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**EXPLORING DRAMATIC SCENES OF INTENSE EMOTION WITH STUDENT
ACTORS IN HONG KONG: PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS**

WU CHI KIN

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield
as the final fulfilment of the requirements under the course
“MA by Research”

April 2018

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Abstract

This thesis is a response to anecdotal evidence that student actors in Hong Kong have particular difficulty in expressing intense emotion. Psychological research shows that such anecdotal evidence can be underpinned by studies concluding that, in general, Chinese and Japanese subjects from all backgrounds, are less expressive than their US and European counterparts. The aim of this thesis is to examine why Hong Kong Chinese student actors find it difficult to express intense emotion on stage and to explore suitable methods of drama training to develop this skill.

The methodology adopted takes a normative qualitative approach with conclusions based on literature review from research psychologists and drama theoreticians and my personal experience training under theatre practitioner and theoretician John Britton.

The first part of the thesis examines what expression of emotion is and whether it is universal/innate or culturally dependent/society specific. A central question addressed is whether Hong Kong Chinese student actors are inhibited in their expression of intense emotion on stage due to cultural factors which may not be easily overcome by simply asserting cognitive control. The original assumption that Hong Kong Chinese student actors are less expressive and spontaneous than their western counterparts was found to be supported by a body of inter-cultural studies conducted by research psychologists on Chinese and Japanese subjects.

Whether cultural factors are the only obstacle inhibiting Hong Kong Chinese student actors in expressing intense emotions is also investigated focusing on the difference between emotion expressed in daily life and emotion expressed on stage. An actor's natural psychophysical union is broken when she is on stage as people become anxious when being watched. Cultural impediments to emotional expressivity together with the universal challenge of expressing emotion on stage make it hard for a Hong Kong student actor to express a character's emotion, particularly intense emotion which requires greater expressivity.

Having explored how expression of emotion works, the thesis goes on to address how Hong Kong actors are trained. The only tertiary level theatre education in Hong Kong is provided by The Hong Kong Academy of the Performing Art (HKAPA), an institution dedicated to the performing arts; drama teaching at the HKAPA is predominantly based on Stanislavski's system. The HKAPA syllabus, course structure and teaching methodology is examined to find out how Stanislavski's system is implemented. The HKAPA drama teaching pedagogy is largely based on research, script analysis, improvisation based on text, scene work and discussion of scene work.

This thesis acknowledges that while the drama teaching methodology of the HKAPA is rooted in Stanislavski's system and taught in a highly cognitive way, it may not provide enough assistance to Hong Kong student actors in expressing intense emotions.

Traditionally, Chinese opera actors can express a range of emotions, including intense emotions, through multi-channel coded messages which are familiar to the audience, including costumes, established movements and singing methods. However such encoded messages are strongly linked to a particular performing art form with a base of realism but expressed through a given range of stylized movement and expression. Hong Kong student actors cannot easily translate this theatrical heritage into onstage expressivity when performing modern drama, they need a distilled and simple method to help them express extreme emotions that does not depend on coded messages from any established performing art form.

I was trained under Britton, then teaching Physical Theatre at Huddersfield University, whose work, like Stanislavski's, is based on a psychophysical approach to acting which focuses on working with emotion via the body. The final part of the thesis discusses my training under John Britton in some detail and concludes with a recommendation that the HKAPA Drama Department adopt Britton's approach, known as the *Self-With-Others Approach* to supplement the Stanislavski system currently being taught. This method is in line with the present direction of HKAPA but it is the one that is lacking in its syllabus.

I Introduction

As an acting and movement trainer for over seventeen years in Hong Kong, I have frequently heard complaints from student performers that it is difficult for them to express intense emotion when performing emotionally charged scenes. As actors are expected by audience and industry to express a wide range of emotion, not being able to express intense emotion will seriously affect their acting ability and hence, their acting careers. This thesis intends to explore drama-teaching methods that can be adopted by drama training institutions in Hong Kong that may help Hong Kong students to overcome this problem.

Before suggesting solutions to the problems, three questions need to be answered first:

1. What are intense emotions?
2. Is the problem of expressing intense emotions particular to Hong Kong Chinese actors?
3. Why is it important that Hong Kong Chinese actors need to express intense emotion?

The thesis examines psychological research on emotion to ascertain if there are emotions that are shared across cultures and if so, what are these emotions. What is intensity of emotion? What emotional demands do the plays make of the actors?

In response to the second question, difficulty in expressing intense emotion is not particular to Hong Kong actors as all actors may sometimes find it hard to express intense emotions, especially inexperienced actors. Although it may be a universal problem, the problem may be accentuated by inhibiting factors in Chinese culture such as the social undesirability of expressing strong emotion in public. The thesis examines if such cultural practices might play a part in constraining the strong expression of emotion. The assumption to be tested is that Chinese student actors are more inhibited in expressing strong emotion due to cultural issues such as an inherited, deep-seated value put on self-control and concealing feelings, especially negative feelings, resulting in a lack of spontaneity. Shame and embarrassment are possible hurdles that Hong Kong actors may need to overcome to achieve a higher professional level of acting skills. Having said that, the thesis does not imply that Chinese and Japanese are not capable of feeling intense emotions. Research shows that people of all cultures are capable of feeling intense emotions (*inter alia*, Darwin 1872, Tomkins 1984, Bloch 1993, Ekman 1999, Plutchik 2001),

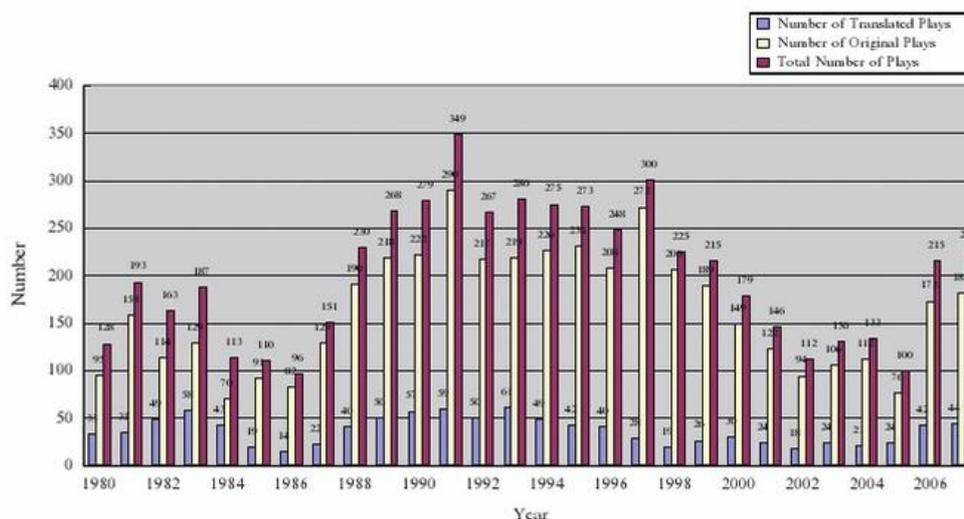
As stated above, the thesis does not imply that Chinese and Japanese people do not feel intense emotion, neither does it imply that they cannot express intense emotions either. There are always occasions that one has to express intense emotions no matter what the cultural context is. However due to certain cultural norms and internalized socialization practice, Chinese and Japanese people may automatically exercise more restraints in public to express intense emotions as public displays of intense emotions are usually frowned upon. As

acting is in a public arena, it may have adverse effect on Hong Kong actors as the social norm of not expressing strong emotion in public may be triggered when performing to an audience on stage, socially learned inhibition may hinder full expression of intense emotions even in the setting of a theatre or even film set, though theatre is different from film as the audience is imagined when making a film. Ekman and Friesen (1975) refer to these cultural norms as “unwritten codes” that govern how emotion should be displayed. The different ways in which emotions are displayed across cultures does not affect the normal communication of emotions within the culture as each culture also develops their own emotion recognition means in response to the way emotions are expressed in that culture. For example, Masuda et al. (2008) suggests that since Americans tend to be more individualistic and therefore they are more likely to pay more attention to individual facial expression to establish the kinds of emotions being conveyed whereas Japanese may look for more contextual cues to understand each other’s emotional state. In other words, each culture has its own way of expressing and reading emotions. Then why do Hong Kong Chinese actors need to express intense emotion in a western way? The thesis does not argue that Hong Kong actors should learn to express intense emotions in a western way. It argues that what Hong Kong actors need to learn is how to express the emotion in way that is in keeping with the given circumstances of the scene, which might be very intense. Chinese people tend to express their intense emotions in a private setting where readers of their emotions are nearby. Hong Kong actors have to learn how to express their raw emotions without being hindered by their culture so that theatre audiences can read the emotions as if they were sitting very close to the actors. What I am advocating

is not exaggeration of emotions but allowing the real emotions of the actors to be expressed in line with the characters' emotions even though the actors have to do it in a public space i.e. the theatre so that cultural impediments to express intense emotions, particularly in public, cannot be acted as a detriment.

Actors' emotions also need to take into account their characters' emotions and the background of the characters. Actors from time to time have to play characters who are not Chinese. For example, a great number of translated plays are performed every year in Hong Kong, mostly American and British plays, accounting for about 62% of plays produced on the Hong Kong stage during the period 1980-2007.

Source: Chan S.K., 2015, p.46: *Number of translated plays, original plays and total number of plays (1980-2007)*



During the same period, translated French plays accounted for 9%, mainly non-naturalistic drama such as plays by Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, Jean-Paul

Sartre and Albert Camus. Translations of German playwright Bertolt Brecht are widely performed; Brecht was in fact the third most popular playwright of translated plays performed in Hong Kong with 27 productions during the period 1980-2007. Shakespeare with 57 productions during that period was the most performed followed by American Neil Simon with 32 and then Brecht. Italian playwright, Dario Fo and Ibsen from Norway were two of the more notable playwrights performed in Hong Kong other than American, British, French and German playwrights with some translated plays from the ancient Greek canon. (Chan S.K.Y, 2015, pp. 52-62) With such a diverse range of international plays, the vast majority being by Western playwrights (some translated Japanese plays were also performed), Hong Kong actors need to be properly prepared for performing the roles in this diverse western repertoire, e.g. if one is performing a Greek or Shakespearian tragedy, or a play by Chekhov, Ibsen or Sarah Kane, one has to be able to depict the most intense of emotions; grief, fear, joy, horror. I am not claiming that there is only one way of playing the characters in these plays, intense emotions can be portrayed in many different ways, but what I am advocating is that culture should not be an obstacle in realizing such roles on stage, that culture may in fact be a useful tool for enriching a performance as we are all products of our own culture. Our culture can be used to develop a character - Stanislavsky says that the only emotions an actor can use when developing a character are his or her own authentic, personal emotions. Acting training should help actors to free themselves from impediments to dramatic expression and if they want to use their own culture to realize their characters, they should be allowed to follow that route, but if actors feel that they are being shackled by their culture, the acting teacher

should help the actor to free themselves of these cultural constraints. Take for an example, in the 1973 Hong Kong production of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Lin comments,

The acting was not strong, the overall production was poor with small audience but the story was like a breath of fresh air and the half story-telling, half arguing style was new, leaving a deep impression for those who had watched it; the use of *Bak Lam*, a kind of Cantonese rap, successfully integrated Brecht's play into the Hong Kong culture. (Lin 1993, p.191)

Chinese culture is a double-edged sword, it might weaken roles that demand strong acting and the ability to demonstrate intense and affective emotions, but at the same time enrich the play with the use of *Bak Lam*, a kind of Cantonese rap. The thesis explores methods that can help student actors who feel they are not able to be spontaneous and not able to express intense emotions the ways they want to.

The need for a good HK actor training programme becomes even more pressing when we consider the growing number of professional theatrical productions in Hong Kong as well as an increasing number of amateur theatre groups productions. In 2013, there were 473 productions in Hong Kong, and this increased to 571 in 2014, and 592 in 2015 (IATC, 2015, p.103) and more than 500 in 2016¹. Each year, over half of the productions are performed by amateur groups that are not funded by the Home Affairs Bureau, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council or Leisure and Cultural Services Department. With

¹ IATC is still compiling information on their yearbook in 2016 but I asked Bernice Chan, the head of the IATC, and this is the estimate figure she could give me.

such an expansion, the demand for good actor training is becoming more pressing.

The thesis further examines if the cultural factor is the only factor that affects emotional expressivity. This thesis attempts to suggest that emotion in daily life is different from emotion on stage in that the latter is more difficult to express. The universal difficulty in expressing oneself on stage compound difficulties caused by cultural impediments to expressivity to make it even more difficult for Hong Kong student actors to express intense emotion on stage. It is therefore important to find an acting technique that can help them.

Once we can understand how emotion is expressed in Hong Kong culture, we can then explore ways to integrate it into acting training programs in Hong Kong.

The use of translated plays in Hong Kong has only become widespread since the 1970s; the development of theatre education spans an even shorter time, compared with western counterparts it is still in its infancy. Early Hong Kong actor-training was in the form of apprenticeships and on the job training with little theoretical basis. After the establishment of The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts (HKAPA) in 1984, theatre education became predominately based on Stanislavski's system. Up to the present (2017), HKAPA is still the only tertiary performing arts education institution in Hong Kong. As HKAPA is the only performing arts institution that confers degrees, the thesis takes a more detailed examination of the syllabus and course descriptions to find out how

Stanislavski's system is implemented there. As the HKAPA adopts the Stanislavski system, this thesis examines this system in detail and explores if the HKAPA's pedagogy can be further developed to suit the needs of Hong Kong students.

This thesis takes a closer look at John Britton's Self-With-Others Approach because the theory behind it has been influenced by many psychophysical theatre practitioners in line with Stanislavski's system, and I have first-hand experience training under Britton. The exercises under this approach, using simple soft balls, are easy to set up and implement.

II Literature Review

This thesis draws on four main areas of research: (1) psychological studies on expression of emotion and inter-cultural studies on expression of emotion; (2) theatre education and training in Hong Kong; (3) Stanislavski's system and psychophysical training; and (4) Britton's Self-With-Others Approach.

Basic Emotions

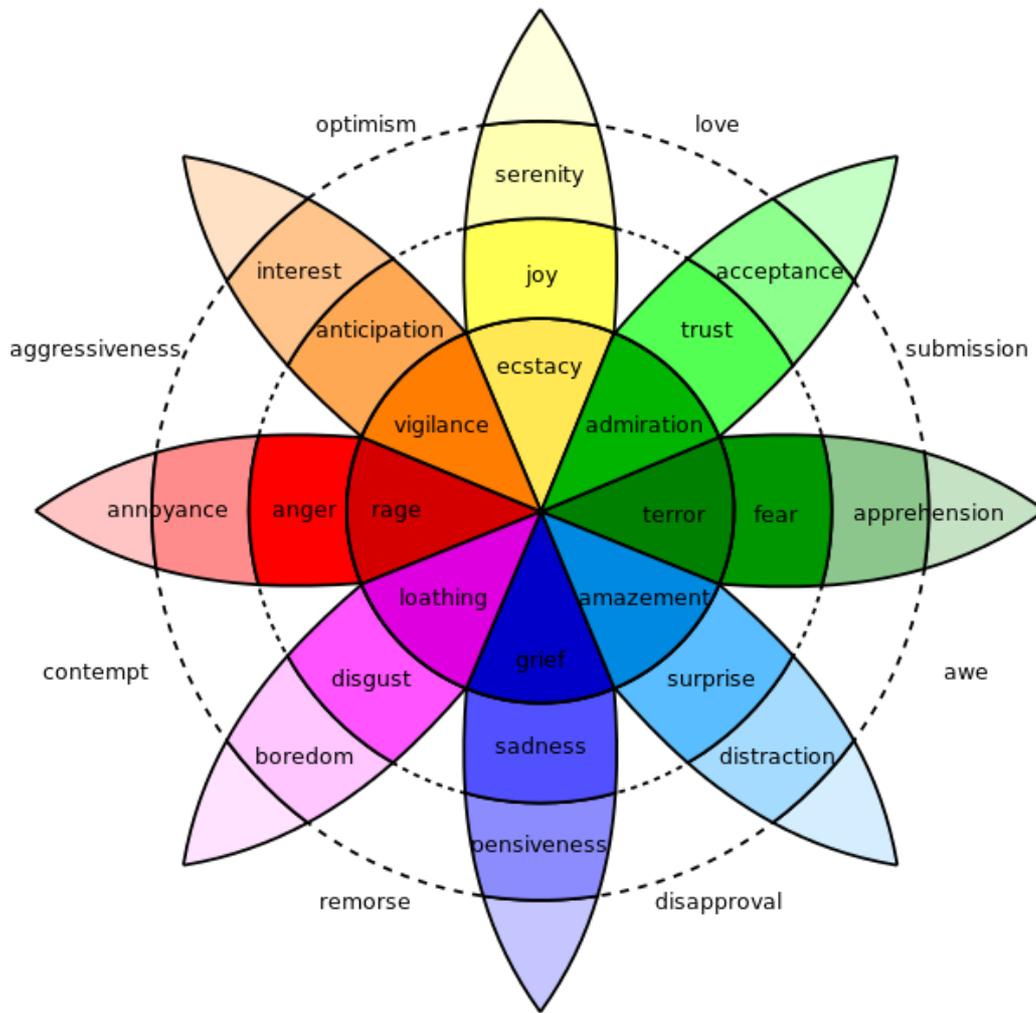
What are our basic emotions? Tomkins (1984) insisted that there are nine biologically based emotions which he terms "affects" to indicate that these emotions are innate, biological responses. The first six basic affects he lists are enjoyment-joy, interest-excitement, anger-rage, distress-anguish, surprise-startle, and fear-terror of which he later added shame-humiliation. They all appear in pairs with the first one being the mild expression of that emotion and the second one, an intense manifestation of it. In other words, joy, excitement, rage, anguish, startle and terror are all intense emotions. He later adds "dissembl" (a neologism) and "disgust" to the list.

Ekman identified six basic emotions: anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, surprise but he expanded his list of basic emotion in the 1990s to include pride in achievement and satisfaction. He defined "basic" emotions in two ways. First they are basic because they are different from one another in important ways, like primary colours they are the source of other colours when mixed, but alone are primary.

[f]rom this perspective, fear, anger, disgust, sadness and contempt, all negative emotions, differ in their appraisal, antecedent events, probable behavioural response, physiology and other characteristics described below. So, too amusement, pride in achievement, satisfaction, relief and contentment, all positive emotions, differ from each other. This basic emotions perspective is in contrast to those who treat emotions as fundamentally the same, differing only in terms of intensity or pleasantness. (Ekman P, 1999, p.45).

Second, they are basic emotion because they are emotions “evolved for their adaptive value in dealing with fundamental life tasks.” (Ekman P, 1999, p.46)

Robert Plutchik (2001, p.344) believed that there are eight primary bipolar emotions i.e. joy vs. sadness, anger vs. fear, trust vs. disgust, surprise vs. anticipation. These primary emotions are illustrated in his Plutchik’s wheel of Emotions:



In the wheel of emotions above, different emotions are classified in different colours and for each colour, the deeper the tone, the more intense the emotion. Take for example anger, a person's anger can progress from mere annoyance, to more substantial anger, to boiling rage. Rage is the most intense emotion in the "anger" category. Emotion can also be combined to form another emotion, "rage" and "loathing" go together can form "contempt" and so can "boredom"/"annoyance" and "anger"/"disgust", reflecting different intensities of contempt. In the above diagram, the intense emotions are those in the inner

circles, i.e. “rage”, “loathing”, “grief”, “amazement”, “terror”, “admiration”, “ecstasy” and “vigilance” and to a lesser degree but still intense “anger”, “disgust”, “sadness”, “surprise”, “fear”, “trust”, “joy” and “anticipation”. Emotions are portrayed as a range of emotions and because of the bipolar nature of primary emotions, they are also portrayed as opposites such as “ecstasy” is the opposite to “grief”.

Ortony and Turner (1990) made a table summarizing basic emotions identified by key psychologists based on their research and findings:

Theorist	Basic Emotions
Plutchik	Acceptance, anger, anticipation, disgust, joy, fear, sadness, surprise
Arnold	Anger, aversion, courage, dejection, desire, despair, fear, hate, hope, love, sadness
Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth	Anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, surprise
Frijda	Desire, happiness, interest, surprise, wonder, sorrow
Gray	Rage and terror, anxiety, joy
Izard	Anger, contempt, disgust, distress, fear, guilt, interest, joy, shame, surprise
James	Fear, grief, love, rage
McDougall	Anger, disgust, elation, fear, subjection, tender-emotion, wonder

Mowrer	Pain, pleasure
Oatley and Johnson-Laird	Anger, disgust, anxiety, happiness, sadness
Panksepp	Expectancy, fear, rage, panic
Tomkins	Anger, interest, contempt, disgust, distress, fear, joy, shame, surprise
Watson	Fear, love, rage
Weiner and Graham	Happiness, sadness

Basic emotions above are experienced by people across cultures - Hong Kong actors and European or American actors experience the same basic emotions because they are innate reactions. That explains my earlier assertion that Hong Kong Chinese actors are capable of intense emotions developed to deal with “fundamental life tasks”, as Ekman put it. Darwin argued that all humans, even animals, show emotions through similar behaviours (Darwin, 1872) linked to our physiological response as animals. A culture may create terms that draw their attention to a particular emotion that the other cultures neglect² but the basic emotions are essentially the same across all cultures.

Emotions should be viewed as families of emotion as there is more than one expression for each emotion – Ekman and Friesen (1978) found that there are

² Examples are like the German word “schadenfreude” (pleasure derived by someone from another person’s misfortune) and the Chinese word 撒娇 (*saijiao*) (only used by females) (making cute sounds or whining in a childish voice to butter someone up, or to flirt, or to act vulnerable, so as to elicit affection from others)

60 ways of expressing anger each with a different intensity of emotion. All these 60 expressions are interrelated and share “core configurational properties” so that they are different from other basic emotions (Ekman and Friesen, 1978; see also Ekman, 1993, p.386). Variations of the expression indicate and signify the various intensity of that basic emotion. The intensity of a particular emotion depends on (1) the control individuals assert on the expression of the emotions – the question is whether such control is culturally and socially dependent; (2) the specific details of the events that produce the emotion – if Stanislavski’s emotion memory is used to evoke emotion, it may explain the fact that the more experience one receives, the more able one is to express the various intensities of certain emotions and (3) whether it is spontaneous or simulated - if the situation really calls for intense emotion, it is much easier to express because there is less conscious control and no intellectual monitoring - this thesis therefore recommends Britton’s Self-with-Others approach which trains a more direct response to stimulus.

Plays are constructed around conflicts in life with complex characters needing to make difficult choices. As research shows (Goleman D, 1987), people whose lives are more intense, tend to lead a more complex life in general and such characters are most appropriate for the stage. Consider all the Greek tragedies, Oedipus’ horror and regret on discovering he has murdered his father and married his mother, Hecuba’s grief when her husband, King Priam, and her nineteen children are killed, and Medea’s jealous rage when she is spurned by Theseus resulting in her murdering her own children. Shakespeare’s plays are also full of complex characters with intense emotions: Hamlet’s anger towards

his stepfather who killed his father and disgust that his mother married his uncle with unseemly haste; Othello's jealousy, unfairly suspecting his wife infidelity with Cassio; Macbeth's ambition to be King of Scotland: the deposed King Lear's rage during the storm scene and despair while holding his dead daughter, Cordelia; Oswald's and Hedda Gabler's desperation in Ibsen's *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler*; the nostalgia and regret in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*; Ranevskaya's denial in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*; the anxieties felt by both Corie and Paul Bratter in Neil Simon's *Barefoot in the Park*; Mrs. Kitty Warren's shame in Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*; the dishonesty and self-deception in Pinter's *Betrayal*; Ian's terror in Sarah Kane's *Blasted*. Even non-naturalistic plays have characters with intense emotion, e.g., the desperation and torture of Joseph Garcin in Sartre's *No Exit*, the desperation of the old couple trying to commit suicide in Ionesco's *The Chairs* and the desperation and futility of almost all Samuel Beckett's characters. Unlike the others, Brecht is the least concerned to express intense emotions as his alienation effect is to stop audience from losing themselves in the narrative and provoke them to have a more critical social and political response to the story. His method is inspired by Chinese opera and it might explain why his plays are so popular in Hong Kong. The emotions provoked should not overwhelm audience's intellectual response. Despite that, the death of Mother Courage's children one-by-one in *Mother Courage and Her Children* and Grusha's love towards Michael in *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* all retain very powerful emotions. Intense emotions can be found in all great plays. Actors need to know how to express them.

Psychological Studies on Expression of Emotion and Inter-cultural studies on Expression of Emotion

As soon as we establish we share basic emotions common to all, the second question is whether Hong Kong student actors really find it hard to express such emotions. My anecdotal evidence needs to be supported by scientific research. If most of Hong Kong student actors indeed find it hard to express intense emotion, is it a universal problem or is it a problem more particular to Hong Kong student actors because what affects their expressivity is connected to their culture?

For expression of emotion in general and whether it is universal or culture-dependent, this thesis traces it back to Darwin's *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals* (1872) in which he noted that certain (facial) expression indicates basic and fundamental emotions that are common to all men. However, in the early 20th century, Landis (1924) and Klineberg (1938) advocated that the relationship between facial expression and emotion are largely culturally dependent and neither universal nor innate, a position supported by many anthropologists. Their views were, however, challenged by Tomkin (1962) and Ekman & Friesen (1971) who came to the conclusion that expression of basic human emotions are universal. Towards the end of the 20th century, this universalist position was criticized by Russell (1994) and Fridlund (1994) although they did not completely deny it. Despite the differences in view, it is generally accepted, as of the date of this thesis, that some emotions are universal as they are physiological phenomena but that the expression of such emotions is influenced by our learning and cultural experiences. Ekman (1982) and Izard (1977) have conclusive evidence that

“specific and differential facial expression exist for a number of fundamental or primary emotions.” (Wallott, 1998) This thesis comes to the conclusion that there are basic emotions, the expression of which is universal to all mankind. However the intensity of expression of each emotion is influenced by cultures (and social conditioning), our experience, and whether the emotion is spontaneous or simulated.

For cultural factors affecting emotional expressivity, this thesis relies on intercultural studies and research on emotion conducted by research psychologists. One of the leading research psychologists in this area is Klaus Scherer, a specialist in emotion. He has published an intercultural study on emotion entitled *Experiencing Emotion: An Intercultural Study* in 1983 with fellow research psychologists: Harold Wallbott (a specialist in the psychology of emotion) and Angela Summerfield. This is a large-scale cross-cultural study of emotional experience and emotional reaction, conducted in Israel and seven European countries: the UK, West Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy and Spain. Surprisingly their findings show that inter-cultural differences on emotion are not pronounced, although such differences were found to exist. This research is important in setting out the method of research and narrowing the investigation to four emotions – joy, sadness, fear and anger. However, this research does not cover any Asian countries. Later Klaus Scherer conducted another study with fellow research psychologists, Harold Wallbott, David Matsumoto and Tsutomu Kudoh, which includes Japan, and this research is published in, *Facets of Emotion: Recent Research* (1988) in a chapter entitled, *Emotional Experience in Cultural Context: A Comparison between Europe, Japan and the United States*. In this study the

comparison between Japan, the United States and Europe shows more pronounced cultural differences between the east and west showing that regional differences may be more pronounced than differences between countries within a region. In 2006, Linda Camras published an article entitled *Children's Expressiveness Linked to Family and Culture* with specific reference to Chinese students and concluded that Chinese culture seems to make students less expressive even though the expressivity examined was limited to facial expressivity.

A key problem with all of these studies is that none of them address the matter of intercultural emotional expressivity in Hong Kong. There is an inter-cultural study on emotional recognition led by Ekman in 1987 that involves Hong Kong and it shows that mixed emotional expressions are easily recognizable across countries – it is, however, not related to emotional expressivity. (Berry, 1992, p.147) There is also an article on inter-cultural study on emotionality that involves Hong Kong but the article is mainly on measuring emotionality and not relevant to this thesis. (Wong & Bond, 2002)

However research on Chinese and Japanese subjects may arguably apply to Hong Kong. In the 2011 Hong Kong population census, published by the Census and Statistic Department in Hong Kong, 93.6% of the Hong Kong population were ethnic Chinese so arguably, research on Chinese may apply to Hong Kong and since Hong Kong is in the Asian region, the research on the Japanese may also be relevant. However these studies are not necessarily conclusive because Hong Kong, unlike China, has a long history of British influence as a former British colony and whether the British culture (a combination of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish cultures) may have any

positive or negative influence on expressivity of Hong Kong people is not clear. To complicate the picture further, due to the imminent handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, 62,000 people representing about 1% of the Hong Kong population emigrated abroad in 1990 (before 1980-87, 20,000 left Hong Kong each year; it increased to 30,000 in 1987, 40,000 in 1988 and 1989)³ and after years of living aboard in countries such as Canada and Australia, they returned and settled back in Hong Kong - these returnees, with their children having grown up in a western country, may behave differently from local Hong Kong people. According to the Hong Kong Transition Project conducted by the Hong Kong Baptist University in 2002, Hong Kong returnees constituted 3% of the Hong Kong population in that year. There is no data to show how many of them attended HKAPA or are engaged in performing arts and further research is needed in this area. However before any further research can be done directly on Hong Kong people, the literature presently available should be sufficient to demonstrate that there are differences in inter-cultural emotional expressivity and Chinese (Hong Kong Chinese included) tend to be less expressive than their western counterparts.

Character Emotion vs Actor Emotion

When it comes to the dichotomy between character emotion and actor emotion, the main focus will be on research work by Konstantin Stanislavski, Sonia Moore, Phillip Zarrilli and Elly Konijn, the last mentioned particularly on her book on acting emotions (2000).

³ Murphy C. (1991).

Stanislavski is probably the first one to point out the only emotions an actor has access to are his/her own and so actors have the responsibility to expand real life experiences and read more, travel more, see more plays, talk to more people, study, work, fall in love, learn and experience as much as they can so that they can tap into their own memories and emotions to realize the character's role.

Sonia Moore further elaborated on Stanislavski, interpreting and explaining his system and expanding it to include work on the subtext of a character's role. Also based on Stanislavski, Phillip Zarrilli's focus is on bodymind training proposing that through such training, an actor can tap into his/her emotions to find the character's emotions.

However Konijn put forward a counter theory that actors' emotions are not real emotions. Konijn's book mainly deals with Diderot's "actor's paradox" i.e. should the emotions of the actor coincide with the emotions of the character or should they not? Or to go even further, can they ever coincide? Her book suggests that it is a myth that character empathy occurs when an actor is on stage - instead she suggests the actor's emotions are a result of a challenge and the gratification of task-fulfillment and such task-fulfilling emotions are the real emotions that drive an actor on stage. As Konijn puts it, "[t]he diversity and intensity of the emotions which an actress has to parade in the short span of time in which she plays Media, Elektra, or Andromache, for example, would not be possible in daily life." (Konijn, 2000, p.59) One of the actor's tasks is to create a model of the character in his imagination and give expression to this model as convincingly as she can. The audience is given the illusion that the emotion portrayed on stage is real and that the actor's emotion is a

spontaneous reaction given the circumstances and his character.

If actors are not using their own emotions, does it matter if the actors themselves are not very expressive? It is a very valid question because what stops an actor from expressing his emotion may be partly due to his culture which makes him/her feel ashamed and too embarrassed to express their feelings freely, and if shame and embarrassment are what operate in the unconscious mind of the actors, it will work differently if Konijin's view is accurate. Accordingly to Konijin, acting is a job for actors and they will try the best they can to create the characters. If actors cannot perform the task well, in this case not being able to express suitable emotions on stage, it will bring shame and embarrassment to the actor. In other words the shame and embarrassment that prevents an actor from expressing his/her emotion in his real life may actually induce the actor to express her created emotion on stage in order to perform her task well. Some inexpressive people may become expressive actors when they are on stage and it is particularly effective for those who are task-oriented, but I argue it may not work for a majority of actors. If an actor is not used to expressing her emotions, it is not easy that suddenly she is able to express them on stage, no matter whether they are real emotions or not. Even if an actor creates a character's emotion in her conscious mind, can she easily retrieve it and express it if it is buried in her subconscious mind? If the range of emotions an actor possesses is narrow and limited, can she suddenly widen the range because it is required by her professional task to realize the role? So although Konijin's theory is different from Stanislavski, the fact that actors can only tap into their own emotions is the same. Their way of expressing emotions cannot be easily changed. In other words, if the actor is

emotionally inexpressive, it will be an impediment for such an actor to express the character's emotions, either because their own inexpressivity inhibits them from expressing the characters' emotions, or because the actor has difficulty expressing her own task-fulfilling emotions.

Konijin's task-based theory was challenged by Eric Hetzler in 2012. After interviewing 333 respondents, Eric Hetzler (2012) came to the conclusion that an actor's emotions on stage are real emotions arising from "the circumstances dictated by the action," not a task-based emotion. (Hetzler, 2012, p.12) Although as mentioned above, an actor can seldom experience the range of emotions Medea experienced in real life, given the circumstances dictated by the action, an actor can experience the same emotion as Medea if she believes that the situation is real for the character, the emotion the actor experiences is as real as Medea's. It is true that it is the character's emotion but since she is the character, it is the actor who is really feeling it. However, despite this strong identification, the actor still has "the aesthetic distance of the 'imaginary'" (Hetzler, 2012, p.12) as an actor still needs to remember the blocking, the props, the other actors and probably the audience. If Hetzler's challenge is valid, actors are using real emotions and their emotion expressivity will then directly affect the characters' expressivity.

Hong Kong Theatre Education

There is very little literature written on Hong Kong drama. Hardly any western scholar has written any article or book on Hong Kong drama. Clayton G MacKenzie has published an article on *Together Again: Theatre in Postcolonial*

Hong Kong (2003) and *Questions of Identity in Contemporary Hong Kong* (1995), but they are not relevant to acting. A few ethically Chinese scholars have written about Hong Kong but mainly on issues such as post-colonialism (Luk Yun Tong, 1998), identity (Shelby Kar-yan Chan, 2015; Wan-Jung Wang, 2016), globalization (Kay Li, 2007), community development drama (Joe Leung, 1978; Wan-Jung Wang, 2014), theatre of the oppressed (Jack Shu, 2016) and intercultural theatre (Siyuan Liu, 2016; Min Tian, 2009) but none of them are concerned with acting and so they are not particularly relevant to the thesis. As of June 2017, the Hong Kong office of the International Association of Theatre Critics (IATC) has published twenty-two books on Hong Kong drama (compilations of play reviews are excluded) and five books on theatre education. None of these publications is devoted to acting or actor training. IATC has also published annual yearbooks on the Hong Kong theatre scene which provide important statistical data regarding Hong Kong drama.

Zifan Fong's (方梓勳) books include very valuable interviews of Hong Kong actors that may throw light on the theatre training in Hong Kong before the establishment of the APA. Shelby Kar-yan Chan's *Identity and Theatre Translation in Hong Kong* (2015) is a very informative book on the history and development of Hong Kong theatre, particularly on the productions of translated and western plays.

As HKAPA is the only tertiary performing arts institution in Hong Kong, this thesis examines its acting training in detail with primary materials from its syllabus and course description. The discussion of the acting training is also

combined with my interviews with the former Head of Acting at HKAPA, and interviews with some lecturers and former students.

The lack of theatre and acting education books in Hong Kong makes research on drama and acting in Hong Kong a necessity and this thesis calls for more research in this area.

Psychophysical Approaches

Konstantin Stanislavski, Russian actor, theatre director and trainer, is the father of the most influential systematic approach acting training in the western world. He was also the first to use the term ‘psychophysical’ (*psikhofizicheski*) to describe an approach to acting emphasizing the connection of body and mind (Zarrilli, 2009, p.13). In order to have a more accurate understanding of the training approach of Stanislavski’s system, this thesis uses the primary material, Stanislavski’s *An Actor’s Work* (trans Benedetti) because it combines Stanislavski’s *An Actor Prepares* (1936) and *Building a Character* (1948) because we can only understand his system properly by taking the two books together. This thesis also takes into account Stanislavski’s later book, *Creating a Role* (1961).

Secondary materials include Phillip Zarrilli, Bella Merlin (*Beyond Stanislavsky: The Psycho-Physical Approach to Actor-Training*, 2001, 2014), Michael Chekhov (*On the Technique of Acting*, 1991 and *To the Actor*, 2002), Eugenio Barba (Barba and Savarese 1991, 2006) (founder of Odin Teatret and a foreword to Zarrilli’s *Psychophysical Acting*, 2009), Jean Benedetti (in addition

to *An Actor's Work, Stanislavski: An introduction*, 2008), and finally John Britton (*Encountering Ensemble*, 2013). Phillip Zarrilli is renowned for training actors in psychophysical process through Asian martial/meditative arts. His published books cover both acting emotion and psychophysical acting including *Psychophysical Acting: An intercultural approach after Stanislavski* (2009) and his edited book *Acting (Re)Considered: Theories and Practices* (2nd ed. 2002). The above two books cover most of the areas this thesis sets out to study including the idea of emotion and acting emotion. His edited book, *Acting (Re)Considered* (2nd ed. 2002), is a compilation of essays by various authors drawn mainly from *The Drama Review*.

A literature review of all these books will serve to explain various types of psychophysical approaches: Stanislavski (physical action), Eugenio Barba (pre-expressivity), Chekhov (triggering emotions through physical embodiment), and Britton (Self-With-Others Approach). The range of psychological approaches shows the different ways the bodymind works and the different emphases given by different drama theoreticians. Britton's approach has incorporated ideas from many psychophysical theorists and practitioners and his book (*Encountering Ensemble*, 2013) provides a useful interplay of theory and practice of well-known practitioners like Eugenio Barba and Michael Chekhov.

III Methodology

This thesis draws its theoretical basis from the literature review by linking different acting theories with psychological studies – although I also refer to some

interviews both in Section IV and Appendix 1, however this material is not sufficiently detailed and comprehensive for quantitative analysis. It does, however, provide valid and illuminating background and generates themes for relevant discussion.

This thesis is based on a normative qualitative approach⁴, analysis based on observation, experience, argument and logical reasoning. To arrive at its conclusion, the thesis also takes a comparative approach by comparing HKAPA course descriptions with my training experience with Britton at the University of Huddersfield during the summer of 2011 to find some ways that may assist student performers in Hong Kong to explore acting with intense emotion.

Inevitably, to understand the Hong Kong theatre scene, I have to refer to texts written in Chinese. By doing so, I have come across many Chinese names and organisations which may or may not have English translations. Sometimes even if English names are available, I was not able to find them in the existing literature. This thesis takes the approach that if existing English names are known, such names will be used without providing the Chinese names. If not, the author will transliterate those names into English himself (if the author comes from Mainland China, transliteration is based on Putonghua pinyin and if the author comes from Hong Kong, transliteration is based on Cantonese pinyin; literal translation is used for the translation of any name of an organisation) and then this thesis will provide the Chinese

⁴ See Taylor C, Gibbs, G.R., Lewins A (2005), Quality of qualitative analysis. At http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/Intro_QDA/quality.php [Accessed on 25 July 2017]

names in brackets. Chinese surnames are put first in accordance with the standard Chinese name system with the surname all in upper case.

IV Expression of Emotion and Theatre Training in Hong Kong

Part 1 Expression of Emotion, Cultural Differences in the Expression of Emotion and Acting Emotion

If Hong Kong student actors really find it difficult to express intense emotions, is it a problem related to its culture?

Cross-cultural Studies on Emotion Expressivity

Scherer et al have conducted many cross-cultural studies on emotions (Scherer, 1986, 1983, 1994)⁵ but some of them only involved European countries, so the study conducted by Scherer, Wallbott, Matsumoto and Kudoh (Scherer, 1988, pp. 5-30) was chosen to be discussed in detail in this thesis as it involved comparing Japanese subject with US and European counterparts and Japanese culture tends to be more similar to Hong Kong culture than US or European cultures⁶. The general picture emerging from this data indicates that the Japanese students tend to have a comparatively low degree of

⁵ Please also see Mesquita, and Frijda (1992, 179-204); Matsumoto and Ekman, (1989 143-157).

⁶ The overall emotion recognition rate between the Chinese and the Japanese was the same: Chan (1985, 681-692).

emotional expressiveness⁷, manifesting their reaction mostly in the face. However, they are more expressive vocally when they feel joy and anger (the four emotions they measured are joy, anger, fear and sadness) but even for that, they are less expressive in terms of non-verbal behaviour and frequently of physiological symptoms than their US and European counterparts, based on open-ended questionnaires to the subjects⁸. Interestingly though, even the Japanese and the American were on the opposite end of emotion expressiveness, they both exercised higher anger display control than Europeans. (Scherer, 1988, p. 29) These findings may reflect Japanese people's tendency to control emotional reactions in social situations (cf. Ekman, 1973, pp.169-222). Possible causes for such differences implicate cultural values, norms, and interactional practices but also demographic and socioeconomic factors, as well as the frequency of certain types of events (e.g. crime).

The comparison between Japan, the United States, and Europe suggests some rather pronounced differences (Scherer, Wallbott, Matsumoto and Kudoh, 1988). Other than elicitation factors, differential reaction patterns are major domains of intercultural differences. If all three cultures are placed on a continuum from low to high emotionality/expressiveness, Americans are very

⁷ Similar findings as comparing the emotion expressivity between the Japanese subjects and their US counterparts: see Matsumoto, Kudoh, Scherer and Wallbott (1988, 267-286).

⁸ According to Scherer et al (1988), subject experience cannot be studied in any other way than questionnaires and it is better than interviews as it can be anonymous when intimate questions are asked. It should be noted that the data presented rely on subjective recall of situation and reactions which may not completely reflect the truth because of factors like ego-involvement, defence mechanism, general inference tendencies and the subject's state when reporting or on situational factors.

high on this dimension, especially as far as the intensity of the subjective feeling and the expressive nonverbal response is concerned, the Japanese are very low, both in terms of nonverbal behaviour and frequency of physiological symptoms. This seems to lend support to the stereotyped notion of the “inscrutable Oriental”, making it difficult for Oriental actors to express intense emotion.

Camras (2006) showed that culture and family environment influence children's facial expressivity and create differences among children of the same ethnicity (Camras, 2006, 15). A mother's strictness, including her attitude toward the appropriateness of children's emotional expressiveness versus restraint, strongly affected her daughter's expressiveness, leading them to conclude that family life is a stronger influence than ethnicity on a child's expressiveness. Despite that, culture may still play an indirect part, i.e. culture affects the way a mother brings up her child and it in turn affects the child's expressivity. Asian mothers tend to be stricter when it comes to disobedience (Chua A, 2011)⁹.

Facial Expression and Bodily Expression

⁹ Chua A. (2011 January 8). Why Chinese Mothers Are Superior. *The Wall Street Journal*, retrieved from <http://www.psychology.sunysb.edu/hwaters-psy327/articles/Chinese%20mothers.pdf> where the author quoted from a study of 50 Western American mothers and 48 Chinese immigrant mothers where 70% of the Western mothers regarded learning to be fun and believed that they should not stress their children by aiming for academic success whereas none of the Chinese mothers thought that it should be the case. Instead the Chinese mothers believed that to achieve academic success, children need to work and children naturally will resist working, so they have to override their preferences. In other words, they should not and will not take disobedience lightly.

Most of the studies here are related to facial expression but Ekman and Friesen (1974) have stated that:

observation of bodily movement does provide information of the quantity (ie. the intensity) of emotion, but not on the quality or specificity of emotions. This would imply that no specific gestures, body movements, or body postures exist which indicate emotions, but instead that only intensity of the emotion experienced is reflected in, for instance, the total movement activity. On the other hand, there is evidence (see Scherer & Wallbott, p.1990) that movements might be influenced by the emotional state of a person. (Wallbott, 1998, p.881)

In other words, even though the body alone may not be able to express a particular emotion recognizable by the interlocutor put together with the facial expression, it can help to portray intense emotion as it can provide information about the quantity of emotion. Body movement is a very useful tool to intensify emotion especially for actors on stage as some audience may sit at a distance away from the actors. However if facial expression is already a problem for Hong Kong student actors, the use of the whole body is probably even more difficult for them (Scherer, 1988),

There is not any direct or relevant study or research done on Hong Kong people as far as emotional expressivity is concerned. If the Japanese or Chinese subjects are similar to the Hong Kong student actors, there is likely to be a problem for Hong Kong student actors to express intense emotions as they are less expressive than their western counterparts. Over 90% of Hong Kong population is made up by ethnic Chinese and despite the past colonial influence, it can be concluded that the culture in Hong Kong is similar to those in China and Japan, particularly Mainland China.

Conclusion from Psychological Researches

It seems that all psychologists believe that there are basic emotions common to all mankind although they may not completely agree with what they are – typical basic emotions include as joy, sadness, fear, anger, disgust. The intense form of these basic emotions are ecstasy, grief, terror, rage, loathing respectively. Hsü stated that “[e]motional expressions, in their simplest and most natural forms, as in children, have a physiological basis and are the same throughout the world.” (Hsü, 1985, p.139)

Under each category of emotion, there are variations of expression. Variations of the expression signify the various intensity of that basic emotion. What affects the intensity is related to, among other factors, cultural differences.

Psychological researches show that Japanese are emotionally less expressive than the US or their European counterparts in both positive and negative emotions but they tend to be slightly better in showing positive emotions than negative emotions. Compared with the US counterparts, Chinese are also found to be less facially expressive. The cultural differences may be due to the family environment and the way children are brought up and the way children are brought up can also be linked to the culture itself.

Together with facial expression, body movement can also help the portrayal of intense emotion. From previous studies cited above, the overall expression of

emotion (which encompasses both facial expression and body movement) is weaker in Chinese and Japanese people than their western counterparts.

It has to be pointed out that the difficulty in expressing intense emotion in itself is not a problem. I have mentioned in the introduction that for each culture, it has developed its own way of displaying and receiving emotion codes. Some people may even claim that “still waters run deep” and the fact that a person trying hard to conceal his/her own emotion only reveals how passionate a person feels about what has happened and is greatly appreciated by the perceiver. It only becomes a problem when this person is a stage actor – an audience who sits away from the actor may not be able to pick up subtle hints and unlike a film actor where the camera may direct the audience to look at what the director wants them to see, a theatre audience sees the whole stage where many things may distract them. This problem was recognized by Hsu when he said,

The expressions we use in ordinary life, verbal or otherwise, are, by the standards of art, poor in power and range. From childhood onwards the expressions of our feelings are curbed to conform with the social conventions and what is rigorously taught us in early life soon becomes second nature as we grow older...Again in most people's life the exciting moments are few and far between, fewer and milder at any rate than in dramas. What is not smothered by imposed and voluntary suppression withers through lack of exercise. (Hsü, 1985, p.139)

Chinese opera was developed in a way so that the lack of actor's expression does not constitute a problem:

In the Chinese theatre the expressions used are derived from the natural and spontaneous manifestation of emotions but are developed beyond

them to carry the more complicated emotions of adult life. Unlike the natural expressions of children, the Chinese style of acting cannot be automatically and universally understood, it is a language which has to be learnt. (Hsü, 1985, p.139)

In the same way, Hong Kong actors need to rediscover the natural and spontaneous manifestation of emotions without relying on the forms provided by the Chinese opera so that their acting can be automatically and universally understood by the audience.

Character Emotion vs. Actor Emotion

As discussed earlier, research psychologists have shown with their studies that expression of emotion varies in different cultures and Japanese and Chinese tend to be less expressive in most categories of intense emotions. How does it affect Hong Kong student actors from portraying emotion on stage? Can the Hong Kong student actor overcome his own inadequacy in emotional expressivity by putting himself into his character? Or does the mere fact of acting on stage provide any obstacle for expressing emotion?

Is the emotion on stage portrayed character-emotion or actor's private emotion? What is the relation between the portrayed character-emotion and the actor's emotion? Stanislavski's answer was simply the following:

My feelings are inalienably mine, and yours belong to you in the same way. You can understand a part, sympathise with the person portrayed, and put yourself in his place, so that you will act as he would. That will arouse feelings in the actor that are analogous to those required for the part. But those feelings will belong, not to the person created by the author of the play, but to the actor himself. (Stanislavski, 1964, pp.191-

192)

Whatever an actor portrays, the emotion has to come from himself/herself. In other words, if an actor finds it hard to express his/her emotion in daily life, it will also affect his/her expression on stage.

In fact, to express emotion on stage is even more difficult than expressing emotion in daily life. It is important to understand what is emotion on stage and how it works.

All of our acts, even the simplest, which are so familiar to us in everyday life, become strained when we appear behind the footlights before a public of a thousand people. This is why it is necessary to correct ourselves and learn again how to walk, move about, sit or lie down. It is essential to re-educate ourselves to look and see, on the stage, to listen and to hear. (Stanislavski, 1936, p.77)

Stanislavski said that actors needed to be re-taught how to achieve basic faculties on stage as they have lost them once they were on stage. Sonia Moore said that an actor's "natural psycho-physical union" is severed and when that happens, it causes "paralysis of faculties" (Moore, 1984, p.30). When a Hong Kong student actor appears on stage, not only does his culture factor affect his emotional display, the stage itself, the fact that he is being watched, is another impediment to emotional display.

Part 2 Theatre Training in Hong Kong

A Historical Development of Theatre Training

Having established that Hong Kong student actors find it hard to express

intense emotion, is there any theatre training method that can help them? Before answering this question, it is important to find out what kind of training Hong Kong student actors receive. As HKAPA is the only tertiary institution to teach performing arts, much emphasis is devoted to discuss the syllabus of the HKAPA.

One may argue that the historical development of Hong Kong theatre especially before the establishment of the HKAPA in 1984 is largely beyond the scope of this thesis.

However the historical development of Hong Kong is relevant in this thesis by illustrating the following points:

- a. "Chinese drama as we have know it today originates and derives from western drama." (Zuo, 1996, p.2);
- b. The Hong Kong theatre scene is still in its infancy when compared with countires in the western world such as the U.K. and U.S.
- c. A few early theatre practitioners and theatre trainers who became household names in Hong Kong were greatly influenced by Stanislavski's system either because they studied abroad, such as Dr. CHUNG King-fai and LAM Lap Sam, or because, like CHAN Yau-hou they were influenced by The Guangdone Dramatic Research Institute (GDRI), the first Drama School in South China. These early theatre practitioners paved the way for the establishment of the

HKAPA and explained its adoption of Stanislavski's system (HKAPA, 2014). There are no available publications on theatre training before the establishment of the HKAPA in 1984.

- d. Plays performed in Hong Kong have become more and more diversified and with the development of full time actors, the need for a proper theatre training is becoming increasingly important.

Theatre and Acting Training Before 1984

The First Wave (1900 – 1960): Mainland Chinese Influence

Starting from the early 20th century, “Wenming” drama “文明戲” (literal translation being “modern theatre” or sometimes referred to as “crude stage play”) was heavily influenced by western drama. Wenming drama was a modern development from Beijing opera which had a freer style in terms of singing (Baidu Encyclopedia, 2015). As it further developed, some of the performances dispensed with singing all together, making it the same as western drama. Wenming drama was first introduced into China and Hong Kong by OUYANG Yuqian (歐陽予倩) and like minded theatre workers in the 1920s and 1930s. At the beginning of the development of modern drama, there was hardly any proper theatre training but given the very free style of acting, only actors who thought they were capable of doing that would take up the roles, making it not so important for acting training.

When it was introduced into Hong Kong, the new styled drama was called

“Baiwa” drama (白話劇) (plays without singing). This new-style drama (plays in modern dress without singing or “stylised” acting) made real headway in Hong Kong as import from Guangzhou and through the influence of two men: TIAN Han and OUYANG Yuqian. TIAN Han founded Shanghai’s Nan Guo (Southern) Dramatic Arts Society, which become famous and very influential throughout China. Ouyang was an actor in the Tokyo-based “Spring Willow” Drama Club (春柳劇) in 1907.¹⁰ In 1928, the Guangdong government invited Ouyang to establish the Guangdong Dramatic Research Institute, the first drama school in South China. The teachers and students of the institute became the first generation actors in Hong Kong’s Cantonese theatre.¹¹

The themes of this new styled drama were mostly critical socio-political comments on society. Facing political crises and corruption, cultural workers took on the moral responsibility to educate the people. The rise of Chinese nationalism and the need to modernize China was a result of a series of political

¹⁰ In 1904, Ouyang Yuqian was sent to study in Japan at the age of 15, first studied at Seijo College, then studying commerce at Meiji University and studying arts at Waseda University. In 1907, he joined the drama society “Spring Willow” (春柳社) in Japan and performed plays such as H.B. Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin and other social conscious plays. In 1911, he returned to China and formed various literature clubs and drama societies like Spring Willow Drama Club (春柳劇) and Minming (民鳴) Drama Club and became one of the first theatre practitioners. He was also the founder and Dean of Central Academy of Drama.

¹¹ LO Dun, LEE Shen Fung, NG Wui, LEE Fa, LEE Lai Lai had all joined the school as students in April 1929. Upon graduation, they formed amateur groups to play in Guangzhou before moving on to Hong Kong, where they joined the film industry while performing plays in their spare time. Other students include WONG Hun, LAW Bun Chiu, AU Oi, CHEUNG Kong Hung, WONG Hok Sing, PANG Kwok Wah and CHAN Yau Ming, all of whom achieved fame as actors, actresses and directors in either Cantonese operas or films. (The China Dramatist Association (Guangdong Branch) & the Guangdong Spoken Drama Research Society 1984, 59)

events like the collapse of the Qing Dynasty, the May Fourth Movement and the Sino-Japanese Wars. At that time, the dominant western theatre style moved from romanticism to naturalism or sometimes known as realism (Lo, 2004, 144). Western naturalistic drama at that time yearned for social reforms and demanded social activism. Playwrights like George Bernard Shaw and Henrik Ibsen became very popular. In accordance with *Important Events of Hong Kong Theatre* by CHEUNG Ping Kuen and HO Heng Fung, there were only eight translated plays performed in Hong Kong before 1960 (Cheung & Ho, 2001, pp.231-244) and other than three plays whose playwrights were unknown, the other six plays were by Bernard Shaw, Henrik Ibsen, Moliere, Oscar Wilde and Carol Osvaldo Goldoni. Chinese cultural workers found that they wanted to achieve the same goals and they either imported those western plays or started to write plays following the same style¹² (Liang, 2012, pp.178-179).

Where they lacked acting training, it was compensated by their strong mission and commitment. The playwrights and directors at that time were eager to bring about social changes and wanted to criticize political oppression and social injustice. The theatre workers were dedicated and mainly restricted to the intellectuals.

The Second Wave – local groups

¹² Examples are Cao Yu's *Thunderstorm* (1934) and *Peking Man* (1940) and Lao She's *Teahouse* (1957).

The second wave started from the local secondary schools. It started at the same time as the first wave but in the beginning it was restricted to small amateur productions in schools (Chan, 2015, p.40). In the early 20 century, the missionary schools in Hong Kong introduced Chinese elite students to Western-style plays.

In the late 60's, some of the missionary school students studied at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and joined the university Drama Club. There were not many theatre companies in Hong Kong at that time and the Hong Kong Inter-school Drama Festival played a very important part in local theatre development, reflecting current opinions on drama and providing sound and useful theatrical criticism. Theatre workers from this second wave grew up in colonial Hong Kong and are still active in promoting theatre that reflect Hong Kong culture and tracing its roots to China.

The plays performed by this second group tend to be naturalist plays. Without proper acting training, actors were very much in a sink or swim situation. Since most of the actors were in amateur groups and the run of the productions were short, it did not constitute a big problem as actors were doing it out of personal interest rather than viewing it as a profession. The fact that most of them could not express intense emotions did not stop them from producing plays.

The Third Wave (post 1960s) – translated plays

In the 60s, many people who graduated abroad came back and saw the big gap between Hong Kong theatre scenes and the west. They decided to

translate and perform western plays to broaden the horizon of the Hong Kong audience. The modern Hong Kong theatre started to evolve independently in the 1960s. In 1962, Dr. CHUNG King-fai, the first Hong Kong student who studied drama abroad, receiving a BA degree in Speech and Drama from Oklahoma Baptist University in the US and a master's degree in Fine Arts from Yale School of Drama¹³. He came back to Hong Kong and taught at the English and Drama Department at the Baptist College (now the Baptist University)¹⁴. Hong Kong theatre started to grow and develop in the post-secondary education institutes.

In the 1960s, the English Department of The University of Hong Kong started to teach modern western drama and theatre as part of their literature courses; this greatly facilitated the development of Hong Kong theatre as the lecturers teaching these drama courses began developing parallel theatre productions and companies with interested and informed students. Under the auspices of Professor Alan Green as the Dean of the University of Hong Kong, an academic with a strong belief that involving students in performing drama in English would greatly facilitate their English language learning skills, practical drama was given a major boost, many young literature lecturers specialising in drama, such as Dr. Vick Ooi, Jack Lowcock and Dr. Jane Lai, were given the opportunity to teach western plays and then go on to produce various plays in English such as Engene Ionesco's *The Chairs*, Harold Pinter's *The Dumb Waiter* and *The Caretaker* and Bertolt Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechuan* (Lo, 2012, p.21).

¹³ See Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopedias on Chung King-fai. Retrieved from <http://enacademic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/1154188>

¹⁴ See above.

The above mentioned lecturers went on to set up the Drama Laboratory, the first black box theatre in Hong Kong. Dr Vicki Ooi, later formed The Seal Players, the first theatre company in Hong Kong dedicated to staging Western plays in Cantonese (Chan, 2015, p.91). From these robust theatrical initiatives sprung many up and coming theatre workers who continued to experiment with theatre and develop their own styles.

With the introduction of western plays, the acting method now became more diverse. When CHUNG performed an extract of Thornton Wilder's *Our Town* on television in the 70s, the most striking elements being the near bare stage, no sets and a lack of props. For the first time, audience saw actors miming, for example, drinking tea without all the props, i.e. teacups and saucers. The main character is a stage manager that speaks directly to the audience. When Brecht was introduced, the idea of *Verfremdung* fascinated the audience. Although the alienation effect was inspired by Chinese opera, it was completely new to the Hong Kong audience who were used to naturalistic plays at that time.

According to a report compiled by Jessica Yeung of the Hong Kong Baptist College, there were 5224 translated plays performed during the period of 1962-2005 and 922 of them were translated plays (Yeung, 2007, p.85). Out of that, 106 productions were performed by HKAPA, 90 were performed by Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, 42 were performed by the Seals Foundation and 40 by Chung Ying Theatre Group (Yeung, 2007, p.86). Out of the above groups, only the Seals Foundation does not have full time actors (HKAPA plays were performed by students but they were prepared to be professional actors). In

other words, over 30% of the translated plays were performed by professional groups whereas amateur theatre groups preferred to perform local plays.

As more and more western plays were introduced, a wide range of acting methods were required. With the establishment of the HKAPA, the number of professional actors increased gradually each year. It is important that there is a method to help acting students to express intense emotions.

B Theatre Training in Hong Kong

Up until 1970s, all theatre productions were produced by amateurs. Not until 1977 was the Hong Kong Repertory Theatre set up, the first professional theatre group fully subsidized by the government in Hong Kong. According to Chan (2007), in its first year five plays were performed directed by different directors, the five plays being: an adaptation of Hong Shen's *The Rural Trilogy* (農村三部曲): Shakespeare's *Hamlet*; Thornton Wilder's *By the Skin of Our Teeth*; an adaptation of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*; and Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle* – a diverse selection of plays from the British, American, German and Chinese repertoires all with different production styles. In 1979, the Chung Ying Theatre under the British Council was established as the second professional theatre company in Hong Kong¹⁵. It was not until 1984 that The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA) was established by Government Ordinance (The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

¹⁵ See Chung Ying Theatre's website for its history: <http://www.chungying.com/about/aboutus>.

Ordinance (Cap 1135) (1984). It provided professional undergraduate education and practice-based postgraduate studies in Dance, Drama, Film and Television, Music, Theatre and Entertainment Arts and Chinese Opera¹⁶. Dr. CHUNG King-fai was appointed the founding Dean of the School of Drama. Since then, Hong Kong has started to systematically train local theatre practitioners.

The establishment of the HKAPA by government ordinance is the watershed in Hong Kong theatre training. Under the legislation the academy was mandated to "foster and provide for training, education and research in the performing arts and related technical arts" (The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts Ordinance (Cap 1135) (1984, s3). It was and still is the only degree conferring institution devoted to theatre training. The acting training history of Hong Kong can be divided into two periods, before HKAPA and after HKAPA.

Before the HKAPA, there were very few formal acting training classes. Theatre training was in the form of apprenticeship and theatre workers learnt their trade by practice. Unfortunately, hardly any formal records can be found to show how actors were trained during this period. We can only understand a little about the theatre training at that time from the recollection of experienced actors and directors. BAO Hanlin (鮑漢琳), an experienced director, actor and play translator once said, "No actors had any formal training in the 60s and everyone read the play and acted in the way they felt fit." He further added,

¹⁶ School of Chinese Opera was set up in 1913. See HKAPA's website for the courses offered: <https://www.hkapa.edu/about/about>.

Some directors did not know how to direct and they mainly instructed actors where to stand and the general movement on stage. There might not be any script analysis and not to mention any discussion about the mood and rhythm of a play. None of these directors have studied drama before and what their job was to ensure that actors stood in the right place, not bump into other actors, not forget their lines and not improvise. (Fong, 2000, p.16)

However it did not mean no actor at that time had proper acting training. Born in 1915, CHAN Yauhau (陳有后) was an experienced theatre actor, TV actor and TV acting training teacher and one of the earliest advisers and consultants of artistic direction and development of Hong Kong Repertory Theatre, the first professional theatre company in Hong Kong (Tao, 2014, p.81). He was one of Ouyang's students. As mentioned previously, Ouyang was the founder of Guangdong Dramatic Research Institute. Chan remarked,

When I was ten, I learnt drama from Ouyang and I was a leading drama practitioner at the university. When I was a student and before I knew any drama theory, the Russian theatre practitioner, Stanislavski, published a book called *An Actor Prepares* and Mr. Ouyang introduced this book to me. (Fong, 2000, p.19)

From the interview above, we can deduce that the training in Guangdong Dramatic Research Institute was influenced by the Stanislavski system. However, despite the fact that a few leading theatre practitioners might have proper acting training, most actors were amateurs with no systematic training.

Currently, the HKAPA offers undergraduate degree programmes, sub-degree programmes and junior programmes with government funding. It also offers self-financing Master's degree programmes. When the HKAPA first started, it

could only offer diplomas, while for students fresh out from the secondary school, they went straight to a diploma course before moving to a higher diploma course unless for someone with some “advanced standing”. The diploma and higher diploma courses were more practice-based and had fewer academic and written components.

In the early 1990s, the HKAPA was allowed to grant degrees. It started to provide a 3-year degree course. The first cohort of 4-year degree students began in 2012. The present curriculum at the HKAPA is based on four types of course: required courses, thesis project, drama electives and academy-wide electives (liberal studies). The required courses are compulsory and include Professional Practice courses, (Stage) Movement courses, Acting courses, and Vocal Studies.

The 4-year course has a more rigid system. There is a specific proportion of credits allocated to electives and to Liberal Arts, which reduces the amount of time that can be spent on acting classes. As a result, there may be less and less time for students to practise acting. As this thesis suggests, HKAPA can supplement the Stanislavski system (see below) with Self-With-Others Approach to train spontaneity of students so that they can express intense emotions better. Therefore more acting classes may be needed.

I have interviewed lecturers on acting and a former Head of Acting at the HKAPA to find out their method of teaching. I wanted to find out how they help students to put themselves in character and express the character emotion in order to see if it can be improved, particularly expressing intense emotion on

stage. I learned that acting courses are mainly based on the Stanislavski system and it has been based on the Stanislavski system since its establishment. According to the former Head of Acting, Dr. Peter Jordan,

Stanislavski was taught in the first 2 years of the 4-year programme, but there were also classes in improvisation and other acting-related exercises even at that early stage. Stanislavski was presented as the basic grounding in actor training and it gave students a 'vocabulary' for building a character (motivation, objectives, super-objectives etc.). (email reply from Dr. Jordan dated 23 May 2017)

The Course Catalogue for the year 2016/17 describes the first year of acting as follows:

By taking as a basis Konstantin Stanislavski's acting system, students are expected to be able to identify and apply a sense of "Living truthfully in given circumstances" whilst acting. They will be expected to be able to "build" a complex character through play analysis, research, emotion and sensory recall and through structured improvisation. Crucial to the students' development is a continued critical self-evaluation and an ability to work spontaneously and creatively in basic scene work with partners demonstrating 'give and take', discipline and a respect for communication. (HKAPA Course Catalogue, 2016, p.7)

For the 3-year course in the past, Stanislavski was formally taught for the first 2 years. In the 4-year course, Stanislavski is taught in the first 2 years of the 4-year programme, but as mentioned before, there are also classes in improvisation and other acting-related exercises even at that early stage such as the Stage Movement offered in the first two years. The acting classes are 'core' courses. That means they are compulsory. The number of electives increases each year, as students progress, they are given more freedom to choose or 'design' their training, but the core acting classes remain throughout. In later years, particularly years 3 and 4, students were exposed to other

approaches to acting. This often depended on the area of expertise of individual teachers.

Based on their varying backgrounds, different lecturers introduced different acting methods alongside the Stanislavski system while still broadly following the syllabus. One of the longest serving teaching staff is Senior Lecturer, Acting, LO Koon Lan who introduces Strasberg's method acting into the syllabus. TANG Shu Wing, one of the former Deans of the HKAPA, is a follower of both Meyerhold and Grotowski and CHAN Suk Yi, a former lecturer, Acting, is a follower of Philippe Gaulier. The background of the former Acting Head, Peter Jordan is in the Commedia dell'Arte and while he was teaching at HKAPA, Commedia dell'Arte was an elective in the 4-year degree structure. In non-teaching periods, students are often offered workshops by invited guests with a particular specialism. However, despite individual deviation from the Stanislavski system, it still forms the basis of HKAPA training. As the Head of Acting was abolished after Peter Jordan left HKAPA in 2013, the quality of overseeing teaching, monitoring classes and reviews of the syllabi and the programme structure may be compromised and the acting programmes may become less centralized.

Conclusion of the theatre training in Hong Kong

Theatre development and theatre training is still in its infancy compared with their UK counterparts. There is only one performing arts tertiary institution in Hong Kong and the teaching is largely based on Stanislavski's system. As the HKAPA does not have a strong centralized system with the abolition of the

Head of Acting, the teaching, in reality, very much depends on individual teachers with various theatrical backgrounds and interests. However an analysis of the course description shows the acting course tries to help students to “build” a complex character through play analysis, research, emotion and sensory recall and through structured improvisation (HKAPA Course Catalogue, 2016, p.7) this means that the Stanislavski system taught at the HKAPA tends to be more about training the mind (e.g. play analysis and research) and the body (e.g. structured improvisation) rather than “bodymind”. The cognitive part plays a very important part of the training instead of helping students to respond to stimuli which I will describe in more detail later. Students are also required to take up liberal arts subjects and electives which also play great emphasis on analysis, research and critical thinking.

Part 3 Stanislavski’s System

In order to understand whether HKAPA’s Stanislavski’s system can help students to express intense emotion, this thesis looks further into what Stanislavski’s system is and how it helps students to deal with acting emotion.

Emotion Memory and Public Solitude

Emotion Memory

Stanislavski’s system is to help students to retrieve emotion memory to create a character and its relationship with other characters. Emotion Memory is basically accumulated by personal experience:

Just as your visual memory resurrects long forgotten things, a landscape or the image of a person, before your inner eyes, so feeling you once experienced are resurrected in your Emotion Memory. (Stanislavski, 2008, p.199)

Emotion Memory can also be accumulated by actors' experience and feelings coming from books, stories, music, paintings etc.

...there are cases when we are not an active or even an observer of what happens but only hear or read about it. That doesn't prevent us from being strongly influenced by it, from having deep emotion memories. (Stanislavski, 2008, p.222)

We can only use our own personal feeling to portray a role. (Stanislavski, 2008, p.209).

How can we recall feeling from Emotion Memory? Mind and body are frequently separated by psychological approaches to acting in which mind dominates body. With this assumption in mind, it is not surprising that such theorists pay very little attention to the body and how to help the body respond to the mind. However, in most instances, feelings and emotion cannot be called by will directly. Stanislavski admits that the actor's self is divided into consciousness and the subconscious, the latter being the "seat of emotions that are dearer to [the actor] than his everyday feelings" (Stanislavski, 1936, p.166). "If emotion immediately responds to the call, that is an enormous piece of luck. Then everything falls into place spontaneously, in a natural way." (Stanislavski, 2008, p.280). But "...[e]motions are states which are produced by activity, they are the result of a process, of actions designed to fulfill an intention." (Benedetti, 1998, p.3). Scherer (2000) attempts to define emotion by saying that it is a

superordinate hypothetical construct, which includes several components such as motor expression, physiological changes, action tendencies¹⁷ and cognitive processing. (Scherer, 2000, p.157) Eugenio Barba explained that emotion is the result of a complex pattern of reactions to stimuli (Scherer, 2005, p.700):

The complexity of the result is attained by working on simple elements, each one separate, then put together level by level, interwoven, repeated, until they melt into an organic unity that reveals the essence of the complexity that characterises every living form. (Barba and Savarese 2006, p.114)

Stanislavski encourages students to work on the source rather than the result, so we should work on the stimuli which bring feeling, rather than trying to recall the feeling directly:

Not think about the feeling itself but think about what made it grow, the conditions which led to the experience. Meanwhile nature herself will create a new feeling, analogous to the one you experienced before. (Stanislavski, 2008, p.218)

Actors can call up and employ in their acting genuine personal feelings, employing Stanislavski's system of "Decoy". "These decoys are precisely those stimuli to Emotion Memory and recurrent feelings which we have been talking about all this time to lure them out" (Stanislavski, 2008, p.225). In most instances, the feelings recalled from memory are different from the original one. Sometimes they are weaker, sometimes they are stronger and sometimes with slightly modified form. (Stanislavski, 2008, p.199). Sometimes the experience of the actor can spontaneously transform other people's feelings gathering from

¹⁷ Action tendency is a reactive action that triggers certain action that is connected to a particular feeling.

books, music and films into direct feelings. But if it does not happen, we can coax our feelings from memory by working on the stimuli. Internal stimuli are created by psychotechniques such as “given circumstances” and the magic “if” (Stanislavski, 2008, p.224) whereas external stimuli are created by lighting, set, sound and other production effects, physical action, text and ideas of the play, the interaction of the characters etc. (Stanislavski, 2008, p.213)

Emotion memory can only help students to express the character emotion if the two basic assumptions are met. First, actors have to be relatively rich in Emotional Memory (Stanislavski, 2008, p.227). Second, actors can express their feelings naturally if they are able to access their Emotion Memory. If these two assumptions are valid, students can then use Emotion Memory based on research, script analysis, improvisation based on text, scene work and discussion together with scene works.

However the two precedent conditions are not always in place. Firstly, actors may not have a sufficiently rich emotional memory to portray different kinds of characters. It is specially distinct in young student actor due to a lack of life experience (however, novice actors may be emotionally expressive rather than feeling the acted emotions). Secondly, “All too often, however, the evocation of past experiences produces negative result- tension, exhaustion, sometimes hysteria. At other times, the mind may seize up, refuse to yield up its secrets.” (Benedetti, 2008, p.90). The same experience was shared by many past HKAPA student actors even for those who later became famous theatre actors in Hong Kong. Appendix 1 of this thesis includes interviews of seven very

accomplished Hong Kong actors and out of seven of them, five actors mentioned it was difficult to use emotion memory.

Secondly, even if the student actors trigger the feelings, such feelings can still be trapped inside the actor without being expressed properly to audiences if the actor's expression of emotion is inhibited either by their personalities or by their culture. Both Zarrilli and Konijn pointed out students tend to use task-emotion for their roles and such task-emotion requires students to be emotionally expressive. Zarrilli states that statistics indicate actors seldom experienced the emotions the characters require them to portray (Zarrilli, 2002, p.62). Konijn was in agreement with Zarrilli when she said that “the results reveal, among other things, that most actors seldom actually experience the emotions that they are portraying on stage as they perform a character.” Konijn (2000, p.17). The emotion of the actors performing on stage was interpreted to be task-emotions which provides support for the task-emotion theory – the underlying emotion is an actor fulfilling his profession, so the actor’s emotion is different from the character’s emotion. “The professional actors reported to experience intense task-emotions of a positive nature, like excitement, concentration and challenge, notwithstanding the sad, frightening or tragic fate of their tormented dramatic characters.” (Konijn, 2002, p.77) In other words, there are situations where the actor is experiencing positive intense emotion such as the excitement in demonstrating to the audience how well he can handle an emotionally charged scene (task emotion), while what he is showing to the audience how heart broken the character is – an intense negative emotion. Such task-emotion is essential to portray intense emotions. In terms

of the levels of heart rate of actors, they are significantly higher during performance than during rehearsals of the same performance (Weisweiler, 1983, 723-4; Konijn, 1991, pp.59-74). Intense emotions such as rage, grief and terror are the most difficult to produce because they require larger cardiac acceleration and more pronounced respiratory effects (Boiten, 1996, pp.12-31). When actors are in action and on stage, the task emotion is triggered, the higher levels of heart rate assist actors to portray intense emotions which also require larger cardiac acceleration. In such a way, the task emotion helps actors to portray intense emotions.

The question is whether task emotions can overcome actors' own emotional inexpressivity, this may well happen. From our own experience, one may come across a person who is not very emotionally expressive but when she is on stage, that person suddenly becomes very animated. I have learnt from many Hong Kong acting students that they like acting because they would like to express a personality that is normally locked away in public. Acting frees them to express their emotions and in most cases, the emotions they talked about are what most people regarded as intense emotions. In the same way, it is not surprising to find some famous and funny comedians to be unfunny and serious in real life. In other words, it seems that what the actor normally behaves may have no correlation to what she does on stage. Despite the fact that the above may happen to some actors, actors need still strong task-fulfilling emotions to drive them. In a majority of cases, if an actor who is not used to expressing her own emotion in public may find it hard for her to conceive how such strong emotions can be expressed on stage. All the task emotion would do is provide

excitement or fear about the performance, so it would more likely reinforce the problem the actor is having.

Ultimately the task emotion has to come from the actor. Under the task fulfilling theory, it can be deduced that emotionally inexpressive actors will never be as good as emotionally expressive actors even if they can successfully “retrieve” emotion memory for the portrayal of their characters.

Hetzler has challenged Konijn’s data collection method. Konijn sent questionnaires to ask respondents to choose words and phrases that best fit their emotional experiences while performing. Hetzler remarked

The question seemed, in some cases, to be a bit naïve about how actors work. It also presumed that by asking about specific moments on stage the actors would have clear memories of what they felt and did. (Hetzler, 2002, p. 4)

Konijn was mainly interested in what actors say in describing performances but Hetzler was more concerned in his study about the fact that actors are feeling what the characters are feeling.

Using Hornsby’s idea that actors have both “real” and “imagined” emotions, Konijn explains how task emotion works. Actors use “imagined” emotions which are free from “unconscious repression mechanisms” which give actors the “aesthetic distance” of imaginary emotions and it allows for “contemplation” and “shaping” of the emotion (Hornby, 1992, p.121). These imagined emotions also enable actors to retain control as real reaction to circumstances implies a lack

of control over what one can express. However since “imagined” emotion tends to be weaker than “real” emotion, task emotions are subconsciously used by actors to bridge the intensity gap between “imagined” and “real” emotions. However by interviewing 333 respondents, Hetzler found that actors’ emotions are all real emotions dictated by the given action and circumstances the actors find themselves in. It may explain why some actors cannot get themselves out of their roles:

A friend of mine, a woman psychiatrist, went to a play that her son had directed. One actress played all the roles - the child, her father (who molested her) and her mother. After it was over, there was a discussion with the audience, many of whom had also experienced such abuse. The actress had no opportunity to get out of her roles before participating in the discussion. As a result, she had a psychiatric breakdown. My friend and her son stayed with her for two days because she was suicidal. She got into the roles and couldn't get out. (Spencer, 2006)

The emotions are real because the situations are real and the emotions the audience see arising from the situations are also real. If Hetzler is right, actors who are less expressive may find it hard to express characters’ emotions as all they express are their real emotions.

In the real world, what actors really experience is probably more complicated arising from the interplay of different factors. It might not be surprising if some actors are expressing “real” emotions while others are expressing “imagined” emotions magnified by task emotions. In either case, a less expressive person is more likely to be a less expressive actor.

Public Solitude

Other than emotion memory, Stanislavski proposed that actors also need to maintain a high degree of concentration as they will invariably get distracted by the audience while performing on stage. Actors need to find a way to concentrate. One of the ways to achieve concentration is what he termed as “public solitude” (Stanislavski, 2008, p.99), enabling the actor to remain private in public. It can be achieved by having actors to form a “circle of attention” which requires them to restrict their attention to a particular area from a bachelor flat to the whole setting on the stage, sometimes even including the whole auditorium. By doing so, Stanislavski pointed a way where something can be done in order to help actors to concentrate. This sounds particularly useful for Hong Kong actors who may only be able to express intense emotions in private. However it is difficult for actors to maintain such attention when “the circle of attention” starts expanding:

The more the area expanded, to my despair, the more the black hole seemed to take over the stage and overwhelmed my power of concentration. As a result all the exercises we had done earlier and which had given me hope, went for nothing. Once again, I felt helpless. (Stanislavski, 2008, p.100).

If an actor cannot concentrate even when they use the public solitude, is there any exercise that can help them to achieve concentration? If Hong Kong actors feel anxious on stage and cannot maintain their concentration and they cannot find the public solitude that allows them to display intense emotion, what else can they do? I have a personal experience in directing a play by local playwright WONG Leung Kin called, *The Book*. *The Book* is the name of a horse (in Cantonese the title carries a satirical meaning, a witty pun with a funny double entendre). Based on a real horse in Japan, *The Book* has taken part in

more than 105 horse-racing events but never won. However, despite its poor performance, this does not stop the owner from entering the horse in every subsequent horse-racing event. Set in a time when Japan was suffering a major economic depression, *The Book* became a national symbol of never giving up and encouraged many people.

A leading role in this play was performed by a Hong Kong actress portraying a desperate woman on a radio phone-in session of a horse racing programme on the verge of committing suicide and filicide. The actress found it hard to concentrate during the play-reading and kept looking to me for help. I dimmed the light so that she could concentrate on what she was about to say and in the dim light she managed to deliver her lines with great emotion. The next day when she was on stage rehearsing, she lost her concentration on stage and she again kept looking at me for help or approval. Without some systematic training, the actor's concentration can be hit and miss. Students can do the exercises well in the studio but become very stiff while facing audience on stage because of their anxieties and loss of concentration.

Stanislavski – Shift from Emotion Theory to the Method of Physical Action (1934-1938)

In the last five years of his life, Stanislavski felt more dissatisfied towards the emotion memory as he found that the subconscious was impossible to control. Actors exhausted themselves when trying to immerse themselves into emotion memory, working hard on internal and emotional levels. They may have

created a physicality for the role they were performing, but that physicality often turned out to be limited, unoriginal and inappropriate for theatrical performance. This led him to revisit his theory and through his experience and observation, he discovered that emotions can be triggered by physical action and the connection between personal experience and physical expression was supported by scientists such as Ivan Pavlov. (Benedetti, 2008)

He discovered that the Method of Physical Actions involved developing a 'conscious' physical scheme of action that can jumpstart the 'unconscious' motions of the actor. The whole method can be broken down into small building blocks and upon them the whole structure can be erected. The smallest building blocks are units and objectives. A unit is a portion of a scene that contains one objective for an actor. Objectives can be connected methodically into a logical sequence of actions, forming the super-objective. Take for example, the objectives of each unit can be "to please her", "to excite her", "to calm her down", "to tease her" and the superobjective is to "make her fall into love with me". (Benedetti, 2008)

An action can be analysed by asking questions about characters such as "What do I do?" "Why do I do it?" and "How do I do it?" During the whole process, actors need to use their imagination, look out for the subtexts, understand the motivation of the characters. (Benedetti, 2008)

Actors also need to concentrate but relax so that they can still have full control of all their motor and intellectual facilities, not allowing themselves to be

“crammed up” through muscular tension. Actors also need to be aware and have a full grip of the “tempo” (the speed of an action/emotion) and rhythm (the intensity of the emotional experience) so that they can have full physical embodiment of the characters, including both voice and movement. While they are communicating with other actors on stage and constantly make adjustments based on such communication. By doing so they then form a communion with the audience. (Benedetti, 2008)

HKAPA’s acting training follows both the emotion memory and the physical action as students are “expected to be able to “build” a complex character through play analysis, research, emotion and sensory recall and through structured improvisation.” (HKAPA Course Catalogue, 2016, p.7).

Stanislavski’s method tries to avoid the pitfalls of over-intellectualization and over-analysis, taking into consideration past failures caused by actors having too much information about their roles and character and not knowing how to deal with it, how to translate character input into real emotion on stage. His system of ‘analysis through physical action’ requires the actor to explore the character they are playing in terms of that character’s goals, needs and necessities, not all at once, but gradually building up the character with the “Magic If” (see examples below) so that characters behave in a logical, coherent way, this pre-performance analysis must then be translated into action - decide on an action, put it on stage, analyze whether it works, and then try again. The physical/body work evolves out of the action. All these methods are valid for actor training as they are methods of helping actors to realize their characters

at a professional level, but it may not be as effective for actors who have personal inhibitions that may curtail emotional expressivity. The method presuppose the actor is an expressive human being and only needs help to get under the skin of a character and express that character's feelings in the same way as the actor ordinarily expresses himself.

The use of the "Magic If" is a cerebral process, actions flow from the mind, an intellectual rather than a physical process. But what if an actor is naturally inhibited, does not normally express what is in their mind in physical, expressive ways? Is there a way to help them? And if these inhibitions are culturally based, e.g., cultural taboos about public displays of emotion, did Stanislavski suggest any way to help actors overcome such inhibitions?

For example, I was taking part in a page to stage theatre workshop in Hong Kong using *Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams – the actors were all Hong Kong Chinese. The actor playing the role of Stanley needed to delve into the history of Stanley Kowalski, to explore his background, motivations, goals, characteristics in order to breathe life into the character – what was it like to be Polish in the French Quarter of New Orleans in post-war America, what are the Kowalskis like and how are they different from the DuBois (Blanche and Stella)? To explore this the actor playing Stanley, gleaning information from text and sub-text, wrote down Stanley's history, his parents, education, work experience. The actor continued to build up the character of Stanley slowly by understanding, for example, what Stanley is like when playing cards with his poker friends (referencing the poker scene in Scene Three) and what he is like

with his wife, Stella (e.g. when he says, “Since when do you give me orders?”). He used the “Magic If” by asking “What will I feel if my wife’s sister arrived unannounced?” “What do I really want to achieve by taking off my shirt in front of Blanche when I first meet her?” or “What will I feel when my wife told me that her sister has lost their family home in Belle Reve and I found out she had jewelry in her drawer?” “How do I feel when I think my wife’s sister is stealing money from my wife and worse still, is stealing money from me as I am entitled to all my wife’s possession under the Napoleonic Code and in any way, my wife is my possession?” Exploring these questions helped the actor playing Stanley to build up his drunk scene, howling at Stella, and even later, raping Blanche in his wife’s absence (while she is giving birth to their baby at the hospital). The workshop analysis went well, the actor playing Stanley was active in participation and provided good answers to all the questions. Now he had to actually perform the scene in which he howled at his wife. After the actor performed the scene, we analysed it and agreed it was not half as strong as it should have been, given Stanley’s character and history with Stella. The director asked the actor to do it again, bearing in mind the answers to the previous questions and imagining his drunken state (answering questions about how much alcohol he consumed and his alcoholic history, his treatment of women). He did it again, but again his performance was not effective. Was this failure due to the actor not understanding Stanley, not being able to get into his mind, or was it more to do with the actor’s physical way of expressing emotion? The actor, a Hong Kong Chinese performer, felt he was not used to howling on stage and he found it uncomfortable expressing strong expressions of anger and bad behaviour. The director could not squeeze any more

expressivity from him by repeating the exercises or asking more questions. That was when the whole workshop hit a brick wall, even with Stanislavski's Physical Action the workshop leader could not coax more emotional physicality and expressivity from his workshop participant. I conjectured that what was needed was a method to unlock the actor's inhibition, not by further analysis and not by action-analysis-action; a method that would help the actor go deeper into his own psyche; something less cerebral, less rational, less conscious. I reflected that Stanislavski, before his untimely death, was in the process of further developing his physical action method and he may have further developed his theory to address the problems I had observed at the workshop.

Despite having doubts about the complete effectiveness of Stanislavski's methods in helping actors realize strong emotion, I still believe that his method based on rational analysis of a character and use of the actor's imagination, is useful and effective, as far as it goes, but may not be enough, particularly when applied to actors from certain cultures, such as Chinese actors. Strong expression of emotion is realized physically, through voice and body, however Stanislavski's system tends to be biased towards mental processes of analysis and inference and even though each process of mental analysis is followed by physical performance this may not, in itself, be enough, inhibitions may still remain, the performance may still be found wanting. What Chinese student actors need are some practical body exercises through which he/she can achieve physical expressions of strong emotion that can, when linked to Stanislavski's process, achieve better results, more convincing expressions of strong emotion.

Help in this direction can be found in the work of Michael Chekhov (nephew of the great Russian playwright Anton Chekhov). He elaborates some of the Stanislavski's concepts and provides practical exercises for students and actors.

Michael Chekhov – Triggering emotion through physical embodiment

Russian-American actor, director and author Michael Chekhov and student of Stanislavski, believed that actors need to train their bodies in such a way that it is extremely sensitive to the psychological creative impulses. (Chekhov, M. 2002, p.2). To create a character, active use of imagination is required but the imagination is not an image in the head. Instead it is the engagement of body and mind by physicalising a “psychological gesture” which “will give your will power a certain direction or inclination; that is, it will awaken and animate in you a definite desire, want or wish.” (Chekhov, M. 2002, p.63). In other words, it is the first step of creating a character and as such, to feel what a character feels. Mel Gordon explains in his introduction to Chekhov's *On the Technique of Acting* that:

Chekhov “found” his role by playing with the shape and quality of the character's movement and by rearranging his physical stature and shape. Only when he “saw” the character's gestures did Chekhov begin his embodiment, or incorporation, of the role. (Chekhov, 2002, xix)

While Stanislavski looked for truth in human behaviour or in the logic of human psychology, Chekhov found that the secret lay outside of both life and logic,

somewhere in the actor's limitless imagination. By creating appropriate physicality for a character through the actor's imagination, fitting emotions for that character will emerge.

Chekhov also carefully steered away from Stanislavski's terminology which sounds like a command or description in a textbook to a language that directs action and movement on stage. For example, Stanislavski's used the word "relaxation" for his physical action whereas Chekhov instructed actors to "move or walk with a Feeling of Ease¹⁸". Instead of recalling from emotion memory, the feeling of being angry, Chekhov would instruct an actor to "add the Quality of anger" to his gesture. Chekhov's terminology is carefully chosen so that it directs action and is easier to follow and, in a way, is more practical to help actors to express their emotions through physical embodiment.

Different from Stanislavski, Chekhov also provides exercises for students to help them create bold and exciting choices. One of the examples is Imaginary Body where actors are asked to find out their differences from the characters they need to portray and then use the imagination to bridge such differences. If the characters are taller than the actors, the actors have to think tall, sit tall and eat tall. By creating an interesting physical appearance for the character, including height, weight, clothing, movement, facial characteristics, the actor can then inhabit the character, breathe life and soul into it and see the world through the character, exploring what voice he would have and movements he would make. (Chekhov, 2002, pp.78-80) Equipped with this physicality:

¹⁸ Feeling of Ease is one of the 4 brothers of Art in Chekhov's Chart for Inspired Acting.

physical appearance, voice and movement, actors' personal emotions can be triggered and expressed in a way that is appropriate to the characters that they are portraying. Richard III's spinal deformity in Shakespeare's *Richard III* may trigger envy and jealousy in him, a determination to make people look up to him (rather than down on him). Certain emotions create certain bodily responses and in the same way, by manipulating one's bodily responses, emotions can be evoked that match such responses. Fear may result in faster heartbeats and quick short breaths; breathing quickly in short succession will increase the heart rate of the actor and may assist her in feeling afraid. Fear may also create body contraction, raised shoulders, raised eyebrows, enlarged eyes and dropped jaw. All these bodily responses can be manipulated to help put an actor in a state of fear.

Another exercise is the Leading Centre:

'Imagine a Center in your chest from which living impulses are sent out into your arms, hands, legs and feet. Start to move, imagining that the impulse to form the movement comes from this Center' (Chekhov 1991:44) Explore moving around the room, imagining that the energy that flows from this centre releases any blocks that you may have in your hips, knees, ankles, elbows and wrists. Try it with large gestures and very small ones, keeping a sense of the impulse coming from the chest centre. (Chamberlain, 2004, pp.137-138)

The Leading Centre comprises three components: location (where the centre is), quality (a specific image of the centre) and mobility (the movement of the centre) (Chenard J. 2010, p.25). The centre can be in the hand - the quality is whether it is strong, weak, slender, hairy, smooth, a hand that can steal without people noticing, for example. Then mobility – how does this centre move? Like a snake or like a hammer. The hand may belong to a pickpocket and guide the

actor to the thought and experiences of the character. Laura Wingfield's limp in *The Glass Menagerie* creates the mental fragility and inferior complex that is central to her character. The limp in her leg is her 'leading centre' which an actor can explore.

No matter whether it is Imaginary Body or Leading Centre, Chekhov had created a set of exercises for students to assist them in expressing emotions and it is a huge step forward from Stanislavski's analysis.

Chekhov's exercises, from "imaginary center"¹⁹ (Chekhov, M. 2002, p.7) to "molding, floating, flying and radiating movements"²⁰ (Chekhov, M. 2002, pp.8-13), all heavily rely on actor's imaginary power. The more the imaginary power developed through exercises, imagination will become more flexible. But,

The more developed your imagination through systematic exercises, the more flexible and fleeting it becomes. Images will follow images with increasing rapidity; they will form and vanish too hastily. This may result in your losing them before they can kindle your feelings. You must possess enough will power, more than normally exert in everyday activities, to keep them before your mind's eye long enough for them to affect and awaken your own feelings. (Chekhov, M. 2002, p.26)

In order to listen and be influenced by either imagination, psychological gesture or atmospheres, actor needed to be extremely sensitive to the psychological

¹⁹ The idea is to imagine energy and impulse flow from the chest and extends to different directions through extension of body movement.

²⁰ They are actually four kinds of movement exercises used to open up actors' bodies. Trainees are asked to try to listen to the sensation and emotion aroused in the process. After trainees are familiar to all these four kinds of movement, they are asked to reproduce them in their mind only and try to recall those sensations and feelings attached to those movements.

creative impulses, a smooth pavement between body and mind. If there are obstacles like anxiety and shame caused by cultural factors, imagination and sensitivity can be easily restricted.

Emotions trigger certain bodily responses and facial expressions; Michael Chekhov helps actors to evoke certain emotions by actually reversing the process using imagination and psychological gestures; imagination and psychological gestures create bodily responses and facial expressions that facilitate the appropriate emotions. Although the end result may help an actor to evoke the emotions pertinent to the character in that situation, it is more like a shortcut bypassing issues of spontaneity and cultural impediments to emotion expressivity. What I am more interested in is a training method that will train spontaneity so that actors can respond to the situation instinctively like a reflex reaction instead of imposing emotions on an actor through physical embodiment. In such a way, “[i]n instinctive reactions and emotional expressions shade imperceptibly into each other. Every object that excites an instinct excites an emotion as well” (James, 1890, p. 442).

This thesis suggests that training methods advocated by Stanislavski and later made more practical by Michael Chekhov through various exercises form the foundation upon which Britton built up his Self-With-Others Approach. The Approach is in the form of exercise and it tackles the very basics without recourse to actors’ imagination. It deals with the emotion process between the perception of the stimulus and the triggering of the bodily response. It is much easier for student actors to learn and practise – a new bodymind awareness

can be created with the use of ball playing games (a simple stimulus that creates different responses) without complex mind training exercises. It can effectively remove anxiety and embarrassment by eliminating the root causes. Even though it is simple at the very beginning, it can be easily varied and adapted for both intermediary and advanced levels.

Part 4 Britton's Self-With-Other Approach

How can we overcome the student actor's problem in expressing emotion, particularly intense emotion?

As previously discussed, Chinese people are less expressive than their western counterparts, so it is hardly surprising that the traditional form of "theatre" – the Chinese opera ("traditional Chinese theatre"), also avoids the expression of intense emotions:

There are two types of scenes the sight of which, without any artistry, can arouse strong emotions, namely, scenes of violence and sex. In the Chinese theatre all passionate love scenes are avoided and all acts of violence scrupulously camouflaged by conventional acting. That certain love scenes are not acted is partly because the Chinese do not see them in real life, they never kiss or embrace in public. (Hsü, 1985, p.103)

The reason the traditional Chinese theatre avoids the expression of intense emotion is not just because it does not reflect real life, it is also because of aesthetic reasons:

The Chinese style of acting and declamation, however, is clothed in a

strict form which takes away the impact of powerful expressions. The acting is like dance not only because it is accompanied by music but also because whatever the actor does, even in the most tragic scenes, he has to be graceful. (Hsü, 1985, p.142)

In fact,

emotional agitation through the realistic details of strongly dramatic scenes is contrary to the taste of the Chinese audience. (Hsü, 1985, p.104)

How does this art form work with the audience?

Art can also excite secondary emotions, that is, feelings about the emotions of the drama and these presuppose a contemplative mood. This type of emotion is one step removed from the direct excitation of the passions and differs widely from that towards real events. The sophisticated audience of the Chinese theatre remains emotionally aloof. They understand but do not share the passions of the characters in the drama; they remain spectators to the drama in the fullest sense of the word. They do not feel involved in the drama, the distress and suspense due to dramatic illusion is altogether absent and there is always a psychological distance between the world of the drama and the world of the audience. (Hsü, 1985, p.104)

Traditional Chinese theatre is highly codified and stylized and the coded messages are shared by both performers and the audience. Such art forms are less concerned with emotion as the emotion is embedded with the form and so if actors can perfect the form, emotion can be expressed and the audience can feel the emotion through the coded messages. In such a way, emotion can be expressed and the same emotion can be retrieved and repeated by perfecting certain movement.

Similar to the traditional Chinese theatre, most of the Eastern theatrical

performing art forms also use coded messages shared by both performers and the audience. In traditional Chinese theatre, emotions are expressed through movement and voice in singing (not voice acting). Prof. Ch'i Ju-Shan 齊如山 documented the basic types of encoded movement as follows:

Sleeve:	72 movement
Hands:	7 ways to hold the hand 26 gestures of pointing (pointing in anger, pointing backwards, pointing to oneself, etc.) 14 gestures for pointing at different parts of one's own body 10 gestures for pointing with something one holds in one's hand 3 gestures for pointing with a finger at something one holds oneself
Feet:	46 different gaits (swimming steps, going upstairs, going downstairs, ghost's steps, etc.)
Leg:	12 movements and postures
Arm:	8 movements
Beard:	39 styles of movements
Pheasant feathers:	11 styles of movements

(Hsü, 1985, pp.142-143)

The movements signify emotion but they are more concerned with the aesthetics rather than the emotional expressivity of the actors. Yet the symbols are still as powerful as what a Stanislavski's actor might experience. Zarrilli has examined Eastern performing arts to discuss ways to train the bodymind of an actor. Zarrilli trained in the traditional South Indian dance theatre art form of Kathakali. For Kathakali dancers, after years of training, "what is being written in the bodies of the dancers is read from the inside by each of them." (Schechner, 2003, p.314) An experienced Kathakali performer will internalize the codes of his dance and feel an intensity and power similar to a western naturalistic actor performing a written play on stage:

The human system is an extremely subtle multiplex-feedback one in which the originator of feelings is also affected by the emotions s/he is expressing – even if these emotions are a lie. That is what Ekman's experiment, and good acting, are saying: the doing of the action of a feeling is enough to arouse the feeling both in the doer and in the receiver. (Schechner, 2003, p.322)

However while acting, half of the actor is himself, controlling, observing and enjoying the actions and half of the actor is the character, internalizing the codes and feeling the emotion. Even though the training is very beneficial to actors, to adopt such training to another art form, one may need to undo all the codes one learns and it can be counter-productive. If you put an experienced Cantonese opera singer on stage, the training she has cannot easily translate into acting methods for modern drama. Even if a Kathakali actor can skillfully manipulate his facial expressions and bodily poses in accordance with what was laid down in the *Natyasastra* (a Sanskrit Hindu text on the performing arts, explaining the use of different body and facial expressions to express emotions), a straight adoption into modern drama may make the actor look exaggerated or lacking in expressive range.

What the theatre trainers need is a distilled training approach that does not rely on the coded messages of a particular art form and it needs to be easy to implement. It has to be a journey with a welcoming entrance which can gradually lead to different exciting levels.

This distilled training approach soon took the form of exercises and theatre games in the development of 20th century actor training with the belief that a good exercise can help actors to create an entirely new awareness of their

internal life – awaking a bodymind union, sensitizing the body, providing both a new kind of relaxation and concentration (Barba, 2002, pp.99-105). It is also the time that western practitioners started to look to the east to make sense of this bodymind technique initially suggested by Stanislavski – as such, embodiment and awareness are the keys and centres of the acting process and techniques. For example, A.C Scott used the Chinese martial art, *taijiquan*, to train American actors (Scott, 1993, pp.48-61) by using breathing and Asian martial/mediation arts.

Stanislavski described how the actor's "physical score", once perfected, must go beyond "mechanical execution" to a "deeper" level of experience which "is rounded out with new feeling and ... become[s], on might say, psychophysical in quality" (Stanislavski, 1961, p.66). Every physical action conceals some inner action, some feeling (ibid, p.166). The yoga Stanislavski borrowed was mainly *prana* (or the *Sanskrit* compound, *prana-vayu*) – the breath(s), wind, vital energy, or life force understood to circulate within. Stanislavski borrowed from Raja Yoga "the obscure notion of the "superconscious", placing it next to the "subconscious" (Carnicke, 1998, p.142).

Eugenio Barba's "pre-expressivity" does not require the actor to "feel" the character emotion and what actors need is to use Asian martial arts and yoga to attune the body and mind and by doing so, it is believed that the actor's inner energy will be awakened. Such energy will then put into use with structured improvisation and the actor will continue to fine-tune this new awareness and energy with instructions from the dramaturgies. The focus is on the use of body,

mind, energy flow and heightened sensory awareness. When actors are adequately trained in this method, then s/he is now at the “pre-expressive” level of performance – it is a training of the readiness of an actor (Barba and Savares, 1991, pp.186-204). The audience then can feel the organic coherence in the expressed represented emotion on stage.

It is true that certain general breathing and stretching exercises from *taijiquan*, Asian martial arts and yoga can be adapted to provide general exercises to relax and prepare actors for their roles. However Britton’s stimuli-reaction approach may target more the problem faced by Hong Kong actors by removing the cultural barrier to intense emotion through triggering spontaneous reaction (and emotions) from actors.

This thesis argues that Britton’s Self-With-Other Approach uses a distilled training method which is easy to implement and does not depend on coded messages from any art form. This approach is also influenced by Stanislavski’s system which can complement the other courses offered by the HKAPA.

I spent slightly more than two months receiving this training at the University of Huddersfield and benefited from it significantly (See Appendix 2). The exercises I took part in are divided into four areas (see below) and I will explain why the exercises help students to express emotion, particularly intense emotion, and why Hong Kong students need such exercises included in the HKAPA acting training syllabus.

1. What is Britton's Self-With-Others Approach?
2. How is Britton's approach related to the other psychophysical approach to acting?
3. How does Britton's approach help actors to engage with their emotion and express them freely and readily?
4. How, and in what ways, might Britton's approach help HK actors express emotion?

Britton's Self-With-Others Approach and How it helps express emotions

Self-With-Others is a pre-expressive training process. "It asks trainees to engage with detailed physical tasks, usually (though not always) tasks involving relationships with one or more 'others'." (Britton, 2013, p.320). It involves throwing a ball with a circle of actors and pre-expressivity is explained by Britton in Barba and Savarese's terms as follows:

The level (of organization of a performer's body) which deals with how to render the actor's energy scenically alive, that is, with how the actor can become a presence which immediately attracts the spectators attention, is the pre-expressive level... (Barba and Savarese, 1991, p.188)

The "others" in Self-With-Others are the other actors and by extension, audience, architecture, music and all other elements of performance.

The core exercise at the University of Huddersfield under Britton was the ball game which we practiced every day (see Appendix 2); in addition to the ball games, movement improvisation was also our basic exercise (see Appendix 2

for more details). We also had voice and rhythm training (see Appendix 2 for more details).

1 Ball Games used with student actors to encourage spontaneity involving soft balls being thrown between participants.

a. Preparation

Each student finds his/her own place as each other has to take responsibility for his/her positioning – a circle will be formed. Before the Self-With-Others Approach gets started, all participants have to experience the shared here-and-now (Britton, 2013, pp.313-314):

stand calmly, body relaxed, listening, looking, meet each other's eyes, smile, to look and be looked at, feel the room, the sound, the feeling beneath the feet, the temperature of the air.

Before throwing the ball, the following four elements are required:

- i) voluntariness
- ii) acknowledging, enjoying and sharing a single time and space
- iii) establishing relationship with each other
- iv) being here to work together

b. Ball Games - variation

It started with one ball in a group and as the training progressed, more variations were introduced to the training:

- i) number of balls – from one ball to many (basically with no limit but normally not more than the number of participants)
- ii) number of participants – ball throwing can be in pairs, a small group or a big group
- iii) single hand or both hands
- iv) throwing may involve keeping the ball(s) and different tempos e.g remaining still and only catching the ball when necessary.
- v) throwing by expressing body emotion with facial expressions, gestures and some bigger movement such as touching the floor, spinning and jumping
- vi) throwing with speaking in between to create further emotion (by calling out names, greetings and stories)
- vii) throwing balls with different colours and associating different colour balls with different feelings
- viii) throwing with music and sound in the background

- ix) throwing balls as a performance with observers and creating a story with a beginning, development and moving towards an end.

The variation shows that the ball games can be very flexible – it can strip down to the basic at the beginning and the instructor can introduce layer after layer on top as the players are more used to the format of the game.

If a student actor suffers from a lapse of attention because of anxieties, distraction or personal habits, she would be hit by the ball or miss catching the ball. She has to immediately reflect why and adjust accordingly. The problem of losing concentration is that one is not aware of its happenings. The ball game is a good device to immediately let one know when it happens – being hit by the ball is a very effective reminder.

c. Theoretical Basis of Self-With-Others

The Self-With-Others Approach is a method to train an actor's bodymind which involves detailed physical work through which an actor learns how to pay full attention:

It is intended to train a performer to pay attention to how s/he pays attention. In learning to change how s/he pays attention to a special task, the trainee learn to alter how s/he does that task. Self-With-Others suggests that attention is the building

block of all performance. (Britton, 2013, p.320)

The training is intended to liberate a performer's ability to react spontaneously, intuitively and physically to impulse without, except when necessary, having to 'think about' s/he reactions. (Britton, 2013, p.320)

It is all about embodiment. Self-With-Others is pointing to the same goal of Chekhov's idea that actor should be "extremely sensitive to the psychological creative impulses". (Chekhov, M. 2002, 2).

Along with all exercises, a few principles underpin the whole process. Such principles are not rules or instruction manual. Instead they are guides which help us to discover ourselves through our work. The principles are as follows:

1. Pursue pleasure (Britton, 2013, pp.323-324)

Encouragement to find a personal reason to do the task rather than being told to do so. Ability to explore more if the task is pleasurable. This is the heart of training which can reduce anxiety, increase sensitivity and open up the imagination.

2. Have no opinion (Britton, 2013, pp.324-325)

This is useful – it disrupts expectations. This principle reminds a performer to be attentive to, and present within, each moment. (Britton, 2013, p.324)

Expectation creates anxieties. Opinions distract us

and interrupt the flow between impulse and reaction. By having no opinion of ourselves and others, reduces anxieties and enhance concentration.

3. Only pay attention to things you can do something about (Britton, 2013, p.325)

As time cannot be stopped, “Now” is forever changing. To react precisely to the present moment, the student actor needs to payfull attention. It is, however, easier said than done.

We worry whether a teacher/lover/agent/critic in the audience is enjoying himself/herself. We wonder (perhaps form opinions about) why a co-performer said a line slightly differently. We drift away, snap back, worry about what we might have missed. (Britton, 2013, p.325)

Distractions can easily cause anxiety. To avoid it, we need to have total control of our attention. In other words, we must choose not to be disturbed.

4. Don't be helpful (Britton, 2013, pp.325-326)

We have to trust our partners to perform the task, not distract them from experiencing the process, allow them to grow, and vice versa.

5. Know your hierarchy of tasks (Britton, 2013,

pp.326-327)

Sometimes, there are overwhelming impulses in the performance but we need to prioritize:

The hierarchy of tasks is fluid. Each moment requires different attention and every action is changed by the unexpected - the sort of 'unexpected' that defines live performance. (Britton, 2013, p.327)

If we learn to deal with the unexpected and our changing impulses, it may bring calmness and clarity to our work.

6. If there is nothing to do, do nothing (Britton, 2013, pp.327-328)

Doing nothing doesn't mean switching off. However, "[b]eing distracted is not 'doing nothing', it is being distracted!" (Britton, 2013, p.328) What it really means is to actively wait when the ensemble does not need us to respond. The waiting engages our whole bodymind. By avoiding useless distractions, it help us to concentrate and remain calm.

The above principles serve as a guide to purge student actors of negative emotions such as fear and anxiety and help them to concentrate and be fully aware of their surroundings. These principles also help student actors to communicate openly, clearly

and in a detailed way with co-performers and the audience.

The training adopted by Britton's Self-With-Others Approach was influenced by European "laboratory" psycho-physicality: Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Grotowski, Chaikin²¹, Barba and Zarrilli, as discussed above.

The other core influence is Al Wunder, teacher of movement improvisation emerged from the New York modern dance scene in the late 1950s supplemented by writings of psychologists Maslow and Csikszentmihalyi (Britton, 2013, pp.36-54).

d. Ball Games and Emotion

Body expresses emotion but body can also trigger emotion. As Sonia Moore described Stanislavski's Method of Physical Action, she said, "In fulfilling the unique physical action, the actor involves the psychological side of the action by reflex; this includes emotion." (Moore, 1984, 20). As some psychophysical masters have even pointed out, body and mind should be one. However in

²¹ Joseph Chaikin embraced dance and musical performances and encouraged actors to be more expressive with their bodies. Schmitt (1990) states that on one end there is the positivist science appreciated by Stanislavsky and on the other end the Heisenberg uncertainty practiced by John Cage and other happening artists. Joseph Chaikin's the Open Theatre is in the Heisenbergian camp. Joseph Chaikin believed that the study of character is in fact the study of "I" and understands the forces that make us and a psychophysically "ready" performer is capable of fully fulfilling the specific tasks required of him as an performer. See Chaikin (1972, p.11, p.17).

reality, our body and mind are not at one - some actors may find it hard to express emotion either because they do not have any experience of the same sort or even when they have an equivalent experience or emotion, they find it hard to retrieve it or even if they can retrieve the emotion, they fail to express it effectively to get across to the audience.

For the first problem, we need to find a way for actors to express certain emotion even though they may not have experienced it. Great actors can always express emotion even though the same experience has not happened to her. For the second problem, there seems to be something which is blocking the mind or blocking the connection between the body and the mind.

As this thesis has explained earlier by the published psychological tests, culture itself may be an impediment to some Hong Kong student actors in expressing their emotion. As an actor, what also affects his/her expression of emotion include fear and nervousness and it may or may not be related to the Chinese culture. Fear involves the fear of failure and comparison with others also magnifies fear. Fear and nervousness also close up a person, making the actor more defensive, less likely to enjoy playing the role and unable to concentrate and respond to others.

The Self-With-Others Approach is a method to deal with the above

problems, particularly in relation to ensemble acting. An actor learns to simulate emotions by manipulating the body. Britton's approach helps actors to understand the body-mind relationship, unblock the reaction to stimuli and develop the way of communication with others in physical actions – in this case, the ball games are assisted by improvisation, voice and rhythm training.

The ball games are particularly useful to deal with the second kind of problem. It trains bodymind with detailed physical work through which an actor learns how to pay detailed attention to his body. Precision gives freedom and the freedom includes the freedom from the tyranny of fear. Intense emotion is even more difficult to express because the actor's fear is going to be greater and the breakdown of the bodymind coordination is more likely, making it harder for the actor to retrieve and express it.

As mentioned above, by dealing with fear, the player is asked not to judge nor to compare with other players. The instructor will not comment on the player's performance and the player is asked not to comment on his own performance either. He is asked to live the moment and follow his energy flow, letting the balls reflect his energy level. He is asked not to be afraid of not catching the ball and enjoy the playfulness of the game. The enjoyment and playfulness help performers to communicate openly, clearly and in

detail with co-performers and with the audience. By understanding that it is a game and by feeling the pleasure of playing with the balls, it stops the defense mechanism of the player from kicking in and prevents the players from closing up within. The ball games are as much a training of the mind as a training of the body.

In a way, the learning process of the Ball Game is a *via negativa*, a process of stripping away, a process of identifying and getting rid of blockages, “not a collection of skills but an eradication of blocks” (Grotowski, 1976, p.17). The ball games help to empty the player of the negative attitude and to unblock mental obstacles.

The learning process is twofold:

- i) unblock reaction to impulse
- ii) learn to react “appropriately” through the shared and chosen principles of the ensemble

To unblock and to learn, the actor has to go through the following steps:

- first experience
- then recall
- then reflect
- finally seek to understand” (Britton, 2013, p.316)

The understanding part comes at the very end through self-

reflection of the recalled experience rather than being told by instructor. It is a self-exploration exercise. During the game, the player focuses on becoming the right vessel rather than acquiring skills. It is a game to train attitude and mentality. The uninterrupted movement of the ball game focuses the player, so that he has to concentrate (developing watchfulness and mindfulness through eye contact, paying attention to others, responding to stimuli and filling up space), connect with other actors (by being aware of the others and remaining calm in chaos), develop full body coordination (by following the energy flow of the throwing balls and encouraging the flow of impulse to reaction) and open up one's body and emotion, believing in one's own emotion and cultivating presence. The intense body engagement does not give the player too much time to think and hence it drives out negative attitude and blockages and the end product is turning the player into an actor with stage presence, ready to perform and a proper training for pre-expressivity.

2. Movement Improvisation

Other than the core activity i.e. the ball game, our training was supported by movement improvisation. The movement improvisation introduced by Britton is slightly different from the one at the HKAPA.

Under the HKAPA course description, improvisation techniques are also introduced in the Acting I & II courses:

... followed by improvisation techniques, in which students utilize their five senses and imagination to explore the dramatic elements, known as the '5Ws' (who, where, when, what, why) (HKAPA, 2016, p.7) and

Acting II equips students with the basic knowledge to prepare a 'character role' through working on scenes from a contemporary realistic play, as well as through continued improvisation exercises, scene work and formal presentation... This course will adopt an experiential and practical learning approach for the study of selected scenes through individual, partner work, group improvisation and critique, and individual coaching. (HKAPA, 2016, p.7-8)

Even though the HKAPA acting course also pays attention to the fundamental principles of improvisation such as attentiveness, readiness, responsiveness and openness²², its focus is on the use of ready texts and scripts, its intention being creating credible "characters" and the approach tends to be more analytical and intellectual such as the use of the '5Ws', critique and individual coaching.

In my experience, Britton's improvisation did not involve character building and was not intended for any scene work in the very beginning and so the '5Ws' will not be appropriate. The emphasis of the improvisation is purely on response to others and response

²² HKAPA, 2016, p.7.

to stimuli. Similar to the ball games, it is all about action and reaction and unblocking reaction to impulse. By taking away characters, scenes and objectives, students are less likely to compare with each other as the standard of good and bad acting cannot apply. In such a situation, students may have more flexibility to explore and are more open to their impulses.

The improvisation starts with physical contact among students with students touching each other. It is a particularly difficult exercise for Hong Kong society as Chinese culture is not very tactile and the social mores may inhibit actors in developing intimacy with other actors as they may worry what the other students think of them if one lets oneself go. Fear and anxiety may be in the way and students have to develop trust and confidence among themselves. This exercise starts to break down that anxiety and in doing so starts to enable the actors to be available to each other for the purpose of the work.

Physical improvisation always starts with pairs dancing. The so-called “dancing” here focuses more on the interaction between students rather than any dance technique and form. It always starts with very simple musical scores. “Through this, they explore and manipulate the possibilities of their performative relationship with another person.” (Britton, 2013, p.334). By understanding different possibility of physical scores in relation to the musical scores, it

opens up unlimited way we can play with partners by making use of one's own body, partners' bodies and their relationship and the physical space. It gradually reduces students' fears and anxieties as mentioned above.

Other improvisation involves isolating body parts when movement improvisation is in process. The objective is to explore movement, develop agility, trust and confidence. Students should also enjoy themselves as they should be reminded that it is a form of game playing. What is required from students is to avoid consciousness and prediction and concentrate on response to stimuli. By doing so, the bodymind connection is more immediate and emotion is better retrieved and expressed.

Actors need to perform in front of audience and in performing in front of classmates, students start with solo improvisation and then slowly develop into an ensemble and finally they start to rehearse a scene. Solo improvisation requires the actor to interact and play with elements in the room while ensemble improvisation requires students to response to stimuli coming from both animate and inanimate objects. The stimulus chosen can start with something familiar to something unfamiliar. Students may need to repeat, develop and change their routines. Students need to improvise with pleasure so they can open up and expand energy and by connecting with other students with whole bodymind, they establish

presence on stage. Only when the students start learning to respond without blockages can they move on to improvisation with a situation, a certain relationship or an objective. This is the more effective in expressing emotion, especially intense emotion.

3. Voice Training

Unlike body movement, the use of voice is more tied in with the language; actors who are well versed in their native language and are sensitive towards the performing language may significantly enhance their performance. HKAPA has courses dedicated to voice training. Although they did say that “through practice, students will learn to free their voices through liberating both the breath and the body” which is similar to Britton’s method, they also mention that “students will explore poetic texts to develop an imaginative use of voice and to stretch vocal range” and there will be chorus-based practice(HKAPA, 2006, 8). In addition, “vocal diversity and expressivity are explored through text-based exercise” (HKAPA, 2006, p.13)

Britton’s approach is less focused on texts and the focus is more on how voice changes with movement. Voice training ranges from gibberish, foreign language to English. Students should be aware of distance, volume and intensity of voice projection and as a group, they should make full of resonance and creating mood with

sounds. Breathing is very important in speech delivery and proper use of breathing may also help to deliver certain emotion and character portrayal. Students also learn to be sensitive to vowels, consonants and tones. Voice training includes using students' native language for story telling.

Voice training and improvisation can combine at a later stage to create a piece of theatre work. Students can combine story telling with movement. The use of gibberish or students' native language is particularly important for a class with students from all over the world. For students whose native language is not English, an advanced voice training exercise may frighten them as it is almost impossible for a non-native English speaker to deliver English texts well within a short period of time. The fear of using an unfamiliar language may hamper students' ability to deliver emotion. The use of students' native language helps them to overcome this fear as they know their language is unlikely to be understood by their classmates, they may even try extra hard in conveying emotion not through meaning but the tone and articulation of the language which may help students to explore their own language in a completely new light.

4. Rhythm Training

Body rhythms are a powerful trigger for the emotions. Thus Stanislavski's earlier insistence on the importance

of tempo-rhythm acquires even greater importance.
(Benedetti, 2008, p.92)

HKAPA does not have a particular class for rhythm but it has introductory course on dance. Britton's use of rhythm is the combination of music with ball games, movement improvisation and voice training. Its influence may trace back to Joseph Chaikin, Al Wunder and Pina Bausch by searching through body expression via music to find the authentic emotion of actors on stage. Music is one of the stimuli that students can react to and the reaction to music can be more direct and immediate than many other stimuli. Music is a very efficient and effective means to trigger emotion in students.

V CONCLUSION

This thesis explores ways to help Hong Kong student actors to perform on stage with intense emotion.

Leading inter-cultural psychological researches on emotion show that compared with the European or American, Japanese and Chinese are less emotionally expressive. Due to a lack of similar research on people in Hong Kong and the fact that over 90% of people in Hong Kong are Chinese, this thesis adopts the research findings and acknowledges that the cultural impediment to emotion expressivity may apply to Hong Kong. The expressivity problem may partly attribute to the control mechanism of negative feelings in the Asian culture and partly due to a lack of spontaneity because of the control.

Other than cultural problem, actors in Hong Kong also have to confront the universal problem of expressing emotion on stage as most people may find it hard to be natural when being watched. It has also been shown by Elly Konijn in her book, *Acting Emotion* (2000), that actors need the task emotion to support or bolster their emotions to get them to a greater height. Hetzler, however, argues that actor's emotions are real emotions dictated by the circumstances of the characters. In either case, to express intense emotions on stage requires great emotion expressivity from actors.

In order to deal with the above problems Hong Kong drama teachers may want to introduce or develop effective acting training tools for Hong Kong actors.

This thesis traces the historical development of theatre education in Hong Kong and concludes that before the establishment of the HKAPA, Hong Kong theatre training was based on apprenticeship without any formal theatre education and theoretical base. After the establishment of HKAPA, the dominant thought is on Stanislavski's emotion memory together with method of physical actions from later Stanislavski's work. My interviews with former HKAPA students (see Appendix 1) seem to indicate that emotion memory sometimes may work with some students but not others. Detailed examination of the HKAPA syllabus and course description of Stanislavski's 'system' indicates that there is not adequate training for students to work on spontaneous emotion triggered by stimuli.

Psychophysical approach builds on the premise that emotion can be triggered by the body and it has been proved by research psychologists that body condition may affect emotion, like breathing. Psychophysical training should stress the importance of bodymind training and believes that if the mind and the body are ready for performance, actors can be put in the character's emotion easily. This thesis examines Stanislavski's system (emotional memory and physical action) in detail, supplemented by exercises created by Chekhov (triggering emotions by physical embodiment).

Psychophysical training may help student actor to develop a physicality that is receptive to impulses and at the same time overcome the shortcoming of emotion memory. This thesis recommends Britton's "The Self-With-Others Approach" partly because Britton's approach is a kind of simple stimuli-response exercises, influenced by later works of Stanislavski and it can easily

supplement Stanislavski's system by creating a set of exercises that help students to achieve spontaneity and express their emotions freely. It is also partly because I have spent almost two-month training under this Approach at the University of Huddersfield and discovered it helped my concentration and relaxation, sharpened my sensitivity and brought about communion among actors. In my experience, it is particularly effective in training spontaneity and facilitates better communication in ensemble acting. Moreover, the Self-With-Others Approach only requires some balls and is easy to set up. It may be the case that other actors would also find that working through the body would be a more reliable approach than attempting to control emotion memory.

This thesis is fully aware that Britton's method is only one of the useful tools. However it is the one that I have personal insight into and find it very useful as an actor and drama teacher to work with emotion via the body. I previously belonged to a theatre company that adopted some of Stanislavski's and Michael Chekhov's method in training actors. They were effective in helping me to create a character and evoke emotions appropriate to the character I was playing. However when I started Britton's training, it helped me to become more spontaneous and more responsive to stimulus. Surmounting the cultural hurdle of concealing my emotions by taking off the mask of respectability imposed on me by my culture, not only helped me as an actor but as a person, enabling me to see and feel the world in a different light.

To prepare actors for performance, other training tools may also be used. The Self-With-Others Approach does not focus on vocal training - voice projection

and elocution may require other training tools, particularly vocal training with prepared texts. Emotion memory, despite its possible shortcomings, is still useful to prepare the emotion of an actor ready for a role. Although over-intellectualisation should be avoided, an appropriate degree of textual and character analysis is required to go further inside the head of the characters. All the above training tools can be used together with the Self-With-Others Approach.

Appendix 1

In order to have a through understanding of the teaching methods, I have interviewed graduate students from different periods. They are mainly divided into three periods and for the sake of this thesis, this thesis calls it “the Early Period” (1980s and 1990s), “the Mid Period” (from 2000 to 2010) and the “the Late Period” (from 2011 to the present). The chosen former student actors are all leading actors in Hong Kong and belong to influential Hong Kong theatre companies. I also interviewed an experienced teacher at HKAPA so that the problems in expressing intense emotion in highly charged emotionally scenes can be explored from both the students’ and the teachers’ perspectives. He has taught in HKAPA for ten years from 2001 to 2011.

This thesis would like to find out the following answer: How many interviewees are consciously aware that cultural factor is an obstacle for expressing his/her emotions on stage? I, however, avoided leading questions and so it was rephrased as follows: Do you (to the interviewee) find it hard to express intense emotion on stage?

i Emily Cheng

An HKAPA student from the first cohort of drama graduates, 1988

Programme Director and founder of On and On Theatre Workshop²³, Hong

²³ On and On Theatre Workshop (前進進戲劇工作坊) was formed in 1998, a professional Hong Kong theatre company which is dedicated to engage in a dialogue with Hong Kong culture with special emphasis on theatre education.

Kong

Although HKAPA students did not follow exclusively Stanislavski's system, a lot of drama exercises were still based on his theory. Emotion memory or affective memory²⁴ was the training method we used in those days.

When I had to deal with the character's emotion, I started from the text. There was no clear path to go into it. There was one interesting experience when I was a student. I fell asleep in rehearsal room while waiting for my cue. When I woke up and started the rehearsal, I suddenly could get inside the character's emotion better than before. Now, I believe it is because I was totally relaxed and my mind was emptied and it provided space to get into the character's emotion.

ii Bonni Chan

An HKAPA student from the first cohort of drama graduates, 1988

Artistic Director and founder of Theatre Du Pif²⁵

I received training on acting emotion in HKAPA. Emotion memory, given

²⁴ It requires actors to call on the memory of details from a similar situation (or sometimes the more recently a situation with similar import) to those of their character.

²⁵ 'Theatre du Pif (進劇場) is a leading Hong Kong theatre company known for its cross-cultural heritage and bilingual productions performing in Cantonese, English or both. Using a workshop and devising process as well as collaborations with dramaturges and artists from other disciplines, they orchestrate movement, text and visual images to produce productions acclaimed both for their power and their poetry. Besides creating new productions, they have also run a wide range of educational and community outreach programmes in Hong Kong and the UK.' (Theatre du Pif, 2013)

circumstances and inner truth²⁶ are all included in the foundation training. Although HKAPA's training is based on Constantin Stanislavski's system, how it is applied to practical acting training depends heavily on individual teacher's interpretation.

Emotion is not different between nations but the way of channeling it is slightly different. In my experience, I find some Hong Kong actors are rather stiff but there are also actors who can portray intense emotion on stage. In general, I find Hong Kong student actor's emotional range relatively limited. I wonder if it is because Hong Kong is densely populated and therefore people tend to be more discipline and more tolerant. Hong Kong is also an extremely fast paced society. Students actor always want to get the effect quickly and they do not spend enough time to explore characters deep enough and so they fail to produce authentic emotion.

iii **Chu Pak Hong (朱柏康)**²⁷

An HKAPA student from the 18th cohort of drama graduates, 2005

For the first three years, our training was based on Stanislavski's system.

²⁶ Gray P. (1966), *Stanislavski and American: A Critical Chronology*, New York: Hill and Wang, p. 138. The inner truth is sometimes called Stanislavsky's inner techniques – the physical technique that trains an actor's feeling for truth and form. See Moore S (1984). *The Stanislavski System: The Professional Training of an Actor*, 2nd rev. ed. New York: Penguin. See the chapter on The Actor's Physical Apparatus.

²⁷ Famous stage actor who also imports his theatricality into his music as a band singer, an influential figure for Hong Kong youngsters.

Sense²⁸ and emotion memory were taught. By searching the memory, I tried to find the elements which could trigger my emotion. At the beginning, it was easy for me to dive into very intense emotion. But I could not control it, shape it or repeat it. For the later stage of my training, I started building up characters by writing down their characteristic and the history of the character. Physically, I also map out the way the character stands, the way he/she moves and his/her rhythm. All these provide the guideline of my emotion. When I focus on portraying my character (both inside and outside), my emotion flows with it.

iv Lai Yuk Ching (黎玉清)²⁹

An HKAPA student from the 18th cohort of drama graduates, 2005

I was taught at HKAPA based on Stanislavski's system but I don't think it helped me to express my emotion in character. When I performed "Titus Andronicus"³⁰ in Shakespeare's Globe, London in 2012, we concentrated in breathing and the

²⁸ Sense memory is the recall of physical sensations surrounding emotional events and not the emotions themselves.

²⁹ Lai Yuk Ching (黎玉清) is a member of Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio and a famous Hong Kong physical actor. Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio was formed by Tang Shu-wing who is the first Hong Kong theatre artist to be bestowed l'Officier de l' Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French Ministry of Culture and Communication in 2007, formerly the Dean of Drama of HKAPA and is the forerunner of physical theatre in Hong Kong, nicknamed the "Alchemist of Minimalist Theatre".

³⁰ *Titus Andronicus*, was first staged in Cantonese in the 36th Hong Kong Arts Festival (2008) by Tang Shu-wing Theatre Studio. The second run of *Titus Andronicus* was specially featured in the 40th Hong Kong Arts Festival (2012) before participating in early May 2012 in Globe to Globe, a World Shakespeare Festival in the Globe Theatre of London as a highlight of the Cultural Olympiad, in which 37 plays of the Bard are performed in 37 languages. It is the first Cantonese production ever performed at the Globe Theatre, London. Tang has also given a theatre workshop organised by the Globe Theatre.

details of the physical scores of the characters³¹. I did not find it difficult to express intense emotion on stage.

v Wan Yuk Yu (温玉如)³²

An HKAPA student from the 26th cohort of drama graduates, 2008

I learned how to use emotion memory when I was a student actress. But now, I pay more attention to my breathing. It helps me significantly when I want to trigger my emotion.

When it comes to expressing my emotion, my main obstacle is my own ego. Sometimes when I want to perform better, it distracts me and I fail to respond to what is happening on stage.

vi MOA Ship Wing 毛擘穎

An HKAPA student from the 26th cohort of drama graduates, 2014

The main problem with expressing emotion in acting is not whether it is intense or not. I find it hard when the character is too different from me and I do not have the character's experience. We were trained to use emotion memory but it is difficult to reach the character's emotion if I do not have similar experience

³¹ Similar to the way musical scores are to music performance, physical scores include physical movement, rhythm, patterns, magnitude, energy flow which can be repeated during performance on stage.

³² Hong Kong famous award-winning actor and her awards include the Best Actress of The 5th Hong Kong Theatre Libre.

of the character. I know my portrayal is not adequate but I will try to get as close to it as possible. We were taught to do a lot of script analysis and placed great emphasis on "given circumstance". We also spent a lot of time exploring subtexts. Sometime during rehearsal, I did not have sufficient time to prepare. Then, I found it hard to express the character's emotion. I normally need a lot of time for my preparation.

vii Mr WU Hoi-fai (胡海輝)

*Former HKAPA Lecturer (Drama)*³³

Part-time Lecturer (Drama)

Our teaching is based on Stanislavski's system but each teacher emphasises on different areas together with their expertise. The most common obstacle on expressing emotion is lack of life experience and knowledge. It is the area where emotion memory cannot help student actors. During rehearsal, I will use any method to help my students to get close to the character's emotion: side coaching, stimulation by imagination, physically recreating the environment, script analysis, sub-scene, character history etc. What works varies from student to student. During the rehearsal of a Greek tragedy, "*The Oresteia*", one of my students who played the Oracle got into the character very quickly and managed to portray the emotion suitable for the character. But as the rehearsal went on, she gradually lost her grip on the character. I found that she

³³ He has been a lecturer at HKAPA for ten years. He is currently the artistic director of Pants Theatre Production (一條褲製作) with actors mainly from former HKAPA graduates.

wanted to repeat the emotion rather than repeating the process of triggering the emotion. It is the general problem of student actors.

C Interview Conclusion of Hong Kong theatre training

As the HKAPA was the only institute providing formal performing art training in Hong Kong. I will focus on the training it provided. We found Constantin Stanislavski's system is the source of the training system in HKAPA as it is also the source of acting training in Hong Kong's history.

Problems in expressing intense emotion on stage

	CHENG	CHAN	CHU	LAI	WAN	MOA	WU
LIFE Experience						X	X
Preparation		X	X			X	X
Emotion Memory	X		X	X		X	X
Concentration / Relaxation	X				X		
Culture		X					
No Problem				X			

In the interview, only one actor (Bonnie Chan) has mentioned culture as an obstacle for expressing intense emotion on stage but even she did not think it happened to her. Similar to this thesis premise, her speculation was not supported by the finding in the my interviews. The interviews however have drawn my attention to four problem areas.

The first problem area is life experience. Emotion memory cannot help students when he/she does not have the life experience of the character. Although the actors have not identified culture as a problem, life experience may be related to one own culture. In a culture where intense emotion is not expressed, actors may find it difficult to retrieve emotion memory. Having said that, life experience is not the same as cultural obstacles because certain life experiences are common to all cultures although the way to express their emotion may be culturally different. In every culture, there are ways of expressing intense emotions as intense emotions are not exclusive to certain cultures.

The second and third problems are frequently referred to by the interviewees, ie a lack of preparation and the limitation of emotion memory. The interviewees have suggested various solutions to help themselves in expressing their emotion on stage. And to achieve that, a lot of time the actors need good preparation and great concentration or they need to be more relaxed (it is the fourth problem identified ie lack of concentration/need for relaxation from

stress). Even if actors can portray intense emotion, it is difficult for them to control it, shape it and repeat it. In order to achieve that, proper acting techniques are important. With proper preparation and effective acting techniques, actors can overcome all the problems identified in the interviews including the lack of life experience.

Appendix 2

My Training Diary at Huddersfield University

My training at Huddersfield University is mainly divided into four areas, namely core training (ball game), movement improvisation, voice and rhythm training.

Day	Core Training (Ball Game)	Movement Improvisation	Voice Training	Rhythm Training
1	X	X	X	
2	X	X		
3	X	X		
4	X	X		
5	X	X		
6	X	X	X	
7	X	X	X (with improv)	X
8	X	X		X
9	X	X		X
10	X	X		X
11	X	X		

12	X (outside)			
13	X	X		X
14	X	X		X
15	X	X		
16	X	X		X
17	X		X	
18	X	X		
19	X	X		X
20	X	X		
21	X	X		X
22	X	X		
23	X	X		
24	X	X		
25	X	X		
26	X	X		
27	X	X		X
28	X	X		X
29	X	X	X	X

Note: “X” indicates the presence of such training

There was a term break after Day 29 and after the term break, we started our rehearsal of the devised show *Act of Resistance* from 8th August to 21st September. In the early part of the rehearsal, we continued with the exercises above with the belief that if we could build a good ensemble feeling among us, it would only take a short time to rehearse the show. The actual rehearsal of the devised play itself only started one week before the performance and we were satisfied with the final result.

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