

IBDP HL Theatre : Research Investigation

Research Question : *What training and gestural knowledge is needed for an actor of the Wu Chou role in the 'fight in the dark' scene in "The Crossroads" Peking Opera play?*

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Table of Contents

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Wu Chou role in the 'fight in the dark' scene in “The Crossroads”**

Peking Opera play?	3
Appendix 1. "The Crossroads" Summary	14
Bibliography	15
Works Consulted	22

What training and gestural knowledge is needed for an actor of the Wu Chou role in the 'fight in the dark' scene in "The Crossroads" Peking Opera play?

Peking Opera is a traditional form of Chinese theatre and comprises of song, dance, stage combat, acting, mime and acrobatics. Peking Opera is internationally renowned for its harsh training methods but more so, for the immense skill which the performers must acquire during their training. The Wu Chou character is a secondary character but one that requires specialized training. This is especially clear in the acrobatic driven 'fight in the dark' scene in Peking Opera's "The Crossroads". Therefore, to portray the role correctly, while following the strict standards of Peking Opera, special training is required. This essay will firstly discuss the Wu Chou character and the generalized training for a Peking Opera performer, and then will examine the particular training, gestural knowledge and skill required by a Wu Chou performer for "The Crossroads" performance.

Introductory training is the first step for all Peking Opera performers. Literature and theatre scholar, Yao-Kun Liu commented on the training process for this theatre style, which is drenched in tradition;

"[Certain] conventions have to be followed in performance, as they are the basis of communication between actors and audience. As a result, the training of actors is a long, continuous, and arduous process in Peking opera." (Liu, 2010).

A typical performer begins general training around the age of eight; traditionally actors were handpicked based on talent (Guan, 2010). Students then practice for six to eight years to master the stylized falsetto and movements, longer if they also

choose to partake in academic classes. The time needed for completion of training also depends upon the skills of each aspiring actor (Ibid).

“A popular saying among the Chinese depicts the importance and hardships of the training in Peking opera: “One minute on stage, ten years training.”” (Liu, 2010).

The gestures are generic until a performer is assigned a particular role to play based on their skills.

“Although there is a specialization of roles, a full training in Peking Opera encompasses more than just the movement and martial aspects of the opera's many facets.” (Bolwell, 2010).

Those that show talent in acrobatics may then be assigned the role of a Wu Chou character based on skill compatibility (Guan, 2010). A Wu Chou actor would train from early morning till night in voice and generic movements initially but once assigned his character, he would proceed to the acrobatic training and the combat training he requires, including weaponry usage (Confucius Institute Online, 2009). Basic training methods include many techniques to give the performers the capability to remember and perform each stylized gesture perfectly. Traditionally, some of the training for Peking Opera included doing handstands for 40 minutes with the actors' legs tied to a rod and staying in a crouching position for more than an hour (Hays, 2010). Training sessions are painstakingly long and repetitive;

“... training included throwing 1,000 punches in a row and then launching 500 kicks...singing and acting lessons were equally rigorous.” (Ibid).

Such training routines develop the muscles needed to perform the physically taxing movements displayed in performances such as ‘The Crossroads’.

The “*principal form of learning is the learning of the body. The body learns, and then contains the information that comprises the style and the role and therefore the performance.*”(Wright, 2002).

Once the skills are learnt, the actors will practice until they are memorized, “*as the body learns, the body changes as a result of that learning.*” (Ibid). This is especially important for the “fight in the dark scene” since the two actors involved are taught the extensive choreography by their master and then must practice it again and again to achieve perfect synchronized timing (refer to picture 1). This is essential to the scene since it requires the actors to perform complex movements together without being able to “look” at the other performer, as it is a fight in the “dark”. Therefore, without the introductory Peking Opera training, the Wu Chou actor would not have a sufficient skill level on which to base his performance in his specialized role.



Picture 1. The performers in the ‘fight in the dark’ scene use a table to jump from, displaying their synchronization and choreography (Cultural China, 2010).

“The Crossroads”, an immensely popular story, requires concentrated story and character training. The ‘fight in the dark’ scene occurs when a senior official is exiled to an island. His bodyguard stays in the same inn as the exiled official but the innkeeper is very confused and believes that the bodyguard is trying to kill the official (refer to appendix 1). They fight for hours in a room until the innkeeper’s wife

walks in with a lit candle, clearing up the misunderstanding (China Odyssey Tours, 2010). Story training for the 'fight in the dark' scene and the entire "Crossroads" performance takes approximately three years (Guan, 2010). One foreign actor, who trained in Peking Opera, called the 'fight in the dark' scene *"a masterpiece in mime, timing, synchronized movement, martial arts, acting and acrobatic skills."* (Bolwell, 2010). "The Crossroads" story is a very famous and popular Peking Opera legend.

"The Peking Opera Crossroads, a famous repertoire of combat dramas, is a snippet of The Yang's Saga. Although not accompanied with any singing, dialogues and recitation, the combat performances in the drama expressed the content quite well, which revealed the amazing techniques of Wu Chou role." (Cultural China, 2010).

To perform the Wu Chou role in the "fight in the dark" scene, an actor must understand the 'Chou' character's personality (refer to picture 2). 'Chou' means the clown or a negative character such as a thief, however, just because the Chou character has some negative characteristics like being sly and cunning, he is generally a good character (Guan, 2010).

"This character is sometimes positive, kind-hearted and humorous, but sometimes negative, crafty, malicious or silly. Like the acting and singing, the makeup is stylized, inspired by the masks worn by dancers in Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties operas." (China Culture, 2010).

'Chou' is the broad term for the clown-like role in Peking Opera but Wu Chou characters are generally humorous, minor, military roles, as



Picture 2. A traditional Wu Chou performer in costume that includes a fitted outfit that allows acrobatic movement and a white nose typical for the role (Oriental Discovery, 2010).

depicted in the 'fight in the dark' scene (Confucius Institute Online, 2009). While the other character remains serious throughout the fight, the Wu Chou performer gets hurt and consequently makes the audiences laugh through comically timed interactions with the audience. Specialized characterization for the Wu Chou character is essential. An actor wishing to play the Wu Chou character in the 'fight in the dark' scene would have to be aware of all the traits that Chou characters represent, and know what movements must be performed. In the 'fight in the dark' scene, the Chou character is a Wu Chou character and has gestures that are derived from martial arts. A performer wishing to have this role must be able to perform all martial art movements required by each scene but would also have to be well versed in acrobatic performance techniques. Since the Chou character can represent so many different things, one must fully understand the context of "The Crossroads" play and the 'fight in the dark' scene before performing the role of the Wu Chou character in this particular performance.

Specialized training is integral to the Wu Chou role, since the actors must be trained in a higher level of acrobatics, stage combat and related gestures.

"Wu Chou, one of the roles on Chinese opera stage, requires not only a good command of the martial arts or acrobatics, but also the ability to deliver the lines both clearly and fluently. The movement should be light but powerful."

(China Culture, 2010).

There are prescribed sets of movements for Peking Opera actors to perform, one of these sets of prescribed movements is called "Chengshi", which dictates how actors should fight. The actors in the 'fight in the dark scene' use a combination of long and short swords but once the actors drop their swords they resort back to the use of punches and kicks performing the "Chengshi" prescribed movements. Weaponry usage is an aspect of Peking Opera stage combat. Peking Opera martial arts, combat

skills and props fall under the “Bazi” aspect of Peking Opera (Chinese Embassy Nepal, 2010). Standard training in combat includes not only hand combat but also combines the use of swords in practice to use in performance (refer to picture 3). The Wu Chou character uses only short swords or daggers because he is not a warrior character; he is more of a cunning thief so his



Picture 3. The “fight in the dark” scene uses both body combat and weapon usage (Cultural China, 2010).

character suits small weapons (Guan, 2010). Many gestures in Peking Opera have symbolic meaning, for example; hand and leg actions, and sleeve movements can convey emotions or other meanings (Hochman, 1972 : 79-84).

In the ‘fight in the dark’ scene, the Wu Chou actor uses the sword to try to find the other warrior that he is fighting against. To show that he is looking for the character to stab, he points his hand in the direction he is stabbing and pushes the sword forward while his feet face the same direction as his leading hand (Guan, 2010). Such techniques are used to represent fights between characters and are part of the complex choreography. It is a short piece but it is very action-packed. The actors are required to run, jump and perform flips. The Wu Chou actor is also required to perform more complex acrobatic movements such as holding one foot and hopping back and forth through the space created (between the leg and the arm holding the leg) with the other foot, this special gesture is called “*tian men tai*”, and is performed only by the Wu Chou (Ibid). It is very taxing on the performer and to

perform this gesture, one must be agile, flexible and strong. This particular movement symbolizes crossing a difficult obstacle. The actor is trained to do this by building up strength and flexibility in the leg muscles and then developing the skill by practice. The acrobatic side of the Wu Chou training includes how to perform flips and cartwheels. It is used with a table in the 'fight in the dark' scene. There is a table on the stage and the Wu Chou character will stand upon the table and back flip onto the ground (Guan, 2010). Therefore, in terms of training specific to the Wu Chou character, a performer would be trained to be able to carry out movements such as those aforementioned for "The Crossroads" performance.

The need for particular gestures comes from the storyline of the 'fight in the dark scene'. In the 'fight in the dark' scene, there is a Wu Chou character and a male Warrior character present. Often unperceived by the audience, every movement in Peking Opera is planned and has meaning. There is little room for actors to change their actions because all gestures, even the direction they point their feet when they walk on stage, have been performed in a specific way for centuries (Guan, 2010). Only senior performers of Peking Opera have a small amount of artistic freedom to change their style in small ways.

"The technique with which the Peking Opera actor creates his character is very strictly defined... While Peking Opera characters are defined by their movement, such movement has its origins in another era." (Wright, 2002).

This exemplifies the necessity for such arduous training methods. Since all the movements are centuries old and most are symbolic, it is essential for a performer to recognize the need for flawless execution of each movement and how vital that is to the ethos of Peking Opera.

This storyline requires gestures, which reflect the martial art aspect of Peking Opera.

"Peking Opera can be divided into "civil" pieces, which are characterized by singing, and "martial" ones, which feature acrobatics and stunts."
(Shme.com, 2010).

The 'fight in the dark' scene is an example of a martial piece. Due to the genre of this piece, in this performance, the actor must rely on his body gestures and the sound he can make himself, as this scene generally does not have musical accompaniment (Cultural China, 2010). As writer K. Huang once said; *"An excellent actor of Chinese drama is a great master of body movements and facial expressions"* (Liu, 2010). The term "Zuo" in Peking Opera refers to the wide variety of Peking Opera gestural skills that a Wu Chou performer must be familiar with. Put simply, "Zuo" is; the use of gesture and mime, with and without props (Liu, 2010). Due to the nature of the 'fight in the dark scene' in "The Crossroads" performance, the use of gesture and mime is both with and without props. The Wu Chou character will use "Zuo" techniques to mime chasing the other character in the dark. They will need to mime as if they are listening intently for their opponent, as the scene requires. In addition, the Wu Chou actor will enact a fight using a small sword as a prop. Therefore, the Wu Chou actor must be well versed in "Zuo" techniques (mastering gestures with and without props) for "The Crossroads" story training to be effective.

Another example of a specialized gesture in the 'fight in the dark' scene is when the Wu Chou character is injured and therefore needs to show the audience that he is in pain, such as;

“when performing crying, an actor shall raise his left arm toward his face, pull his left sleeve with his right hand while shake and bowed his head.” (Liu, 2010).

Therefore, actors are not just trained in the “Zuo” gestures but also in the use of costume to complement gesture. This is aided by rehearsing in full costume. In this scene, the actors are merely pretending to be in the dark. Their fellow actor is visible however they must not look at each other to assist the illusion (refer to picture 4). All gestures must be completely in time and following the choreography precisely. This is when the repetition used in training becomes helpful in learning

performances. Additionally, the training technique of repetition makes the actors less likely to try to introduce their own style. Despite the regimented nature of Peking Opera performances, the Wu Chou character is allowed some artistic independence. This exception is allowed because of the importance of the Wu Chou role in “The Crossroads”.



Picture 4. The two actors must work in perfect unison to give the full effect of the “darkness” in which they fight; therefore, they cannot “look” at each other (Cultural China, 2010).

Training for the specialized gestures must come from knowledge of the gestures required by each scene. Since the ‘fight in the dark’ scene is set in a dark room, while on a fully lit stage, the Wu Chou character actor is trained to use cautious, small,

slow steps to portray cautiously walking due to lack of sight. He must also turn his head quickly at the sound of the other character because it is instinct despite lack of vision.

“Walking at night ... and the like are all demonstrated by the stylized movements of the actors and actresses. Performers also use their eyes and facial expressions to help convey the specific meaning.”(Shme.com, 2010).

The actor must use his eyes to convey his fear to the audience. At one point, when the Wu Chou character is hurt, which happens often due to his character, he must use his facial expressions to convey his pain because he cannot cry out due to the constrictions of the scene. A Wu Chou actor also uses his face, eyes and gestures, when he hears or bumps into his opponent. *“If an actor throws his hand above his head and flicks his sleeves back, he is astonished or surprised.”* (Ibid). The Wu Chou character performs this movement when he bumps into his opponent; surprised because he cannot see his opponent in the ‘fight in the dark’ scene. Peking Opera has many traditional movements and they must be used to portray certain emotions. Sometimes gestures must be adapted to be more scene-specific. *“When worried the actor will rub his hands together for several minutes.”* (Shme.com, 2010). Although rubbing hands together symbolizes worry, in the ‘fight in the dark’ scene Wu Chou must also have his hands out in front of him to avoid hitting one of the props by “mistake”, so he would not rub his hands together unless in a stationary pose. Additionally, for most of the scene he has a sword so he would use facial expressions instead of gesture to express concern. A Wu Chou character would train to adapt the gestures for the ‘fight in the dark scene’ in the story training for “The Crossroads”.

Gestural knowledge is imperative for Wu Chou actors.

“Physical language in Peking opera is employed imaginarily, symbolically, and abstractly. Although it originated from life and is intended to illustrate the reality of life, yet, as a specific theatrical language, the mimes, gestures, and body movements in Peking opera developed far beyond the reality and logic of life.” (Liu, 2010).

Therefore, an actor would know that some gestures, such as knocking on a door are performed in a realistic manner, while the actual door is imaginary and is alluded to by mime and symbolic gesture. This would be included in the acting training sessions. This can be shown in a number of ways, such as when crossing an imaginary threshold, an actor raises his right arm or foot first, which symbolizes entering a room, similar to when the Wu Chou character enters the stage for the ‘fight in the dark’ scene. A Wu Chou character would have to train for and memorize each gesture and know which part of the scene requires a realistic performance and which does not.

In conclusion, the training for the role of the Wu Chou character for the “fight in the dark scene” in “The Crossroads” play is very strenuous. The art form is deeply rooted in tradition, so it must be performed at the highest level of quality following the old techniques. Despite the difficulties in mastering the skills needed, a true master will claim that the training is necessary to truly attain the abilities needed to perform in Peking Opera style. Starting with the generalized training described and proceeding to the specialized training in the story and character, stage combat and acrobatics, gesture and scene specific gesture, a Wu Chou performer develops the necessary skills to portray his character.

Appendix 1. “The Crossroads” Summary

“Jiaozan, a senior official of the Song Dynasty was exiled to Shamen Island because he killed a treacherous court official. The commander in chief Yang Yanzhao sent Ren Tanghui to protect Jiaozan secretly. During the night, Ren stayed at the same crossroad inn as Jiao. In that inn, a fierce fight took place between Ren Yanzhao and the innkeeper Liu Lihua who thought Ren Yanzhao wanted to murder Jiaozan. The fight waged for hours until Liu Lihua's wife came in with a lit candle. The two men recognized each other, and this cleared up their misunderstanding.” (China Odyssey Tours, 2010).

Bibliography

- 1) Bolwell, John. "Peking Opera Training In China." Web log post. *The Tai Chi Union For Great Britain*. Web. 7 Apr. 2010. <<http://www.taichiunion.com/magazine/pekingo.html>>.

This was a very interesting blog-like article to read. It provides differences and similarities between Peking Opera and Internal Arts, and short snippets of information about Peking Opera weaponry, themes and elements of Peking Opera. I enjoyed gaining research from this site. Bolwell gave a knowledgeable insight into Peking Opera through his experience. His first person account of the training experience is unique and ensures his research is accurate. Unfortunately, it was too short to be detailed enough, for example the theme/stories were too short to be of any use. Although he provides some relatively useful information about the type of weaponry used in Peking Opera, which I used.

- 2) "Chou Roles in Peking Opera." - *Confucius Institute Online*. 27 Sept. 2009. Web. 29 July 2010. <http://www.chinese.cn/quyi/en/article/2009-08/29/content_22568.htm>.

This site was quite simple and did not elaborate on many of the sections. However, the information about the 'Chou' character was detailed enough to be of use. Apart from that, the accuracy of this website was questionable due to the lack of a listed author and/or references which meant all the information had to be double checked before I could use it. However, one would use this site for an introduction to the features of Peking Opera, like the characters, in a succinct presentation style. If they wanted to know about the Chou character, they would use this particular page

however there were many more articles available on the site regarding Peking Opera. This site has a lot more information to offer people in the field of theatre about Peking Opera if searched thoroughly. I used the information on the Chou character to gain a better understanding of the character and his traits.

- 3) "Classic Plays." *Discovery Oriental*. Web. 07 Apr. 2010.
<<http://www.orientaldiscovery.com/2006/9-22/200692214244.html>>.

This source was focused on the storylines in Peking Opera. I avoided the written information from this site because it wasn't referenced, had no author listed, and it contradicted many other sites that I was using so I deemed the information to be inaccurate/unreliable. However, if one was to use this website, the information of interest would be the information on the different stories in Peking Opera that is concise and informative. This website was used solely for the picture. I used the picture of the Wu Chou Character from the source.

- 4) "Famous Combat Peking Opera: Crossroads." *China Culture*. Web. 07 Apr. 2010.
<http://www.chinaculture.org/library/2008-01/24/content_27479.htm>.

This site offered a concise page of information regarding "The Crossroads" play and the "Wu Chou" character. This site gave a very short description of the story that could have been more in-depth, however it was clear and simple which was still beneficial. This source could be used to learn about nearly all the facets of Peking Opera in brevity if one were to search the site for Peking Opera information. Unfortunately, it lacks the information needed to make it a reliable source such as an author or referenced works. The information that I used was very useful such as a paragraph on the story and the Chou character. It was highly relevant to my topic.

- 5) "Famous Combat Peking Opera: Crossroads." *Cultural China*. Web. 07 Apr. 2010. <<http://arts.cultural-china.com/en/89Arts4900.html>>.

Many things were strikingly similar on this website to the site I have cited above, so it was unnecessary to use the written information. Also, there was no author listed so it had no credibility. I wouldn't recommend this website due to the lack of information that was unoriginal. However, the pictures were quite good, so if people required photos they would be able to find them from this source. However I used this website for the photo album it had of a performance of 'The Crossroads'. The photos were relevant to the 'Chou' character so I used them.

- 6) Hays, Jeffrey. "PEKING OPERA, CHINESE OPERA AND THEATER." *Facts And Details*. Apr. 2010. Web. 7 Apr. 2010. <<http://factsanddetails.com/china.php?itemid=246&catid=7&subcatid=41>>.

This source not only gave good information but also lots of new information, for example; there was a section on the efforts to revitalize Peking Opera. It also gave a good description of the training of Peking Opera performers that was very hard to find throughout all my research. This website had an author listed which immediately made it's information more reliable than others, also, all the information he gave he referenced. One could use this website for basic, yet detailed research on Peking Opera and for all the other sites given as "good website and sources" links. Overall, this was a very helpful source and completely reliable. This essay used the information on the training and symbolism of movements.

- 7) Hochman, Stanley. "Peking Opera." *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of World Drama*. Vol. 1. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972. 79-84. Print.

This is an encyclopedic reference and therefore is a reliable source of information, as it has to be factual to be published by a reputable publisher. The information given such as; story outlines, make-up/costume/scenery facts, gesture and movement information and a brief history of Peking Opera was of use and would be useful to others if all could be deemed still accurate today. The limitation with this reference is that it was published in 1972 and may no longer be up to date. For this reason, I cited this source only for information that I was sure (as it correlated to other research found) was still applicable today. I used the information regarding symbolism of the stylized Peking Opera movements. This information would be useful to dramatists for information on basic Peking Opera facts.

- 8) Liu, Yao-Kun. "Peking Opera and Grotowski's Concept of "poor Theatre"." *The Free Library*. Farlex, 1 Mar. 2010. Web. 21 Nov. 2010. <<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Peking+opera+and+Grotowski's+concept+of+%22poor+theatre%22-a0232470984>>.

This source was very helpful and very well written. Yao-Kun Liu is a university professor and his links between Peking Opera and Grotowski's concept of "Poor Theatre" was very well researched and all his sources were cited in his bibliography, which gave this source credibility. Although this source does not only discuss Peking Opera, it gave good information such as the audience type, training and symbolism of Peking Opera. I used the information given pertaining to the symbolism and the meaning of Peking Opera gestures. This source could be used in the field of drama to explore the connections between Grotowski's theatre style and Peking Opera.

- 9) "Peking Opera." *China Tour*. Web. 07 Apr. 2010.
<<http://yeschinatour.com/china-guides/chinese-culture/beijing-opera/>>.

This was a tourist website that was giving a brief description about Peking Opera such as Peking Opera roles and such. Once again, this was a site that gave good information but lacked an author or other features that could have validated the information. Although the information seemed correct when checked with other sources, an author listed would have helped to confirm this. The information on the roles in Peking Opera was particularly helpful and is what I used from this source.

- 10) "Peking Opera." *EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN NEPAL*.
Web. 20 Nov. 2010. <<http://np.china-embassy.org/eng/Culture/wh/t167626.htm>>.

This information was for tourists looking to travel to China because it was on the website for the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Nepal. However, it was actually very detailed and gave information pertaining to acting, costumes, plays, history, roles, setting, music and song, make-up and colour. I used the information about the "Bazi" aspect of Peking Opera. This source did not give an author which made it less reliable but given that it is the embassy's website, it is likely that this was well researched to be as accurate as possible. Regardless, the source was used sparingly because it did not have an author listed. This source would be good for research of the information listed above.

11) "Peking Opera." *Shme.com*. Web. 28 July 2010.
<<http://www.shme.com/culture/opera/peking.htm>>.

This site was very informative containing lots of Peking Opera story summaries and roles, famous Peking Opera actors and a brief description of other elements such as history, costume and make up. The site is aimed at helping people find extensive information about China but has no author so its credibility is questionable. The strength was in the synopses, which would be very useful if people wanted to find short descriptions of famous Peking Opera stories. Also, the basic information was succinct yet detailed. I used this for the introductory information because it was broad, very well written and comprehensible.

12) "Peking Opera School." - *Confucius Institute Online*. 27 Sept. 2009. Web. 07 Apr. 2010. <http://quyi.chinese.cn/en/article/2009-09/27/content_22347.htm>.

As aforementioned in reference to this site, it was quite minimal and did not provide many details for most sections. This page contained information on the training of Peking Opera students both historically and in modern days. The accuracy of this website was problematic due to the lack of a listed author and/or references. There was lots of information in other articles available on the site regarding Peking Opera but this page would be useful for a brief description of training regimes. For my essay, I used the information on the academic classes and Peking Opera tutelage.

- 13) Sherman. "Four Roles of Peking Opera: Sheng, Dan, Jing and Chou | ChinaScan.org." *ChinaScan.Org*. 19 Jan. 2010. Web. 29 July 2010. <<http://www.chinascan.org/archives/1582>>.

This site was gave good information about the four roles of Peking Opera but upon exploration there are many other pages by this author on Peking Opera. The credibility is sound, as there is an author listed and much of the information was backed up by other sources. The author writes on a wide array of topics such as 'the art of listening', and how audiences traditionally enjoyed Peking Opera. However, he also offers an original view on Peking Opera. I used the character information, which he wrote on the four roles of Peking Opera.

- 14) Wright, David. "Reflections on Writing a Cross-Cultural Theatre Text." *Double Dialogues*. University of Western Sydney, 2002. Web. 07 Apr. 2010. <http://www.doubledialogues.com/archive/issue_two/wright.htm>.

This text piece was very informative. It was reliable because it was from the author's own experiences and he referenced his information too. The depth in his writing about his workshop was not always relevant to what I was searching for but at the same time it was very educational and interesting to read. His analysis of his process of writing his script was fascinating. One mightn't use this source to find information about Peking Opera but as information about writing processes and work-shopping pieces they certainly should. I would recommend for actors to use this text as a resource. I used many quotes about the training of Peking Opera actors from this professor to enhance the meaning of my work.

- 15) "Interview with Peking Opera Director" Interviewee: Mr. Guan. Personal interview. 3 Sept. 2010. Translated by Fairy Ren.

As a theatre troupe director, Master Guan is very knowledgeable about all characters in Peking Opera. He is completely reliable as a source because he is a director but he was also a Peking Opera actor beforehand, therefore, he knows firsthand about the training requirements which would be of interest to anyone wishing to learn about Peking Opera. He has many years of experience and is very informative. People could use him as a resource for almost all information regarding Peking Opera. Also, he is much more informative than a written source because throughout the interview he was able to demonstrate certain things to aid the comprehension of his words. The only limitation with this source is the language as he only speaks Chinese. From the interview, I used his information about the weaponry, combat movements and information regarding the Wu Chou character.

Works Consulted

- 1) Osnes, Beth, and Sam Gill. "China." *Acting: an International Encyclopedia*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001. 68. Print.

This encyclopedia offered an interesting reference to the Chinese Cultural Revolution (in the Chinese Cultural Revolution entry) in relation to the way it changed Peking Opera. This source was a published work, and as an encyclopedia, I considered it to be trustworthy. Although this source was used to aid an extended comprehension of the history of Peking Opera, I did not cite this source, as it did not directly relate to my research question. However, in the field of the theatre, the information on how Peking Opera was changed into a tool for propaganda is

intriguing and informative as it discusses how gestures and movements were affected.

- 2) Pattinson, Tom. "Revival of the Shrillest." *Time Out - Beijing* May 2008: 10-13. Print.

Although the only section of this article that was related to my research question was on the four roles of Peking Opera, the whole article was very informative on the subject of a comeback for Peking Opera and renewal in its popularity. From a magazine located in China, the accessibility to information would make this a very accurate source. The usefulness and interest of this source lies in the character information, historical background and a Peking Opera star's biography given. I used this source to research about the history of Peking Opera (which aided my comprehension of the goals of Peking Opera and the traditions while not being directly related to my research).