A Yin Yang Approach to the Body in Performance
William Trevino

The principle of yin and yang has been a fundamental concept in traditional East Asian philosophy and metaphysics for thousands of years. The interplay of these two complimentary and opposite forces is used to describe everything in our natural world from the macrocosm of the universe around our planet to the microcosm of a living organism. As part of the natural world, the human body and all of its processes and functions – including physical movement – can be analyzed from a yin yang perspective. In martial arts techniques, the yin yang concept is actively employed to maximize speed, power, and balance. It is my contention that movement in theatre and dance – which seeks to be more dynamic than the habitual movements of our daily lives – can benefit from this type of conscious application of yin yang theory.

In this lecture/demonstration, I will closely examine the movements of Soo Bahk Do, a traditional Korean martial art, in order to identify the characteristics of yin and yang in movement (opening/closing, expanding/contracting, filling/emptying, advancing/retreating, and giving/receiving). Attention will be paid to how the breath, hips, and spine harmonize with the arms and legs to send maximum energy to the hands or feet while maintaining a balanced body. After this practical look at how yin yang theory engages the whole body in strengthening a movement, I will extrapolate on how a yin yang approach can be applied to theatre and dance to create or enhance the dynamics of a movement sequence.

Biography: William Trevino is a theatre professor at St. Joseph’s College, Brooklyn. He holds an MFA in Acting and a Liberal Studies MA in East Asia from Columbia University. Certified by the Korean Soo Bahk Do Association as a 5\textsuperscript{th} degree black belt and master instructor, he has over 24 years of formal training in traditional martial arts. Last fall with support from the Jerome Foundation, he traveled to Korea to further his research in martial arts movement and performance. He devises physical theatre with his company, Corporeal Arts Incorporated, which has performed in New York, California, Brazil, and Finland.