

Stina Bergman Blix

Professional Emotion Management as a Rehearsal Process

Abstract: The work of stage actors has long been used as a simile for every day role playing, generating theoretical concepts to describe how people work to present themselves in general and how they manage their emotions in particular. Building on this tradition, this article analyses professional stage actors' deliberate emotion management as an embodied professionalisation process, focusing the relation between emotional experience and expression through the concepts of decoupling, double agency and habituation. Observations and interviews with theatre actors rehearsing for a role revealed how they gradually develop a capacity for double agency, decoupling the experience from the expression of emotions, which are eventually habituated in a form adapted to the role character. This process of professionalising emotion management is beneficial to the presentation of role-appropriate emotions and furthers the ability to cope with the endeavour of managing emotions at work. Implications for professions outside the artistic domain are discussed.

Keywords: decoupling, deep acting, embodiment, emotion management, habituation, stage actors, surface acting

“Without anger and fondness”, is the epitome of professional behaviour (Weber, 1978), implying non-emotionality as a guiding principle. However, research has shown that emotions are integral to rational behaviour (Damasio, 1994) and are embedded in most work organisations (Fineman, 2008). Professionalism in this context is a “disciplinary mechanism” (Fournier, 1999) to align a presentation of self with expected professional competence. Emotion management, the conscious adjustment of emotional experiences and expressions (Hochschild, 1983), is essential to presenting a professional demeanour and claim professional status (Lively, 2001). Emotion management as a work requirement was conceptualized as a critique of the expanding service society demanding workers to use their private emotions in commercial settings (Hochschild, 1983). The role of emotion management in professional life has generated a vast amount of empirical studies (Filstad, 2010; Harris, 2002), but still lacks in theoretical integration (Wharton, 2009). Although the theoretical concepts used to understand role presentations and emotion management to a great extent originate from dramaturgical theory and stage actors' work, the scholarly analysis usually builds on acting literature (Hochschild, 1983), public interviews, or anecdotal evidence (Goffman, 1974). This article will attempt theoretical integration by applying some of the basic concepts in their original context, which is actual stage acting practice in the theatre, to investigate if more nuanced interpretations of the development of professional emotion management can be made.

Stina Bergman
Blix,
Department of
Sociology,
Stockholm
University

Contact:
Stina Bergman
Blix,
Department of
Sociology,
Stockholm
University,
106 91 Stockholm,
Sweden
Stina.bergmanblix@sociology.su.se

Received:
12 Feb 2015

Accepted:
19 June 2015

An important distinction made in dramaturgical theory is between the performance of a task and the *presentation* of performing a task (Goffman, 1959). In professional life, the former is usually in focus but, as Goffman shows, the latter is just as important: a judge is trained to make objective legal decisions, but the *presentation* of impartiality is equally crucial for reproducing trust in the legal system. The task of stage actors is the presentation per se, and the theatre and actors' work with presenting roles is an effective simile for the study of every day role playing (Goffman, 1959, 1974). Formal training and the constant repetition and inhabiting of new roles make stage actors highly skilled in mastering emotions, in contrast to most people required to manage emotions at work, who get little or no training. Furthermore, stage actors can be regarded as "privileged emotion managers" (Orzechowicz, 2008), making it possible to study the process of professionalising emotions in an organisational setting that facilitates emotion management (Bergman Blix, 2014).

More specifically, the relation between emotional experience, *deep acting*, and expression, *surface acting*, will be scrutinised (Hochschild, 1983) by focusing on the bodily aspects of emotion management. Decoupling, double agency and habituation (elaborated below) are three concepts that in different ways problematize this relation and will be used as sensitizing concepts (Willis & Trondman, 2000) to investigate the successive change and development of emotion management during the rehearsal process. Focus will be on 1) the decoupling of private emotions; 2) how surface and deep acting relate to professional emotional experience and expression; and 3) how modes of habituation relate to surface and deep acting.

This article first provides a brief presentation of the relation between emotional experience and expression in previous research, followed by a theoretical account of emotion management as an embodied process. After a methodological presentation, the development of emotion management during rehearsals will be investigated examining the body as a tool for both anchoring and disassociating professional emotional expressions from their private origins. The discussion returns to the research questions posed above and in conclusion, the findings are discussed in relation to their relevance to other professions that require similar emotion management.

Managing emotions in professional life

The importance of professional emotion management in close interactions is evident in some cases, such as physicians who need to recognise and adapt to patients' emotions in order to arrive at correct and efficient diagnoses and treatments (Larson & Yao, 2005; Lee, Lovell, & Brotheridge, 2010). But emotion management is also an important feature in other types of professional interactions, for example to legal actors during court hearings (Bergman Blix & Wettergren, 2015; Maroney & Gross, 2014).

A major line of research on emotion management focuses on coping strategies (Filstad, 2010) and private consequences of managing emotions at work (Wharton, 2009), for example when the organisational demand to express emotions does not correspond with felt experience (Grandey, 2003). These studies need to disentangle the process of expressing and experiencing emotions at work, distinguishing between *surface acting*, shaping the outward appearance, and *deep acting*, using imagination, personal memories or body control to induce or attenuate emotional experience to match a required display (Hochschild 1983). The results are mixed: Surface acting is associated with stress (Grandey, 2003; Van Dijk & Brown, 2006), but surface acting can also be associated with well-being—if the subject accepts the role performance, but lacks the ability to experience the displayed emotions in the moment (Ashforth & Tomiuk, 2006). Research on emotion management has

shown the relation between surface and deep acting to be complex and impossible to reduce to an either/or relationship; it rather constitutes “the opposite ends of a continuum” (Zapf, 2002). Surface acting rather means working from “outside in,” focusing expressive behaviour in order to change emotional experience and, deep acting from the “inside out,” focusing experience to align expressions (Hochschild, 1990, p. 121), in which case they cannot be understood as exclusive categories (Ashman, 2008). This calls for a closer integration of the concepts, elucidating the relation between emotional experience and expression.

As depicted above emotions are relational and managed in accordance with situational and organisational norms. These norms may differ, but emotions are always managed and expressed in and by the body. To investigate the relation between emotional experience and expression, an elaboration of emotion as a process engaging bodily responses is needed.

Emotion as an embodied process

A brief definition of emotion suggested by Frijda is “changes in action readiness” (1986, p. 5). The experience of emotions changes our perception of the world and our *dispositions* to act, not our expressions as such. The emotion *process* can be described as starting with the perception of a trigger such as a situation or a thought that sets off an autonomic response, a change in arousal level which is limited to fractions of seconds, often invisible to the human eye and skimming below the conscious mind (Friedman, 2010). For an autonomic response to turn into an emotion there has to be some form of information processing, both of the trigger and of the autonomic response. The experience may be marginal or intense, or anywhere in between, depending on the significance of the perceived trigger and on the cognitive evaluation of the situation. The expression of an emotion can be suppressed or altered in several ways depending on the situation.

This description fits with Thoits’ interactional definition of emotions comprising the awareness of the four elements of a) appraisal of a situation, b) changes in bodily sensations, c) free or inhibited display of expressive gestures, and d) a cultural label applied to specific constellations of these three elements (1990, pp. 191-192). The definition implies that our “readiness to act” is adaptable to socialisation in terms of feeling and display rules: culturally specific norms on how to experience and express emotions (Hochschild, 1983). Feeling rules shape our inclination to experience emotions, for example to feel sad at funerals, while display rules shape how we express our felt sadness. In emotional socialisation the experience and expression are connected, feeling sad at a funeral is associated with certain ways to express sadness. Emotional socialisation starts in infancy and emotions are usually managed without much conscious reflection. However, private feeling and display rules may differ from professional ditto and in work life more deliberate emotion management strategies are commonly required (Hochschild, 1983). Emotions then are always managed and how this management relates to emotional experience and expression on a more fundamental level will be elaborated through the concepts of habituation, double agency, and decoupling.

Habituation

A significant aspect of surface acting was discussed already by Darwin in his argument about serviceable habits in expressing emotions, showing how intricate expressions of emotions can be learnt through repeated manipulation (Darwin, 1999). Eventually, they become habituated; we perform them without conscious manipulation. One example is the social smile. Even if we do not feel joyful when we greet our colleagues with a smile at work every day, the smile becomes habitu-

ated. We do not need to control the facial expressions in detail in order to perform it. Goffman's description of interpersonal rituals highlights "rules of conduct" (Goffman, 1956) that we usually perform habitually without "deep" feelings.

Expressions originating in stronger emotional experiences also become habituated. Concomitant with the autonomic response is a disposition to act that tends to be expressed in ways that we have used previously. A person who shouts and throws things when she is furious tends to repeat that behaviour every time she is angry: the expression becomes habituated. Habituated emotional expressions are induced socially and thus amenable to adaptation both in a particular situation and in the long run. If the shouting infuriated person gets angry in a public place she probably restrains the urge to throw things (Lively & Powell, 2006).

Habituation is the outcome of emotional expressions that are repeated over time. It is a fundamental aspect of the socialisation of emotions and, on a more conscious level of awareness, a prerequisite for being able to perform professional emotional expressions.

Double agency

The ability to monitor and thus regulate our emotional expressions has been illustrated by Cooley in his concept of a looking glass self: We incorporate our interpretations of other people's reactions when we define situations and our own role in them (1922, p. 184). The self-monitoring involved in this process is used both momentarily and in retrospect; it helps us adapt to a situation while being in it, and to remember and reflect on our actions in earlier situations.

Professional actors need to express emotions while monitoring them in order to perform their work, for example raging without literally falling off the stage or hurting someone. The concept of double agency was introduced by Hastrup to describe "the dualism in the player's work; the player is both a character and a professional, both text and context" (2004, p. 267). For the purpose of investigating the ability to both do something and at the same time observe oneself doing it, double agency is here defined as *the simultaneous observation and regulation of bodily, particularly gestural activities, in order to investigate and indulge in other activities*.

Decoupling

The concept of emotional decoupling has been used to explain the linkage between emotional experience and expression (Matsumoto, Keltner, Shiota, O'Sullivan, & Frank, 2008) that can be related to Goffman's description of "a strip of behaviour" turning into "a strip of play" when describing play fighting (1974, p. 41), and Schechner's application of the concept "restored behaviour" to describe how behaviour in general is performed in strips that have lost touch with their original source (Schechner, 1985, p. 35ff). In order to work professionally with emotions, stage actors need to partly disassociate their private emotional experiences from their professional expressions on stage.

In applying the above three concepts to stage actors' work, a number of questions arise. On stage, the actor needs to find *emotional paths* that correspond with the character. Private scripts need to change to professional character scripts, adjusting to applicable feeling and display rules. How does the actor do that, and how does the fact that the stage actor performs emotions within strict and settled blockings¹ that constitute the scene influence the emotion itself? Is the experience of an

¹ "Blocking" refers to planned movements on stage, from walking across the stage to the blinking of an eye. Blocking does not only imply the movements in themselves, but pre-

emotion affected by being continuously expressed in rehearsals and during performances?

As argued above, stage actors are professional emotion managers, but for every role they are also beginners, adapting to new norms of emotional experiences and expressions. Their starting-point is their own private emotional experiences but during rehearsals they turn them into professional expressions.

Method

This article draws on material from two field studies that were carried out at a Swedish theatre during 5 months between 2005 and 2007. The field studies employed ethnographic methods of observations of rehearsals, and informal talks with stage actors during the rehearsal period and the first weeks of performance of two theatre productions. The rehearsals were recorded in field notes on sight and observations outside rehearsals and informal talks were recorded in retrospect after each day or during longer breaks. I attended almost all rehearsals for both productions, a total of five months. In Sweden, actors rehearse five days a week, eight hours each day, if they are not engaged in a running theatrical performance. The productions were selected so as to obtain as rich a variety of acting experience as possible including actors of both sexes, with a great range of experiences and diverse employment conditions.

Interviews were conducted at various stages of the rehearsals and in the beginning of the performance period, all in direct relation to rehearsals in order to come closer to actual practice. The interviews ranged from 1-2 hours. All in all 38 interviews with 25 actors were analysed². The two projects were situated at the same theatre, but no actor was involved in both projects. The theatre house is one of the largest in Sweden. It has a permanent actor crew, but also employs actors on contracts on a one to two-year basis or for particular projects. The study included 15 men and 10 women. Experience of professional acting ranged from 1 year to more than 60 years, with a median of 20 years. Nineteen of the actors had had their professional training at a higher education Theatre Academy, while 6 actors had no formal exam³.

All interviews were recorded and transcribed and, together with the observations notes were coded in the programme NVivo. The codes were a combination of inductive themes, and more deductive codes that originated from my theoretical framework, such as “surface acting going deep”, and “double agency”. The data was analysed by combining a phenomenological approach, focusing the intersubjective structures of meaning that could be deduced from the subjective experiences expressed in the data (Schütz, 1962) and in relation to how the data fitted with emotion theory, analysing how the relation between experience and expression was

dominantly their relation to the other characters. The blocking of one character affects the actions and emotions of another character. The rehearsals are the building of a large and complex puzzle or tapestry of emotions and actions and their connections with each other.

² In the first production I had a wide focus, looking at the rehearsals from different perspectives, interviewing most actors twice, in the beginning and in the end of rehearsals. In the second production, I had analysed the first round and could focus more on details, laying more weight on my observations and conducting one shorter interview with most actors focused on specific aspects. The crew was small and there were frequent opportunities for informal talks as well.

³ In Sweden there are four Theatre Academies on university level. Most actors that work professionally today have been trained at one of those academies. To become a member of the Theatre union in Sweden one needs an exam from one of the Academies or employment as a professional actor for a year—this was applicable to all actors in this study.

manifested in the stage actors' bodies and could be interpreted with reference to previous research.

The analytical process was iterative and started during field work, keeping actual extracts and notes in the writing process, while developing a "theoretically informed vocabulary" (Willis & Trondman, 2000). When analysing the deductively generated code of double agency, different phases were developed from findings in the data. The concepts of habituation and decoupling were instead found in previous theory when trying to make sense of inductively generated codes. The intention was to uncover a process of professionalising emotion management when adapting to a new role in the western theatrical tradition, to identify how this process could be understood in theoretical terms; the relevant concepts involved and their relation to each other. The names used in this article are altered in order to protect the actors' anonymity, and the quotes are cleaned of some spoken language repetitions.

Emotion management during rehearsals of a new role

In this section, emotion management as a rehearsal process will be analysed, starting with how the actors work with instigating emotions, how emotions are formed, embodied, and eventually partly decoupled from their private origin. The relation between the experience and expression of emotion will be problematized throughout using the concepts of surface and deep acting, while the practical use and development of decoupling, habituation and double agency will be presented in separate sections.

Surface acting going deep

Although directors rarely expect or require that actors should be able to express role-relevant emotions at the beginning of rehearsals, some kind of expression is needed very early, both for the director to be able to evaluate how the staging works and how to proceed, and for the co-actors to have something to respond to. When all the actors stand with manuscripts in their hands, and there are constant interruptions from actors finding their lines and trying to remember their blocking, it is difficult to find and connect through deep acting. In short, surface acting is necessary.

Furthermore, finding the surface of a character is an important aspect in developing an understanding of the character. Actually, a person's surface or outward expression says a great deal about the person, whether it be a private person or a staged character. One actor argued strongly against talking about a person's exterior as something empty and disconnected, as if there would be some room deep inside the human where the real person exists, separated from the surface:

...the shallowness captures the incredible expressive range of the human face [...]. None of them are like each other in any way, the variation is tremendous... the surface starts it, and then gives a signal inwards to the experience. So those who prevent the surface and call it shallowness—I don't like shallowness as a negative word, as a critique (Georg, 65 years experience, retired/freelance).

Several actors described how simple physical movements can open up the emotions and also help the lines to flow. In addition, actors can trigger particular emotions, by using physical movements or voice: "You can use physical tricks, like shouting. You become choked just by hearing all that noise, and often there is a reaction like sadness or crying afterwards" (Alice, 12 years experience, freelance). To go from the outside in also appears to be a way to find the character while by-

passing the intellect—that is, one works from a physical gesture of emotion, without reflecting, as too much intellectualising can hamper emotions: “The body gives the feeling, from the outside in. I don’t think a lot when I work. There’s more action” (Nathan, 19 years experience, permanent). “From the outside in” implies that when expressing an emotion, the actor dares to perform the expression without embarrassment. If successful, the actual experience of the emotion results from the expression (Tomkins, 2008, p. 668ff).

Decoupling—taking the feeling and changing the expression

The opposite process, from deep acting toward surface acting, originates in private emotional experiences that often have to be modified in order to fit how the character expresses emotions. This is where a process of decoupling private emotional experiences from their professional expressions starts. One actor described how he works with crying in character:

I take memories from when I myself have cried, and how I felt then. But it is not really me crying on the stage, it is the character, and there you add stuff that you would not do yourself. ...if I would cry privately, for example, maybe I would be sitting like this and be crying (showing how he sits slouching), but it doesn’t fit with the character. I just take the feeling, only the cry, and then you maybe sit like this instead (shows how he looks up instead) and cry. But then I have distanced myself, do you understand, then it is a character that does it, but the feeling to start crying I get from myself (Leif, 47 years experience, permanent).

The focus on display, that Goffman is both famous and criticised for, is at the heart of acting; it is all about expression, experience is not relevant in itself as long as the audience gets in touch with the character. This fundament of dramaturgical theory is as relevant to deep acting as it is to surface acting.

It is often necessary when standing on a stage to enlarge emotional expressions. Even the spectators in the back row have to be able to hear when the lovers whisper sweet words in each other’s ears, making it necessary to actually shout them out loudly. To work from the inside out can imply both modifying and enlarging, or for that matter, attenuating the expressions of emotional experiences.

Embodying emotions

In conversations with and observations of actors at work, it becomes clear that the body is not only an arena for both surface and deep acting, but also that the border between the two is often blurred. Actors are constantly working with their bodies.

The embodiment of emotions on stage is a fundamental part of rehearsing. Distance and proximity between bodies is tried out to create emotional inputs. Sometimes they are determined in advance by the director and thus deliberately performed to show an expression; at the same time they open the way for emotional experiences. The need to constantly be in touch with one’s own body was clearly shown in a scene when an actor’s character was afraid; his fear affected the way he gently turned the page in his manuscript, so as not to upset the person he was afraid of, as it were. Browsing the manuscript is of course outside the characters’ interaction, but when the fear is expressed in the body it also affects how you move your hands. After some of the scenes have been set in a preliminary fashion, you can see how the actors constantly, while they act, adjust the distance between each other and to any furniture or props. They back up or walk toward each other to find where their relationship works the best. Often, small changes in blocking can change the total expression, and parts that the actors have found difficult suddenly

become obvious. In a scene where the actors were supposed to be attracted to each other, they avoided looking at each other during the first half of the scene. When their eyes eventually met, it resulted in a much stronger encounter than it would have been if they had done the first half of the scene without avoiding eye contact.

Habituation—“It is turned on by itself”

The fact that actors link lines with blocking is important for the character to become a whole person. But it is also important for the expression to settle in the body. Habituation is an important part of the finished product that helps the lines come automatically when the actors do their scenes, and also triggers the emotions that the character needs to express:

...you find feelings that you have experienced. You always use personal stuff. And then you go into the feeling when you rehearse a lot, then you are in that feeling. But after 15 times, you don't need to go into the feeling. You have it in your body automatically. Then the feeling doesn't trigger the personal part, it doesn't affect me personally (Michael, 16 years experience, freelance).

Emotional expression can sometimes be very strong. In the performance period, one actor was crying so hard on stage that mucus was running down her nose. Afterwards, when I asked her how she did it, she replied: “That's the way it is every time now... It's physical memory. I've done it so many times, so it is turned on by itself. Repetition does it” (Mia, 6 years experience, freelance). After such a strong emotional expression, non-actors are often a little discombobulated, but this actor went straight off the stage and spoke to me with the same tone as if we were discussing the weather. The emotion was apparently in the body at the scene, running tears and cracking voice, but as a repetition of a previous experience she could easily go in and out of the emotion, the experience was partially decoupled from its origin. This observation fits with previous studies arguing that habitual scripts tend to become less strenuous to perform over time (Ashforth & Fried, 1988). However, an important difference in this study is that stage actors emphasise the need to keep in contact with some level of emotional experience. If the experience is completely decoupled, it needs to be recharged or the expression will become mechanical. In the later part of the rehearsal process when they settle the scenes and decide what expressions should remain, the actors always need to rehearse the scene a couple of times, “so that it becomes settled”. If the actors don't repeat it, or if it is changed frequently close to the première, then they have a hard time on stage; old blockings or emotional expressions are mixed with new ones and the play can become fragmented. This can be paralleled to the concept of routinisation of interactive work that also focus the repetition of emotional expressions but is associated with efforts to standardise behaviour and thereby the workers' self-presentations and feelings (Leidner, 1993), in effect “providing a shield behind which workers could withdraw” (1993, p. 174). Habituation would then be the underlying mechanism behind two opposite scenarios, routinisation that leads to emotional distancing; and the emotional presence that actors need to be able to maintain on stage without becoming overwhelmed by emotions (Sorensen & Iedema, 2009). Both scenarios seem to provide some form of a professional shield:

People, who don't know acting asks me if it isn't difficult to play two productions at the same time, but I don't think so. During the rehearsal period I live with the character ... but when I have embodied the character, during performance, I just come to the theatre, I go into my character; I turn on, then I go out, and turn off. It's really like that. I played in X (a modern tragedy), that was 6½ hours long and really intense. When I came out afterwards and met some people

I knew in the audience. They were overwhelmed and we actors were like “You wanna go for a beer and yada yada.” And the audience kind of think that—it’s such a clash! (Kathy, 21 years experience, permanent).

In the quote above, the actor describes how the settled emotional expression can be displayed with a reduced corresponding experience. Professionally habituated emotions can thus be expressed and repeated with less strain than strong private emotions.

Double agency—being split in two

The expression of professional emotions on stage was associated with a high sense of control. The actors in this study described being “*split in two*”; one persona that is in the fictional situation and one that monitors same situation and regulates its appearance both regarding future blocking and the audience’s reactions.

If I’m mad and fly out at someone in character, I have the same feeling as when I am mad privately, but I am not mad. I always stand beside myself as an actor. All the time I look at what I am doing...if not there would be no limits. Something could go beyond control. That is not possible. If that happened one would not be quite healthy I think (Monika, 30 years experience, permanent).

In this quote it is evident that the actor distinguishes between professional and private emotions in that the professional emotion is split in two and thereby more controlled than the private emotion. At the same time, she maintains that the emotion is experienced as similar in private and on stage. When the actor performs deep acting, the emotion is experienced as it is in her private sphere but now she surveys herself and hence can use the emotion as a professional tool; making it possible to deliberately shape the emotional expression. The use of double agency makes surface and deep acting interdependent and interwoven.

The split described by the actors evolves during the course of the rehearsal process. At first, when the actors try to find the correct entries into the scenes, with the accompanying blocking, the duality apparently makes it easier for them to handle new and untested situations. At the same time, as they move around on stage and respond to lines from their co-actors, they need to consider how their characters would respond to these events. In order for the play to proceed and for the actors to build up their characters, they have to act and reflect upon their acts at the same time. They can also, when they act one way, discover other ways to act; as a result, their expressions may turn out somewhat erratic. During this period, the actors’ performances appear rather disrupted, sometimes with extended breaks between questions and replies. The two sides of the duality do not operate simultaneously; the monitoring aspect is sometimes slower than the expressing aspect.

Strong emotional expressions are rare in the early rehearsal period. Rather, actors are more likely to present an indication of a strong emotion at places where it is motivated. After a while the actors and the director need more outspoken expressions to be able to evaluate the scenes as they will finally turn out. Now it is time for the full-fledged expressions. During this period the split apparently functions as a protecting screen that allows the actor to let out her emotions:

You sort of harbour a miniature actor in your head all the time who knows that now it is time to move a little closer to the ramp, it is quite okay to stand there, but now you have to... you are a little too close compared to last time, it’s not going to work when you have to do that other thing. But perhaps you can back up a little. You are aware of that now the director says “break,” now we have to talk a little, and now we have to do it again. Someone who goes on like that

while you are in character and because this one is turned on, it is possible to let out one's emotions. It is a kind of awareness whilst you allow the automatic impulses to come out. You let them be, sort of (Lisa, 20 years experience, freelance).

The above quote shows how the actors handle the constant interruptions by letting the "talking about" remain in the background. Another way to use double agency, which only appeared when the productions had been running for some time, is simply to think about something altogether different and outside of the play, for instance events in one's private life: "did I take the right shoes, the weather is really bad? You would think that it is a formidable split, but it just works that way. You just have to accept it and not despair" (Henrik, 61 years experience, retired/freelance). The actor manages to be in character and somewhere else at the same time.

In sum, when stage actors rehearse a new role they need to find emotional paths that correspond with the character. These paths are grounded in private experiences but situated and expressed in a novel setting with the body as an important tool to both anchor and disassociate the professional expression from its private origin. We will now look more specifically at how these findings link to the research questions posed in the introduction.

Discussion—towards a process of professionalising emotion management

This section focuses on three issues: 1) the decoupling of private emotions; 2) how surface and deep acting relate to professional emotional experience and expression; and 3) how modes of habituation relate to surface and deep acting.

Decoupling: making private emotions professional

Goffman and Schechner describe a complete decoupling between behaviour and situation, the expression turning into "restored behaviour" (Schechner, 1985). However, I argue that in order to constitute trustworthy professional expressions, there has to be threads leading back to their origins. More concretely it can be seen as a compromise between Hochschild's over-involved worker that does not distinguish her private self from her professional self, and the over-distanced worker that does not engage in the role at all (Hochschild, 1983, p. 187). In contrast to Hochschild's third alternative, the consciously acting worker who knows that the performance is a mere act, the stage actors have built their performance on private experiences and the knowledge that it is acting does not and should not cut off the experiential aspects completely. When the expression has become habituated and situated in the body memory, the experience of the emotion tends not to be as articulate as in its original form.

A further, tentative interpretation could be that, since the emotion is grounded in an earlier experience, an autonomic response should be at least partly activated, thereby giving rise to "the feeling" of the emotion (Damasio, 1994). However, in contrast to private emotions that have been released many times, are associated with past experiences, and follow familiar paths that can be difficult to deviate from, decoupled emotions follow less established paths that are defined by their professional contexts and thus can be more swiftly turned on and off.

It is important to note that merely walking the path of blocking and lines is not enough to elicit emotions; there is a demand for concentration of attention and double agency for the character to come alive. The decoupling can be described as a loop, in which the body, when the connection with the original experience has

faded, needs to recharge with new experience in order to maintain the habituated expression. Furthermore, since the decoupled emotion still rests on an earlier emotional experience, it can backlash and generate a privately connoted emotion; that is, when private vulnerabilities or moods are at the fore, the ostensibly decoupled emotion may trigger a private emotion. However, this scenario is unwelcome and regarded as unprofessional in the acting profession (see also Damasio, 1994, p. 149).

Emotions experienced and expressed in surface and deep acting

Four different paths between emotional experience and expression were discovered: a) superficial acting, without an anchor in an associated experience, usually described as related to instant and brief emotional expressions such as fear and laughter that have to be expressed at precise points in the play and have a short time span; b) perfect congruence between expression and experience mostly observed in the creative phase of the rehearsals when the actors tried out different emotions. When the rehearsals were starting up, as well as in the later phases of rehearsals and in the performance period, the stage actors were somewhere between a and b; c) reaching an anchored experience by first expressing it mechanically; this strategy was often used in the start-up phase; and, d) intentionally altering the expression of a privately experienced emotion. This was observed when the actors started working on the stage and needed to boost their expressions so that the audience would perceive and hear them.

In order to disentangle the emotion management process we need to make an analytical distinction between the interplay of two continua. The first continuum accounts for the emotional expression and can vary from completely manipulated to fully habituated. The second continuum represents the experience of emotion that can vary from being fully to not at all anchored. These two continua can be supportive, contradictory or independent in relation to one another.

Habituation of surface and deep acting

It has been argued that “the actor’s spontaneous vitality seems to depend on the extent to which his actions and thoughts have been automatized, made second nature” (Roach, 1993, p. 16). What Roach argues, supported by the actors in this study, is that in order for actors to be able to “be in the moment,” their routines must be both well established and rehearsed many times so that the whole “curve” (the play), as well as the details of blocking and lines, can be performed without deliberation. The way the character relates to each situation and the people she encounters is incarnated in the actor’s body through habituation, thus making the actor able to situate the character impromptu, in unforeseen situations such as when a co-actor forgets her lines or drops a glass on the floor.

It is important to note that habituation involves deep as well as surface acting. Habituation of emotions elicited in deep acting has a base in an autonomic response. The autonomic part of the emotional expression cannot be manipulated at will, but, as suggested in the section about decoupling, there may be some aspects of the response that eventually are attenuated due to repetition. However, in this study the stage actors who for example were close to tears when they were sad or angry continued to shed tears during most performances as well; the autonomic response of crying did not fade away due to repetition. The essential part of the emotional expression in deep acting had been worked out during rehearsals so that the expressions matched the character. These expressions were sometimes explicitly decided upon, but more often came out intuitively through the actor putting herself in a situation and being open to what that situation would feel like when seen through the character’s (imaginary) circumstances. These expressions were deep in

the sense that they originated in an emotional experience.

Habituation of surface expressions also occurs when originally consciously manipulated expressions were performed repetitively. The actor who is supposed to laugh at a specific point in the play laughs at that point every time, and eventually the laugh comes when she hears the cue, although she does not feel happy.

Conclusions and applicability for other professions

The main finding of the study is that close-up observations and interviews of theatre actors rehearsing for a role have revealed how they gradually develop a capacity for double agency, decoupling the experience from the expression of emotions, which are eventually habituated in a form adapted to the role character. This process of professionalising emotions is beneficial to the presentation of role-appropriate emotions, but, importantly, also furthers the ability to cope with the endeavour of managing emotions at work. Against this background, we will now proceed to discuss the relevance of the findings for the study of other professions, and for professionals outside stage acting to constructively handle emotion management.

Within the artistic professions, performing artists like dancers and opera singers, work in similar ways as actors and the deliberate use of personal experiences in professional work is well known (Lund & Flisbäck, 2010). In this section we will focus on the relevance of the findings for two classic professions medicine and law, where emotions are officially denounced but where professionals indeed need to manage both their own and others' emotions (Lee et al., 2010; Maroney & Gross, 2014).

In professions that involve meeting with clients or patients there are recurring patterns of interaction. The physician often meets patients one-on-one, while legal actors in court meet “clients” in a more ritualistic setting. Both need to balance professional demeanour and individual attunement with the parties involved in order to make the meeting flow, get material for decision making, and a satisfied patient/client.

The high demand for professional demeanour presumably puts *double agency* as a point of departure for both legal actors and physicians. A professional demeanour is often learnt by shadowing an experienced colleague, mimicking an appropriate display. For the novice, using double agency to keep the demeanour in check is cognitively demanding (compare the stage actors disrupted performance during early rehearsals), and one can speculate that a focus on demeanour also triggers a process of decoupling private feelings “from the outside in.”

Legal actors and physicians, as do stage actors, need to express emotions that are more controlled than in private life, *decoupling* the experience from its expression. Legal actors need to tone down emotional expressions to fit with norms of neutrality. A study on the Swedish judiciary found that a common way for judges to express irritation was to put down their pen—signalling that the other legal professionals should move on (Bergman Blix & Wettergren, 2015). Their experience of irritation could be strong, but their expression was adjusted to fit with norms of professionalism. The experienced physician also conveys expressions that originate in earlier experiences that are gradually more or less decoupled from current expressions (Larson & Yao, 2005).

Habituation is a fundamental aspect of the socialisation of emotions and a prerequisite for being able to repeat professional emotional expressions. Consequently, habituation can take different forms, as “mindless” automaticity or promoting the possibility of being “in the moment.” The latter type of habituation is more likely to be relevant for medical and legal professions that demand emotional presence and involve strong emotions (Larson & Yao, 2005; Maroney & Gross, 2014). If

encounters are charged with intense emotions, the physician or legal actor needs to be adequately prepared to be able to handle both their experiential and expressive aspects. The prosecutor in court, for example, needs to handle the injured parties' tears while making sure she gets answers to secure the case. One can assume that a combination of decoupling and habituation is used to behave appropriately in these situations. In contrast, if emotions were to be completely decoupled from experience and performed mechanically and mindlessly, they would not serve their purpose (Kolb, 2011). In an ongoing project legal actors in retrospect regarded their occasional failures to manage their own emotions in relation to a case as valuable signs of their not having become numb to the tragedies they face on a daily basis (Wettergren & Bergman Blix, work in progress).

To sum up, it seems reasonable to assume that the process of professionalising emotion management and the mechanisms involved—double agency, decoupling, and habituation—can be expected to appear in professions outside the theatre, although with different patterns, emphases, and time spans.

References

- Ashforth, B. E., & Fried, Y. (1988). The mindlessness of organizational behaviors. *Human Relations*, 41(4), 305-329.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/001872678804100403>
- Ashforth, B. E., & Tomiuk, M. A. (2006). Emotional labour and authenticity: Views from service agents. In S. Fineman (Ed.), *Emotions in Organizations*. London: SAGE.
- Ashman, I. (2008). Deep acting and bad faith: a Sartrean treatment of emotion work. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 2(3), 288-304.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJWOE.2008.019427>
- Bergman Blix, S. (2014). Facilitating emotion management: Organisational and individual strategies in the theatre. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 6(2), 193-208. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJWOE.2014.060930>
- Bergman Blix, S., & Wettergren, Å. (2015). A sociological perspective on emotions in the judiciary. *Emotion Review*, accepted for publication.
- Cooley, C. H. (1922). *Human nature and the social order*. New York: Charles Scribner's Son's.
- Damasio, A. R. (1994). *Descartes's error*. New York: G.P. Putnam.
- Darwin, C. (1999). *The expression of the emotions in man and animals (third ed.)*. P. Ekman (Ed.). London: Fontana.
- Filstad, C. (2010). Learning to be a competent paramedic: Emotional management in emotional work. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 3(4), 368-383. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJWOE.2010.035325>
- Fineman, S. (Ed.). (2008). *The emotional organization. Passions and power*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fournier, V. (1999). The appeal to “professionalism” as a disciplinary mechanism. *The Sociological Review*, 47(2), 280-307.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-954X.00173>
- Friedman, B. H. (2010). Feelings and the body: the Jamesian perspective on autonomic specificity of emotion. *Biological psychology*, 84(3), 383-393.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2009.10.006>

- Frijda, N. H. (1986). *The emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1956). The nature of deference and demeanor. *American Anthropologist*, 58(3), 473-502.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/aa.1956.58.3.02a00070>
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Boston: Northeastern Univ. Press.
- Grandey, A. A. (2003). When "the show must go on": Surface acting and deep acting as determinants of emotional exhaustion and peer-rated service delivery. *Academy of Management Journal*, 46(1), 86-96.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/30040678>
- Harris, L. C. (2002). The emotional labour of barrister: An exploration of emotional labour by status professionals. *Journal of Management Studies*, 39(4), 553-584. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/1467-6486.t01-1-00303>
- Hastrup, K. (2004). *Action—Anthropology in the company of Shakespeare*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The managed heart—Commercialization of human feeling*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Hochschild, A. R. (1990). Ideology and emotion management: A perspective and path for future research. In T. D. Kemper (Ed.), *Research agendas in the sociology of emotions* (pp. 117-142). New York: State University of New York Press.
- Kolb, K. (2011). Sympathy work: Identity and emotion management among victim-advocates and counselors. *Qualitative Sociology*, 34(1), 101-119.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11133-010-9177-6>
- Larson, E. B., & Yao, X. (2005). Clinical empathy as emotional labor in the patient-physician relationship. *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 293(9), 1100-1106. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1001/jama.293.9.1100>
- Lee, R. T., Lovell, B. L., & Brotheridge, C. M. (2010). Relating physician emotional expression to shared understanding and shared decision-making with patients. *International Journal of Work Organisation and Emotion*, 3(4), 336-350. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1504/IJWOE.2010.035323>
- Leidner, R. (1993). *Fast food fast talk—Service work and the routinization of everyday life*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Lively, K. J. (2001). Occupational claims to professionalism: The case of paralegals. *Symbolic Interaction*, 24(3), 343-366.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/si.2001.24.3.343>
- Lively, K. J., & Powell, B. (2006). Emotional expression at work and at home: Domain, status, or individual characteristics? *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 69(1), 17-38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/019027250606900103>
- Lund, A., & Flisbäck, M. (2010). Konst och kultursektorn: ett pionjärområde för ett arbetsliv i omvandling? [The art and culture sector—a pioneering area for a working life in transition?]. *Arbetsliv i Omvandling*, (4), 1-13.
- Maroney, T. A., & Gross, J. J. (2014). The ideal of the dispassionate judge: An emotion regulation perspective. *Emotion Review*, 6(2), 142-151.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1754073913491989>

- Matsumoto, D., Keltner, D., Shiota, M. N., O'Sullivan, M., & Frank, M. (2008). Facial expressions of emotion. In M. Lewis, J. M. Haviland-Jones, & L. Feldman Barrett (Eds.), *Handbook of Emotions* (third ed.). New York: The Guilford Press.
- Orzechowicz, D. (2008). Privileged emotion managers: The case of actors. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 71(2), 143-156.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/019027250807100204>
- Roach, J. R. (1993). *The player's passion : Studies in the science of acting*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Schechner, R. (1985). *Between theater and anthropology*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. <http://dx.doi.org/10.9783/9780812200928>
- Schütz, A. (1962). *Collected Papers I, The Problem of Social Reality*. The Hague: Nijhoff.
- Sorensen, R., & Iedema, R. (2009). Emotional labour: clinicians' attitudes to death and dying. *Journal of Health, Organisation and Management*, 23(1), 5-22.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/14777260910942524>
- Thoits, P. A. (1990). Emotional deviance: Research agendas. In T. D. Kemper (Ed.), *Research agendas in the sociology of emotions*. New York: State University of New York Press.
- Tomkins, S. S. (2008). *Affect imagery consciousness: The complete edition*. New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Van Dijk, P. A., & Brown, A. K. (2006). Emotional labour and negative job outcomes: An evaluation of the mediating role of emotional dissonance. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 12(2), 101-115.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.5172/jmo.2006.12.2.101>
- Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and society*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wettergren, Å., & Bergman Blix, S. (work in progress). Objectivity and empathy in the legal process: The case of Swedish prosecutors.
- Wharton, A. S. (2009). The sociology of emotional labor. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35(1), 147-165.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-070308-115944>
- Willis, P., & Trondman, M. (2000). Manifesto for ethnography. *Ethnography*, 1(1), 5-16. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/14661380022230679>
- Zapf, D. (2002). Emotion work and psychological well-being: A review of the literature and some conceptual considerations. *Human Resource Management Review*, 12(2), 237-268. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/14661380022230679>