of Romanticism and the social condition in that period, so they produced social critiques about the condition. For instance, Wittayakorn Chiangkoon composed a poem, *In Search for the Meaning*, and a play script, *I Just Want to Go Out*. In terms of theatre, it started when Kamron Kunadilok was a lecturer

at Chiang Mai University. He took the students out for field trips to allow them to experience and learn the real life of people living in rural areas. In 1972, he produced a play called “Rural Area Number 1” to reflect the hardship of peasants to the outside world and performed it to the peasants. After that, another play called “Rural Area Number 2” was produced to reflect the inundation of investment and metropolitan culture that flew into the rural areas and drew people into the city. “Rural Area Number 3” reflected how rural people had to work in factories and been oppressed by their employers.

However, the liberal theatre movement ended as a result of the military crackdown on 6 October 1976 that took away lives of university students and the public alike. Social activists and theatre practitioners dispersed into jungles and joined the Communist Party of Thailand while some of them went into exile abroad. Thus, theatre’s social function started to disappear. Only after the release of the Order of the Prime Minister's Office no. 66/1980 which allowed “national development partners” to return to the city, that social activists including former members of the Crescent Moon Theatre Troup started to get active again. At the time, Kotom Areeya encouraged theatre practitioners and social activists who just returned from jungles to participate in Grassroots Micro Media Project, which was later transformed to the Makhampom Theatre Group. Makhampom uses mobile theatre to reflect on significant development issues such as the promotion of community banking system and cattle-buffalo bank by rotationally performing in different rural communities. Their development ideology at that time was formed based on development practitioners’ attitudes that farmers were deprived of opportunities and knowledge. Theatre was then used as an educational instrument to raise community’s awareness and understanding about the issues (Duangkae Buaparakone, et al., 2004: 90-94).

As Makhampom has been using theatre in community development, they have called themselves a “community theatre group” since 2009 until now. Makhampom primarily targets children and youth in order to enable them to identify problematic issues within their own communities and produce their own community theatres. Pradit Prasarthong, director of Makhampom mentioned that “We are proud of the community theatre project that takes part in the development of children and youth in local communities.” (Pradit Prasarthong’s interview in Sarakadee Magazine,

2001). This is because Youth Community Theatre is a “tool that reflects on concerning issues and problems within a community to give room to discussion and sharing of experiences. It also acts as community’s alternative resource for entertainment. Moreover, it enables communication within a community and between communities” (Duangkae Buaprakone, et al., 2004: 131). At present, there are many theatre groups that use theatre in development work.

From the above mentioned, it can be said that theatre has played an important role throughout Thai history. However, in academic context theatre concepts and theories originated in Western community and can be traced back to the ancient Greek period.

2.1.2 From Greek to modern theatre

In William Shakespeare’s *As You Like It*, there is a line that reads, “All the world’s a stage; And all the men and women merely players.” This can be interpreted that in the Western point of view, theatre is an imitation of the real world and the audience is observing the world and the people. Hence, theatre is not separated from the lives of people in a society.

Chettana Nagawachara (1994: 131) argued that a nation with civilised culture is usually the one that withholds auspicious theatrical work. In the West, theatrical evolution has a long history alongside political, economic, and socio-cultural development. To study the role of Western theatre, one can trace back to the ancient Greek era. It has been commonly accepted that the Greek Tragedy can be referred to as the origin of theatre. The Greek Tragedy follows concepts of Aristotle's *Poetics* as follow:

“Tragedy is a representation of serious action with the protagonist’s fortune shifts from good to bad and mostly end with tragedy. The tragedy does not necessarily result in death. It can refer to the protagonist’s fall from good fortune and comfort or his sufferings. Tragedy presents the suffering of human beings to elicit pity and fear from the audience. Such feeling will lead to enlightenment and bring about exaltation and catharsis” (Yuwapa Chaisilpwattana, 2002: 129).

The protagonist in Greek Tragedy is a Tragic Hero with tragic flaw; usually arrogant, not submissive, believes that one has the right to choose one's own way of life, and does not accept one's own fate. Such designation of the protagonist's characteristic is complementary with the aim of tragedy. When the protagonist makes false decision as a result of one's own arrogance and does not give in to fate, one cannot maintain life balance and eventually ends up with disaster. The protagonist's disastrous life experience will arouse pity and fear from the audience as they fear that the same thing could happen to them. The audience will then be enlightened that they should not act so arrogantly to avoid similar incident from happening to them. This kind of feeling reflects the Greek perspective that "to live a good life, one must live a neutral and moderate life and use logic to control appropriateness" (Yuwapa Chaisilpwattana, 2002: 132). The enlightenment will lead to exaltation and catharsis. Therefore, it can be concluded that Greek Tragedy reinforced people's practice of social norm although the process was interpreted as the ruler's mean to control the mentality of its citizen so that they would behave themselves.

Once the social context has changed, the mind controller as well as the role of theatre will change accordingly. Sodsai Pantumagomol (2006: 191-192) mentioned that after the Greek Empire has fallen and the Roman Empire took over and reached its most materialistically civilised era, people's perception also changed. Their admiration of simplicity and their sensitivity also disappeared. Greek Theatre which was full of sophisticated philosophy became boring. Thus, the style and role of the Roman Theatre aimed to arouse the audience's excitement. Gladiator shows portray scenes of people brutally attacked and torn apart by lions. Theatrical sceneries were extravagantly produced, for instance, the real display of the volcanic eruption scene and the use of high technology to transfer water into theatres for the marine battle scene. However, such excitement was not enough to respond to the audience's need and ended up in the entire city being destroyed by arson. These kinds of temporary excitement had eventually led to the fall of the Roman Theatre as well as the Roman Empire in the 6th Century when Christianity was powerful.

After that the role of theatre has changed according to the social context in each period until French Revolution in the 19th Century has led to major social and political change that resulted in peace becoming European's principal ideology.

Furthermore, development of scientific knowledge and industrial revolution has resulted in empirical reasons being widely used in explanation. In social dimension, positivism has become highly influential in explaining social phenomenon. Positivism asserts that scientific ideology needs to be applied to create knowledge and social facts. This means that knowledge and facts must be provable by information obtained from sense data via all five senses, namely eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and touch.

Moreover, Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of the Species* which was published around the same period also caused an impact on the ideological change. The ideology about evolution and natural selection of species has brought about questions about the existence of God and fate. All this has resulted in an extensive use of scientific ideology and empirical reasons to explain knowledge and facts (Denduang Pumsiri, 1980: 5). This ideology also caused an impact on the role of theatre. Romantic theatre which presents an ideal story that human beings dream to escape from their daily hardship and melodrama theatre which uses riveting scenes to entertain the audience regardless of the logic and contains typical characters, for instance, the main male character is usually a decent person who is good looking and courageous; the main female character is beautiful and fits the ideal image of femininity; and the delinquent character is ugly yet cunning (Sodsai Pantumagomol, 2007: 41), were particularly popular during the early 19th Century, but got all rejected. A new theatrical school of thought known as Realism, which explains that "we will learn about the actual world through observation of its development...and must try to think as objectively as possible without trying to misrepresent the reality" (Denduang Pumsiri, 1980: 5) because theatre is life itself (Sodsai Pantumagomol, 2007: 41), was developed. Realistic Theatre is the origin of Modern Theatre in the Western world, which was developed towards the end of the 19th Century.

Text and presentation method of Realistic Theatre during the early period of Modern Theatre were well-made. Realistic play script is comprised of five steps: the exposition, conflict such as conflict between value systems presented through the main character, complication which refers to conflicts that become more complex, climax which refers to conflicts being fully developed until they reach the point of change, and resolution which refers to the conflicts being resolved. Stage setting, props, costume, and action and movement of the characters are all realistically

presented. The characters act like normal people. Thus, the audience act as observers who are aroused to have vicarious emotional identification. The audience is made worried about conflicts that are taking place in the play and will feel relieved after the conflicts are resolved although the resolution might not lead to a happy ending. It is said that the audience will look through the forth wall, which means that they are observing the lives of real people living in a house. All the three sides of the wall are the back and both sides of the stage. The forth wall is the imaginary wall at the front of the stage from where the audience can watch the representation of human life.

Realistic Theatre is also known as a realistic representation of life, which can be generated into three more styles. First, naturalism emphasises precisely on the actual circumstances of human life and is known as the slice of life drama. While performing, the actors and actresses can speak naturally instead of forcing their voices out in dramatic style. They can also walk, sit and stand naturally without worrying whether the audience will be able to see them. Realistic props, for example, tap with running water and real meat, are used. Naturalism is against the fully scripted play, but paying more attention to the tableaux of life. However, this kind of Realistic Theatre cannot communicate well with the audience and gave rise to a new form of theatre called simplified (or selective) realism. Simplified (or selective) realism refers to a form of theatre that selectively presents a part of human life or certain actions of human being. Stage setting is the selection of scenery that can truly represent a location. The simplest form of Realistic Theatre is called Suggestivism. Props are selectively limited just to represent a location. For instance, only one throne is placed to represent the entire stateroom. Acting is most important for this type of theatre (Mattani Ratnin, 2003: 191-192).

Besides the above mentioned characteristics, Realistic Theatre also reflects social issues.

“In the early period, modern playwrights were so concerned about the social environment that sometimes “society” became highlight of the story instead of comprising elements or the background as in the past. This trend gave rise to literature-based sociodramatic play, which attempted to reflect the negative side of society so that it would lead to a solution.

Sometimes the protagonist is represented by mass hero in order to make the audience understand the overall social problems” (Sodsai Pantumagomol, 2007: 17).

Although Realistic Theatre aims to change certain value system within society, the audiences are able to learn from behaviour of and changes that have occurred to the characters. However, this kind of theatre is developed based on Aristotelian poetic principles in which the audiences watch the play from the beginning until the end before leaving theatre. Bertolt Brecht, a German poet, playwright, and theatre practitioner; a very influential figure in theatre between 1920 and 1956 who admired Marxist philosophy, argued that Aristotle’s concept of catharsis.

“...demolishes the audience’s intellectual power because if catharsis provides emotional relief from disturbances such as pity and fear, the audience will feel even more comfortable after watching a play. Thus Aristotle’s dramatic style will never encourage people to change the world” (Chettana Nagawachara, 1983: 182).

Brecht found that theatres in the former period reflected the attempt to combine different art forms to create illusions, which the audience are attracted to. However, reality is not as glorious as presented in theatre due to class disparity and social oppression. Therefore, theatre needs to reveal real face of the ruling class and fight for the oppressed class by provoking the audience to analyse their own social status and the way they are treated by the society so that they will make a reformation. This is the starting point in developing Theatre for Social Action.

2.1.3 Brechtian theatre

Brecht created Epic Theatre to present the clear distinction from dramatic focus of modern theatre. Generally, people understand that epic refers to an extended narrative poem that mentions about the feats of legendary heroes. However, the word “epik” in German that Brecht used to call his form of theatre refers to “a narrative of

modern literature such as novels. Consequently, Brecht's Epic Theatre is not related to the extended poem...Brecht used the word, "episch"¹ to point out that it is different from the "dramatisch" style which means that the "episch" style does not strongly arouse the audience, but give them time to analyse and critique the same way as when they read a narrative (Chettana Nagawachara, 1983: 180; Grey, 1976: 71-72). Brecht compared the differences between Dramatic and Epic Theatres as shown in the table below:

Table 2.1 Dramatic and epic theatre comparison

Characteristics of Dramatic Theatre	Characteristics of Epic Theatre
- Performance	- Narrative
- Draw the audience to the stage situation.	- Limit the audience merely as observers, but
- Demolish the audience's capacity for action.	- Arouses the audience's capacity for action.
- The audience's feelings are aroused.	- The audience is forced to take decisions.
- Experience	- World view
- The audience is drawn into something.	- The audience is set to face something.
- Deceiving suggestion.	- Urge an argument.
- Feelings are preserved.	- Feelings are aroused to the point of recognition.
- The audience feels involved.	- The audience is excluded and just observing.
- The audience empathises with the characters.	- The audience studies the characters.

¹ An adjective of epic.

Table 2.1 Dramatic and epic theatre comparison (cont.)

Characteristics of Dramatic Theatre	Characteristics of Epic Theatre
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assume that we already have a thorough understanding about human beings. - Human beings do not change. - The audience gets excited to know the ending - Each scene is related to another - The story develops by itself. - Linear development - Fixed evolution - Human being is a fixed point - Thought determines being - Feeling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human beings become the subject of our exploration. - Human beings are changeable and keep changing all the time. - The audience pays attention to what is currently taking place - Each scene stands alone - The audience needs to take combine different scenes together to make sense of the entire story. - Curve development - Keeps jumping - Human being is a process - Social being determines thought - Reason

Source: Schumacher, 1930 quoted in Chettana Nagawachara, 1983: 181; Grey, 1976:

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Brecht created a new form of theatre presentation to support the above idea. He called it an “alienation” method while theatre practitioners call it the V-Effect or V-Effekt in German. The “V” derived from the word, “*verfremdung*” which is similar to alienation (Gray, 1976: 67). Theatres in the earlier period focused mainly on the realism and how to make the audience empathise with the characters’ emotion and feelings. Brecht’s alienation is to make the audience consciously realise that they are watching a play. This is to keep the distance between the audience and the play. Thus,

stage setting in Brechtian style is not realistic. There are no hidden stage lights and set changes are in full view of the audience. The characters sometimes speak to themselves or turn to address questions directly to the audience. Actors might be in a form of chorus that criticises characters' behaviours. Moreover, there is a use of signs to describe the story or a projection of still photographs onto monitor in front of the stage. Brecht believed that this method would make the audience think along instead of becoming emotionally involved with the play. The audiences were occasionally requested to compose the rest of the play because Brecht could not finish it. This was part of the alienation method in order to de-familiarise the audience. Additionally, Brecht created plots that would cause an estrangement and objection among the audience as he believed that they were intellectuals who could critically contemplate. This was reflected in his play, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, about a canteen woman who traded in war zone and lost all her children at war but did not escape from it. In this sense,

“the audience were provoked to think about the story of *Mother Courage* and rationally analyse it. They might learn that war is bad. Nevertheless, *Mother Courage*, who had to repetitively experience the loss of all her three children at war never learned her lessons and did not escape from war. This means that the audience are more clever than *Mother Courage* and theatre has taught us to become smarter. However, to really be smart, we must not follow, but use logics to scrutinise the messages that the theatre is attempting to portray although it means that we need to go against certain ideas that are presented to us” (Chettana Nagawachara, 1983: 183).

Due to Brechtian Theatre's attempt to motivate rational self-reflection and internal conflicts among the audience and social misunderstanding of the word “Epic”, Brecht came to prefer labelling his type of theatre Dialectic Theatre instead.

“Brechtian Theatre is the process of unmasking. After reading and watching the play script, the audience will start to be gratified, but not as

much as to be highly stimulated or feel motivated enough to immediately resist the oppressive system. These theatres have messages that the audience need to take away with them after the performance has ended and think them over. Brecht is against Aristotle because he does not want to produce theatre that would cause emotional catharsis. Generally speaking, Brecht wants to make his audience uncomfortable, concern, and traumatised to be aware of social injustice, oppression and suppression, and grouping for material gain. However, Brecht did not create these issues to get sympathy. Instead, he developed new theatrical techniques to stimulate us to use reasons to critically analyse the issues and find solutions by creating social change” (Chettana Nagawachara, 1983: 198).

2.1.4 Arguments regarding Realistic theatre and Brechtian theatre

An important question for Brechtian Theatre is how much it can transform the audience’s attitudes and perceptions that will lead to social change compared to other forms of theatre. Gray (1976: 166-181) explained that the answer to the question lies in the audience. He provided an example of Auber’s opera, *La Muette de Potici*, which was performed in Brussel, Belgium in 1830 and successfully motivated the audience to create change that resulted in several revolutions around Europe. However, Gray stated that in the first half of the nineteenth century, Europeans were ready for the provocation and public demonstration. This explanation reflects that if the public and society is ready to move forward, any forms of theatre can be a component that can motivate them to participate in a social movement. In addition, Realistic Theatre that Brecht does not approve of, for instance *A Doll’s House*, a play about women who choose to break free from the social structure that restricts women’s role as subordinate in order to live their own lives, by a Norwegian dramatist who is one of the founders of Modern Theatre, Henrik Ibsen, have motivated the audience to call for women’s rights. Yet, Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* was not primarily intended to cause a social movement like in Brechtian Theatre. This phenomenon indicates that dramatic theatre can also transform the audience’s perceptions the same way that Brechtian Theatre is questioned whether it can actually bring about change as Brecht intends to. Chettana Nagawachara (2007: 28) stated that “the author also doubts the

way theory is used as a base and from the author's experience, both Brechtian Theatre's play scripts and presentation style cannot always fulfil its purpose as Brecht's theory intends to".

Consequently, theatrical style is only a factor which co-exists in individual and social factors that will determine whether or not a theatre can bring about change. Nonetheless, an important thing that Brecht has left behind is that "he could present what he wanted to particular groups of people in specific situations in order to achieve specific goal for specific purposes" (Gray, 1976: 168). This is what made Brecht different from other theatre practitioners, who although discussed social issues, the discussion was general and presented in generic style instead of in specific style as in Brechtian Theatre.

In Thailand, Brecht's plays have been produced by Thai theatre practitioners between 1976 and 1986. Each of the plays could present Brechtian concept and ideology differently. For example, Pornsawan Wattanangkoon mentioned about *Mother Courage and Her Children*, which was performed in 1986 by Dramatic Art, Faculty of Arts, Chulalongkorn University and directed by Noppamas Sirigaya as follow:

"For human beings, war is winning and losing, similar to trading which brings both profits and loss. However, the meaning is not deep enough. Partly is because the song, which is simple in Brechtian style and is supposed to be able to reach the audience easily, was arranged in Bruce Gaston's simple style. Although the song has beautiful melody in the popular Western style, which is what Thai listeners are used to, the singer's outstanding performance distracted the audience from focusing at key messages in the lyrics. Hence, the author doubts whether the audience would understand the key message that Brecht attempted to portray about lessons of war and Mother Courage's behaviour. Another important factor that makes key messages from the theatre not as appealing as it should have been is due to the performance of some of the actors that could not make the audience think along and have self-reflection as Brecht aimed to. This is because the actors have their personal style of acting and particular

body movements that is popular in Thai soap operas. Moreover, they could not interpret and communicate key messages in the dialogue about war heroes and the length of war clear enough” (Pornsawan Wattanangkoon, 1987 quoted in Parichart Cheungwiwattanaporn, 2004: 256-257).

While *Mother Courage and Her Children* could not represent Brecht’s ideology, *Galileo* (also known as *Life of Galileo*), which was performed in 1985 by Theatre 28 and directed by Rassami Paoleungthong faced different outcomes. Brecht wanted the audience who watched the play to have internal conflicts whether or not they should give in to the oppressive power for survival or affirm their ideology and belief in order to achieve something greater. The idea was presented through the story of Galileo’s life as he chose to become submissive to the Roman Catholic Church for survival, but had to destroy his scientific discoveries and lost faith from his believers. When this theatre was performed in Thailand, Chettana Nagawachara, a literature specialist and an expert in Brechtian Theatre mentioned that:

“To sum up the researcher’s analysis about the latest performance of Brecht’s play, the researcher believed that “Brecht would also be satisfied with it.” A group of new generation who founded Theatre 28 did well in interpreting Brecht’s play and understanding its key messages. What is most important for admirers of Brechtian Theatre and people who study Brecht’s literature is that 28 Theatre Troup followed Brecht’s guideline and did not get lost” (Chettana Nagawachara, 1988: 227-228).

The two given examples indicate that theatrical presentation, which comprises of play script interpretation, performance, and other presentation elements, is critical factor that will influence the audience’s perception the way the theatre attempts to. However, the example presented a performance of Western theatre, which has specific objectives closely tied with specific contexts, in Thailand where surrounding contexts are different. Thus, it is not unjustifiable to judge that the Thai theatre production team did not understand the purpose of the theatre. Pornsawan

Wattanangkoon (1987 quoted in Parichart Chuengwiwattanaporn, 2004: 258-259) noted about the unsuccessfulness of *Mother Courage and Her Children* as follow:

“The difficulty in presenting *Mother Courage and Her Children* in the Thai context lies in the director’s and the actors’ interpretation of the play, which had to be in the Epic Theatre style. They had to interpret the story that took place in different cultural context and era and present it to Thai audience who are not familiar with the Roman Catholic Church and political and religious conflicts in that period. Although Thais are used to watching theatre that presents itself as a performance, which fits in with the Epic Theatre, most of them are attracted to the ones that make them feel emotionally involved. This can be considered as the main constraint”.

Thus, it can be concluded that the audience’s socio-cultural context can affect how theatre will cause an impact on the audience. Moreover, the audience’s experience and their familiarity with theatrical style can also affect theatre outcomes. In addition, critics’ statement, “by following Brecht, you will never get lost” that they have given after watching Brecht’s play, *Life of Galileo*, means not getting lost in the sense of interpretation and the presentation method. The critics gave their opinions from theoretical point of view, which does not guarantee that the theatre will successfully provoke a new set of ideas among the audience that will lead to social change.

It is possible that the limitation is a problem of praxis, which refers to answering “how” and “why” things happened the way they did (Nicholson, 2005: 39). The limitation does not mean that theatre practitioners focus only on one side, but means that they consider both sides separately, for example using theory or ideology as a base in order to develop practice but forgetting that both theory and practice are theatrical components which are mutually inclusive (McCullough, 1998: 3). Also, answers to the question, “why...?” is usually given by referring to theatre theory without considering social factor, in which the audience is a component.

Even though Brecht’s theory might have some limitations in terms of incorporating the theory into practice and have several other factors that determine its

success in reaching the objectives, it does not identify that Brecht's theory cannot bring about change. Thus, when applying Brecht's theory, theatre practitioners need to consider other surroundings factors in order to ensure that the theatre will successfully reach its objectives.

2.1.5 From Realistic to Brechtian theatre: preliminary research results regarding the use of theatre to enhance learning

It has been accepted both theoretically and practically that theatre begins with text. Chettana Nagawachara (2007: 31) mentioned that in theatre production, the first thing that is created is the script. In the past, play script was categorized as a form of literature which can be comprehended and empathized via reading and unnecessary to watch in order to understand. However, play script in the modern era is different from the conventional one because in many cases, the script and theatrical presentation were created simultaneously. Hence, reading the play script alone might not be enough to make readers understand and empathized with the theatre. Instead readers need to try to understand the script through theatrical presentation, which is specifically designed for the particular theatre. Chettana Nagawachara (2007: 37-38) mentioned that:

“I want to confess that after reading Nikorn Saetung's play script called *Insomnia*, I was not impressed since it failed to arouse my imagination. Nonetheless, after watching the performance, I must admit that it could attract the audience. Most of the audience who have watched the theatre agreed that *Insomnia* is absolutely impressive. Yet, why is the play script not interesting? The answer is because a play script that focuses on performance such as this might only provide a framework or serve as an acting manual, which is more suitable for the actors to use”.

The statement shows that play script alone might not be the most important factor to make the audience understand or get impressed with a theatre, but the script must also be presented via a suitable method so that it responds to the theatre's

purpose. Accordingly, an interaction between play script and theatrical presentation method is the critical factor that enables a theatre to reach its objectives.

When considering the factor together with findings from the arguments between Realistic and Brechtian Theatre as previously mentioned, we can get the preliminary conclusion regarding the use of theatre to create change that theatrical presentation style cannot identify that a theatre will be able to create change. This is because the Realistic Theatre that Brecht does not approve of can also create change while Brechtian Theatre might not be able to fulfil its theoretical objectives. All these statements confirm that considering theatrical presentation style or the play script separately is not an appropriate way. The interaction between both elements needs to be considered together. Furthermore, the socio-cultural context, the culture of theatre watching, and the way theatre is interpreted based on the socio-cultural influence can all affect the audience's understanding and learning.

2.1.6 Applied drama / applied theatre

Applied drama or applied theatre is another type of theatre that has not been developed based on the dramatic style of Modern Theatre, but like Brechtian Theatre, it has a social purpose. Nicholson (2005: 2-10) mentioned that applied theatre refers to dramatic activity which does not fit in the mainstream or conventional theatre. It aims to perform activities that would be beneficial to individuals, community and the society. Applied Theatre started to become popular during the 1990's. However, in practice, Applied Theatre was developed based on radical theatres in the 20th Century such as Theatre of Political Left, Theatre in Education, and Community Theatre. These three types of theatres are examples of the attempt to integrate dramatic practices with individual and social transformation by aiming to use theatre to demolish social hierarchies and divisions. In terms of politics, theatre has been used in social movements such as in civil rights movement. The role of theatre is to turn political issues into visualisation and present them as an initial platform for discussion about the issues. One thing that guarantees the role of theatre in politics is the emergence of Workers' Theatre Movement, which was part of the Workers' Movement in 1920.

In terms of education, theatre is influenced by two schools of thought, namely the European Model of Progressive Education, which focuses on learning by doing, and The Pedagogy of the Oppressed by Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator who thinks that educational system in the past is “banking education” in which the students listen and memorize information that have been transferred to them by the teachers. In this process, there is a hierarchy of knowledge providers and knowledge recipients. The knowledge recipients are powerless and receive the ideology and perspectives of the knowledge providers, who are the powerful, into their consciousness. This shows that they are oppressed. Freire argued that to liberate the oppressed, education needs to be in the form of dialogue and the learning process needs to be learners-centred. Thus, theatre in an educational context is the use of theatrical tools such as play, improvisation, and role playing as educational and learning tools based on the schools of thought. Community Theatre or Grassroots Theatre is a theatrical production participated by community members in order to present issues that are significant to people within the community such as issues that require the community’s opinion. Community Theatre aims to create social inclusion and community building.

In conclusion, applied drama or applied theatre is a type of theatre that uses pedagogical process to invite learners to participate in the process. As mentioned that even though applied theatre became widely known in 1990’s, it has long been implemented.

An example of applied theatre is Theatre in Education (TIE), which is performed by a professional theatre group aiming to educate or motivate perspective transformation among the audience as planned by using theatre as a tool. Hence, to organise Theatre in Education, research regarding the topics of presentation and targeted audience needs to be conducted based on developmental psychology and different needs of people from different age groups.

“Theatre in Education refers to theatrical work that still preserves general theatrical elements although some components might be excluded and employs only the simple techniques. This is for the purpose of flexibility when performing in different locations. Quality TIE needs to focus on the quality of presentation, performance, conduction, scriptwriting, activity

design, and professional design of all related theatrical elements. TIE aims to use experience from watching theatre performance as an educational tool for the audience. In other words, TIE is a tool that motivates the audience to raise questions and find solutions to problems, which is a critical method for survival...Mostly Theatre in Education is a combination between theatrical play and creative drama² because professional actors are used in the performance and activities are in the creative drama style in which actor-teacher will motivate the audience to participate in the discussion of desired topics. Sometimes, the audience are requested to participate in activities by performing role plays” (Parichart Chuengwiwattanaporn, 2004:13).

In the social context, apart from learning in school, Theatre in Education is used to provide knowledge to the general public by not limiting only to youth. In Africa, theatre is used as a channel to inform and raise public awareness about HIV/AIDS in order to transform lifestyles and behaviours that make them vulnerable to HIV infection. For example, in Malawi, the Department of Agricultural Extension and Service, the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, realised that there is a high rate of HIV/AIDS infection among farmers and were challenged to raise awareness about the issue. They considered that theatre could be used as an awareness raising tool and co-operated with Centre for Advanced Training in Rural Development from Germany to conduct an action research to explore the possibility in using theatre to raise public awareness about issues concerning HIV/AIDS in 2001. During the action research, training for trainers were provided for Agriculture Officer so that they would be able to produce theatre to raise awareness about the issues in certain areas, compared with other areas where other awareness raising activities were conducted. The research result indicated that theatre could raise public awareness about HIV/AIDS better than other campaign activities. This is shown in 88 percent of women and 94 percent of

² Creative Drama was developed in the United States to develop the participants’ skills, for instance, their concentration, observation, imagination, creativity, analysis, physical and verbal communication, self-respect or positive self-recognition, realization of social problems, and sensitivity. Main focus of the Creative Drama is the process, not the product. Therefore, this activity does not require official audience even though the process will eventually lead to performance.

men, who live in the area where theatre was performed, having positive attitudes towards condoms while 81 percent of women and 65 percent, who live outside the area where theatre was performed, have negative attitudes about condoms. Moreover, the questionnaire results to the question, “should HIV/AIDS and related issues be discussed with family?” showed that 91 percent of people living in the area where the theatre was performed think the issues should be discussed with family while 75 percent of people who live outside the area where theatre was performed said the issues should be discussed with family. The research outcomes, which indicated that theatre is an effective awareness-raising tool, have resulted in Malawian Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation establishing a Drama Taskforce to make use of theatre in other awareness raising activities (Braun, 2001: 50-103).

Another example of Applied Drama or Applied Theatre is “Theatre of the Oppressed”, which was developed by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian theatre director. The name “Theatre of the Oppressed” reflects that this theatrical form was influenced by Paulo Freire’s Pedagogy of the Oppressed. In the book, Freire mentioned that the oppressed need to liberate themselves from any forms of oppression since it is dehumanization. The oppression does not only dehumanize the oppressed but also the oppressor. Thus, self-liberation is not the fight against the oppressor because once the oppressor is removed from power, the oppressed will turn into the oppressor themselves. Therefore, the liberation is the process that allows the oppressed to critically examine the oppression and understand the consciousness of both the oppressor and the oppressed. This understanding will lead to the understanding of behaviour, perspective and ethics. Once the oppressed understand these issues, reality of oppression in the consciousness of the oppressed will be transformed. The transformation is self-liberation from being the oppressed into human. The transformation process also liberates the oppressor from being dehumanized. The existence of the oppressor guarantees the existence of the oppressed. However, once the oppressed regain their humanity, the oppressed will no longer exist. Consequently, both the oppressor and the oppressed will no longer exist. At this stage, learning of the oppressed will become learning of all other citizens since everyone is basically all learning at the same time (Freire, 1996: 25-51).

A form of theatre for the oppressed is called Forum Theatre, which was developed in 1973 based on Boal's experience in using theatre to solve community problems. It derived from the ideology that personal problems are social and political problems. During that period, Boal focused mainly on the production of political theatres which would allow the oppressed to liberate themselves and fight with the oppressors. The Forum Theatre was found when his theatre group performed in a community in Peru. After the performance ended, a local woman went up to him and asked that he used theatre to help her solve personal problem. Her problem was that her husband took her money and said that he would use it for a new house construction. Every time he took her money, he would leave her a note saying that it was a receipt for the construction materials. However, she was illiterate and believed that those receipts were real. After a long period of time, she started to wonder why constructing a new house was so time consuming and asked her neighbours to read the notes that her husband left. That was when she found out that the notes were actually love letters that he had written for other women and the money that her husband took from her was spent on his mistress. After listening to the story, Boal told her that he could not solve the problem for her, but he could create a role play and ask the audience how they would solve the same problem if they were in her shoes. The audience proposed many solutions and the actors performed accordingly, but Boal noticed that a woman was not satisfied with any of the proposed solutions. He then asked her opinion and performed according to her recommendation, but she was still not satisfied. Thus, Boal asked that she performed the role of the woman who experienced the problem and show what she thought would be the best solution for the problem. As a result of this incident, Boal created Forum Theatre (Boal, 1995: 1-9), which is performed by professional actors who set up a role play of problematic situations and present them to community members or people who participate in the activity. After the performance reaches a point where the protagonist needs to make a decision or handle a situation, the performance will be paused to ask what the audience think would be the best solution for the problem or the situation and the actors would act accordingly. In some cases, the audience who are experiencing personal problems will be asked to participate in the role play that imitates their real situations. This is because Boal believes that in transformations of society, everyone is

a protagonist (Boal, 1979: 120-156). By proposing solutions and participating in the role play, the audience is rehearsing problem-solving situations so that they would foresee or understand the outcomes of the problem-solving which is shown through the reaction from other actors or the audience's own improvisation in the given role.

Boal called this method, "Rehearsal of Reality" (Boal, 1979: 120-156) and called his spectator, "spect-actor" which refers to the audience who gain experience through their performance or from doing in order to find solutions themselves. This would cause internalisation which would lead to the audience's learning and transformation. The process is equal to self-liberation (Okagbu, 1998: 39).

An example of the use of Forum Theatre to bring about change is discussed in Ahmad Khatoonabadi's (1994) Ph.D. research entitled *Systemic Communication and Performance: A Humanist Learning Approach to Agricultural Extension and Rural Development*. The research presented how Forum Theatre was used as a guideline for community and agricultural development for farmers in Iran and Australia. The research revealed similar results in both countries. Forum Theatre was used as a tool that turned farmers into actors who work towards community and agricultural development via their interaction. The interaction took place during their attempt to find solutions for situations presented in the theatre and led to collective action and solutions for the problematic situations. From the research result, it can be concluded that Forum Theatre turned farmers' role as passive audience into actors who control their own development direction (Khatoonabadi, 1994: 294-309).

Boal's theatrical style was used directly and adaptively to enhance learning and bring about change, particularly in the social context where people are oppressed by the state power and socio-economic structure. This type of theatre was used in the social movement by the Philippines' People Theatre Network to drive the Philippines' former President, Ferdinand Marcos, who was known for his dictatorship and suppression of the civilians, out of power between December 1985 and February 1986. The Philippines' People Theatre Network comprised 300 community theatre groups, which scattered into different communities to perform theatre that reflected problems which arose as a result of Marcos's suppression (Erven, 1987: 57-78). Even though the Network was not the only group that took part in people's revolutionary movement, the theatre was eminently influential because they presented and reinforced the

Filipino civilians' suppression experience into visualisation. During public demonstration, theatre was performed at the front. The movement successfully drove Marcos into exile on February 25th, 1986.

After the incident, the Philippines' People Theatre Network was transformed into Philippines Educational Theatre Association – PETA, which focuses on enhancing the learning process rather than performance. This is why PETA's theatre practitioners call themselves ATER, which stands for Artists, Teachers, Organisers, and Researchers. Even today PETA is still active in using theatre to enhance learning and raising public awareness (Erven, 2001: 14-52). It can be said that PETA's self-definition as ATER, which is comprised of the word "teachers", reflects their intention in enhancing learning for the audience. Also the theatre practitioners need to act as researchers themselves while attempting to enhance learning. Hence, apart from being actors and organisers, they also need to perform the role of learning facilitators since their use of knowledge is a significant element that can create learning for the audience.

2.1.7 Theatre and learning

After considering the learning process framework, which Uthai Dulyakasem (2005: 199) explained that learning does not only refer to reception, but reception is the starting point of the entire process that would lead to comprehension and transformation in terms of attitudes and perception, values, ideology and behaviour, it can be concluded that theatres that were previously mentioned can enhance learning.

However, a question raised is what factors and conditions are related to the use of theatre to enhance learning. Answer in terms of theatrical factor is reflected through the argument between Realistic Theatre and Brechtian Theatre that by analyzing the script and the presentation method as separate elements, it cannot present the role of theatre in transformation. This also includes the role of theatre as a tool to enhance learning. Script and the presentation method need to be considered as elements or factors that interact with one another. This statement is complement with what Keyssar (1996: 1-18) mentioned about Feminist Theatre that in the past feminist theatre practitioners believed that Brechtian Theatre is suitable for creating feminist

consciousness. There was a period when feminists did not accept Realistic Theatre because it was developed based on the patriarchal dominant ideology which marginalized women. However, the feminist movement realised that Realistic Theatre could be suitable to present feminism since it is the representation of everyday life that general people can experience and understand (Reinelt, 1996: 35-48). In addition, this type of theatre does not distance theatre from the audience. Thus, the theatrical world and the audience's world is the same one which made it easier for the audience to receive feminist social and political messages. Empirical evidences indicated that Feminist Theatre both in Europe and the United States produced Brechtian and Realistic Theatres in even proportion. Also, there was a creation of Feminist Theatre in a new realism which combined the realistic presentation method of the Realistic Theatre with an aspect of Brechtian dialectic (Keyssar, 1996: 5).

Although there is no absolute answer regarding which type of theatre can enhance learning better, the literature review shows that factors and conditions that affect learning through theatre include: 1) interaction of text and presentation methods such as conclusions from the argument between Realistic Theatre and Brechtian Theatre and findings of the Feminist Theatre 2) specific socio-cultural context such as theatre that drove President Marcos out of power, had the social and political contexts at the time as major supporting factors that make the audience felt related to the situation presented. Thus, the theatre influenced the audience's perspective and led to social change. Similar situation applies to an opera in Belgium which motivated collective action from the public that also led to social movement. This is because the political context at that time already prepared the Belgian citizens to get ready to move towards social change 3) socio-cultural context is another learning factor. When the same theatre is interpreted differently by producers and audience who have different contextual background, the outcomes will also be different as in the case of Brechtian Theatres performed in Germany and in Thailand.

2.1.8 Researches related to theatre and learning in the Thai society

In the past, researches that study the role of theatre and its relation to learning mostly aimed to proof the hypothesis that theatrical activities such as creative drama, role play and so on are helpful for child and youth development. For instance

Poranee Kururattana's (1992) research entitled, *Performing Art and Child Development*, found that children's experiences are enhanced by their participation in different activities such as art, movement and creative drama. Creative drama and acting activities aim to enhance children's experience through their performances which allow them to present their abilities and individuality. Creative drama is different from theatre in a way that theatre focuses on the audience and what they will achieve from watching the performance while performances aim to enhance children's imagination skills which are crucial for their development. Imagination does not only refer to creative thinking in art, but also refers to the ability to link stories that are related to ones' daily lives, be they family issues or their surroundings. Imagination can only take place when children have more experiences, which can be enhanced by their participation in acting. Besides, movement and speech are also significant. Even though some acting activities are non-verbal, they must at least have some movement. The movement will make the children understand the management and positioning of their own bodies, which will lead to personality development. In terms of verbal activities, the children will learn how to use words and language that are related to communication and learn about self-presentation through verbal usage.

Furthermore, outcomes of Parichart Chuengwiwattanaporn's (2005) research, *The Use of Creative Drama for Learners Development*, showed that theatre can be used as a learning methodology to help develop learners' physical, intellectual, mental and emotional states. It also helps learners to have better interaction with other people in the society and the outside world. This research aimed to use creative drama to develop learners' thinking skills and teaching techniques for performing arts in the basic curriculum (2004). The research defined creative drama as the use of role play to present the actors' imagination and creativity within a secure atmosphere with no intention to present it to the public, but focuses mainly on the process of activities. The research result revealed that learners' thinking skills were improved.

In terms of theatrical activities used for specific development purposes, Sujittra Kaewseenuan's (2002) research entitled, *Theatre's Influence upon Building Self-Esteem for Child Abuse Victims*, tried using creative drama to build self-esteem for nineteen child abuse victims, who were going through recovery and reintegration process at the Centre for the Protection of Child Rights (CPCR). Outcomes of the

monitoring and evaluation of child abuse victims' self-esteem level, both prior to and after participating in the creative drama, revealed that prior to their participation, the children had low self-esteem, but after their participation, the children's self-esteem level had increased. They became more extrovert and confident in sharing their opinions. The children mentioned that they gained confidence after realising that their voices were heard and accepted by others. They could also control their emotions better and were calmer than before because they felt relaxed, proud of themselves and were happy. Nonetheless, the researcher mentioned that there was no confirmation whether such positive transformation would be sustainable. Also in cases of children who have been severely abused, participation in the creative drama was not enough to cause any changes. This indicates that background of the audience or people who participate in the theatrical process affects learning outcomes. Although the researches about theatre that were previously mentioned were not about theatrical plays, they represented different kinds of theatre used in theatrical process or activities to encourage learning for people participated in the process. Research regarding the use of theatre for perspective and behavioural transformation is presented in Marisa Seankulsirisak's (1989), *Strategies in Using Theatre to Persuade Cleanliness Preservation and Environment Protection: A Specific Case of Theatre entitled, Adventure of the Magic Eyes in Filthy City*. The research used an action research to conduct a theatre, *Adventure of the Magic Eyes in Filthy City*, for children aged between six and twelve years old to get their feedback and reaction. The research results showed that the theatre could convince the children to transform their behaviours for environmental protection such as by showing their desire to be in the same team as the Magic Eyes and their disgust of the dirtiness. They also transformed from being ignorance towards dirtiness to becoming helpful in rubbish collection. The researcher argued that the theatre could persuade the audience to transform their behaviour because it delivered the key message through action instead of words or written message. Information presented in action form allowed the children to see what happened and compared their actions to those of the characters. These elements support attitude reinforcement by convincing the audience to have the same attitude, reinforcing the audience's existing attitudes and perceptions that complement with the ones presented in the theatre, or enabling an attitude change from negative to positive.

Chulakorn Masatienwong's (2000), *A Study of the Process and the Results of Grassroots Micro-media Project for Human and Social Development in Different Regions: A Case Study of Makhampom Theatre Group* is another research that studies the role of theatre as a learning tool. The research explored about the production process and the presentation of *Malai Mongkol* by Makhampom Theatre Group in different schools all around the country for sixteen rounds in 1996. The theatre presented about Monk Malai who travelled to hell to meet the sufferers and people who received the results of their good deeds in heaven and combined it with information about HIV/AIDS to raise awareness about HIV prevention. The theatre successfully achieved its objectives in raising the audience's awareness about the severity of HIV/AIDS. The audience also recommended solutions to the problem such as self-protection methods and campaigns to raise public awareness about HIV/AIDS.

In the study, the researcher collected data through observation, both in a participatory and non-participatory way and interviews with members of Makhampom Theatre Group. They also followed Makhampom to their performance venues and asked the audience to fill in questionnaires after they finished watching plays. Key questions asked the audience to identify the play character that they pitied the most, their achievement from watching the play, and their recommendations for HIV/AIDS solution.

However, these questions are about reception, not learning. The audience's awareness of the HIV/AIDS problem and its solution could be from their past learning, prior to watching the theatre. In the discussion of the research outcomes, the researcher mentioned that *Malai Mongkol* could enhance the audience's learning process, but did not analyse the audience's transformation that occurs as a result of learning.

In terms of theatre production, the researcher presented Makhampom Theatre Group's production process such as their researches on *Tri Poom* (a literature about three worlds composed during Sukhothai period), HIV/AIDS, play script writing, rehearsal, and so on. However, the researcher only reported about the production process by explaining what happened and how it happened without questioning why Makhampom selected Monk Malai as the core of the story, and why the storyline and the scripts were presented that way, and so on. These kinds of

questions would bring answers about Makhampom Theatre Group's ideology used in selecting stories and their presentation method or learning design which lead to successful or unsuccessful achievement of the theatre objectives. Thus, the researcher failed to present how the theatre has influenced or affected the audience.

What makes the research interesting is the recommendation that a theatre needs to be adjusted in order to fit into the cultural context of each region where the theatre is performed. This indicates that the audience's surrounding context affects their learning. Thus, for a theatre to successfully fulfil its goals, surrounding contexts and backgrounds of the audience need to be carefully taken into account.

Another research, which shows that theatre is an effective tool to enhance learning, is Sirin Jaitiang's (2005), NGO's Li-kay: A Case of Makhampom Theatre Group. Even though Makhampom Theatre Group uses a traditional Thai performance as Li-kay, they apply the modern theatre technique for their performance. Li-kay performances that the researcher focused on were about politics such as the one called "Street Reservation", which aimed to encourage the audience to consider the relocation of Thammasat University from Tha Prachan to Rangsit. The researcher concluded that:

"Makhampom's Li-kay performances believe in the power and capacity of acting that it can arouse and warn the society, and reduce the severity of problems to be "discussed" by adjusting the message and presentation method so that it fits the targeted audience and can unconsciously make them feel involved and have empathy. Although the same problem is discussed and presented by other forms of performing arts, Li-kay makes it easier for the audience to receive the message and arouses their emotions. Makhampom's Li-kay allows the audience to express their opinions as well as relief stress about the pressing issues, while at the same time provokes them to take actions to create social change" (Sirin Jaitiang, 2005: 138-139).

The above conclusion is overstated since the researcher did not explore whether or not the audience had any perspective and behavioural transformation as a

result of watching the play. In addition, the research did not aim to investigate whether Li-kay could encourage learning. It only studied the role of Makhampom Theatre Group as a Community of Practice based on Etienne Wenger's concept. Also the researcher works as a volunteer for Makhampom, so the above conclusion was presented from a point of view of someone who is part of the group and admires and has faith in the Group's work.

However, the research's presentation of Li-kay as a tool that could influence the audience's learning is interesting. It mentioned that Makhampom Theatre Group adjusted their techniques and language for each performance to fit different groups of audience. This reveals that the audience's differences, which refer to their background and social status, can affect the presentation method. On the contrary, the audience's background is related to their ability to learn from the theatre.

Moreover, Nungruthai Tanaprachum's (2006) research entitled *Student's Participation in Educational Theatre as Part of the Thai Children Awareness Project: A Case of Pibulwes Kindergarten, Bangkok*, which explores Maya: The Art and Cultural Institute for Development's use of theatre as an educational tool to raise awareness of elementary school students about the negative effects of sweets, soft drinks and snacks. The theatre aimed to transform the students' consumption behaviour. The theatre presentation process started with a "warm up" which used fun activities as an icebreaker to get the children acquainted and involved. Then during the performance, theatre characters raised questions to the children and asked them to help finding solutions to situations being presented. After the theatre ended, learning enhancement process was conducted through the use of activities. The activities

"started with the learning facilitator persuaded students to re-identify problem and cause of the problem regarding the negative effects of sweets, soft drinks and snacks and raised questions such as "what methods will you use to limit your consumption of those snacks?" Students were asked to individually explore their problems then turn their ideas into pictures and write down descriptions under their pictures...after finished drawing, student representatives were asked to present and explain their drawings to the rest of the students...then students were encouraged to

take part in the conclusion and final assessment to test their memory and comprehension of the problem and its solutions” (Nungruthai Tanaprachum, 2006: 73).

From the above mentioned process, the researcher found that theatre could transform children’s perspectives, which is believed to lead to behavioural transformation. However, the researcher suggested that further research should be conducted to find out whether or not theatre can fully create transformative learning. This indicates that the researcher cannot assert that theatre which is performed to the audience only once can lead to transformative learning. This ideology is presented in the researcher’s recommendation that “schools should periodically organise activities that encourage students’ participation in order to reinforce their awareness” (Nungruthai Tanaprachum, 2006: 128).

Even though it cannot be fully confirmed that theatre encourage learning, this research indicates that a critical factor for learning through theatre is that theatre needs to encourage the audience’s participation so that they do not passively receive the messages being presented, but become active audience who think along and critically analyse the messages that they have received after the performance ended.

By looking at the overview of this research regarding theatre and learning in the Thai society, it can be found that this research is to proof the researchers’ belief that theatre can be used as an effective learning tool. Thus, this research is not presented from the critical perspective. The research findings indicate that: 1) defining target audience and analyse their learning nature is crucial for designing theatre to encourage learning such as in the theatre entitled, *Adventure of the Magic Eyes in Filthy City* 2) understanding the audience’s socio-cultural context is a major component in designing a theatre that will lead to audience’s learning as reflected in theatres and *Li-kay* performed by Makhampom Theatre Group 3) enabling audience’s participation both during and after the performance will assist them to achieve better learning such as in the case of “Thai Children Awareness Project”.

2.2 Learning process and factors influencing learning

Learning process does not only refer to reception, but also comprehension and transformation of attitudes, values, ideology and behaviour. When considering learning process as an ideological and behavioural transformation process, it is found that learners' critical self-reflection upon their own ideology and behaviour is a necessary condition for learning. The critical self-reflection is discussed in Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory, which was introduced in 1978. This theory defines transformative learning as a reformation of meaning perspectives, which is the assumption that a person uses to interpret experiences. The reformation of meaning perspectives will lead to a formation of belief and opinions that can be proofed whether they are correct and more appropriate than they previously have been which will be used as a guideline for new reformation process. In details, the Transformation Theory focuses on learning in order to negotiate or balance inner thoughts and transform perspectives regarding targeted issues, values, feelings and learners' self-definition so that learners can control their lives to be socially responsible and can make clear decision. In other words, this kind of learning aims at awakening which can occur by critically aware of one's own and others' assumptions and expectations before assessing the relevance for reinterpretation. It can also be mentioned that transformative learning is learners' critical self-reflection of perspectives and belief, which resulted from their past experience, in order to evaluate whether or not they are appropriate or can set them free. If the result shows that those perspectives and belief are inappropriate or cannot set them free, learners need to adjust their existing conceptual framework or develop a new one before accessing another transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000: 3-33). In designing critical self-reflection process in order to reach perspective transformation, it is necessary that learners investigate sources of their existing perspective and beliefs by raising questions such as "why did I think so?"; "Where did I get this perception from and how did it happen to me?"; "Is this perspective an outcome of the social value that has been defined for us?" and so on. Then monitor the consequences of such perspective and beliefs by raising questions such as "what will happen if I still hold on to these perspective and beliefs?"; "Will I be able to confront with new situations by having

these perspective and beliefs?" and so on (Cranton, 1992: 149). In transformative learning, it is also important to share experiences with others through dialogues in order to reflect and evaluate the appropriateness of learners' perspectives and beliefs, which will lead to judgment, conclusion finding for a new set of clear insights, and a creation of new transformative learning process. People who organise learning need to be able to encourage learners' critical self-reflection, which will lead to awakening and transformation as previously mentioned (Mezirow, 1990: 360).

Adult learning has several factors or components that affect learning. Merriam and Caffarella (1999: 387-404) mentioned that three components which are related to learning include the learner, the context and process. The learner component refers to the learner's past experience, which is related to age since people who are older have more experiences. Moreover, age is related to learning psychology including brains' learning capacity. The context is comprised of two dimensions, namely interactive and structural dimensions. Interactive dimension explains that learning occurs as a result of learners' interaction with surrounding contexts while structural dimension refers to race, social class, gender and cultural diversity. It can be assumed that learners from a more culturally diverse society can accept more diversity compared to those who come from a less diverse society. Power and oppression structure, under which individuals live affect their learning. The process is comprised of two parts including speed and meaningfulness. Speed refers to the amount of time used to examine and respond to a subject. Older people will have slower response. In terms of meaningfulness, individuals will learn about what they find meaningful.

Moreover, Cranton (1992: 56-62) mentioned that individuals' experiences, philosophies, values and autonomy affect their learning. Individuals' experiences affect ones' learning because experiences are events, interactions and thoughts collected within each person, which influence on perception and understanding of the surrounding world. They also lead to individuals' belief, the way people interpret different phenomenon and the kind of knowledge that they achieve. Thus, experience is a foundation in the learning process. This is because individuals use their own experiences in adapting, changing, and creating meaning and new values. Past experiences or previous learning that individuals have will facilitate their new learning because they already have existing knowledge. In terms of transformative learning,

which is based on critical analysis and questioning of individuals' belief, it is a questioning of individuals' past experiences in a way. Therefore, individuals' different experiences will result in different learning outcomes. However, experiences can also obstruct learning (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999: 390) in a way that individuals have defined and given values to certain stories through their past experiences until they become static knowledge and belief, which makes it difficult to pursue new learning, or new learning might not take place at all. Moreover, individuals' or learners' experiences also implies ages. This means that people who have lived long have many experiences about different issues, which might result in their knowledge and beliefs becoming static as previously mentioned. Consequently, old people might experience more learning difficulty compared to young people.

In terms of philosophy, Cranton (1992: 56-62) mentioned that it refers to a set of principles that individuals use to direct the way they live their lives. As individuals have different life principles, they will have different learning. When considering those principles, we can consider different components under "learners' philosophical framework", which comprises of influences that affect individuals' philosophy including 1) Epistemic influences refer to learners' definition of knowledge or their perspectives towards it, for instance the way they define knowledge as black and white and right and wrong, or how they define knowledge as relative and changeable. These different definitions or perspectives result in individuals' use of different principles to live their lives and understand the world, 2) Sociocultural influences refer to power and social relation, including differences between each individual due to race, gender and culture. These differences result in individuals having different identity and social relation, 3) Psychic influences refers to past events, especially painful experience that caused an impact on the way an individual lives one's life and one's behaviour at present. Interaction between all the three influences results in individuals defining their life principles and their life principles or philosophies affect their learning (Cranton, 1992: 56-62).

Value system is another factor that affects learning. It refers to principles, goals and individuals' or social standard that has been practiced and accepted and looks at what an individual wishes for. The value system is similar to philosophy or it can also be regarded as a part of individuals' learning outcomes. Individuals' different

existing values can also affect their learning outcomes differently, for instance people who are good followers and do not raise questions to the people in power will have different learning outcomes compared to those who do not believe in the authority.

Individuals can define their own objectives or learning ambitions. When individuals are determined and find the necessity of learning, their learning experience will be different from those with no determination and who do not find the necessity of learning. In addition, Merriam and Coffarella (1999: 394) mentioned that reasons or learning inspirations might not derive from individuals' internal needs, but from tension between individuals and social context. For example, medical personnel are required to learn new technologies so that they receive modern knowledge, or new community management system requires that community members learn to live in the new system.

In the adaptation of learning theories to organise learning process through mediums, for example organising learning in museums, Falk and Dierking (2000: 10-141) found that various factors and conditions affect learning. They asserted that any kinds of learning is a series of contexts, which means that learning does not occur separately in different parts as in scientific test tubes. Instead, it is an integration of organic experience in the actual world. Moreover, learning is an outcome of ongoing dialogue between individuals and physical and socio-cultural world in which individuals live. Based on this concept and experience in encouraging learning in museums in free-choice learning style, Falk and Dierking have created the "Contextual Model of Learning". The model is created based on the idea that learning is the result of an interaction and integration between personal, physical and socio-cultural contexts that pass over time. The personal, physical and socio-cultural contexts are not constant, therefore when time goes by, the three contexts will also change accordingly.

Regarding individual context, Falk and Dierking explained that human beings will draw themselves to learning when they are in appropriate environment, involved with meaningful activities, live without concern and fear, have learning choices and can control the learning experience without being forced, and when the learning challenge goes along with their existing skills. Moreover, learning is not merely about facts and different schools of thought, but learning, particularly the one from inner force is related to human's emotional experiences and conditions. Learning

new things is also related to past experience/ learning because human create new knowledge from prior knowledge. Prior knowledge does not only refer to lessons from past success or failure, but also different materials that are fuels for new learning.

Apart from the components, human's learning can be in terms of individuals and as a community because individuals are members of community and society. Thus, human's learning is related to the cultural and historical context where it takes place. Furthermore, the media that are surrounding learners such as television, movie, newspaper, book, museum, the Internet and so on are components that affect learning. These medium create socio-cultural dialogue between the media and its users. When analyzing the components mentioned above, it can be argued that knowledge that derived from human's learning is shared because learning does not take place in non-linear form. As human beings learn something directly from a source and the learning does not take place in a vacuum space without surrounding contexts, it indicates that human can learn from story or in a narrative form that exists in the socio-cultural context. All this is the learners' socio-cultural context.

In terms of physical context, Falk and Dierking mentioned that human beings need to live among physical surroundings, both in terms of nature such as trees, soil, air and so on, and in terms of built environment such as houses, offices, department stores, and so on. This explains why built environment affects human beings' learning. For instance, if a learning session is organised in a building or classroom where learners are not used to, feel insecure or excluded, learning will be difficult.

To sum up, individual learning is dependent on several factors which are related to individuals and social context/ structure as follow:

Individual Factors

1. Providing meaning to the knowledge such as giving fixed answers about what is right or wrong or thinking that knowledge is alterable
2. The value system that an individual believes in.
3. Past experience or knowledge
4. Social class
5. Nationality/ Race

6. Gender
7. Age
8. Learning objectives

Contextual/ Structural factors

1. socio-cultural values and framework
2. oppression and power structure
3. socio-cultural learning mechanisms such as family, the media and educational system

Socio-cultural context of learning factors and conditions are related to individual factors because the individual factors are socialized under the socio-cultural context. Hence, the socio-cultural context influences the way individuals perceive ones' surroundings as well as controls values that they believe in, for example if the society worships power, then individuals have tendency to do the same. In addition, socio-cultural structure determines social class and defines race. Meanwhile, race is also related to social class, for instance Thai society regards certain ethnic groups who live in the plateaus as having lower social status compared to the metropolitan middle class. This results in those ethnic groups' identity being oppressed and their ability to access knowledge is different from the metropolitan middle class. Gender is also turned into a social class issue by the socio-cultural process, for example, women's subordination to men and their distinct social status from men result in women having different life experience from men. Besides, learning ambition is related to learners' contexts as previously mentioned. Therefore, it can be argued that learning factors at individual level and in the socio-cultural context are not separated from each other. Rather, they interact and affect learning.

Moreover, learning design is a prominent factor that affects learning efficiency such as learning in a museum where architectural and interior designs and display influence learning experience. For transformative learning, an example of learning design is described in Stephen Brookfield's *Analyzing the Influence of Media on Learners' Perspectives*, which starts from encouraging learners to analyse their own autobiography. The analysis requires learners to analyse how they obtained their own

vision and perspective. The media, particularly television, is used as a component to create vision and perspective. Then learners are requested to decode messages printed in the news or generated by the media by analyzing underlying messages of the pictures, symbols, or phrases. After that, they have to analyse contents by looking at structures of the stories as presented in the media and compare them. The decoding and content analysis will enable learners to realise how meanings are created by the media. Lastly, learners need to construct their own television program. During this step, learners will realise that during program management, only certain information is selected for presentation while the rest is excluded. Learners will then understand that what is presented by the media is solely selected facts, not all. The selected facts influence learners' perspective and vision. At this point, learners will have a critical self-reflection that the media only produce partial facts which result in their questioning about their own perspective and vision (Brookfield, 1990: 235-250). This kind of questioning can also lead to a new operation which results in the learners not believing in facts presented in the media without raising any questions.

In conclusion, learning design needs to bring about the process that enables learners to critically analyse their former ideology and belief and leads to the production of new set of ideas. Learners' critical self-reflection will occur through a dialogue that allows them to analyse their own perspective and belief.

2.3 Gender construction in Thai society

On 21 June 2004, Wallop Tangkananurak, former chairman of the legislature's Committee on Women, the Elderly and Youth issued a letter to the Director of the Office of National Buddhism to request that it reconsider the restriction that prohibited women to worship relics because Mrs. Rabiabrat Pongpanich, former Khon Kaen senator, was not allowed to worship Lord Buddha's holy relics at Doi Suthep and Doi Tung due to her sex. All women were not permitted to worship relics while the restriction was omitted to men. Rabiabrat thought that the restriction was a representation of sexual discrimination against women and opposed to Article 30 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, S.E. 2540 (1997).

The letter from the Senate has caused a tremendous social impact, which resulted in Doi Suthep Buddha Relics Foundation sending out an invitation to priests and Lanna (northern Thai) philosophers for their participation in a discussion forum about the issue, organised on 9 July 2004. It was explained that restriction on women's access to the holy relics' storage building is due to the belief that women and their belongings such as lingerie will break magic spells contained in the holy relics. Also, the restriction was part of Lanna's long tradition that has been passed on from generation after generation and a way to show respect to the holy relics in Lanna style that people from other regions need to follow. Apart from the explanation, a severe impact is reflected in Northern people's retaliation against Rabiabrat as they thought that she disrespected the holy relics, for example a major demonstration, a discussion forum organised at Phra That Haripunchai Temple in Lumpoon on 11 July 2005, a prohibition on her entrance to Chiang Rai, and curse ritual in Chiang Mai. Eventually, Rabiabrat and the Committee on Women, the Elderly and Youth under the Thai Senate had to apologize to Northern people. However, there was still a petition, which requested for Rabiabrat's resignation from the Senate.

The question raised is what Thai society learns from this case since Rabiabrat eventually lost to Thai "social norms and belief" that does not allow questions, for example how the social norms and belief were developed, under which ideology, and how they affect people, especially women, to be raised. Thus, the social norms and belief have become "absolute truth" that everyone in the society has to accept without questioning. When a question is raised against the "social norms and belief", the person in doubt will be punished by social process the same way that Rabiabrat has experienced.

Rabiabrat's action was at risk of being retaliated since it was against the ingrained belief. Moreover, the action only referred to Constitutional Rights without considering about local context. However, the way Rabiabrat was strongly retaliated reflects that general acceptance of the restriction of women not to get near holy relics because women are dirty is the acceptance that women have subordinate status in the Thai society, or that women's subordinate status is "true" or regarded as "normal". This also includes the acceptance that the way women are "defined" by society is acceptable. An example of how women are defined is shown in Wantanee Wasikasin

and Sunee Hemaprasit's research (1998: (8)-(11)), which stated that Thai people expect their daughters to be responsible for household work more than their sons. Moreover, daughters are expected to take care of their parents during old age. As wives, women should be respectful and leave the decision-making to their husbands, support their husbands' career progress, and accept their husbands' sexual desire when in need. These defined perceptions put women in a subordinate status.

The question raised is "what" makes women's subordinate status becomes actualized in the society. Napaporn Hawanont (2004: 60-62) explained that a society where gender inequality exists is a social system called "patriarchy".

"The system created an ideology that makes people in the society believes that men are more superior than women by creating rules, regulations and social standards that support such belief. For instance, the make-belief that women's biological structure to get pregnant and deliver baby gives women's natural mother instinct to raise their child, yet makes them sensitive, emotional and weak. On the contrary, society has created the make-belief that men have stable emotion and strong body. This ideology has led to work division for men and women. Rules, regulations, value, and beliefs are created to support the ideology. For instance, the identification that women's major role in the family is to take care of the household and child-rearing while other works that are outside the house are subordinate. Men are responsible for other works outside the house that are not related to child-rearing and housework. The classification that women's sphere is attached to main responsibility to take care of the household and childcare while men work outside in the public sphere allows men to receive more life opportunities compared to women; for example, the opportunity to experience several things outside the house, to receive news and information, to work, and to access significant life-sustaining resources. Men's world is the big wide world outside the house that provides them income work, status, freedom, and opportunity to progress and build life stability. Women's world is at home to take care of the house, raise the baby, and support their husbands. This kind of social

system makes women responsible to their private life at home and to have limited opportunity to enter the public sphere”.

It can be said that femininity and masculinity are the products of social construction of reality under the patriarchal system. The social construction of reality emphasises that the biological sex differences determine different social status between men and women. This implies that social disparity between men and women are natural because biological sex is assigned by nature. However, feminist movements, which fought for women's rights and gender equality in Western society during the 1960's, explained that social disparity between men and women is not an outcome of biological sex differences. Instead, it is related to gender, which means that femininity and masculinity are socially constructed. However, the social construction does not lead to gender equality between men and women because it is constructed based on the patriarchal or male dominant system which functions through social institutes, economy and politics (Warunee Purisinsit, 2002: 4-5).

The socially constructed definition of femininity that makes women subordinate has allowed knowledge and social facts to be produced under patriarchal vision. On the contrary, facts about women and their knowledge are kept in private sphere and left “silent” since they cannot participate in providing knowledge and facts about their society. Although women provide knowledge about both the natural and social world through their experience and worldview, their knowledge is considered as the outside science (Harding, 1998: 106). Consequently, knowledge and all facts are still produced under the patriarchy, which is the reproduction of femininity to ensure that social awareness regarding the issue remains the same. The reproduction reflects the media's role as stated by Kanchana Kaewthep, et al. (2005: 265) that:

“...there are several problems related to women in the real world, for example, violence against women, abortion, inequality between men and women, and so on, but the media choose to turn their blind eyes to these problems. In terms of prostitution or rape, the media choose to present only some angles of the issues. In television series, news, or commercials, the media choose to “create” an image that even among working women

“femininity/ women’s roles/ family life” are more significant than “being professionalists / their public lives”. The media has created an image that although some women are given opportunities to work in the public sphere, they are merely “insignificant extras” or “men’s subordinates”.

In conclusion, major gender problem in the Thai society is the belief that gender differences between men and women are “real” or “natural” even though the differences were socially constructed under the male-dominated patriarchy which restricts women’s role and make their status subordinate.

2.4 Theatre and learning gender issues: theoretical framework

From the literature review about theatre, learning and gender issues, a theoretical framework can be created as follow.

2.4.1 Learning outcome

Crucial gender problem in Thai society is the acceptance of women’s submissive status caused by the social construction of reality about men and women. Hence, learning objective about gender is to make learners understand that gender is socially constructed under the patriarchal political construction of meaning and such meaning can be deconstructed. The deconstruction of the socially constructed meaning will lead to transformation of gender perspective and behavioural change.

2.4.2 Factors influencing gender learning

From the literature review, it can be concluded that major factors that influence gender learning are learners, socio-cultural context and learning design which interact with one another. This research explores theatre as a learning tool. Therefore, learning design refers to theatre design and learners are the audience.

2.4.2.1 Theatre factors

Literature review about theatre and learning and designing modification-based learning shows a shared principle that learners need to have inner dialogue that will lead to critical self-reflection. Hence, it can be concluded that

theatre factors that lead to learning include: 1) audience analysis for theatre production; 2) theatre practitioners' combination of theory and praxis that results in the interaction between text and theatrical presentation, which when considering together with modification-based learning theory, refers to learning design that has to lead to the learners' inner dialogue and critical self-reflection; 3) a process that makes the audience active through participation and dialogue exchange. Dialogue can take place in two manners: an outer dialogue between the audience and theatre or among the audience themselves, or there might not be any outer dialogue at all; instead it might be an inner dialogue between the audience's old and new beliefs after watching the play.

2.4.2.2 Audience factors

The literature review reveals that an individual's learning factors include: 1) providing meaning to the knowledge such as giving fixed answers about what is right or wrong, or thinking that knowledge is alterable; in this sense refers to giving a changeable or unchangeable definition to gender, 2) the value system that an individual believes in, which in this case refers to their beliefs in gender value, 3) past experience or knowledge, which in this case refers to past learning about gender issues, 4) social class, 5) race, 6) gender, 7) age, and 8) learning objectives/ expectations.

2.4.2.3 Contextual factors

Contextual factors that can be concluded from literature review include: 1) socio-cultural values and framework, 2) oppression and power structure, and 3) socio-cultural learning mechanisms such as the media and educational system. When considering all factors in the gender dimension, it can be identified that contextual factors that affect learning about gender issues are 1) value system/ social ideology on gender, 2) gender structure and oppression (including hostility and rebel), and 3) gender mainstreaming via the media and educational system.

2.4.3 Theoretical framework

The three factors listed above are not distinctively separated from one another. Instead, they interact and affect on gender learning through theatre. All the

learning factors and the purpose of learning can be illustrated in a theoretical framework as follow:

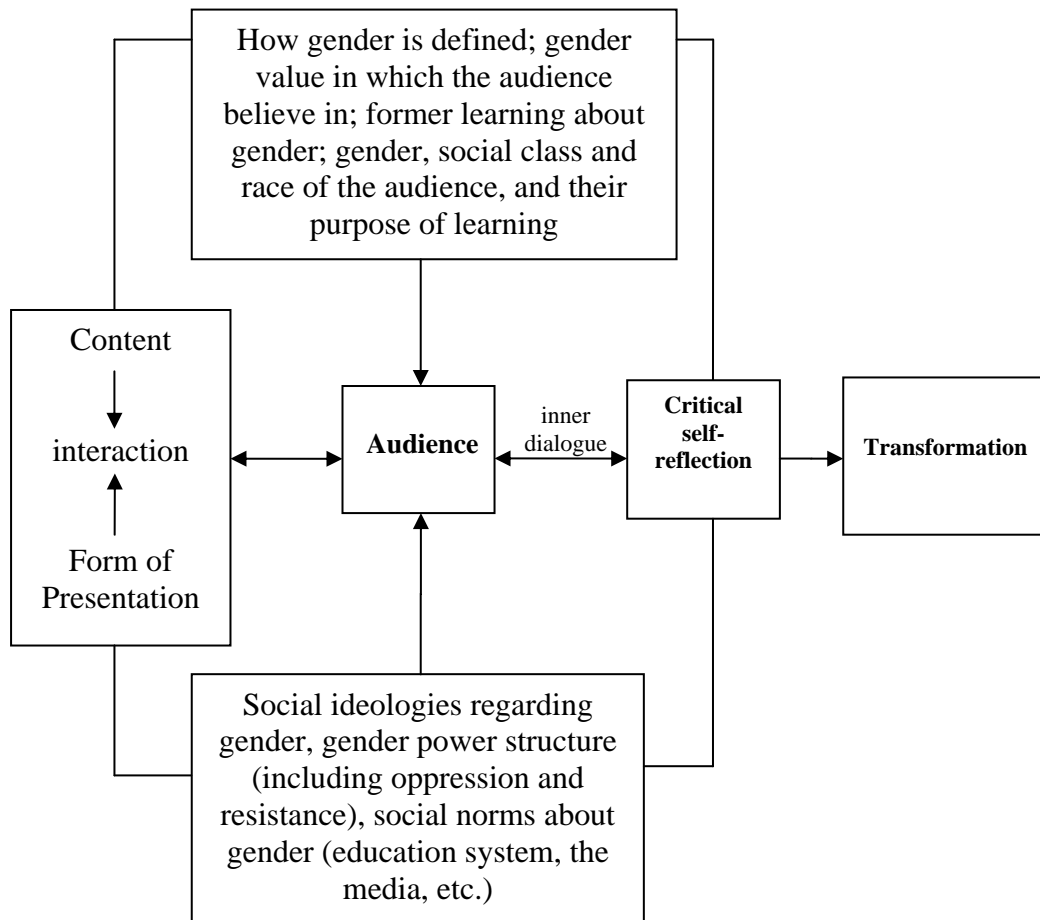


Figure 2.1 Theoretical framework

The above theoretical framework shows that factors that lead to learning transformation are comprised of three different parts. The initial part is the interaction between plot and the presentation method. The presentation could be in the form of outer dialogue in order to draw the audience's involvement. The second part is the audience and the last part is the social context that is related to gender. All the three factors do not affect the audience's learning experience in a linear form. Instead, each part interacts with one another. If the interaction results in the audience having inner dialogue and critical self-reflection about their preconceived notions about gender and realising that their former belief is problematic, they will transform. However, if they

do not have critical self-reflection, they will only receive the message that the theatre is trying to present or might have better comprehension, but not enough to reach the point where they will transform.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter will present the research methodology, which uses to answer the research questions. It consists of the research approach and the research design. The research design is composed of four elements, which are the research strategy, the conceptual framework, the subjects of the study and the data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research approach

The paradigm to seek knowledge can be divided into two parts. 1) The “positivism” paradigm believes that the knowledge and the truth must be able to investigate and indicate by the empirical evidence that is the attribute of objectivity. 2) The “anti-positivism” paradigm believes that the knowledge and the truth are constructed by interpretation related to subjectivity of the interpreter. Both major paradigms have therefore led to the rise of two research approaches, which are the quantitative approach rooting from the positivism paradigm, and the qualitative approach rooting from the anti-positivism paradigm. (Davidson & Tolich, 1999: 26).

The quantitative research is the research that explains the social phenomenon through the numerical expression. Thus, the approach believes that the numerical expression can precisely present through the hard data operation¹ since the data can be counted and measured. In contrast, the qualitative research aims to make understanding on the social phenomenon through explanation and interpretation (Davidson & Tolich, 1999: 28-29). In summary, it can be said that the quantitative and qualitative research are different in two major dimensions, which are the philosophical foundation for how the world works and the mode of data analysis and interpretation (Uthai Dulyakasem, 2002: 59); that is,

¹ In this case means the data that can create the code in numeric form

“In the part related to one’s views of the world, the quantitative research seizes the concept of positivism which means that all things in the world already have its own pattern while the qualitative research seizes the concept of phenomenology, which does not believe that all things already have pattern but being dynamic... The quantitative research will not rather interest in the dimension of being human because it used “physical science” concept while the qualitative research intends more to being human since the research of social phenomena relates the human as the actor... In aspect of the conceptual framework, the quantitative research pays less attention to the history dimension whereas the qualitative research pays more attention to historical dimension... The quantitative research always focuses on applying the research result in generalisation while the qualitative research concentrates on the deep understanding in the subject of the study but will not apply the result to generalisation... The quantitative research uses the statistical analysis method but the qualitative research uses the analysis called Interpretive Understanding... The quantitative research provides definition of the data analysis result according to the calculation outcome whereas the qualitative research provides definition of the analysis result according to social context and the culture of research informants...” (Uthai Dulyakasem, 2002: 59-60).

This research seeks to the answer of the theatre and learning creation, which is to study in depth in the social phenomena that related to human, social context and culture. This research therefore uses the philosophy and qualitative research approach as the research means.

3.2 Research design

Punch (2005: 142) stated that research design is the designing of overall plan which consists of 4 elements that are strategy, conceptual framework, the subject of the study (who or what will be studied) and tools to be used for collecting and

analyzing empirical materials. By the research pattern functions to link the research question with the information to be used to answer the question. Therefore, the research pattern must be relate and correspond to the research questions.

3.2.1 Research strategy

Since this research needs to answer the question whether the theatre can create gender learning and what are the factors and conditions in which the theatre could create gender learning in Thai's social context which is the research in specific issue, the research therefore select the strategy of the case study assisting to in-depth investigate the truth and knowledge for interested phenomenon which occurs in specific context or bounded system (Ongart Naiyapat, 2005: 355). The word "case" refers the phenomenon occurring in the specific context which could be individual, organization, country, specific role of the subject and etc. (Punch, 2005: 144). For this research, the "case" is the theatre creating gender learning which is phenomena in specific context, not the theatre creating learning of other issues and not creating gender learning by using other tools. For this reason, the case study is the proper strategy to answer this research question.

However, the case study can be both single case study that studies the internal case and multiple case study that studies across cases or comparative case. The multiple case study intend to make understanding of similarities, differences and cause of diversity of each case leading to construct specific explanation of how diversity is patterned (Ragin, 1994: 111-112). This explanation pays attention to complexity and its context that lead to create understanding wholeness of the case study (Punch, 2005: 144).

There is more than one theatre that creates gender learning in Thai society and each is different. However, the differences and diversity are in the same category. Therefore, the researcher selects the multiple case study as the strategy to make understanding on each specific theatre and to make understanding similarities and differences in specific context of each theatre to explain the wholeness of theatre linking to create gender learning in Thai's social context.

3.2.2 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework of this research refers to the theoretical framework from the literature review in chapter 2. However, when considering gender learning through the theatre of the viewers in Thai society, I found that one factor, which is not conforming to the nature to view the theatre, is the intention or the anticipation to learn. The audiences, viewing the theatre in the issue of gender learning, do not intend to learn about gender in advance. Most of the audiences in Thai society always go to see the theatre goes because it is the theatre goes, not the theme of theatre. Therefore, this factor is irrelevant to this research. Besides, the audiences in Thai society always are Thai people in the middle class who graduates or studies in university. Therefore, the nationalities, class factor and educational level are the constant variables. The learning factor in the part of audiences then consists of: 1) giving the definition of gender whether the definition can be changed 2) the adhering value system of gender 3) the former learning of gender 4) the gender of audiences 5) age. Therefore, the conceptual framework on this research will be as the following picture:

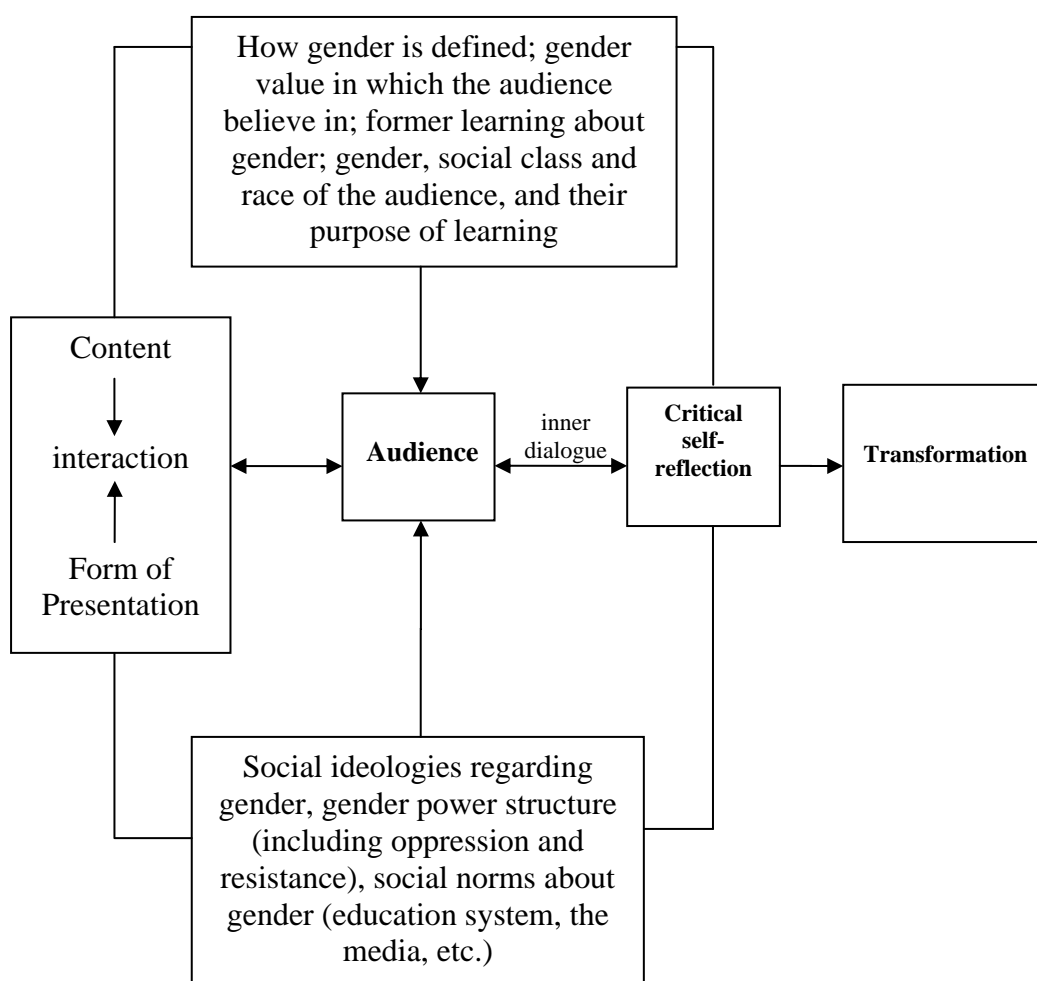


Figure 3.1 Conceptual framework

3.2.3 Subject of the study

To answer the research question, the researcher selected three performances differ in the details of content and the form of presentation to study in comparison. As stated in the introduction, theatre of gender issue has become known among Thai audience from 1994 to present. When considering the content and the form of the theatre, the theatre can be divided into three groups The first one emphasises the reinterpretation of female characters in classical Thai literatures from today women's perspectives. For example, Bussaba from Inao, Pimpilalai from Khun Chang Khun Pan, and Sida from Ramayana. The second one is an adaptation of well-known western feminist plays into Thai context. The third one is the Thai originals

based on the real situations of Thai women. As a consequence, the researcher chose one theatre piece from each category in order to compare learning results brought about by these three different forms and contents. This could help identify form and content of the theatre suitable for gender learning. Moreover, each chosen theatre piece took place in not much different period of time, by which could be assumed that situations of women and social context of these three pieces were not much different. The comparison of these three theatre pieces will therefore be done under the same context, resulting in a clear distinction in terms of learning results precipitated by each theatre piece.

For the first category, the researcher chose *Sida-Sriram* written and directed by Associate Professor Pornrat Damrhung, produced in 2005. This production was part of a research project titled “Revisioning an Old Story” in which classical stories were reinterpreted and presented in a form of contemporary theatre combining traditional elements with the modern ones. For the second category, the researcher chose Eve Ensler’s *The Vagina Monologues* translated and directed by Bhanbhassa Dhuptien, produced in 2007 as a part of “Women in the Moon Theatre Festival” aiming to voice women’s perspectives through the eyes of female theatre practitioners and dramatists. This production was presented in a form of simplified realism. For the third category, *Venus Party*, a physical theatre based on situations in everyday life of Thai women devised and directed by Sineenart Ketprapai was chosen. This production was presented in the 2008’s “Bangkok Theatre Festival”.

These three performances were produced in almost the same period of time. It therefore could assume that the social context related to gender issue of the three performances were not much different. Moreover, it could be said that the three selected pieces of work could be representatives of the modern Thai theatre as most theatre in Thailand are of these three categories, which are the contemporary theatre that combine the tradition Thai theatrical elements with the modern one, a translation or adaptation of western play, and the performance its text created from current situations.

3.2.4 Data collection and data analysis

Data collection is the basis for answering the research objectives. To answer the first objective, the answer has to state that whether theatre can bring about gender learning. Questioning therefore intends to obtain the information about the learning of the audience, which could be either reception, comprehension, or transformation. Questions and informants are as presented in the table below.

Table 3.1 Questions, informants and data collection methods to answer the first objective

Stage of learning	Questions	Informants	Methods
Reception	-What is the main issue of the performance? -What do you think about the issue presented? Why?	Audiences	Interview
Comprehension	-Is the issue presented (differences/inequalities between men and women) a normal thing in the society? Why? - Did the performance address the causes of gender differences/inequality? How? -What do you think about gender differences/inequality the performance addressed?	Audiences	Interview
Transformation	-Have you ever known before about gender inequality and its causes ? -If never known, what do you think when knowing?	Audiences	Interview

Table 3.1 Questions, informants and data collection methods to answer the first objective (cont.)

Stage of learning	Questions	Informants	Methods
Transformation	-Do you gain any new thinking from attending the performance? What -Does the performance make you any changes in gender differences/inequality? How? - If there is any change in inking, whether it results in your behaviour? How?	Audiences	Interview

To answer the second objective, the answer has to state the factors and conditions related to gender learning, which can be divided into four groups: 1) the factors and conditions of the theatre 2) factors and conditions of the audiences 3) factors and conditions on the context 4) the interactions of all factors and conditions. Questions and sources of data can be summarised as followings.

To answer the question on factors and conditions of the theatre, the key informants are theatre directors, who can be regarded as a learning provider in the context of learning. Therefore, the idea of learning design belongs to them. However, the audiences might also provide information to answer to this question because they are the learners who can reflect whether the learning design effects on learning. Thus, doing so is the way to recheck the information with the information from theatre directors.

Table 3.2 Questions, informants and data collection methods to identify factors and conditions related to the theatre

Questions	Informants	Methods
-What are the playtext and the form of presentation like, and how it relates to stages of gender learning?	Playtext	Playtext analysis
- Do the playtext and the form of presentation make you und to convey? How?	Audiences	Interview
- What is the intention in producing and directing this performance?	Director	In dept interview
- What are the playtext and the form of presentation like? Why so?		
- What is the process to identify the playtext and the form of presentation?		

To answer the question on factors and conditions related to audiences, the key informants are the audiences as they are regarded as the learners in the context of learning.

Table 3.3 Questions, informants and data collection methods to identify factors and conditions related to the audiences

Questions	Informants	Methods
-sex	Audiences	In depth
-age when attending the theatre		interview
-education		
-How is the relation among family members?		
What are the roles of mother and father?		

Table 3.3 Questions, informants and data collection methods to identify factors and conditions related to the audiences (cont.)

Questions	Informants	Methods
-How were you brought up, your education, growing process, and socialisation? -What are your opinions or beliefs about femininity and masculinity? - Why and how do you think and believe that way? -Does the theatre make you change in belief related to being women and being men? How? - Have you experienced or learned about femininity and masculinity before attending the theatre? How? - Do you think your sex affect your understanding on social relation between sexes? How?	Audiences	In depth interview

To answer the question on factors and conditions related context, the principle sources of information are the academic documents that have been analysed the contextual issue that relating to the gender learning.

Table 3.4 Questions, sources of data and data collection methods to identify contextual factors

Questions	Sources of data	Methods
- What is the gender ideology in Thai society? - How is gender issue in the media?	Document such as	Document analysis

To answer the question of whether the factors and conditions of the theatre, the audiences and the context are interrelated in bring about gender learning, it can be done through the analysis of each group of factors and conditions.

For data analysis, it will be the analysis to understand 1) whether the theatre can bring about gender learning to the audiences, and at what level 2) the interactions of each factor resulting in gender learning of the audiences. This is to analyse the audiences, form and content of the theatre and the process to identify them, factors related to social context, and other factors related. The analysis will be divided into two parts. The first part is to analyse each performance in order to illustrate its specific context. The second part will then to compare similarities and differences of each performance, which includes learning of the audiences and factors affect the learning. As learning outcomes could be reception, comprehension or transformation, the analysis will therefore illustrate the interaction of factors which results in different level of learning. All the analyses aim to identify the role of theatre in bringing about gender learning, and what factors and conditions take part in the learning process.

CHAPTER IV

THEATRE OF GENDER ISSUE

Theatre of gender issue in Thailand originated from the works of female theatre scholars who gave importance to women's issues. Those scholars were such as Professor Dr. Mattani Ratnin of Thammasat University whose works gave emphasis to a reinterpretation and reanalysis of female leading characters in classical Thai literatures, for instance, *Busba-Unakarn*, a reinterpretation of a classical literature *Inao*, *Rama-Sida*, a reinterpretation of *Sida*, a leading female character of *Ramayana*. These theatre pieces were produced between 1993-1997. Likewise, Associate Professor Pornrat Damrhung of Chulalongkorn University reinterpreted *Sida* in her *Through Fire and Flame* produced in 2000, as well as Pimpilalai of Thammasat University's scholar Parichart Jungwiwattanaporn in which Pimpilalai, a leading female character of a classical literature *Khun Chang Khun Pan*, was reinterpreted and produced as a theatre piece in 2001. It can be said that from past to present, many pieces of theatre of gender issue emphasising women's perspectives have been continuously produced by theatre scholars. Nowadays, theatre of gender issue is not limited itself within merely the realm of intellectual and scholar. This can be seen from the emergence of "Women in the Moon Theatre Festival" in 2007, in which female theatre practitioners and dramatists from diverse independent theatre troupes took part.

Considering contents and forms of theatre of gender issue, it can be classified into 3 groups. The first one emphasises the reinterpretation of female characters in classical Thai literatures from today women's perspectives as mentioned earlier. The second one is an adaptation of well-known western feminist plays into Thai context. The third one is the Thai originals based on the real situations of Thai women. As a consequence, the researcher chose one theatre piece from each category in order to compare learning results brought about by these three different forms and contents. This could help identify form and content of the theatre suitable for gender

learning. Moreover, each chosen theatre piece took place in not much different period of time, by which could be assumed that situations of women and social context of these three pieces were not much different. The comparison of these three theatre pieces will therefore be done under the same context, resulting in a clear distinction in terms of learning results precipitated by each theatre piece.

For the first category, the researcher chose *Sida-Sriram?* written and directed by Associate Professor Pornrat Damrhung, produced in 2005. This production was part of a research project titled “Revisioning an Old Story” in which classical stories were reinterpreted and presented in a form of contemporary theatre combining traditional elements with the modern ones. For the second category, the researcher chose Eve Ensler’s *The Vagina Monologues* translated and directed by Bhanbhassa Dhuptien, produced in 2007 as a part of “Women in the Moon Theatre Festival” aiming to voice women’s perspectives through the eyes of female theatre practitioners and dramatists. This production was presented in a form of simplified realism. For the third category, *Venus Party*, a physical theatre based on situations in everyday life of Thai women devised and directed by Sineenart Ketprapai was chosen. This production was presented in the 2008’s “Bangkok Theatre Festival”.

This chapter will focus on the analysis of forms and contents or texts of these three theatre productions, with the aim to point out the intention of each piece and its possibilities in bringing about a transformation of gender perspectives to its audiences.

4.1 *Sida-Sriram?*: revisioning an old story

Pornrat Damrhung (2010: 17), the director of this performance stated in her article “*Sida tells us (women) our stories*” extracted from research report of “Revisioning an Old Story 4: *Sida-Sriram?*” that:

“*Sida-Sriram?* is an experimental theatre through which the director tries to utilise western knowledge in dramatic interpretation and theatre directing in telling a myth of Ramayana or a story of Rama... The

researcher wants to create another play based on this old story with the conditions that this new story must be of Sida's perspectives".

It can be said that the director's above idea is in line with the concept of "Fictional Revisionism" which refers to a retelling of an old story with substantial alterations in character or context. This retelling aims to revise aspects shown or implied in the old story, which will lead the audiences to view the story in a different way. The in line between this concept and the director's idea could be seen through the name of the research project "Revisioning an Old Story", in which the researcher/director wanted the revision to take place among her audiences (Pornrat Damrhung, 2010: 25); that is, in Ramayana or a story of Rama, Sida was entitled to be a woman who can always keep virtue even in the worst situation. She is clever and always ready for everything. Her virtue is widely known and accepted... It is an ideal image of woman (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006: 1-2) while the director viewed that this ideal image is simply a myth constructed by Thai society whereas Sida also has an ordinary part like any other women (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006: 9). The director therefore wanted to retell a story of Sida "in order that the Thai society could look at this character more profoundly, and this re-look will lead to a revision of the character... The audiences will therefore understand the ideal image and open up their minds to accepting diverse roles, strengths and needs of women in society at the same time" (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006: 2). In the revision process, the director started from

"collecting information from different versions of Indian and south-east Asian Ramayana in order to develop a contemporary playtext that could stimulate the audiences to think about themselves and analyze the roles of women in the Thai context. The researcher chose to tell a story of Sida which is an ideal image of women in many Asian countries in order to reflect differences and similarities of this ideal image in different societies. This ideal image has an influence on thinking, attitudes and the socialization of women of today. After that, the collected information will be analyzed for a creation of a playtext that presents another image of women... in order to raise an understanding in "values of women in

society” in a form that can communicate with contemporary audiences and can make the audiences understand the ideal image together with diverse roles, strengths and needs of women” (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006: 2).

In developing the playtext, the director deconstructed the character of Sida from a study of different versions of Ramayana, and reconstructed Sida together with stories of today’s women. Information of today’s women was collected through interview sessions with 25 women of different careers, ages and backgrounds. This is to find out that how ideal values of women such presented in Ramayana impact women of today. The director also studied information from current situations and then compared it to the life of Sida. For example, being left since born is compared to lives of street children, getting married with Rama is compared to marriage with the unknown or internet matchmaking, being abducted is compared to being away from loved ones, bringing up children by herself is compared to today’s single mother, and so on (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006: 31). Through this process:

“the researcher had an idea to plot the story like a structure of women’s magazine. The introduction will introduce a character of today’s woman who wants to find Sida, an ancient woman in a classical literature. This character will bring the audiences through layers of space and time to meet with many Sidas who tell their different stories of which each Sida wants it to be an endpoint. This play then starts with many different endpoints of different Sidas. All the stories will be weaved by the today’s woman character, and this weaving will help the audiences to connect present and past. The audiences will find the real Sida and learn from her life, the life that the majority of people have never heard or never thought about and related to their lives before” (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006: 84).

Through the mentioned process, the director composed the “Parallel Plots” as following.

Table 4.1 Parallel Plots of Sida-Sriram?

Deconstruction of Sida's Life	Current situations: Local and Global Levels
Diversified birth and being left by parents, being buried => left with gods	Local: underground children, street children, children not raised by parents Global: child prostitute, human trafficking
Choosing husband => might, righteousness, a rival	Local: marry with the haves, the goods, and strangers VS love, understanding, knowing each other Global: internet chosen bride
Standard image => standard women, ideal women and binary opposition, circle, keeping women in a circle in order to protect them? Or judge, or choose, constructing the right and the wrong / white and black Abduction of Sida Suffering from forced separation, thinking about committing suicide when reuniting with Rama, Rama gives her freedom. Sida's choices Walking through fire and flame - to purify - a never gone stain - being put to death, being expelled - raising children by herself - sons gone to war and being caught	Local-Global: good woman VS bad woman Anti-all stereotypes , both men and women, presented in commercial mass media in particular Interpreting abduction Local: Men's attitudes towards women Global: Questioning abduction, forced separation, women's lost of loved ones in war, plague, lost of family members Interpreting walking through fire and flame Local/Global: question of trust, moral support when suffered, being a couple-being friends between women and men, walking through fire and flame-a never ending suffering: being a mother without marriage

Table 4.1 Parallel Plots of Sida-Sriram? (cont.)

Deconstruction of Sida's Life	Current situations: Local and Global Levels
Many different endings—choose => Sida transforms herself into a demon in order to fight with the power of the great demon, a never ending fighting, separating from Rama	Interpreting fighting, a war that all men died and women are left in suffering, transforming into angry demon Global: separation from husbands caused by war, both local---global: women who lost their children and husbands in the southern unrest, women left behind after war

Source: Pornrat Damrhung, 2010: 21

The above parallel plots were developed to be a proper playtext with dramatic structure as following.

Prologue

1. Five women sit in a giant iron-skeletoned box. Everyone wears a veil.
2. Narrator talks to the audiences about “Ramayana the Great Epic” and a story of Sida who is an ideal woman and ideal wife for Rama. However, the narrator says that a story of Sida is in fact much less told. Her life seems to be mysterious. If Sida can have a say, a story of Ramayana might be altered.
3. When the narrator finishes, the five women start to uncover their faces. Their eyes are still closed. They start to move their bodies slowly. The movement is a mixture between traditional Thai dance and the modern one. Their hands spread over the sandbed on the floor. Then they pose their gestures of traditional Thai dance, and speak.

“The day Ravana died is the last day of my life. When the war ends, Rama gains back his honour. But he and I seem to be far away from each other, like we have never known before. It is a marriage life without trust.”

“I died despite living. Abduction is honourless. I become an object of stealing. I am forced by power and seen as a toy for sexual pleasure.”

“When Rama gave me and my children a death sentence, our relation was broken up. I will have a new life only for my children.”

“I died since when I was thrown into the ocean by my own parents. Who are my parents? Why is there no one love me?”

“Women are always left with dreadful things. When Ravana and his family collapsed, there was another war, and a greater demon with 1000 faces and unbreakable might. Rama, his brother and all men had gone to the war. They all died. Some were swept away by the wind. Rama was shot to death. No man is left alive. I am angry!”

The five Sidas start to wear a mask of a female demon and fight with the 1000 faced demon performed by three male dancers. On the backdrop behind is a shadow of the demon which gradually disappears. In the silence there is a soft reciting nursery rhyme, and then the narrator starts to say.

“If today Sida can tell us Ramayana story, we will find that the end of her life is relatively interesting. The life of Sida has been told as a legend of ideal woman. No matter how Ramayana ends, honour

of Rama still exists. If Sida has a chance to tell us about her life, what would she tell? The old story has already been told.”

Part 2, women in hell, spa and beauty (a short comedy): In spa, many women are talking about “Sida Universe”, a competition of Sida stories.

“Sida Universe Competition! The winner will receive a luxurious paradise house worth 10 billions baht. Please don’t hesitate to send us your story. Well, this year’s rule is strange. Everyone has to send one’s own story. Whose story is most similar to that of Sida will be published and filmed. Wow! I wonder who will be the most perfect woman!”

“The selection procedure is so interesting. All the competitors will vote among themselves for the most virtuous, righteous and beautiful woman of the three worlds.”

Women in spa are all physically imperfect. They talk about their imperfection that causes them not to compete with the perfect Sida. They then have to come to this scorching spa, a hellish spa, unlike Sida who is living happily in heaven. By the end of this scene, a beautiful woman name Sida comes in.

Sida: Could this spa wash a long-haired wig?

Receptionist: We do everything to make women beautiful.

Sida: Then please reset this wig. I also would like to get my traditional Thai costume dry-cleaned, and my ornaments polished. I have to use them in a couple of days.

Receptionist: The costume is very gorgeous. Is it a real antique one?

Sida: It’s a fake one, imitating the antique.

Woman: Are you on business, or for Sida competition? Do you have some interesting stories? If you have one similar to the life of Sida, you might win Sida Universe. You are very beautiful, and we would like to nominate you.

- Sida: Thank you very much. I have various stories. But people just choose to hear what they want to hear though there are many other stories.
- Receptionist: Please sign here, so it's not confusing when you collect them. Is your name really Sida?
- Sida: Yes.
- Woman: My goodness! Sida must be in heaven. How could she be here? Possibly be a fake one like those costume and wig!
- Sida: Right! This is one of the stories. There are still many for you to hear and think about. Sida might be in hell, just like you. Who knows?

This scene ends with a coming of a woman who wants to nominate herself for Sida Universe. She asks spa women where she could by the old story of Sida.

Part 3

1. Ancient story-heavenly birth: Shiva assigns Lakshami to born to be Sida, and Vishnu to be Rama. This scene is presented through a dance of Lakshami and movements of 5 shadow puppets of Sida. Vishnu is also presented through shadow puppet, a gigantic puppet. By the end of the scene, 5 shadows of Sida get smaller, and unite to be one shadow of a baby. It is a birth of Sida, with a relic of classical Thai music: She is fine-looking, unlike her royal demon lineage. She shouts "extinct the demons" for three times, but her parents do not hear.
2. Orphans-lives in the underground: Big-sized shadow of child-like puppet is on the backdrop. Five actors performing 5 children rise up from underneath. Classical Thai music is performed with a relic: The princess is like fire aflaming and smouldering the demon kingdom. She must be hurled into a river otherwise the kingdom will be obliterated.

Part 4

1. My parents left me: Actors performing underground children are murmuring while rising up from underneath: Who left me, who are parents, who are sibling?

Child 1: You don't understand what lives buried underground means.

Child 2: You don't understand how lives left by parents, thrown into river, or left beside a mountain of garbage are.

Child 3: You don't understand how children who live with strangers or foster parents feel.

Child 1: Lives underground, lives in the darkness are lives in a black box. Though the box is made of gold, lives in there are still in the darkness.

Child 2: We have no education.

Child 3: Running away from home to seek for the fortune is the way to make our lives better.

By the end of the scene, 2 well-dressed women come in. They look very kind to the children, and offer the children a way of having a better life. But in fact, they are recruiting the children for factories and sex trade.

2. Journey: On the backdrop, a campaign of wife ordering through the internet is advertised. Three actresses performing three brides walk slowly with suitcases in their hands. They talk about marriage and opportunities in lives. The first bride talks about a decision of women to marry with strangers because they hope their lives will be better. The second bride, not beautiful, married an Italian guy and thinks that she is very lucky. The third bride talks about her perfect wedding ceremony. But in the end she was beaten by her husband and he left her while she was pregnant.
3. Sida Universe Competition. Three women from spa are selection committees of the competition. Sida walks in. The three committees blame her as she would disturb the competition. They say Sida should stay in her place. But Sida says that she is the same

person as Samanakha (a female demon symbolising unpleasantable woman) and all women are imperfect. Women could be both victims and hunters.

4. Single mother: 2 characters of female teenagers come in. They talk about their difficulties of their mothers in bringing them up. They think their mothers are the real Sida.
5. Abduction: 2 men push a big yellow DHL-like parcel in. A girl rises up from within the parcel. A man in black comes in and drags her back and forth. Sida comes in and says: As long as we don't perceive women as objects, pets for cuddling when feeling alone, or as ornaments of men's honour, abduction and stealing will never happen. Abduction of Sida is not the first case. Abduction, stealing and borrowing might don't cause any damages. No matter being damaged or not, or gain more, women are nevertheless not asked to speak out... A lot of women have been abducted for several times. But a case of Sida is different. She doesn't let it go effortlessly. A case of Sida is about honour and integrity of men. It's a fighting game of men. They fight in order to tell themselves that they are of the great importance.
6. Question (to Rama about Sida): An actor performing Rama reveals his feeling of love and relation with Sida. He feels guilty for her. However, many female characters hearing Rama's words are still angry. They reject his apology and point a gun to him.
7. Walking through fire and flame-a struggling: Many female characters scream and strain the leash like being in fire. The conversation of this scene is on "war in women's minds" which no one wants to hear. It's all about being raped and pregnant, lost of children, separation, and so on. What women have to face with is like women are walking through fire and flame, and being burnt till they have to transform themselves to be a devil.

Epilogue

“A story of Sida is in everywhere. After the great war, a greater awaits. After an evil demon falls, another demon appears at the edge of the world. It has more than thousand faces and thousand hands. Women don’t wage the war, but they always lose their loved ones because of war. They become victims or survivals, and have to suffer from a fight for power and prosperity of men, which is out of the realm of women’s understanding.”

“There are many children unwanted. There are many orphans living in the underground. Some might be lucky, having good opportunities in lives. But some are not.”

“We have to love, understand and honour our husbands. But the question is that they will love, understand and honour us or not. Or they just see us as a regular prostitute. When we grow old, would they take care of us? Or they just think it’s only us who must take care of them. Women are taught to be nice and caring. What about men? How have they been taught? What about you? How would you teach your brothers and your sons? Tell them to wait for an ideal woman, or tell them to look deeply into the lives of women, like the life of Sida, and dare enough to accept the way women are.”

Ending: The narrator speaks directly to the audiences.

“Women of today have many concerns which are more important than trying to be a good woman and taking care of husband. There are many women questing for justice. Many of them work for others. They have roles, duties and responsibilities. They know who they are. They are good friends, good wives, and good mothers. What women have are far more than beauty. Women can be life’s partners, supporters, leaders, and followers. They love and want to be loved in return. They are sincere and

need to receive sincerity. Women are not dull. They want to be protected, and can protect you. What about you? Ask yourselves whether you are worthwhile enough for women.”

It can be seen that the parallel plots resulted in the inncontinuity of the situations in the play. The structure of the play was therefore fragmented like a collage. This form of structure would make the audiences:

“feel like opening women’s magazine in which diverse sections with different stories located incontinuously. Some stories were presented in text while some were through photographs. Some were of the past and some were of the future. Sida-Sriram? was therefore open-ended with no major conflict and purpose of the main character like in traditional plotted drama. It aimed to tell stories of diverse literatures portraying the lives of Sida together with real current situations of women that the audiences could comprehend from their everyday life encounter” (Pornrat Damrhung, 2010: 22).

As a consequence, form of presentation of this story was formulated differently from traditional forms of theatre in order to serve this distinctive parallel plots and structure. This theatre production was then:

“a combination between modern spoken drama and story-telling theatre. It was also inserted by dance drama with contemporary form of dance combining traditional and modern forms. This theatre piece then included dance with music and relic, and modern spoken drama, with another part portraying lives of today’s women symbolising Sida in the modern world. It can be said that this form of presentation weaving dance and text together was more or less surreal and stylised. Though the acting form was realistic, but other elements such as dance, movements, music and relic, led this story to be understood from story-telling aspect, not from action... It was composed by different forms of story-telling, for instance, a story

told through different spaces and times. The researcher also used music, dance, shadow puppet, and slide plates to differentiate the atmospheres of the past and the present. All these components made the sequence of the story not linear like those of the audiences' familiarity" (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006: 97-99).

With the mentioned deconstruction and reconstruction processes, the director then named her production as "postmodern theatre" (Pornrat Damrhung, 2010: 20). Lehmann (2006: 1-14) stated that postmodern theatre movement started in 1970s as a consequence of "crisis of drama". That is, in the era of modern theatre, theatre was influenced by Aristotle's the Poetics in which essences of theatrical aspects were given to unities of place, time and action. In theatre production, playtext was of the major importance, and the text was in linear sequences. The audience of this kind of theatre was merely to be spectators observing and witnessing situations taking place. However, Lehmann viewed that this form of theatre, a historical model of theatre, was time-bound, and could not respond to and interact with changing social situations. This thinking was influenced by social phenomena of the postmodern world in which boundaries of things were starting to be blurred. The world orders did not exist as explained in the grand narratives of the modern. There have also been many "realities" emerging here and there. The grand narratives were to be denied. Modern forms of theatre were also questioned. Postmodern theatre then does not give emphasis to the well-made text, but to experimental process of text construction, for example, text is constructed through actors' improvisation. Some productions only have a loose structure of playtext, and the audiences will be invited to engage in the process of text construction. Theatre of this process is therefore called "contemporary experimental" or "contemporary alternative" by which the audiences will be demanded to construct the meaning of the theatre themselves.

The postmodern characteristics of Sida-Sriram? can be seen from its non-linear plot as addressed earlier. Moreover, its parallel plots of was constructed from actors' collaborative creation, as Pornrat Damrhung (2010: 20) stated that:

“I wanted all the actresses to participate in the construction of stories, and bring their attitudes and experiences into the parallel plots composition... The playtext resulted from workshop with the actresses was divided into many parts, and each part employed its own spirit, not necessarily connected to one another”.

Although *Sida-Sriram?* did not demand the audience to participate in playtext construction as such, it did not offer a definite one single answer. What it did is to challenge the audiences’ attitudes on gender by asking them that “should we hold on to the existing sets of values and expectations? Could we possibly find other aspects of values and virtues of today’s women? If possible, what kinds of values and virtues should they have? And to whom these values and virtues are for, themselves or others?” (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006: 99).

From the above mentioned, it could be seen that the director aimed for the audiences to revise their existing attitude in order to have a new better one regarding the relation between the idealistic image of *Sida* and a myth about women socially and culturally constructed. In so doing, the director used postmodern approach in the theatre process, in which a deconstruction of the old story and a reconstruction of a new one were practiced. The result of this approach is a non-linear structured and collage-like playtext which is one of the characteristics of postmodern theatre.

Nevertheless, postmodern theatre demands its audience to construct the meaning of the theatre themselves, and each individual audiences might construct the meaning differently. This demand could probably be an obstacle for some audiences to understand and appreciate the theatre as the Thai audiences are familiar with a linear structured drama. Furthermore, attending the theatre is not an intellectual activity, but entertaining, while appreciating *Sida-Sriram?* seems to be intellectual-like as it demands the audiences to rethink and revise their existing attitudes. In the other words, it demands the audience to deconstruct their existing believes and reconstruct the new ones. Therefore, the audiences who are used to attending a well-made drama with clear starting and ending points might not understand this kind of theatre, which means that they could not reach the goal of the theatre. Considering *Sida-Sriram?* as theatre for gender learning aiming at audiences’ transformation of gender perspectives,

it could be said that Sida-Sriram? might not bring about learning. This is because as the audiences could not understand the story, the reception which is the first stage of learning process does not take place. This means that comprehension and transformation stages will not take place as well.



Illustration 4.1 The combination of traditional and modern forms of theatre of Sida-Sriram?



Illustration 4.2 The finale' of Sida-Sriram?

4.2 The Vagina Monologues: the body politics

Bhanbhassa Dhuptien, the director of the Thai version of *The Vagina Monologues* said that she is not a feminist. The reason she chose to direct this play for “Women in the Moon Theatre Festival” was that she had been familiar with it since when she was studying in USA. She chose it because it fit with the festival’s purpose, to voice women’s voices through the theatre. In interpreting the play, she said “I just put myself into it, and looked at it from my own standpoint, and explored how myself as a woman felt” (Bhanbhassa Dhuptien, Interview).

Despite the director did not have her own feminist agenda in directing and presenting this play, the original playtext of Eve Ensler has it. Ensler intended to bring up the unspoken word “vagina” to be the subject of the play. She stated that:

“I say it because I’m not supposed to say it. I say it because it’s an invisible word—a word that stirs up anxiety, awkwardness, contempt, and disgust. I say it because I believe that what we don’t say we don’t see, acknowledge, or remember. What we don’t say becomes a secret, and secret often create shame and fear and myths. I say it because I want to someday feel comfortable saying it, and not ashamed and guilty... I say “vagina” because I have read the statistics, and bad things are happening to women’s vaginas everywhere: 500,000 women are raped every year in the United States; 100 million women have been genitally mutilated worldwide; and the list goes on and on. I say “vagina” because I want these bad things to stop... And as more women say the word, saying it becomes less of a big deal; it becomes part of our language, part of our lives. Our vaginas become integrated and respected and sacred. They become part of our bodies, connected to our minds, fuelling our spirits. And the shame leaves and the violation stops, because vaginas are visible and real, and they are connected to powerful, wise, vagina-talking women” (Ensler, 1998: xx-xxiv).

What Ensler stated above indicates the concept of “body politics” which is one of the streams of feminism aiming to fight against the patriarchal objectification of female body resulting in violation against female body such as rape and any forms of sexual abuse, female sterilisation, and so forth. This concept therefore emphasises women’s power, authority and control over their own bodies. The practices of this concept are such as the denial of a socially constructed perfect female body by unshaving underarm hair, a fight for reproductive rights, and so on. Thus, when using this concept to as a lens to view *The Vagina Monologues*, it can be said that Ensler used the body politics to fight with violation threatening women; that is, while the word “vagina” and stories related are unspeakable publicly, Ensler chose this word and its related stories to be spoken out through theatre in order to liberate women’s bodies from being controlled and to celebrate women’s power over their own bodies. In the playtext development process, Ensler interviewed about 200 women from different groups in society and used the information from the interview to compose the playtext. *The Vagina Monologues* first performed in New York in 1996, and this performance resulted in a broadly social dialogue on women and violation against women, and when it reperformed again and again in many countries around the globe it eventually developed to be the V-Day¹, the day to against violation against women which has become a part of international women’s movements.

However, when *The vagina Monologues* came to Shanghai in China it was not allowed to perform though it had been advertised and the tickets had been sold out. This is because Shanghai government viewed that this performance was not yet mature. Looking through this phenomenon, it could be said that the control over female bodies still remains, and it reveals that this performance contains feminist political ideology within itself. Therefore, when it was performed in Thailand, the feminist political agenda was delivered to the audience automatically even though the director did not identify herself as feminist.

The director said that she only picked some stories from the original playtext fitting in the Thai context to translate and perform in Thailand. There are 4 stories in the Thai version. The first one is of a woman whose husband wants her to

¹ V refers to vagina, violence and victory.

shave her vagina hair, and she does as he wants. However, she feels hurt when having sexual intercourse she then does not shave anymore. As a consequence her husband does not have sex with her and goes for an affair with another woman. She then brings her husband to consult with a marital therapist as she thinks that his need is unusual. Surprisingly the marital therapist tells her to follow what he wants because, as the marital therapist explains, a couple should compromise each other. She then shaves again and even though she sacrifices for him, he has someone else anyway. The second one is of an old woman who has never had sexual fulfilment. This unfulfilment causes her to have a strange dream in which whenever she is sexually roused it will be flood in her vagina and the water will flow out with unpleasant smell. This causes all men to deny her. The third one is of a young woman whom when she was a little girl her mother told her not to touch her own vagina, and that has caused her to believe that her vagina is an ugly and unpleasant organ. Her vagina was also being hurt by her friend, and after that she was raped by her father's friend. All these have caused her feel bad with her own vagina. When she was a teenager she met with a lesbian woman and had a wonderful sexual affair, she turned to feel good with her vagina and has developed her identity as a woman who loves a woman. The fourth one is of a woman who was raped by a group of soldiers violently. It was the worst experience in her life, and she now is still apprehensive. In telling this story she thinks that she could recover her mind from it, but while she is telling it seems that this worst experience is still shadowing over her. The playtexts of the four stories are as follow. It is noted that the following playtext is the original of Ensler chosen by the Thai director (Ensler, 1998: 9-75).

Story 1: Hair

You cannot love a vagina unless you love hair. Many people do not love hair. My first and only husband hated hair. He said it was cluttered and dirty. He made me shave my vagina. It looked puffy and exposed and like a little girl. This excited him. When he made love to me, my vagina felt the way a beard must feel. It felt good to rub it, and painful. Like scratching a mosquito bite. It felt like it was on fire. There were screaming red bumps. I refused to shave it again. Then my husband had an affair. When we went to marital therapy, he said he screwed around because I wouldn't

please him sexually. I wouldn't shave my vagina. The therapist had a thick German accent and gasped between sentences to show her empathy. She asked me why I didn't want to please my husband. I told her I thought it was weird. I felt little when my hair was gone down there, and I couldn't help talking in a baby voice, and the skin got irritated and even calamine lotion wouldn't help it. She told me marriage was a compromise. I asked her if shaving my vagina would stop him from screwing around. I asked her if she'd had many cases like this before. She said that questions diluted the process. I needed to jump in. She was sure it was a good beginning.

This time, when we got home, he got to shave my vagina. It was like a therapy bonus prize. He clipped it a few times, and there was a little blood in the bathtub. He didn't even notice it, 'cause he was so happy shaving me. Then, later, when my husband was pressing against me, I could feel his spiky sharpness sticking into me, my naked puffy vagina. There was no protection. There was no fluff.

I realised then that hair is there for a reason-it's the leaf around the flower, the lawn around the house. You have to love hair in order to love the vagina. You can't pick the parts you want. And besides, my husband never stopped screwing around.

Story 2: The flood

Down there? I haven't been down there since 1953. No, it had nothing to do with Eisenhower. No, no, it's a cellar down there. It's very damp, clammy. You don't want to go down there. Trust me. You'd get sick. Suffocating. Very nauseating. The smell of the clamminess and the mildew and everything. Whew! Smell unbearable. Gets in your clothes.

No, there was no accident down there. It didn't blow up or catch on fire or anything. It wasn't so dramatic. I mean... well, never mind. No. Never mind. I can't talk to you about this. What's a smart girl like you going around talking to old ladies about their down-theres for? We didn't do this kind of a thing when I was a girl. What? Jesus, okay.

There was this boy, Andy Leftkov. He was cute-well, I thought so. And tall, like me, and I really liked him. He asked me out for a date in his car. ...

I can't tell you this. I can't do this, talk about down there. You just know it's there. Like the cellar. There're rumbles down there sometimes. You can hear the

pipes, and things get caught there, little animals and things, and it gets wet, and sometimes people have to come and plug up the leaks. Otherwise, the door stays closed. You forget about it. I mean, it's part of the house, but you don't see it or think about it. It has to be there, though, 'cause every house needs a cellar. Otherwise the bedroom would be in the basement.

Oh, Andy, Andy Leftkov. Right. Andy was very good-looking. He was a catch. That's what we called it in my day. We were in his car, a new white Chevy BelAir. I remember thinking that my legs were too long for the seat. I have long legs. They were bumping up against the dashboard. I was looking at my big kneecaps when he just kissed me in this surprisingly "Take me by control like they do in the movies" kind of way. And I got excited, so excited, and, well, there was a flood down there. I couldn't control it. It was like this force of passion, this river of life just flooded out of me, right through my panties, right onto the car seat of his new white Chevy BelAir. It wasn't pee and it was smelly-well, frankly, I didn't really smell anything at all, but he said, Andy said, that it smelled like sour milk and it was staining his car seat. I was "a stinky weird girl," he said. I wanted to explain that his kiss had caught me off guard, that I wasn't normally like this. I tried to wipe the flood up with my dress. It was new yellow primrose dress and it looked so ugly with the flood on it. Andy drove me home and he never, never said another word and when I got out and closed his car door, I closed the whole store. Locked it. Never opened for business again. I dated some after that, but the idea of flooding made me too nervous. I never even got close again.

I used to have dreams, crazy dreams. Oh, they're dopey. Why? Burt Reynolds. I don't know why. He never did much for me in, but in my dreams... it was always Burt. It was always the same general dream. We'd be out. Burt and I. It was some restaurant like the kind you see in Atlantic City, all big with chandeliers and stuff and thousands of waiters with vests on. Burt would give me this orchid corsage. I'd pin it on my blazer. We'd laugh. Eat shrimp cocktail. Huge shrimp, fabulous shrimp. We'd laugh more. We were very happy together. Then he'd look me into my eyes and pull me to him in the middle of the restaurant-and, just as he was about to kiss me, the room would start to shake, pigeons would fly out from under the table-I don't know what those pigeons were doing there-and the flood would come straight from down there. It would pour out of me. It would pour and pour. There would be

fish inside it, and little boats, and the whole restaurant would fill with water, and Burt would be standing knee-deep in my flood, looking horribly disappointed in me that I'd done it again, horrified as he watched his friends, Dean Martin and the like, swim past us in their tuxedos and evening gowns.

I don't have those dreams anymore. Not since they look away just about everything connected with down there. Moved out the uterus, the tubes, the whole works. The doctor thought he was being funny. He told me if you don't use it, you lose it. But really I found out it was cancer. Everything around it had to go. Who needs it, anyway? Right? Highly overrated. I've done other things. I love the dog shows. I sell antiques.

What would it wear? What kind of question is that? What would it wear? I would wear a big sign:

"Closed Due to Flooding."

What would it say? I told you. It's not like that. It's not like a person who speaks. I stopped being a thing that talked a long time ago. It's a place. A place you don't go. It's closed up, under the house. It's down there. You happy? You made me talk-you got it out of me. You got an old lady to talk about her down-there. You feel better now? (Turns away; turns back.)

You know, actually, you're the first person I ever talked to about this, and I feel a little better.

Story 3: The little coochi snorcher that could

Memory: Five Years Old

My mama tells me in a scary, loud, life-threatening voice to stop scratching my coochi snorcher. I become terrified that I've scratched it off down there. I do not touch myself again, even in the bath. I am afraid of the water getting in and filling me up so I explode. I put Band-Aids over my coochi snorcher to cover the hole, but they fall off in the water. I imagine a stopper, a bathtub plug up there to prevent things from entering me. I sleep with three pairs of happy heart-patterned cotton underpants underneath my snap-ap pajamas. I still want to touch myself, but I don't.

Memory: Seven Years Old

Edgar Montane, who is ten, gets angry at me and punches me with all his might between my legs. I feel like he breaks my entire self. I limp home. I can't pee. My mama asks me what's wrong with my coochi snorcher, and when I tell her what Edgar did to me she yells at me and says never to let anyone touch me down there again. I try to explain he didn't touch it, Mama, he punched it.

Memory: Nine Years Olds

I play on the bed, bouncing and falling, and impale my coochi snorcher on the bedpost. I make high-pitched screamie noises that come straight from my coochi snorcher's mouth. I get taken to the hospital and they saw it up down there from where it's been torn apart.

Memory: Ten Years Old

I'm at my father's house and he's having a party upstairs. Everyone's drinking. I'm playing alone in the basement and I'm trying on my new white cotton bra and panties that my father's girlfriend gave me. Suddenly my father's best friend, this big man Alfred, comes up from behind and pulls my new underpants down and stick shis big hard penis into my coochi snorcher. I scream. I kick. I try to fight him off, but he already gets it in. My father's there then and he has a gun and there's a loud horrible noise and then there's blood all over Alfred and me, lots of blood. I'm sure my coochi snorcher is finally falling out. Alfred is paralysed for life and mama doesn't let me see my father for seven years.

Memory: Twelve Years Old

My coochi snorcher is a very bad place, a place of pain, nastiness, punching, invasion, and blood. It's a site for mishaps. It's a bad-luck zone. I imagine a freeway between my legs and, girl, I am travelling, going far away from here.

Memory: Thirteen Years Old

There's this gorgeous twenty-four-year-old woman in our neighbourhood and I star at her all the time. One day she invites me into her car. She asks me if I like to kiss boys, and I tell her I do not like that. Then she says she wants to show me something, and she leans over and kisses me so softly on the lips with her lips and then puts her tongue in my mouth. Wow. She asks me if I want to come over to her house, and then she kisses me again and tells me to relax, to feel it, to let our tongues feel it. She asks my mama if I can spend a night and my mother's delighted that such a

beautiful, successful woman has taken an interest in me. I'm scared and O can't wait. Her apartment's fantastic. She's got a hooked up. It's the seventies: the beads, the fluffy pillows, the mood lights. I decide right there that I want to be a secretary like her when I grow up. She makes a vodka for herself and then she asks what I want to drink. I say the same as she's drinking and she says she doesn't think my mama would like me drinking vodka. I say she probably wouldn't like me kissing girls, either, and the pretty lady makes me a drink. Then she changes into this chocolate satin teddy. She's so beautiful. I always thought bulldaggers were ugly. I say, "You look great," and she says, "So do you." I say, "But I only have this white cotton bra and underpants." Then she dresses me, slowly, in another satin teddy. It's lavender like the first soft days of spring. The alcohol has gone to my head and I'm loose and ready. There's a picture over her bed of a naked black woman with a huge afro. She gently and slowly lays me out on the bed and just our bodies rubbing makes me come. Then she does everything to me and my coochi snorcher that I always thought was nasty before, and wow, I'm so hot, so wild. She says, "Your vagina, untouched by man, smells so nice, so fresh, wish I could keep that way forever." I get crazy wild and then the phone rings and of course it's my mama. I'm sure she knows; she catches me at everything. I'm breathing so heavy and I try to act normal when I get on the phone and she asks me, "What's wrong with you, have you been running?" I say, "No, Mama, exercising." Then she tells the beautiful secretary to make sure I'm not around boys and the lady tells her, "Trust me, there're no boys around here." Afterward the gorgeous lady teaches me everything about my coochi snorcher. She makes me play with myself in front of her and she teaches me all the different ways to give myself pleasure so I'll never need to rely on a man. In the morning I am worried that I've become a butch because I'm so in love with her. She laughs, but I never see her again. Now people say that it was a kind of rape. I was only thirteen and she was twenty-four. Well, I say, if it was a rape, it was a good rape then, a rape that turned my sorry-ass coochi snorcher into a kind of heaven.

Story 4: My Vagina was my Village

My vagina was green, water soft pink fields, cow mooing sun resting sweet boyfriend touching lightly with soft piece of blond straw.

There is something between my legs. I do not know what it is. I do not know where it is. I do not touch. Not now. Not anymore. Not since.

My vagina was chatty, can't wait, so much, so much saying, words talking, can't quit trying, can't quit saying, oh yes, oh yes.

Not since I dream there's a dead animal sewn in down there with thick black fishing line. And the bad dead there animal smell cannot be removed. And its throat is slit and it bleeds through all my summer dresses.

My vagina singing all girl songs, all goat bells ringing songs, all wild autumn field songs, vagina songs, vagina home songs.

Not since the soldiers put a long thick rifle inside me. So cold, the steel rod cancelling my heart. Don't know whether they're going to fire it or shove it through my spinning brain. Six of them, monstrous doctors with black masks shoving bottles up me too. There were sticks, and the end of a broom.

My vagina swimming river water, clean spilling water over sun-baked stones over stone clit, clit stones over and over.

Not since I heard the skin tear and made lemon screeching sounds, not since a piece of my vagina came off in my hand, a part of the lip, now one side of the lip is completely gone.

My vagina. A live wet water village. My vagina my hometown. Not since they took turns for seven days smelling like faeces and smoked meat, they left their dirty sperm inside me. I became a river of poison and pus and all the crops died, and the fish.

My vagina a live wet water village. They invaded it. Butchered it and burned it down. I do not touch now. Do not visit. I live someplace else now. I don't know where that is.

About the form of presentation, this performance was text-based, and the actresses performed the four characters of the four stories by each character told her story to audience. Each actress told the story as if it was her own. This means that acting style of this performance was realistic. However, the performance did not give any importance to realistic set and other theatrical elements. On set there was only one chair for the actress to sit and tell the story to the audience. Thus, it can be said that the

form of this performance was “simplified realism”. It should be noted here that in any realistic theatre, the audience is always placed as an observer of the story and characters. But for this performance, as the character talked to the audience directly, the audience then became a listener of the characters, not just being an observer like in other realistic theatre. As a consequence, the audience’s position is in between being an observer and a dialogue partner of the characters. It can be said that the audience was involved in the stories of the characters by being a direct listener and interact with the characters while the stories were being told.

As the audience was involved in the stories of the characters, he or she could easily feel and touch the internal condition of the characters which could lead to the understanding of violation against women. However, when comparing with Brecht’s theory, it could be said that this performance could not lead the audience to any changes as the performance did not pose any questions for the audience to think. Nonetheless, as discussed earlier that Brecht’s theory itself could not guarantee that the audience would change as the theory aimed, it then could not assume that any non-Brechtian performances could not change the audience’s thinking. Let alone the fact that *A Doll’s House* which is a realistic drama could activate its audience to move for women’s rights in Europe.

Another important theatrical component put onto concern in order to assess the audience’s learning is the issue or content of the theatre, and for this case is the concept of body politics presented through the stories of “vagina”. For Thai audience, hearing the word vagina might make he or she uncomfortable as talking about vagina or even about sex publicly is still not that of normal. If so, learning will not take place as the audience might reject to hear, which means that the audience will not receive what the performance wants to deliver. However, considering that *The Vagina Monologues* has brought about the V-Day internationally, it then could be said that this performance can bring about learning. Moreover, when considering that the concept of body politics gives emphasis to women’s power over their own bodies, it is understandable that why a lot of women over the world could liberate themselves after attending this performance. Hence, it could be assumed that when it performs in Thailand, learning will take place among female audience better than male.



Illustration 4.3 Scene from The Vagina Monologues



Illustration 4.4 Final scene of The Vagina Monologues

4.3 Venus Party: when the body speaks

Venus Party is a physical theatre which is the theatre that uses body gesture to communicate the story without word. Moschochoriti (2009: 9-11) stated that though the theatre that use body language to communicate the story such as mime or

Commedia dell'arte have been long time existing, but the physical theatre as a type of theatre with specific characters as those mentioned above is different. For instance, physical theatre is one of theatrical forms that against the domination of mainstream theatre that uses words to convey the message as it believes that words cannot convey the deceive and delude meaning while the body and movements can create better authenticity. Beside, physical theatre also rejects the form of realistic performance according to Stanislavski's concept that the performers reach to the characters by using the magic "if". This means that when the performers perform they would assume themselves as if they were the characters in order to create the real presentation of those characters. The rejection of the "magic if" leads to the seeking of forms or new ways of performance, and the physical theatre is one of them based on the concept that lets the performers free to imagine about the new performance through body movements and symbolic gesture. By the overall picture, physical theatre contains the following characteristics.

1. Giving importance to the performer as the creator of the performance more than the interpreter.
2. Aiming at the collective working methods.
3. The practice and method used in practicing, no matter for the new creating works or those created from the playtext, will use the body as a tool.
4. The performers and the audiences have a dialectical relation between each other.
5. The sense of play arises from the improvisational relationship among performers themselves, and performers with their roles.

It could be said that physical theatre is the theatre that uses the performers' bodies to present symbolic meaning. It is the theatre that uses body to present the symbolic meaning of human life that lives in the social and cultural context. Moreover, the creation of sound and the elements of scene and costumes also contain symbolical meaning. As the performing method is exaggerated, physical theatre then demands the audience's interpretation, which means that the audience must understand

the world created by the theatre and needs to have emotional involvement with the theatre in order understand the message that the performance intends to deliver.

In Venus Party the set did not define where it was, and there was no theatrical property. The audience would only see three or four big square frames that could change the position. The performance opened with the performer's movement by raising their hands to reach for something, then it moved on to the main story consisted of three acts. The first act was about a fat woman who tried so hard not to eat as she desperately wanted to be slender. She had to fight with her hungriness sufferingly. She tried not to open the refrigerator but lastly she could not stand. She finally opened it and ate the food happily. This act was presented in a comedy style in that the performer used her body to suggest the fight with the gravity of the refrigerator, and this made the audience to laugh. Besides, this fat woman also wanted to marry just like any other women. This part was also presented through the use of the performer's gesture and movements to suggest a fight for the wedding bouquet that the bride threw to all the girls who wanted to be the next to get married.

The second act was about a working woman who was surrounded by male colleagues. She was teased by those men who tried to steal her chair. There was also a small scene in this act in which a group of women were about to be harassed. But once the women turned to fight, no one could harass them. The third act was about a man and a woman with the rope tying around their necks together. These two were wife and husband with no interaction to each other. While the husband was watching television, the wife was ironing his shirt. There is no theatrical device to represent television or iron. The action presented through the use of the performers' gesture to suggest the existence on those two things. When the wife wanted to change the television channel, the husband did not agree. Both of them sit and sleep separately, but when the husband moved, the wife was pulled by the rope on her attached to the neck of the husband.

The performance ended with the movements that each performer back to be the neutral characters, and each character stepped out of the big square frame, the same frame as seen in the beginning of the performance. It should be stated here that there was the use of stage lighting to create the proper mood of each situation presented.

The intention of the director of *Venus Part* was to bring up the situations women had to face with in their everyday lives to speak out publicly in order to question the audience whether these situations, the situations perceived by society as normal, are really normal? The process to develop the plot was to bring up women's issues from everyday life situations such as news in the newspaper to discuss with performers in order to find out the conclusion on the content and the form of presentation of the theatre. The content and the form did not come from the story that had been set for the performers to take the roles, but from the improvisation proves between the director and the performers in order to find out the proper form and content. However, the form of physical theatre was selected because the director viewed that "word" had some limitations in communication process. Furthermore, the director had been trained in the non-realistic school. Physical theatre was therefore the answer for this task (Sineenart Kateprapai, Interview).

It can be seen that *Venus Party* was characterised by physical theatre theory in the aspects of creative collaboration between the director and the performers, the use of body and movements, exaggerated performing style, the use of symbolic elements, and so on. However, physical theatre is the form of theatre that demands the audience to interpret the world constructed by the theatre, and this could be an obstacle for the audience who is familiar with the conventional theatre that has a concrete story and dialogue. Besides, as the subjects of the performance were the everyday life situations that the audience might be already familiar with, it could be questioned that whether the audience would be able to step over this familiarity to a new understanding, as well as to question that whether the audience could interpret the symbolic gestures of the performers. If not, the audience then would not gain any new insights, which means that the learning did not take place. For physical theatre, the audience is demanded to decode what the theatre presents, which might be slightly difficult for general Thai audience.



Illustration 4.5 Opening scene of Venus Party



Illustration 4.6 Venus Party scene 2



Illustration 4.7 Venus Party scene 3

4.4 Women's theatre, women in the theatre

As stated above, it can be seen that the three theatres of women's issues by the three female directors were different in forms and contents. For the forms, they have some significant differences; that is, *The Vagina Monologues* is text-based like any other conventional theatres even though the form of presentation is simplified realistic, while *Srida-Sriram?* is a postmodern theatre denying the conventional text-based but using the deconstruction and reconstruction processes to develop the plot. Even more, *Venus Party* rejects the use of word but uses bodies and movements of the performers to tell the story. These differences then demand the audience to perceive them differently. This can be summarised as the following table.

Table 4.2 The demand towards the audience

Theatre	The Vagina Monologues	Srida-Sriram?	Venus Party
Content	Violation against women takes place because women do not have power and authority over their own bodies.	The ideal image of women created by the society is in fact another myth, not reality of women. Do we still want to be in that myth?	Are situations women facing with in everyday life that seem to be normal really normal?
Form	Simplified realism giving importance to text and realistic acting, but cutting technical elements off except clear simple lighting.	Postmodern theatre with a newly created plot resulting from the deconstruction of the old text, with elements of modern spoken drama together with dance, shadow, music, including the use of symbols and lighting.	Physical theatre refusing text but using gesture and movements to tell the story, including the use of symbols and lighting to create artistic dimensions.

When considering those three theatres as the learning tool, it could be said that these three theatres would bring about different learning outcomes to the audience as they were designed differently. The next chapter will consider whether these three theatres have brought about different learning outcomes, and how the differences are.

CHAPTER V

THEATRE AND GENDER LEARNING

This chapter will illustrate gender learning of the audience. The information used is from the interview of 18 individual audiences. Among these, some of the audiences attended more than one performance. In explaining theatre and gender learning, the overall picture of learning outcomes will be presented first, then followed by the learning outcomes of each performance.

5.1 Gender learning through theatre

Gender learning of the audiences of three theatres which are Sida-Sriram?, The Vagina Monologues and Venus Party were diverse. Some audiences attending more than one performance had different learning outcomes for each performance. The learning outcomes taking place could be classified as follows.

5.1.1 Understand, but not very clear

Sadud attended Sida-Sriram? while he was a fourth year university student. He said that:

“I know that it was talking about women, about Sida. I know that she’s Rama’s wife. It seems to me that the performance wanted to raise some questions. It talked about women and criticised something about femininity such as beauty contest. But if asking whether I understood the whole story or not, and how each of scenes connected to each other, I did not know much by that time... For example, the narrator, why did she have to be tied up with a chair. There were many girls who could possibly be Sida being locked in a cage. That picture made me dismayed, what was it

and for what? I was so dismayed by the picture before me. I tried to understand, tried to view it as a story but I didn't know what the story was trying to convey. I tried to connect those pieces of performance, but I couldn't. So I lost".

Darunee is another person who did not understand the performance. Differ from Sadud, she went to Venus Party and talked about it that:

"It was difficult. I admit that I didn't understand. After the performance I talked with my friends that it was not like the performance I had seen before. I was so dismayed. After that I tried to search from the internet about the physical theatre, and found that it is the theatre that uses gestures to deliver the message, and the audience have to interpret the story for themselves. Just like it leaves the room for the audience to think. I discussed with friends later on about it".

Similarly to Darunee, Chutiporn who went to see Venus Party with her talked about this performance that:

"I didn't understand. It was abstract. I didn't know how to interpret it. People interpreted it in many different ways, and would argue when discussing together. I just want to know what this performance wanted to say. It was not a performance of one story line. It had many pieces of stories which caused me wonder that how they were related. So I was dismayed... It seems to me that it wanted to say that in the past women had to be at home. They were not strong, inferior, and supposed to be mild-mannered, while men went out to explore the world. Something like that".

5.1.2 Already known

Wittaya is a friend of Darunee and Chutiporn. He has some different views about Venus Party as he said that:

“I think it was about women, suppression on women. It seems that women were inferior. It was about women fighting with their own needs, about equality between sexes. Like in the performance there was a woman who might be better at work than her male colleagues, but her chair, her position, was being stolen by men... I think it was about women’s voices, that women had rights to get what they dreamed for. They should have a voice in family matters, not just being demanded by their husband. Men didn’t have to be the front legs of the elephant and women didn’t have to be the rear ones anymore. Men shouldn’t be the leaders or being at higher positions all the time... Our society is just like what the performance presented. But I think for some matters men should still be the leaders because women are more emotional. They’re always emotional. Men should be the leaders at work. I think women are somehow not likely to make any decisions. Men are more likely to dare for decision making. But as being couple, men and women should listen to one another... The performance was actually to reveal how the society is”.

Natee is another one attending Venus Party. In his opinion the issues presented in the performance were something people had already known.

“They were situations women had to face with in their everyday life, facing with their own selves, at work, in family... The way the performance presented was quite direct to the point. It revealed how the society was. At the beginning of the performance I had to put some attempt to interpret it because it had no spoken word. I had to adjust myself because it was not presented through words. I had to interpret it from acting, sound and lighting in order to understand the direction of the performance. It was a live theatre, not like television drama... But it was not difficult to understand. It was what I had known before”.

Warunya went to Venus Party and could understand what it wanted to present easily. However, she viewed that everyone had known the issues presented already.

“It was not difficult to understand, and was very spectacular... It told us the perspectives of women who faced with the situations. Being a beautiful woman was not always good, married also. Women had to face with these. It reflected that any women sooner or later had to face with these situations. It's like women must face with the difficult time in some periods of their lives, may be at work or in marriage life... But the reality is tougher than those presented in the performance, like crime, murder, rape. If these issues were presented, what had been presented in the performance might seem to be so simple. Reality is much worse. Anyway, the situations presented are something which any women have a possibility to face with. Not everyone was or would be raped of course, but rape represents violation against women better... I have known what it presented already. It's not the thing that makes us angry when being told anymore. We're so familiar with it, too familiar to have any questions about it”.

5.1.3 So what?

Sadud attended Sida-Sriram? But not understand what it wanted to say. He also attended Venus Party. He said about it that:

“I know it was talking about women but I, as well as my friends watching this performance, had a question that this issue still needed to be talked about? It's been discussed for ages through many channels and mediums. Too much already. To me, when the issue was first presented through theatre it made me think a lot. But as time gone by, it didn't raise any questions anymore. I understood it clearly... What I like was the way it presented, the form. But for the content, no. All the issues, women wanted to be slender, as such, we had known already. We had been told by television programme for a long time”.

Niorn is another one who questioned Venus Party. But her question is different from the one of Sadud.

“After the performance I thought to myself “then what?” How could I as a woman direct my own life? How could I manage all the problems? It’s just like telling me what the problems are again and again. But it didn’t give me any clues for going through it. How could I live my life in this society? The performance just told me that there were many problems, gender inequality. I was so upset because it didn’t lead me to find the way out. Problems, then what? Nothing’s new, just like those familiar stories in the newspaper, women are victims again and again. The performance just presented the information, but didn’t do anything to stimulate the audience to think, to analyse how we should live our lives. Then it told us to come out of the cage. But how? It didn’t give any clues how we could come out”.

Siriporn didn’t see Venus Party but she went to Sida-Sriram? and had some questions as Niorn and Sadud had for Venus Party.

“It wasn’t new. I didn’t feel anything. If asking how much it had impact on me, no. Asking if I had known it before, yes. Though I had come across some philosophy and discourse about women, I didn’t feel anything from attending this performance. To me it asked the audience bluntly that, “hey, have you ever thought that once you’re born as a woman you’ll certainly be a sexual object? Or as being a woman you have to surrender to the man. Look at Sida! Oh, she is so suffered. She then runs away.”... To me it forced us right at the beginning to think that Sida would make some decisions. But in that decision I didn’t see any realisation of the character... I think they wanted to experiment. They then put a lot of elements into the performance, shadow, actors running in and out... Performance that too

much emphasises the form of presentation will eventually dehumanise the characters. Self and identity of the characters are replaced by spectacle of the form. And in the end the characters will say something to us like they're giving a speech".

5.1.4 New insights from the never seen

Worawut attended The Vagina Monologues. Though he felt slightly uncomfortable when hearing the word "vagina" at the beginning, he said that this performance made him understand the internal condition of the woman better.

"In our society, women are expected to be as the society defines. They cannot express their thinking that much. The characters in this performance were expressing the thoughts that women wanted to express but could not do so in real life. For example, sex issue. In the society, women could not express their thoughts because they are expected not to express, as well as they themselves want to be as expected. Like "We're a woman. We have to be mild-mannered and behave properly. We have to limit ourselves within social expectations otherwise we will be casted as the not-good." In fact they might have some deeper desire. I think that all women want to socially deform. But they just can't do it. Other people, men, or even themselves, have set the code of conduct for them... I'd had this understanding before, and this performance made me understand better, understand that it's true as I thought... But of course I couldn't feel as the women did. I just had a better understanding and got to know something I didn't know before".

For Charuwan, she went to Sida-Sriram? and said that this performance was quite interesting in terms of a bringing up of women's perspective, Sida's in this case, to present through the theatre, and this perspective was that she had never known before.

“What I felt first was that I’d never known this aspect before. A story telling of Ramayana in the past was from men’s perspective. A story teller was a man. But this performance, to me, it was an up side down. This was my first thinking when watching it. This performance was a telling of Ramayana from women’s perspective. If Sida could tell the story, she would tell this way. The interesting of the performance was of this point... The tile also told that the story was of Sida. It’s like Sida wanted a chance to have a say. Women wanted to say... People always thought that Sida was not that good. Not good in men’s aspect because she was at the beginning with Rama and then with Ravana. In fact she was abused. If she could choose, she might choose nothing, not with anyone at all. But she couldn’t choose. Everything that happened to her was done by other people while she couldn’t do anything she wanted. If she could have a say, she might say that why I had to stay with the hermit, why?... Or if it was us, we are the people of the modern time, we might think that if some day women insist not to do this and that, what’ll be happening? If it could be so, something might be changed”.

Dararat is another one who has a new aspect about women from attending Sida-Sriram? which is not much different from Chruwan. She said that:

“I understand that the performance wanted to portray the character of Sida. In the literature Sida is the character that was created. We’ve learnt about her from the literature since when we were young, that her story has been told as we knew, never been changed. But if someday Sida can have a say, or if she is living in our time, will we ask her how she feel?... The performance reflected that if one day Sida could have a say or can express what she feels, or can do things more than she was expected in the context of male domination, if she stands up for herself, how would she be?... I remember that the performance didn’t lead the audience to conclude that women are important, or understand women’s thinking. It was open-ended that each audience can think further in many different ways. To me, it

made me rethink the life of Sida, of women. Anyway, different audience might think differently. For me, I found it's strange because it was talking about girls in karaoke bar, a beauty contest, and linked these today's phenomena could with Sida's life... In the end I think that no matter where and when Sida is, in the literature or in today's world, there're some similarities. I felt good when watching this performance. It'll be nice if Sida could have a say. It's like we've learned something new. We might never think about it before, or overlook it... It made me hear another voice, the voice that we've never heard before. It made me feel that Sida is real, and she is actually us all".

Jira went to Venus Party. Though many people viewed that this performance did not propose anything new, he thinks that:

"It was about women's problems in today's society. I'd never thought about it. Might be because I never paid any attention. It might be a kind of normal thing in the society. But when I watched this performance, I thought it might be a problem. For example, in the scene that two guys were talking about women's body, well, if my friends talked about this issue or if this talk was in my everyday life context, I would think that it's normal. But when it was in the theatre, I realised that it's not good. There're some situations I've never heard before, like in the scene of a working woman in which her chair was stolen. I might have known from women's magazine of twenty years ago, but never thought that it's still existing... It should be the intention of the director to pick up many things that we might overlook to make us realise. For example, the wedding scene. We know that many girls want to win the wedding bouquet. But in the performance this wanting seemed to be a desperation. It's like the coin has two sides. Usually we see it from one side. But if we see it from another side we might know it more. What we perceive as customary might be not if we look closer. We might find something different".

For Nut, he was satisfied with the performance as it portrayed aspects about women not much presented in the theatre before.

“I liked it because there’re not many performances addressing women’s issues. The message they sent to the audience was so clear. It reflected social system in which women are dominated by men’s power. It encouraged women to realise that they can fight with male domination... It gave me some aspects I’ve never known before, like the aspect of women and house works, women and marriage life, women and the body... things like that. So to me it was very interesting. And when they presented it visually, it made me think that women could liberate themselves from male domination. They can protect themselves and can fight in the workplace or when they’re abused. They can against men’s power”.

5.1.5 Synchronising with our gender standpoint

Sudathip watched The Vagina Monologues and felt appreciated very much. However, the performance did not bring about any learning to her as gender issue presented in the performance synchronised with her existing gender standpoint.

“The Vagina Monologues was a drama about women with diverse gender perspectives. The content was quite profound. The sequence of the story started from shallow and developed to the profound one. It gradually brought us to investigate a seem-to-be shallow problem of women’s everyday life to the root cause of the problem which was the control over an untainted nature of women that devalued women’s self. The performance was trying to reflect the male domination mechanism, and at the same time to reveal the real potentials of women. If we didn’t look as women through the eyes of men, we would realise that women were not inferior than persons of other gender... The performance was so impressive. I would say that it synchronised with my own thinking. This is because I have a background in feminist and Tao philosophy emphasising

femininity and state of being a mother. It then didn't change. It's like a friend who sings along with me".

Jira is another one who admired this performance. It however affected him not different from as affected Sudathip, as he said:

"I liked it so much because it was so sentimental. But for the issue of women's problem I don't remember that much. The first story, if I'm not wrong, was about a housewife. The second one was about a woman who had water flow from her body. I'm not sure whether it was about sexual desire. But the third and the fourth ones were made me understand women who'd been sexually violated. I was so shaking, and understood the lesbian better. It made me realise that there are a lot of women victimised in this kind of situation. They must be very suffered. Anyway, it didn't make me change my thinking. I never violate any women and men, and don't know anyone who do so. I believe that being lesbian is not strange. And I believe that women should fully express their sexual desire. I already have all these before attending the performance".

5.1.6 Questioning oneself

Siriporn is the one who viewed that Sida-Sriram? did not propose anything new. For The Vagina Monologues, however, she said that:

"I'd never known before. I went back home and thought about it. I thought about social discourses. It made me think quite a lot. One character, she cried out painfully, but she still had to surrender to her husband's needs. Why women had to surrender? I thought about it seriously. Then it reflected to my own life, that should I follow all the established discourses? Should I let them direct my life?... It didn't address the issue directly. The characters didn't tell us to against. They just told us their suffering experience. That experience, first of all, if we think about it further, they were hurt by persons of another sex. Second, born female was

so inferior... I'd never thought that it is a form of an abuse. It brought up the issue that never been talked. Even women never think about it before. It affected me very much. It's changed my attitude".

Not differ from Siriporn, Wannapa is another audience shaken by The Vagina Monologues. She said that:

"It was in our everyday life, in our house, but we've never thought that it was an enforcement that made us suffer emotionally and spiritually... It seemed to be a tiny thing, but it's huge in the feeling of the beholders. Just some words of a man could make a woman in the second story have a bad dream, the flooding. Who knows, just a foolish dream. It's just another dream. But this woman suffered with it terribly. It made me think about it a lot more, that why we had to do things just to favour another one that much... It made me realise women's issues a lot more without saying a word about gender inequality... It was just a small domestic issue, not being beaten, not being raped, but for them it was tremendous. I believe that there are a lot more women facing this kind of situation. Situations might be different, but the point is the same... It made me question that in fact what we had seen was really as we saw. Violation has many facets, not just physical violation. It could be something that not hurt us physically. It made me think more and see more, that this and that are also violation. It filled up what I'd been thinking. It we look closer, look at what we think it's customary to women, it's a violation that even women never think about it before. It made me think that, oh my god, I'd been brainwashed for a long time".

Not only female audiences shaken by this performance, male audience like Kittu was shaken too.

"It really touched the inside feeling of the audience. It let the audience touch the lives of the characters, the suffering lives of women who had

been violated. They just sit and told us their stories, but the stories were such powerful. It's like we're listening to difficulties in their lives. I'm thinking about the woman who loves woman character. While she was telling her story, there's something she didn't want to tell. But when she told, to me, it was so shaking... It made me think back to many evidences in my own life. Like violation against women, I thought about the relation between my mom and dad. My mom lived her life, well, sometimes having problems with my dad. She was beaten, but she's still there, not running away. The performance made the story of my mom came to my mind, a story of my own family. At the same time as of the performance I had a chance to visit women's shelter. I then thought to myself again that I'd never understood how abused women felt, or had anything deep down in their minds. The Vagina Monologues made me find that it's so difficult for these women to decline from their sufferings... To me the performance tried to portray that the root cause of women's problems was the fact that women had been oppressed. It actually didn't obviously say. It wasn't a women's rebel. Not like that. But it told us a hidden reality of women's lives. "What do you think once you're told? Would you let it be this way?" It questioned us, and let us to answer for ourselves. The characters didn't demand anything, but in not demanding it was, oh, so touching. It made me think about social structure, traditions, culture, teaching, being men. It connected me to these things".

The audience who questioned himself most is Pakorn. After attending Sida-Sriram?, he said that:

"At the beginning I almost totally didn't understand. But after a while I started to catch up. I knew that it was about Sida, but still didn't know the details. After another while I found that they link the issues of today's women with Sida, to point out the similarities between Sida and today's women. The issues I picked up were violation against women, male domination, women as object and commodity... It was the women's voice.

They voiced that they were human beings... In fact we'd already heard about what happened to women, but once it's visualised in the performance, it aroused me to look into the reality, and I felt very saddened. I then thought that I should do good to women, starting from those who're close to me, family members... I haven't done any great things. I just respect women more than before, my mother in particular. To me, Sida in the performance represented my mother, our mothers".

Furthermore, the performance has made his perception of femininity and masculinity changed, particularly the perception of equality between genders.

"Before attending the performance I'd had an idea that men were deemed to take care of and protect women, husband to wife for example. But after watching the performance I found that what I'd thought was no true. Men still violated women, no matter with intention or not... Before that women were in between following men and equal to men, well, they didn't follow men but somehow they're not equal to men. But after watching the performance, I found that women were still far behind... The word "working woman" made everyone think that women and men are equal. But in fact, no... We'd ever heard every issue presented in the performance, but we might pay no attention to it. But when attending the performance, all those we'd heard were visualised and struck us. To me, the performance was blaming us that "Don't you know that these things are existing? What're you guys doing? Just knowing it and then going back home?... I felt like I was slapped, and that made me think to myself about what I'd done to women".

5.2 The overall picture of theatre and gender learning

From all the stated above, it can be seen that theatre of gender has brought about gender learning in many different ways. Nonetheless, when looking the overall picture of the learning, it could be said that theatre can bring about learning at the

reception stage; that is, the audiences received the information about problems and difficulties of women from the theatre, such reflected in the “already known” group of the audiences, including that some audiences gained “new insights” from seeing the never seen parts of women. However, it could not lead the audience to the comprehension stage of learning, as reflected in the “so what?” group which is a group of the audiences viewing that theatre of gender could merely present women’s problems but could not associate women’s problems to structural gender power relations. Let alone the fact that there is another group of the audiences that did not understand what the performance wanted to convey. Nevertheless, it could not say that theatre of gender could not entirely precipitate gender learning because there was a group of the audiences questioning themselves and connecting what the theatre presented to gender socialisation leading them to have certain gender perspectives. However, these audiences were the minority while the majority were at the reception stage.

When considering the role of theatre in bringing about gender learning within the framework of Transformative Learning Theory, it could be said that theatre cannot lead the audience to have such a prevailing inner dialogue leading to the critical self-reflection of the sources of one own gender perspective and belief. Furthermore, theatre cannot stimulate the audience to question oneself that whether women’s problems presented in the performance are really be generally known. This is because criticising and questioning one own thinking and belief could be regarded as a crucial process that leads the audience to a transformation of gender perspective. As the audience does not question or criticise one own believe system, learning is hardly to take place.

5.3 Differences in bringing about learning of each performance

When considering learning brought about by each performance based on what the audience said earlier, it could be said that each performance has brought about learning differently. In the case of *The Vagina Monologues*, as stated in Chapter 4, bringing the word “vagina” and related stories to present through the theatre might cause the Thai audience uncomfortable. However, as can be seen through Worawut’s words

that even though he felt uncomfortable at the beginning, but that did not prevent him from following the performance. Moreover, he did not merely follow the story performed, but he started to understand the feeling of women having been assaulted, which was what he had never known before though he had realised that gender inequality existed.

While Worawut gained a better understanding, Kitti was shaken emotionally. He had an emotional identification with the story, and that made him rethink gender power relations existing in his own family. Together with the experience he gained from visiting women's shelter which made him think back to his own experience related to gender issue, he could associate what presented in the performance to gender socialisation in his family and gender discourse socially and culturally constructed. This also happened to Siriporn who questioned herself whether she would let the dominant gender discourse to overrule her life. This questioning resulted from a new perspective on the domination over female body of which even women never thought about it before that it was a form of violation. Wannapa also gained this perspective from the performance, as she addressed that what happened to female body was always perceived to be normal while in fact it was a form of sexual violation that even women did not realise. As she as well as other women did not realise this before, it could be therefore said that their thinking and belief were constructed by the dominant discourse, and this performance made her to realise this fact.

For Jira, even though this performance could not cause him any changes, he was emotionally shaken and felt sympathy for the characters. He also received more details of life and aspects of life of women as he mentioned his understanding to a woman who loves a woman. Sudathip's learning was quite the same as of Jira; that is, the performance did not cause her any changes because what the performance proposed was as the same as her gender standpoint, and she viewed that the performance could present gender issue profoundly.

It could be said that this performance by the overall picture could lead the audiences "to see the unseen" and "to know the unknown", which were the details of violation against female body that even women did not realise before. This performance has then expand the audiences' "learning boundary" resulting in the audiences' looking back into their own experience related to gender issue, which leads them either to

confirm the existing belief, revise the existing experience, or question both the existing belief and experience. The expansion of the learning boundary varies in each audience. However, what took place in all the audiences was the “inner dialogue” which was a crucial starting point leading to the “critical self-reflection” which could assist the audiences to learn that the social construction of femininity is much more complex than understood. It could be then said that *The Vagina Monologues* has potentials to precipitate transformative learning, though its audiences have not yet been transformed.

Sida-Sriram?, as stated in Chapter 4, aimed for the audiences to have a revision about women. In attaining this aim, the director used the form of postmodern theatre that could lead the audience to a deconstruction of their existing belief. Comparing the deconstruction of the existing belief with the concept of transformative learning, it could be said that the deconstruction is as the same as critical self-reflection in learning process. Nevertheless, when considering the audiences’ learning despite the fact that Pakorn who is one of the audiences of this performance has revised his belief, it could be said that this performance by overall picture cannot precipitate a revision to the audiences. This could be seen from Sadud’s words that he did not understand this performance, which means that the reception which is the first stage of learning process did not take place. Moreover, Siriporn, even understood clearly what the performance wanted to achieve, viewed that the performance did not propose anything new. Her reception then could not bring about any learning to her. Nonetheless, Charuwan and Dararat said that this performance made her see another side of *Sida* they had never seen before. They then received a new message from the performance, and this reception associates them to women of today’s society. Hence, when considering the overall picture of *Sida-Sriram?* it could be said that it has brought about a reception of different angles of women and femininity, but this reception still cannot lead to the audiences’ transformation of gender perspective.

As this performance was a part of research project, the director asked the audiences to answer the questionnaire after attending the performance. The answer revealed that the majority of the audiences (62.73%) “receive messages never known before”. For the question “How does this performance made you to view the ideal image of women differ from before?” This answer was 53.88% differ, 45.90% not differ (Pornrat Damrhung, 2006, no page number). These answers help confirm that what

taken place among the audiences was a reception of what they had never known before, but this reception still not resulted in a revision of the ideal image of women as the performance aimed for.

For Venus Party, it could be said that based on the learning outcomes, the audiences can be divided into two groups which are the group that did not understand the performance and the group that understood but did not change their perspective because the performance presented what people in the society had already known, and the performance could not made them view the known differ. To consider this performance in the context of learning, it could be said that this performance could not lead its audiences even to the reception stage which is the first stage of learning process. Even though the audiences of the second group received, they received what they had already known. That thus, it could be said this performance could not bring about gender learning.

It could be said that each performance brought about learning differently because it was designed differently as illustrated in Chapter 4. In addition, the literature review demonstrates that apart from the theatre itself, contextual factors and factors related to individual audience influence learning, and the learning of each individual also differs. The next chapter will be a presentation of these issues.

CHAPTER VI

FACTORS AND CONDITIONS RELATED TO GENDER LEARNING THROUGH THE THEATRE

As discussed in the last chapter that the theatre can bring about gender learning at the repletion stage. Moreover, there are many different factors and conditions involve in the learning, both of the theatre itself and of the audiences. Furthermore, the literature review reveals that factors related to social context or contextual factors take part in the learning. This chapter then will consider all the factors involving in gender learning through the theatre in order to answer the question why the theatre can bring about learning at the reception stage which is merely the first stage of learning process.

6.1 Social context and the audiences' gender perspectives

Social context that affects viewpoint and standpoint of a person in genders is social ideology concerning masculinity and femininity. That is to say, women are not equal to men and the majority of the audiences accept the existence of this ideology set, for instant, the audiences in Venus Party said that she dared not to step out of the old frame herself, as the saying, “the play reminded these matters. It’s true, but it did not change a thing, not step out the box, not well enough, still concern about others... surrounding contexts were heavy, incompatible”. Also, some of the audiences viewed the characters and roles of females and males are subject to dominant discourse such as the saying of the audiences that “let the man lead the work since the woman is not decisive”, this saying is the reproduction of the idea that female is inferior. In addition, although some audiences said that they saw no difference between male and female but those audiences agreed that female is in minor status according to the social structure.

In studying about genders, the feminists criticised that the western dualism concept that separated masculinity and femininity and sphere of male and female in binary opposition under the concept of patriarchy which stated that male is a genders of reasoning, objective, active, etc. while female is emotional, subjective, passive, etc. And that sphere of male is public sphere when sphere of female is domestic sphere. All these built role and power of male over female. By deriving this conceptual framework to explain inequality between male and female in Thai society, there may be argument that this concept may not be able to explain masculinity and femininity in Thai society because perceiving female sphere as private sphere or domestic sphere means perceiving that females are not economically productive based on capitalism. Female labour is reserved or marginal labour subject to capitalism since it can fulfil the productivity lesser than male labour. Female labour is mostly used in household works such as raising children and housework. These works are unprofitable while male labour is in the producing system of capitalism that is profitable, so the works of female is determined as economically unproductive. Meanwhile, females have had essential role economically in Thai society from the past. According to Pranee Wongthet (2001: 342-344), Thai and other Southeast Asia women have had parts in the working in the field, preparing food as well as being a seller in the market, so women have important part in a society as we can see from how they were praised and worshiped as the creator mother and the symbol of plenitude such as the terms ‘Mae Nam’(mother goddess of water), ‘Mae Toranee’ (mother goddess of soil) and ‘Mae Phosop’ (mother goddess of grain).

However, this does not mean that there is no inequality between genders in Thai society because when a society has developed to a state with a regime and social hierarchy, such a society created “class”.

“Aristocratic system appeared in Ayutthaya period, when administrative power was centralised especially, in the reign of King Trailokanat in order to descend the power which obviously created class between the ruling class such as those nobilities and another was the ruled class such as those commoners and slaves. The ruling class was divided to 2 levels; the highest level included the king, the royal families and the high-ranked

official at the level of chancellor. The low level was those low-ranked officials which the commoner could possibly make his way up to that position. If the hope to become an officer of those commoners or slaves was not be possible, they might instead bolster their descendants by putting them into the care of the nobilities in order to serve them. This relationship caused the social value of admiring people who work as government officers, giving an opportunity for men to have many wives including partners as they please. Poor parents might give away their daughter to be a servant of the nobleman, so women were men's property that can be traded. The idealistic value of women among nobilities was that women must be an excellent wife who served her husband well and preserved her purity, a good and quiet follower. While all power was in a hand of men, all women had to do was just try to keep the husband with her" (Pranee Wongthet, 2001: 345-346).

It is to say that changing social and cultural context has created ideology of class that caused the desirable women ideology. And even though this ideology set was made up in the context of elite women, this ideology was passed on to lower class women when Thai society acquired western educational system. This is to say, the value of that women had to concern their beauty, manner, preserving their purity, taking the follower role, serving their husband, etc. has become the lesson for women of all classes in a society though educational system that large numbers of women could access. (Pranee Wongthet, 2001: 347-348). This "femininity" has become dominant ideology of Thai society and there was a social machinery to control women under this ideology made up such as the origin of the proverb about masculinity and femininity, "Man is paddy, woman is rice" means paddy can grow well wherever it fall on like a man when woman is likely to be a rice that cannot grow more, it will only decay or be eaten by animal. Furthermore, there are "good or bad the woman is, depends on her husband" or "husband is as a shelter and the face of his wife" these proverbs has confined women into a domestic role that much depends on men. When educational system developed, the finishing school has emerged, and the purpose was to prepared women to be an excellent housewife. This reflects that modern education

program still support the belief that woman's main duty is being an excellent housewife, and woman must not study man's subject, especially, about government or administration. (Warunee Phurisinassith, 2002: 184-185)

Wood (1994: 21) stated that whichever way the society has changed and how the viewpoint about masculinity and femininity has been re-explained, the old set of explanation which was likely to be a basic blueprint still remains. No matter how the society moving, femininity built up from the past has been reproduced through modern technology such as "media" according to Kang (1997 quoted in Wirada Somsawad, 2006: 69) said that "visual imagery as socialising agent may strongly affects our attitude, value, belief and behaviour", so the image of woman and man displayed through media is the process of reproducing an awareness of femininity and masculinity such as the reproduction of femininity through movie.

"The first thing we can find from most of the movies is that the female characters cannot exist on their own selves. 'Femaleness' always needed to be protected by 'other persons' or 'other things', and mostly the woman would live under the shadow of "honour family" usually represented by a large residence (for example, Baan Sai Thong, Red Mansion). In some cases, the woman's guardian appeared substantially such as a forceful father in Khamin kab Poon. Once she became free from the family's nourishment, she flew to the arms of her husband. Even when she became old, she needed to hold on to her children. Moreover, many movies are found that the desire to solve its problem is beyond desire to be fulfilled the hope of the female character. The theme of a story which the conflict is about "one husband with many wives", the story, "Tiwawam", is the most obvious example one. Both of the female characters are good and truly honest, but due to the first wife is incapable to fulfil the role of 'woman' perfectly which refers to the ability to give birth to a child, the husband earns the right to have another wife, and at the end, the movie forces the first wife to suppress her own desire" (Kanchana Kaewthep, 2000: 249-251).

Furthermore, later in the year 2009, there was a movie that achieved high popularity among women audiences named, “Bangkok traffic love story”. The story was about a Chinese-Thai woman in her 30s who was in good condition and well-educated which made her qualified as a general middle-class people, but her problem was when her friends got married one by one when she did not have a lover herself. Therefore, when she found the one she liked, she tried to get him and finally succeeded. We can assume that, this movie achieved high-success due to its target group was well-analysed, that is to say, nowadays, the middle-class people marry late since they spend lots of their time for studying in the university and working in order to build up their economics status. So, there are many of their 30s who have not married. This movie ‘played’ with this group of women because they are large target. Chamreonlak Thanawangnoi (1999: 184-206) discussed about this point that there is belief that Thai movies made for women audiences. Although this belief has not been proved, one thing is certain that the movie makers are men. Women may have parts in the making process, but there are lesser, also, they are likely to be in the positions that require them to follow the instruction of the male director.

Other than the movie, television drama is another channel of reproducing traditional definition of femininity and masculinity, as seen from the research about women’s careers in TV drama conducted by Charin Leurdchiraprasert (1982 quoted in Kanchana Keawthep, 2000: 328-330) found that:

“From 22 female characters, it is found that there are 6 of them who have not got a job, and the numbers of these jobless female characters are 3 times more than of male characters. This is a sign that “career is not as important to women as it is for men”. The analysis about type of career found that careers for women are limited to a few types, mostly are housekeeper the second most are servant, secretary and public relation of a hotel. The researcher notice that in fact, housekeeping and serving are the same kind of works and these two careers for women one of them is unprofitable (housekeeping) and another is disrespectful. When considering deeply about the work of secretary and public relation, it seems just to extend services inside a family to outside. Although, there is

a stereotype of how they put the career for characters in TV drama which based on “male manages, female serves”, but since nowadays, new generation of women have an opportunity to step up the administrative position once preserved for only men, it is impossible to avoid reflecting the real picture in the story. However, still the administrative female characters are 3 times lesser than the male characters. Those female administrators will not be the lead character, but they will be in supportive roles that have no importance for the story. Moreover, instead of being happy in working-life and family, the analysis found that these high-positioned female characters are not happy especially; fail completely with their family-life. This method seems to be the regime “showing bad results one will get when crossing the line” by demonstrating to all the women of what they will get when they go too far”.

As mentioned above, we can see that ideology of femininity and masculinity under the concept of patriarchy still exist and unchanged as well as reproduce it through media in more complex way that even the women themselves cannot feel it. This ideology is the factor of the context that highly affects genders learning in term of how the power of this set of ideology affects the audiences for not to change their viewpoint toward genders since they do not feel that they have enough power to step out of this set of ideology. As the saying of an audience that, “not step out the box, not well enough, still concern about others... surrounding contexts were heavy, incompatible.” In other words, seeing this set of ideology as fairness such as the saying, “let the man lead the work since the woman is not decisive, the man is braver.”

When looking at this phenomenon in dimension of history, we can say that the process of historical making or historical writing in Thai society did not concern about neither genders issue nor females roles included. Craig J. Reynolds gave us example in his articles, *Engendering Thai Historical Writing*, that historical writing regarding the administrative reformation of the year 1932 did not mention the participation of women in that movement. What we knew about the administrative reformation was only that the reformation was caused by a group of people which

definitely, only men involved. This way of historical writing reflected the concept of separating social spheres into public sphere that belonged to men and sphere for women was private sphere. Therefore, political and social reformation was made to be for men (Prisara Saekuay, trans., 1998: 165-187) and this way of historical writing was made for the members of Thai society to learn of both formal and non-formal education, and this was socialisation that history which contained social changes was made by men. This type of phenomenon did not happen in Thai society only, referring to Pranee Wongthet (1996: 3), history of Southeast Asia which mentioned the movements against Colonialism from the west was filled with the story of pride and dignity of men who had fought together when women would be included in the history just as a supportive role.

As the result, we may say that the process of social leaning in historical writing has become a lesson in educational system, value production through media, movie and TV drama. This makes the status and role of femininity remain inferior. Femininity is defined via social construction under patriarchy concept that made this construction become true. When considering this as a context element of genders learning, we may say that this context element has influence on thought and values of individual and this set of values has become hindrance for the change of viewpoint about genders.

Nevertheless, this way of socialisation regarding genders was challenged by women's movements which disincline toward how patriarchy unilaterally decided femininity and masculinity in society. According to Warunee Phurisinsith (1992: 285-200), a group of educated women started to make a demand for reformation in the roles of women and men since the reign of King Rama 5. As appeared in the magazine, "Khulasatri", it was said that the role classification which gave men a leader role and responsibility to earn for the family while women were responsible for serving husband, and how the husband was able to have several wives made women become disadvantageous. Also, there was a request for women to be educated. These requests continued until the reign of King Rama 7 via women's magazine such as Sattrisap and Siam Yuppadee as well as the demand to issue the law of monogamous marriage. Because men having several wives led the former wife and kids to be

abandoned and later put women into hardship in life. Their request at that period, as mentioned by Warunee Phurisinsith (1992: 189-190)

“reflected the need of women to gather together on the basis of same gender that confronted hardship and were abused by men. This kind of feeling mentioned above could not arise just by imitating the western women, there must be some experiences they shared among the group which encourage them to gather in order to solve things they found unfair in term of genders. Even though we cannot say that those women are the majority of the country, but we cannot say either that unfavourable experiences they shared did not exist, at least among a group of Thai women”.

After the administrative reformation of the year 1932, women's organisation was firstly established with the name, “Thai Woman Association of Siam”. Later, several women's organization was established such as the group of women lawyers, the group of nurse, etc. Although, these women's organization were run under government's policy at first, nonetheless they caused benefits for woman such as revision of the law for double register a marriage, and husband's consent for making legal act. Women's movements had continued until the present that when we look at the whole picture of the movements, Amara Phongsaphich (2550: 83) defined these movements as several waves below:

“The first wave of feminism movements was the social movements that requested equality of men and women though law and other regulations revision. The second wave of feminism movements viewed that revising each law one by one could not solve the problem of genders inequality, so they pointed out that not only genders inequality in society but also women were oppressed and exploited. There was a suggestion to bring this up as the political issues and public issues to be solved by all. This new social movement was public movement which related to politic at the same time.

In the third wave of feminism movements, issues concerning men and women became fully political and public issues”.

It is to say that women’s social movements nowadays have come to the point of questioning about femininity and masculinity in a society which is the genders movements not a request for equality for women as in the past. We can see from the role of “The Women’s Health Advocacy Foundation” that creates genders learning through development project and training about sexual and reproductive health on based thinking that sexual and reproductive health is the key of women’s health and the right for sexual and reproductive health is the human’s right for all. The operation of the foundation is on the 3 frameworks including genders, sexuality and right based approach. The foundation believes that driving Thai society into the society which realises that the right of sexual and reproductive health is the basic to quality of life. It must be the drive based on understanding variety in sexualities of people in the society as well as concerning their sexual life is influenced by several believes and values. The most influencing one is the belief and a value relating genders and it is to be considered that variety in sexualities is not unusual. It can be changed through time and life experiences. (Woman’s Health Advocacy Foundation, 2010: 1-5) In addition, there was a start of “Women’s Studies” in graduate study in the year 2000 in Chiangmai University where the study is specific in the linked analysis of social economics politics and cultural issues that emphasised on analysing the power relations of gender, class, ethnicity and seniority. (Faculty of Social Sciences Chiangmai University, 2010: 1-5) Moreover, Thammasat University opened this course in 2001 which aims to create a master student with analysing and criticising skills about social phenomenon from the thought and viewpoint of feminism which lead to changes in sexual roles and power relations reflected through complex economics, politics and cultural problems, and to build up as well as gather new knowledge about women and gender roles in Thai society context. (Faculty of Social Sciences Thammasat University, 2010: 1-5)

Furthermore, there is a group of lesbian with a purpose to create social sphere and identity of love between women, and to seize a chance to define the existence of lesbian. This is to respond to the dominant discourse of sexuality that

sexuality in the dominant discourse is the social construction of gender, and homosexuality is not at all unusual. This movements of homosexuals is “one of the battles from a small group of people weakened by the state from government strategies of “conformity” which in fact, prevent freedom to emerge of things which are different from dominate belief or benefit. (Kritya Achawanijkul & Kanokwan Tarawan, 2000: 86-95)

As mentioned above, we can see that women had responses to giving definition of genders in society, and that process has caused a discourse conflict between dominant discourse and counter discourse. This affected the conflict and negotiation of the thought of individuals in the society on how individuals give meaning to femininity and masculinity, and how individuals who are the audiences of the drama define it must affect the learning of genders.

6.2 Theatre and the audiences, the audiences and the theatre

As mentioned in Chapter 5 that when comparing learning outcomes of all the three theatres, The Vagina Monologues seems to be able to enhance learning better than the other two. It has broadened the audience’s learning boundaries and aroused them to have inner dialogue that could lead to critical self-reflection and transformation. Venus Party, on the contrary, failed to enhance learning. However, different presentation styles applied by each theatre result in different learning outcomes since they demand from the audience differently as analysed in Chapter 4. The analysis can be illustrated as follow.

Table 6.1 The analysis of the demand of the theatre towards the audiences

Theatre	The Vagina Monologues	Sida-Sriram?	Venus Party
Details	Women’s lack of power over their own body results in	Socially constructed idealistic image of	Things that happen to women, which

Table 6.1 The analysis of the demand of the theatre towards the audiences (cont.)

Theatre	The Vagina Monologues	Sida-Sriram?	Venus Party
Details	violence against women.	women is in fact a myth, not reality. Do we persist in holding on to it?	are regarded by society as normal, are in fact abnormal.
Style	Simple Realism, which still pays attention to text.	Postmodernism, which creates a new text by renovating the old one.	Physical theatre which rejects the text.
Demand towards the audience	Not to neglect details about “vagina”. Get emotionally involved with feelings of the characters in Realistic Theatre style.	Compiling collage of a theatre and renovating old perceptions to form a new set of perceptions/ ideology.	Symbolic interpretation and looking beyond usual images to see their abnormality.

The table above shows that in terms of presentation style, The Vagina Monologues should have the least distance from the audience because this theatre was presented based on the Realistic Theatre style, which pays attention to the text. Venus Party, on the contrary, rejected the text while urging the audience to interpret the actors’ symbolic movements and gestures. Thai audience’s unfamiliarity with such presentation method led to the lack of understanding about what the theatre was trying to present. Darunee mentioned that “it was difficult. I admit that I didn’t quite understand the story...I was puzzled. I just learned from the Internet that the theatre

used symbolic movements and gestures, which required the audience's own interpretation." Chutiporn also said "I didn't understand the theatre. It was really abstract and I don't know how it should be interpreted...so what did it talk about? What was it trying to present? Also there was not just one long story. Many sub-stories were included, which made me think how each of the stories was related. This is what confused me." Moreover, Natee mentioned that "primarily you need to interpret what was being presented because it didn't use dialogues. I had to adjust in order to understand because it is not spoken drama. The audience had to pay attention to the performance, the lighting, the colour and the sound settings in which way it aimed to express the mood of the story." All these statements clearly reflect that Venus Party's presentation in a physical theatre style is the main constraint that obstructed the audience from understanding what the theatre was attempting to present.

It can be mentioned that Venus Party's presentation method creates constraint for audience with limited theatrical experience to understand the theatre's key message. However, audience with theatrical experience like Kitti, a drama professor at university, also found the presentation method problematic. It was not because he did not understand what the theatre was trying to present, but because he thought that Venus Party's physical theatre is a constraint. He said:

"What was presented was the outer condition, not the inner one. The presentation might have been limited by the presentation method that had to be in the physical theatre style. Inner condition needs to be presented clearly by using the right presentation method that can persuade the audience with entertainment. The audience need to feel motivated. This theatre presented the outer condition through occupations and behaviours of people in the society. Venus Party discussed these things. We would see the picture..., but when forming a picture, it needs action. The action will create a clearer picture...yet it is just a performance. To get certain details and in-depth messages transferred, text or dialogue is required."

In contrast with Venus Party, Kitti thought that the simplified presentation of *The Vagina Monologues* could make him feel emotionally involved.

“The theatre did not use anything, just telling stories, but made me feel involved. It was so powerful. It was as if I was listening to women’s stories from the angle where they face hardships. I’m thinking about the character who’s a lesbian. While telling story, there were something she didn’t want to talk about, but when she talked about it, I was so moved. I’m thinking that the character was reflecting that the root of problems that occur to women might be the oppression of women. For me, I don’t think the character would say it. It wasn’t a protest by women...there was no such attitude. They only presented that this was something that happened in my life, what do you think after you watched it? Will you let things be the way they are now? The theatre raised questions and we as the audience, need to answer. It’s like the characters didn’t ask for anything, but by doing that, it really hit right through me.”

What Kitti said indicates the theatre’s direction in presenting women’s story. Such direction is not a protest or demand, but it revealed women’s intrinsic status which aroused the audience’s emotional involvement and affect their perspectives. This is different from the way men were condemned in *Venus Party*. Kitti thought that such condemnation would not lead to learning. He said, “Would men accept that they have that kind of behaviours? If you are going to force them like that, it won’t lead to understanding.”

Siriporn’s statement about *The Vagina Monologues* also reflects the theatre’s direction. She said:

“The characters didn’t speak to us directly. They didn’t tell us that they were resisting, but when they told us their life difficulties...firstly, if we think about those difficulties further, we would realise that they were abused. Secondly, to be born with their biological sex, it’s more inferior. We would think about the characters’ problems over and over again.”

Besides *The Vagina Monologues’* simplified realism, which contained some unrealistic components, realistic acting could make the audience understand the

characters' inner conditions. Kitti said, "It touched my inner feeling. I feel more involved with simple story-telling." Likewise Siriporn said:

"Space was in an arena style. Then the characters came out. Lights turned to us, but when they started telling stories, we would forget that unrealistic components existed. The actors were also very professional and could completely convince me. The rhythm that the story was told was so real. This also includes the story selection. I must admit that the author wrote this story for me. The story itself, after I listened to it, I was like...hmmm..."

What Siriporn said that the "story" was written for an audience like her shows that the story can affect the audience's perspective and the story was the one, which

"discussed issues that have never been discussed before. Even women have never thought about it. There was a character that said she was in so much pain, but had to give in to her husband. Why do women always have to be submissive? I really started thinking about it. Then it reflected back on me whether I would allow the same discourse since I was born to determine what I should do."

The theatre's discussions of issues which have never been the topics of discussion and which women have never thought about enabled Siriporn to realise that she had been controlled by gender discourse until she raised the question. Wannapa also thought so. She said:

"This story gets into everyday life and at home that sometimes I don't even think it's oppression that leads to emotional and psychological suffering. It touches issue of femininity more than just saying stop sexual oppression. It's the life at home, some trivial things. It's not about being physically abused by husbands or being raped by anyone, but for them it's

a major issue. I believe there are many people who have experienced these things. What happen to them might be different in details, but developed from the same angle. It makes me questioning what we see more that it's not just about obvious issues like the use of violence, force or being offensive. It's more than that. Oppression occurs at the level where you might not feel the pain. It makes me think harder that this is also true, and so is that story. It supports my existing perspective. When I seriously look at things, I see that these stories are real. Although they seem to be common things that happen to women, women themselves don't even think about them."

Regarding Sida-Srirraam?, even though overall the theatre could not lead to the transformation of gender perspective, Pakorn who was one of the audience had his ideology transformed by learning something that is different from his previous set of ideology. He said:

"Previously I also thought that it's men's duty to take care of women and provide protection. Husbands should take care of their wives. However, after watching the theatre, I realised that in reality there's not only one side. There's also the side where men physically harm women, either intentionally or unintentionally. My previous perspective of women is that they are in between following men and are equal to men. They are neither equal to men nor follow men. However, after watching the theatre I realised that a lot of women are still following men. Initially, I thought men and women are almost equal because at that time there was a campaign to promote gender equality. You would see the word like 'working woman', which means that because women can work outside the house, they are already equal to men. Yet in reality, after watching the theatre, I realise that is not the way it is."

Learning stories that are different from previous set of ideology is the same as how Siriporn and Wannapa learned something that even women themselves

have never thought of before from *The Vagina Monologues*. Hence, the story that challenges the audience's previous set of ideology will influence their learning outcomes. Venus Party's story that most audience think is normal reflects the director's intention for the audience to cross over the normality to the abnormality, which is yet to happen. Waranya said that, "it's like I already knew about it. It's not something that I'd see and be at rage. It's something I normally see and got used to. When I see it, I thought...ah yeah...I saw that, it exists, instead of thinking...wait a minute, why did that happen?" Sadad also agreed with Waranya. He said, "Are these issues still being discussed? I think we've talked about it too much already in this era. Various kinds of media have discussed about it using many different methods."

Apart from the idea that story that this theatre presented has already been widely discussed, Niorn had a contradictory opinion. She thought that despite the issue being widely discussed, solutions for women are still not known. This means that as a woman, she did not learn anything new from the theatre.

"It's like reading the newspapers every day and then you see taxi drivers raping thee passengers again. Women fall into victims again. There's only information, but the news don't really urge you to think how you think about it, what you are going to do about it, how you are going to live your life. The theatre told you problems and said that you need to break through. It's like being hit. It said you need to break through from this problem without encouraging you to think how you are going to do it."

Besides the story, Niorn thought the presentation method is another component that obstructed her learning.

"I'm not sure whether it's because I'm used to realistic presentation style. They should have created the main story that was developed on the main plot and assisted the audience to go through each sub-story before disentangling them so that we could think along. However, they presented one problem here, one problem there, and reflected another problem there, then asked us to break through. I didn't feel involved. The form was

presented clearly. They used clear symbols, but they needed a clear principle with a theme. What happened was like you kept watching theatre and started thinking ‘what is going on?’ I think the theatre was cool, but then what? If the entire story flew in the same direction, it would have been perfect. The theatre needed a form that would have fit well with its content.”

The comparison between *The Vagina Monologues* and *Venus Party* as previously discussed reveals that theatre that has tendency to create better learning is the one that can convince the audience that the story is “real”. This means that the audience believe that what the characters have spoken actually happen in their real lives. The reality then touches the audience’s feelings and thoughts. Their feelings and thoughts are shaken, which leads to the revision and questioning of their previous ideology, beliefs and experiences. In other words, theatre that will create better learning not only have to make the audience understand, but also need to arouse their “feelings” towards what they understand. The feelings will motivate the audience’s thinking.

In terms of story, the story that has never been discussed before can influence the audience’s feelings and perceptions more than the story that is generally known by everyone. Otherwise, if the story is plotted based on what is generally known, it must make the audience feel as if they have never known about it before. For instance, the well-known story of Sida was re-created different in a way that challenged the audience’s previous ideology and could enhance better learning. Moreover, the way masculinity and femininity is discussed should not create a binary opposition between men and women, but should present a comprehensive status of women. The comprehensive discussion will touch the audience’s feelings and thoughts better while binary opposition might lead to rejection by some of the audience.

Realistic theatre presentation, which in this case refers to realistic characters while other components do not necessarily have to be realistic, enables the audience to understand what the theatre is attempting to present better than the presentation that is anti-realism such as in physical theatre. The audience did not understand *Venus Party* because of their unfamiliarity with physical theatre. Although

this kind of theatre might be interesting and spectacular, it could not enhance learning for the audience with limited theatrical experience. In other words, this theatre demanded the audience's understanding more than realistic theatre. Yet, people with extensive theatrical experience who understand what the theatre aimed to present also agreed that physical movements and gestures alone cannot deliver the key message as well as dialogues. Consequently, the presentation of physical theatre limits learning enhancement.

When considering *The Vagina Monologues* as a theatre that enabled the audience to know and feel the reality, the process of how this theatre's story was created also needs to be put into consideration. The story was written based on true stories that happened to women. Eve Ensler, the author, created the story by interviewing approximately two hundred women about their sexual organs, sexual relationships and sexual violence. Although the women who were interviewed are not Thai, the results of the interview reveal that women from all over the world share similar experiences and have secrets they have never revealed to society in the same manner. Accordingly, the story of this theatre is real and has never been discussed before in public sphere. However, once it has been discussed, the story has "awakened" the audience to hear what they have never thought of hearing before and led to their self-reflection and questioning about masculinity and femininity. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data collection process from the subject of the story, which in this case are women, to analyse and synthesise before producing a theatrical story, is the crucial factor that enables theatre to enhance learning.

In addition, the presentation method applied by this theatre created an interaction between the characters and the audience because the story that was presented addressed the audience directly. Hence, the audience were drawn to get involved and as if turned into characters themselves. They listened to the story told by narrative personages and were not just watchers or observers of other people's story that was unrelated to them. This explains why the audience were touched and could thoroughly follow along the characters' thoughts and feelings. Jira, one of the audience who watched this theatre mentioned that the characters in this story "expressed their thoughts directly. I felt as if I was listening to someone who was revealing one's painful experience...I was overwhelmed."

As previously mentioned, collecting information from the subject of the story in order to create a theatrical story is an important factor that allowed The Vagina Monologues to enhance better learning. Sida-Sriram? also went through the same process. The theatre was a research and the story was created based on the research perspective as already discussed in Chapter 4. However, although both theatres were created based on the research process with regards to women and femininity, Sida-Sriram? could not enhance learning as much as The Vagina Monologues did. While The Vagina Monologues could stimulate the audience to have inner dialogues that led to reflection of their own experiences about femininity and masculinity, Sida-Sriram? could only enable them to see femininity from a different angle through understanding Sida's story which was compared with story of women in present society. This might be because Sida-Sriram?'s postmodern presentation could not make some of the audience understand what the theatre was attempting to present. Sadad mentioned that:

“Initially I thought it would be something related with the Thai context because of the theatre's title, but after I watched it was like...whoa...The stage was decorated with beautiful pictures, which I'm not used to. I'm not familiar with this kind of storytelling. I don't understand why the narrator needs to be tired with the chair and had movement with the chair. Women were put in cages. The presentation shocked me and I wondered what it was and what it was for. I was confused because theatres that I used to see were normal ones that told stories, but this one take this out and take that out and it was like...huh?...what? I was trying to connect all the stories together so that they make sense without considering what the theatre was trying to present at the time. As I failed to link the bit and pieces together, I was lost.”

The above statement reveals that theatrical presentation in a collage style, which lacks continuity in terms of the story and the characters and has complicated presentation components, for instance the use of symbolic movement and gestures and so on, is a limitation that prevents the audience from understanding the theatre's key

messages. This is because the audience could not relate different components of the theatre together in order to understand the theatre's conceptualisation. This is different from The Vagina Monologues' presentation which used realistic acting presented through continuous story telling of each character that enabled the audience to follow the story, thoughts and feelings of the characters and led to their understanding and learning. This was reflected in Sadad's statement that:

"I feel that theatres that tell stories can do more in a way that I can observe a character closely, follow it, understand and learn...like I'm watching a film. I can observe what the character does. The situation is more realistic and I feel more involved."

Emotional involvement with the characters and the theatrical story is another significant issue that enables the audience to understand the theatre and will also affect their learning as in the case of the audience who watched The Vagina Monologues. When looking at Sida-Sriram?, apart from the audience's lack of emotional involvement with the characters, the script and the presentation method of this theatre made some of the audience think that the theatre was creating a make-belief while the audience did not feel involved with the stories and the characters. Moreover, the presentation method diminished the characters' humanity as Siriporn mentioned that:

"It asked you questions directly whether it ever occurred to you that women were born as sexual objects or born to be submissive. Look at Sida, for example, she suffered a lot and eventually had to escape. Sida no longer gave in. I feel that the author intentionally force Sida to take decision. The author struck us since the beginning that Sida would need to take a decision. However, during the character's decision making process, we didn't see when the character realised her condition. I also think that the theatre's presentation method was outstanding. The theatre intentionally made us felt that it was experimenting. So stuff was thrown in and I felt that it's a piece of art. (Yet) when watching theatre that was

developed with a clear form, it dehumanise the characters. Sometimes the characters turned into a chorus or something else completely different, which removed their humanity. Then they would say something that would make us feel like they were giving a speech.”

Siriporn said so because she thought that for the audience to be able to learn from a theatre, they must be able to see and understand the characters’ realisation that leads to their decisions to do something. She provided an example of Nora’s character in *A Doll’s House*, who realised that her femininity and her status as a wife led to her being treated as a doll in a beautiful doll’s house. The realisation influenced her decision to leave the house to live her own life. (This theatre motivated the feminist movement among European women to call for their rights as mentioned in the literature review).

However, when comparing the two theatres, it can be seen that both used the characters as “narrators” or used dialogues without contextual situations of what was being presented. In other words, the audience did not see the characters’ actions that would enable them to understand the contexts that influenced the characters’ thoughts and feelings. This raised a question why the audience of *The Vagina Monologues* felt more emotionally involved. The reason might be because of the presentation method that enabled the audience to see that the characters’ inner thoughts and feelings were real and the reality was presented through the narration, which was continuous and related. Therefore, the audience could follow the characters’ thoughts and feelings and were moved. On the contrary, characters in the other theatre did not present inner reality and only had their statements that had no relation with either the characters or the events presented in the theatre. Hence, the audience did not see the characters as real human beings.

Consequently, it can be mentioned that postmodern method that Sida-Sriram? used to present gender issues could not deconstruct the audience from their previous set of ideology as the theatre attempted to. The use of paralleled plot between the story of Sida and that of women in present society as well as the presentation in a collage style have become main constraints that prevent some of the audience to connect the stories together. This means that the theatre’s presentation method is the

main constraint for the audience's understanding and learning. In addition, because the audience did not feel that the characters' dialogues were real, but felt that they were based on the principles regarding equality, they did not feel involved in the story. This is shown in the last part of the theatre's dialogue which sounded as if it was the feminist statement as follows:

“Women these days need to deal with so many things, which are more important than being a good person and serving their husbands. A number of them look for justice, many works to serve other people. They have roles and responsibilities. They know themselves and can be good friends, good wives, and good mothers. They have more than their beauty. They can be friends for life, thinking partner, leaders, and followers. They can be lovers while also need love, loyalty, and expect all those things in return. Women are not stupid. They need protection and can also protect you. What about you? Ask yourself whether you worth enough for women.”

Although The Vagina Monologues could encourage better learning than the other two theatres, it did not successfully lead to the audience's transformation. When analysing from the starting point, we will see that Eve Ensler organised a performance of this theatre in different areas in order to create a dialogue with women in different countries. This action led to an organisation of V-Day or Violence against Women Day. A question why this theatre failed to enhance learning that would lead to a social movement in the Thai society was raised. A possible answer was reflected in the statement of Bhanbhassa Dhuptien, the director of The Vagina Monologues.

“In fact this theatre contained a social agenda. Eve travelled around the world to pass on this agenda. From her point of view, she was communicating with the society, not the theatre goers. For us, we feel that it's a performance. We didn't motivate people as much.”

A critical factor which is a limitation of learning enhancement for a theatre is its highly demanding presentation, for example the complex presentation through a storyline that lacks continuity such as in the case of Sida-Sriram? and the presentation through physical movements and gestures and stage presentation with no dialogues as seen in Venus Party's physical theatre. The presentation methods applied by both theatres rejected plot and conventional theatre's presentation style that contains a protagonist who the audience can follow its thoughts and feelings, a linear storytelling with clear starting and ending point, and a dialogue, with which Thai audience are familiar. Furthermore, postmodern and physical theatres also reject the characters' reality, which is based on the Realistic Theatre style that pays attention to the characters' inner feelings that can touch the audience's feelings. The rejection of reality prevents the audience from feeling involved with the characters' inner reality and feelings. The emotional involvement is significant in motivating Thai audience's thoughts. Besides, the physical theatre's presentation method of using symbolic movements and gestures alone with no dialogues prevents the audience from deeply empathising with the characters' feelings.

Apart from the presentation method, the theatre's attitude towards gender is another significant factor. Regardless of the story, if the theatre presents a binary opposition between men and women, some of the audience will reject the theatre since they feel that it is only declaring feminist statement. In terms of story, the theatre still presents stories that are generally known by the society such as discrimination in workplace, servitude in a couple's life, and so on. These stories no longer encourage the audience to raise questions about gender.

When considering theatre as a learning tool, it means that the particular theatre has been designed to enhance learning. Nonetheless, even though each director aims to enhance learning, for instance, by attempting to motivate a new set of perspective among the audience and transforming their attitudes and perceptions so that they view the phenomenon that happen to women from a new angle, the director still uses theatrical concept that aims to create theatricality to design theatres. A clear example is in cases of postmodern and physical theatres. The directors do not apply the concept of learning process or even the concept of theatre for learning or theatre for change such as Brechtian Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed in their theatrical

design. Hence, various theatres are still only performances and fail to transform the audience's gender perspective.

The discussion above reveals that different theatrical design lead to different learning outcomes for the audience. However, theatrical components that tend to influence the audience's learning can be summarised as follow:

Table 6.2 Theatrical components influencing learning

Theatrical components	Explanation
Details	Present a story that the audience have never thought of before or might occur in the audience's real lives but have been overlooked. This kind of story is provocative and aims to stimulate inner dialogue that would lead to learning. To make this possible, the theatre would need to discuss social issues the way The Vagina Monologues used "politics with regards to a physical body" to set direction of the storyline and conduct an in-depth research from the subject of the story.
Style	Simplified style with realistic characters to encourage emotional involvement from the audience. Thus the performance is presented with realistic acting by highly experienced and professional actors in order to create realism.
Interaction with the audience	The audience are not merely observers of other people's lives like audience of Realistic Theatre, but are drawn to get involved with characters or story presented by the theatre, for instance getting involved as listeners of the characters' stories in The Vagina Monologues.

Table 6.2 Theatrical components influencing learning (cont.)

Theatrical components	Explanation
Reaction towards gender issue	Should not create a binary opposition of sex because some audience might reject it.

However, no matter how much components of a theatre facilitate learning, audience of the same theatre do not achieve the same learning outcomes. Therefore, the audience's different individual factors affect their learning to turn out differently.

Sudatip watched *The Vagina Monologues* at the age of twenty-nine while pursuing her Master's degree in Philosophy. She had much theatrical experience, both theatres conducted by university student and professors and the ones produced by professional theatre groups. She said:

“The *Vagina Monologues* is a theatre that presented different sides concerning women and was really in-depth in terms of story. The narration started from shallow to deep and gradually led us to explore problems that seemed to be trivial in women's daily lives until we reached the root of the problems, which is domination and oppression of women's pristine nature. The domination and oppression devalue women. The theatre attempted to reflect upon the mechanisms that oppress women and women's true capacity. It revealed that if we don't use the male dominant structure to oppress women, women's capacity is not lesser than people from other gender.

The statement clearly indicates that she understood the key message that the theatre attempted to present and the understanding reaches as far as the gender divisions in the power structure that oppresses women. When considering the audience's background, it can be mentioned that the understanding is the outcome of

her education in Philosophy and previous interest in gender issues before she watched the theatre.

“Normally Faculty of Philosophy, in which I am studying, basic knowledge would be mainstream philosophy that philosophers presented a school of thought. I want to know what different ideologies could be. Another reason is because I also have doubts in certain social values regarding men and women, so I tried enrolling in the Feminist course to explore.”

Thus, this theatre could not lead to perspective transformation since she already had existing ideology that complements with the key message of the theatre.

“The Theatre was really good. I can say that its message compliments with my existing perspective. Probably the reason I watched it might be because I already have the same perspective. This might be because I used to study Feminism and Taoism, which focuses on femininity and motherhood. So I don’t feel that the theatre transformed my perspectives. It is more like finding a friend who shares the same perspective.”

Siriporn, a drama professor at university who watched this theatre when she was thirty-one, mentioned that *The Vagina Monologues* had an influence over her perspective.

“It made me think to a certain extent. There was a character who cried out she was in pain, but she had to give in to her husband. Why do women have to give in? I seriously thought about it and it reflected back upon me whether I could allow the same discourse to determine what I should do. The theatre did not talk to us directly. The characters also didn’t tell us that we need to resist, but they told us their painful experiences. If we think their painful experiences over, we would realise that primarily, they

were oppressed and secondly, their biological sex made them more inferior.

She mentioned that her perception is partly because she already had an ideology regarding gender inequality before watching the film. She mentioned that “My perception is already in the same direction as the theatre’s key message. I don’t like being treated violently. I already have that foundation and I am quite against people looking at me as a different sex.” She also experienced domestic violence during childhood where her father abused her own mother. The experience makes her frustrated about gender inequality. Although she already had a perspective against gender inequality, the theatre urged her to think about it at a greater level because “I’ve never know that such action is women being oppressed, abused. This theatre discusses things that have never been discussed before. Even women have never thought about these issues before.” Wannapa, who also works as a drama professor at university like Siripron, watched this theatre when she was twenty-eight. She said that she liked it because it enabled her to get a clearer view regarding violence against women. She thought that such perspective derived because her gender identity is not restricted by the heterosexual discourse created under the patriarchal system. Therefore, she could realise the oppressive power over women easier.

Worawut watched this theatre at the age of twenty-four. He graduated in Science, but is interested in politics, art, literature, and film. He was involved in theatrical activities since his university years. His present work is related to film critics and organising art films. He has extensive theatrical experience. He said that:

“I understood, but I didn’t deeply feel the femininity. I understood several things like the way women are oppressed, what they want to say, what they feel but men like us have never known before...about sex, their desire, and how they want to be treated equally but cannot express it. I understood these issues after watching this theatre.”

Although Worawut learned and understood women’s condition better from watching the theatre, he already had existing ideology regarding masculinity and

femininity in the society. The existing ideology could be a prominent factor that enabled him to understand the theatre.

“Our society thinks that women should behave so they cannot express their thoughts much. Characters in this theatre presented women’s opinions that they would like to express, but cannot do so in probably because they are restricted by the way society think towards femininity and the way women restrict themselves that they need to fit the ideal image of femininity. They think that there must be a line that indicates the scope of femininity. Once they cross the line, the society will see that they don’t behave the way they are expected to be. Deep down inside, women have desire...all women desire to cross this line, but they cannot do so. Other people or men or even themselves draw a line to restrict their behaviours. I had my previous perspective and this theatre allowed me to understand better. Things that I thought about really exist.”

He mentioned that his perception is influenced by his family upbringing that allowed him to have freedom of thought and he learned about masculinity and femininity from his past experience.

“My parents want me to learn how to live my life and can do things myself. I don’t know when it had dawned on me, but I quite understand women and homosexuals. I have many friends from are homosexuals. I understand what they think. It might be because I studied in male school and there were many homosexuals. I got acquainted with them so I know what they think. After that I went to mixed school, so I met people from various genders. I met women and it helped me to understand them.”

Furthermore, he was brought up by a single mother because his father passed away when he was young. Hence, he could understand the femininity through his mother who was the closest person to him. His various involvements in university activities have broadened his perspective and perceptions. Nonetheless, his

understanding in masculinity and femininity as well as in the key message that the theatre was trying to portray did not lead to his transformation of gender perspective and behaviour. This is because the “society” has socialised masculinity and femininity in a way that makes men dominant over women and he is no exception. He mentioned that “although I feel that I am very open, but there is still a frame that limits my action. I still want to be macho and present my masculinity.”

Jira is another audience who watched the theatre when he was thirty-five. He graduated in Linguistics and Foreign Literatures. He works as a translator and is interested in literature, films, and theatre. He said “I really love this theatre. It is very heart-wrenching, particularly in the third and fourth stories. I was really moved and can now understand lesbians better. Now I understand the feelings of abused women.” However, the impression and the understanding did not lead to perspective transformation because:

“I don’t abuse women or men so I don’t think the theatre transformed my perspective. I already thought that this kind of behaviour (sexual abuse) is bad. I already thought that lesbians are normal and that women should be able to express their sexual desires.”

Kitti works as a drama professor at a university and is open about his gender identity as a homosexual. He watched this theatre at the age of thirty. He mentioned that this theatre...

“touched so many people. I saw the narrators’ lives and how they were abused. I saw inside their lives. The characters just sat down and told us stories, but it was so powerful. I got to listen to women’s hardships. There were things they didn’t want to talk about, but after they talked about them, I was really moved. It reminded me of past experiences when Dad hit Mum, but Mum didn’t leave. This popped up in my thought. There’s certain angle like the one about sexual abuse...when a person is severely abused up to the point where one chooses to alternate one’s own gender. I

feel that this could change a woman's life. If the incident didn't take place, the character might have grown up differently. This really struck me."

This theatre encouraged his self-reflection about past domestic violence and self-identification of his gender identity. In the theatre, the female character was abused by the male character which resulted in her development of gender identity as a lesbian. This made him reflect upon his own gender identity as a homosexual. His gender identity was influenced by past experience. This explains why he said, "it hit right through me". The past experience might refer to his mother being abused by his father, which made him empathised with women's subordinate status. Then, the ideology aroused him to reflect upon past gender experiences.

Although all of the audience watched the same theatre, their learning outcomes or reactions towards the theatre are both the same and different. Siriporn and Wannapa who learned from the theatre in similar way had the same and different backgrounds. They both work as theatre lecturers and had extensive theatrical experiences, but have different individual components in terms of gender and sexuality. Wannapa is open about herself being a lesbian while Siriporn is straight and married to a man. However, Siriporn feels oppressed about gender inequality which she has experienced during childhood seeing her mother being abused by her own father. Even though Kitti has different biological sex from Siriporn, he also experienced sexual violence. Thus he felt emotionally involved, which led to critical analysis and review of his past experience of domestic violence that his father did against his mother. He also questioned why his mother did not leave his father and analysed his own gender.

Differences regarding the audience's learning outcomes can be seen clearly in Sudatip's case. While Siriporn and Wannapa experienced perspective transformation, Sudatip who had previous theatrical experiences and shares the same sex as Siriporn and Wannapa did not have her perspective transformed. This is because key messages presented by the theatre were not different from her existing gender perspective. Jira, who also had extensive theatrical experience felt emotionally involved with the character's story, but did not have his perspective transformed. This

is because he did not agree with gender disparity even before watching the play. However, Worawut who also had much theatrical experience and grew up with open ideology including that regarding gender, thought that the value system and socialisation had influenced in forming part of his mainstream male identity. These factors helped him understand femininity better without leading to perspective transformation. This is partly because he understood the social process that determines women's subordinate status before watching the play.

While *The Vagina Monologues* successfully enhanced Siriporn's learning, she mentioned that *Sida-Sriram?* "does not present new issue...if you ask whether it has any impact upon me, I would say that I don't feel it." The statement shows that different theatres cause different impacts upon the same audience. This means that different theatre presentation methods clearly affect learning differently.

Apart from Siriporn, Charuwan who is also an acting coach is another audience who watched *Sida-Sriram?* when she was thirty-three. She mentioned that the theatre could not transform her perspective.

"I don't feel that I was transformed. I have felt for a long time that men and women or even the homosexuals are equal. We are not different. It's only that there's certain line that has long been created by our society and our parents telling us what we can or cannot do. Men are allowed to do more things, but when I ask myself I feel that men and women are all equal. We can do everything equally."

Charuwan used to study about gender issues, but she mentioned that previous gender learning did not have much influence on her perspective about the issue. She asserted that her gender perspective that men and women are equal is a result of her family upbringing.

"My Dad worked in a different province so I lived with Mum when I was in primary school. I only met Dad once or twice. Mostly I lived with my Mum so I saw her working and my Dad was also working. Both of them set me an example. Mum didn't just wait for support. She told me that

when I was little, she didn't work, but once I grew up she wanted me to attend good school so she started working. I saw an example. Dad worked as a government officer so he received low salary. Mum operated private business so her salary was high. Sometimes Dad's friend had to borrow Mum's money so I felt that my Mum was really cool. While Dad got low salary, but he taught me that I should be proud of his work as a government official. I'm proud of both my Dad and Mum so I don't feel that they are any different."

Thus, this theatre did not create learning that could lead to her transformation of gender perspective because she already perceived that men and women are not different before she watched the theatre. On the contrary, Dararat who watched *Sida-Sriram*? when she was twenty-three and just graduated Bachelor's degree in Theatre mentioned that:

"I remember that there was not absolute conclusion that after watching one must feel that women are important or this is the way women think. It was like an open end that allowed you to think over from different perspectives. After watching the theatre, I suddenly realised that his kind of thing exists. However it affected the audience differently. Personally, at that time I felt that it was rather odd to discuss about the present, about karaoke, and women's beauty contests, but link with *Sida*. It was quite strange and I felt...hmm...so it could be done. In conclusion, regardless of the period, whether in the book or anywhere in the world, similar situation exists. I think it's good. It would be nice if the characters would speak. It's like I learned something new that perhaps I didn't even think about or might have overlooked it."

The above statement reflects that this theatre encouraged the audience to learn another side of women through *Sida*'s character. However, this theatre could not transform her perspective about gender, but aroused her to think about other sides that

she had never thought about before. The reason that her gender perspective was not transformed after watching the play might be because of her existing perspective that women and men are not different, as she had previously mentioned.

“I studied theatre so I don’t feel that women are inferior to men. When was studying acting, we were required to jump, jump on the other person, embrace, and the lecturer would say that there is no sex in theatre because we need to share. We need to cross over the line that separate men and women. We need to see that everyone is another human being just like us. Only our muscles are different. This has given me a clear picture and allows me to look at more people. I used to be afraid of men because I studied in girl school. My mouth shook when I talked to boys or men. However, after I enrolled in acting course, I started to listen and learn to accept other people’s perspectives.”

In addition, the reason that her gender perspective was not transformed after watching the theatre might be because she already understood that the existing gender structure in Thai society determines the roles of men and women and women’s practice of everyday life makes it possible for them to live under the structure.

“The Thai social identity still exists. Eventually, women need to play dumb so that men can take care of them. They feel that men lose their pride because they feel that they cannot take care of their lovers. I also feel that I’m smart up to a certain level, but sometimes I need to pretend that I’m dumb. There was one part in the play that talked about women’s appearance and beauty, which I think is true. Women who watched the play laughed. Yet we still have to do it because it is a way that would allow us to be accepted by men.”

Siriporn, Charuwan and Dararat are all women who have many theatrical experiences, but they had different learning from the same theatre. This is because there are other individual factors that influenced their learning differently. However,

although the three of them learned something from the theatre, overall their gender perspectives were not transformed. On the contrary, Pakorn who watched this theatre while he was a university student with no previous theatrical experience had his gender perspective transformed after watching this theatre. This theatre allowed him to see different side of women's stories and he felt emotionally involved with the stories.

“Since the very beginning when women were abused...since the underground scene. I was so depressed that I almost cried. I felt like everything happened to women. It's something I've heard of before, but the theatre made us look at the real picture and made me depressed. I feel that I want to do something good for women starting from people who are close to me like people in my family. I don't just start by doing something major, just that I need to respect women more. The easiest start is with Mum. After watching it, it reflected that Sida could represent our mothers.”

What is interesting is that while this theatre could not transform gender perspective of other audience, it successfully did so to Pakorn. Considering Pakorn's childhood experience living with a single mother because his father passed away when he was around sixteen or seventeen years old, it is possible that Pakorn's sensitivity towards and empathy with what happened to women is a result of close relationship with his mother. Hence, he used the same feeling to compare his mother with other women. He mentioned that “after the theatre ended, I felt as if being slapped and started questioning what I did to women. Although what I did might be trivial, women represent motherhood...they share the same sex as our mothers.” Consequently, this theatre could transform his gender perspective despite being his first theatre.

On the contrary, Sadad, who watched this theatre while being a university student with little theatrical experience gained from watching university student's theatre, did not experience perspective transformation. This is partly because he did not understand what the theatre was attempting to present, which could reflect that limited theatrical experience obstructed his comprehension of theatre with complicated presentation style. He said:

“why was the narrator tied with the chair? Why did the narrator have moment with the chair? Women were put in cages. That scene made me shocked. I wondered what it was and what it was for. I was puzzled. Theatres I used to watch were normal storytelling, but this theatre cut this bit and pieces out and I felt...huh? What? I was trying to link the bit and pieces together so that it made sense without paying attention to what it was trying to present. Because I tried to link everything together, I was lost.”

The above statement indicates that presentation style of the theatre obstructed Sadad from learning details and critical issues that the theatre attempted to present. Audience with limited experience regarding different theatrical presentation styles might experience difficulty in understanding theatres that are complicated or have different presentation styles from conventional theatre, with which most Thai audience are familiar. The audience's incomprehension of theatre as a result of limited or the lack of theatrical experience can be seen from Venus Party's audience. Venus Party was presented in a physical theatre style. Darunee watched this theatre while she was a second year university student when she had no previous theatrical experience. She mentioned that:

“it was difficult. I admit that I don't quite understand. When I came out of the theatre, I said to my friend ‘Oi! It's not like Ballang Mek (Cloud Throne the musical).’ I was confused. I just learned from the Internet that it used movements and gestures to suggest what it was trying to present. The audience need to interpret those movements and gestures themselves.”

Wittaya is also a second year university student who has no theatrical experience. He mentioned about the presentation style of this theatre that:

“I used to think that theatre needs to be presented in a Disney style, narrative style, or the style normally applied by Faculty of Architecture. I

thought if we could understand some part of it, we would be able to move on from there and think further. We would get the overall picture. However, if we fail to do that, we would get confused.” Chutiporn who was from the same university as Wittaya and just saw theatre for the first time mentioned that “I didn’t quite understand. It was so abstract. I don’t know how it should be interpreted. What was it trying to present? What did it mean? It wasn’t just one long story with an ending, it had sub-stories. I tried to figure out how each of the stories was related so I got confused.”

Apart from theatrical experience, Sadad also mentioned that the audience’s life experience which is related to the issues that the theatre was trying to present could also affect learning.

“Sometimes the theatre is good but I don’t feel it. Sometimes the theatre is not spectacular, just a normal storytelling, but it is really fun. The story might be compared with what we are experiencing in real life or during this moment, we might be in the same situation like the characters. I might be distant from women’s feelings. The story might not fit my life experience.”

Life experience that Sadad mentioned might also include individual’s gender socialisation such as his experience of Muslim gender socialisation. He mentioned about this after he learned about gender issues from theatre that:

“I don’t know what gender means. This word was not listed in my brain cell. I just learned about it when I took my Master’s. After I studied it, I realised that it is contradictory with my Muslim perspective and ideology because gender role is constructed by tradition, gender, genetics and physiology. When I first learned that this perspective exists, I also believed in it, but I didn’t dare being opposed to my religious principles. Lately, I tried not to think about it much. I believe that there are facts in

Muslim that we believe is real, we learn about it and didn't reject it (gender perspective as presented by scholars). They can think whichever way they want to and something we feel like...ah...so this is how they see it, but I personally believe that Islam has answers for everything. Sometimes we just haven't searched for the answer, but we believe that Islam will definitely provide good answers for us when we start searching for them."

The above statement reflects that gender socialisation influences on individuals' gender learning. Similarly, Wittaya felt that the mainstream socialisation of masculinity and femininity still has an influence over him because even though he realised male dominance within the society as it was stated that "we learned history that was written by men", he thought:

"Society is like what was presented in the theatre, but I feel that men should be leader for some activities because women are more emotional compared to men, so they use emotion more. Men should be leader when it comes to work. Women are not decisive enough. Men have more leadership. They are more decisive. However, in terms of love life, I think both are equal and should listen to each other."

It can be said that the social construction of masculinity and femininity in gender mainstreaming is the main factor that made the audience, particularly male audience, learned about gender issues. However, some male audience who experienced different gender learning previously, tend to learn more about gender issue. For instance, although Venus Party could not influence upon perspectives of the majority of the audience, Nut thought that:

"I saw another angle that I hardly knew about issues related to women such as women and household work, women and a couple's life, and women and their body and appearance. It was interesting. When they

presented in a concrete picture, I came to realise that women can protect themselves. We can fight when it comes to work and when women are oppressed, we can counterbalance the oppressing power.”

Although this theatre did not cause any impacts on other audience, it could arouse Nut’s critical analysis about the issue mentioned above. Nut thought that it was because of his previous learning about issues concerning gender and women. He said:

“I’m interested in feminism. I used to take a course. During my final year at university, I studied Feminist Literatures. Primarily I saw women as mothers. To be good mothers, women need to love her children, take care of her children or they need to fit the ideology of femininity. Then I learned that they were discourses determined by patriarchal society. The lecturer mentioned that women probably do not want to be fit in those roles.”

When comparing Nut and Sadad, it is obvious that previous learning about gender issues, which is not the mainstream one, allows the audience to learn more compared to those who have been influenced by gender mainstreaming. However, Kittti who has previously learned about gender like Nut and experienced perspective transformation after watching *The Vagina Monologues*, viewed *Venus Party* completely different from Nut. He thought that the theatrical presentation style was the main learning constraint as follow:

“The theatre might have been restricted by the presentation which had to be presented in a physical theatre style. It needs to be presented clearly by using the right presentation method that can persuade the audience. The audience need to feel motivated and entertained. This theatre presented the outer condition through occupations and behaviours of people in the society. *Venus Party* discussed these things. We would see the picture...It needs action to connect all the pictures together. The action will create a clearer picture. Because they believe that they need to make the audience

understand the key message of the theatre, they could only perform to show the message. However, text or dialogue is required to deliver certain details and in-depth messages.”

Similarly, Jira was impressed and moved by *The Vagina Monologues*, but he could not transform after watching *Venus Party*. He mentioned that “*Venus Party* made me realise other people’s problems, but I’m not sure what I need to do in terms of self-improvement and how to do, or whether I need do anything at all.”

From all of the above mentioned, it can be concluded that Theatre Factor and Audience Factor are closely connected in a complex and inseparable way. This means that a static pattern regarding which Theatre Factor and Audience Factor would lead to learning about gender issues from theatre cannot be indicated. For example, it cannot be clearly identified that people with less theatrical experience will learn less compared to those with more experience. Sadad who had little theatrical experience could not understand *Sida-Sriram?* while Pakorn who had no theatrical experience could learn about gender issues from the same theatre. Siriporn who had more theatrical experience compared to the two audience mentioned that this theatre did not present anything new. This shows that different audience perceive different learning outcomes from the same theatre. However, the same Siriporn had a perspective transformation after watching *The Vagina Monologues*. This indicates that different theatres cause different effects on the same audience. It can also be mentioned that Siriporn’s individual factor such as extensive theatrical experience, existing perception against gender inequality, and so on led to her learning from *The Vagina Monologues*. However this does not guarantee that she would learn from other theatres as well. This indicates that the interaction between Theatre Factor and specific identity of an individual affects learning outcomes. For example, various factors of *Sida-Sriram?* that enhanced Pakorn’s learning cannot be used as standard indicators to guarantee that other audience will achieve the same learning outcomes. Similarly, various factors of *The Vagina Monologues*, which tended to enhance better learning compared to other theatres, led to different learning outcomes among the audience. This is because each audience has different individual factors. Therefore, it can be stated that the interaction between theatre factor and individual factor is non-linear and complex.

Moreover, individual factor with regards to gender perspective is also inseparably related to gender socialisation, which is a contextual factor. For instance, Sadad explained about masculinity and femininity based on the Islamic perception, which determines his gender perspective and is difficult to transform. Although he learned about gender issues from his post-graduate study, this new set of knowledge contradicts with the religious explanation. Sadad explained to himself that Muslim has answers for everything. This indicates that his gender perspective remained the same. On the contrary, Pakorn, who primarily understood that men and women in the society are already equal before watching the theatre, came to realise that gender roles of men and women in the society are different from his former understanding. This led to his perspective about gender equality being transformed possibly because he was not closely attached to his former explanation or understanding. Charuwan thought men and women are not different because her mother prominently supported her family finance. Thus, she was brought up with the perspective that men and women are equal, which should have led to similar perspective transformation as Pakorn after they finished watching the same theatre. However, what she perceived from the same theatre as Pakorn did not lead to perspective transformation. She only learned the other side of Sida's life. This indicates that Charuwan's and Pakorn's perceptions regarding gender equality are different. Charuwan learned about gender equality from her childhood experience in the family while Pakorn understood about gender equality from social presentation of working women. Hence, their perceptions and beliefs about gender equality are different, which could have influenced in the two audience perceiving different learning outcomes.

Siriporn mentioned that she felt discontented when anyone regarded women as a person from different sex because human beings from both sexes should be treated the same way. Her perspective might be resulted from past experience of domestic violence when her mother was abused by her own father. However, Kittti who also experienced domestic violence did not have the same discontentment if anyone would view women as subordinate to men. It is possible that Siriporn and Kittti's different perception might be related to their biological sexes. Siriporn is a woman and could understand and empathize better with her abused mother while Kittti is a man and might have not identified his own feeling to that of his mother who was

abused the way Siriporn did. Nonetheless, Kitti learned that gender is the social construction of masculinity and femininity after his work became involved with sex education and gender.

An individual's perspective and standpoint regarding gender issues is complex and the complexity is the result of a social construction. Hence, socio-cultural context influences directly upon an individual's perspective. The audience's individual gender perspective is resulted from their individual experience and social construction, which leads to each audience having different perspective and perception about gender issues. Thus, when they watch either the same or different theatres that present gender issues, the interaction between the theatres and the audience is different and result in different learning outcomes. The different learning outcomes are also resulted from the differences between each theatre.

When considering the age and educational background of the audience, it cannot be clearly concluded whether older or younger audience will learn more about gender issues from theatre. A twenty years old university student who watched *Venus Party* did not have any ideological transformation whereas Pakorn, a university student in the same age group who watched *Sida-Sriram?*, experienced major ideological transformation. Furthermore, when comparing Pakorn with Jira, a thirty-five years old audience who watched *The Vagina Monologues* and much older than Pakorn did not learn anything new from the theatre. Similarly in terms of educational background, it cannot be concluded whether the audience with higher educational will perceive better learning. For example, Pakorn, an undergraduate student learned more from his attendance in theatrical performance than Sudatip, a post-graduate student. However, the audience's age and educational level cannot be separately analysed from other components because all of the components together form an individual. Likewise, the audience component or factor cannot be separated from theatrical factor since they are elaborately intertwined as previously discussed.

What makes the research about the interconnection between different factors that affect learning interesting is the learning tool. Regardless of how well a learning tool is designed, it cannot create the same learning outcomes in different learners. Because each learner has distinct individual factors, the interaction between each learner and learning tools are consequently different and result in different

learning outcomes. An example is when audience of the same theatre perceive different learning outcomes. Thus, it can be concluded that in any learning process, paying attention to learning tools alone cannot guarantee that the learning outcomes will turn out as planned unless learners' different individual factors are considered in the learning process.

CHAPTER VII

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In chapter 5 and chapter 6, the research results were presented according to the research purposes. In this chapter, the research results will be discussed as well as making a proposal about guidelines for the use of theatre to create gender learning, and learning in general.

7.1 The research results

There are two objectives of this research: 1) to study the role of theatre in bringing about gender learning; and 2) to study the factors and conditions which related to gender learning through theatre. Therefore, the conclusion of the research results is made according to these objectives.

7.1.1 Role of theatre in bringing about gender learning

Uthai Dulyakasem (2002: 199) stated that learning is not only about reception when persons take in information and knowledge from various sources, and not only about comprehension when persons interpret meaning and create relationship among information received from various sources of knowledge in a level of logical explanation, but the learning is also about transformation of attitude, value, thinking process and behaviours. Considering the results of learning from audiences of the three performances, performance with gender issue has created learning in various features. In general, theatre can create gender learning at the level of reception, that is, most audiences were informed from the performances about problems that happen with women in Thai society, as they said that ‘they’re already aware of the problems, the problems are not new’. In addition, the audiences also see things that happen with women in other aspects they have never seen before, as they said that they have ‘new viewpoint from seeing another side of women’s. However, the performance cannot

raise awareness of most audiences to a level of comprehension that reflects through their feeling as 'dissatisfied, then what to do next'. This group of audiences view that performance only presents the problem to the audiences' acknowledgement, but cannot link them to such problems of women and the sexual power construction in society that defines destination of women which will lead to the understanding of gender. This excludes the fact that there are still another group of audiences which are not sure about what the performance wants to tell them.

However, it cannot be said that theatre is unable to make the audiences learn at the level of comprehension as there is another group of audiences that question themselves and link what appeared in the performance to the socialisation that makes this group of audience viewing gender in one way. Considering in general, this group of audiences is just a minority, when most audiences have learned at the level of reception. And when considering the role of theatre and gender learning in accordance to the transformative learning theory, it can be said theatre is unable to create a firm inner dialogue which enough for the audiences to reach the critical self-reflection on their sources of their thinking and beliefs about masculinity and femininity. In addition, theatre cannot make the audiences questioning themselves whether the problems that happened with women in the performance is generally recognised as criticising and questioning on the thinking and belief of audiences are important for the transformation of gender perspective.

In addition, each performance creates learning differently, that is, The Vagina Monologues has expanded the boundary of gender dimension reception of the audiences which resulting in the creation of inner dialogue between one's original experiences and those gained from watching performance. Also, the experiences will be linked to the gender issue in the dimension of social structure which is the start of critical self-reflection that will lead to transformative learning. However, most audiences of this performance have not transformed their attitude and behaviour toward gender as most of them have original based thinking that is not much different from what the performance presents. Therefore, it can be said that this performance has an impact on the audiences at the level of comprehension since they can link what they gained from the performance to what they already knew. The performance called Srida-Sriram? has resulted in giving the audiences a new perspective of gender, but

not leading them to the critical self-reflection as for the audiences of The Vagina Monologues, this performance therefore impacts the audiences in the level of reception. For the 'Venus Party', it did not create a new set of reception for the audiences, which is the first step of learning process. It can be said that the 'Venus Party' is unlikely to create gender learning for the audiences.

Though the 'Vagina Monologues' can create learning in the level of comprehension, and some audiences have questioned their original thinking and beliefs, and the Sida-Sriram? has resulted in creating new gender perception, the 'Venus Party' cannot create perception to the audiences. Considering in general, performance can create gender learning at the level of reception.

7.1.2 Factors and conditions related to gender learning through performance

As mentioned in chapter 6 that factors affecting gender learning including performance factor, individual audience factor, and social and cultural context factor which having an impact on opinion and standpoint about gender of each individual. Gender learning of individual through performance has arisen from complicated interaction of the three groups of factors, and as concluded in the previous topic that performance can create gender learning at the level of reception, this topic will conclude that which factors and conditions contribute to the gender learning at the level of reception from performance.

For the factors related to the theatre, the performance has not presented a story that challenges existing gender awareness or gender perspective of the audiences such as the need to have beautiful body to be acceptable, problems in married life, sexual harassment, etc, which were already recognised in their daily life, resulting in audiences not questioning on what they knew from the performance. However, the stories that audiences already get used to may cause the audience to question if the performance can be presented differently so that they will look at it from a different point of view. Performance hasn't taken audiences to that level due to unfamiliar style of presentation, and that is a hindrance to story perception and understanding, including modern style of presentation and physical theatre, which the audiences are not used to. In addition, this kind of performance presentation demands strong

experiences of audiences to recognise and understand. Therefore, audiences with less experience will have a limited understanding. This kind of performance presentation cannot make audiences sense and feel about reality of the players for their further thinking. This therefore results in only reception level.

Besides the factors related to the theatre, there's also the factor of individual audiences that is relevant to the gender learning through performance. However, the factor or component of individual audiences such as existing gender perspective or learning, experiences in performance, education, gender, age, etc, of each individual audience; all have complicated relationship that it cannot be clearly identified which components or factors have direct impact on learning. Individuality of the audience also interacts differently with components or factors of performance. There is a relationship between gender perspective, which is individual factor, and socialisation of gender which is contextual factor. Therefore, each of the factors complicatedly interact with one another in the gender learning through performance, that is, the relationship between each factor and learning result is not linear, however, the factors interact the same way as interaction between context and audience factors. When audience watches performance with gender issue, whether it is the same or different performance, interaction between audience and performance will be different. This has resulted differently in learning, and those differences are a result of a difference in each of the performance. Therefore, each learning factor is not independent.

7.2 Discussion of the research results

Literature review, both in the part of learning process and performance, creates a conceptual framework as follows:

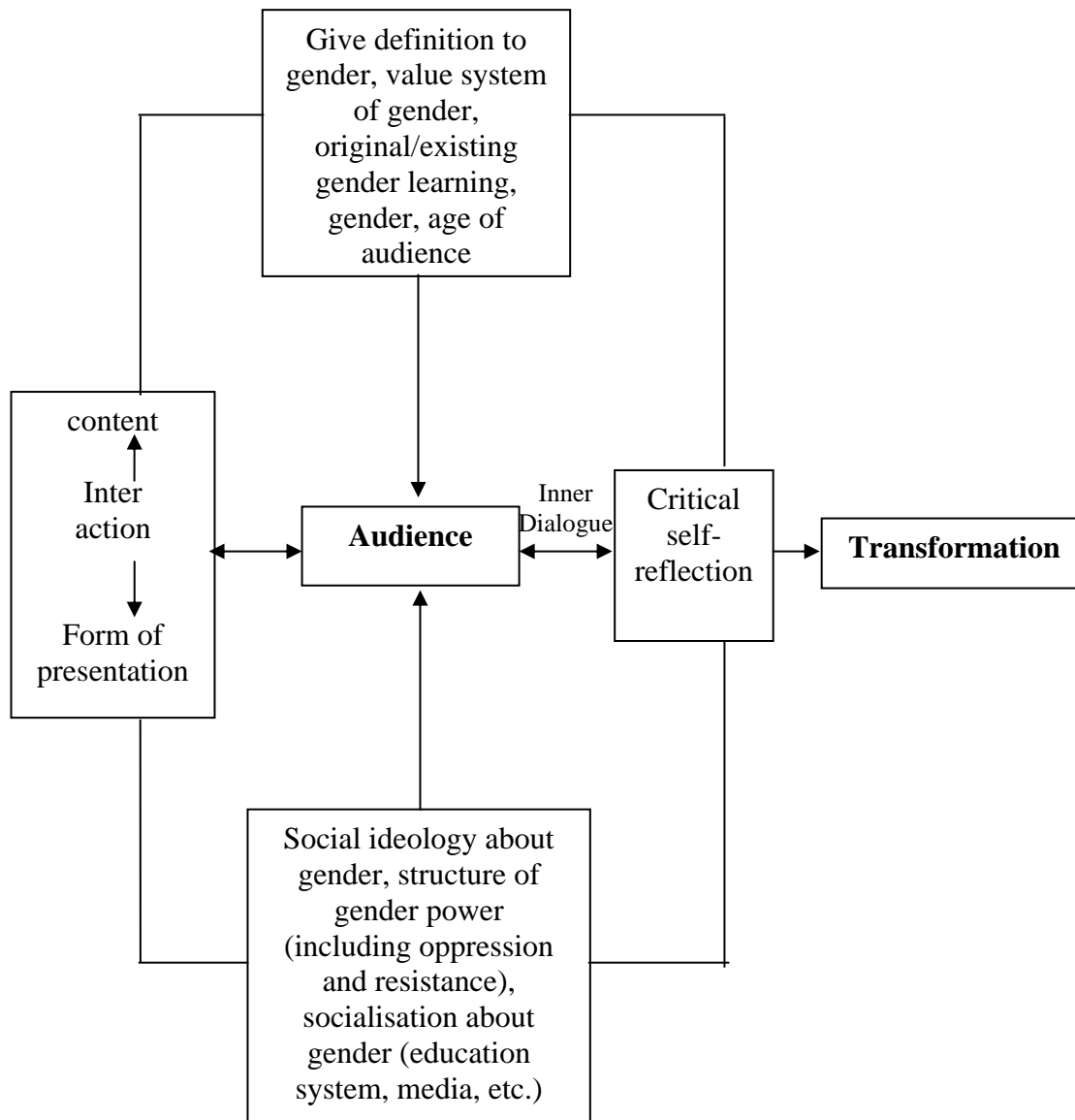


Figure 7.1 Conceptual framework for discussion

This conceptual framework can be explained that transformation learning consists of 3 components: firstly, the performance with the interaction between its characters and presentation form, secondly, individual factor which is the audience and lastly, social context involving gender. By which these three factors do not affect the linear learning of audiences but will show the result through interaction between each other as well as that inner dialogue, then produce the critical self-reflection to original beliefs of gender, and regard them as a cause of problems. Therefore, audiences will change accordingly. If they have not shown any critical self-reflection, they may perceive only what the performance is presenting or may have a clearer comprehension but no changes have taken place.

The result of the study implies that gender learning through performance occurs from the interaction of these 3 factors as prescribed in the conceptual framework of the study. However, the result has clearly demonstrated that the interaction of the mentioned factors is more complex than indicating how any single factor has the direct impact on the study result as seen from the audiences watching the same performance. They are learning differently which reflects individuality of audiences who have different details and different interactions or even with the audiences similarly learning from the same performance may comprise different factors as well as one individual watching more than one performance, there can be different interaction to different performance. Thus, there is no any single factor of performance and audiences can be specified as directly affecting the learning of audiences.

Nonetheless, no single attribute is indicated that it has resulting in the audiences' learning, but there still are many points to be discussed further. Firstly, the use of performance as a learning tool, that is, the performance will be designed for learning. However, the director of each performance might have the objective of creating learning process like inspiring audiences to set a new point of views and see the phenomena happening to woman with new perspectives. In designing performance, a director still adheres to the concept of theatricality as seen in the postmodern performance and physical theatre designing. The director has not yet applied the concept of learning process in the design of performance. Consequently,

all performances remain just as a performance that has not created any gender perspectives transformation to audiences.

Uthai Dulyakasem (2005: 130) stated that good learning process must emphasise on the participation, horizontal relation, interaction and integration of problem consideration. When these factors were applied in speculating performance as a learning tool, it is said that performances have limitation of building learning process due to the design of performance does not cover the 4 dimensions. What performance can do is to create interactions between audiences and performance to which each performance can induce audience interactions in different ways. For example, *The Vagina Monologues* involves the audience in the performance as the listener of its character directly, while *Sida-Sri Ram?* (Thai performance) makes interaction to the audience through questions for audiences to think about. These types of interactions are taken into account as creating audience's participation. However, this participation may differ from the involvement in designing learning process since performance has been made by the director. This participation of audiences has not been regarded as the full participation and the design without audience involvement may cause the consideration of performance- audience relation not to be horizontal but as a recipient and so on. Therefore, it is probably mentioned that one factor affecting performance's creation of learning process is that the performance itself lacks the factors facilitating good learning, that is, the limit of the performance.

However, the past literature review indicates that performance can be designed to compose of the 4 mentioned factors. For instance, "Theatre of the Oppressed" where the director analyses all aspects of problems prior to designing performance that is open-ended in which the audience can participate in assigning story of the performance leading to the solution. This reflects the horizontal relation and interaction between performance and audience. "Theatre of the Oppressed" can be able to create the learning process in the dimension of conceptual and behavioral changes respectively. Though, the performance using the same concept as "Theatre of the Oppressed" may better induce the gender learning, this application is not the indicator that audiences will induce their perspective of gender. This is because the study result has demonstrated several other factors involved in the complex interactions in learning process.

In addition, the literature review has obviously shown that social situation relevant to things the performance is going to convey, has an impact on learning. On the other hand, if what is going to present the responds to social context at a moment of time, the performance can then initiate the learning process or become part of social learning as seen in the success of the performance aiming at ousting the former Filipino president, Ferdinand Marcos and so on. This is because at that time Filipinos were frustrated to his dictatorship and the performance has visualized that dictatorship together with the public movement to expel him. This performance then represented the role of creating learning and changing accordingly. The surrounding factor or social context reinforce the role of performance or simply say, it is so due to its positioning itself as one component of the social movement. Similarly, The Vagina Monologues can initiate the learning process in many countries until the day against violence in woman is established due to its role as the pure performance but the performance itself is the movement as Ensler, the writer and director, has presented this performance in many countries to arouse the social interactions.

Looking back to the performance inducing the gender learning in Thai society, it is aware that it is only role as perceptive creation. This is because the performance is passive. That is, its role as a display in the theatre awaiting the walk-in audience. In case The Vagina Monologues can initiate the learning and changing in many countries but cannot do the same thing in our society. Considering the target group of audiences in Thai society the majority are the specific group whose interest is in performance (theatre goers) like performance instructor and university students whose perception on masculinity and effeminacy are not equal in our society. When they come to watch the performance then they do not feel that it can present such inequality in different point of views, the performance, consequently, cannot induce any changess in learning of this group and that the performance is passive with the specific target group making it limited in accessing the majority of general population in society.

Besides, social context relating to gender at the time (timing) the performance is presenting has not facilitated the learning of audience at that period. That is, our society may not recognise gender inequality (gender imbalance) is one of the social injustices, that is not in a crisis or simply seen as a normal state of the

society. One obvious instance is the event occurring in 2004 that Mrs. Rabiebrat Pongpanit, a senator of Khon Khaen province (at that time position) has not been allowed going to worship the pagodas at Doi Suthep and Doi Tung with the reason that she is a woman. Neither do other women. She recognised that such practice was the form of discrimination, injustice to woman and default to the Article 30 of the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand. When the senate submitted the letter of complaint to the Bureau of National Buddhism for considerations. The answer of not allowing women to get close to the pagodas was the “belief” that woman and her dirty wares like lingerie, will cause the magic contained in the pagodas to decline and “tradition” that the Lanna ancestors have inherited as worship for outsiders to follow. Apart from that explanation, the severe impact in this case was the interaction of Northern people aggressively responding to her as a violator who showed disrespect to their worshipping places, for example, the protest and debate at Phra That Haripunchai Temple, Lumpun province on 11 July 2004 and the prohibition of Rabiebrat accessing Chiang Rai including the damnation of salt and chilli’s burning in Chiang Mai to reprobate her. Finally, the Woman Affairs, Youth and Elderly Commission Board of the Senate and she had to apologize the Northern people. However, there still was an impeachment to remove her from the senate.

Certainly, her practice is risky to be responded from her defiant stance to the public with long cultured belief as well as the right protection action solely under the Constitution regardless of locality. This severe response to Mrs. Rabiebrat reflects the acceptance with the expression that dirty women cannot get close to the pagodas is justly enough. This reflects the fact that woman inferior to man in Thai society “True” and “Normal” including the acceptance that woman “defined” by society is also true. This obviously echoes the pattern of concepts and beliefs that position woman underneath man and remains unquestionable. Though, there may be many inquiries regarding the issue, there also is a social measure to sanction like Mrs. Rabiebrat’ case. Furthermore, our society has not learned from the case even it was propagated through several media. It is difficult for the performance to initiate the gender learning amongst such social situations which is totally different from Filipino society in the movement to expel the former president that performance has played a key role.

The social formation process of gender socialisation is the main reason why the pattern of our concepts and beliefs is like this that causes inequality between man and woman to be normal. In the view of historical dimension, it is found that historical recording or historical writing in Thai society the gender and woman's roles have been neither emphasised nor included. In Craig Reynolds' example on the article "Engendering Thai Historical Writing" historical writing of the change of regime in 1932 has not mentioned the participation of woman. What has been recognised is that the ruling change emerged from a panel, surely composing of all men. Moreover, such historical writing reflects the conceptual process of dividing the public sphere for men and private sphere for women. So the political and social changes are men's matter (Prisara Saekuay, translated, 2008: 165-187) and Thai women appearing in the Thai historical writings must perform heroic and brave sacrifice to the nations as a center of power, Suriyo Thai, Tao Thepkasattri, Tao Srisunthorn Tao Suranaree for instance. (Jiranut Sopa, 1999: 216). The said historical writing has been brought to educate Thai society both in the formal and non-formal educational systems. This is a form of socialisation that history contained social changes has been created by men. If woman is the case, she must sacrifice herself for holistic power not for her own life.

Apart from historical writings which later become text books, the text book of other subjects also repeat the ideology of masculinity and femininity as in Pensri Chulakarn's critic (1998: 150-151) which analysed Thai text book for elementary school of the revised edition 1990 containing the repetitive content of the original roles of man and woman in which man was presented in the manner of strong leader, full of knowledge and polygamy without social blame while woman was a house wife, full of tenderness, respect to her husband, under man's custody illustrated in the poem and explanation.

In addition, mass media as one of mechanisms of socialisation remain repetitive production of effeminacy attached to domestic sphere as seen in the study of printing media by Sanor Charoenporn (2005: 258-259) showing that:

"In the year 1977-1987, most products focused on properties useful for house wives without any indication that house wives had careers outside

their home. (This has not meant that woman of 1970s has not worked outside). It can be summarized that commercials presents the woman in household chores only while in the 1980s most products boasted of their properties of “Making Modern House Wives Happy” even busy with working outside, breast feeding or cooking. Commercials in this decade presented the working woman with her responsibilities as a good wife and mom”.

Television is another media which is able to reach wide range of audience since almost every household has them. TV commercials also reproduce femininity in restrictive way as we can see from the research “Sexualities and Popular Media” in case of TV commercial that:

“Most of the commercials present the sexual role unequally, and gender of female is often oppressed representing through the commercial... in dominant gender and sexualities, being a wife, housewife, and well-cooking mother, they define that the success of women is when they get marriage, pregnant, hold a baby and look after them... women in the commercial are regularly weak and need to be assisted or protected by men which is different from the physical attribute of men that they should be strong and well-built... and show possession over women body. Presenting how he has power to take control and decision makes women become tractable, under controlled and lack ability to make a decision as well as the right over their own body” (Chayanun Manokasemsook, et al., 2008: 10-13).

As mentioned above, we can say that socialisation concerning historical writing that becomes a lesson in educational system, and values reproducing through media have made femininity defined by patriarchy concept become true. When considering this thing as a social context, we can say that the context has affected the thought and values of individuals, and this set of values has become hindrance for

gender learning as people in the society do not view sexual inequality as a problem in power construction.

Not capable to see or not to see the construction problem of people in a society is in some way emerged from educational system. Attachak Sattayanurak (2001: 35) stated that Thai educational system made its people submissive referring to government power that went down through officialism which dominated society. The government employed educational system to create workforce for strict official machinery, so they do not want people to think, they want people to obey the command of the authorities. This way submission resulted in how people do not question about things that is going on in the society as well as fairness in a society. Moreover, if we consider culture of learning, Sutiwong Pongpaibul (2002: 20-22) stated that from the past until today, culture of learning for Thai people focused more on giving information than the approaches. The objective is making the learners become like the majority. This kind of learning is more like “to remember” than “to decide”. To remember is for the learner to think the same way as the teacher does, so teachers, text books and instruction confined the learner from new ideas. And “whatever knowledge conveyed to the learners without rebuild process is only a fact, not knowledge. It does not help learners generate vision and the new way of looking at the world” (Nithi Eawsriwong, 2001: 7)

From what mentioned above, we may conclude that socialisation makes the members of society not to see that sexual inequality in the society is unusual or if they see, they may not question about that inequality. In the end, Thai society does not view that sexual inequality is a problem. Also, capitalism has influenced people to individualism and being subjective so that they do not see an existence of social unfairness then the topic of sexual inequality is out of interest of a society. Because even the problem of poverty which is another substance of unfairness in a society that has occurred continuously over long period of time is perceived as usual matter existed in Thai society. Comparing the issues of poverty and sexual inequality in a society which both are inequality in a society, we may say that sexual inequality is an issues which is hardly to be seen and there is no obvious social process to solve it compared with poverty problem solving process. So, sexual fairness could not be

generated in near future because even the way to solve poverty problem which is a substantial inequality in a society is still too far.

As the result, it is difficult for performance which is only one of efforts to create sexual equality to be able to generate a learning of this issue if other learning machineries such as educational system and media, etc. still reproduce an inequality. This does not include the fact that a performance also has some limitation as a tool for learning. So, if a performance will create a gender learning, other learning machinery in a society must be changed in order to generate social context which will facilitate gender learning. And the content and form of presenting of a performance itself must be designed to encourage the audience questioning their old belief. This will generate leaning. Also, the performance may need to involve itself into being one factor of social movements about women and gender, not just wait for the audiences walking into the theatre as how *The Vagina Monologues* by Eve Ensler led to the founding of violence against woman day (V Day) that showed how the performance positioning itself as one of the social movement. It then could be said that theatre cannot be a “stand alone” intervention in bringing about gender learning, but should be working together with other social learning mechanisms of the same programme concept in precipitating a transformation of gender perspective to the members of society. This is because the powerful socialisation mechanism, but not desirable, like the educational system has made people in the society to be submissive, resulting in difficulties in bringing about any social change. Therefore, in pursuing any changes, diverse learning mechanisms of the same programme concept need to be combined.

7.3 Theatre and Learning: some considerations for the future

Using theatre to bring about learning is complicated as each element both of the performance, the audience and the social context are interrelated that cannot be separated in affecting learning process as we can see from the case of using theatre for gender learning. However, if there is a control to some factors or a variable as well as if a performance is designed to involve the thought and theory about learning into a consideration, performance is able to create leaning. It is to say, all of the 3 performances used for this study is passive and wait for the audience to walk into the

theatre, and even if most of the coming audiences are theatre goers, but those audiences are different in background and experiences which will affect different way of learning from the performance. On the other hand, that the theatre that aims to create learning is not targeting the characteristics of their audiences. If the theatre can define its audiences to homogenous group, the theatre practitioners will be able to design a performance which response to the nature of this audience group and bring better influence to leaning. Therefore the performance is actively approach the particular audiences and having audience analysis which will lead to designing content and presentation form, the performance should be able to create better learning. This is an interaction control between the audience and performance to be in the same direction.

The study of theatre and gender learning reflected that social values reproduced thorough social learning machineries such as education system and media are the key hindrance of learning and this social value has become values held by individuals: for example; the way people in Thai society do not perceive sexual inequality as a problem to be solved. Therefore, the theatre practitioners need to analyse social values in the issue they want to create learning, and whether there is any machinery or process to do so, and how the values affect thought and belief of individuals. This analysis is advantageous to performance designing for learning. That is because when considering Mezirow's transformative learning theory, the key factor to learning process is inner dialogue which leads to critical self-reflection and in designing learning process, there is need to verify the sources of their old thought and belief with these question; "why we think this way", "where this thought came from and how it happens to us", "whether this thought is how social values stipulated to think, etc. then verify the consequences of having that thought and belief with the question; "what will happen if we still have this thought and belief", "will we be able to handle new situation with that thought and belief", etc. (Cranton, 1992: 149) transformation learning also focus on dialogue of experiences from others in order to reflect and evaluate suitability of thought and belief of the learners which will lead to judgement, insights and new set of operations as well as the educator must be able to give learner a critical reflection that will lead to the transformation mentioned above (Mezirow, 1990: 360). So, performance designing must be made for that result.

Although the research showed that theatre, in a whole picture, can create receptive learning, there are some performances, here is, The Vagina Monologues which tended to generate higher level of learning than receptive level, and the key factor is the content that make numbers of audiences see and feel the story of women that even women themselves have not seen or felt before. In this case, it brings women's body politics to make the audiences see things they have never seen, and this leads to inner dialogue and the questioning of femininity and masculinity in a society. Considering Mazirow's theory, this is the sources verification of old set of thought and evaluation of the consequences from that thought as well as questioning themselves about what will happen to keep the same thought. Another key factor that this performance tends to create better form of learning that is realistic form of presentation which the audiences can feel the emotion identification that is the factor to the theatre of social action. Some concepts reject that emotion may ruin an intellect in audience's thinking; however, The Vagina Monologue shows that emotion and feeling of the audiences toward a performance can lead to further thinking if that emotion emerges from provocative fact and returns to shack the inner feeling of the audiences till the inner dialogue generated. This is the key step to critical self-reflection and transformation.

As the result, the theatre that can create learning need to present the content which make audiences see things they have not seen in order to challenge an old set of perception and viewpoint of the audiences so that the inner dialogue emerged. Those things must not be a story that people in a society are familiar with like those realism theatre which need not to be totally realistic, but focus on reality of the character that will have the audiences feel and sense the way they do. As the audience's feeling is the key factor of leading the audience to inner dialogue others than the challenging content. Using theatre to create learning need to focus on the feeling of how the audiences sense that the characters are real human, not just a character that saying out things that audience do not sense it. The factor of emotion and feeling should be the key differences between theatre and other tools of learning.

The concept of theatre for learning such as of Brechtian Theatre and Theatre of the Oppressed notify that one key factor of this kind of performance is questioning for the audience to think and find the answer. Therefore presenting

performance as a fact along with questioning the audience to verify the sources of their thought and belief as well as to find the way out if they find their thought and belief is troublesome. This should be an appropriate road map of theatre for learning.

Considerations toward the future about theatre and learning mentioned above is an effort to fix the gap of using theatre to bring about learning that involve different factors into interaction complicatedly by considering the case of using performance to create gender learning as a starting base. That consideration toward using theatre to precipitate learning is the considerations which based on the finding of this research synthesising with related framework and theory. So, that consideration is not an answer for using theatre to bring about learning. There should be an action research in order to find the answer by using this consideration as the conceptual framework which may lead to even more suitable answer in developing knowledge of using theatre to bring about learning.

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