



How to Feel Wonderment: Ritual Frameworks for Developing Emotional Intention Regarding the Rasa Adbhuta

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How to Feel Wonderment:
Ritual Frameworks for Developing Emotional Intention
Regarding the Rasa Adbhuta

Ali Astin

A Thesis in the Field of Dramatic Arts
for the Degree of Master of Liberal Arts in Extension Studies

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Abstract

Emotional intention, how can one access or martial their feelings at will? This paper will examine feeling, namely wonderment, how it has been accessed, and how it has been regulated according to three ritual philosophies of performance (each selected for their commitment to verisimilitude): Sanskrit Rasa-Aesthetics, Chinese Ritual theories espoused by Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi, as well as Stella Adler’s post-Stanislawskian performative imagination technique. Existing empirical discussion on Emotional Regulation isolates emotions from their regulation processes. This work will specifically address one emotion alongside the practices for manipulating that emotion, avoiding the pitfall of disassociating the feeling from the process. Previous discourse reduces the concept of emotional agency to self-restraint. This work will identify and examine discrete practices for both sides of the emotional agency spectrum— both regulation and strategic access. Finding primary practices for accessing and controlling “wonderment” using elements from each of the three philosophies, these practices will be applied to a sample performance text, both in isolation and in concert with one another. By applying these diverse practices to the same text, this thesis aims to find points of overlap, offering a multifaceted addition to the existing conversation on emotional agency.

Frontispiece



The Navarasas performed in mime by Professor Ravi Mokashi at the Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati. (Mokashi 1)

Author's Biographical Sketch

The author of this work, Ali Astin, is a researcher on human emotion, focusing her graduate studies on theater as anthropology and the practical uses of emotional agency for performers and non-performers alike. She works as a professional actor, as a development executive for children's television, and as an instructor in multiple disciplines of performance. For those who care to hear an origin story, the following paragraphs serve this aim—for those interested in a general overview, the above should suffice as appropriate background.

Ali began her study of theater as a child, running around on film sets with her mother, while her father worked as an actor in New Zealand. She performed with a professional regional theater for a decade of her young life, beginning at age seven. When she declared her desire to act professionally on film (at age ten), her father compiled a syllabus for her, consisting of 100 books on the craft of acting and 100 films with renowned performances by child actors. Her task was to read and watch all 200 and complete an essay on each, underlining how it influenced her desire to perform. It took two years, but she completed the list. At age twelve, she began formal training in acting, dance, movement, and voice—studying with members of the Diavolo Dance theater and working as a recording artist on her first solo album at the age of sixteen. After performing in both film and voiceover projects, she left Los Angeles to study Theater, Dance, Media, English, and Archaeology as an undergraduate at Harvard College.

As a Harvard undergraduate, Ali founded a production company and was awarded the Encore Producers' Award at the Hollywood Fringe Festival as well as invitations for her work to be shown in Boston, Vermont, New York, Miami, and Los Angeles. While running the company, Ali also performed in nearly thirty productions, earning recognition in Boston Magazine and a feature in the Harvard Crimson. When she wasn't acting or producing, Ali directed half a dozen projects spanning from Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, where she helmed a thirty-person cast and a forty-person crew, to a travelling repertory-cast double-feature of Mike Bartlett's *The Cockfight Play* and Yasmina Reza's *God of Carnage*. She personally wrote and composed a thirteen-song cabaret with the American Repertory Theater and was featured with a solo track on the original cast album for SHE the musical at A.R.T.'s Oberon. She took several months to continue her studies in film and performance at NYU Tisch and UCLA's school of Theater, Film, and Television, earning certificates from both institutions while continuing her curricular studies at Harvard. Her studies led her to the Ludwik Solski Academy in Krakow, Poland where she trained in Grotowski physical body work and studied experimental theater. This love for experimental theater continued in her courses on the avant-garde, viewpoints, Laban, and LeCoq with Daniel Kramer, director of the English National Opera, and with David Chambers from the Yale School of Drama.

After graduating Magna Cum Laude from Harvard, Ali immediately began conservatory training in Los Angeles at the Stella Adler Academy of Acting, where she trained in movement, advanced scene-work, voice-work, and speech-work, with special forays into Shakespeare and Classical Greek theater. This conservatory training allowed unique, daily practice in Stella Adler's imagination technique and exercises. During the

pandemic, Ali extended her academic pursuits into formal graduate study at Harvard's Extension school, while concluding her conservatory training virtually. She had the opportunity to train alongside the founder of the Lucid Body Technique, Fay Simpson, for several months. During this time, she sought out the sources of many of her favorite Harvard syllabuses—training at the respective institutes for Fitzmaurice voicework, Knight-Thompson Speech-work, Alexander Technique, and Feldenkrais Movement training as well as continuing improvisational training at the Upright Citizens Brigade, Groundlings, and Second City.

Throughout all of this training, Ali kept an eye toward her curiosity of the human condition—paying mind to the emotional insights she found for herself, even as she was working on developing characters as an actor. In her spare time, she was given the opportunity to audit a course entitled *Quests for Wisdom: Religious, Moral, and Aesthetic Experiences in the Art of Living*. It was here that she found harmony between the emotional training she was receiving as a performer, and ritual practices from ancient China. Seeing similarities between modern practices and those from 500BCE, she probed further into the potential of combining these disciplines. The final piece of the puzzle came together when she was studying under Parimal Patil, professor of religion and Indian philosophy at Harvard—looking at the *rasas* in classical India. Ali had interacted with the *navarasas* as an undergraduate, studying the work of Richard Schechner, and later as an advanced extension of her research stemming from the Lucid Body acting technique. Seeing the ways in which each of these three philosophies intersected and interacted precipitated the extensive research contained within this thesis.

This abridged biography above undoubtedly overlooks many facets of the individual writing this work—at present—in the third person. Notably that her most important role is that of big sister to two incredible humans with which she is lucky to share a gene pool. Please excuse any important aspects that were missed and accept the humble gratitude of this pandemic-wearied author for kindly electing to read this far into the biography section.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my mother, for cultivating my spirit as a performer and as an individual—and for reminding me to breathe deeply, especially when I would otherwise indulge the opportunity to overreact. She is the reason I am the best parts of myself. To my father, for teaching me how cathartic and entertaining it can be to embrace absurd emotion. He is at fault for the weirdness I inflict upon the world, and for that, I'm truly grateful. To my sister Elizabeth for strengthening my backbone and for tickling my funny-bone every day—and for tolerating that ridiculous characterization of our friendship. She is my rock. And to my sister Bella for being the whetstone to my knife, for sharpening my perceptions and for making me a better person for knowing her. She is my inspiration. Let no mistakes be made in this reality—I am who I am because of my family, and without their support, none of my work could be possible.

Acknowledgments

In the academic field, my advisor and mentor, Walter C. Klein Professor of Chinese History and Anthropology, Michael Puett, must be mentioned first and foremost. I would like to start by specifically indicating the clarity with which he has been able to elucidate hundreds of years of Chinese history, not only for me, but for nearly every undergraduate student I knew at Harvard College—all of whom flocked to his class and most of whom called it the favorite course in their college career. In that respect, and in his efforts to clarify key elements of my research regarding Chinese Ritual theory, I owe much of my inspiration to him. It is as a mentor, however, that he has made the greatest impact on my life and work. Never have I had the opportunity to share my ideas to such an open and welcoming reception, and with someone so enthusiastic about the discoveries to be made. When I read *The Great Gatsby* in High School, I declared that it was my favorite book—and I've had a hard time finding a work to rival it since (maybe only Laozi's *Dao De Jing*, which Professor Puett introduced me to). In any case, one of my favorite passages is the best way I can imagine to aptly describe my experience with Michael Puett.

“He had one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced, or seemed to face, the whole external world for an instant and then concentrated on you with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just as far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself.” (Fitzgerald 76)

To an incomparable academic (and lifelong) mentor, my grandad, John Allen Astin, I owe more than I can say. Grandad is, this year, entering his first year of retirement after twenty years as the Dramatic Arts Program Director and Homewood Professor of the Arts at Johns Hopkins University. Grandad is 91 years old. Our relationship can be best summed

up by a call we had just yesterday at 1:17pm on a Wednesday. I said, “Hey granddad, you know Exercise #24 in Adler’s book?” (with zero preceding context) to which he replied “the purple book?” I said “yep, that’s the one,” and, from memory, at 91 years of age, he said, “ah, yes, Chapter 3, on Imagination.” For clarification, this book, *The Technique of Acting* went out of print in September of 1990. I had the incredible opportunity to assistant teach for Granddad in his last year as a professor, and he is sharper and more in tune with his instrument as an actor than his students who are one fifth his age. When I write about the Group Theater and Stella Adler’s husband, Harold Clurman—I am endlessly inspired by the fact that granddad was there, studying with him, living the life of an actor during the height of the turn towards verisimilitude in performance. He is an endless font of knowledge and a tuning fork for honest performance in all areas. Most of all, he is one of my best friends. I am specifically grateful, for the sake of this thesis, that granddad picked up the phone at 1:17pm on that Wednesday, and flipped through the purple book with me, page by page, until I finally found Exercise 24 (which was, in fact, in Chapter 3). For that time, for countless other times, for being wise enough to bring an incredible woman like my grandma Val into my life, and for being the voice in my head that tells me to “just be me”—I am and will always be grateful.

As a performer, I have been shaped and inspired by several key figures with whom I am lucky to have shared time in class. Professor David Chambers exploded my conceptions of what theater can be and brought the same revolutionary spirit he had at Yale in 1969 to his work with me in 2016. Whenever we meet to discuss my current work, his current work, or, most often, the state of the modern avant-garde, I am filled with a fire and artistic spirit unparalleled in my experience with theater and performance. He was the first

individual to introduce me to the work of Richard Schechner, whose contributions to the field of theater as anthropology are the closest predecessors I've found to my own. He taught some of my favorite professors at Harvard, when they were at Yale School of Drama thirty years ago. When my artistic ideas were rejected in other avenues, as so many are for creative artists, Professor Chambers urged me to revive them and make them even bigger. It is because of him that I filled an experimental theater with glow-in the dark bubbles and industrial blacklights—that is to say, it is because of him that I have much of my practical understanding of the concept of wonder (the *rasa Adbhuta*).

Professors Ryan McKittrick, Marcus Stern, and Remo Airaldi can certainly be credited with many of my developments as a performer—having braved the daunting task of instructing me for multiple semesters as an undergraduate, and then again for multiple courses as a graduate student. To clarify, all of theirs were elective courses, and I elected to sign up for their classes enthusiastically—over and over again. When I note why I came back to Harvard for a Masters' Degree, I must honestly say that the opportunity to work specifically with these three incredible humans was the deciding factor.

Professor McKittrick is the reason I composed a 90-minute musical cabaret inspired by Jeb Bush's failed 2016 presidential campaign, he single-handedly sparked and fanned my love for the Moscow Art Theater, Chekhov, and Stanislavski into an ever-growing flame. He was one of the two members of the Harvard faculty to review my undergraduate thesis—meaning that, outside of my immediate family, he is one of the only people on this earth, at this point in time, to have read hundreds of pages of my writing. On top of that, he still agrees to meet with me to discuss my lofty immersive digital Chekhov production ideas and post-Stanislavskian acting tangents, and for that, I am very grateful.

Professor Marcus Stern met me at my most volatile point as an actor and taught me what the fullest extent of the words “grace,” “clarity,” and “kindness” can be. The thoughtfulness and peaceful stillness he employs while considering every idea I bring to the table is a model for what I hope will grow within myself. He is so clear in his directorial vision, and his way of processing ideas has informed my personal creative process immeasurably. His encouragement as I find my voice, not only as a scholar, but as a director, performer, producer, and individual means the world to me.

Professor Airaldi would rather his students call him Remo, so it seems appropriate to do so here. Remo cares for the work of an actor with the love of a father, fights through the text alongside the actor with the spirit of a comrade, and approaches each scene with the curiosity of a child. The fact that I found my way to the same patch of earth as him, at a time when we could work together, is a reality I am grateful for often. Having taken courses with him that are character based, as well as ones focused on the performance of self in public speaking, I was able to internalize the concept of moving from unconscious incompetence through conscious competence, and all the way to unconscious competence, through his instruction. Whether he is helping me prepare for an audition last-minute, or helping me understand the heart of Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet* for the millionth time—he embodies the quote “to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man” (Shakespeare I.3.564-566). I truly believe this is the case for Remo, I’ve never seen him hit a false note on stage or in the classroom—his honesty as a performer has me convinced that acting can faithfully represent the human condition.

I had a unique relationship with Professor Parimal Patil, whose passion for the endless possibilities stemming from the ideas of the navarasas underlines much of my research. Having taken his class fully asynchronously, virtually, and remotely—I got to interact with him, and the texts of Classical India in a way that was mediated very much by technology. Even via our technologically mediated, pre-recorded, email, formally written, and voice-memo interactions, I was able to gain so much of the historical context for my work from his guidance. Furthermore, the spirit of classical Indian writing was made so much more human via his often humorous and always incisive analysis.

At the Stella Adler Academy of Acting, I was transformed as a person. The magnitude of gratitude I have to extend to Yorgos Karamihos, Tim McNeil, Kennedy Brown, and Laura Leyva is too great for me to possibly broach in this acknowledgements section. To Professor Karamihos, I owe a comprehensive understanding of theater history—if such a thing is even attainable, he is the one to impart it. He saw me as a scholar and indulged my excessive and extensive research every class—he gave me my first opportunity to formally lecture and he put faith in me that I can only hope I will find in myself in years to come. Assisting his instruction of his classes was one of the greatest privileges of my academic career, and his understanding of the connection between the physical body, the vocal instrument, and the energetic context of one’s environment is inexplicably valuable to my ongoing research of human behavior.

Professor Tim McNeil, as a direct student of Stella Adler’s, gave me the clearest incision into imagination technique I have ever received. His guided imagination exercises broke open my perception of what is emotionally possible. Vivid images of the scenarios he led me and my fellow students through still remain in our collective imagination—to

the extent that we can recall memories in places that never existed, together. His dark humor and deep connection to tragedy as well as his attention to detail, serve as my basis of understanding for the power of the imaginative space.

I credit Professor Kennedy Brown entirely with my introduction to the Lucid Body technique of active emotional improvisation. His work with the rasas as an extension of emotional improvisation marks the deepest and most practical work I have experienced with the subject. It is through his meditative instruction that I was able to grasp the importance of connecting the body to emotional research, and his raw, fearless approach to finding his students' deepest emotional resonances inspires me to this day. He gave me an introduction to Carl Jung's analysis of self—one which informs my understanding of myself and others on a daily basis—and his willingness to join his students in their emotional journey gave me an example of the kind of selfless leadership emotional training calls for.

One class with Professor Laura Leyva convinced me to forget everything I knew as an actor and start from scratch. She personifies for me the idea of taking the most basic building blocks of human behavior and examining them under a magnifying glass. To understand the true value of training one's emotions, I am convinced that we need look no further than Professor Laura Leyva's classroom. The number of times I watched myself and my colleagues look away when saying a sentence only to hear "try again, but remember, eye contact"—even weeks into the term, taught me that even the simplest tasks must be conscious. If there were an instructor whose work most mirrors that of Mencius' cultivation of self most, it would be Professor Leyva without question.

Other incredibly influential individuals in my research process will be noted briefly below, simply for the sake of saving trees will I abridge my gratitude—though it knows little bounds. Professor Ashleigh Reade for her invaluable instruction on Fitzmaurice voicework, specifically the voice’s connection with the physical and emotional body. Professor Tim Kopacz, for teaching me how painstaking study of the international phonetic alphabet can actually lead me to unique Schechner-esque understanding of those with different dialects. Professor Tracy Ellis for tying me to a chair while I performed Joan of Arc—some instruction is non-traditional, you taught me to think out of the box (but not necessarily out of the chair). Professor Chris Thornton for debating *Amadeus* with me to no end—his instructing style, heart, and humor gave me the courage to hold my own as a performance scholar. Professor Rick Peters—for believing in me when I needed it most, for jumping into the trenches alongside me as I found my voice as a creative. Executive Director John Jack Rodgers for making my time at the Stella Adler Academy possible, for giving the studio its beating heart, and for never giving up on the cause of creating an acting family. Director of Undergraduate Studies for Theater, Dance, and Media at Harvard, Debra Levine, for giving me the opportunity to try new, innovative, and insane ideas as a plucky undergraduate. My dear undergraduate advisor, Professor Philip Howze for teaching me that my best work isn’t always what is most polished, and that my unfettered voice deserves its own space. Professor Sam Marks for teaching me to get words on the page, and for encouraging me to make every second count. To my incredible international cohort of Harvard Extension School creatives—Sun Zhiwen “Nyima” in Tibet, London “Coco” Griffin in California, Louna Kadoun in Paris, Aden Karp at Columbia University, Ethan Norton at Wesleyan University, and Madison Trice at Harvard— I never knew

waking up at 5am for class in four different time zones in the middle of a pandemic could yield lifelong friendships and an iron-clad creative community.

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Chapter I.

Regarding the Following Chapters and Terminology

Section I.I, About Chapters

What is emotional intention? How can one access or martial their feelings at will? The Law Code of Manu, composed prior to 1900 B.C.E. in Southeast Asia, calls the notion of emotional intention: “self-control”—similarly, today, modern scholars James J. Gross and Robert W. Levenson deem it “behavioral regulation via emotional suppression” (Gross et al. 970). This historically complex principle of restraining one’s emotional self, however, treats emotion as a one-way system—in essence, one ought to fortify emotional flood gates to prepare for unpredictable surges of emotion that must be held at bay. But what if these floodgates were not just a dam to hold emotions back? Emotional agency then moves beyond the domain of emotional regulation (holding back) and into the realm of emotional access (calling specific feelings forward)—a field uniquely situated at the intersection of Anthropology and the Dramatic Arts. Major historical texts regarding performance practice will be re-examined though the framework of viewing acting as a case study in human emotional access—focusing specifically on wonderment. These examinations will yield new understanding of the synthesis of practices relating to the key question: How can one take the reins of both emotion regulation and emotion access to act with complete emotional intention?

The aim of this thesis is to examine ritual frameworks for experiencing a particular emotion through the lens of developing emotional agency through ritual. Sociological ritual

frameworks will be examined using ancient Chinese ritual theory and practices. Corporeal experiences in ritual spaces will be examined through practical interpretations of Sanskrit Rasa-aesthetics. Ritualized imagination experiences will be examined via analysis of post-Stanislavski performative imagination technique exercises performed in the Stella Adler Academy and Studio of Acting and Theater.

The primary texts for this work will be Stella Adler's books *The Technique of Acting* and *The Art of Acting*, Bharata Muni's the *Nāṭya Śāstra*, and Confucius's *Li Chi: Book of Rites, The Analects*, as well as the *Guodian Chu Slips* of Confucian works. Each of these primary texts will be examined first for its overarching statements on the performance or access of emotion, as well as the restriction or regulation of emotion. Though the *Nāṭya Śāstra's* description of the nine moods or "navarasas" includes nine separate emotional centers, this thesis will limit its analysis singularly to *adbhuta*, which can be loosely translated as "wonderment." The line between true feeling and the performance of feeling is necessarily blurred in all of the source texts by Adler, Xunzi, Mencius, Confucius, and Bharata Muni, respectively, but the effort to pursue true feeling through performance joins the texts in purpose and in practice. These principles will be applied individually and in concert with one another to a sample text--Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*—ideally a familiar sample for Anthropologists and thespians alike. This particular text calls out the feeling of "wonder" by name in its language and will provide a brief view into the application of ritual practices for access and regulation of feeling. Examining these three historical performance rituals and texts with an eye toward their approach to wonderment will allow an isolation and comparison of core practices in accessing and regulating the emotion *Adbhuta*.

The following chapters will examine the feeling of wonderment, how it has been accessed, and how it has been regulated according to three ritual philosophies of performance (each selected for their commitment to verisimilitude): Chinese Ritual theories espoused by Confucius, Mencius, and Xunzi; Sanskrit Rasa-Aesthetics; as well as Adler's post-Stanislavskian performative imagination technique.

Chapter One, affectionately and succinctly titled "Regarding the Following Chapters and Terminology," will, as is the present aim of this and the immediately following paragraphs, outline the chapters to follow and the general ideas therein. A second section will provide a working glossary of key terms outlining their particular usage in this conversation. Finally, a third section of Chapter One will provide context for the need to advance existing discourse on emotional access and emotional training—a centuries-long effort which, for the purposes of this thesis, began with the work of Confucius.

Chapter Two, titled "The Pitfalls of Legalism as a Path Toward Emotional Understanding," will look into several key texts against which the Confucian tenets of emotional self-cultivation can be juxtaposed. Present-day legalistic emotion regulation will be examined via the work of H.H. Goldsmith. This chapter will also examine Classical Indian instances of legalistic thought—specifically regarding emotion regulation—via the Law Code of Manu. Chinese history will see similar ideas gain popularity through Mohism and the philosophy of Lord Shang. Finally, the modern phenomena of toxic masculinity and the feminized stereotype of hyper emotionality in the workplace will glance at the modernization of purposeful emotional alienation from the self. Once these key opposing points have been established, their methodology will be laid bare by a critique by Han Feizi as well as by a central notion in Laozi's *Dao De Jing*. The key aim of this chapter is to

clearly distinguish legalistic emotional regulation as a limited and confining pathway toward emotional intention.

One may ask, “what, then is a less confining pathway toward emotional access and intention?” One which includes strategic emotional access. To address this question, Chapter Three, entitled “The Dramatic Arts as Anthropology,” will focus on historical pathways to emotional access located at the intersection of the two fields. The first section will provide key context on individuals working at the crossroads of Anthropology and the Dramatic Arts. This context will manifest primarily via the scholarly pursuits of dramatic anthropologist Richard Schechner on the deconstruction, reconstruction, and manipulation of human behavior. Two key figures will form the basis for dramatic anthropological precedent with a focus on understanding the ethnography of separate cultures through performance. These figures are dramatist Eugenio Barba who conducted social studies of ritualized situations with performative subjects, and anthropologist Victor Turner who focused on ritual as performance. The primary thread joining all of these dramatic anthropologists is their usage of strategic emotional access to better understand other individuals. This thesis, in contrast, aims to redirect that focus in a new way—focusing inward, on the self. A second section addressing strategic emotional access will discuss methodologies that employ performance strategies that have historically been used as a practical means of conducting insight into the self—namely Alexander Technique and audibly guided meditation. The limitations of these methodologies will be identified by their compartmentalization of the human experience—understanding more about the self solely through one’s body mechanics or solely through still contemplation of one’s mental landscape.

The previous chapters will have addressed common pitfalls for those seeking emotional understanding—focusing only on emotional repression in Chapter Two, using emotional access only to study others, and attempting to understand the self by abstracting one’s self from their component processes in Chapter Three. Chapter Four, titled “Acting as an Anthropological Tool” will clarify the use of performance technique as an apt instrument for anthropological study—highlighting the commitment of certain acting practices to verisimilitude. The first section will discuss the trend toward realism in Russian and American performance at the turn of the twentieth century. The second section will highlight the isolated practice of actors seeking to cultivate instances of authentic emotion within the Stella Adler Technique. The third section will isolate the unique ability of acted performance to constitute emotional access, emotion regulation, and the giving and receiving of emotion.

Having broached the topic of giving and receiving emotion in the previous chapter, Chapter Five, entitled “The Navarasas in Dramatic Anthropology,” will discuss the Sanskrit Rasas and their history as a part of the performative emotional exchange. In the first section, these Rasas will be addressed as the key to isolating and specifying core elements of the emotional instrument—allowing these primary colors of emotion to be trained distinctly before they are eventually blended together. The distillation of these rasas into points of energetic concentration on the body will be explored through an examination of the Lucid Body technique’s emphasis on the Chakras. The second section of this chapter will discuss Richard Schechner’s rasaboxes performance exercise as laying a foundation for improvisational emotional training—specifically with respect to the creation of a segmented practice space.

Taking a step back into the Confucian aim of self-cultivation, Chapter Six, titled “Creating the Ritual Emotional Training Ground” will examine the creation of the ritual space for emotional exploration. The first section will look at Confucian ritual in *The Analects* and explore Mencius’s contributions to Confucian ideas through his emphasis on training. The second section will consider practical examples of creating a personal ritual space in a modern environment. The third section will discuss modern additions to the concept of creating safe spaces in a performance environment—drawing from the increasing popularity of intimacy coaching in dramatic performance settings. Similar instances of non-performance-related guided experiences will be noted as a key component of creating a safe space for emotional expression.

With the aim of self-cultivation fueling the creation of a ritual space—the modern would-be trainee of personal emotional understanding might face the daunting and often gutting question: “now what?” Chapter Seven, titled “Dramatic Imagination Exercises for Training Emotional Agency,” discusses Stella Adler’s performative imagination theory and exercises. The first section will examine the Adler imagination theory text, exploring practical examples of her imagination exercises. A comparison on practice will also be made against Lee Strasberg’s affective memory ideology. A second section will look into access points for emotion via the five senses within the context of Adler’s imagination framework.

Chapter Eight, titled, “Accessing the Rasa Adbhuta” will discuss the Sanskrit term in detail. The first section will detail the decision to begin the cultivation of emotional agency with the rasa adbhuta. This section will also examine the term “adbhuta” in its original context, noting the *Nāṭya Śāstra*’s prescriptive performance guidelines that both

aid and hinder ritual emotion self-cultivation practices. A second section will explore the ways in which the Chakra system can be utilized in locating and isolating energies characteristic of certain rasas within the self. A third section will address the sensory access points referenced in Chapter Seven, used to evoke the rasa adbhuta in the modern day.

Chapter Nine, titled “*Romeo and Juliet*—Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training in Practice” will serve as a theoretical case study, applying all of the concepts of creating the ritual space, aiming to cultivate the self with the goal of increasing emotional access, utilizing imagination techniques, and interacting with the Rasa adbhuta through improvisational guided exercises as well as sensory access points. The principles of accessing the emotion of wonderment (Adbhuta) will be applied to the text of the balcony scene interaction in Act 2, Scene 2 of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Each of the three philosophies—Chinese Ritual Theory, the Sanskrit Rasas, and Stella Adler Imagination theory—will first be applied to the exercise separately, and then in concert with one another, incorporating many of the nuances discussed in the prior chapters.

Finally, Chapter Ten, entitled “Extensions of Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training” will discuss the next steps involved in this research—namely that of expanding practices into a training curriculum including eight of the nine rasas. The first section will describe ways in which these theories can be applied to a theoretically comprehensive and ongoing practice, stemming from Mencius’s ideal of creating a lifelong training regimen. A second section will discuss practical methods of expanding active sensory stores for personal applications of Stella Adler Imagination work using media. A third section will detail the significance of this practice--including possible applications in corporate arenas,

early learning curriculums, and therapeutic relationship spaces—citing its potential impact on actors and non-actors alike.

Section I.II, Definition of Terms

“Emotional Access” vs “Regulation” vs “Intention/Agency ”

For the purpose of this work, the terms “emotional access” and “access of feeling” will be interchangeable. “Access” in this context means ability to be called forth at will. Merriam Webster’s Dictionary defines “accessibility” as “capable of being reached, used, or seen”—in terms of emotion, the term will be extended to “capable of being felt” (“feeling” in this instance meaning a “conscious awareness of an emotion”). On the Cannon et al. Model of Conscious-Competence, reaching stage three, Conscious Competence, will qualify as emotional accessibility. Emotional Regulation is the suppression or “holding-back” of certain feelings. In this work, regulation can be likened to the terms “emotional self-control” and “emotional restraint.” In this sense, emotional regulation is the “pull” to emotional accessibility’s “push.” Finally, acting with Emotional Intention is a state of conscious and concerted agency over both the “pull” of Emotional Regulation, and the “push” of Emotional Access. Clarifying further—though the nuance of these classifications may reach a point of diminishing return—“emotional intention” is a subclassification requiring conscious effort in the direction of an emotion. This subclassification can be filed under the larger heading of “emotional agency” which simply means the *ability* to exert conscious, directed emotional effort, whether that ability is employed or not. Elucidating the pathways toward, specifically, Emotional Intention (namely surrounding the *rasa* Adbhuta) is the aim of this thesis.

“Emotion/Feeling”

In this work, the terms “emotion” and “feeling” can often be used interchangeably. Goldsmith in his empirical analysis of Emotional Regulation deferred to Cole, Martin, and Dennis for their definition, which also holds here—that “Emotions are a kind of radar and rapid response system, constructing and carrying meaning across the flow of experience. Emotions are the tools by which we appraise experience and prepare to act on situations” (Cole et al. 319). The small measure of distinction between the two terms is best described by Joseph LeDoux, that “feelings are states of consciousness about emotional situations” (LeDoux 665). However, since this thesis primarily deals with conscious access of feeling, the term “emotion” must be endowed with at least the consciousness it requires to discuss it, leaving the two terms with little differentiation.

“Presentational vs. Representational”

Uta Hagen describes these terms in the following way, and it is a definition that holds for this thesis. “Presentational acting” occurs when the actor “attempts to reveal human behavior through a use of himself” (Hagen 28). “Representational acting” occurs when the actor “deliberately chooses to imitate or illustrate... behavior” (Hagen 28). In the context of modern performative realism, presentational acting appears to the viewer to be “more real” and representational acting appears “fake” or “exaggerated.”

“Rasas/Rasa-aesthetics”

The first reference to “Rasa” theory occurred in Bharata-Muni’s keystone text on Sanskrit theater, *The Nāṭya Śāstra*. Though the Sanskrit translation is literally “juice,” or “essence,” the performative connotation for the term is described by Scott Felluss in an

examination of the Rasa's application to modern theater. Felluss notes that "Rasa as a concept aims to frame the human phenomenon of performative reciprocity and shared embodied emotional space... Rasa... describes the embodied act of constructing emotions through a performative, physical exchange" (Felluss 3). This text treats the Rasas as the nine key emotional flavors that, when combined or placed in isolation, are able to make up the full spectrum of human feeling. Chapter Six of the *Nāṭya Śāstra*, as Dr. Natalia Lidova, a Russian scholar in the field of Sanskrit Literature and Hindu Culture, notes, "provides detailed characteristics of nine rasa varieties" including "Adbhuta—a participle meaning 'wondrous,' 'miraculous,'" (Lidova 189).

Section I.III, The Need for Discourse on Developing Emotional Intention

This work situates itself freshly within the conversation between Dramatic Anthropologists Richard Schechner, Victor Turner, and Eugenio Barba—extending and expanding their scholastic contributions into the realm of independent emotional study. What, however, is the significance of extending the present discourse on practical emotional research to the study of the self? To understand the need for increased understanding of one's emotions—one must examine the dangers posed by a lack of consciousness of the emotional self. Researchers Dewe, Watson, and Braithwaite at the Behavioral Brain Sciences Centre at the Universities of Birmingham, Warwick, and Lancaster researched sub-clinical dissociative experiences in a paper titled "Uncomfortably Numb: New Evidence for Suppressed Emotional Reactivity in Response to Body Threats in those Predisposed to Sub-Clinical Dissociative Experiences" (Dewe et al. 377). This paper notes that "aberrations in self-consciousness are not just associated with neurological conditions, mental illness, psychosis, and psychopathology"—

continuing that “a growing body of research now clearly demonstrates that such experiences can and do occur in sub-clinical populations in the apparent absence of these disorders and conditions” (Dewe et al. 377). Depersonalization and derealization are defined as “feelings of detachment and dissociation from one’s self or surroundings” including “emotional ‘numbing’” and “estrang[ement] from [one’s-self], from [one’s body], and from [one’s] emotions” (Dewe et al. 377-378). While an undiagnosed population may not imminently fear significant side effects of diagnosed derealization and depersonalization, this expanding body of work that Dewe and her colleagues indicate represents a potential for this numbness to become apparent in sub-clinical populations as well.

Matthew Rocklage, Derek Rucker, and Loran Nordgren—in their article for the Urbana Association for Consumer Research—look at these sub-clinical populations in the consumer marketplace—one which has an increasing grasp over mankind in the world of trackable preferences and personally tailored AI marketing. Looking at people as consumers, Rocklage and his colleagues found that “across domains, as consumers gain expertise,” as individuals in an ever-increasingly consumer-based society are wont to do, “they become more emotionally numb” (Rocklage et al. 981). Many studies have examined the sources of this emotional numbness. Manfred Kets de Vries conducted a survey of executives with a high level of expertise in their respective fields as they approached mid-life. Kets de Vries looked at these executives’ behavioral responses to “the stresses and strains of midlife” (Kets de Vries 1381). Figure 1 looks at Kets de Vries’ findings in the behavioral responses of his subjects in which 42% of those surveyed presented some form of emotional numbness. Kets de Vries defines “anhedonic” as being “applied to people

who have a lowered ability to experience pleasure; it implies a sense of apathy, a loss of interest in and withdrawal from all regular and pleasurable activities”—wherein “activities that would provide pleasure and satisfaction under normal circumstances do not do so any longer” (Kets de Vries 1389).

Table I. Stress Reactions at Midlife^a

Adaptable	58%
Alexithymic/anhedonic	20%
Depersonalized behavior	12%
Alexithymic/anhedonic/depersonalization	10%

^a*n* = 200.

Figure 1. Stress Reactions at Midlife.

Kets de Vries’ behavioral responses in subjects relating to stress reactions at midlife (Kets de Vries 1389).

As Kets de Vries notes “we must do all we can to avoid... sleepwalking through life” for “as the French writer Diderot said ‘Only the passions, only great passions can elevate the mind to great things’” (Kets de Vries 1397-1398). Humanity is in a race against the consequences of its own consumerist tendencies—against a numbness to the feelings of others, and even worse, a numbness to one’s own capacity for emotion. If one is to combat this epidemic of emotional numbness, tools must be developed. Ancient and effective systems of emotional self-cultivation must be adapted to suit modern problems, and this thesis seeks to pursue that aim.

Chapter II.

The Pitfalls of Legalism in the Path Towards Emotional Understanding

Section II.I, The Problem of Emotional Regulation

Modern anthropological precedent sees H.H. Goldsmith's discourse on "Disambiguating the Components of Emotion Regulation" as a clear outline of the processes for changing an existing behavior over time. Discussing chronometric approaches to emotion regulation inspired by cognitive science, Goldsmith identified "developmental psychologists'... central interests" as "[lying] in the experience and expression of emotion"—a subject that, at first, seems to align directly with the emotional self-cultivation processes at work within this thesis (Goldsmith 362). Goldsmith continues, however, in such a way that shows a stark divergence from strategic emotional access. Goldsmith qualifies this "central interest" with the clarifying questions: "how do the experience and expression of emotion diminish? Does dampening of, say, the experience of fear always reflect ER processes or can fear simply decay" (Goldsmith 362). This clarification indicates that Goldsmith's work is primarily interested in the ways in which emotions are diminished in potency—not the ways in which they can be strategically accessed and controlled. Goldsmith's systems of emotional regulation stress the "separating" of "emotion" itself "from ER (emotional regulation) processes" (Goldsmith 361). Goldsmith concedes that this separation presents practical "challenges," even going so far as to call the aim of separation a "conundrum" (Goldsmith 361). How, one may ask, did these notions of separating the self from emotions begin? An analysis of Classical

Indian, Chinese, and American historical conceptions of emotional regulation indicates that this idea has pervaded major cultures throughout history.

Section II.II, Emotional Regulation in Classical India

Looking at some of the earliest texts from classical India, particularly the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Law Code of Manu*, an emphasis on martialing one's unruly emotions becomes readily apparent. In the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, as the deity Lord Krishna counsels the warrior Arjun on the precipice of battle, Krishna offers the guidance that "the mind is undoubtedly restless and difficult to curb, but it can be controlled by repeated practice and detachment" (Vyasa 6.35). On the concept of repeated practice, this thesis resoundingly finds alignment with Lord Krishna, however, the concept of detachment is specifically contrary to the aims of strategic emotional access.

Much like Goldsmith, Lord Krishna is calling for the detachment of the decision-making matrix from the emotional realities confronting Arjun. Lord Krishna begins with epithetical attacks on Arjun to inspire this detachment—in much a similar way to the modern medical discussion of depersonalization and derealization addressed in Chapter One of this thesis, wherein dissociative episodes may be triggered by traumatic experience. Lord Krishna says of Arjun, "it does not befit you to yield to this unmanliness. Give up such petty weakness of heart and arise, O vanquisher of enemies" (Vyasa 2.3). The appeal to an unfeeling ideal of manhood is a present encumbrance to society's attempts at encouraging empathy even today, and it is only the starting place for Lord Krishna.

In a much-quoted excerpt from Lord Krishna's advice to Arjun, Krishna states that "one who is able to withdraw the senses from their objects, just as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its shell, is established in divine wisdom" (Vyasa 2.58). Promoting this

detachment from emotion, however, represents a fear of that emotion's ability to take uncheckable control—in this case, grief. Krishna treats any form of excessive emotion as corrupting to the wisdom of the beholder, saying “the senses are so strong and turbulent... that they can forcibly carry away the mind even of a person endowed with discrimination who practices self-control” (Vyasa 2.6). Again, the reader sees this version of emotional understanding dominated by detachment, suppression, and regulation labelled as “control.” Speaking from a strategic military perspective, Lord Krishna is proposing Arjun start out from a defensive position—accepting his place as one easily vulnerable to defeat by his enemy—his emotion. One might suggest that if the limbs of the tortoise represent its emotional faculties—the ability of the tortoise to sense the world around it—that a retraction of those limbs would result in numbness, or an *inability* to sense the world around it. How could this tortoise, then, be a model for wisdom, if it is unable to incorporate the active environment surrounding it into its knowledge base. By retracting these highly sensitive data collection antennae, the tortoise limits its ability to act in the here and now, making it undoubtedly inert. Without the ability to sense emotion, without its limbs, the tortoise cannot move. If, for example, grief were seen as a turbulent water surrounding the tortoise, a tortoise with retracted limbs could easily be swept out to sea. However, a tortoise with its limbs outstretched would have a chance to swim to safety. This metaphor may extend better to turtles, since tortoises are terrestrial, but that is beside the point. If anger, for another example, were seen as hot sand, a tortoise aiming to keep its feet from getting burned might retract its limbs. In this way, its feet may remain un-singed, but a tortoise willing to brave the heat might easily walk to shade and avoid a miserable day of waiting for the cool of nightfall. A brief note—tortoises, more accurately, walk on their toes—a

unique form of mobility called digitigrade, but the metaphor still stands—on tiptoe. This concept of detaching oneself from their emotions neglects the potential benefit of getting into the driver’s seat, and taking the wheel of ones’ emotions with conscious agency.

There is a method of examining this passage from the *Bhagavad Gita*—one in alignment with the methodology of this thesis—which would commend the aims of Arjun. Arjun consciously attempts to step out of grief while simultaneously and actively attempting to call forth courage within himself. The problem with this simplified view, is that Arjun is forced by Lord Krishna to assign value judgements to certain types of feeling—grief, being “bad,” must be extinguished while bloodlust, being “good,” must be cultivated. This system of value-judgements imposed by Lord Krishna presents internal inconsistency with Krishna’s advice to retract one’s emotional “limbs” like the tortoise. With Arjun’s limbs retracted, how could he possibly embody the persona of a “mighty-armed... vanquisher of enemies” (Vyasa 2.3, 26). At best an emotionally detached warrior might be merely discerning and disinterested.

The *Bhagavad Gita*, a central philosophical text in classical India, emphasizes this idea of emotional detachment. This detachment offers the image of a person, operating without the influence of their emotion, making decisions from points of objective data like a theoretically intelligent, human shaped supercomputer. With such excision of certain “bad” emotions, the legalistic approach to feeling in Ancient India, unsurprisingly, found its way into the legal thinking of the time. The *Law Code of Manu*, deemed the oldest legal text in Indian culture, details an incredibly regimented picture of nearly every aspect of daily life. One which only a theoretically non-emotive human-shaped supercomputer could carry out perfectly. This code is detailed so that it contains a practically innumerable set of

(at times, self-conflicting) rules for personal, practical matters like “sipping” in Chapter Two, “voiding urine and excrement” in Chapter Four, and “breath control” in Chapter Five (Olivelle 3-6). This regimented, idealized manner of behavior was elaborate for every citizen, with increasing complexity as one moved up the social ladder. Everyone from the “Forest Hermit” to the King had specific rules for “proper behavior” in every manner of life (Olivelle 6-7).

This, often punishment-based, life of external rules and regulations did not allow much room for emotional self-exploration and this manner of applying rigid external social rules for the people of India was emphasized in the *Arthashastra* by Kautilya—detailing military strategic ideals, statecraft, policies dealing with the nation’s economy. When it came to making the state run, outward expression of proper behavior took precedence over honest expression of inner feeling. In a particular depiction of Kautilya, detailed in Vishakhadatta’s third century BCE play, *Mudrarakshasa*, otherwise known as *Rakshasa’s Ring*, Kautilya’s actions clearly demonstrate this priority towards outward adherence to rules regardless of inward feeling. Kautilya, the new king’s prime minister, serves as a judge and jury, ordering his executioner to kill Chandana-Dasa, a friend of the former king’s exiled prime minister, Rakshasa. Rakshasa throws himself before the new governing body, offering his life in exchange for that of his friend. In this moment—the friend, Chandana-Dasa, who has just said his final goodbyes to his son, and who is imminently awaiting execution, chastises Rakshasa for his attempted sacrifice because it represents inward feeling, not outward adherence to strategic state aims. Chandana-Dasa declares aloud “you have done me no service, sir, to make all my efforts useless”—basically communicating that, one’s duty to statecraft takes precedence over feeling and friendship

(Coulson 331). The American political theorist Roger Boesche notes that Kautilya and his rigid amoral political ideology showed impressive similarities to that of Lord Shang, who came to power only two decades later under Duke Hsiao of Qin; Lord Shang will be discussed in the following section. Boesche compares the two saying “they wrote within decades of each other, each was an uncompromising realist with no interest in moralizing about politics, each thought he had discovered a new way of looking at the world”—yet, unfortunately for Confucian and Mencian self-cultivationists, these new ways of looking at the world stifled the aims of emotional self-understanding with their rigid system of external guidelines (Boesche 64).

Even in the, arguably, most emotional keystone texts in early Indian culture—the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali and the *Kama Sūtra*—limitations arise. For the *Yoga Sūtras*, one of the key tenets of meditation, which will be discussed at length in the next chapter as a helpful and imperfect method of emotional self-cultivation, is a practice called “dispassion” (Miller 32). Patanjali says that the “cessation of the turnings of thought comes through practice and dispassion... Practice is the effort to maintain the succession of thought... Dispassion is the sign of mastery over the craving for sensuous objects” (Miller 32). The difficulty with these two ideas being intertwined is that continuous “practice” is a key element of any kind of cultivation, whereas “dispassion” is, by nature, a limitation—a repression of emotion. Patanjali continues “higher dispassion is a total absence of craving for anything material”—which one practicing emotional restriction would laud as success (Miller 32). However, since the door of emotional access and emotional agency swings both ways, the total absence of passion would mark an inability to access that passion, desire, and craving consciously and with control. In this way, the *Yoga Sūtras*, a text that

does so much to train its reader in consistent practice with the goal of self-cultivation, does that very thing which the seemingly far more legalist texts do blatantly—it calls solely for emotional regulation and suppression.

In what may seem to be a direct contrast, the *Kama Sutra* by Vatsyayana says that “pleasures are a means of sustaining the body, just like food” and then proceeds to give a detailed encyclopedia of the Kamasutra—acts involved in cultivating pleasure, from “singing: to “cutting leaves into shapes” to “poetry” to “the science of strategy” (Vatsyayana 12-15). The limitation here is provided by specificity—while the text details nearly every fathomable facet of activated pleasure from “ways of embracing” to “procedures of kissing” to “getting back together with an ex-lover” to “methods of increasing the size of the male organ”—the text is limited to desire in its most active form (Vatsyayana vii-x). The *Kama Sutra* does not counsel the reader in any other feeling, or in the cessation of desire either. It provides insight on a one-way door (activating desire), where there could be a bustling multi-directional thoroughfare (activation and deactivation of many distinct emotions). These two texts, the *Yoga Sutras* and the *Kama Sutra* may be providing rigid guidelines on the subject of self-cultivation, but those complex guidelines and instructional pathways are confining, like the legal systems and religious instructional treatises of their time, through their limited scope and methodological rigidity.

Section II.III, Emotional Regulation in Classical China

In the hundred years before the Warring States Period in China, Laozi, in the *Tao Te Ching*, and Confucius, through *The Analects*, expanded the ideals of self-cultivation—and it was in response to these thinkers, who will be discussed at greater length in Section V of this chapter and in Chapter 6 respectively, that the political and societal ideology of

legalism sprung forth. Two primary thinkers from the years closely following Confucius sparked the notions of external emotional and behavioral regulation, these thinkers were Mozi and Lord Shang.

For Mozi, emotions are not directly considered throughout his philosophy. As the earliest critic of Confucian ideology, Mozi, instead, applied a utilitarian ethic to all human activity, denoting clear guidelines for “good” behavior and “bad” behavior—much like Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. His notions “on cultivating the self” relied almost entirely on “a gentleman match[ing] his words and his deeds”—with no discernable attention paid to emotional dispositions (Mozi 13). Mozi taught that all would be ordered “if all the people of the world could be brought to believe that ghosts and spirits are able to reward the worthy and punish the wicked” (Mozi 279). This idea was rooted in the notion that “if Heaven is taken as the standard, then all one’s actions must be measured against Heaven... What Heaven desires should be done and what it does not desire should not be done” (Mozi 27). Mozi’s utilitarian world is incredibly pragmatic, based on the principle that his is a world where “the strong plunder the weak,” and his “main purpose is to build a system of governance that improves the standing of the community” (Schneider 9). This world of clear-cut rules and guidelines diverges from the Confucian ideology that cultivation of the emotional dispositions deserves time and energy because, as a Mohist would say “[emotions] do not accord with the benefit of the ten thousand people” (Mozi 307).

When Mohist philosophy developed over the years, the body passing judgement on the population ceased to be one of ghosts and spirits as governments gained more power. By the time of Lord Shang, the clear-cut system of rules, praise, and punishment became

entirely run by a dominating state through a system of laws with violent consequences. Boesche, who spoke on the similarities between Kautilya's *Arthashastra* in India, noted that for Lord Shang, "laws could only work if the state [used] the principles of collective responsibility and punishment"—since he believed that humans were inherently selfish in the "absence of guiding laws" (Boesche 66, 70). This opposition to interest in the self was the natural extension of Mohist focus on sacrificing personal needs for the greater good of the most people. Harsh and violent realities manifested under the power of Lord Shang—for example, Lord Shang believed, as he said on page 279 of his own work, that "if there are severe penalties that extend to the whole family, people will not try" to get away with breaking the law" (qtd. in Boesche 7). Though this violent element was criticized by later thinkers like Hanfeizi, one element remained—that in a spy state like that of Lord Shang, where citizens were turned against each other fearing violent punishment —any unregulated emotion was dangerous. Paul Goldin, professor of Chinese Thought at the University of Pennsylvania, speaks on the emotional limitations placed on the ruler in legalist thought as outlined by Hanfeizi saying that "a ruler is the loneliest of men" because he is "unable to share his innermost thoughts and feelings with anyone around him, or to love or hate or be motivated by any emotion at all"... we are even told that "he ought to sleep alone, lest he reveal his plans as he mutters in his dreams" (qtd. in Goldin 12). If one were seeking the source of this quotation in Hanfeizi's works, they need look no further than the translation by Chen Qiyou in the section labeled 13.34.782-783. If this was the case for the ruler, who faced no physical punishment whatsoever, the stakes of emotional suppression and regulation were even higher for those who faced the violent consequences of legalist principles.

What makes these thinkers easy to identify as emotionally suppressive is their seemingly absolute rejection of the emotional instrument—favoring actions and words explicitly as they focused primarily on statecraft. In contrast to thinkers like Vatsyanana, who embraced the activation of desire or Lord Krishna who embraced rage in battle, even texts regarding warfare discussed by Lord Shang and Mozi operated without emotional verbiage. While much earlier Chinese philosophical precedent made room for emotional exploration, the period of time where legalist thought took the stage stands as a shining example of people embracing the limitations created by high stakes necessity for emotion suppression and regulation.

Section II.IV, Emotional Regulation in the Modern United States

While Chapter One, Section III briefly discussed some of the dangers associated with trends toward emotional numbness in the present day, two additional case studies seem relevant to this comparative discourse on emotion regulation between ancient India, ancient China, and the twentieth to twenty-first century United States (the regions and times from which this thesis's major theories on emotional agency will be drawn). Victoria L. Brescoll, professor in Yale's Women and Public Policy program, writes in her discussion on "How Gender Stereotypes of Emotion Lead to Biased Evaluations of Female Leaders" that "people believe that women express all emotions more than men, with the exception of anger and pride, which are seen as uniquely masculine emotions" (Brescoll 415). For her research on this point, Brescoll cited the reference works of Plant, Hyde, Keltner, & Devine from the year 2000. This gendered bias toward stereotyped masculine and feminine emotions has bred the following two paradigms in the modern United States;

first, men are being told not to feel (emotional suppression), second, women are being told to hide or regulate their emotional expression in the workplace.

In the first instance, modern men have been told to suppress emotion—often understood as the notion that “real men don’t cry.” This ideology has taken hold for thousands of years, but it remains a prevalent reality—just as Arjun was told by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* that his empathy was weakness and that he should embrace the appropriate rage and courage for a warrior, Professor Brescoll identifies the same gendered emotive stereotypes active in the present. Tianyi Li and David Gal at the University of Illinois at Chicago wrote in their paper on “Gendered Perceptions of People Seeking Mental Health Care” about the increasing consequences of “men’s conformity to traditional masculine gender roles” which particularly included “restrictive emotionality (i.e., the difficulty men have in expressing their feelings)” (Li et al. 1). Their research on this point cited the reference works of O’Neil and their colleagues in 1986. One real and dangerous consequence of this emotional limitation created by only allowing certain emotions to be expressed is that “men who endorse traditional male gender roles are more likely to stigmatize mental health concerns and are thus less likely to seek psychological help for themselves” (Li et al. 1). Li’s research on this point cited the reference works of Vogel and their colleagues in 2011. If men in the present day are beset with restrictive emotionality, then they are already well on the way to the paralyzing end state of emotional numbness discussed in Chapter 1, and even more dire than disassociation lies the possibility of actively avoiding connection and eschewing psychological help. In this way, the need for masculine emotional agency and de-coupling of emotional access from

limiting stereotypes is clearer now in the age of increased mental health awareness than ever before.

In the second instance, Brescoll identifies a cultural difficulty for women regarding a call for limited emotional expression, explained by former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in 2016 as the dilemma that “you have to be aware of how people will judge you for being, quote ‘emotional’” (qtd. in Brescoll 417). But there is a distinction to be made in terms of precisely what this word, “emotional,” means in the context of modern gendered emotive expression—as Brescoll notes “men and women are not thought to greatly differ in the extent to which they experience different emotions—just in the extent to which they outwardly express those emotions to others” (Brescoll 417). Specifically, this manifests in the idea that “women may be labeled as more emotional than men in large part because they are seen as less able to control the outward display of their emotions compared to men” (Brescoll 417). This so-called “control of the outward display of... emotions” maps directly onto many of the conceptions of emotional regulation idealized in ancient China and India, but why exactly is the control of display identified as more important than that of internal emotional agency (Brescoll 417)?

The Mohist prioritization of reforming words and actions rather than internal dispositions seems to still be at work in the ways modern individuals are asked to behave in the United States. Brescoll continues that the perception of women as being unable to control their emotional expression “is consequential for female leaders because people infer a tradeoff between the ability to control outward emotional display and the ability to make rational, objective decisions” and “if an individual is able to hide her emotions, people infer that she is also able to prevent those emotions from biasing her thoughts and

behaviors” (Brescoll 417). In this way, the perception of behavior is used to infer internal control over one’s emotional state—but much like an iceberg, though the surface may convey limited emotions, left unaddressed and actively repressed, the majority of mass of human emotion for that individual is yet untended and volatile. Emotion regulation carried out due to fear of excess emotion bursting forth becomes a complex process of sweeping emotions under the rug, until all that’s left is a quaint rug sitting gently atop a mountain of emotional sand. In order to address the “issue” of displayed emotion, a de-coupling of feminized stigmatization from emotional access must take place, especially considering that “the belief that emotions detract from reason has not been supported by recent research in cognitive neuroscience” (Brescoll 418). Brescoll also comments that “research has... demonstrated that certain emotions often aid in sound reasoning and effective decision-making rather than detracting from it” (Brescoll 418). Several reference works were essential for Brescoll in drawing this conclusion, including those of Bliss-Moreau & Barrett in 2009, Damasio in 2005, and Seo & Barrett in 2007. Following a de-coupling of gendered stigmatization, emotional access must not be avoided, as it has been, in a slipshod attempt at emotion regulation and suppression in isolation—rather emotional access must be cultivated as a necessary complement to emotional regulation.

Section II.V, Laozi and the Solution to the Rigidity of Emotion Regulation

The rigid rules and limitations placed on emotional agency by ancient Indian culture in the form of “detachment” and “dispassion,” by ancient Chinese culture in the form of a legalist focus on action over internal disposition, and by modern American culture in the form of stigmatization and “restrictive emotionality,” present a staggering problem. Time and time again, people have been told that strength lies in the martialing

and regulating of one's unruly emotions, and that—in essence—the emotional door ought to only swing one way, toward suppression. Such an uncompromising view of the emotional impact on one's life presents a binary—suppress emotion and succeed, express emotion and fail. Given the rigidity of this binary, a system has been formed which has a very hard time adapting to circumstances as they come. It is for this reason, a need for adaptability, that the principles of counterintuitive adaptability explained in Laozi's Dao De Ching [Tao Te Ching] become pertinent.

Regarding adaptability, a Chinese proverb attributed to Confucius says that as the water shapes itself to the vessel that contains it, so a wise man adapts himself to circumstances. Confucian principles for creating the ritual space and embarking upon a process of emotional self-cultivation will be explored in detail in Chapter 6, but this principle of adaptability finds its counterpoint in the present Chapter's emphasis on rigid rules and restrictions of emotional access and expression. Laozi, in the Dao De Jing, presents a different view, that may at first appear counterintuitive. This view is that “the soft and weak overcome the hard and strong” (Laozi 36). What Laozi means by this is explained in more detail by his allusion to nature:

Trees and plants, in their early growth, are soft and brittle; at their death, dry and withered. Thus it is that firmness and strength are the concomitants of death; softness and weakness, the concomitants of life. Hence, he who (relies on) the strength of his forces does not conquer. (Laozi 76)

When one visualizes this image of aged, uncompromisingly stiff trees, the similarity to the harsh external guidelines for emotional expression become evident. Such resolve not to let emotion out is akin to a strong tree that cannot withstand stiff winds and “invites the feller” (Laozi 76).

What then, could be weak—in this new definition of weak—enough to withstand the unexpected circumstances constantly battering a person’s emotional landscape? Laozi says that “there is nothing under Heaven that is softer and weaker than water. But when attacking the firm and the strong, nothing can overcome it”—emphasizing again that “weakness overcomes strength” (Laozi 78). Learning to be like water would mean learning to sense the circumstances and adapt one’s behavior to fit those circumstances in real time. This adaptability, however, requires a knowledge of one’s emotional landscape—one that many, after years of emotional suppression, have not developed. If one is considering the question “How to Feel Wonderment”—a necessary step is considering “what does wonderment feel like to *me*?” Many do not know. Numbness is shrinking the horizons of man’s conscious emotional landscape. To attempt to adapt to emotional circumstances in real time, one must have the emotional tools with which to adapt. In this way, the formerly supposed “strength” presented by emotional regulation—devotion to singularly shutting off one’s emotions—is a real weakness, shutting off any ability to understand emotions as they come. Rather than people being like water, a singular focus on regulation makes people more like a valve in an incredibly uncomfortable shower—the water can either be on or off (ideally off), and it will either be hot or cold with no way of predicting or controlling it.

To conclude this portion of the discussion on emotion regulation, a reflection on several key metaphors must be summarized. Let the emotional self-cultivationist trudge forward, like a tortoise with its emotional limbs outstretched, through a door of quelling and activating feeling that opens both ways, in an adaptable fashion that resembles the strong weakness of water. In other words, emotion regulation has a clear role in emotional

agency, but only when utilized in concert with emotional access, which will be explored in the following Chapter.

Chapter III.

The Dramatic Arts as Anthropology

Section III.I, Key Dramatic Anthropologists

Chapter II examined emotion regulation. This Chapter aims to examine the historical context for its counterpart, emotion access. The concept of emotion access is incredibly nuanced and can be approached from a multitude of angles—but, as with all roads in the Roman Empire, all roads lead to the same destination: activating feeling (or Rome, respectively). Rather than focusing on the neural mechanisms of emotion (affective neuroscience), as was the case with H.H. Goldsmith, this thesis examines instances of practical emotional strategy. The major difficulty in finding instances where feelings are employed strategically in measurable circumstances is that reporting is incredibly difficult to regulate, as Gary Yukl found in his research on *Leadership in Organizations* in the late 1990s. Yukl had incredible difficulty finding ways to view organizational leaders operating “as if” there was no audience. This term, “as if,” is very important to understanding the ritual space outlined by Confucius. Confucius specified that “when sacrificing to the spirits, [one] should comport [oneself] *as if* the spirits were present” (Analects 3.12). What this meant was that it did not matter if the spirits were present or not, just that the internal dispositions of the practitioners operated as if they were. In the case of Gary Yukl’s business leaders, he found a hard time manufacturing this “as if” or realistic space under supervision. This task for Yukl was daunting enough with the key goal of identifying a fixed set of leadership strategies in a singular conference-table discourse.

So how could one possibly examine the full spectrum of human emotion being accessed in subjects acting “as if” there was no audience? Luckily, there is an entire field

dedicated to this endeavor, though it is rarely utilized to this strategic end; that field is dramatic performance. For a limited parallel, the control of feelings in the job description of espionage is relegated to the confines of regulation or is highly classified. The singular vocation where an analysis of highly regularized, constantly reported, and widely experienced access of a diverse array of feeling is found, happens to be the Dramatic Arts.

Strategic employment of one's emotional capacities is a concept that sits firmly on the border between Dramatic Arts and Anthropology—since the ideas of “how to feel” and “why that pathway to feeling works for some people” are largely interconnected. For this reason, both the Anthropological background and Dramatic Arts background for this type of research are pertinent. This section aims to discuss historical precedent for this type of study with an examination of three writers who sit at the foundation of this intersection between anthropology and theater.

The first is Richard Schechner, theater director and father of the term “performance studies.” Schechner's work with the dramatic applications of rasa-aesthetics will be discussed in Chapter 5 Section II, but his framing of the critical landscape surrounding the intersection of anthropology and theatre is incredibly useful at this juncture. Schechner's work entitled *Between Theater and Anthropology* states that “just as theater is anthropologizing itself, so anthropology is being theatricalized” and that “the convergence of anthropology and theater is part of a larger intellectual movement where the understanding of human behavior is changing from [the] quantifiable... to an emphasis on the deconstruction [and] reconstruction of actualities... the making and manipulating of strips of behavior” (Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* 33). What this means is that Schechner was realizing a need to step out of Goldsmith's realm of examining the

neural mechanisms of emotion as compartmentalized from practical applications. This thesis focuses on key aspects of what Schechner identifies as the future of the field—the “construction” of feeling—in this case, of wonderment.

The second major figure whose writings and practices frame the history of this type of research is dramatist Eugenio Barba, an Italian theater director, founder of the Odin Theater, and founder of the International School of Theater Anthropology in Denmark. Richard Schechner cites page two of a flyer distributed to participants in the second session of Barba’s school in Holstebro, Denmark in 1981, stating that “Barba describes ISTA and its goals as follows: ‘Anthropology is the study of the biological and cultural behavior of man in a theatrical situation, that is to say, of man presenting and using his physical and mental presence in accordance with laws differing from those of daily life’” (qtd. in Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* 28). Barba worked with trained performers to examine what Leo Rafolt at the University of Osijek calls “transcultural bodily knowledge”—using performers to explore the nuances contained in the physical behaviors of others (Rafolt 95). In Barba’s book, *The Paper Canoe: A Guide to Theater Anthropology* he describes one of his experiments in which, “in 1978, the actors all left Holstebro in search of a stimuli which might help them shatter the crystallization of behavior which tends to form in every... group” (Barba, *The Paper Canoe* 6). With this in mind, even “in the perspective of Barba’s theatre anthropology, [the performers] were... in the artificial state of (re)learning other people’s techniques” (Rafolt 111). In essence, Barba’s research examined the performance emulation of movements. Barba’s work studying socially separated or ritualized situations with performative subjects underlines the abstract historical understanding of emotional access.

The third key figure is anthropologist Victor Turner who, as Schechner continues in his framing work, “was interested in ritual-as-performance and... in what he called performing ethnography”—“experimenting with the performance of ethnography to give students understanding of how people in other cultures experience the richness of their social existence” (qtd. in Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* 30). Turner’s physical work, as described on pages 33 and 34 of his 1982 work *From Ritual to Theater: the Human Seriousness of Play*, is a key element in understanding the active and embodied nature of theater anthropology in practice.

Schechner was able to look at his two predecessors, Barba and Turner, and posit that “it would be good to see some of Bara’s ideas joined with those of Turners” continuing by suggesting “how about emphasizing not only the cognitive and experiential aspects of the ethnographies enacted but also the kinesthetic—how the body is handled, held, restrained, released? This would put into the bodies of the student performers a living sense of what it is to move ‘as if’ one were the other” (Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* 31). Schechner’s suggestion of combining cognitive research and embodied performance as a path toward cross-cultural, or even cross-rehearsal-space empathy served as an extension of his predecessors, moving further into the ethnographic field.

These writers specifically contributed within the limited scope of drama’s intersection with anthropological and ethnographical study. This thesis makes use of similar foundational texts as Schechner, but moves, instead, toward what this work deems “narcissistic anthropology” whereas Schechner, Turner, and Barba exist more within the sphere of cultural ethnography—neglecting to focus on the individual self. While Schechner would employ emotional access toward the task of more empirically

empathizing with the circumstances of others or of characters through strategic physical emotion exploration, this thesis examines these techniques in the pursuit of narcissistic anthropology—exploring methodologies for strengthening emotional agency within the self.

Section III.II, Emotional Access Methodologies: Limitation by Compartmentalization

While researchers in Theater Anthropology focused primarily on the study of others, three notable disciplines related to theater and anthropology focus on the study of the self. Meditation, as outlined in Chapter One of the *Yoga Sutra*, seeks a more complete understanding of the practical mechanisms of the mind. The Alexander Technique was developed as a movement and breath mechanism training program in Tasmania. Practical Aesthetics is an acting technique founded in New York which emphasizes the practical mechanisms of physical expression and the effect of those expressions on others. In their own ways, each of these three disciplines explore the self, but they do so by compartmentalizing that self into mechanistic parts—much in the way Goldsmith’s research on neural mechanisms behind emotion alienated the activity of these synapses from the whole of the emotional being. Does this suggest that every emotional problem ought to be solved at once? Not by a longshot. However, by breaking up the body processes that typically work in tandem during daily emotional function and by studying those processes in isolation, one fails to create the true Confucian “as if” space. One does not realistically experience the full range of anger, grief, wonderment, and desire in a single instance, so to attempt to study all of those emotions at once would depart from reality. Yet, one does realistically exist using the mechanisms of their mind, body, and personal

emotional faculties at one time, so to study those elements in isolation is a divergence from the “as if” space committed to verisimilitude.

The process of breaking up these mechanistic components of human experience has been historically practiced throughout the world. Rafolt noted that “Schechner often quotes the Japanese *nō* performer and playwright Zeami (from his treaty *Kadensho*, written c. 1405), who emphasized the dialectical tension between *tai* and *yu*, between ‘what is seen by the mind’ and ‘what is seen by the eyes’” (qtd. in Rafolt 98). Unfortunately, though there can be a difference in what is seen and what is internalized, the process of visual intake is nearly simultaneous to mental internalization. The distinction is there to be made, but is hardly applicable in real time. With that said, each of these three disciplines has gleaned much about its respective area of focus within the system of the self and each warrants consideration.

In the case of meditation, Patanjali carefully distinguishes the “forces of corruption” within the “turnings of thought”—enumerating them as “valid judgement, error, conceptualization, sleep, and memory” (Miller 31). When attempting to practice what Patanjali describes as the “cessation of the turnings of thought,” seeing the clearly noted “ways of stopping thought” can be extremely useful to the practitioner (Miller 32-33). This thesis, in no way, aims to denigrate the complex and confounding work contained in Patanjali’s detailed understandings of the mechanisms of the mind—it simply aims to note that these mechanisms are not designed to cultivate holistic emotional access. While they may help the practitioner martial the mechanisms of the mind, they isolate the mind from the complete emotive being, and that compartmentalization hinders a comprehensive attempt at emotion activation.

Alexander Technique is described by researcher Jennifer Tarr at the London School of Economics as “a form of body work which seeks to educate its pupils to use their bodies more efficiently in everyday movement” (Tarr 254). This technique includes lessons on sitting, rising, walking and other everyday movements, requiring repetition and internalization of processes. Tarr comments that “somatic techniques such as the “Alexander Technique, affect... improvement by bringing unconscious habit to conscious critical reflection so that it can be worked on” (Tarr 258). The dedication of these lessons to rudimentary action is pervasive throughout the technique, “one of the most common stimuli provided in lessons is a chair, and pupils are asked to practice standing and sitting without collapsing the proper alignment of the head-neck-back relationship, sometimes referred to as the ‘central core’” (Tarr 259). Again, this technique emphasizes conscious martialing of a body mechanism—increasing one’s ability for behavioral access, but hindering the body-mind-and-internal-disposition relationship involved in the process of personal emotional access.

Finally, in the case of the acting technique titled Practical Aesthetics, techniques like “act before you think” and a focus on “what...the character... [is] literally doing” deemphasizes the practice of honing internal dispositions for the performer (Sanchez 1). Exercises adapted from Sanford Meisner’s repetition work calls on performers to pair up, “focus on one another, and say the first thing they see,” then to “identify what appears to be a mental or emotional state,” and finally to “identify the thought or thoughts behind” what they identified as emotional states (Dobosiewicz 4-5). Note that this practice is based on what is “seen,” and on what others “appear” to be displaying. This technique does not rely on sensing the internal dispositions of the self or the internal dispositions of others.

William H. Macy, one of the founders of the technique and the most prominent actor to practice this technique, said in an interview that “you cannot control your emotions. You can control your actions” (Macy 1). Considerable similarities arise between this word-and-action based technique and the priorities of Mohism where action is valued over internal feeling. Saying that “acting is a big fat trick that we play on the audience,” Macy continues that “most actors, a lot of the time, feel like frauds. And the mature actor says, ‘that’s great’” (Macy 1). The notion that “character is an illusion we create—this idea of creating a potentially disingenuous illusion, even though it might resemble realistic experience to the onlooker, is internally inconsistent with the goal of pursuing verisimilitude ” (McCann 1). In essence, this technique is not committed to verisimilitude on the part of the performer’s internal experience and isolates behavioral mechanisms from the emotive being.

Though much can be gained in the isolated fields of studying mind, body, and behavioral mechanics, the practice of accessing emotion necessarily moves beyond this compartmentalized methodology in a number of different acting techniques to be elaborated on in the following chapter.

Chapter IV.

Acting as an Anthropological Tool

Section IV.I, The Dramatic Trend Toward Verisimilitude 1890-Present

If elements of the performing arts can constitute a discipline for developing real-life emotional access, how is it that the performing arts became viable for anthropological study in realistic human experience? From the 1890s to the 1920s, Dramatic Arts in the United States underwent a revolution, transitioning from what Acting Theory bastion, Uta Hagen, deems presentational to representational acting styles. This distinction deals primarily with the acknowledgement of the audience on the part of the actor. Before the 1890s, the audience was acknowledged by the actors, who often performed postures and standard archetypes. Without exception before 1600 and frequently afterward, these actors acknowledged their audience in a lit performance space (with full view of spectators) before the advent of the proscenium stage. But as performance traditions matured, acting came to look more and more like a closed study of emotion, trending more towards representation with the use of the “fourth wall,” the standardized practice of making the audience “invisible” to the performers. This acting trend towards verisimilitude, popularized by the teachings of Stanislavski and his students in the United States, marked an aim to make one’s feelings in performance as close to reality as possible. With this trend in mind, if one is to consider certain instances of realistic acting practices as a ritual space for practicing real, human feeling, then each play, each showing, each individual performance becomes a case study in effective (or ineffective) access of feeling. Without the capability to examine each individual performance in the United States between 1890 and the present day by an actor striving for post-Stanislavskian-realism, one must examine

acting theory as a path toward a more comprehensive understanding of the nuances of realistic access of feeling.

With respect to the Dramatic Arts background, dramatic tradition dating back to Athenian festivals of Dionysus was said by Aristotle to “help in the creation and regeneration of pathos” among the citizenry as they watched Ancient Greek theater (Lyketsos 242). The enduring effect of these dramatic texts on viewers is emphasized by George Lyketsos, Chief of the Psychiatry department at Dromokaition Hospital in Athens in 1980 as he discussed the use of *Ancient Greek Tragedy as a Means of Psychotherapy for Mental Patients* in the modern day. Given the emotional potency of the dramatic arts and theater’s unique position as the locus of strategic emotional manipulation throughout history, it is the appropriate launching point for a practical analysis of emotional agency.

Strategizing the access of feeling is, in many ways, synonymous with many theories of acting and performance. With that in mind, the methods by which certain acting disciplines deal with verisimilitude were essential determining which theoretical texts to include in this analysis of pathways toward accessing and regulating the *rasa Adbhuta* in everyday life. Moving beyond Greek theater, where specific acting exercises were not recorded in the same depth, one examines rigid acting practices from Kabuki theater’s inherited roles in the east, to the stock characters of *Comedia dell’arte* in Italy, to the posed world of Victorian melodrama—all of which presented a filtered or heightened form of reality. As far forward as Victorian melodrama, where “gesture, declamation, music, and tableaux formally organize[d] the audience response,” and where “a more or less fixed set of stock characters engaged in” standard and recycled plots, theater did not necessarily bear much resemblance to the everyday realities of the people alive at the time (Williams 1). In

the case of purely entertainment-based performance around 1890, Russian director Konstantin Stanislavski grabbed the helm of theatrical convention and steered it firmly in the direction of realism at the turn of the twentieth century. Starkly contrasted by his contemporary, Nikolai Evreinov (whose “hostility towards realism was well known”), Stanislavski sought realistic performances, citing that presentational performance and “theatricality [were exaggerations] when juxtaposed with what should be the realistic truth of the stage” (Romantsova 59). This subsection of acting theory concerned with strictly realistic performance quickly became the area of focus for finding the particular theories to analyze.

The decision to analyze post-Stanislavskian performative imagination technique specifically, namely that of Stella Adler, resulted from a variety of factors. In order to understand the selection of Adler’s technique, one must examine the cohort of other realism-based performance philosophies proliferating from Stanislavski’s time to the present day. In the American theatrical tradition, though heightened P.T. Barnum-esque showmanship had the burgeoning nation in its grips, a group of young performers formed a gritty, grounded troupe called The Group Theater. The Group Theater (affectionately termed “The Group”) had members who would each develop their own schools of acting following Stanislavski’s realist principles—their schools would be the foundation for realism-based acting theory in the United States. The Group was composed of Sanford Meisner, Lee Strasberg, Stella Adler, and a host of other members including famed director Elia Kazan and writer Clifford Odets. In selecting the modern acting technique to analyze, several of the group theater alumnus’ philosophies were considered, as well as other, more recent methods. Stanislavski’s system was the first to consider, but the nature of his

thoughts on acting practice changed significantly over the course of his life—giving birth to two different, starkly contrasting points of view at the beginning and end of his life, respectively. The room for misinterpretation regarding which Stanislavski’s personally espoused at which times, though the texts on his practices are available in no short supply, made them unfavorable as a choice from which to extract discrete practices. A more direct comparison between Adler technique and Lee Strasberg’s method will be examined in Chapter Seven, but his work was ruled out given the personal accounts of practitioners experiencing emotional trauma via unregulated emotional access via the practice of using real-life affective memory. Sanford Meisner’s technique, as was discussed as a key influence on Practical Aesthetics in the last chapter, carries some similarities to that of Stanislavski but is focused, instead, on acting on instinct rather than by design—characterized by one of Meisner’s famous quotations “Act before you think - your instincts are more honest than your thoughts” (Meisner 14). This emphasis on instinct as a concept is a key element of sensing emotions in real time, but it extends quickly and dangerously into the Practical Aesthetics style of rejecting emotion training in favor of solely following instinct—a limitation much like that of emotion regulation, encouraging the practitioner away from cultivating self-understanding. Having honed in on Adler Imagination Technique as the favorable pathway toward emotion access, the following section discusses elements of Adler’s practice that highlighted her commitment to the pursuit of verisimilitude.

Section IV.II, Adler’s Commitment to Accessing Realistic Emotion

Sharon Marie Carnicke, professor of acting and critical studies at the USC School of Dramatic arts notes in her article “Stanislavski: Uncensored and Unabridged” that

“Soviet Newspaper headlines heralded [Konstanstin] Stanislavski with mythic praise” (Carnicke 22). Carnicke notes that in Khaliiov’s words in 1938, Stanislavski “was... ‘The Creator of Realistic Theatre,’” while in Gus’s words in 1938, Stanislavski was “on the front lines of ‘The Battle for Realism’” (qtd. in Carnicke 22). Though this man, “defined by many as the father of psychological realism in acting,” did much for the cause of seeking verisimilitude in dramatic performance in Russia, it was another group that lauded these ideas abroad (Chichakayan 1). It was the Group Theater “that championed an imperative for realism and the teachings of Konstantin Stanislavski” in the United States (*stelladler.la*). As a founding member of The Group, credited with upholding the cause of realism in acting in the United States, “Stella Adler is the only American actor to have studied with [Stanislavski] through intense, private training” (*stellaadler.la*).

Her connection to Stanislavski, and her personal accomplishment of clarifying his work—of bringing those clarifications, single handedly to the eager performers in the United States—makes Adler’s commitment to honesty and truth all the more compelling. In a documentary on Stella Adler titled *Stella Adler Awake and Dream!* from “American Masters,” the narrator explained that “In 1934, Stella went to Paris. She met Stanislavski by chance and accused him of ruining her joy of acting. They took an afternoon stroll...” (StellaAdlerStudio: 24:53-25:01). Adler, personally, adds “he took me under his wing, and together with his secretary, we worked for weeks on clarifying what Mr. Stanislavski understood as being made into a kind of mystery in America. I don’t think he wanted that” (StellaAdlerStudio 25:11-25:29). This clarification led Adler toward the formation of her own studio, which now operates in New York and Los Angeles as the Stella Adler Studio and the Stella Adler Academy, respectively. Her grandson, and artistic director of the Stella

Adler Studio, Tom Oppenheim, said of his grandmother's work that "I think that's what Stella was after and what her techniques - plural – offer...that there is a purpose of Art... I think that some Theatre in America pulls in the opposite way, it deifies what is habitual in ourselves rather than elevate" (Noguiera 1). This quote gets to a key component of Stella's work—while she seeks verisimilitude, she does not seek the deification of the mundane. Her aim was to avoid what Oppenheim calls a "degradation of Humanity" wherein the human emotional spectrum is shrunk down to within smaller and smaller realms of operation (Noguiera 1).

While she has many techniques involved in actor training for performers, this thesis focuses particularly on one aspect of her work—her core exercises on Imagination which will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Seven. If Stanislavski is the father of realism in acting, Adler was the daughter who carried on his legacy with pride. The Stella Adler Technique is defined by the modern New York Studio bearing her name with the following core belief: "Growth as an actor and growth as a human being are synonymous" (*stelladler.com*). Adler's work is dedicated not only to elucidating human experience, but to growing that experience through training—this is what makes her exercises so ripe for the inclusion in emotion training and self-cultivation for the performer and non-performer alike.

Section IV.III, Drama as a Path Toward Emotion Access, Regulation, and Exchange

Though there has been much discussion in Chapter Two on the limitations posed by emotion regulation used in isolation, and much discussion in Chapters Three and Four on the possibilities provided by increased emotional access, these components stand as two of the three key pillars of Emotional Agency: Access, Regulation, and Exchange. This

system of emotional agency ideally works like a door that swings both ways—a person can enter from one direction, accessing a feeling like Fear, and then that person can return through the door the other way, turning that Fear off when it no longer serves them. These components, emotional access and regulation, will be employed in concert in the Case Study in Chapter Nine. There is one more element, however, that will be discussed in the following chapter—that of giving and receiving emotion from others: Emotional Exchange. It is, perhaps, more of a consequence of human existence than a skill for many, but, with emotion access and regulation under one’s control, emotion exchange can be controlled and strategic.

If a person walks through a door, they need to be prepared for someone to be on the other side—for how their movement through the door might affect the other person. This is the process of emotional exchange. Once emotion access and emotion regulation are mastered, one training their emotional agency might attempt to affect others or to be affected by others using their newfound skill. This exchange often occurs involuntarily, however, in the context of theatrical performance, exchange of emotions occurs strategically and regularly. For example, this exchange frequently takes place between the performer and the audience--viewers watching the movie *The Notebook* are on the receiving end of an emotional exchange with the performers, Ryan Gosling and Rachel McAdams. Researchers Antonio Maffei and Alessandro Angrilli at the Department of General Psychology at the University of Padova in Italy conducted analysis on the “induction of emotions in neuroscience” via the stimuli of movies—studying emotions received by audiences as they watch films. Their work with clips represents a “multimodal stimulation of the viewer with simultaneous and coherent engagement of both the visual

and the auditory sensory systems”—noting that “in the context of mood induction, they are suitable for elicitation of basic emotions, like Fear or Disgust, as well as for the induction of more complex feelings” (Maffei et al. 1). Maffei and Angrilli cite the page 1153 of Schaefer’s reference work as essential to their findings on this point. This phenomenon was witnessed by Maffei and Angrilli in their isolated laboratory setting viewing the effects of actors’ emotion on the viewer—“confirm[ing] the effectiveness” of targeted “excerpts to elicit in the viewer” predicted “emotional states” (Maffei et al. 1). Maffei and Angrilli cite the page 261 of Lang’s reference work as key to their work at this juncture. Classifications of feeling will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter, but the essential conscious end state of emotion access must be noted—emotions can, and will be, shared, whether they are wielded by someone with agency or not.

It is up to the one who wields their emotion to gain agency over and understanding of their emotional instrument. As Adler says in her book titled *The Technique of Acting*, as one begins to understand their emotional faculties, one must be able to identify emotions or sensory reflections of those emotions “in [one’s] head vividly and accurately before [one] can describe them. Only then can [one] give them back and make [their] partner or the audience experience what [one has] seen” (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 20). If these emotions must be understood vividly and accurately before they can be wielded with agency for emotion exchange, how does one understand emotion with clarity? What are the classifications of feeling? This will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Chapter V.

The Navarasas in Dramatic Anthropology

Section V.I, Understanding the Navarasas

One theory of performance which stems from Ancient Southeast Asia includes principles of performance based in an active, fluid exchange of feeling with a sympathetic onlooker—theory which is experiencing a resurgence in modern western theater as well. This research works within the structure provided by the Sanskrit treatise on the performing arts, the *Nāṭya Śāstra*, which details the nine key components of human feeling, called “Rasas.” Eight of these nine components can be combined or isolated to create the entire spectrum of human emotion, as is actively practiced using Richard Schechner’s avant-garde “Rasaboxes” energy-mapping exercises. This thesis will focus specifically on the rasa “Adbhuta,” which roughly translates to “wonder” or “awe.” These Rasas will serve as the basis for this thesis’s classifications of feeling. While other classifications of emotion like Paul Eckman’s six basic emotions from the 1970s or Psychologist Robert Plutchik’s 2001 color wheel of emotions exist, the Rasa’s provided a unique glimpse into not only the existence of these emotions, but the ways in which they were performed and experienced over centuries. Focusing on one isolated feeling will allow for manageable analysis of ritualized emotional practices in Chapter Eight, however, in order to more clearly understand Adbhuta, one must first understand the Rasas in context.

Schechner’s theoretical work framing the “rasas” for his own practice is foundational to an understanding of their applicability to modern theater—for this reason, much of the exposition for the text, *Nāṭya Śāstra*, will be sourced from Schechner’s perspective. The nature of the text itself is one of a “sastra, a sacred text authorized by the

gods, full of narration, myth, and detailed instructions for performers, ” though Schechner notes that outside of the written text, “the NS tradition is active, oral, and corporeal” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 28). How old this original text may be is a question obscured by the existence of many fragmented manuscripts, lost and re-found over centuries, but “scholars have placed it anywhere from the sixth century B.C.E. to the second century C.E.” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 28). Similar questions of certainty circle the identity of the author of the work—as is the case with many sacred texts, meaning that “exactly how much of the NS was the work of one person and how much the lore of many will probably never be known. Bharata-muni, whoever he was, if he was at all, wrote only the NS” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 28). So, if this text, from an unspecified date, written by an uncertain author was lost and re-found throughout history, how is it that the work remains so foundational to Sanskrit performance? The answer is simple, the emotive ideas contained within the work on performance are as enduring as the human condition itself—they are as applicable today as they were centuries ago.

Though briefly addressed, the term “rasa” warrants a deeper definitional examination. Schechner notes, regarding the title of the work, that “*Nāṭya*, [is] a Sanskrit word [that is] not easily translatable, but reducible to dance-theatre-music” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 28). If “*nāṭya*” is complex to describe, “rasa” is modern description and translation’s Everest—though the best description comes from the text itself:

There is no *nāṭya* without rasa. Rasa is the cumulative result of vibhava [stimulus], anubhava [involuntary reaction], and vyabhicari bhava [voluntary reaction]. For example, just as when various condiments and sauces and herbs and other materials are mixed, a taste is experienced, or when the mixing of materials like molasses with other materials produces six kinds of taste, so also along with the different bhavas [emotions] the sthayi bhava [permanent emotions experienced “inside ”] becomes a rasa.

But what is this thing called rasa? Here is the reply. Because it is enjoyably tasted, it is called rasa. How does the enjoyment come? Persons who eat prepared food mixed with different condiments and sauces, if they are sensitive, enjoy the different tastes and then feel pleasure; likewise, sensitive spectators, after enjoying the various emotions expressed by the actors through words, gestures, and feelings feel pleasure. This feeling by the spectators is here explained as the rasas of natya. (Bharatamuni, *The Natyasastra*. Adya Rangacharya Translation 54-55)

Schechner's analysis quoted this passage as well, and for good reason, because defining these terms "rasa" and "sthayi bhava" without their original context is to reduce the terms immeasurably. Schechner further explains "rasa" as "a flavor" or as a "taste," specifically calling it akin to "the sensation one gets when food is perceived, brought within reach, touched, taken into the mouth, chewed, mixed, savored, and swallowed" (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 29). He discusses what the "eyes and ears perceive" and how "the nose gets involved"—even how the "mouth waters in anticipation" while "hands" and "fingers" play their part in delivering the food (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 29). For Schechner, as for many acting instructors, the process has "all the senses... well-represented"—but the experience of the Rasa is more than the initial process of seeing the food—it is the process by which "what was outside is transformed into what is inside" (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 29). This metaphor for food consumption literalizes the process of emotional experience, making the involvement of the senses tangible where acting practices employ the imagination. In this vein, Schechner describes acting as "the art of presenting the sthaya bhavas so that both the performer and the partaker can "taste" the emotion, the rasa (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31). The following chart from Schechner's paper titled "Rasaesthetics," outlines eight of the nine "rasas and their corresponding sthaya bhavas" (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31).

Rasa	Sthayi Bhava	English
sringara	rati	desire, love
hasya	hasa	humor, laughter
karuna	soka	pity, grief
raudra	krodha	anger
vira	utsaha	energy, vigor
bhayanaka	bhaya	fear, shame
bibhasta	jugupsra	disgust
adbhuta	vismaya	surprise, wonder

Figure 2. Rasas and their Corresponding Sthayi Bhavas.

Chart from Richard Schechner's "Rasaesthetics" outlining the relationship between Rasas and Sthayi Bhavas (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31).

Looking at the eight rasas together, one may wonder at the constant referral earlier in this work to the term "navarasas" meaning "nine rasas." To understand this, one must acknowledge the addition by Abhinavagupta of a ninth rasa to the mix, years after the first eight were established—the rasa of bliss. This ninth rasa, "shanta... does not correspond to any particular sthayi bhava," which is why it is not included in the chart—"shanta is the perfect balance/mix of them all; or shanta may be regarded as the transcendent rasa which, when accomplished, absorbs and eliminates all the others" (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 32). For this reason, "shanta" is less practically accessible in terms of active study, because it requires an understanding of all eight of its predecessors, so study of this rasa must be reserved until after all other rasas have been adequately examined.

Further distinguishing between the eight rasas for initial practice and their "indwelling" counterparts, the sthayi bhavas, Schechner comments that "the sthayi bhavas

are the “permanent” or “abiding” or indwelling emotions that are accessed and evoked by good acting, called abhinaya” and that “rasa is experiencing the sthayi bhavas” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31). He uses a metaphor to clarify this idea, saying that “the sweetness “in ” a ripe plum is its sthayi bhava, the experience of “tasting the sweet ” is rasa. (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31). If one aims to gain personal emotion understanding and agency, the process of honing one’s connection to the rasas, is, to borrow from Schechner’s metaphor, a process of honing one’s palate as they learn to “taste the sweetness” of different types of food through ritual practice. Schechner pursued a type of training with rasas to a different end, as his colleague characterized it, he was “challenged by Antonin Artaud ’s demand that the actor be an ‘athlete of the emotions’” and wanted to use the rasas to better influence audience experience of works of dramatic performance. This aim and the experiments Schechner employed will be examined in the following section.

Section V.II, Navarasas in Dramatic Practice

Richard Schechner’s rasa-aesthetics energy box exercises provides a more modern view into ways the Nāṭya Śāstra has inspired performance and understanding of the feeling of “wonderment,” among seven others. Before exploring this particular exercise, however, one must understand the initial aim of accessing the rasas in the Nāṭya Śāstra—an aim that aligns much with Schechner’s. Schechner noted that the process of accessing the rasas—of tasting the sweetness—consists of a “paradigmatic activity... a sharing between performers and partakers (a more accurate term than “audiences” or “spectators,” words that privilege ear or eye)” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31). This idea of sharing the emotion with the partakers aligns much with this thesis’s earlier discussion of emotion exchange in Chapter Four Section Three. The difference here, is that the initial intent of rasa

performance removed the reciprocity from this exchange—the actors gave the feelings to the partakers, and that ended the transaction. This thesis outlines emotion exchange as a constant back and forth, giving emotions which are fully experienced by the giver, and later being receptive to receiving new emotions from the being to whom the first impulses were given. The concept of being receptive to new emotion will be discussed further in the following chapter, which will outline the creation of and aims surrounding the ritual space. The exchange employed for the purpose of this thesis operates more like a cycle, where the initial exchange outlined by the rasas is not.

When confronting “Diderot ’s question, “Do actors feel the emotions they communicate?”” Schechner asked kathakali actors practicing rasa technique (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 32). Their response mirrored that of actor William H. Macy in the Practical Aesthetics—Schechner said that these actors conveyed that “feeling the emotions is not necessary though it is not a bad thing either” but that “what is relevant is making certain that each ‘partaker’ receives the emotions, and that these emotions are specific and controlled” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 32). There is a lot to unpack here, first, while the idea that “feeling the emotion is not necessary” may align with the Practical Aesthetics technique of acting, the emphasis on “specific and controlled” emotions does not—because Practical Aesthetics focuses on instinct, not control. Second, the practitioners of rasa-aesthetics that Schechner was speaking to were employing the Rasa-aesthetics in a similar but inverted way to the anthropological work of Barba and Turner. While Barba and Turner used the study of ritual to better understand others, rasa practitioners used the controlled performance of emotions to help others better understand themselves. The place where this thesis diverges from prior usage of rasa work is that it aims to use rasa theory in a new

way, where the emphasis on the performer personally feeling and exploring the emotion is emphasized, and one where emotion exchange (which had been the isolated focus of earlier rasa employment) is an end state following the personal understanding and embodiment of a particular feeling.

When referencing “Stanislavsky-based Euro-American acting” Schechner qualifies the differences between it and rasaesthetics, saying that in the former “one does not ‘play an emotion,’ one plays the ‘given circumstances,’ the ‘objectives,’ the ‘through-line of action’” and that “if this is done right, ‘real’ feelings will be experienced and ‘natural’ emotions will be displayed” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 33). He then examines the “NS rasic system” as one in which “one can work *directly* on the emotions, mixing them according to ‘recipes’... or even by devising new recipes” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 33). He goes on to juxtapose the two systems, saying that performers of the rasic system are “every bit effective as performers trained in the Stanislavski system,” but this thesis does not view the two systems as opposed. In fact, this thesis poses the notion that only through the combination of both systems can a practitioner truly and personally embrace the rasa for themselves—that one can personally embrace the rasa through ritual practice (which includes imagination of one’s circumstances as a part of accessing that rasa). In the perspective of this thesis, neither practice is a matter of “playing the emotion” or not, they are both tools to the end goal of emotion access and agency for the practitioner. Furthermore, defining the rasas as solely being meant to “offer emotions to partakers in the same way that a chef offers a meal to diners” is to neglect the reality that before one can feed others, they must learn to cook for themselves (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 33). Even more, if one has learned to satiate themselves, and if then, that individual moves on to work

as a chef, giving emotional experiences to others via emotion exchange, that chef will, necessarily, taste the flavors of their dish in the process of making it.

Even so, Schechner’s exercise sought to “use space to delineate each rasa, and allow the individual performer to find her own expression of the emotion/s contained within it”—rather than the classical technique of “codifying the expression of emotion through particular gestures and facial expressions that are always performed in the same way” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 40). Even though the intent was to create a personalized process by which emotions could be transferred to partakers, rather than necessarily internalized by practitioners, Schechner’s work allowed for personal subjective experimentation surrounding each rasa. This personalization expanded the existing codification of movement to incorporate modernizations of physical expression.

The exercise created by Schechner includes the creation of a distinct space, and subsequent behavior practiced by the actors, without a clear time limit and without any limitations placed on the number of times the exercise can be undertaken. The following figure is a depiction of Schechner’s delineation of space, viewed from above.

RAUDRA	BIBHASTA	BHAYANAKA
KARUNA	SHANTA (empty)	SRINGARA
HASYA	VIRA	ADBHUTA

2. The Rasabox grid with one rasa written in each box. (Figure by Richard Schechner)

Figure 3. Schechner's Rasabox Grid

The grid used in Richard Schechner's rasa-based exercise for actors (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 40).

His exercise consisted of the following set of discrete steps, which were elaborated on in further experimentation to involve the physical body and movement improvisation.

1. Draw or tape a grid of nine rectangular boxes on the floor. All rectangles are the same and each ought to be about 6' x 3'.
2. Very roughly "define" each rasa. For example, *raudra* means anger, rage, roaring; *bibhasta* means disgust, spitting up/out, vomiting.
3. In variously colored chalk, write the name of one rasa inside each rectangle. Use chance methods to determine which rasa goes where. Write the names in Roman alphabetized Sanskrit. Leave the center or ninth box empty or clear.
4. Have participants draw and/or describe each rasa inside its box. That is, ask each person to interpret the Sanskrit word, to associate feelings and ideas to it. Emphasize that these "definitions" and associations are not for all time, but just "for now." Emphasize also that drawings, abstract configurations, or words can be used. In moving from one box to another, participants must either "walk the line" at the edge of the boxes or step outside the Rasabox area entirely and walk around to the new box. There is no order of progression from box to box. A person may return to a box as often as she likes, being careful not to overwrite someone else's contribution. Take as much time as necessary until everyone has drawn her fill. When a participant is finished, she steps to the outside of the Rasabox area. This phase of the exercise is over when everyone is outside the Rasabox area. Sometimes this takes several hours.
5. When everyone is standing at the edge of the Rasabox area, time is allowed for all to "take in" what has been drawn/written. Participants walk around the edge of the Rasaboxes. They read to themselves and out loud what is written. They describe what is drawn. But they can't ask questions; nor can anything be explained.
6. Pause. Silence.

Figure 4. Schechner's Rasabox Exercise Outline in Steps

The exercise outline used for Richard Schechner's rasa-based exercise for actors (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 40).

This exercise grew to include "participants... mov[ing] among the rasas, embodying each rasa by means of [a] pose they have chosen"—a technique intended to [develop] an emotional/physical agility the actor can use to transform instantly from

expressing rage to love to sadness to disgust” in a subsequent six steps (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 40). The theory was that “once participants [were] comfortable with being statues, [the instructor would] introduce breath and then sound and finally movement and sound together” to the improvisational space, providing the actor with a set of sensory methods with which to convey the rasa to an audience (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 40). Even though these improvisations were used to explore physical demonstrations of each rasa, this thesis would suggest that the visible products of externalizing often internal emotions may not be the end goal.

Finding the perfect subjective pose to convey raudra (rage) might aid in the initial goal of the rasas—helping an audience of partakers explore raudra as they see it performed. However, for the purpose of this thesis, the intent would be to explore the ways in which that physical expression could inform the performer about their own relationship to the rasa—making the relationship to that rasa more clear and more traversable. While Schechner might say that “acting” of “abhinaya” is the art of presenting the sthayi bhavas so that... the partaker can “taste” the emotion, the rasa,” this thesis posits that the art of physicalized exploration of a rasa (what some might call acting training) can inform the explorer (what some might call the performer or actor), and eventually the explorer can share that insight with others (who Schechner would call “partakers”) (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31).

Minnick, a colleague of Schechner’s, comments that “some practitioners of drama training” have experimented with adapting Schechner’s specific rasaboxes exercise provide an explorative space for personal emotion understanding (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 41). However, the limitations provided by Schechner’s exercise are many,

and Minnick notes that his exercise is not designed for performers to “indulge in... the personal side of emotion” (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 41).

In examining the limitations provided by this exercise, the first is the necessity of experiencing all eight core emotions in a single ritual practice session, which can prove incredibly taxing on individuals not accustomed to diverse emotional access. This exercise, by nature, requires the practitioner to set aside places for each emotion and to practice transitioning from the height of one to the height of another in rapid succession. Not only is this an incredibly advanced skill, complex for even highly trained performers, but it is also a departure from verisimilitude. How often does one experience the absolute height of grief or rage or desire in their lives—one would hope the answer to be “very rarely, and not all feelings at once.” Schechner asks for the peak of these emotions to be displayed one after the other with some degree of randomness—a tactic that does not aim for deepened understanding, rather flanderized physicalization allowing for distinctive performance. If a performer was attempting to feel these displays internally during each transition through Schechner’s boxes, the result might be severe emotional damage tantamount to a psychotic break. Just as Chapter Three Part Two discussed the limitations of emotional access due to compartmentalization of emotional mechanisms like movement or voice, this exercise asks the performer to compartmentalize the mechanism of emotional transition—focusing on switching between the way emotions look from the outside. This thesis will examine other pathways of exploring these rasas in isolation, not for the end goal of performance, but for the aim of personal understanding, before the rasas are switched between or blended. Schechner describes an auxiliary effect of some of his work wherein a “performer” might “[become] a partaker herself” and where the performer may be later “moved by her own

performance”—this reality is essential to consider after actively engaging with emotion work in a ritual space (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 46). Schechner notes that “in orthodox Western theater, the spectators respond sympathetically to the ‘as if’ of the characters living out a narrative” while in “rasic theater, the partakers empathize with the experience of the performers playing”—so by joining these techniques, the practitioner will be able to empathize both with their own emotional experience after exiting the ritual space, and with the plot from within as an imaginative actor playing inside of the ritual space (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 46). Schechner’s actors were moved *later* by what they portrayed in the exercise, this thesis asks actors to be moved *during* the ritual in order to gain empathetic understanding of themselves afterward.

What does Schechner’s exercise incorporate that would have a positive effect on one’s training in emotional agency, as outlined in this thesis? The exercise incorporates the inclusion of a physical ritual space that is set apart from the setting of daily life, it distinguishes the core components of emotion clearly and succinctly, and it gives room for subjective exploration of each emotion in a physicalized and improvisational setting, though that exploration is notably performative. In what ways does this exercise provide limitation? The exercise asks all practitioners to traverse the full spectrum of human emotion in one fell swoop, it does not provide a structure for personal *internalized* exploration, it does not give any direction on separating the ritual experiences from the everyday self, and it asks the performer to focus on how the rasas look from the outside. While Schechner’s work did much in the way of modernizing ancient Sanskrit rasa theory for dramatic performance, much is left to be developed in terms of using these rasas to

understand the human emotional instrument—in the cases of performers and non-performers alike.

Chapter VI.

Creating the Ritual Emotional Training Ground

Section VI.I, Confucian and Mencian Ritual Practices

In terms of the study of human behavior, people have been using emotions strategically as a part of building societies since the dawn of time. With that said, finding instances where humans practiced those emotions in isolated circumstances is more complex. Though training for athletic endeavors and military ventures required emotion regulation and the employment of certain emotions like rage, very few instances required ancient individuals to actively practice vulnerability—outside of the performance space. So how could people throughout history practice having emotions when they weren't acting? They practiced using ritual. Richard Schechner likened ritual to performance using Van Gennep's keystone description of ritual patterns from 1909 (first translated into English in 1960), which notes that "a [ritual] performance involves a separation, a transition, and an incorporation" (qtd. in Schechner, *Performance Theory* 20). Schechner said of these categories that "training, workshop, rehearsal, and warm-ups are preliminary rites of separation... the performance itself is liminal, analogous to the rites of transition... [and] cool down and aftermath are post-liminal, rites of incorporation" (Schechner, *Performance Theory* 20). Through the practice of active ritual and repeated social behaviors, many people outside of the confines of the stage engaged in activities of emotional access. This was the case within Chinese ritual theory, beginning (for the purposes of this thesis) with Confucius, bolstered by Mencius, and emphasized by Xunzi. In discussing interpretations of Confucian ritual observance, professor of philosophy at Texas Tech University, Howard J. Curzer, notes that "for Confucius, the role of rituals in

moral development is that they build better habits of perception, thought, feeling, and behavior by requiring repeated symbolic acts” (Curzer, *Contemporary Rituals* 1). This ancient system goes further than the modern Practical Aesthetics school of acting—exchanging the “fake-it-till they believe it” mentality for the “perform-it-till *you, yourself* believe it” methodology. Ancient Chinese rituals offer an earnest attempt to engage in situations of performed emotion for the sake of accessing those emotions strategically at the appropriate time.

What is said about Confucian ritual in *The Analects*, the written work filled with ideas and wording attributed to Confucius? Confucius lays out clearly to his disciple Yan Yuan, in the twelfth chapter of the Analects, translated by D.C. Lau, that “to become good, [one] must overcome the self by submitting [one’s]self to ritual” (Analects 12.1). For Confucius, the notion of the self was not pre-established, rather it was “establish[ed]... with ritual” (Analects 8.8). But if one is to establish the self, rather than attempting to uncover the Western Platonic idea of a pre-determined immutable self, what exactly does this mean—what must one overcome? Professor Michael Puett at Harvard University would indicate that in a Confucian worldview, the goal would be “to recognize which habits, preferences, and patterns shape our identities most and try to overcome these patterns” (Blumberg 1). The patterns are what Puett deems “ruts” that can be broken through ritual (Puett, *The Path* 1). In an interview with the Harvard Crimson, Puett elucidated this notion, saying that “if we take the challenge of saying we fall into ruts and patterns but we can break out of those, you think of yourself and the world around you as changeable—and something you can devote yourself to changing” (Puett, *Constructions of Reality* 1). So, from this perspective, the self must be established by breaking out of habits

and behavioral ruts that are fallen into, and the path to breaking these ruts is through submitting to ritual.

What, then, is this term “ritual” for Confucius? One can first consider what Confucius determined “ritual” was *not*—Confucius said that he did not want to witness “rituals performed without due respect, funeral services attended without mourning” (Analects 3.26). This immediately rejects the Practical Aesthetics and traditional Basic view of performing without personally feeling—because the act of visibly attending a funeral was not enough for Confucius. The practitioner had to actually go through the physical and emotional internal process of mourning, emphasizing their internal dispositions in the “as if” space. Furthermore, in *The Analects*, “when a man named Lin Fang asked Confucius “‘what is the main thing in ritual’ Confucius replied, “a great question! For rituals, modesty rather than extravagance, and for funerals, expressing grief rather than remaining composure” (Analects 3.4). For Confucius, ritual was not performed with a focus on the viewing pleasure of an audience, Confucius did not ask those following his ideas of ritual to remain composed or to suppress their feelings of grief—he, instead, gave grief a specific place to be expressed in the ritual space (rather than letting it run rampant and uncontrolled). Confucius added that “self-control and turning back to the path of traditional ritual is the way to practice humankindness” (Analects 12.1). For Confucius, self-control included controlled instances of emotional access in the ritual space—of losing one’s composure on purpose in a designated space and time, before employing emotion regulation to step out of the ritual space and regain composure. This ability to strategically access and martial one’s emotion, during ritual, constitutes a display of emotional agency—one that Confucius calls “humankindness.” For

the purpose of this thesis, the word “humankindness” takes on two forms—one being the nature of humankind, to express emotion as essential to the experience of life—and another being human kindness, the duty of an individual to have agency over their actions in order to treat others with respect.

In what ways did Mencius, in the years following his predecessor, expand the ideas of self-cultivation and ritual put forth by Confucius? If one is to “overcome the self by submitting [one’s]self to ritual” as Confucius said, the universal applicability and training methodology put forth by Mencius are incredibly instructive (Analects 12.1). For Mencius, “the potential for self-cultivation began with four sprouts” which, when cultivated, “[grew] into the four virtues of benevolence, duty or propriety, ceremonial ritual, and wisdom” (Raphals 318). Whereas Confucius stressed the importance and nature of ritual, Mencius connected these ideas to constant training of the self. In fact, Mencius says of self-cultivation “seek and you will find it, let go and you will lose it”—adding that the only reason some men are “twice, five times, or countless times better” or more cultivated “than another man... is only because there are people who fail to make the best of their native endowment” (Mencius VIIA.3, VIA.6). Mencius is saying that self-cultivation is there for the taking, for any individual who wants it—indicating that no person is incapable of self-cultivation because “what is sought is within [ones]self” (Mencius VIIA.3). When discussing this same personal mandate toward self-cultivation, Confucius’s teaching in the Analects 12.1 “taught Yen Yuan about ‘mastering oneself and returning to ritual propriety,’ and made it clear that ‘the practice of humanity depends on oneself alone, and not on others’” (qtd. in Liu et al. 146). While no one may be beyond the capacity for inward exploration, Mencius makes a clear distinction between the “gentleman” and “the

multitude”—speaking about those who choose the path of self-cultivation, and those who do not, respectively. Mencius says of himself and of gentlemen that they find joy through the examination of the self, while saying of the multitude that they “can be said never to understand what they practice, to notice what they repeatedly do, or to be aware of the path they follow all their lives” (Mencius VIIA.3). This state of unawareness bears much resemblance to the startling image of emotional numbness painted in Chapter One.

With this distinction made, Mencius’ view of the gentleman was not infallible—that is to say, even Mencius compromised his own ideals, failing to uphold his own doctrine in a particularly arrogant and mal-tempered instance detailed in Book Two of *The Mencius*—the work on his teachings compiled by his students. In this instance, following a falling out with the local leader of Qi, Mencius’ passive aggressive statement to Chong Yu as he was leaving Qi detailed his personal frustration, saying “If Heaven wished to bring order to all under Heaven, who in the present generation is there other than me? How could I be displeased?” (Mencius IIB.2). The clear arrogance and lack of emotional agency in the situation were present, but this was merely Book Two of seven, each of which contained multiple parts detailing how he cultivated himself again after each failure, each lapse in pursuit of self-cultivated goodness. Mencius’ work does not ask for only a select few with special emotional capabilities to achieve perfection in emotional agency—it says that every individual, regardless of natural proclivity, has the materials ripe for cultivation, and that even though failures in the process arise, the constant dedication to continued self-cultivation is key.

Following decades after Mencius, Xunzi’s dedication to ritual is grounded in the idea that “rituals serve to display certain attitudes and emotions...” and that emotionally

performative rituals can “serve to *cultivate* those attitudes and emotions in the person” (Hutton 29). Hutton continues that Xunzi firmly believed that “in the process of *becoming* good, ritual plays an especially important role” (Hutton 28). Xunzi and Mencius upheld Confucian ideals of ritual in ancient China, and regardless of their respective views on the nature of man, they all emphasized the importance of cultivating one’s emotional dispositions through ritual. In contrast with the legalist thinkers discussed in Chapter 2, these thinkers favored internal disposition and rejected models solely focused on outward action. Their model for ritual observance toward the aim of self-cultivation, toward the aim of getting better acquainted with one’s emotional capacities, is foundational to the practice of performative emotional self-study, of access and regulation as will be outlined in Chapter Nine.

What did these rituals have to do with the supposed cycle of emotion exchange—being prepared to give one’s feelings to others, while also being receptive to receiving new feelings from others in real time? To discuss Confucian ideology’s relationship to emotion exchange, one must consider of the notion of “qi” (vital energy) as it relates to “qing” (emotion). This topic is elucidated by the Guodian Chu Slips (abbreviated as GDCS)—bamboo scrolls discovered in a tomb from around the time of Mencius (300 B.C.E.). Within these scrolls is a passage titled Xi Zi Ming Chu—which holds the translated meaning “Nature Derives from Mandate” (Chan 361). This passage discusses the idea that all matter is composed of this vital energy called “qi,” and only through interaction are certain energies expressed. This idea is bolstered by the notion that “the energies of joy, anger, sorrow, and sadness are given by nature” and that “when [these energies] are manifested on the outside” (outwardly expressed) “it is because people have called them forth”

(GDCS). With regard to emotion exchange, the scrolls say that one is born with their emotions—that “the Way begins with the dispositions and the dispositions are born from nature” but that “only through training do we become able to respond well” (GDCS). This relational idea of emotion at first bears resemblance to the acting technique espoused by Sanford Meisner and co-opted by the Practical Aesthetics technique—the repetition exercise, in which an actor is called to react solely based on the actions of their partner. However, the idea evolves when applied to more sophisticated characterization of “calling... forth” of emotions—not only can emotions be called forth by *other* humans, given the language of the Guodian Strips, these dispositions can be called forth by the human housing them as well. This is the case within the ritual space, wherein a human calls forth their own emotions in a certain space and time. It is worth noting that the interaction of these terms “qi” and “qing” are incredibly complex, particularly considering that “within the GDCS, the Xing Zi Ming Chu and other texts... a logical structure” was created “linking heaven (tian), destiny (ming), human nature (xing), emotion (qing), [and] the way (dao)” to name only a few of these multifaceted terms which were interlinked “to discuss the basic quality and actual functioning of human nature” (Lai 33). Keeping this complex interconnection in mind, for the sake of understanding the importance of emotion within ritual for the context of this thesis, primarily the concepts of “qi” and “qing” will be directly discussed.

When one of his students asked Confucius for a keyword—a guide in the aim of self-cultivation, Confucius suggested “shu,” (translated as “the ability to adopt others’ points of view”). To this single term, Confucius added the statement: “Do not do to others what you do not want done to you” (Analects 15.24). Mencius echoes this sentiment years

later, saying “try your best to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself” (Mencius VIIA.3). Both of these foundational thinkers implied with these statements that first one must achieve the mastery of emotional agency within the self. Only after learning how one wishes to be treated can one apply the Confucian and Mencian “golden rule”—otherwise a person would be like those in the Mencian multitude, unable to know how they wish to be emotionally treated by themselves. After achieving emotional agency, one can prepare to employ “shu” and share emotion intentionally with others—remaining aware of the fact that just as one can call forth emotions in themselves, so too can others call forth emotions in them and vice versa. Ritual, then, becomes a way of familiarizing oneself with the processes involved in the calling forth of emotion.

While discussed briefly in earlier sections, certain Confucian rituals surrounding grief allowed the mourner an opportunity to express this intense emotion within the ritual space—freeing themselves from the real-world limitations of composure. Another ancient Chinese ritual, however, “exercise[es] the dynamic between a father and son in a hereditary monarchy, where there is a constant struggle for a feeling of satisfaction in each successive generation” (Siemien 1). This ritual, outlined by Professor Michael Puett in a conversation with Boston College interviewer Connor Siemien, is described by Puett in the following way: “You and your son enter the ritual space, and your deceased father is called down... You are now your son, and your son is your father” (Siemien 1). This ritual includes the interaction of two individuals—something that would be considered highly advanced, necessitating the participation of multiple willing practitioners. While it may seem far removed from modern practice, “in psychology and psychodrama, children and parents often switch roles in order to better empathize with each other... often sparking insight

between both groups” (Hafizullah et al. 1). However, for much ritual practice, though participation by multiple parties would have been common in ancient China, there is no need for a coordinated effort by multiple practitioners. In a 2021 interview with Professor Puett, the sentiment received by his interviewer was that “once a person steps into the “shi” ceremony room, they are completely separated from everyday life” and that this may “[allow] people to open their minds and perceive ideas in different, unexpected ways” (Hafizullah et al.1).

Section VI.II, Ritual Space Construction in the Modern Environment

With the aim of elucidating the construction of the ritual space, particularly as it applies to theatrical tradition, professors Seligman, Weller, Puett, and Simon created the multi-disciplinary work entitled *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity*. This text examines many aspects of and analytical discussions surrounding the ritual space, historically and in the modern day. This particular text notes theater-as-ritual’s commitment to verisimilitude, citing that this unique form “claims to deal with ultimate truths, at least sometimes, in a way that playing tag or checkers never does” (Seligman et al. III). However, Seligman and his colleagues’ text says that theatrical ritual “is repeated, and we always know the ending”—in this case, the analysis fails to recognize the increasingly popular usage of improvisation in theatrical performance—allowing the ending to be unknown and creating room for even greater discovery by the practitioner. Though brief mention is made of improvisation, it is treated by Seligman and his colleagues as a danger rather than a possibility for increased exploration:

Mimicry appears much less like our classic ideas of ritual, however, when its roles become loose, flexible, and improvised. Under these circumstances we no longer know the ending in advance, and true repetition is

impossible... this is why a game of imagined kings and knights can degenerate into an actual fistfight.” (Seligman et al. III)

Seligman and his colleagues liken this less confined improvisation to a term called “carnival” in which there is “the possibility that the players may let the role run away with them” (Seligman et al. III). The trouble with this characterization, however, is that it unnecessarily juxtaposes improvisation and control—eliminating room for free play within established limitations. Controlled improvisations were employed by Schechner to the recorded benefit of his performers’ experiences, and they did not need to necessarily risk that so-called “threat of a dissolution into chaos” (Seligman et al. III). In this way, “dramatic performance” would become nearly “indistinguishable from ritual especially where its performative functions are accentuated, and where the actors’ temporary role appears to be more than artifice” (Seligman et al. III) However, the aim of the acting training to be discussed in the Chapter Seven is to make the performance experience accomplish more than “appear[ing] to be more than artifice” as Seligman and his colleagues characterize it (Seligman et al. III). Stella Adler technique, following that of Stanislavski, strives to cultivate authentic feeling within the body of the performer, much as Confucius called for in rituals of mourning. The foundational intersection between the research on ritual conducted by Seligman and his colleagues and the work of this thesis is considerable, though the distinctions in dramatic application to be made are many—further exploration on the topic of ritual as it pertains to imaginative emotional self-cultivation would see far deeper exploration of these distinctions, though the degree of specificity would require a volume longer than this thesis and Seligman’s work combined.

Dutch historian Johan Huizinga likened “archaic ritual” to “sacred play,” specifically in that his definition calls “play” reliant on several conditions; these conditions

include that play "never [be] imposed by biological need or moral duty... stand[ing] apart from the world of coercion" (Seligman et al. III). Play also, for Huizinga "epitomizes the sphere apart from our mundane needs" in that it "does not make life possible by providing food or shelter"—it simply "adorns life" (Seligman et al. III). Finally, play, for Huizinga "has its own time and place, its own course and meaning, secluded from the rigors of the everyday" (Seligman et al. III). Seligman and his colleagues' characterization of these conditions of the terminological synthesis of ritual and play serves as a precursor to his exploration of defining the ritual space. In discussing the creation of a physicalized ritual space, Huizinga says the following:

"Just as there is no formal difference between play and ritual, so the 'consecrated spot' cannot be formally distinguished from the playground. The arena, the card-table, the magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen, the tennis court, the court of justice, etc. are all in form and function playgrounds, i.e. forbidden spots, isolated, hedged round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain. All are temporary worlds, within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart." (Huizinga 9)

Seligman and his colleagues also focus intently on this passage as the applications of the ritual play space become clear for the modern day. Seligman's understanding of Huizinga's drawn similarities between ritual and play, and between the ritual space and the play space, do much in the process of specifying the use of the word "ritual" for its purpose in this thesis. The word "ritual" has contained many nuanced definitions within critical literature, and can, as is its nature, take on new meanings in a grand array of circumstances; however, for the sake of this thesis, Huizinga's conception of the ritual space as a closed playground, within which special rules apply, will serve as a foundation for the term's usage in these pages.

Another definition of the ritual space that lends clarity to the term's usage in this thesis is that of French intellectual Roger Caillois. Of the four types of play delineated by Caillois, Stella Adler imagination work, as will be discussed in the following chapter, will fall into the role of "Mimicry"—rather than *alea* ("games of chance"), *agon* ("competitive games in which external conditions are equalized in order to measure the innate skills and talents of competitors directly against each other"), or *Ilinx* ("the pursuit of vertigo", which Caillois calls "voluptuous panic"... meaning "children's pleasures like spinning in circles or tickling, but also the more adult thrills of non-competitive skiing or white-water kayaking" (Seligman et al. III). While the term "mimicry" may give a misleading inclination towards the depiction of false representation, Caillois' definition clarifies this potential misstep. The definition of "mimicry," as "Caillois writes, is the acceptance of a 'closed, conventional, and in certain respects, imaginary universe. This is the world of simulation, from children imagining themselves as dragons to a performance of *Oedipus Rex*" (Seligman et al. III). This definition does not preclude the calling forth of authentic emotion, nor does it require a false representation of self, it simply calls for the creation of a closed simulation space—what many may consider a ritual play space.

Practically speaking, however, how might this ritual playing ground be delineated? The delineation of space can be created in multiple ways depending on the demands of the practitioner. If one requires freedom of vocal and physical expression, one might need a place set apart from those who might be disturbed by loud or erratic behavior. Certainly, one would aim to find a place for ritual practice that is set apart from the gaze of onlookers, and where one is allowed freedom of movement. One may consider the term "boundary" to be at once freeing and confining—creating a clear space within which an imaginative

mind may run free. However, this same term “boundary” can take the form of the literal delineation of space—the tape on the floor for Schechner’s “rasaesthetics” exercise. If it becomes useful to delineate the space with tape, chalk, or other physical media, the application of such boundaries is reliant solely on the subjective needs of the practitioner. The need is simply to have the space constitute a clear and delineated point of entry and exit—a way for one to know that they are exiting the “real world” and entering the ritual space, and the reciprocal for their departure from the ritual space. Though the ancient Chinese ritual space may have required a host of specifications, the specifications required for the modern practitioner (focusing on the technique outlined in this thesis) are not limited by concrete rules. The modern practitioner needs only to construct a space within which the conditions for unobserved imagination exercises, set apart from the “real world,” may take place. A physical demarcation of space, however, may aid in the solidification of another boundary—the invisible dividing line between the self (outside of the ritual space), and the performative self within the space—this will be discussed further in the following section.

Section VI.III, Modern Additions to the Ritual Space

Any discussion on modern additions to the ritual space must include the delineations of consciousness brought to the field of emotional performance in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s in France and Moscow—the interaction between Stanislavski and French philosopher Dennis Diderot. In his introduction to Diderot’s work: *The Paradox of Acting, and Masks or Faces*, acting instructor Lee Strasberg wrote that “any discussion of acting almost invariably touches on Diderot’s famous paradox: to move the audience the actor must himself remain unmoved” (Strasberg x). If this is the case, then let this thesis

address Diderot's paradox directly: Diderot's statement is categorically false—it is simultaneously, necessarily true. How could this be possible? That is the nature of the paradox—if the actor is to enter the state of what Seligman and his colleagues would call “carnival,” the dangers of uncontrolled, unfettered behavior could abound. However, if the practitioner remains “unmoved,” how could one possibly carry out the aims outlined by Confucius and Stanislavski—for the practitioner to truthfully feel grief in a mourning ritual or sad scene.

Scott Fielding, the director of the Michael Chekhov Actors Studio in Boston, discusses the complex relationship between Stanislavski and Diderot's *The Paradox* (which had famously been read by Stanislavski just after the turn of the eighteenth century). Fielding notes that Diderot “wrote, ‘they say an actor is all the better for being excited, for being angry. I deny it. He is best when he imitates anger. Actors impress the public not when they are furious, but when they play fury well’ (Diderot 71)” (Fielding 1). Fielding continues this juxtaposition saying that “Stanislavsky, of course, had a contrary view. Not *indicating*, but rather, “experiencing”—the process of “living a part”—was expressly what Stanislavsky was after in acting” (Fielding 1). Even though these two thinkers, Diderot and Stanislavski, diverged so starkly on the point of practitioner feeling, of attempted verisimilitude by the performer (as is the case with this thesis against the ideals of the Practical Aesthetics acting technique), the interaction of Stanislavski with Diderot did yield an important qualification in the effort toward verisimilitude for the performer. This distinction is one called the “dual consciousness”—this concept is the reason Diderot's paradox remains necessarily true and false for the Stanislavskian actor. Stanislavski's concept of the “double personality” was explained further through the notion

that “*experiencing* need not necessarily preclude observing” (Fielding 2). Fielding notes that, for Stanislavski, “in fact, the former is quite desirable” (Fielding 2). As Stanislavski says “[D]ivision does no harm to inspiration... on the contrary, the one encourages the other” (Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares* 190). It was the creation of this dual consciousness that allowed the paradox to continue throughout actor performance, allowing the actor to genuinely feel instinctual emotions while simultaneously protecting colleagues and audience members from dangerous extensions of that feeling. Including citations from page 288 of Stanislavski’s *An Actor Prepares*, Fielding notes that:

Tellingly, in each of his... books, Stanislavsky restates the same quote, which he attributes to legendary Italian actor Tommaso Salvini. ‘An actor lives, weeps and laughs on the stage, and all the while he is watching his own tears and smiles. It is this double function, this balance between life and acting that makes his art’ (qtd. in Fielding 2).

So how does one construct this double consciousness? To ask this question assumes that a double consciousness is the primary addition to the performative ritual space. While this may be the case, other additions must first be considered. Fielding, as director of the Michael Chekhov Actors Studio, is in a unique position to note that the namesake of the acting technique he espouses famously created an addition to Stanislavski’s dual consciousness. As Fielding notes, “Chekhov... put forward the more complex concept of ‘divided consciousness’” expanding with the clarification that “for Chekhov, the actor experiences not just the double awareness of himself as a character and himself as a performer, but also an awareness of the character itself as an independent being or “ego.” (Fielding 2). This idea was made popular through its allusions to famous writers and artists, where Chekhov notes that “the whole morning, wrote Dickens, he sat in his study expecting *Oliver Twist* to appear. Goethe observed that inspiring images appear

before us of their own accord, exclaiming, ‘Here we are!’” (Chekhov 22). So too, in Chekhov’s point of view, could an actor exist as themselves, then create a separate consciousness for the “as if” space where feelings could be truly experienced as a character within the ritual or scene (even though there was a sense of observational control), and then interact with a third consciousness on behalf of that character (where, even though it was mediated by the other two states, the character’s own ego could exist independently, if only briefly).

This distinction between dual consciousness and divided consciousness is made for the sake of advanced practitioners, who may wish to employ Chekhov’s “principle of objectivity, meaning that the character is objective to the actor” and that “the character, as an image, exists outside and independent of the actor-subject” (Fielding 3). This addition by Chekhov, however, aims to incorporate the characteristics of a character as “other” into the body of the performer—lending itself far more to the research of individuals like Turner and Barba who sought elucidation of the emotional complexes of others through ritual. Understanding Chekhov’s addition, this thesis will reject his tertiary state of consciousness and opt, instead, to cultivate a practice more akin to Stanislavski’s experience between a practitioner and the amorphous creation of organic emotion within their second consciousness. All this is to say that, when entering the space, one must heed Stanislavski’s solution to Diderot’s paradox, one must create a clear line between two states: that of the “real world” self, and that of the separate but simultaneously observed emotional being created within the emotional space.

The work of separating the “real world” self from the ritual self is, in many ways, a subjective process, since one’s definition of self might take on a whole host of

different meanings. These definitions of self might range from one's in-the-moment consciousness to, perhaps, a more defined Western idea of self, characterized by accumulated habits. While a Mencian conception of self, or, rather, of consciousness, lends itself readily to ritual work (since there are no limitations placed on natural emotional proclivities in self-cultivation), other conceptions of self can still operate within the ritual space (though with more constraints).

Outside of this personal and subjective path toward defining the nature of one's ego, modern acting practices have developed clear pre and post-ritual procedures to aid in the process of separating these dual consciousnesses. Sam Houkom, an AEA Stage Manager, wrote an article in June 2019 regarding an organization called Intimacy Directors International (IDI). This organization was founded around several "important factors known as 'The Five Pillars': Context, Communication, Consent, Choreography, Closure" to be employed when addressing the performance of intimacy and vulnerability (Houkom 1). For many years, intimacy directors in dramatic performance did not exist, there were no specialists designed to choreograph intimate scenes—it became a known practice in Hollywood for fight choreographers to step in and attempt to designate the motions of intimate scenes. While the connection between a fight choreographer and an intimacy coordinator may not seem immediately apparent, both professionals operate at the boundaries of an individual's emotional spectrum—coordinating actions endowed with high concentrations of feeling like rage or vulnerability (that the actor may not personally feel on a regular basis). While an understanding of the core tenets of Context, Communication, and Consent may be essential in daily life as well as performance, and while Choreography might seem a given for multi-performer scenes of heightened natures,

it is the fifth tenet that applies most directly to the construction of the ritual space for solo emotional self-cultivation. As Houkom describes, “rituals are being developed to allow the actors (and those outside the scene) to “tap out,” clarifying that “this ritual signifies that the scene is over and the characters are left behind... we are ourselves once more” (Houkom 1). The “tap out” rituals differ slightly for scenes with two people versus scenes with a single individual, but the intent remains the same. Houkom notes that “an example of a ‘tap out’ would be the actors involved mak[ing] eye contact/tak[ing] a deep breath together/then high-ten[nin]g (a two handed high-five)” but Houkom also notes that “an actor may need a moment... in the middle of a scene” and that “there can also be a pre-ordained signal for this” wherein “the actor needs to walk away but will return quickly” and where “there is no need to attend to this person, but wait patiently” (Houkom 1). The Lucid Body Technique of acting, which focuses on emotional improvisation, offers a version of this mid-ritual “tap out” wherein performers are called to “place [their] hands on the wall to help ground the energy that feels overwhelming” (Simpson et al. 208).

The Lucid Body Acting Technique, founded by dancer Fay Simpson, includes updated guidelines for not only “tap out” techniques, but also “tap in” techniques to be conducted surrounding multi-subject interactional emotional improvisations. The first step in Simpson’s “tap in” bears much similarity to that of the example provided for Intimacy Directors International: “Palm to Palm, Eye to Eye. Two actors face each other and meet the outstretched palms of their partner, checking in before building an intimate scene, to know how to come back to this neutral place” (Simpson et al. 207). The final step mirrors this pattern wherein the improvisers come “Palm to Palm to complete the exercise” and “verbally instruct [their own] body and each other to neutralize the intimacy. (For example:

‘I was acting,’ or ‘I am not actually chasing you.’)” (Simpson et al. 208). While the verbalization and palm to palm behaviors may not be helpful in solo practice, the creation of a physicalized ritual to enter and exit the space can be incredibly clarifying as one attempts to personally draw a clear line between consciousnesses.

Thus far, modern additions to the ritual space have included delineation of ritual and non-ritual consciousness and establishment of entering and exiting practices for the ritual space. Another modern addition has foundations in the Lucid Body technique, that of stating additional boundaries. While a Mencian viewpoint may not incorporate the limitations of Western views of the self, individuals in the modern day are learning to vocalize and protect themselves against interactions that may be triggering to previous trauma. This thesis aims in no way to place a value judgement on the triggering material or personal trauma of any individual, and hopes to outline additional facets of the ritual space that can embrace one’s potential desire to state clear emotional boundaries for themselves. Simpson notes in her “protocol for [group] improvisation” that members of the improvisation must “state boundaries before the improvisation starts” offering “for example ‘please don’t touch my neck’ or ‘I sprained my ankle and cannot twist’ or ‘I am not up for kissing yet’ (Simpson et al. 209). For the solo practitioner, these verbal statements of boundaries may be instructive for any individual leading the practitioner through an imagination exercise, or for the practitioner themselves to personally remember any limitations that may exist. These limitations may be physical or emotional—for example, stating a boundary of not being ready to explore the depths of despair on a certain day is just as valid as stating the boundary of limited neck mobility. Another one of Simpson’s pre-ritual protocols includes “establish[ing] a STOP sign—such as hands

crossed over the body—which means you need to stop the action and step out and have a break” (Simpson et al. 209). This protocol in the context of solo practice may, again, be instructive for the individual guiding an imagination exercise, or for the self to note a moment of becoming overwhelmed clearly for future reflection.

These pre-ritual protocols do much to address the evolvingly vocal emotional atmosphere that aims to protect individuals from unnecessary emotional damage in the process of emotion exploration. More on the risks of emotional damage in the process of exploration will be discussed in the following chapter regarding Lee Strasberg’s affective memory technique.

There are, however, several additional facets to the modern ritual performative space that warrant consideration: namely the areas of “non-judgement,” establishing a basis of trust and good faith, and ensuring the lack of critical scrutiny by others. Simpson considers the phenomenon of personal nonjudgment for the practitioner as twofold: consisting of the “neutral body” and “non-judgmental mind” (Simpson et al. 242). Simpson defines the “neutral body” as “a bodily state of being in which the habitual muscular/energetic tensions are absent, and from which any” emotion “may be built”—a state which may require physical warm up to achieve (Simpson et al. 242). This idea of the “neutral body” does not mean that one’s interpretations of the emotion is rejected, but that both one’s pre-conceived understandings of the emotion and also one’s “real world” personal emotional context are left outside of the ritual space.

Simpson’s definition of the “nonjudgmental mind” applies both to the practitioner and to anyone invited to guide the imagination exercise. This term also ideally applies to anyone invited into a reflective discussion of imagination training, since judgement from

others can hinder further progress. Simpson defines the “nonjudgmental mind” as the in-performance “mental state wherein the actor observes herself and others without value judgements”—aligning much with Stanislavski’s idea of dual consciousness (Simpson 242). The Stella Adler technique has, in recent years, begun to incorporate Lucid Body Movement work into its core curriculum, though general instruction in movement has always been at major aspect of Adler’s training. Executive Director of the Stella Adler Academy, John Jack Rodgers, referenced in an interview with movement instructor Kennedy Brown “the lack of judgement in [Brown’s] class... everyone says it’s such a free space to explore and that there is such a level of trust in the room to explore... and you’d have to build a comfortable space to do that... no judgement” (StellaAdlerAcademy, *Meet our Faculty 2015: Kennedy Brown* 3:15–3:42). This idea of ‘non-judgment’ can be juxtaposed against Simpson’s definition of the “judgmental mind,” which is “the mental state wherein the subject constantly compares himself with others, to establish the pecking order and define her own place within it”—bearing much similarity to Caillois’ term “alea” (Simpson 241-242). The aim of the eradication of preconceived judgement from the body and mind is to allow freedom of discovery within the ritual space—a modern addition which may at first appear to contradict much regarding ancient Chinese tradition. However, this freedom from judgment does not preclude the ancient Chinese ritual emphasis on tradition because, as Stanislavski noted, “*experiencing* need not necessarily preclude observing” and non-judgmentally acknowledging tradition (Fielding 2).

Non-judgment is a precursor to a larger concept: the creation of trust and good faith for the practitioner regarding the ritual space. On the topic of cultivating trust, and self-trust within the space, Kennedy Brown says “trust in a space is essential and that’s a

process... in inviting [ones]self to explore different patterns of movement... often times we don't do certain things or act certain ways because we're afraid of what people will say or of being hurt, so our process of non-judgement is very important in order" to learn how to trust the self and the process as a whole (StellaAdlerAcademy, *Meet our Faculty 2015: Kennedy Brown* 3:40-4:23). While both Brown and Simpson's practices make room for observation by the guiding instructors as well as by other movement improvisers, Huizinga's notion of a closed play space is maintained in their practices. The modern stipulation that the ritual space ought not include room for active scrutiny by critical observers finds life, even in the spaces of Simpson and Brown, which can involve dozens of practitioners at one time. This is because the delineation of "others" or "critical observers" refers to those operating outside of the construct of the "nonjudgmental mind." Creating this space, where one can learn to trust the good faith of the ritual and the nonjudgmental minds of everyone involved inside the space, relies on the employment of principle of nonjudgement within the self. The interactive judgement of others within the space can call forth emotional responses that practitioners are not yet trained to field—and this unpreparedness can result in emotional suppression or uncontrolled emotional access. As Brown notes, this closed space "allow[s] [one] to explore [ones]self in new ways" because this kind of work is about "getting to know the many aspects of [the] self that have been either suppressed or unexpressed" by "making [one] available and flexible" emotionally (StellaAdlerAcademy, *Meet our Faculty 2015: Kennedy Brown* 4:24-6:09). The closed ritual space is necessary to maintain its structural integrity.

These additions to the notion of the ritual space—that of dual consciousness by Stanislavski, protocols for entry and exit from the space by the IDI, systems of personal

boundary establishment by Simpson, and the cultivation of trust and non-judgement by Simpson and Brown—all adapted to modern realities in unique ways, contributing a practice that is more responsive to the needs of practitioners in the modern day. These tactics will be added to the case study in Chapter Nine as additions to the work started by Confucius and Mencius centuries ago.

Chapter VII.

Dramatic Imagination Exercises for Training Emotional Agency

Section VII.I, Stella Adler Imagination Exercises

Many individuals in the modern day may be able resonate with a certain feeling—its January 1st, there's a New Year's resolution looming overhead, they've committed to bettering themselves in some way or another. Maybe there's a pair of running shoes by the door, it could be any one of countless self-dedications one makes, hope in their eyes, as one year transitions to the next. Each individual partaking in this ritual self-dedication knows they want to pursue “self-improvement”—but once the goal is made, they find they don't inherently know what to do next. Rolling out the yoga mat on the floor doesn't magically endow us with the knowledge of every asana. Much in the same way Mencius stressed daily training in self-cultivation, so it is the case for training one's emotional capabilities on the path toward emotional agency. Perhaps some remain undaunted by the specter of putting in the hours—of returning to the practice day after day, but the question remains, what is this practice one theoretically returns to? What does “training one's emotional capabilities” practically entail? To answer this question, this thesis will examine specific imagination exercises provided by Stella Adler, juxtaposing these exercises against some of the most common missteps in employing her technique. Though engagement in these exercises represents only one third of the three theoretical frameworks that this thesis aims to intermingle, elaboration on the particulars of Adler's process presents an essential foundation to the blending of the three theories in Chapter Nine.

Adler's practice was simplified in her book *The Technique of Acting* with the following call to action: “the actor's job is to defictionalize fiction” (Adler, *The Technique*

of *Acting* 26). Adler clarified this idea with her work on the performer's imagination, emphasizing her commitment to verisimilitude by elaborating that "anything that goes through the imagination has a right to live and has its own truth" (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 26). To carry this out, she provided a series of structured imagination exercises with the intent of provoking strong emotional reactions from performers, even within imagined circumstances. The following exercise provides a series of imagination destinations to be experienced by the performer in Adler's rehearsal space, or by the reader of her book in any location the reader saw fit.

EXERCISE #24

Go imaginatively to:

1. A boy being beaten by a policeman
2. A crowd that is breaking windows
3. A car where the wounded people are being taken out by the police

Use your imagination. These situations demand strong reactions.

Figure 5. Adler's Exercise #24

One of Adler's Imagination Exercises outlined in Chapter 3 of her book titled "Imagination" (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 26).

In describing the process of making an imagination exercise more real to the student, Adler says of the imagination guide or author of a written work:

[The guide or author] is never going to give you a country road that belongs to you. He will only give you words that say, 'I was walking along a country road.' You [the student] will create the road, saying to yourself: It is dusty. The color of rust. There are cornfields on both sides... As [one] imagine[s] this scene, there will be many facts. Don't leave them dead. Realize through your imagination the life of each fact. (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 28)

In this way, even in the exercises she, herself prescribed, she placed the onus of immeasurable specificity on the subjective capacities of the performer. She did, however, set a clear emphasis on the personal creation of the imagined space, on the exploration of that space in particular. In an interview published by the Stella Adler Academy of Acting featuring the late Stella Adler, Adler said of her predecessor in theatrical realism that:

What Stanislavski emphasized was that the platform was to be called a place and that place was to be named. And usually everybody has a place. The table has a place. This pencil has a place. The water has a place. But only the actor on the platform didn't know the place. So, he began to make quite clear that you're either in the garden or in a railroad station. He made the place of utmost importance... So that the [performer]... had a complete idea, first of the place... The [performer] came to understand the specificity of being in a specific place. (StellaAdlerAcademy, *Stella Adler 2018 Speaking on Stanislavski's Method* 0:40-2:17)

Regarding this emphasis on place, Adler qualifies much in reference to using dramatic source texts for performers, but she also makes a clear note about the importance of this specificity in emotional exploratory improvisation. A student at the Stella Adler Academy details one exercise in an interview. This student describes how her cohort was led through multiple emotionally evocative imagined realities. She said that "in one exercise [we were led through the imagined landscape of] Auschwitz" and that "until then [the imagined circumstances had been]... more positive" with imagined realities like "being in a meadow" (StellaAdlerAcademy, *August 2014 What is Your Favorite Class* 0:54-1:04). This student said of the more positive realities that she was able to "[slip] into [them] very easily"—but when she describes the emotional impact of the darker

imagination exercise, she said that “it felt like [she] was there and it really hit [her] for the first time how powerful the imagination can be” (StellaAdlerAcademy , *August 2014 What is Your Favorite Class* 1:04-1:26). Stella Adler’s book titled *The Technique of Acting* has an entire chapter dedicated to imagination, in which Adler states that “if you confine yourself only to the social moment of your generation, if you are bound within the limits of your street corner, separated from every object or period that does not contain your own experiences, then the result is a disrespect for the world in general and an alienation from anything that is not immediately recognizable as part of your everyday habits” (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 18). While trends in modern casting have done much in the way of increasing representation for actors, Adler’s commentary is not limited to actors professionally playing roles that do not reflect their own experience. Adler’s words refer to an individual’s capacity for imagination and internalized emotional empathy for others who have different experiences than one’s own—this much resembles the anthropological work of Barba and Turner on understanding others through the embodiment of their physicalities and rituals. Furthermore, Adler’s work means that insight into another’s experience can elucidate one’s own experience as well. Tom Oppenheim, Adler’s great-grandson, elaborated that imagination work “wasn’t a revolution against who you are” but that for Stella “if you limit yourself to [your own past experiences], you limit yourself as a human being”—meaning that the scope of one’s emotional landscape is often greater than one’s daily behaviors allow one to explore (YiddishBookCenter 3:12-3:36).

Delving into the evolving work on imagination using Adler’s technique on both coasts, two different institutions carry on Adler’s practice directly in the present day: The Stella Adler Academy in Los Angeles and The Stella Adler Studio in New York. In an

interview titled “The Importance of Imagination in Stella Adler’s Philosophy and Work,” Tom Oppenheim, of the Stella Adler Studio in New York, says that “imagination work... for Stella... is the central tool, the central aspect of one’s self to utilize.” He says the goal of Adler’s work is “to create that which you see in such a way that you are moved by it”—calling this practice “a function of the imagination” (YiddishBookCenter 2:01-2:44). In outlining the Adler imagination-building exercises employed at the Adler Studio, Oppenheim explains “a lot of the foundation exercises” have the student “asked to... create, in enormous detail, landscapes or a fifth avenue apartment” which “was one that” Stella personally led students through (YiddishBookCenter 2:45-2:55). The particulars of these exercises change—as Oppenheim says, “it’s different for different teachers” which imagination scape and scenario they lead students through; however, Oppenheim describes the imagination as “a muscle” that one must “keep exercising” (YiddishBookCenter 2:55-3:05). “Students at the Stella Adler Studio are asked to use their imagination to locate the fullest range of motivational force, rather than depending solely on their personal past and emotional memory,” says the website for Stella Adler’s Studio in New York (stellaadler.com). On the West coast, Executive Director of the Stella Adler Academy, John Jack Rodgers spoke with Adler imagination coursework instructor, Tim McNeil, in an interview detailing McNeil’s curriculum. According to McNeil’s modern instruction on the Stella Adler technique, McNeil says that “imagination is a beautiful tool and it can aid [one] in connecting to any circumstance” (StellaAdlerAcademy, *2021 Stella Adler Academy of Acting & Theater* 0:26-0:35). McNeil teaches an “introduction to Stella’s work in the use of the imagination” at the Stella Adler Academy, in which his aim is to “get to the truth of the circumstance through imagination” (StellaAdlerAcademy, *2021 Stella*

Adler Academy of Acting & Theater 0:35-0:40). In a separate promotional video for the course, McNeil elaborates that in Adler's technique, "the use of the imagination allows for such great" emotional "range if [one is able to] learn to use it specifically" (StellaAdlerAcademy, *Interview with Tim McNeil 2014 December* 1:26-1:31).

Adler's technique—grounded in honoring the ritual space of the stage and working through organic, new, and authentic emotions using imagined circumstances—espouses the idea that "the theater was created to tell people the truth"—even and especially through the imagination (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 60). Adler's exercises in imagination pursued personal agency in emotional access—noting that "acting is truthful when you [the actor] yourself are convinced," of emotions within an imagined reality, not of singularly attempting to relive one's own memories (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 143). Her dedication to methodological verisimilitude in imagined circumstances, the volume of her works, ongoing schools dedicated to her practices, and the constancy of her acting principles, makes Adler's work ripe for analysis of this nature. Adler says of her imagination exercises that "as [one does] these exercises, [their] confidence will increase. [A practitioner of these exercises] will feel enriched by [the] ability to know that [they] can experience anything—[one] need[s] to grow independent, and the ability [one] gain[s] through these exercises will give [them] confidence and size" (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 29).

This thesis has examined performance techniques like Practical Aesthetics and Schechner's Rasaboxes, which compartmentalize aspects of action from internal disposition. This compartmentalization makes for what Uta Hagen calls representational performance—a departure from the aim of verisimilitude. A further examination of one

technique that developed in parallel to Adler's will provide insight into the consequences of misapplying Adler's principles. If, as Adler says, "imagination refers to the... ability to accept new situations of life and believe in them," then, by nature, each situation in each exercise must be new for the performer—this contention, however, was not held by one of Adler's colleagues, Lee Strasberg. (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 20). Strasberg's technique was also committed to verisimilitude, though, perhaps to the emotional detriment of its students as it required them to attempt to regularly re-live personal trauma.

Lee Strasberg's *method* acting uses a technique called "affective memory" which includes the recall and re-living of personal memories in an attempt to tap into the emotional resonance of the actor's past experience. The narrator of the documentary on Stella Adler titled *Stella Adler Awake and Dream* notes: "Stanislavski" formally "confirmed Stella's belief in imagination, not emotional [affective] memory, as the key tool in an actors' art"—the work of emotion access (StellaAdlerStudio 25:32-25:43). Even Stanislavski, who was a major figure in bringing realism to the modern stage, struggled at first to make a distinction between affective memory and emotion access, but he did, eventually, make up his mind. Upon the occasion of his private discourse with Adler, Stanislavski said "he was surprised to learn that Americans were still using emotional [affective] memory, a technique he had abandoned years earlier" (StellaAdlerStudio: 25:01-25:11). While nearly relevant to Adler's practice, Strasberg's insistence on recreating past emotions removes the acting exercise from the flexible ritual space—forcing the practitioner into the mind, out of the present moment, and into their own past. Strasberg's technique risks placing the individual on an endless quest for simulacra of past events (events which may have contained unfettered emotional behavior), rather than

exploring real-time emotional agency. Stella Adler, herself, was often confronted by Strasberg. During the documentary on Adler titled *Stella Adler Awake and Dream*, the narrator cites that in their early work together “Strasberg was adamant, Stella must develop her work from emotional memories from her past” to which Adler responded simply: “I didn’t want to” (StellaAdlerStudio 24:22-24:33). “For Strasberg,” however, “affective memory was believed to be “the core of an actor’s inner technique” (Wang 112). Adler described her “central disagreement” with Strasberg as founded in her contention that “the theater exists ninety nine percent through the facility of the imagination, and Mr. Strasberg insisted that [imagination] was secondary” (StellaAdlerStudio 24:09-24:22). The following section will distinguish Adler’s “sense memory” from Strasberg’s “affective memory” or “emotional recall” in order to clarify the importance of accessing the five senses within the ritual space while maintaining the freedom to access new imagined experiences.

Section VII.II, Points of Sensory Emotional Access

When actors hear Adler denounce affective memory, a major misunderstanding often takes shape. Some believe that (what Adler sees as) the harm of re-living one’s past emotions translates to the outright rejection of memory access--that imagination work cannot involve the access of one’s memory. This mischaracterization of Adler’s meaning often separates the actor from themselves—even making them afraid to connect personally with the character in any way. Tom Oppenheim, of the Adler Studio, makes the following distinction: “Sense memory is the evocation of senses - smells, tastes, etc. - affective memory is using the technique of sense memory to bring yourself back to a traumatic place” (Nogueira 1). In this way, when past memories evoke one or more of the senses, that memory is absolutely applicable to imagination work. For example, if one wanted to

explore an imagination exercise consisting of sitting at a lake, mid-morning, in spring—a series of past memories could theoretically inform this exercise significantly. If the practitioner had visited thirty lakes and remembered the distinctive smell of wet peat grass, the sound of gulls flying overhead, the touch of a light gust of wind wrapping around the shoulders, the taste of the wet morning air, or the sight of the morning sun glinting off the surface of the water—all of those memories could help bring details of the imagination exercise to life. These elements of human experience feed the imagination and help create a place that one has never seen before—even though every aspect of that world is endowed with specificity, which is informed by one’s past sensory experience.

The problem comes when an actor trained in *affective* memory hears: “Imagine you are sitting by a lake, it is mid-morning, in springtime,” and the actor begins to rack their memory for a specific time they did exactly that. There are only two ways this line of thinking can lead. The first scenario would be that the actor has had an exactly analogous experience, which would send the actor retreating into their mind, attempting in vain to squeeze out every detail of their personal memory—“what was I wearing that spring in sixth grade when I went to the lake? Was it flip flops?” However, when the leader of the imagination exercise gives a detail that diverges from the actor’s specific experience, the affective-memory-bound actor’s mechanism for recreating that personal experience would break down. If the imagination leader said “and now a sixty-foot-dragon flies overhead,” Strasberg’s actor would be at a loss. They may try to find an analogous moment of wonder, but how could a personal proxy for seeing a dragon exist? The second scenario would be that the actor does *not* have an analogous experience. This would lead the actor to stop the exercise and say to the imagination leader “excuse me, I’ve never been to a lake” or, worse,

“I’ve been to a lake at mid-morning, but it wasn’t springtime, so I can’t do this exercise.” Adler’s technique would say, even if you’ve been to a lake at mid-morning in springtime, place your imaginary lake somewhere else. Use sensory details from your experience to inform your imaginary place, but don’t try to relive your day at the lake, because one has to be open to the possibility that a dragon might pass overhead. The Adler technique’s response to the dragon would be—“well, perhaps you’ve touched a lizard’s scaly skin, maybe you’ve heard what a bird flapping its wings sounds like, and you’ve seen a giant airplane pass overhead.” Using those sensory elements, and a bit of imagination, an actor could endow this imaginary dragon with real characteristics that they have a sensory response to. The Adler technique welcomes the dragon, and gives the practitioner an opportunity for an emotional response they may have never had before, within the controlled imagination space.

Adler elaborated on this idea when discussing the icy black water in Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, saying that “all acting is imagination, since it is... more interesting... to think of that water that’s ice, than to see the water where I live at home in Watermill—I’m bored with that water... it’s always going to be there” (PrincipeTurandot 2:52-2:59). Adler continued that “somewhere, I... know what ice is, somewhere I know what black is... I don’t want you to do what Mr. Strasberg would tell you to do, which is leave that ice” that you are trying to imagine, and “go to your own ice” (PrincipeTurandot 3:33-3:46). She punctuates this point with the clear statement that “it is more interesting for the actor to use his imagination than it is for him to use his experience... since his experience is going to be in his imagination anyway” in the form of sensory understanding (PrincipeTurandot 3:45-3:55). In this way, even though the actor may have an analogous experience, Adler

advocates using the sensory information of that experience without trying to recreate it and re-live it. Adler's case study of this issue demonstrates her own struggle with Strasberg's insistence on affective memory—as Adler said in an exercise “if you say: ‘the lemons are wonderful... look at them, they really are larger, aren't they?’ I don't have to say, ‘are they larger? Wait a minute, I saw a lemon yesterday at my house’” (PrincipeTurandot 4:23-4:39). Adler continued that “[she] was playing a lead in a play, and had to pick up a lemon” when “[she] said ‘what does a lemon look like at home’ and then thought ‘I'm in trouble’” because at any other time, in her imagination, she knew “[she] could see all kinds of lemons, ‘I know what lemons are, I don't think they're oranges or pears—I can see them [in my imagination]’” (PrincipeTurandot 4:40-5:19). This strategy of breaking through the limitation of playing solely with one's personal experience allows for more freedom in the ritual imagination space, a wider array of potential emotional experiences, and a greater spectrum of emotion access and agency.

Once this principle of sensory emotional access is included in the imagination space, Adler addresses the concept of emotion exchange. In her book titled, *The Technique of Acting*, Adler says that “you must see images in your head vividly and accurately before you can describe them... only then can you give them back and make your partner or the audience experience what you have seen (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 20). In this way, cultivation of one's personal emotional access via imagination work is essential to the sharing of that emotional agency with others. In order to pursue this self-cultivation, Adler notes that one “must exercise their powers of observation” and that “[one] must be continually aware of the ongoing changes in [one's] social world,” even going so far as to suggest that practitioners “keep a journal filled with lists of observations” (Adler, *The*

Technique of Acting 24). These observations could be delineated by sense, for example, a list of “smells that feel like home” or “the way water looks in different lighting” or “ambient sounds on a quiet morning outside.” Though practitioners are not instructed to conduct this list-making homework assignment as a necessary element of the practice, Adler deems it a tangible aid to the process of making one’s sensory observations accessible—a way of remarking on how every element or object in one’s day is endowed with context and sensory potential that could be drawn upon in the ritual space.

Chapter VIII.

Accessing the Rasa Adbhuta

Section VIII.I, Why Start with Wonder?

Chapter Five of this thesis explained the existence of eight pliable rasas or baseline emotional flavors which, when combined, can create every known human emotion. The conclusion of Chapter Five also noted that experiencing these eight emotions separately over time (before learning to combine them) marks an advancement from Richard Schechner’s “rasaboxes” exercise—which demands the embodying of all eight emotions in one session. Chapter Three addressed the potential pitfalls of compartmentalizing emotional and physical processes, however the division of emotional resonances (rasas) does not diverge from reality, since these rasas can be (and often are) experienced in isolation in the real world. The practitioner of emotional self-cultivation is now tasked with a harrowing question: which rasa does one start working with in the ritual space? Again, referencing Schechner’s chart, one’s options are as follows: (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31).

Rasa	Sthayi Bhava	English
sringara	rati	desire, love
hasya	hasa	humor, laughter
karuna	soka	pity, grief
raudra	krodha	anger
vira	utsaha	energy, vigor
bhayanaka	bhaya	fear, shame
bibhasta	jugupsra	disgust
adbhuta	vismaya	surprise, wonder

Figure 6. Rasas and their Corresponding Sthayi Bhavas.

Chart from Richard Schechner’s “Rasaesthetics” outlining the relationship between Rasas and Sthayi Bhavas, see also Figure 2 (Schechner, *Rasaesthetics* 31).

For context, Prakruti Prativadi offers another version of the same chart with further clarification on the differentiation between the rasa and the Sthayi Bhava:

Rasa	Meaning	Sthāyi-Bhāva	Meaning
Śṛṅgāra	Love or passion	Rati	Affection or Attachment to
Hāsya	Humor	Hāsā	Mirth
Karuṇa	Pathos	Śoka	Sorrow
Raudhra	Furious	Krodha	Wrath
Vīra	Heroic	Utsāha	Energy or Enthusiasm
Bhayānaka	Terror	Bhaya	Fear
Bibhatsa	Odious	Jugupsā	Disgust
Adbhuta	Marvel, wonder	Vismaya	Astonishment
Śānta	Tranquil minded, calm	Śama	Quietude and Detachment from worldly objects

Figure 7. Prakṛti Prativadi’s Rasas and their Corresponding Sthayi Bhavas

A comparison of Rasas and their corresponding Sthayi Bhavas with translations to English by Prakṛti Prativadi (Prativadi 82).

To begin the ritual practice with sringara, desire or love, one might examine the *Kama Sutra*, which focuses primarily on elements associated with this essence of desire. However multiple difficulties with this particular emotion arise: many practitioners have personal trauma associated with the access of this emotion, and it must be approached with upmost sensitivity. Also, as noted in Chapter Two, the dichotomy presented between Patanjali’s practice of “dispassion” and Vatsyayana’s one-way-passion-access-door makes

strategic regulation and access of this emotion historically trying (Miller 32). This emotion, though potent, is best worked with once one has gained their bearings with other rasas. Beginning with hasya, what Schechner deems humor or laughter, at first appears far more accessible. However, this rasa yields a potential danger when regulated—rather than returning to a neutral place, practitioners may mistake the regulation of laughter for the access of its opposite (karuna, grief). Any interaction with karuna, pity or grief, at the beginner stage of emotion cultivation, is highly volatile. Individuals in the modern Western social environment lack Confucian rituals surrounding grief, and the attempted access of karuna can prove emotionally overwhelming—making regulation and stepping out of the ritual space very difficult. For this reason, beginning with either hasya or karuna may prove difficult. Just as karuna leaves room for emotional damage when accessed by an unpracticed practitioner, so does access of raudra—rage. Difficulty with emotion regulation regarding raudra, particularly given its characteristic embodied tension, makes stepping out of the ritual space a more advanced maneuver as well. Vira, known as energy or vigor, often associated with courage or heroism, is a solid contender for early study. However, just as hasya left room for an accidental foray into working with karuna, so vira leaves room for unexpectedly falling into bhayanaka—fear or shame. Bibhata, disgust, does not present the same difficulties with emotion regulation or access, stepping into and out of the ritual space. The main reason for selecting wonder, adbhuta, as a starting point over bibhata is that, if someone was to attempt emotion cultivation and decide it wasn't for them after only one session—if this technique could only impart a better understanding of a single one of the rasas—this thesis favors imparting an outlook of curiosity over one

of disgust. A framework for the ordering of rasic exploration in ongoing study will be outlined in Chapter Ten, Section I.

In order to “begin with adbhuta,” one is faced with a similar question as was referenced in Chapter Seven—it’s January 1st, one knows their general New Year’s resolution—but what comes next? What does one actually *do* now? What does working specifically with adbhuta practically entail?

To understand which types of imagination exercises will specifically evoke adbhuta, one must explore the term’s definition. While adbhuta has been described and re-translated countless times—and this thesis will explore those definitions promptly—one clear caveat must be outlined: Emotion (for the purpose of self-cultivation) is, necessarily, a subjective experience. This is not to refute the extensive quantifiable anthropological and psychological research on emotion—the work of Goldsmith in measuring behavioral responses, the studies by Dewe, Watson, and Braithwaite in emotion reactivity, and the research conducted by so many others. Their work is absolutely indispensable to the cause of making emotion scientifically legible. However, quantifiable scientific analysis is akin to having a tank of propane, but no nozzle or match. To the layperson, it is incredibly difficult to put quantified scientific analysis into action—whether for the aim of performance or emotional self-exploration. So, what does one do when the scientific analysis is potent but inaccessible? One must define what each of these emotions (or rasas) means in their own life. The personalized, subjective understanding of any one rasa may not be as scientifically ironclad as a tank of propane—but a dry matchbox with a useable flint will do much better for the layman in a pinch. One’s subjective understanding of the nuances of adbhuta, in their own life, is—and has to be—enough to begin exploring it in

the ritual imagination space. As Adler pointed out, the sensory understanding in one's own life creates an endless world of possibility in the imagination space. The humble, practical, performance anthropologist must have faith that quantified research on chemical emotive responses will be logged by careful scientists providing targeted measurable stimuli. If multi-disciplinary individuals on all sides (practical, theoretical, and quantifiable) work towards solving the question: "How to feel"... mankind may eventually find an answer. With that in mind, there is no quantifiable, standardized end goal for reaching satisfactory personal exploratory understanding of *adbhuta*. The best this thesis can do is provide a guide based on the anthropological and performance frameworks for this feeling—the specificity and personalization of *adbhuta*, for the purpose of this thesis, must fit the lens each individual practitioner.

Though subjectivity is essential to the practical application of this thesis' ritual aims, the historical definitions of *adbhuta* certainly warrant extensive consideration. Prakruti Prativadi, researcher on Sanskrit performance and founder of Kala Saurabhi Dance School is a trained Bharatanāyam dancer who wrote a book attempting to bridge the gap between scholarly theory on *Rasa* and dance practicums that focused primarily on "describing the movements and repertoire" of Bharatanāyam (Prativadi iv). Her description of the *rasa adbhuta* includes nuanced aspects of the "ancient art of Bharatanāyam" which she describes as "much more a traditional ethnic dance" because it "embodies a thought system, profound philosophy, and practice of an ancient art originating from a few millennia ago in India" (Prativadi 1). This system, which Prativadi describes as a "form of embodied knowing" has the "ultimate goal" of "*rasa*"—to "elevate the audience to experience a higher state of consciousness" (Prativadi 1). Specifically regarding the *rasa*

adbhuta, Prativadi says that “the Adbhuta rasa is the Rasa of marvel and wonder” remarking that, as Schechner noted “the Sthāyi Bhāva of this Rasa is Vismaya or surprise” (Prativadi 98). An important addition clarified by Prativadi is that “adbhuta rasa comes from that experience which is incredible, thrilling, amazing and filled with awe; any words, action or situation that is extraordinary is the impetus for this Rasa” (Prativadi 98). While this thesis’ exploration of the rasas in Chapter Five focused mainly on the rasas for their use in modern acting performance in the West, some elements of Bharatanāyām are helpful in understanding Bharata-muni’s description of adbhuta in the *Nāṭya Śāstra*.

Prativadi qualifies the experience of adbhuta using four terms: “Vibhāva, Anubhāva, Vyabhicāri Bhāva,” and “Sāttvika Bhāva” (Prativadi 98). Dr. Siddhartha Singh at the Sri Jai Narain Misra Post Graduate College in Lucknow elucidates these terms, saying that “Vibhāvas are the stimuli that cause or give rise to a bhava or emotion” (Singh 2). Dr. Singh continues that “Anubhāvas (ensuant responses) are the psycho-physical manifestations which a particular emotion makes upon characters” (Singh 3). The distinction between these two terms can be confusing because the classifications of emotion, emotion response, and emotion stimuli are not typically applied to Western performance behavior in this way. Dr. Singh makes the distinction that “while vibhāvas are the cause of an emotion, anubhāvas are the effects or manifestations of emotions”—further clarifying that an anubhāva of one character... may sometimes serve as a vibhāva for the emotion of another character;” for example; “a maiden’s smile... may enkindle love in a young man” (Singh 3). Defining the term “Vyabhicāri Bhāva,” Dr. Singh calls these “Sanchari bhavas or transitory feelings” which “are the various fleeting or temporary emotions which... help the permanent psychological states to mature into *rasa* or the

aesthetic delight in the spectator”—which, for the ritual practitioner, can also be the self (Singh 5). Finally, referring to “Sāttvika Bhāva,” Dr. Singh calls them “reflex actions or involuntary bodily reactions to strong feelings or agitations that take place in one’s mind” (Singh 7). These four terms provide multiple avenues of insight into the term “adbhuta,” however they also become incredibly prescriptive in terms of physical portrayal of the term. The following analysis of the prescriptive aspects of the *Nāṭya Śāstra*’s and, subsequently, Prativadi’s elucidating text, does not align with the aims of verisimilitude or the ritual practicum of this thesis; however, these elements are clarifying for the original context of the rasa and therefore must be examined. Singh includes a chart “from the forthcoming book *An Introduction to the Study of Indian Poetics*” by M.S. Kushwaha and Sanjay Kumar Mishra detailing the eight Sāttvika Bhāvas with instructions for how they are to be played by actors:

Sr.	<i>Sattvika bhavas</i>	Instructions for actors
1	<i>Aśru</i> (Tears)	To be acted by wiping the eyes and shedding tears
2	<i>Pralay</i> (Fainting, death)	To be acted by repeated thrills, hair standing on the end, and touching the limbs.
3	<i>Romānce</i> (horripilation)	To be acted by repeated thrills, hair standing on the end, and touching the limbs.
4	<i>Stambha</i> (Stupeftion)	To be acted by standing still, body unmoving, eyes unseeing, and the limbs lifelss
5	<i>Svara-bheda</i> (break in voice)	To be acted by means of broken and choked voice
6	<i>Sveda</i> (Perspiration)	To be acted by using a fan, wiping perspiration, and exhibiting the desire for fresh air.
7	<i>Vaivarnya</i> (Pallor)	To be acted by pressurizing the pulse and changing the colour of the face.
8	<i>Vepathu</i> (Trembling)	To be acted by means of trembling, throbbing and shaking.

Figure 8. Sāttvika Bhāvas and Corresponding Actor Instructions

A detailed list of Rasas the eight Sāttvika Bhāvas and corresponding Sthayi Bhavas with corresponding instructions for actors with translations to English by M.S. Kushwaha and Sanjay Kumar Mishra (Singh 11).

These instructions bear a striking resemblance to the Delsarte “system of melodramatic acting in which physical and vocal gestures for the performer are coded in terms of a highly unified pattern”—which, like Bharatanāyam, “emphasizes the musical nature of gesture and movement” (Roberts 68-69). Delsarte lived from 1811 to 1871, and the following chart from Genevieve Stebbin’s illustrated compilation of Delsarte’s principles outlines the specificity of performance detail:

CRITERION OF THE EYES.




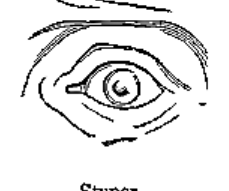





GENUS.	SPECIES. 1	3	2
II	<p>1-II. Ecc.-conc.</p>  <p>Firmness.</p>	<p>3-II. Norm.-conc.</p>  <p>Bad humor.</p>	<p>2-II. Conc.-conc.</p>  <p>Contention of mind.</p>
III	<p>1-III. Ecc.-norm.</p>  <p>Stupor.</p>	<p>3-III. Norm.-norm.</p>  <p>Passiveness.</p>	<p>2-III. Conc.-norm.</p>  <p>Grief.</p>
I	<p>1-I. Ecc.-exc.</p>  <p>Astonishment.</p>	<p>3-I. Norm.-ecc.</p>  <p>Disdain.</p>	<p>2-I. Conc.-ecc.</p>  <p>Scorn.</p>

Figure 9. Criterion of the Eyes

Genevieve Stebbin's illustrations of Delsarte's physical gestures for the performer (Stebbins 240).

This chart might qualify the performance of *adbhuta* as depicted in the section 1.I—“Astonishment.” This physicalizing of melodramatic performance, however, was not limited to the eyes by any means. Florence A. Fowle Adams, in her book *Gesture and*

Pantomimic Action, from 1891 went so far as to provide detailed, illustrated descriptions of physical motions to be associated with performed emotional dispositions:

PRIMARY OPPOSITIONS FOR ARM AND HEAD.

I. — RESIGNED APPEAL TO HEAVEN.

Right hand turned out at side, palm to the front. Head inclined over right shoulder, eyes raised to Heaven.



IV. — REMORSE.

Throw head back, dropping right arm and hand over head, left arm dropping at side.



V. — SHAME.

Bow head upon breast, at the same time carrying arm as far overhead as possible, and moving arm to front to hide the face.

Figure 10. Primary Oppositions for Arm and Head

A. Fowle Adams’ descriptions and illustrations of physical movement associated with particular emotional dispositions (Adams 49-51).

By Adams’ guide, position “I. – Resigned appeal to heaven” might be appropriate for what Prativadi calls the “type of *Adbhuta Rasa*... that arises out of divinity” or “from witnessing something Divine” (Prativadi 98). However, one might just as easily argue that the matching of defined embodiment to portray particular emotion goes back to the sixteenth century performance traditions of *Comedia Del Arte* stock postures. Even earlier, the comedy and tragedy masks employed in ancient Greek theater in the fourth century B.C.E. could be theoretically said to resemble *hasya* and *karuna* respectively. The difficulty

with these physical rules for portrayal of the emotion is that, by specifying the Vibhāvas and Anubhāvas objectively, one creates an objective system of emotion in which there are “correct” or “incorrect” emotional responses. As Roberts says of the Delsarte system “it is a system which stresses study rather than temperament” because “the emotional experience” of the performer” forms only part of the content” (Roberts 68). The reason that the discussion on emotion exploration began with a reference to the necessary modern subjectivity of experience is that, in modern behavior, as well as modern performance, each person’s Vibhāvas, or emotional stimuli, may differ. What makes one cry may make another laugh, and not all experience is standardized. Furthermore, by qualifying the Vyabhicāri Bhāvas as fleeting emotions, rather than as equally weighted combinations of the core emotions, the hierarchy creates a system of value judgements on emotional resonance and potency which may not be helpful to a modern emotion-cultivation practitioner. If the generalized feeling of fear (the Sthayi bhava, bhayanaka) and the corresponding rasa bhaya is not as strong or permanent as the Vyabhicāri Bhāva, Trāsa (fright, or terror), then this thesis’ system would not place a hierarchy on the transience or intransience of these feelings the way Bharata-muni did in his *Nāṭya Śāstra*. Finally, by quantifying the Sāttvika Bhāvas, this practice makes mechanical what might otherwise be organic and subjective in terms of physicalisation. What Prativadi notes about the rasas “embod[y]ing a thought system” and “profound philosophy” outside of the confines of the ancient dance tradition of Bharatanatyam and Bharata-muni’s treatise on theater, holds true for this thesis. The concepts are incredibly instructive in emotional agency cultivation, though the particulars of performance manifestation from the source text do not apply to

this new context—just as other historical systems of physical standardization do not directly apply.

With the knowledge that the direct application of these standardized reference points for the *rasa adbhuta* do not necessarily serve the aim of verisimilitude in practice, there is still much to be gleaned from the historical context these terms provide. With this in mind, one may consider Prativadi’s description of “the *Vibhāvas for*” *adbhuta*: “beholding the divine, the sudden or unexpected achievement of what one wants, witnessing something extraordinary, going to beautiful and breathtaking natural surroundings or temples, and witnessing magic” (Prativadi 98). While these *Vibhāvas* do not encompass the full spectrum of stimuli for *adbhuta*, the circumstances can catalyze ideas for evocative imagination exercises. Similarly, Prativadi’s description of “the resulting *Anubhāvas*” as: “uttering exclamations, being wide eyed, staring, feeling thrilled, having tear filled eyes, being joyous, laughing, and moving the body and limbs,” certainly do not characterize the full spectrum of physical embodiments of *adbhuta*, they do offer a general guide to physical parallels to the abstract emotion (Prativadi 98). These physical and ideological parallels that may guide a practitioner on their path to defining *adbhuta* subjectively, through their own lens, continue with Prativadi’s description of the *Vyabhicāri Bhāvas*: “*Capalatā* (restlessness), *Āvega* (agitation and excitement), *Harsa* (joy), and *Jadatā* (stupor)” as well as her description of the *Sātvika Bhāvas*: “*Sveda* (perspiration), *Aśru* (tears of joy), *Stambha* (standing stunned, staring in amazement), *Pralaya* (fainting), and *Svarabheda* (change in voice)” (Prativadi 98). Again, though every person working on developing the *rasa adbhuta* within themselves may not exhibit

“pralaya” (fainting), the presence of these historical datapoints are helpful in generally mapping the term before conducting subjective, personal exploration.

Section VIII.II, Understanding the Rasas Via the Chakras

While the *Nāṭya Śāstra* explains many performative elements of adbhuta in detail, the larger social context of the term offers other points of access. Some elements of the description of the rasa adbhuta from Bharata-muni’s *Nāṭya Śāstra* hold significant meaning within the religious context of the time, but that religious association may be much more difficult to elucidate outside of the context of Hinduism. Prativadi outlines how within the *Nāṭya Śāstra*, “each rasa is represented by a Hindu deity and color”—depicting these designations with the following chart:

Rasa	Hindu Deity	Color
Śṛṅgāra	Viṣṇu	Light green
Hāsya	Pramatas	White
Karuṇa	Yama	Grey
Raudhra	Rudra	Red
Vīra	Indra	Cream (yellowish)
Bhayānaka	Kāla	Black
Bibhatsa	Mahākāla	Blue
Adbhuta	Brahma	Yellow

Figure 11. Rasa Associations with Hindu Deity and Color

Prakruti Prativadi's list of rasas and their corresponding Hindu deity and color associations (Prativadi 82).

The specifics of these deities and the classic lore surrounding their existence would require an entirely separate analysis—as would an examination the color associations with each of the rasas. From a western perspective, one might see parallels between these deity—ideology pairings, and the gods of ancient Greece. Where Rudra is the Hindu deity representing rage (raudra), so Ares is the God of war—where Vishnu is the god of desire (sringara), so Aphrodite is the Goddess of love. These similarities are in no way exactly parallel, but they represent a social connection between religious ideology and emotional practicality in both cultures.

If the association of each rasa with its deity can be likened to the Greek Gods with their major focuses, then the Chakra system might be likened to the Roman Gods from the same time. Many similar ideas are discussed, much of the historical and religious context remains relevant, but key organizational differences make extended direct parallels rather difficult. If one is attempting to fully grasp the impact of the Greek Gods, elements of the related Roman religion will not directly light the path, but they will certainly provide illuminating context. Such is the case with the Chakra system in emotional performance and understanding of rasas. The Chakra system deals with many complementary ideas to the rasas in a notably different manner. The Lucid Body technique of acting experiments with the idea of actively playing with emotion using the Hindu chakra system.

In a paper written in December of 2020, titled “The Simpsonian Intersection of Energetic Performance, Empirical Classification of Movement, and Eastern Religious

Vocabulary as Modern Acting Practice,” I examined Simpson’s sources of inspiration for her acting guide—her “process of locating emotional need in the body and expressing it” through the “seven chakra energy centers” (Simpson xvi). My research on Simpson noted that, “the Hindu chakra system can begin to be understood through Aiyar’s thirty minor *Upanishads* and through Arthur Avalon’s *The Serpent Power*, the first translation of the *Shatchakara Nirupana* into English” (Astin 3). The key element of this research isolated the simplification of the Hindu Chakra system by Simpson’s key influences, “C.W. Leadbeater in *The Chakras* and Carolyn Myss in *Sacred Contracts*—two texts which address and analyze the Chakra system [later] employed by Fay Simpson in her work” (Astin 2). My research on Simpson extended into her and Myss’ work on archetype as well as into Simpson’s movement influences, however, it was the way in which Simpson employed the Chakra centers that proves most relevant as a path toward understanding performative access of an emotion similar to *adbhuta*.

So how exactly did Simpson and her predecessors simplify the expansive Hindu Chakra system into a discrete acting practice? My research on Simpson examined this simplification in the following way:

Avalon’s translation describes the Chakra centers as “subtle centres of operation in the body,” listing upward of thirty separate centers throughout the body (Avalon p. 103). Simpson provides her own interpretation of this concept using a definition given by Professor Robin Powell, at New York University, of these centers as “spinning sphere[s] of bio-energy emanating from the major nerve ganglia branching from the spinal column” (Powell “Human Energy Systems,” NYU Tutorial) (Simpson p. 31). Simpson reduces the number of these “elusive centers” down to seven (Simpson p. 33). (Astin 3)

Simpson, like her direct predecessors, Leadbeater and Myss, mapped the chakra energy centers onto the body. The following image presents C.W. Leadbeater’s 1927 depiction of the Chakra system (which he was credited with bringing to the West), next to

Carolyn Myss' simplified version in 2001, alongside Simpson's 2020 chakra palette written exercise for actors.

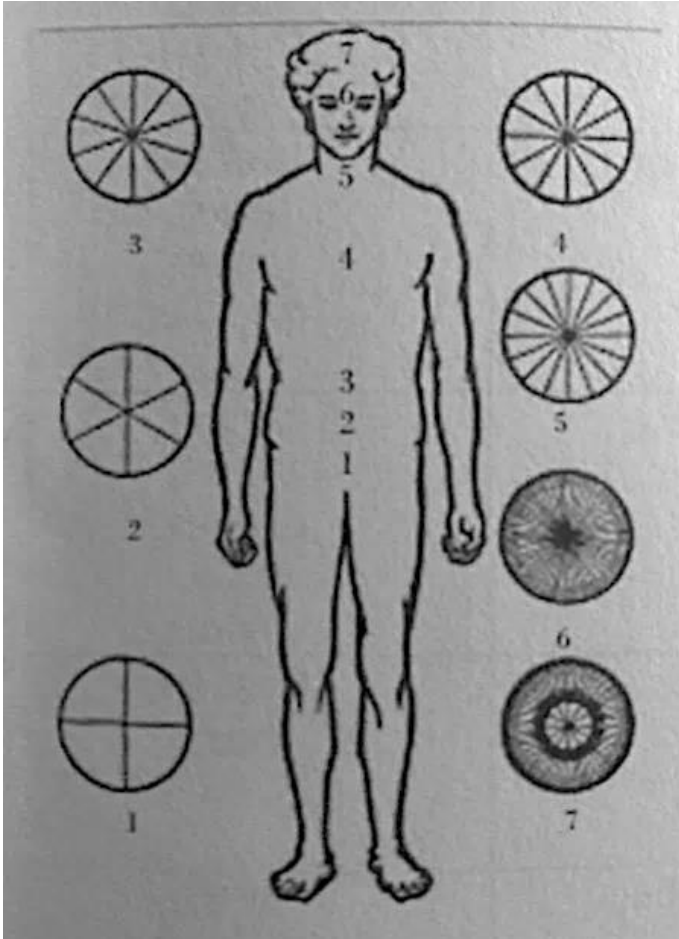


Figure 12. Leadeater's Chakra Energy Centers

A numbered illustration from 1927, depicting the locations for each chakra energy center on the body along with an imagined illustration of each energy center (Leadbeater 32).

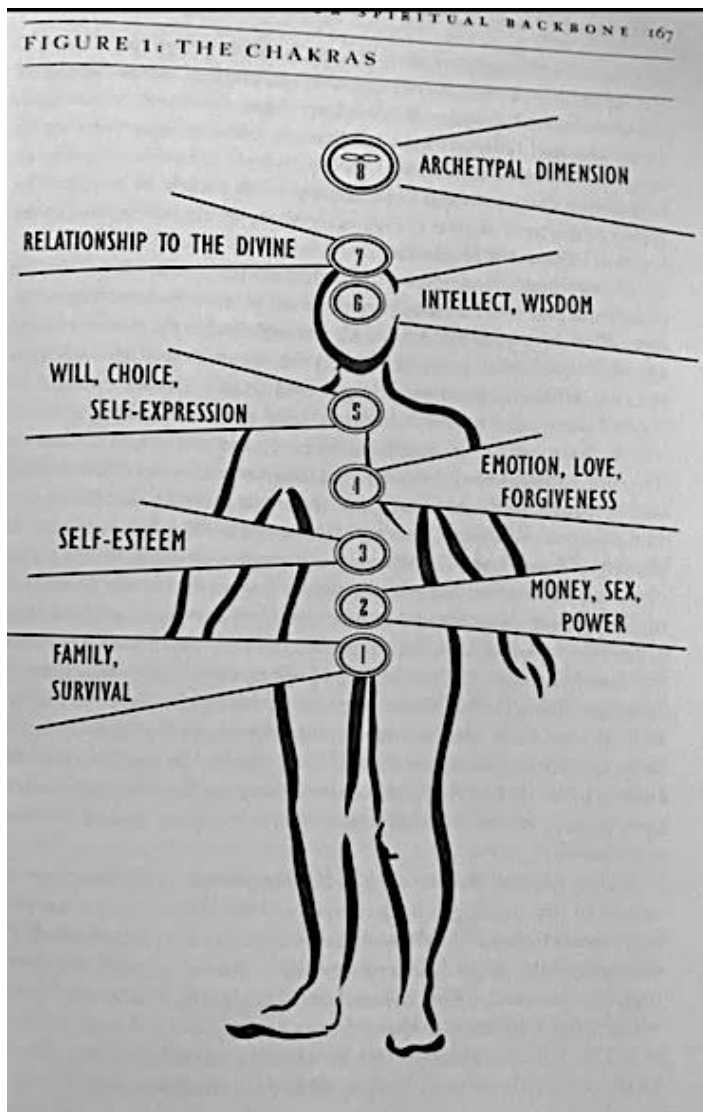


Figure 14. Myss's "The Chakras"

A numbered illustration from 2001, depicting the locations for each chakra energy center on the body along with written descriptions associated with each energy center (Myss 167).

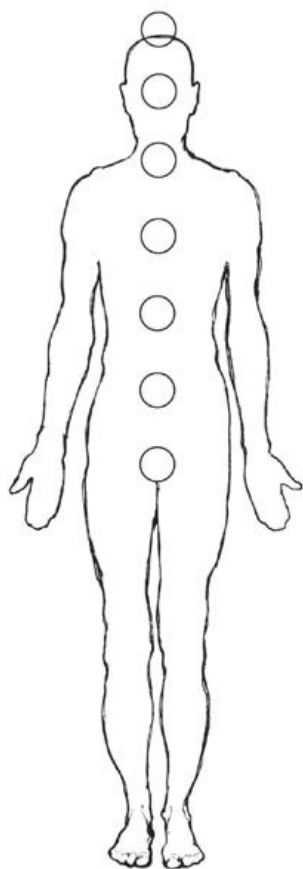


Figure 15. Simpson's Chakra Palette

An illustration from 2020, depicting the locations for each chakra energy center on the body along with open circles to be written in as a part of Simpson's exercises for actors (Simpson 198).

Each work defines the seven simplified Chakras in its own way, deviating further from Aiyar's thirty minor *Upanishads* and the *Shatchakara Nirupana* with each layer of abstraction from the source text. Bharata-muni's *Nāṭya Śāstra* began as a dramatic treatise on performance, while the Chakra system had to be adapted by Simpson for this purpose,

however, in the case of both source texts, present-day performance standards demand a certain level of modernization.

In the case of Simpson's seven Chakras, she defined each of the energy centers and their meanings, using five terms to represent changes in the flow of energy through each respective center. These terms, "exploding, imploding, spastic, blocked," and "balanced," represent directionality of energy flow (Simpson 190). Simpson describes "exploded" as a term "used as if a pipe has exploded, spilling out and taking the energy away from other areas, which will then be imploded or lack energy" (Simpson 33-34). A diagnosis of the Jungian persona and shadow of an individual or character could then be mapped onto the chakra chart depicted above using symbols for energy flow directionality. This process creates an emotive palette from which actors might examine the emotional tendencies of their characters. Simpson's complex system includes isolated locations for particular emotions, with five options for the ways in which the emotions might behave in each center. Five options for each of seven chakras create nearly endless possibilities for character palettes, and a ripe playground for emotional exploration; however, the process also presents some of the same potential pitfalls as Schechner's rasaboxes exercise. There is no limit to the number of combinations to be explored, and the employment of an energy palette requires the interaction of all seven energy centers at once. Simpson's work leaps headfirst into the realm of emotion blending—a technique only to be addressed in Rasa emotion cultivation after each of the rasa has been assessed in isolation. Even exercises with a single chakra in Simpson's technique leave room for the implosion and explosion of that chakra—an immediate blend of what would be two or more rasas.

With all this in mind, since there are similarities to some of Simpson’s Chakras in the content of the *rasa adbhuta*, a brief translation of the *rasa adbhuta* into Simpson’s Chakric vocabulary will now be conducted. The *rasa adbhuta* might be characterized by Simpson as including an exploded brow (sixth chakra)—which represents “not [knowing] what is going to happen next...allowing images to emerge from the unconscious ... lead[ing] to a refreshing path out of the *known* into the *unknown*” (Simpson 100). One might also come to the conclusion of wonderment or surprise being located in an exploded sixth chakra by examining the chakra’s inverted counterpart—the imploded sixth chakra. In the imploded sixth chakra, Simpson defines the brow as “cynical and closed minded,” defined by characters who “choose to wear blinders, so their strong opinions leave no room for argument or change” (Simpson 110-112). Seeing as this imploded sixth chakra appears to be the polar opposite of wonderment, curiosity, and capacity for surprise (*adbhuta*)—one might very well consider an explosion of this Chakra to be in line with *adbhuta*. Again, though this system does not directly map onto the *rasic* framework, the two methods of energy mapping (Chakric and *Rasic*) are complementary, and advanced practitioners of *rasic* emotion agency cultivation may have much to gain from the high-level blending techniques outlined in Simpson’s work.

Section VIII.III, Wonder Access Points

As was detailed in Section I of this chapter, one’s personalized understanding of the *rasa* being explored is, necessarily, subjective—this will be the case with sensory access points as well. As Stella Adler suggested, keeping a notebook of evocative sensory experiences can prove grounding in the aim of preparing to engage in ritual practice with an emotion. The following section will include examples of Adler’s types of lists as well

as references to other individuals' interactions with each of the five senses as they relate to the rasa adbhuta or wonderment.

Section VIII.III.A – Accessing Adbhuta Via Taste

Beginning with taste, as Von Essen and Mårtensson point out in their article “Young adults' use of emotional food memories to build resilience,” food is a key point of memory building for many individuals. The sensory interaction with food can contribute to incredibly evocative imagination exercises because “certain dishes and [cooking] habits” can be “strongly associated with memories of happiness, security and community,” among other emotions (Von Essen et al. 210). Von Essen and Mårtensson describe that “preparing, cooking, and serving food is described as an “unexpressed intimacy” in which good and memorable meals become associated with family and friends and positive emotional states” (Von Essen et al. 210). Von Essen and Mårtensson cite Piqueras-Fiszman and Jaeger’s reference work in 2015 as well as Sidenvall, Nydahl, and Fjellstrom’s work in 2000 as essential to their conclusions on this point. Von Essen and Mårtensson conducted several in depth case studies which chronicled subjects’ emotional food memories—for example, in the case of one subject, “soup with bread had taken on a positive connotation of security and togetherness for him” (Von Essen et al. 210). This emotional connection with the sense of taste can be used as a personal access point for the rasa adbhuta. Below is an example of a list dealing with taste as it relates to the rasa adbhuta:

Taste of Wonderment (a Subjective List)

- Unexpected Lemon Zest atop a Cheesecake
- Cheddar cheese hidden beneath a layer of breadcrumbs
in a bowl of Mac & Cheese
- Extra Jalapeño in a salsa dip
- M&M’s in a bowl of Skittles
- Mint Gum followed by Cold Water

The reason this list is incredibly subjective is that, for some, finding a rogue M&M in a bowl of Skittles might evoke the sense of *Bibhasta* and *Jugupsā* (disgust), while others might consider the experience a welcome surprise (*adbhuta*). Additionally, it is a common primary assumption that interacting with sensory memory regarding taste must involve food. While this is generally true, other, more abstract examples of less food-based, still taste-based, sense-memory access points do exist. A company called Write the World, founded at Harvard University in 2012, provides an outlet for writers aged 13-18 “through a global online community and guided interactive process.” One of their young writers, who writes under the pen-name “AcetheticallyPleasing” wrote the following poem regarding what they deem to be the “Taste of Wonder”:

"Look up at the night sky. Take a deep breath... What do I taste? ...I taste wonder. A minty excitement popping in your mouth, like antarctica-flavored poprocks. A creamy donut when your thoughts pass those minty stars and swirl around the Milky Way. And past that is an impeccable flavor, lingering on your dancing tastebuds. A taste you know, a taste you've known all your life, but you're suddenly unable to recall its name. You don't know what it's called, but you don't care right now, because every millisecond now is spent on savoring that sweet comfort..." (writetheworld.com)

Other young writers addressed topics under the prompt of “Improbable Flavor” with poems like “The Taste of Stage Fright” which apparently “tastes like ice and chili peppers in your mouth at the same time” according to Christabel from Malaysia (writetheworld.com). Not all taste-markers need to directly associate with a particular *rasa*—lists can be made for distinctive tastes which might be helpful in constructing imaginative exercises for any one of a number of *rasas*; for example, McKayla Ambury from Canada writes about “The Taste of the Night Sky,” for her, being “the taste of crisp cool air filling your lungs” (writetheworld.com). This may apply to *adbhuta* for one person in one imagination exercise, and to *sringara* for another person in a separate exercise, but

the taste is undoubtedly viscerally and emotionally evocative, so it warrants inclusion in a non-specific sensory list. Returning to instances that directly intersect with the topic of the rasa adbhuta, however, an Australian writer working under the penname “Pickles8Aug” describes “The Taste of Surprise” as a being “an explosion of extremely sour lemon, mingled with the subtle flavor of tangy apple” (writetheworld.com). While a format of classification like Bharata-muni’s in his *Nāṭya Śāstra* might give specific guidelines for taste profiles that are appropriate to adbhuta, this thesis will stop short of providing rules, leaving only references as a guide.

Section VIII.III.B – Accessing Adbhuta Via Scent

Moving onward into the sensory category of scent, the potency of this sense to evoke memory has been extensively studied. Researcher Jonas K. Olofsson and seven of his colleagues in Sweden published a paper titled “Smell-Based Memory Training: Evidence of Olfactory Learning and Transfer to the Visual Domain.” This paper is based on the generally accepted reality that “human and non-human animal research converge to suggest that the sense of smell, olfaction, has a high level of plasticity and is intimately associated with visual-spatial orientation and memory encoding networks” (Olofsson et al. 593). Their research went so far as to “speculate that the sense of smell may facilitate transfer of learning to other sensory domains” such as “visual memory performance” (Olofsson et al. 593). When assessing the sense of smell and its ability to “trigger childhood memories,” BBC columnist Tom Stafford conducted the following comparison of human sensory faculties:

Sight relies on four kinds of light sensors in the human eye, cells known as receptors, which convert light into the electrochemical language of our brain, and touch relies on different receptor types for pressure (at least four of these), for heat, for cold and for pain, but this pales into comparison for

what is required for detecting smell. There are at least 1,000 different smell receptor types, which regenerate throughout your lifetime, and change according to what you are used to smelling. The result of this complexity is that we are able discriminate many, many different kinds of smells. (www.bbc.com)

The difficulty with this incredible variety of scents one is able to distinguish is that, as Stafford notes, “we do not... have names for all the smells we can differentiate” and “smell is perhaps the sense we are least used to talking about” (www.bbc.com). This leads to the problem that humans “generally only have names for smells which mean the thing that produces that smell, such as “cedar,” “coconut” or “fresh bread” (www.bbc.com). One can acknowledge the limitation of personal capability for olfactory sense-description, and address it in the following way: one can accept that words may not appropriately describe the scent they desire to recall—since, as Stafford notes, “memory research has shown that describing things in words can aid memory, but it also reduces the emotion we feel about the subject” (www.bbc.com).

Researcher Matthew D. Lieberman and five of his colleagues at the University of California, Los Angeles, wrote an article titled “Putting Feelings into Words: Affect Labeling Disrupts Amygdala Activity in Response to Affective Stimuli.” In this article, Lieberman and his colleagues wrote that “putting feelings into words”—a process called “affect labelling”—“has long been thought to help manage negative emotional experiences;” however, the process of verbally explaining a feeling might “diminish emotional reactivity along a pathway from the right ventrolateral prefrontal cortex to the medial prefrontal cortex to the amygdala” (Lieberman et al. 421). What this means is that trying to describe the scent too much might help one remember it, but it might also diminish its effect. For this reason, one ought not worry about mis-labelling a scent after the object

which produces it—the fallible or, practically referential but wholistically incomplete, labeling system might actually serve to preserve emotional potency. Just as with taste, below is an example of a list dealing with scent as it relates to the *rasa adbhuta*:

Smell of Wonderment (a Subjective List)

- A bouquet of lilies in an unexpected place
- Sea-salt filled air riding on a gust of wind past a mountaintop
- Rain (otherwise known as petrichor)
- Boiled peppermint, fresh mint, mint in any variety
- Conifer trees, preferably rooted in the ground, preferably in large quantities
- Wasabbi (specifically the scent)

Studies on the origins of certain scents attempt to define the mechanisms at play within distinctive smells like petrichor—a term coined by researchers Bear and Thomas at the C.S.I.R.O Division of Mineral Chemistry in Melbourne, Australia. In their article, “Nature of Argillaceous Odour,” they concluded that “petrichor represents an accumulation of substances fortuitously present in the atmosphere which have been absorbed by materials known to be active in that capacity” (Bear et al. 1995). While Bear’s and Thomas’s work (on defining the particular smell that occurs after rain) elucidated much on the subject—clarifying why that smell existed hardly affects the scent’s influence on one’s sense memory. This is to say, though their work merits scientific praise, one aiming to cultivate sensory access points for emotion must heed the advice of Lieberman and his colleagues on the dangers of over-articulating potent evocative scent-memories. This difficulty characterized by the over-articulation of sense memories is present within practitioners of Lee Strasberg’s affective memory technique—wherein actors re-access and attempt to re-live the same personal memories in each performance. Strasberg-trained actors often refer the declining emotional potency of re-living certain memories after those

memories are accessed and articulated many times. Lieberman’s research on the declining potency of scent-based emotional connection clarifies this Strasberg-technique-based difficulty and supports Adler’s notion that one should keep a constantly updated list of new evocative sensed stimuli.

Other subjective inquiries into scents that evoke the *rasa adbhuta* or comparable wonderment have included petrichor as well as those of “mint” and “wasabi,” which have been associated with the activation of the “trigeminal nerve” (www.ski.com). If one finds themselves lost, searching for olfactory data points in the journey for scent-based personal stimuli, Les Senteurs Perfumery provides a list of “100 Scents You Need to Smell” which may serve as a launching point in this endeavor—including suggestions like “a greenhouse of ripening tomatoes” or “the feral masculinity” and “urban musk” of “tomcats” (www.lessenteurs.com). To reiterate, as will be done with each of this thesis’s notes on sensory access, the descriptions given for scent access points are subjective and intended as guides, not as guardrails or guidelines (as a formally intended divergence from the instructive nature of Bharata-muni’s *Nāṭya Śāstra*).

Section VIII.III.C – Accessing Adbhuta Via Sight

In their research on “visual memory and visual perception,” researchers Riou, Lesourd, Runel, and Versace described how “embodied theory argues that [visual] memory is based on sensory– motor traces that can be activated when a part of the encoded stimulus or situation is processed” meaning that “consequently, our memory should be the result of our own perception” (Riou et al. 1094). How, then, does one hone these visual perceptions and how can one re-activate them to inform an imagination exercise? To put it simply,

what images from one's own memory can be accessed to enhance their imagination work regarding the *rasa adbhuta*?

In research conducted at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Christian N.L. Olivers and his colleagues made a distinction between two terms: “visual attention” and “visual working memory” (Olivers et al. 1243). They deemed “visual attention” as “the mechanism by which humans *select* relevant and *ignore* irrelevant visual information for a task” (Olivers et al. 1243). In contrast, “visual working memory” was deemed “the mechanism by which humans actively *retain* relevant and prevent interference from irrelevant visual information for a task” (Olivers et al. 1243). In this way, those aiming to compile lists of relevant memory images to inform future imagination exercises must hone their use of both their visual attention and their visual working memory. Whereas visual attention may have previously selected only images necessary to the completion of day-to-day activities, a mind receptive to the potential utility of unique images for imagination work might deem a whole host of different images relevant to their extended aim. Furthermore, the retention of these evocative images can be amplified by recording them in a notebook, since the images may not represent immediate utility, but may become useful in the moment that a certain future imagination exercise demands. Note here that recording the image in a notebook for the sake of increasing memory grasp does not require extensive reiteration or re-living of that image. As with taste and scent, below is an example of a list dealing with sight (or images) as it relates to the *rasa adbhuta*:

Images of Wonderment (a Subjective List)

- Waitomo Glowworm Caves
- The last glaciers melting at Glacier National Park
- The stained-glass window in Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, CA
- His face in the crowd, years later, (being careful to isolate the sensory

impact of the image, not the person in particular—the goal is not to literally recreate a past moment)

-The unwashed and unrestored portions of the Coliseum walls

Images of wonder have, thankfully been historically catalogued as the “Wonders of the World”—now existing in multiple lists compiled by sources like USA Today, CNN, CEDAM International, BBC, and even Astronomy Magazine. USA Today’s 2007 generalized list included “Potala Palace in Tibet” and “Polar Ice Caps” (www.listerious.com). CNN’s list of the “Seven Natural Wonders of the World” from 1997 included “the Grand Canyon, the Northern Lights, Mount Everest, Paricutin, The Harbor at Rio De Janeiro, Victoria Falls, and The Great Barrier Reef” (www.cnn.com). Specialized lists filled with images of wonder are stratified into different categories, highlighting nature, industry, aquatica, and outer space. Further lists have been published with specific reference to location, such as CBC’s “Seven Wonders of Canada” (www.cbc.com). This is all to say that there is no shortage of visual wonder to be mined, as cited by international news outlets time and time again. While wonder may be present in religious and nature-filled scenes, it is also capable of being visually accessed even in mundane circumstances—the key is finding personally resonant images evocative of adbhuta, regardless of where those images are found. The skills to be developed in this particular avenue of sensory access regarding adbhuta lies in training the mind to recognize and retain images of wonder as relevant to the ongoing process of emotion cultivation.

Section VIII.III.D – Accessing Adbhuta Via Touch

The tactile aspect of memory represents a semantic challenge due to its descriptors often simultaneously operating as both practically literal and as figurative explanations for abstract sensations. For example, if someone were to ask “How do you feel?” the odds are

that one might respond “happy” or “sad” or “plagued with indigestion”—but they would likely not respond “my skin feels warm and porous while my eyeballs feel wet and slimy.” Why would the general answer to the question “How do you feel” initially invoke the assumption of the abstract definition of the word “feel” over the literal usage—perhaps a greater proportion of social contexts require the abstract employment of the term. Children’s book character Amelia Bedelia is described as a “literal-minded but charming housekeeper” who “trips through the minefield of the English language” by failing to correctly identify when words are used figuratively (www.ameliabedeliabooks.com). To avoid falling into the Amelia Bedeliesque trap of confounding literal and figurative usages of words like “feeling,” this subsection will instead make use of words like “tactile” and “texture” when referring to touch sensations—focusing on receptors for pressure differentiation as well as receptors for heat and cold.

In a “Comparative study of Texture Terms” including “English, French, Japanese, and Chinese” nomenclature, Katsuyoshi Nishinari and his colleagues noted that “texture is one of the most important attributes of foods,” calling texture a “sensory property” which might be measured by “sensory evaluation” compared against “indirect instrumental measurements” (Nishinari et al. 531). Since additional indirect instrumental measurements do not serve to increase one’s personal experience of texture, one must rely on what one “feels” or, to put it more clearly, experiences through their tactile receptors. The different words used to describe these textures vary, particularly in the English language, as noted by page 385 of Szczesniak’s 1963 studies on textural parameters and popular nomenclature:

RELATIONS BETWEEN TEXTURAL PARAMETERS AND POPULAR NOMENCLATURE
(SZCZESNIAK 1963)

Mechanical characteristics		
Primary parameters	Secondary parameters	Popular terms
Hardness		Soft, firm, hard
Cohesiveness	Brittleness	Crumbly, crunchy, brittle
	Chewiness	Tender, chewy, tough
	Gumminess	Short, mealy, pasty, gummy
Viscosity		Thin, viscous
Elasticity		Plastic, elastic
Adhesiveness		Sticky, tacky, gooeey
Geometrical characteristics		
Class		Examples
Particle size and shape		Gritty, grainy, coarse, etc.
Particle shape and orientation		Fibrous, cellular, crystalline, etc.
Other characteristics		
Primary parameters	Secondary parameters	Popular terms
Moisture content		Dry, moist, wet, watery
Fat content	Oiliness	Oily
	Greasiness	Greasy

Figure 16. Relations Between Textural Parameters and Popular Nomenclature

A series of lists relating popular terms for textural experience to an object's mechanical characteristics along with secondary parameters (qtd. in Nishinari et al. 534).

Nishinari and his colleagues clarify that “Japanese texture terms are classified into three classes: (1) mechanical properties; (2) geometrical properties; and (3) characteristics related with water and oil content” as is also demonstrated in the above chart (Nishinari et al. 534). However, the comparative study of textural terminology across multiple languages yields pages of extensive clarification on the translation and increasing complexity of these terms. The following table of Japanese terms presents only eight of one hundred thirty-five texture descriptors recognized by consumers in a study conducted by Yoshikawa in 1964 and by Hayakawa in 2003:

MOST COMMONLY USED JAPANESE TEXTURE TERMS APPEARING IN FIG. 1

No		Properties	Solid (S) or liquid (L)	Example foods
1	<i>Tsurutsuru</i>	1 Smooth surface and slippery	S	Noodles (wheat salted noodles, somen)
2	<i>Pari pari</i>	1 Crispy, sound emitted by biting crispy and thin foods	S	Rice cracker, fresh lettuce
3	<i>Korikori</i>	1 Crunchy, sound emitted by biting hard foods	S	Cartilage, sea cucumber
4	<i>Karikari</i>	1 Crisp, sound emitted by biting crispy foods	S	Apple, unripe plum, corn snack
5	<i>Pasapasa</i>	3 Appearance of dried foods	S	Bread, chicken, fish
6	<i>Katai</i>	1 Hard, for solid foods with high elastic modulus	S	
7	<i>Sakusaku</i>	1 Short, easily broken by biting	S	Cookie, pie, apple
8	<i>Zarazara</i>	2 For rough surface or coarse grains	S	Coarse sugar, vichyssoise (potato soup)

Figure 17. Most Commonly Used Japanese Texture Terms

A list of descriptive words used to address the textures of certain foods in Japan (qtd. in Nishinari et al. 549).

Nishinari and his colleagues note that of the one-hundred thirty-five terms, “seventy terms are onomatopoeias and account for 52%” of the terms overall (Nishinari 552). The complexity of these descriptors is included in this thesis to expand the figurative palette one might use to describe texture, as one learns to describe and log their evocative tactile interactions with the world around them. Textures are not limited to food, as was the case with Nishinari and his colleagues’ comparative analysis—and the conflation of texture with food can lead to accidental classifications of taste-based observations within the texture category. To clarify, the above charts from Nishinari et al. present textural descriptors while the below chart establishes the five, core, taste-based descriptors.

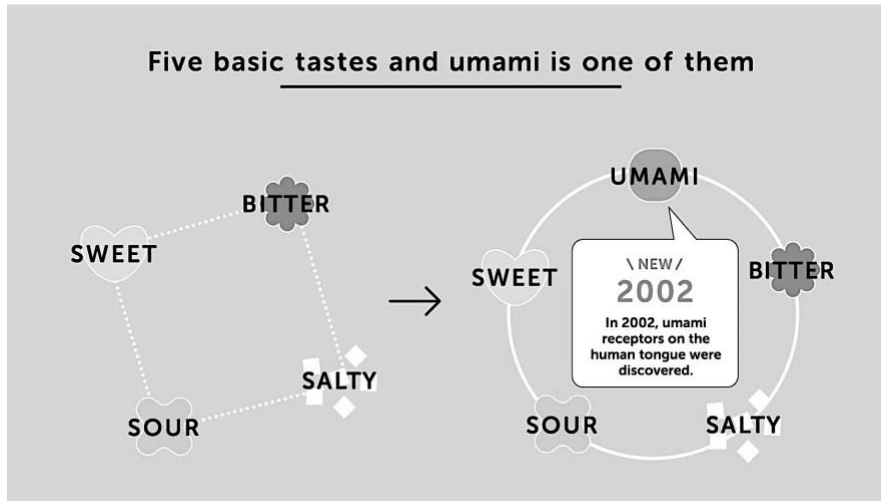


Figure 18. Five Basic Tastes

A chart depicting the addition of Umami to the list of basic human tastes in 2002 (www.ajinomoto.com).

If one is attempting to describe a texture and finds themselves referring to any of the above five descriptors, the time has come to course-correct and deposit that observation in the taste category.

Now that textural and taste-based observations have been distinguished, one can turn their attention to texture's interaction with the rasa adbhuta. In the same manner as with taste, scent, and sight, below is an example of a list dealing with touch (or texture) as it relates to the rasa adbhuta:

Textures of Wonderment (a Subjective List)

- Damp skin bristling as it is hit with a brisk breeze
- The freezing sting of plunging into the ocean
- The warmth kept within a marble surface, left after someone else had just touched it for a while and then walked away.
- Chilled AloeVera smoothly slicked across hot, sunburnt skin
- Steaming hot tea gently sloshing down the esophagus and into the stomach

Specifically, regarding tactile impressions of the *rasa adbhuta*, subjective accounts of texture-based interactions with wonder overwhelmingly abound from art teachers instructing young artists. Accounts of nature walks collecting “rough bark, spiky conkers, bristly beech nuts” and “fluffy flowers” evolve into interactive textural experiments like “[using] the textures as paint brushes and then [exploring] squeezing the [collected] textures into air” or “drying clay to make texture prints” (www.makewonder.com). Art teacher Grace Heslep worked with students ranging from kindergarten to sixth grade on drawing textures, marking the room for representational variation on a variety of factors:

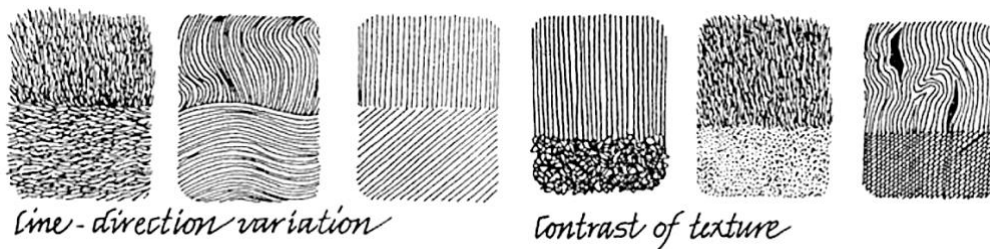


Figure 19. Depictions of Drawn Textures

Hand-drawn examples of illustrated textures using line-direction variation to create a contrast of textures (Heslep 1).

Heslep placed these illustrated examples in direct comparison to natural textures (depicted below), which she physically brought in to the classroom to help her students understand texture artistically:



Figure 20. Corresponding Textural Examples in Nature to Heslep’s Drawn Textures

Photographic examples of textures appearing in nature using color grading as well as line-direction variation to create a contrast of textures (Heslep 1).

In each of these instances, tactile impressions are allowed to leave a subjective mark on the individual. Since the tactile receptor response to line-direction-variation within a slice of cabbage may have a different evocative response than one’s experience with spiny rose thorns, the important element to note is any strong sensory impression made by the texture of an object. Though there can be no specific direction as to which textures objectively denote *adbhuta* for all individuals, working within the parameters of textural pressure, and heat or cold sensitivity, provides seemingly infinite potential textures which might be available for utilization in imagination work, exploring one’s personal experience of the *rasa adbhuta*.

Section VIII.III.E – Accessing Adbhuta Via Sound

Sound, as the fifth essential sensory element of the human experience, provides its own unique access point for adbhuta within the context of imagination exercises. One is called upon to recall the impression left by a sound in the past, letting that sonic impression inform an imagined circumstance in the present. As Nina Kraus at Northwestern University notes in her article on “Memory for Sound,” “the listening brain must respond optimally to the sounds a listener cares deeply about” (Kraus 406). Kraus cites the unique needs of different specialists to hone their hearing abilities to best suit their trade, citing that:

For a musician, keen tuning to the pitch and timbre of one’s instrument is important. For a bilingual, the distinctive pitch, phonetic repertoire, and cadence of one’s two languages are important. For an auto mechanic, the sounds coming from an engine in distress are important. (Kraus 406)

Kraus’s research on the memory of sound indicates that one’s personal “experience with sound leaves a legacy on” what Kraus deems a “massively interconnected auditory system” (Kraus 407). The auditory processing system that Kraus outlines, highlights the need for a ritual process to prioritize subjective viewpoints. For Kraus, “each of us—through experience with sounds that matter most to us—forges a unique sound processing foundation that formats our own sonic world”—meaning that “our memories... weave together who we are” (Kraus 407). Musician Alf Gabrielsson, in his book *Strong Experiences with Music*, echoes this sentiment, explaining how “just like music is varied and endless, so are our reactions to it” (Gabrielsson 1). Gabrielsson continues that “the very same piece of music can generate totally different reactions in different people, and a person can react quite differently to the same piece of music on different occasions” (Gabrielsson 1). What Kraus and Gabrielsson both indicate is that not only can one’s subjective experience of auditory stimuli change over time, but that each person’s

mechanism for hearing even the same auditory cue is ever-evolving according to their personal experience.

So, what can one gain from examining case studies of such personalized experiences with sounds that evoke the *rasa adbhuta* in the listener? Even highly subjective experiences by others can demonstrate structural strengths and weaknesses in the journey of ritual rasic self-cultivation. Alf Gabrielsson defines music as being “to a great extent associated with emotions,” and he set out to explore a wide array of those very associations (Gabrielsson 121). Through an extensive set of interviews, Gabrielsson was able to identify that “many narrators generally” identified “music” as “arous[ing] strong feelings in them” (Gabrielsson 122). Gabrielsson cites several of his subjects’ quotes, noting their reactions after listening to a music clip: “‘it was an enormous emotional experience’, ‘Great and majestic feelings’, ‘My feelings overflowed everywhere’, and similar expressions” (Gabrielsson 122). One account in particular stood out as indicative of experiencing wonder as a result of a musical stimuli. Gabrielsson noted how for this particular interviewee, “an association [had] come about between experiences of war and a well-known piece of music, Finlandia by Sibelius” (Gabrielsson 132):

(11.3E) Woman, middle-aged, 1950s

Stockholm’s Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Carl Garaguly, was playing Finlandia by Jean Sibelius. The then aged composer, who was visiting Sweden, sat on an armchair not far from the orchestra. This was the autumn of 1950.

I had extremely mixed feelings—not to mention that I was in a sort of chaos which wouldn’t release its grip. The reason was that the announcer stated that the work portrayed Finland’s varied nature and barren landscape, wind and storm and so on—and nothing else.

The first time I heard Finlandia was on the Gramophone Hour in the radio in 1940, while the war was raging. I was a child and was living with my grandmother in Sweden, separated from my parents and not knowing when

I'd see them again. I was very frightened by the piece, because I immediately interpreted the trumpet blasts as machine guns, heard bomb explosions and so on. I felt anguish.

Both of these experiences of the same concert piece are still there and more or less keep me reminded. Regrettably, I can't listen to Finlandia with anything but mixed feelings—fright and great *wonder*. I won't say it is exactly pleasurable. (Gabrielson 132)

This woman's interaction with music and the *rasa adbhuta* warrants inclusion in this discussion because it is a clear and definite example of emotion blending catalyzed by an audible stimuli. In this case, the woman noted a conflation of the *rasas bhayānaka* (terror) and *adbhuta* (wonder). The difficulty with many sensory stimuli is that they often evoke more than one emotion. One must be careful to focus their attention within imagination exercises on including aspects of their sensory experience primarily for the purpose of enhancing the intended *rasa*.

To clarify, imagine the woman from Gabrielsson's interview was involved in an imagination exercise aimed at exploring the *rasa adbhuta*. The imagination leader might say "there is music playing in the back of the room on a record player." Gabrielson's woman might flip through her notebook of evocative sounds or search her mental catalogue, seeking a song to imaginatively "play" on that record player. Whether organically or via referencing her notes, the woman comes across the song "Finlandia"—which certainly evokes a sense of wonder for her. Suddenly she is mentally taken out of the exercise, not knowing what to do, worried about whether Finlandia is connected too strongly with *bhayānaka* for her to use it in this instance. The solution to this dilemma is similar to Olivers and his colleagues' use of the term "visual attention," as was referenced in Section VIII.III.C (Olivers et al. 1243). Transitioning this term into the auditory realm, "auditory attention" might mean "the mechanism by which humans *select* relevant and

ignore irrelevant” *auditory* “information for a task” (Olivers et al. 1243). Gabriellsson’s woman would be having an issue with focusing her auditory attention on the task of addressing the *rasa adbhuta*. If her connection to the song serves to primarily amplify her experience of the *rasa adbhuta* in this exercise, it is a practical choice—if, however, *bhayānaka* is the primary *rasa* evoked, then a different song choice would be preferable for that exercise. Another danger would be that, since this woman’s specific past experience with the song was so strongly connected to her past circumstance, using *Finlandia* may risk pulling her out of the exercise and into her own past. This would risk an accidental foray into Strasberg’s system of affective memory. If one’s past auditory understanding of a certain sound or song is inextricable from their past memory, that sound or song is not ready to be used in the imagination space.

In a reciprocal instance, sounds which are so regularized in the social lexicon of an individual may not be potent enough to warrant inclusion in one’s notebook of evocative sounds. Crosswordtracker.com notes that the “*Sound of wonderment* is a crossword puzzle clue that [has been] spotted 10 times”—and according to its frequent usage, the exclamation “ooh” (the answer to the crossword prompt), may lack the specificity to elicit a unique or powerful response from an individual. Below are the instances in which this combination (*Sound of Wonderment*—“ooh”) has been used in published crossword puzzles.

Recent usage in crossword puzzles:

- Universal Crossword - June 7, 2018
- Pat Sajak Code Letter - March 30, 2013
- Pat Sajak Code Letter - Oct. 14, 2012
- Universal Crossword - June 29, 2011
- USA Today - May 14, 2011
- USA Today - Oct. 28, 2010
- Wall Street Journal Friday - July 31, 2009
- Universal Crossword - July 23, 2009
- NY Sun - Nov. 7, 2007
- Universal Crossword - Dec. 19, 2000

Figure 21. Recent Usage of “Sound of Wonderment” In Crossword Puzzles

A list of the dates and places of publication for each instance of the clue “sound of wonderment” corresponding with the answer “ooh” in crossword puzzles (www.crosswordtracker.com).

In this vein, one must mine their personal experience for sounds which are neither too specifically associated with past memories, nor too generic to provoke an emotional response. Completing the quintet of sensory avenues which began with taste, scent, sight, and touch, below is an example of a list dealing with sound (or music) as it relates to the *rasa adbhuta*:

Sounds of Wonderment (a Subjective List)

- An unexpected harmony appearing as one sings with a group
- The resonance of a pipe organ bouncing off of cathedral walls
- The sound of the dinner bell after getting lost in toilsome work
- Sudden shouts as one enters a surprise party
- A morning dove’s waking “coo” at sunrise

Each list of this nature, included in this thesis, provides a glimpse into possible subjective examples of Adler-esque listing of *adbhuta*-focused evocative sensory experiences. Such lists and examples aim to serve as inspiration rather than as instruction for those searching

for examples of auditory evocation of emotional response in their own lives. In an article titled “Eliciting Sound Memories” by medical anthropologist Anna Harris, Harris details her experience with emotional sound-memory elicitation. Harris’ experience may serve as another subjective account of auditory evocation of the *rasa adbhuta*. Harris remembers “a cool May evening in Bray England, in a tiny but very famous restaurant called the Fat Duck” wherein “a culinary experiment [was] about to take place which [would] move diners to tears” (Harris 14). This experiment consisted of the head chef serving a “new dish called *Sounds of the Sea*” which was to be consumed in the following way:

On a little glass box [the chef] has crafted a beach of tapioca, fried breadcrumbs, ground ice cream cones, and crushed fried baby eels. Upon this “sand” tumbles an ocean of abalone, razor clams, sea urchins, oysters, and edible seaweed, fringed by shellfish juice foam. The dish is served with a large conch shell, out of which trail the ear-buds of an iPod.

Diners are instructed to place the buds in their ears. In swim the sounds of waves lapping at a shore, overlaid with the odd squawk of a seagull. Blumenthal [the chef] has constructed his own sonic spiral seashell to accentuate memories of the seaside and enrich the dish. He claims that the effect is extraordinary, with diners overcome with emotion, engaging in passionate discussions with one another about which beach they find themselves in, as they become immersed in the culinary experience. (Harris 14)

The restaurant’s personal website discusses this dish and its emotional significance, saying that “the *wonderful* thing about this dish is that the sounds of the sea and the occasional seagull act as a fantastic memory trigger” (www.thefatduck.co.uk). This instance of sonic-memory elicitation treated a sound-based stimulus as a social prompt to increase conversation amidst a group of diners. Herein lies a clear example of the power of simple sensory cues—in this case “being generic enough to enable everyone around the table to relate to it” (www.thefatduck.co.uk). When increasing the specificity for personal

use in ritual emotive self-cultivation practices, the potency of auditory cues may increase exponentially.

With a general understanding of sensory access points for the *rasa adbhuta*, and established background for each of the three theories involved in this thesis, the following chapter will conduct a Case Study involving each of the theories in isolation, and then in concert with one another.

Chapter IX.

Romeo and Juliet—Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training in Practice

Section IX.I, Setting the Stage: A Shakespearean Case Study

The decision to select an excerpt from Act Two, Scene Two of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* for a Case Study in Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training is rooted at the intersection of three key components. First, this scene is widely read by school children internationally, many of whom are in their adolescent years and experiencing a flood of their own emotions for the first time. The introduction to this text at such a young age will hopefully provide readers with a source text less obscured by advanced, more emotionally cynical analysis. Second, this scene occurs between two young characters who are, themselves, experiencing and learning to understand their emotions for the first time—which will be the case for many individuals first experiencing this technique. Third, this text references the feeling of “wonder”—stating the emotional reality of the characters by name—making this text a ripe playground for exploring pathways toward the text's stated emotional goal: wonderment or *adbhuta*.

Regarding Shakespeare's note that this scene is to be played with an aspect of “wonderment,” Act Three, Scene three, line thirty-six of *Romeo and Juliet* features a lovesick Romeo lamenting his banishment away from his new bride, Juliet. Romeo specifically references the “white wonder of dear Juliet's hand,” a direct allusion to his musings on Juliet's hand in Act Two, Scene two, lines twenty-four and twenty-five—the lines immediately following the excerpt detailed in the below Case Study (Shakespeare III.3.36).

A Side-By-Side Comparison of the Source Text and this Case Study's Excerpt

<p><i>Romeo and Juliet</i> II.2.2-26 (Source Text)</p>	<p><i>Romeo and Juliet</i> II.2.2-26 (Excerpt)</p>
<p>[Enter Juliet Above]</p>	<p>[Enter Juliet Above]</p>
<p><i>Romeo:</i> But soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the East, and Juliet is the sun. Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon, Who is already sick and pale with greif. (5) That thou, her maid, art far more pale than she. Be not her maid since she is envious. Her vestal livery is but sick and green, And none but fools do wear it. Cast it off.</p>	<p><i>Romeo:</i> But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?</p>
<p>It is my lady. O, it is my love! (10) O, that she knew she were! She speaks, yet she says nothing. What of that? Her eye discourses; I will answer it. I am too bold. 'Tis not to me she speaks.</p>	<p>It is my lady. O, it is my love!</p>
<p>Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, (15) Having some business, [do] entreat her eyes To twinkle in their spheres till they return. What if her eyes were there, they in her head? The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars (20) As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven Would through the airy region stream so bright That birds would sing and think it were not night.</p>	<p>Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven, Having some business, [do] entreat her eyes To twinkle in their spheres till they return. What if her eyes were there, they in her head? The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars As daylight doth a lamp; here eye in heaven Would through the airy region stream so bright That birds would sing and think it were not night.</p>
<p><i>(for reference)</i> See how she leans her cheek upon her hand. O, that I were a glove upon that hand, (25) That I might touch that cheek...</p>	
<p>O, speak again, bright angel... (29)</p>	

The first portion of the source text omitted from this Case Study excerpt (lines 3-9) represents additional metaphors regarding Juliet's relationship to the sun, which do not prove necessary to an understanding of the scene's emotional relationship to the *rasa adbhuta*. The second omitted section (lines 11-14) provides additional exposition regarding Romeo's initial observation of Juliet—exposition which proves, again, non-essential to an understanding of the scene's emotional relationship to the *rasa adbhuta*. For the purpose of

this analysis, the omitted lines detract from the primary focus of the excerpt, and have therefore been removed. Lines 24-26 are provided as additional reference material for the reader, connecting Shakespeare’s reference to “wonder” in Act Three to this excerpt in Act Two.

Section IX.II, Addressing the Scene Via the Sanskrit Rasas

Romeo and Juliet II.2.2-26 Excerpt

[Enter Juliet Above]

Romeo:

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is my lady. O, it is my love!

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, [do] entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; here eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.

This section will examine the above lines, spoken by Romeo, addressed solely from the perspective of the Sanskrit Rasa analysis. In the Indian classical performance outlined in Bharata Muni’s *Nāṭya Śāstra*, Romeo’s face would present the following visage: “wide opening of eyes, looking with fixed gaze,” and “horripilation,”—behaviors which align with his increased visual perception of Juliet and his focused description of Juliet’s eyes (Bharata Muni, *The Nāṭyaśāstra: Ascribed to Bharata-Muni* VI. 74). Other visual cues to be performed by Romeo in adherence to the visual depiction of adbhuta would be “tears [of joy], perspiration,” and “joy” (Bharata Muni, *The Nāṭyaśāstra: Ascribed to Bharata-Muni* VI. 74). The tears of joy are not directly denoted in Shakespeare’s stage direction—

with the only references being to tears of sorrow in the play text in Act Three, Scene Three, line 83, and Act Four, Scene One, lines 30, 31, and 22. Regardless of the lack of direct notation in the play text, tears of joy from Romeo at the sight of Juliet on her balcony would not mar the action of the play. The context preceding Romeo's words in this excerpt, of him scaling the walls of the Capulet house and trespassing on forbidden ground certainly, practically warrants perspiration, and these actions' successful climax in seeing Juliet certainly warrants an expression of joy.

Bharata Muni's suggestion for further visual cues associated with *adbhuta* include "making gifts, crying incessantly... and movement of fingers and the like" (Bharata Muni, *The Nāṭyaśāstra: Ascribed to Bharata-Muni* VI.74). Though his presence alone might be a gift to Juliet, Romeo makes later promise of his devotion to Juliet, which might be seen as a manifestation of this action. The crying incessantly carried out later in the play by Romeo would hinder the clarity of his profession of wonder in this instance, but as the first point of conflict between Bharata Muni's instructive text and the clarity of the source material, this paltry singular point of conflict does not contraindicate the practical principles of the *Nāṭya Śāstra* with the faithful and truthful playing of this text.

Bharata Muni elaborates physical depictions which might be carried out by Romeo as he imparts the *rasa* of *adbhuta* to his audience: "Complementary Psychological States" to the *rasa* *adbhuta* include "weeping, paralysis, perspiration choking voice, horripilation, agitation, hurry, inactivity, death and the like"—which, if one reads the remainder of Shakespeare's play, aligns with Romeo's actions rather clearly. Romeo becomes *agitated* after the death of Mercutio, killing Tybalt, *hurries* to the Friar, is forced to be *inactive* while stuck in exile in Mantua, and meets his *death* back at the Capulet tomb. The

characterization of Romeo's state of *adbhuta* or wonderment when confronted with Juliet results in a practical application of each of *adbhuta*'s complementary psychological states throughout the remainder of the play.

Additionally, according to Bharata Muni, *adbhuta*, or "the Marvellous Sentiment" is "to be represented on the stage by a gesture of... joyful shaking of the limbs... speaking words of approbation, tremor, choking voice, perspiration, and the like" (Bharata Muni, *The Nāṭyaśāstra: Ascribed to Bharata-Muni* VI.76). Romeo's utterances likening Juliet's eyes to the stars certainly qualify as words of approbation, and his hesitation as speaking to her represent what could reasonably be portrayed with a tremor, choking voice, and perspiration.

Finally, *Nāṭya Śāstra* indicates that *adbhuta* must have "its basis the durable psychological state of astonishment" which is "created by determinants such as the sight of heavenly beings or events, attainment of desired objects, entry into a superior mansion, temple, audience hall, and seven-storied palace and [seeing] illusory and magical acts" (Bharata Muni, *The Nāṭyaśāstra: Ascribed to Bharata-Muni* VI.74). Romeo's astonishment occurs directly before he speaks in this excerpt, upon the occasion of Juliet's surprising entrance onto her balcony. Later in his discourse, Romeo calls Juliet "bright angel," qualifying his sighting of her as akin to the sight of heavenly beings (Shakespeare II.2.29). Furthermore, later in this scene when asked by Juliet "what satisfaction canst thou have tonight?" Romeo replies "Th' exchange of thy love's faithful vow for mine"—to which he hears Juliet say "I gave thee mine before thou didst request it, and yet I would it were to give again" (Shakespeare II.2.133-136). This exchange satisfies yet another condition of Bharata Muni's basic conditions—that (if Juliet or her love can, for this limited

purpose, be deemed an object), Romeo certainly attained what he desired. On a third account, Romeo’s astonishment at Juliet’s presence came after he “o’erperch[ed]” the “orchard walls” to the Capulet mansion, which were notably “high and hard to climb” (Shakespeare II.2.68, 71). This, and the presence of Juliet, qualifies Romeo’s trespassing into the Capulet estate as entry into a superior mansion. Finally, on the last qualifying point for circumstances in the *Nāṭya Śāstra* noted for creating the rasa adbhuta, Romeo cites this entire interaction as being like “a dream, too flattering sweet to be substantial” (Shakespeare II.2.47-48). This statement marks his exchange as dreamlike, akin to an illusion of the night—qualifying the exchange as indicative of seeing illusory or magical acts.

Expansion of the Sanskrit rasic understanding of this exchange into Simpsonian interpretation of Hindu chakric vocabulary may conflate Romeo’s exploded brow (sixth chakra) with an exploded heart (fourth chakra); however, Simpson’s Lucid body technique allows for discretion on the part of the actor regarding the primary chakra for the persona of the character. An exploded heart may be a key feature of Romeo’s character when interacting with Juliet—Simpson notes Romeo’s interaction with the Friar in Act II, Scene 4, lines 31-37 as indicative of the exploded heart chakra in her book *The Lucid Body: A Guide for the Physical Actor* (Simpson 80). However, performing Act II, Scene Two of this play with special attention paid to the exploded brow at the outset of the scene proves to be more in line with Shakespeare’s stated aim of “wonderment” for this exchange.

The approach to this scene from the perspective of Sanskrit rasa analysis using the guidelines laid out in Bharata Muni’s *Nāṭya Śāstra* provides the practitioner with a highly specific set of guidelines for performance and a clear understanding of the major

mechanisms involved in applying wonderment to Romeo's interaction. It applies clear vocabulary and ideological understanding to the feeling of wonderment in this context. The system does not, however, leave room for much personal exploration of internal disposition or abstraction of the process into self-exploration—this is a performance technique, focused on the mechanisms of displaying the *rasa*, *adbhuta*.

Section IX.III, Addressing the Scene Via Chinese Ritual Theory

Romeo and Juliet II.2.2-26 Excerpt

[Enter Juliet Above]

Romeo:

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is my lady. O, it is my love!

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, [do] entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.

This section will examine the above excerpt within the context of a Confucian worldview—a context adhering to the Chinese Ritual Theory outlined in this thesis—including an understanding of Mencian and Xunzian extensions of Confucianism. First and foremost, Romeo can be compared against the Mencian classification measurement of self-cultivation, which distinguished individuals as being either gentlemen, or members of the multitude. Mencian gentlemen found joy via the process of examination of the self, and Romeo, especially in this scene, lacks the tools for self-examination—favoring, instead, the extensive examination of Juliet. Romeo did not consider the implications of his actions,

in fact, he deliberately rejected the practical consequences, saying “there lies more peril in thine eye than twenty of their swords” (Shakespeare II.2.71-72).

In contrast with the gentlemen, the Mencian multitude were typified by the definition that they “can be said never to understand what they practice, to notice what they repeatedly do, or to be aware of the path they follow all their lives” (Mencius VIIA.3). This description aligns much more with Romeo, whose very nature as a “star-crossed lover” paints him in the ignorant crosshairs of a fate which he does not fully understand (Shakespeare I.1.6). Furthermore, Romeo, seemingly subconsciously, repeats the cycle of infatuation and lovesickness twice, in rapid succession, in the first two acts alone. Romeo’s repeated behaviors of adoration were so often engaged with that his friend Mercutio could “conjure” the image of Romeo by chidingly repeating the elements of Romeo’s ritual:

Nay, I’ll conjure too.
Romeo! Humors! Madman! Passion! Lover!
Appear though in the likeness of a sigh.
Speak but one rhyme and I am satisfied—
Cry but ‘Ay me!’, pronounce but ‘love’ and ‘dove.’
...
I conjure thee by Rosaline’s bright eyes
By her high forehead and her scarlet lip,
By her fine foot, straight leg and quivering thigh,
And the demesnes that there adjacent lie,
That in thy likeness thou appear to us!
(Shakespeare II.1.7-11, 18-22)

Mercutio’s mockery of Romeo’s pining for Rosalind bears a striking similarity to Romeo’s active, earnest declaration of adoration for Juliet just a scene later. Specifically, Mercutio notes Romeo’s repeated fixation with “sigh[s],” “rhyme[s],” and “bright eyes” (Shakespeare II.1.9, 10, 18). In the excerpt selected for this case study, Romeo audibly sighs saying “O,” produces rhymes like “bright” and “night” and directly references Juliet’s “bright eyes” (Shakespeare II.2.10, 16, 22-23). Though chidingly, Mercutio faithfully

represents the very ritual Romeo had once engaged in with Rosalind, and was now engaging in with Juliet. In this way, Romeo clearly fits the Mencian classification of the multitude, wherein one repeatedly takes part in habits they do not understand.

A Confucian adaptation of the *Romeo and Juliet* narrative might bear little resemblance to the tragic Western love story in its original form. Since the Confucian worldview stressed how “children [were] taught to honor the ethical code (Li), such as honoring parents... respecting elders, trusting friends... and retaining loyalty to the family,” Shakespeare’s depictions of the young lovers’ actions deviate far from the Confucian norm (www.family.jrank.org). Chloe Gong, “who is one of 2020's youngest New York Times best-selling authors,” wrote a “*Romeo and Juliet* inspired romance set in 1920s Shanghai” which elucidates much about these characters’ conflict with traditional Chinese values in the context of the narrative (www.baos.pub). Gong writes, through the voice of one of her characters that:

For thousands of years, the worst crime in China was a lack of filial piety. Having children with no xiàoshùn was a fate worse than death. It meant being forgotten in the afterlife, a wandering ghost doomed to starve when no offerings came in from irreverent descendants. (Gong 123)

Gong identifies a core inconsistency between the behaviors Romeo and Juliet, and these characters’ respective duties to their families: Juliet, as the only child of a wealthy household, Romeo, as the first son and heir to the Montague name. An ideal Confucian version of Juliet would report the presence of a trespasser to her family immediately in Act II, Scene 2, and follow the bidding of her parents to marry Paris out of respect for her elders and loyal dedication to her family. Similarly, a Confucian Romeo would likely not betray the trust of his friends by running away from them after a party, and would not risk the safety of himself or his kin by trespassing on enemy land. Their forbidden interaction in

Act II, Scene 2, in the above excerpt, could have never taken place if both characters adhered to the ethical code (li).

Even so, if the plot did progress to this point, and if these words must be uttered, how might this particular excerpt be addressed through the lens of Chinese Ritual Theory? In the time of Confucius, a clandestine declaration of love, without the knowledge of either family (and explicitly against the families' wishes), would be far from the norm. Ancient Chinese tradition held extensive marriage rituals which heavily involved the families of both parties involved in the marriage. If one is to consider this excerpt—Romeo's declaration of love—as a courtship ritual, what elements of the interaction represent its classification as ritual? Howard J. Curzer cites that according to some Confucians, rituals represent “learned human activity that is regarded as sacred” continuing that “to regard something as sacred is to think that the proper attitude toward it is awe or reverence” (Curzer, *Contemporary Rituals* 292). Curzer notes that “on this view, being regarded with awe or reverence is an essential feature of rituals,” which would make Romeo's adbhuta-filled marveling at the presence of Juliet a clear example of ritual-worthy awe or reverence (Curzer, *Contemporary Rituals* 292).

Furthermore, according to Xunzi, “ritual begins in that which must be released, reaches full development in giving it proper form, and finishes in providing it satisfaction” (Xunzi, 19: 120–2). In this sense, both Romeo and Juliet begin the exchange with feelings that must be released, they declare their love for each other formally, and conclude the interaction in mutually agreed “satisfaction” (Shakespeare II.2.133). The angelic nature with which Romeo regards Juliet, and his constant comparison of her eyes to the stars in heaven, represents an overwhelming sense of awe and reverence on his part. Romeo goes

to a place set apart from his everyday world, focuses his attention on the object of his desire (Juliet's eyes), ideologically endows those eyes with enhanced properties akin to the stars in heaven, and (at the conclusion of the scene) leaves the consecrated place. Romeo calls the entire isolated experience like a "dream"—a clear separation from his standard reality, to which Romeo must, afterward, return (Shakespeare II.2.140). Similarly, Juliet steps out onto her balcony, a place set off from her regular nighttime activities. When she steps onto the balcony alone, she speaks "as if" Romeo were present, focusing her attention on a singular object of affection,—his "name"—endowing it with heightened properties (the "sweet[ness]" of a "rose") (Shakespeare II.2.143-144). At the conclusion of her declaration of love, Juliet steps out of the consecrated space of the balcony and back into the realities of the Capulet household—to her nightly habits and daughterly responsibilities. Just as Romeo had done before with Rosalind, both Romeo and Juliet take part in parallel rituals of adoration.

Something unique to this particular lens of Chinese ritual theory is that it can be applied both to the characters inside the narrative and to the actors reciting the lines in a performance of the play *Romeo and Juliet*. Where the Sanskrit *rasa* and Adler imagination techniques are historically entrenched within performance theory, Chinese Ritual Theory formally extends into the exploration of personal internal dispositions, which is applicable to both performance and non-performance contexts. This lens might view the action of actors walking onto the stage as the entering of a consecrated ritual space, separated from reality. Furthermore, the recitation of lines in an "as if" space, night after night, would feature external emotions being "called forth" from the actors throughout the performance, as was described in the GDCS.

Viewing Shakespeare’s text, namely this excerpt, through the perspective of Chinese Ritual Theory allows for the exploration of internal dispositions, and establishes the major elements involved in the ritual space—both within the human interactive processes of the characters inside the narrative, and through the performance behaviors of actors playing the scenes outside of the narrative.

Section IX.IV, Addressing the Scene Via Stella Adler Imagination Technique

Romeo and Juliet II.2.2-26 Excerpt

[Enter Juliet Above]

Romeo:

But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is my lady. O, it is my love!

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, [do] entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.

This section will isolate analysis of the above excerpt to the perspective of Stella Adler’s Imagination technique. While the Adler Technique of acting involves many additional elements like script analysis and character breakdown, this thesis will limit its exploration of the excerpt to Adler’s work with imagination exercises. Tom Oppenheim of the Stella Adler Studio in New York says of imagination exercises: “it’s different for different teachers” (YiddishBookCenter 2:55-3:05). Given the organic nature of construction for even officially recognized modern versions of Stella Adler imagination exercises, this thesis will reference several of Adler’s own examples to construct a unique sample exercise specific to Romeo’s experience in this excerpt. Adler’s exercises, #16 and

#17, will be instructive in defining the subjective personalization of the imaginative space for the practitioner. Adler's emphasis on seeing specifically is an essential component of her imagination work, as Adler Imagination instructor Tim McNeil notes, "the use of the imagination allows for such great" emotional "range if [one is able to] learn to use it specifically" (StellaAdlerAcademy, *Interview with Tim McNeil 2014 December 1:26-1:31*). While certain facts may be given by the imagination leader or author of a text, each fact needs to be, in Adler's view, filtered through the active imagination of the practitioner. Adler says of these facts that "there will be many," and that it is the practitioner's duty to not "leave them dead..." as one must "realize through [their] imagination the life of each fact. (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 28)

EXERCISE #16

To See Specifically

Describe a stone.

This is my stone, taken from the park:

"I saw a great big stone in the park. It was gray and its surface was uneven. Around it there was grass, but patches of the grass were dead and had turned yellow."

In order to make the stone more vivid to your partner, you expand on what you see. Don't use fancy words.

Now, give me *your* stone.

EXERCISE #17

Describe a rose.

If you say, "I saw a rose," and tell your partner about it, you must expect your partner to see your rose.

If I speak about a rose, the image of the rose is very specific.

"I saw a rose. It is red and yellow and has a long green stem with thorns on it."

Now the rose is not just a fact. It requires a certain energy to make your partner see what you see. For you alone to see it is not enough. Make it part of your technique to give these images to your partner.

Figure 22. Adler's Exercise #16 and Exercise #17

Detailed instructions for two acting exercises devised by Stella Adler in Chapter 3 of her book titled “Imagination” (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 22).

Exercise #16 may be a major source of inspiration for the specificity one might add in an imagination exercise based on Romeo’s action in the scene’s excerpt. Just as Adler suggests one might find color, textural, and contextual adjectival life in even a single stone, so the practitioner might find such specificity in anything from the Capulet orchard walls to the moonlight bouncing off Juliet’s balcony. Exercise #17 is incredibly instructive for the purpose of the selected scene, just a few lines after the excerpt, where Juliet literally compares the “sweet[ness]” of a “rose” to Romeo’s name (Shakespeare II.2.143-144). Adler would have the practitioner internally endow that rose with even more qualities than the sweetness of smell. This exercise is a clear indication that Adler would only be satisfied with a practitioner’s understanding of the rose when it was so clearly formed in the practitioner’s mind, that their audience could imagine the rose in the same detail. In this way, the practitioner would make the imagined rose their own. Adler’s exercise # 26 provides a sample structure for this thesis’s new exercise—offering both a script for the theoretical imagination leader as well as a suggested set of internal questions that a practitioner might ponder during the exercise.

EXERCISE #26

Now you are walking down a lane:

1. The long branch of a tree has been cut off.
2. Throw it off the road.
3. Go up a small road.
4. On both sides the grass grows quite high.
5. You come to an old wooden bridge and a pond.
6. Lean over the wooden bridge.
7. In the pond is a school of tiny fish.
8. Farther down the road and across the pond is a yard with a clothesline tied between two trees.
9. Some clothes are hanging from the clothesline.
10. A child's pajamas, socks, sneakers
11. An old kitchen tablecloth
12. Overalls
13. Look at the overalls.
14. Notice their shape.

Ask yourself:

1. How tall was the grass on both sides of the lane?
2. How was the bridge made?
3. Where are the tadpoles?
4. Describe the sneakers?
5. The tablecloth?

What you have seen is now entirely yours.

Figure 23. Adler's Exercise #26

Detailed instructions for an acting exercise devised by Stella Adler outlined in Chapter 3 of her book titled "Imagination" (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 27).

While the thought leader tells Adler's practitioner in point four that "on both sides the grass grows quite high," Adler simultaneously suggests that the practitioner answer for themselves exactly "how tall was the grass on both sides of the lane?" (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 27). This type of parallel personalization makes the imagined memory "entirely yours" from Adler's point of view (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 27). Below is the excerpted-scene-specific sample imagination exercise created for the purpose of this thesis, including a parallel suggested internal dialogue for a theoretical personalization of the exercise by a single practitioner:

Sample Guided Imagination Exercise	Potential Questions to Consider Internally to add Personalized Specificity to the Imagination Exercise
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine you are outside, it's evening. • You have just left a party that you crashed with your friends • You climb up and jump over a high orchard wall • You are trespassing on an estate, if you're caught there will be dire consequences. • You see a light turn on in one of the rooms above you • You romantically fell for someone at the party. This is their parents' house. • Suddenly, the person you fell for steps out onto the balcony above you, looking at the moon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How late is it? Is there a full moon? Can you see the stars? Is it cloudy? Is it cold or warm out? Is there mist in the air or humidity? ○ Are you still dressed for the party? What do your party clothes look like? What material are your shoes made of? Are they made to be walking outside? ○ How high is the wall? Was there ivy on the wall? Did you make a loud thud when you came down? What is on the ground (Mud? Leaves? Grass?) ○ Are there guards nearby? If so, how many? Did they see you come over the wall? Did they hear you come over the wall? Are there other sounds (animals, leaves in the wind, music from the party?) ○ Are there curtains? If so, what are they made of? Are there other lights on in the building? Are you in shadow? How many steps away from the building are you? How many steps away from the orchard wall are you? ○ What were they wearing at the party? What color is their hair-- their eyes? What do their parents look like? Does their father have a beard? ○ What are they wearing? What does the moon look like bouncing off their skin? What facial expression are they making?

This sample exercise outlines the actions immediately preceding the excerpted lines from Romeo. By putting the realities of the scene through one's imagination, and by asking questions to personalize the imagined experience, one may be able to feel Romeo's wonder in a new and personal way. The suggested internal questions above are nowhere near exhaustive, and represent only a small sampling of potential curiosities to be mined in the process of making the imagination exercise personal for oneself. While one of the suggested internal questions was simply "what were they wearing at the party?" Adler might have asked this question in far greater detail, like in her Exercise #12:

EXERCISE #12

An actress left cleaned clothes in the dressing room on a hanger. See each article of clothing and describe it instantly.

- What color was the suit?
 - How was the collar made?
 - Where are the pockets in the suit?
 - Of what material was the suit made?
 - Where are the buttons?
-

Figure 24. Adler's Exercise #12

Detailed instructions for an acting exercise devised by Stella Adler outlined in Chapter 3 of her book titled "Imagination" (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 27).

Some iterations of Adler's technique involve physicalizing the imagination exercise, keeping the eyes closed or leaving the gaze in what director Anne Bogart would call "soft focus" (Dixon et al. 31). Bogart defines soft focus as "the physical state in which [one

allows] the eyes to soften and relax so that, rather than looking at one or two things in sharp focus, they can now take in many” because “by taking the pressure off the eyes to be the dominant and primary information gatherer, the whole body starts to listen and gather information in new and more sensitized ways”—like from the imagination (Dixon et al. 31). Adler’s imagination exercise, when put into the body, allows a practitioner to bend down and imagine feeling the grass with their fingertips, or to reach up toward the imagined balcony, feeling the imagined distance between them and Juliet’s foot. Adler would call the development of this skill, of being able to physically interact in the imaginative space, the development of “muscular memory” which could be strengthened in ways like the one described in Exercise #7:

EXERCISE #7

To strengthen the skill of muscular memory, do the following:

1. Pick up the real needle.
Thread it with imaginary thread.
 2. Pick up the real thread.
Thread the imaginary needle.
 3. Use the real needle and thread to sew an imaginary hem on a small piece of material.
-

Figure 25. Adler’s Exercise #7

Detailed instructions for an acting exercise devised by Stella Adler outlined in Chapter 3 of her book titled “Imagination” (Adler, *The Technique of Acting* 15).

This is the manner in which Adler would lead a practitioner to make the circumstance of the excerpt, both mentally and physically, their own. Adler implies that there is much to be learned via the experience of others, like Romeo, in the imaginative space because “if [one] limit [themselves to [their own past experiences], [they] limit [themselves] as [human beings]” (YiddishBookCenter 3:12-3:36).

The excerpted text, when looked at through this lens, reads almost as though Romeo were actively engaged in an imagination exercise regarding Juliet’s eyes—making the image of them even more real to himself by specifying every aspect of his experience. He doesn’t say that they look like stars, Romeo says her eyes shame “two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,” and he doesn’t simply say that her eyes shine, he says they “stream so bright that” if they were up in the sky “birds would sing and think it were not night” (Shakespeare II.2.15, 22-23). Each of these elements, Romeo puts through his mind’s eye and makes them his own. This attention to detail, and the references he makes, emphasize on all accounts the high status he places Juliet in—himself below—creating a clear image of dramatized reverence.

Adler’s technique would amplify this reverence even further within an imagination exercise, by leading the practitioner to find sensory specificity regarding each of the elements of the scene—asking what one could smell, hear, see, feel (texturally), and taste. This very embodied practice would allow exploration of the practitioner’s internal dispositions as they related to, or were felt through the imagined perspective of the character. While Adler’s is very much a performance technique, her methods apply to the personal internal development of the actor, insofar as they serve the actor’s ability to serve the scene. This perspective of the excerpt allows the audience a very detailed way to place

themselves in the shoes of the character, and to allow the character’s emotional experience to flow through them.

Section IX.V, Addressing the Scene Via All Three Theories in Concert

Romeo and Juliet II.2.2-26 Excerpt

[Enter Juliet Above]

Romeo:
But soft, what light through yonder window breaks?

It is my lady. O, it is my love!

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, [do] entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.

This fourth and final examination of the excerpted scene will approach it using elements of Chinese Ritual Theory, Sanskrit Rasa Aesthetics, and Adler Imagination Theory—from a new lens, which this thesis will call “Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training.”

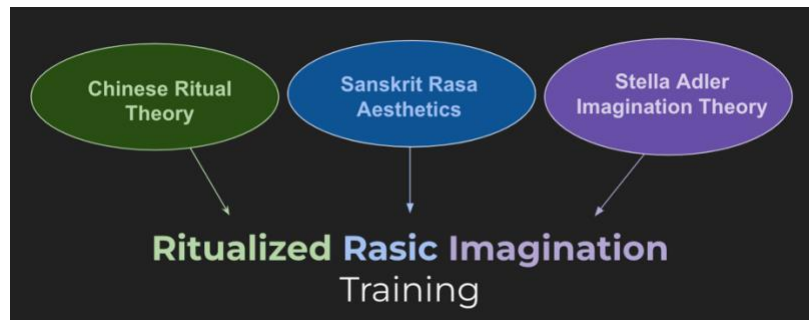


Figure 26. RRI Visual Representation

A depiction of each of the component parts of the term coined within this thesis: Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training (Astin 2022).

The first step in employing this new approach lies in setting the intention. While each of the preceding sections listed the specific assets each individual theory brings to its own practice, the aim of Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training is personal, emotion exploration, working toward the goal of emotion agency. Emotional agency is comprised of two processes: emotion regulation and emotion access, which can each be cultivated via constant training. Once cultivated, these processes can contribute to conscious emotion exchange with other individuals. This is the stated intention for the way this thesis will address this sample text.

The second step lies in establishing which stage of the emotion cultivation process one has personally reached: Have all eight rasas been explored and cultivated? Have new emotions been explored via emotion blending? Has emotion blending matured to the point of practicing strategic emotion exchange? For the sake of this excerpt's examination, this thesis will involve the excerpt in the earliest stage of emotion cultivation: exploring a single rasa. The rasa to be explored will be wonderment: *adbhuta*. One can examine elements of Sanskrit rasa aesthetics and historical presentational elements of *adbhuta* to inform their understanding of the term. Wide, unblinking eyes, or the circumstances of witnessing the divine might provide helpful inspiration in physically elucidating the term for one's-self. One may also engage in sensory collection—taking time before the exercise to write down personal sensory experiences that subjectively evoke the sensation of *adbhuta*. Examples of sensory wonderment for Romeo might include the sight of the twinkling stars in the milky way, the scent of fresh dew on the grass at 2:00 in the morning, the taste of Juliet's

heavenly kiss still lingering on the lips, the sound of the nightingale echoing far and wide, the texture of Juliet's heavenly hand. One must remember to isolate sensations that have the primary effect of evoking *adbhuta*, even though other *rasas* may also be evoked by the memory to lesser extents.

At this point, an overarching intention and a specific motivation for the particular exercise at hand have been confirmed—aiming for eventual emotional agency by, now, seeking to cultivate the access and regulation of the *rasa adbhuta*. From here, one must establish their ritual space. This space does not have many practical demands, but it must be set off (in some way) from the daily circumstances of the individual. This could be made through dimming the lights, turning on a specific type of music, stepping into a quiet room, or via any form of differentiation that distinguishes the space from the mundane realities of the every-day experience. Ideally this space would be free from the scrutiny of others. Signals for entering and exiting the ritual space may be established at this point, such as touching the wall, or clapping one's hands. This is also the time for one to set personal boundaries and to check in with one's desired limitations (physical or emotional, if any need to be noted). For the sake of this exercise, one might theoretically step into their bedroom (if there is enough room to move around), shut the door, dim the lights, and place their hands against the wall to begin the ritual. One's limitations might be a sore neck from exercise and sensitivity to themes of abandonment. After checking in with the text of the guided exercise, the theme does not appear to be addressed. One can remain cognizant of this limitation if it should arise—knowing that if, at any time, an element of the exercise becomes uncomfortably overwhelming, they may place their hands on the wall and take a break from the exercise or stop all together.

The fourth step, the primary movement of the imagination exercise, can be conducted in a number of ways, depending on the resources at hand. If alone, the practitioner can pre-record a step-by-step imagination scenario to follow along with, or ask an imagination leader to audio-record an imagination exercise, like Adler's exercise #26, or the sample provided in this thesis. One might also adapt a given scenario provided by a play (as is the case with this excerpt) or other work, to the format in this thesis's provided sample. The solo practitioner might also elect to operate in the imagination exercise without a guide, letting the circumstance unfold organically. If there is an imagination guide present, and they are aware of the practitioner's personal boundaries and exit rituals, then the imagination guide may lead the practitioner through an imagined scenario. In this example, one may be listening to a recording of this thesis's sample guided exercise from the preceding section. Regardless of the manner in which the scenario is conveyed, this is the time for the practitioner to explore and personalize their imagination space, breathing deeply and actively experiencing the imaginative landscape, asking personalizing questions like those suggested in the sample in the previous section. One would personalize everything from (what might be) their felt-tipped party shoes to the soggy grass underfoot, to golden tresses of their Juliet on the marble balcony overhead.

Step five enhances the imaginative experience by encouraging the practitioner to begin to move physically about the room. Physicalizing the movement about the imaginative space creates more avenues for embodied emotion to be exercised by the practitioner: feeling one's own cheek as they imagine Juliet's hand against her own, reaching up to the balcony where the imagined Juliet stands, feeling the soggy ground seeping through one's pants as they kneel on the ground. The recording should leave room

at the end for extended improvisation within the imagination space, allowing room for one to expand further on certain resonant elements of their personalized experience.

During step six, the practitioner should prepare to exit the ritual space. The exercise should lead to the practitioner closing the imagination exercise, performing their exit ritual, and leaving the space. An extended exercise might direct the practitioner to enter and exit the space multiple times, entering into the imagination exercise for varying periods of time as one gains agency over their ability to access and regulate the sensations of wonderment. Each time the practitioner leaves the space or prepares to re-enter, they must return to a neutral disposition. However, no matter how many times one reaches up to Juliet or breathes in the sweet midnight air, the conclusion of the experience, as a whole, must consist of the closing ritual and the formal exit of the ritual space. If this were occurring in one's bedroom, even if that person's next habitual daily action would be to get into bed and go to sleep, they would need to restore the lights, perhaps open the door, and formally transition themselves out of the ritual experience.

Finally, step seven would see the practitioner reflect on the insights gained from engaging with this ritual, and set curiosities for the repeated ritual in the future. While this reflection may be a less formal element of the practice—able to be conducted over a series of days or even weeks following the actual ritual—it is an important component of building an ongoing, cumulative training program. For this excerpt, one might note how feeling wonderment from Romeo's perspective allowed an unjaded and clearer picture of *adbhuta*, that might only be possible from the perspective of a new-to-love teenager.

In this new training program, each of the source theories contributes essential elements to the practice. Chinese Ritual Theory lends the construction of the ritual space,

the aim of emotional self-cultivation, and important aspects of Confucian ritual. Sanskrit Rasa Aesthetics provides the emotional framework for dividing one's internal dispositions into realistic and digestible categories of practice—with clear examples of hundreds of years of physical representations of these emotions for reference. Stella Adler's Imagination exercises provide a practical outline for daily training, working within a technique that aims to protect practitioners' personal memories while also allowing them authentic, novel experiences in the imagination space. Each of these theories finds harmony with the others, all aligning with the cultivation of personal skills in some way, and all operating within a realm set off from the every-day. While Confucian ritual, extended by Mencius and Xunzi, provided the primary inspiration for the creation of the ritual space, Bharata Muni's *Nāṭya Śāstra* conducts all of its training in highly specified rehearsal spaces, and Stella Adler has ideas about the rehearsal studio which very much align with Confucian ideals. “As [Adler] has conceived it, the” rehearsal studio or ritual space “is the place in which the ... [practitioner] is given the opportunity to cultivate the habit of looking at himself, not as a person scooped along by the manners of conventional life, but as someone who actively wants and pursues... life”—perhaps even a life of greater emotional understanding (Rotté v). The combination of these three theories into a single practice will ideally create fertile ground for better emotional self-understanding, and, someday, a more conscious exchange of emotion between performers and non-performers alike.

Chapter X.

Extensions of Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training

Section X.I, A Theoretical Framework for Ongoing Training

The earlier discussion of rasic starting points for emotion cultivation, in Chapter Eight, expressed potential difficulties for practitioners regarding certain rasas. Based on this assessment, the curriculum for advanced study of all eight workable rasas over time would consist of exploring the rasas in the following order: Adbhuta, Bibhasta, Vira, Bhayanaka, Hasya, Karuna, Raudra, Sringara. After exploring wonderment, trainees would work with inverting that curiosity beyond the neutral state into the realm of disgust. After exploring this spectrum of intellectual or experiential appetite, trainees would experience Vira before bravely and humbly exploring Bhayanaka. Bhayanaka, as a potential place for great vulnerability, must be addressed with special attention paid to entering and exiting rituals. Further study would then begin with Hasya, and the many circumstances in which this rasa feeds interaction, however' special attention should be given to the rasa being practiced in isolation—for there is great room for accidental blending with other rasas. Exploration of Karuna is highly volatile and vulnerable for practitioners—one's work with Bhayanaka was a microcosm for the resonant potential of karuna. Not only must special attention be paid to entering and exiting rituals, but special attention to aspects of emotional self-care would need to be included in this module. After exploring Karuna, Raudra must be practiced with equal care and consideration. Though access may appear easier for this rasa, specific attention must be paid to exit rituals, ensuring residual raudra does not overflow outside of the ritual space. The final rasa may be the easiest for some practitioners, but it may prove most difficult for others. Modern comfort ritual practices

outlined by the IDI should be heeded and additional support from intimacy coaching professionals for multi-student improvisation may be necessary.

Given the above framework for ordering the rasas to be explored, a successful (or personally satisfactory) completion of the individual rasic capabilities of access and regulation would lead to the study of rasa blending. The blending of multiple rasas allows one to be nested within another (like karuna within raudra), creating new and complex interactions between emotions in a layered context. Once one has experimented with emotion blending, they may wish to explore the Lucid Body Technique's complementary Chakric system of explosion and implosion. Approaching Lucid Body exercises or Schechner's rasaboxes exercise require a more advanced element of comfort with ones individual rasas, so they should be experienced carefully by advanced practitioners.

Once rasa blending has reached a level that is satisfactory to the practitioner, multiple practitioners might engage in the practice of strategic emotion exchange. Development of these skills inside the ritual space will leave room for broader employment of the practice, providing direct advantages to the interactions of performers and non-performers in many diverse contexts.

Section X.II, Expanding Sensory Stores for Imagination Work

A brief note must be made about modern additions to sensory emotional stimuli—that of media. While media of the written and live-performance forms have been a present influence on the sensory-empathetic understandings of individuals since the earliest iterations of storytelling tradition, new technological developments demand additional consideration. The modern individual experiences an empathetic connection with characters in media as well as a digitally mediated connection with real-life individuals in

their own lives on a constant basis. Where the intake of media a hundred years ago was limited to silent films, reading written works, or attending live theater... entertainment media today fills every waking hour of many individuals' lives. While sensory observations of visual media like movie clips might just as well be divided into their visual or auditory components, new experiences like Harris's audio-mediated dinner excursion spark consideration of the unique nature of mediated—or technologically enhanced experience. Aaron Balick, in his chapter for the book *Media and the Inner world: Psycho-cultural Approaches to Emotion, Media, and Popular Culture*, writes that:

While the term hyper-connectivity captures the intensity and overdetermination of technological developments in relation to contemporary digitally enhanced human inter-connectedness, it does not quite do justice to the psychological implications of hyper-connectivity. (Bainbridge et al. 155)

This hyper-connectiveness simultaneously amplifies the intensity and timetables for human connection across great distances, while also creating greater physical distance.

Whether one is experiencing empathetic pseudo-proxied-connection to characters in a film, interacting within a virtual landscape like the metaverse (or in a virtual RPG), or taking part in immersive AR or VR experiences, technologically mediated experiences are beginning to transform what sensory connection looks like. Where adbhuta may have required physical movement in the past, one can now digitally stand on a mountaintop witnessing the great expanse of the sea without physically leaving their couch.

Balick suggests that “while today’s digital world has a rather steroidal quality to it in the sense that it ‘pumps up’ the personal and social mechanisms that have always been present, in many important ways the fundamentals remain the same” (Bainbridge et al. 165). Perhaps digitally mediated interactions have their counter-parts in the non-digital

world—receiving a text message today operates with many parallels to the process of receiving a letter hundreds of years ago. Where someone used to sit by the windowsill waiting for a letter to arrive, they now pass the time refreshing their email inbox. Where one might have gone out to the theater with friends, now friends from around the world can connect with a virtual watch party. Where one today identifies with a character in a television show or movie, years ago people identified with characters in magazines, novels, and plays. Many essential elements of human interaction remain constant no matter how they are mediated. However, as Bainbridge and Yates note in the introduction to *Media and the Inner world: Psycho-cultural Approaches to Emotion, Media, and Popular Culture*, “the advent of the digital age has led to the development of new phenomena in patterns of communication and everyday life, where technology and digital media now play an increasingly important role,” continuing that “a key effect of this is the displacement of notions of ‘community’ into the virtual domain” (Bainbridge et al. 5).

The landscape of sensory emotional stimuli exposure is rapidly changing, and whether these mediated experiences can be examined by the same sensory toolset as unmediated experience or not is still up for open debate. Therefore, one must consider the possibility that an additional set of skills for sensory analysis may need to be applied to digital experiences, which represent, for better or for worse, greater physical distance and a decline in physicalized engagement. If these digitally mediated experiences are to be embraced as new avenues for authentic emotional connection (rather than relegated to the role of typifying the trend toward emotional numbness outlined in Chapter One), then new mechanisms (or, at least, modernized perspectives) for understanding digitally-mediated-emotional-expression must be explored. This additional avenue of media-sensory

understanding of the *rasa adbhuta*, to be considered alongside entries made in Chapter eight, is exemplified below:

Mediated Instances of Wonderment (a Subjective List)

- Satine appears as the “Sparkling Diamond” in Baz Luhrman’s film *Moulin Rouge*
- Jay Gatsby is revealed to Daisy Buchanan for the first time in years amidst a room filled with flowers in Fitzgerald’s novel *The Great Gatsby*
- A video game called Age of Empires II emits a surprising, congratulatory “ding” following the successful construction of a “Wonder”
- A beloved character returns from the dead in the CW network’s television show *The Vampire Diaries*
- Walter Mitty looks out over the natural landscape of Seyðisfjörður in Iceland in the film *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*

In each instance, a reader, viewer, or player, is offered a window into the life of another—wherein one might experience their own, personal, visceral reaction. This was the case with the theatrical example of *Romeo and Juliet*, though the mediated element (experience via the perspective of a character) was an inherent layer of the exercise. Many imagination exercises do not name imaginary the character whose perspective the practitioner is allowed to temporarily inhabit within the imagination space—oftentimes, the imagined person in the space is simply the practitioner, unaltered, in different circumstances. It is necessary, here, to make the distinction between inhabiting the perspective of a character, and inhabiting the mildly adjusted perspective of the self in imagined circumstances. Both instances offer opportunities for emotional insight into uncharted territory. Since this thesis was written at the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, where nearly all social interaction became mediated by digital video conferencing software, the line between mediated and unmediated interaction is, in this moment, unquestionably blurred. Further extensions of this practice will need to make room for the increasing presence of mediated experience in the emotional landscape—and this could be

done by drawing a solid dividing line between mediated and unmediated experience, or by erasing that line altogether. For the purpose of this section, at this time, that line will remain dotted, with only a brief nod given toward the distinction.

With regard to mediated experiences of *adbhuta*, in particular, another short note must be made of the field of well documented emotional connection between the viewer and the media they intake. To attempt to isolate every film (or theater production, or novel, or television show, or video game, or immersive Virtual Reality experience) which has inspired the *rasa* of wonderment in its audience would be a herculean—nay, a practically impossible task; two cursory, subjective examples will merely signal the incredible emotional impact of ingested media on the viewer. Peter Rainier, a film critic in Boston Massachusetts, cites the overuse of “technological phantasmagoria” in the film *Alice Through the Looking Glass* directed by James Bobbin, to be a poor substitute for what Rainier deems ought to have been “genuine wonderment” (Rainier 1). This scathing critique of the film sets it apart from many others in the same genre which, in Rainier’s view, did achieve what he calls “genuine wonderment” by using fewer “mechanical contraptions” (Rainier 1). In contrast, Jacob Axelrad, film critic for the Pittsburgh Gazette writes of the “Oscar-nominated Norwegian film ‘Kon-Tiki’” that directors Joachim Roenning and Espen Sandberg are able to “[stir] wonderment” in their audiences by providing the audience with “telling images,” like “the look in a very young [character’s] eyes as he plunges into a frozen lake, peering into the water’s icy depths” (Axelrad 1). What specifically endows these films with the ability to inspire wonderment in their viewers (and reviewers) is for the individual intaking the media to decide and for film critics to expand on in detail. However, the tangible emotional potency of these examples

of filmed media, and of the millions of works of media like them, makes mediated experience a worthy source of stimuli for the *rasa adbhuta*—a source which one may consider including alongside sensory experiences in a notebook of emotional access points for imagination work. If the lack of existing framework for working with mediated emotion in this thesis proves too greenfield for the budding practitioner of emotional self-cultivation, this thesis would advise pulling solely from un-mediated experience for sensory inspiration in the imagination space. Media’s inclusion in this thesis serves simply to note its overwhelming influence on the emotional lives of modern individuals, and to leave room for media’s future incorporation into the sensory inspiration matrix.

Section X.III, RRI Training in Multiple Application Arenas

Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training, or RRI cannot unequivocally answer the question “How to Feel Wonderment” for everyone. In fact, the majority of this thesis was focused on the first three words of the statement: “How to Feel”—a question which has been asked for many different reasons, countless times, by countless individuals, in countless contexts. Wonderment is simply the first in a long line of emotions—an eight point line, with many specialized blends in between—which one can explore in pursuing the question “How to Feel.” To discuss an exhaustive list of the possible applications of this technique would be to list every human interaction that has ever demanded empathetic understanding of the self or others. With that in mind, listing the potential practical benefits of this system to several specific arenas is warranted at this time.

For actors, many come under the illusion that one technique holds all the answers—that has not been the case in any of the readings examined for this thesis, and this thesis does not claim to hold all the answers either. However, the common thread in any acting

technique is *you*—the actor themselves. Gaining better personal understanding of one’s capacity for emotion, and one’s ability to summon up and set aside that emotion at will, can inform any acting technique—even Practical Aesthetics or Lee Strasberg’s method. This practice breaks the emotional limitations of one’s everyday experience and allows infinite opportunity for exploration of the emotional self, offering the ability to single-handedly hone one’s emotive instrument.

In the business world, so much of entrepreneurship involves telling a company’s story, and selling investors on the inspiration behind the company. For an executive to understand a company’s ability to inspire others, the knowledge of their own personal capacity for wonderment is invaluable. Just like football players often take ballet classes to increase coordination, those operating in highly communication-based jobs ought to train their faculties of communication—prime amongst which is emotional agency.

In the context of early learning, there are few formal processes in place to bolster emotional development—especially as children enter adolescence. Having a clear framework for understanding one’s evolving emotional capacities from an early age would allow more room for clear articulation during one’s formative years. This would have extended effects on more mature relationships, which often find hardship in one or both individuals lacking the tools to evaluate their own emotional needs and states of being.

With potential positive effects on performers and non-performers, RRI (Ritualized Rasic Imagination Training) represents the harmonious influences of three key theories of emotional understanding—allowing the practitioner insights into their internal dispositions, informed by thousands of years of performance and ritual theory. This thesis lays the groundwork for emotional self-cultivation for anyone who strives to attain it, and

the potential positive effects of this work, if applied, leaves one (at least the writer of this thesis) with a sense of wonderment.

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