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From Rape to Rapture
The Art of Performing Emotion

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Introduction

Extreme Emotions: Performing Rape

Preamble

March 27, 2007. I am sitting in the F.C. Smith Auditorium at Concordia University's Loyola Campus at the final dress rehearsal of *Per/Son/Alia*[1], a faculty directed student production. The piece is a multi-part, non-narrative collective creation, staged environmentally throughout the building. The current part consists of a series of short, unrelated scenes, staged like cabaret numbers on a sparsely lit, elevated stage. We are about midway through the performance.

After a number of quirky acts, a young woman, voluptuous with curly hair, wearing a tutu made of bubble wrap, enters the stage. In an earlier scene we learned that the character is thirteen years old, preparing for her first prom. The actress announces to the audience: "Okay, this is a piece that I did for my Theater and Development class[2] last semester." We are not sure if she speaks as "herself," or as an older version of her thirteen-year-old character.

Pretending to hold up photographs she recalls bits of memory like snapshots, full of exuberance, excitement, anticipation: the dress, the shoes, and the visit at the hair-dresser. "In this photo: it's the first time I am allowed to go to the hairdresser by myself. […] In the next one I am wearing my brand-new shiny, silky dress with squeaky, black patent shoes and I swoosh around." She twirls and swooshes around. Then we hear a man's catcalls, whistling, notice his lecherous stares, "In this one – actually there is no photo of this one – just my memory…"

The memory takes over the performance, becomes acted out reality, the man grabs her, shoves her onto a stool, she continues to deliver blips of narration: she is in a car, details overwhelm her senses, smell, sound, "All I hear is the buzz of radio static in

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[1] *Per/Son/Alia*, conceived and directed by Sandeep Bhagwati, written by Lindsay Wilson and Kristin Gorslin, based on improvisations by the ensemble, performed by Students from the School of Fine Arts at the F.C. Smith and Cazalet Studio, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, March 29 – April 1, 2007.

[2] A class given at Concordia University's Theatre Department that is mandatory for all its BFA students. Many audience members know that it is obligatory to create an autobiographical performance piece for this class.

Figure 1. Krystelle Metras in *Per/Son/Alia.*

the car…" the rip of her dress, "I am silent as he zips, and rips at my shiny, swooshy satin dress…."

The man unzips, pulls off her tutu and "rapes" her from behind. Short moments of emergence interrupt the act, with her face turned to the audience the girl narrates her experience, "I am petrified, all movement stops, everything freezes..." The act continues. For how long? Seconds? Minutes? "I never felt so full of shame, so pink and red all over." Then the man is done, he zips up, pulls up the girl, and pushes her away. She gathers her skirt and shoes, her hair is undone, her make-up smeared.

She walks downstage, another photograph: "I stood with all the beautiful girls in high heeled shoes. I stood in my shoes." She slowly leaves the stage, dazed.

Strong reactions pulse through the mostly student audience: surprise, outrage, revulsion – and possibly pity and fear. But those sentiments[3] are quickly refocused on an all male a-capella number, three men, one of them "the rapist" from the previous scene, perform a doo-wop song about their male inadequacies; the act is self-ironic, light-hearted, cheesy – a welcome relief.

The Premise

Like so many acting teachers before, I have been pondering the question of how to prepare student actors to perform extreme emotional states. Earlier in spring of 2007, I had a conversation on the topic with my colleague Sandeep Bhagwati[4] while he was developing and rehearsing *Per/Son/Alia* with a group of student performers, writers and musicians. At the time he was encountering difficulties with the staging of the above rape scene. The young woman playing the victim, a second year acting student, was worried that her classmates would falsely identify her as a rape victim in real life. This fear made it very difficult for her and her partner to find a way into the scene.

Bhagwati's problem reminded me of issues I had encountered myself several times when directing student productions, which either implied or included rape scenes.[5] The task of performing a scene that is so extreme in content, emotionally challenging, and touching on cultural taboos, pushes student performers to their limits and fundamentally questions their position towards acting.

Whereas in much of the general repertoire of plays and scenes, students actually try to embrace the emotional content, be it positive or negative, in the case of performing rape it seems that many students have much greater difficulties. Rather than speculating about the reasons for such fears, or investigating the cultural, political, ethical or gender issues surrounding rape, I will focus in this thesis on the acting problem at hand. A rape scene directly confronts the problem of differentiating between "performed" and "felt" emotion, the aesthetic ideals that are attached to such differences, and the student performer's own

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[3] Sentiments here mean emotions that are projected onto a subject that might not be valued or considered worthy of the attention or empathy.

[4] Bhagwati is a German-Indian composer, since 2006 he has been cross-appointed between the Departments of Music and Theatre as Canadian Research Chair for Inter-X Arts at Concordia University, Montreal.

[5] For example: Seneca's *Trojan Women* (University of Santa Cruz, 1997), Tretyakov's *I Want a Child* (Swarthmore College 2002*)*, and in a more veiled way Brecht's *Mother Courage* (University of Santa Cruz, 1998).

emotional and cultural position towards such choices. The student actor seems to be suddenly forced to decide between play–acting and using a repeatable technique to help her master this unsettling task.

In order to meet the task of performing an emotionally challenging scene it seems that the student needs to have a clearer understanding of the nature of performed emotions and a technique that enables her to realize this on stage, as much as the director needs an understanding of how to navigate extreme emotions from the outside.

Performing Emotion

What does performing emotion mean? It implies an understanding of the activity called performing, an understanding of what an emotion is, and the assumption that an emotion can be performed. I will use the verbs to act and to perform interchangeably at most points in this thesis, in specific places however I will make use of the wider meaning of "performing," over the narrower meaning of "acting," which in quoting Michael Kirby often evokes connotations such as "to feign, to simulate, to represent, to impersonate." Acting is often equated with performing, but "not all performing is acting." In the same vein, the actor is always a performer but it is certainly not necessary for the performer to be an actor.[6] To perform is defined as doing an action, either in the sense of fulfilling, carrying out; or in the sense of enacting: such as portraying, demonstrating, presenting. It can be understood as an "action that follows established patterns or procedures or fulfills agreed-upon requirements and often connotes special skill."[7] This definition connects performing with the idea of repetition, "following established patterns." To do an action that stands in relationship to an earlier, similar action, yet in the moment of carrying it out marks a unique and single moment in time. In addition, performing might mean to do a recognizable action or to behave in a recognizable way.

The noun emotion suggests a qualitative state, or mode of being.[8] This state is

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[6] See: Kirby, Michael. On Acting and Not-Acting. In: *Acting Reconsidered*. Ed Phillip B. Zarilli, New York: Routledge, 1995. pp 43-58.

[7] Merriam-Webster's *Online Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 2006-2007. http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?va=perform

[8] When I talk about an emotional "state," I am aware that it is in fact a process, not a state I am referring to. The word "state" suggests a relatively stable, if short-lived event, yet there seems to be little stability in the constantly fluctuating and evolving emotion processes. But for the sake of practicality and in-line with the

induced by an event or trigger and is in itself a response or reaction to that trigger. This reaction can be further identified as goal relevant, or consequently as part of decision making processes.[9] This seems to imply an act of cognition, the act of identifying the trigger and the person or situation the emotion is directed at, yet, as an experience the emotion may stay in the realm of the unconscious or preconscious.[10]

Is the emotion itself a reaction or is it in turn a trigger for a reaction? In the above I called it a qualifier, a state, a mode, a reaction and an experience. When looking at emotion from the perspective of duration, there is a beginning, middle and end, yet the speed of onset, the awareness of it, and the demarcations of the passage are variable. Thus a general understanding of duration does not help to more clearly identify the nature of what we call emotion, though some researchers suggest that the duration of an affective state marks the difference between emotions, feelings, and moods.[11] Later in my thesis I will try to investigate how one can differentiate between these states. But at this point I want to suggest that the term emotion, understood as a general name for processes that result in qualitative change in human behavior, might not do justice to the variety of processes involved in individual emotions and emotion clusters but that the term connotes a generalized category of phenomenological states with a variety of strongly differing sub-categories – i.e. individual emotions.[12]

In the realm of the performed, emotions can be willfully and consciously created or re-created. In fact, to a number of theater theoreticians there is an indisputable difference between emotion and performed emotion. But what about those emotions, that befall an actor involuntarily on stage? Are they not "performed emotions" even though they might occur just before or after consciously performed emotions? Can the category of "performed emotions"

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terminology commonly used in North American theatrical practice, I maintain the use of the term "state" of emotion.

[9] Damasio, Antonio. *Looking for Spinoza*. Orlando: Harcourt, 2003, 144-47.

[10] Stocker, Michael. "The Irreducibility of Affectivity." In Solomon, Robert C.: *What Is an Emotion*? Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002:258-264. Stocker bases his reading on the later Freud, who acknowledges the possibility of pre- and unconscious affect.

[11] See Damasio, Antonio. *The Feeling of What Happens*. Harcourt, 1999: 55 ff, 341f.

[12] Griffiths, Paul. "What Emotions Really Are: The Problems of Psychological Categories." In: Solomon, Robert C.: *What Is an Emotion*? Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002:284-290.

include unconscious, or preconscious emotions?[13] I will return to this question at several points in my thesis.

In writing about emotions in performance the problem that repeatedly arises is: which action will appropriately identify the occurrence of an emotion? That leads to other questions: What does an emotion do? How does it come about? Does one "just have it"? Is it called up? Induced? Realized? Does it occur or appear, erupt or rise-up? Is it performed, acted, created, imagined, pretended, produced? Is it thought, felt, embodied? What type of activity, motion, and movement should the verb suggest? What change in state does the observer see when watching someone "have" an emotion? What is the right word for the seemingly multitudinous ways emotions manifest themselves in and out of performance? These questions lead to the investigation of the biological aspects of emotion processes and the control, shaping and containment of these processes on one hand, and the performer's process and techniques on the other.

Training the Emotions

As performance styles shift from conventionalized forms to what might be understood as "natural," that is from stylization to realism, from affectless to high passion, a question emerges as to what tools to "train the emotions" are available to the performer today. Given the re-evaluation of the role of emotions in human behavior and the rise in current scholarship on emotion and affect, has the resulting research influenced performer training? And if so, how? This thesis is an investigation into the methods, means, mechanisms and processes performers in both past and present have used in order to realize emotions on stage. The resulting questions necessitate the analysis of both historical and contemporary schools of acting as well as texts on emotion and other affective states from a number of disciplines.

[13] My reading of conscious, unconscious and preconscious refers to the states of cognitive awareness, and is based on my readings in neuroscience, cognitive science and psychology, i.e. Damasio 2004, and Barrett, Niedenthal and Winkielman, Eds. *Emotion and Consciousness*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2005. Useful to my analysis is Solomon on Freud: "In the first part of his career, Freud divided the mind into three components, which he sometimes described as "chambers." There is the Conscious, the Preconscious, which can emerge into consciousness at any time, and the Unconscious, which cannot become conscious because of repression." (Solomon, 2003, 98.) So, when we talk about unconscious emotions in the actor, they are either his/her personal deeply buried emotions that drive his actions unbeknownst to him/her, or those of the character. In the latter case, the performing actor would be conscious of these buried, unconscious emotions and find ways to show how they drive the character nonetheless.

Overall, this investigation will contribute to the re-evaluation of the performance of emotion in contemporary actor training.

My goal is to draw attention to the practice of performing emotion by adding my own fieldwork as example of current practice. I am looking at empirical research on acting techniques as the locus and subject of my investigation. Though this practice as such is independent from research in neurosciences and psychology, it nevertheless stands in a symbiotic relationship to the current emotion research in the sciences and to historical documentation of earlier acting practices. It is these relationships that I will investigate. As of now, despite the affective turn[14] experienced in the humanities as well as in the sciences, the research on acting techniques is still underdeveloped. The current processes need to be re-evaluated and the awareness of the performance of emotions heightened. Last but not least that means that my project is also geared towards a pedagogical aim, namely to increase the current acting student's ability to perform emotion and to be better equipped for the heightened emotional states that are more and more expected on stage and screen.

In the following, I will examine how different forms of actor training approach emotions philosophically and what these techniques entail in practice. There exists an assumed disparity between the inside-out and outside-in approaches to performance; by delineating the shifts in performance style I will show that in practice fluid transitions between forms are common, often being used simultaneously and interchangeably, sometimes even by the same performer within the same performance.

In 2006, I was able to institute an Emotion Laboratory at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, with the goal of investigating the performer's affective body or, if you will, the performed, embodied[15] emotion. In the Lab, particular focus was given to the student actor's process, the differences between applied acting methods, and the individual's particular approach with the hope of further developing an acting tool that allows for a detailed analysis of emotion processes in performance and a training ground to develop

[14] See chapter 1.

[15] Embodied here is to be understood as emotion physicalized by the performer, drawing attention to the physical rather than the mental emotion process. In emotion theories these processes are often discussed in regard to physiological and neurobiological patterns as well as psychological and cognitive processes, however in performance the primary focus is on embodiment. See: Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Basic Writings*, ed. Thomas Baldwin. Routledge, 2004. See: Zarrilli, Phillip and Cook, Amy in: *Theatre Journal*, Volume 59, Number 4, December 2007.

repeatable performance choices. As a vehicle for this investigation I have been using Richard Schechner's rasaboxes exercise.

In addition to historical research, I will lay out and discuss findings from the work with the students and put these into the context of current emotion studies. I want to investigate if training the emotions can be as much a part of actor training as vocal technique, movement training, text analysis and period styles are. Furthermore this thesis explores how the latest discoveries in the multi-disciplinary field of emotion studies may be applied to the specifics of performed emotions. By concentrating on the nuts-and-bolts of performance practice, the embodied, performed emotion will be the focal point of my thesis.

Figure 2. Rasabox exercises with *Oedipus* cast, January 2009. Free exploration on grid.

Emotion Laboratory

In the initial phase of the lab work (October - December of 2006), a group of six

student research assistants, a cameraman, a guest and myself met for eleven sessions.[16] The two actors who were later to perform the rape scene in Bhagwati's piece *Per/Son/Alia* had been among the initial lab participants.

The practical work in the emotion lab is based on the rasaboxes exercise, which I have been practicing and teaching since it was devised by Richard Schechner in 1994/5.[17] The rasaboxes exercise is in part inspired by the emotion theory laid out in the *Natyashastra*. In Sanskrit drama the performer evoked a state of co-experienced emotion with the audience, called rasa, by adding and combining highly specified facial, hand and body movements. Borrowing the list of eight basic rasas from the *Natyashastra*, Schechner devised a set of exercises intended for performers trained in contemporary Western acting methods. Among the goals of the exercise is how to clearly differentiate between the emotional states, to investigate different means of evoking such states, and to apply them to performance. In the basic layout of the exercise the workspace is divided into distinct spaces, "boxes," each one reserved for one rasa. The rasabox grid is then used for a number of different exercises. A detailed discussion of the rasaboxes exercise will be given in chapters two and four.

During the lab sessions we encountered a number of hurdles and difficulties as the students raised many valuable questions regarding the work. The lab process and the resulting questions will become the framework for my thesis. The rape scene among others will serve as an example to show how these issues relate to performance and how the lab work may inform or help the students in their process, both during performance and in its aftermath. The first questions that usually arise during the lab concern rasa: what is it, why do we use the term, and how does it differ from what we call emotion or affect? In chapter one and two I will discuss a couple of possible answers.

Once the work is underway, the students wonder why we work with one specific set of emotions rather than another. The idea of finding different sets of "basic emotions" depending on period and subject matter of a given project opens up a whole new horizon of

[16] The lab participants in 2006 were: Joseph Bembridge, Isabelle Fortier, Krystelle Metras, Thomas Preece, Chantria Tram, Vance de Waele; camera work was done by Adam Levasseur. All were at the time second or third year students in the Concordia University BFA program in Theatre.

[17] In recent years, the training method has been further developed and trademarked by two company members: Michelle Minnick and Paula Murray Cole. They offer regular summer intensives at NYU and Ithaca College.

possibilities for the lab, which we are now only beginning to explore. This question was much discussed during rehearsals for Ned Dickens' *Oedipus* as produced in 2009 by Concordia University with theatre students under my direction. The workshop, rehearsal and performance phases of this production of *Oedipus* during the fall and winter terms of 2008/09 will be the topic of chapter five.

Meta Emotions

During the period of the first lab, a few moments occurred that involved fear, and the sudden importance of what I call meta-emotions. Meta-emotions[18] are those feelings that are personal and influential to performers and audience members and are motivated by circumstances outside of the immediate performance context – yet possibly called up by that context – and in turn influence it in a double feedback loop.

In order to discuss this phenomenon further I will return to the example of the rape scene in *Per/Son/Alia*. Krystelle Metras, the student who performed the rape victim, was afraid of being identified as a rape victim in real life because of three issues: the much publicized collaborative nature of this particular collective creation piece, the fact that the student performers were called by their own name, and because Metras opened the scene with the line: "This is a piece I did for my Theater and Development class last semester" – a class that is known for its autobiographical performances. She deeply feared that being marked as the actual victim of sexual assault would have larger social consequences for her. Those fears became her meta-emotions and kept her from engaging with the scene for most of the rehearsal process. Later, during the run of the performances, she merely mumbled the opening lines, which "identified" the scene as possibly autobiographical, and further obscured this pseudo-authentification by physically turning away from the audience.[19]

[18] See: Hooven, Gottman and Katz. "Parental meta-emotion structure predicts family and child outcomes." In: *Cognition and Emotion*, 9, 1995: 229-264. "[Meta-emotions are] what people think about feelings" in Oatley, Keltner and Jenkins. *Understanding Emotions*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006:305.
[19] Video documentation of *Per/Son/Alia*.

After the run of the show I conducted an interview with Metras. She was still shaken up and confused by the process but also somewhat exhilarated. At this point, Metras had not been able to clearly analyze her own performance process but felt that instead of precisely repeating the scene, she delved into each of the five performances anew. She let herself be guided by the physical and textual outline, but allowed for slight changes in the physical execution of the score to keep it "fresh." Joseph Bembridge, who played the rapist, initiated these nightly micro-changes, as challenges and surprises for his scene partner. Both had agreed on this process. This element of play became a double-edged sword; on the one hand it provided spontaneity and immediacy for Metras yet at the cost of physical risk, on the other hand it prevented the performers from developing a reliable score within which to explore emotional depth.

Figure 3. Krystelle Metras and Joseph Bembridge in *Per/Son/Alia.*

Metras was thrown onto a black wooden box, bruising her body badly during every rehearsal and performance – but in addition to feeling pain, it heightened the "reality" of the situation for her each time. One could speculate that the physical pain, surely numbed by adrenaline, helped to recreate the emotion in a realistic[20] way rather then to engage with the "performed emotion." In a class response to the play a fellow student, Antoine Yared, complained:

> The scene did seem harsh, and […] painful, and horrible. Like a real rape would be. Except it is NOT a real rape. […] Krystelle had been coming to class with bruises all over her body, arms and legs, for a good two weeks before the show opened. […] I have taken sword and stage fighting classes, and my final presentation had to be a fight/rape scene. My partner and I came out with no bruises. […] Because you are not supposed to get hurt! It's called ACTING.[21]

Here lies the fundamental contradiction – while Metras and Bembridge were striving for authenticity and "realness" – a "hot" performance, this audience member wanted a higher level of abstraction – a "cold" performance. These two positions are extensively discussed in the *Paradoxe sur le Comédien,* where Diderot clearly states his preference for the latter; the cold, controlled, reliable approach. Despite the admitted fact that a hot performance can be highly effective at times, he critiques the actors who immerse themselves in passionate feelings because he resents the irregularity, unpredictability, and unrepeatability of such "real" feelings.

In my reading, Krystelle Metras' meta-emotion "fear" numbed her physical and mental awareness during the scene in order to be less present – not unlike what can happen to victims of actual rape.[22] After a number of rehearsals entering the scene "cold" and not finding a way into its emotional world, both performers had decided that it didn't work for them and attempted to explore the scene "hot". Metras recounts that when she began to use her voice in the scene she started "to get it." "Oh my god it's real, I'm going to do a rape scene [because] when you get raped, you are not silent at all."[23] It seems that both during the

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[20] Realistic is here used as an imitation of reality – even in the sense of naturalistic – an imitation of nature.

[21] Play review by Antoine Yared, second year performance student, written for TPER 311, WS 2007, April 18, 2007.

[22] See related articles discussing dissociation in sexual assault: Foa, Edna B. & Olasov Rothbaum, Barbara. *Treating the Trauma of Rape: Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for PTSD*. New York: The Guilford Press, 1998: 24 ff. And: Whetsell Mitchell, Juliann. *Rape of the Innocent: Understanding and Preventing Child Sexual Abuse*. Taylor and Francis, 1995: 120-122.

[23] Video interview of Krystelle Metras by the author, Montreal, April 17, 2007.

rehearsal process and the run of the show the lines between levels of reality were blurred. The "realness" of the scene as experienced physically by the performer became nearly synonymous with an actual rape. Through their physically engaged performance style, Metras and Bembridge achieved lending a strong sense of "reality" to the scene; yet, without sufficient rehearsal time, they were not able to achieve both emotional commitment and a safe score – they had opted for commitment and blurring of different levels of reality.

When talking to Bembridge later, he first asserted that only Metras as the victim experienced emotionality, whereas he considered his role to be emotionally neutral. After some probing he admitted that his character's actions were guided by a form of cold, controlled anger (corresponding to the rasa raudra). I read his evaluation of the rapist as "neutral", as an attempt to disengage with the actual implications of the scene. Only when imagining his physical actions within the rasaboxes, which he had worked in during the emo lab, did Bembridge realize that his character could have only performed the act in raudra. Metras too felt that her character's emotional state was mostly anger, rather than fear or shame, which are the emotions most often associated with victims of actual rape.[24] Even though the scene was not rehearsed using the rasaboxes exercise, their participation in the emo lab gave these two actors a frame of reference, which enabled them to analyze the emotional layers of the scene in retrospect.

For the audience the scene felt "intense," yet it was not clear if that meant frightening, exciting, thrilling, or saddening. It seems to me that within an episodic play structure the audience's feelings are not resolved through an evolving narrative but rather tempered and shaped by rhythmic structures and juxtapositions; in this case the possible feeling of discomfort or uneasiness induced by the rape scene was quickly resolved in the immediately following song and dance number. However, in the long run, the scene stood out from the rest of the play and elicited quite a bit of commentary among the student community.

The feedback that the actors received from an audience that consisted mostly of fellow theater students was notable in that Metras experienced a distinct lack of commentary from other students. She interpreted this lack as a refusal to engage with her role as rape

[24] See: Bourke, Joanna. *Rape, A History from 1860 to the Present*. London: Virago Press, 2007; Brownmiller, Susan. *Against Our Will*. NY: Fawcett Books, 1975; Buchwald, Emilie, Fletcher, Pamela R., Roth, Martha, eds. *Transforming a Rape Culture*. Minneapolis MN: Milkweed Editions, 2005; Cahill, Ann J. *Rethinking Rape*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001; Campbell, Rebecca. *Emotionally Involved: The Impact of Researching Rape.* NY: Routledge, 2002.

victim, and in some way it confirmed her earlier fears of social ostracization. Bembridge on the other hand garnered open admiration. He received comments such as "powerful," "sexy," or admiringly "I could have never done such a scene."[25] During the course of my interview with him we discussed possible reasons for such divided responses. In addition to the fact that he performed the role of the empowered assailant, therefore playing into the audience's unconscious adherence to existing power hierarchies – his audience of peers knew Bembridge as an openly gay man who had just performed a one-man show celebrating his own, very vulnerable sexuality. This fact in my mind allowed viewers to enjoy his position of power more freely because of the implicit assumption that the gay man playing the part could not possibly be a "real" rapist. The rape victim however could be a "real" victim any day and thus any form of identification with her would remind an audience member of her or his own potential vulnerability, since for women and some men, the fear of being raped is always present – it is not a far-removed incident in a far-removed land but a "pervasive, sustained, and repetitive, […] element of the development of women's experience."[26]

The investigation of this short scene shows that both performers and audience, especially the familiar audience within a university setting, are strongly ruled by meta-emotions and complex cultural and social judgments. The performance of extreme states such as rape challenges the preconceptions of performers and audience alike. It seems that a more detailed understanding of these processes, a finer shading of the multiple emotional layers would work towards a more refined aesthetic experience. A stronger emphasis on the difference between "real" and "performed" emotion in actor training, using techniques such as the rasaboxes exercise,[27] may help to develop such understanding. After all, why should the emotional aspect of performance be "natural" when every other aspect of performance is usually so highly controlled?

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[25] Video interview of Joseph Bembridge by the author, April 17, 2007.

[26] Cahill 2001:4

[27] Other current forms of emotion training include for example Alba Emoting developed by neuroscientist Dr. Susana Bloch. See: http://www.albaemotingna.org. See also: Bloch, Susana, Pedro Orthous and Guy Santibanez-H. "Effector Patterns of Basic Emotions: A psychophysiological method for training actors." Reprinted in Zarrilli, Philip B., ed., *Acting [Re]Considered: Theories and Practices*. New York: Routledge, 1994. Of course Strasberg's sense memory exercise and a number of *Stanislavsky*-based approaches also offer ways to train emotional agility.

Thesis Layout

I am often surprised how soon after seeing a performance, audience members and critics will judge the actors' display of emotion. Everyone seems to be an expert in knowing what emotion is the right one for any given situation, how it should be expressed, how another person should react to it, how long it should last, etc. Indeed, there seems to be a clear understanding of the "right" and the "wrong" way of showing emotion on stage, at least as long as the performance remains in style and subject matter within a certain parameter of the known and familiar.[28]

The seemingly rather vague idea of a "right" and a "wrong" representation of performed emotion, applies not just to the technical accomplishments of the actors but also to ethical, moral, and aesthetic choices suggested by the performance. Thus the choices surrounding the performed emotion confirm or question the audience's self-understanding. But rather than to analyze the time- and place-specific differences in style, my thesis will focus on the emotion processes in performance. How does the performer "do it?" How does the student learn it? How can it be repeated?

Following this introduction, I will ground the discussion of my research with Concordia students by investigating current findings in emotion research in the fields of neuroscience, psychology and philosophy. Following this exploration, I will in chapter two analyze rasa theory as laid out in the *Natyashastra* in as much as it is relevant to the work in the rasaboxes. In chapter three I will show how the rasaboxes exercise and other current practices connect to historic theories of acting from the eighteenth century. My discussion of the exercises themselves in chapter four will allow me to draw comparison to current trends in North American actor training. Following this chapter on training, chapter five is concerned with the application of the emotion work to the rehearsal and performance process. In conclusion, I want to point towards the more metaphysical states of performance as rapture and transcendence. This overall structure allows me to investigate seemingly differing

[28] From my brief glimpses during the last two decades at some of the more recent German and Flemish theatres (Castorf, Martaler, Needcompany, Ivo van Howe) it seems that the style of performing emotions has become much more extreme, to a level where an actor can take almost infantile pleasure in his or her emotional outbreak. This style has not yet become very widespread in North America, aside from small emotional outbreaks in for example some of Ann Bogart's pieces (i.e. *bobrauschenbergamerica*) or some of the younger, often more European influenced groups and artists such as Pig Iron, Rude Mechanicals, Sabooge, Cynthia Hopkins.

subjects by linking them all back to the guiding problem at hand: what defines the performed emotion.

Chapter 1: Performing Emotion at the Affective Turn: The Emotion-Affect-Feeling Triad

Chapter one examines the state of current and recent emotion research, primarily in the natural sciences. The increasing knowledge of the emotion processes and brain functions involved in these processes changes the understanding of the role emotions play in all decision-making processes. It breaks down the differentiation between body and mind, cognition and emotion and restates these relationships not as binary opposites but as interlinking co-dependencies. In addition, the knowledge about the different emotion processes shows a reciprocal relationship between the scientific knowledge and performance practice. The goal of the chapter is to clearly establish these links. In addition, this chapter defines the terminology currently in use and how it is applied in this thesis.

I will discuss a number of different definitions of the terms "emotion," "affect," and "feeling," which in emotion research are often bundled together under the umbrella "affective states."[29] Emotion, affect, and feeling are at times used interchangeably, yet I will refer in this context mainly to the performed emotion, rather than the performed affect, or feeling. In reading Massumi[30] and Damasio,[31] I differentiate between these states both qualitatively as well as in regards to their duration. Other terms for affective states, such as "passion" or an earlier use of "affect" will come into play in chapter three when investigating the historical acting styles of the eighteenth century. Discussing the different uses of the terms will allow me to refer to a variety of emotion theories, highlighting which areas of research are applying what term, and how this can be useful in the discussion of the performed emotion. I will look at the conscious and unconscious relationship of stimuli to emotion particularly with the concept of "performed emotion" in mind.

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[29] See for example: Erber, Ralph, and Markunas, Susan. *Managing Affective States*. De Paul University, 2005. Affective states are at times also considered to be precursors to emotion.
[30] Massumi, Brian. *Parables For The Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. Duke University Press, 2002:24 ff.
[31] Damasio 1999.

Chapter 2: Is there Rasa in Rasaboxes?

Chapter two takes a look at rasa theory as laid out in the *Natyashastra*, thus examining one of the source inspirations for the rasaboxes exercise. My goal is to delineate more precisely between rasa theory in Sanskrit drama and the use of the term rasa in the contemporary exercise. After defining the emotion process as understood in the *Natyashastra* and the subsequent application recommended for Sanskrit performance, I will briefly investigate how rasa is applied by contemporary practitioners of "classical" Indian dance drama and what theoretical implication the understanding of rasa might have for performance. As rasa theory foregrounds the physiological emotion processes by suggesting minute physical scores to portray and possibly enter emotional states in performance, a tangible connection can be established between this approach and some of the acting manuals of the eighteenth century. Overall, this chapter helps to establish that the performance of emotion can be a consciously shaped artistic process. Rasa as an experience might be elusive and only attainable for the connoisseur audience yet the processes leading to rasa can be both clearly identified and analyzed. The technical steps leading to rasa thus become teachable.

The relationship between rasa and bhava, and the different sub-categories of bhavas, resonate with the detailed analysis of the performed emotion during the eighteenth century. However, our practical understanding of the *Natyashastra* today seems to be better informed than our knowledge of 18th century techniques because many of the principles of Sanskrit drama are still applied to the many classic Indian dance drama forms practiced today, whereas the embodied knowledge of the conventionalized 18th century forms have been lost.

Chapter 3: The Passions: Does the Actor "Really" Feel (Nothing)?

In chapter three, I am situating my discussion in relation to historical acting styles, creating a linkage to a period in Europe when acting was considered to be the key aspect of theatrical performance. Here I am interested in showing the understanding of the performed emotion during the "long" eighteenth century.[32] However, despite the fact that theatre

[32] I am referring to the period that extends from the late 17th to the early 19th century, or the period that lasted from the end of the Restoration era until the beginning of the Victorian era as the "long" eighteenth century it is sometimes defined in English Studies.

practice in central Europe at the time focused on acting and specifically the performance of the passions, signified by an outpouring of acting manuals, the different emotion processes are portrayed as opposites or even mutually exclusive. This lead to strong differences in the approaches to acting that to some extent carried through to the twentieth century. By investigating emotion through the lens of eighteenth century acting practices, I hope to cast a new light on contemporary emotion research within and beyond the field of acting. Here, as in the earlier chapters, I will focus primarily on the performer's body, the performer's means and techniques of expression, and their desired effect on the audience.

Chapter 4: Training in the Emo Lab: The Art of Controlling, Shaping and Letting Go

In chapter four, I arrive at the empirical part of my thesis by describing the training in the rasaboxes exercise. My goal is to show how this training helps refocus the current actor's attention towards the potential of emotion, both as an analytical tool in text preparation as well as a practice for rehearsal and stage. The training heightens the performer's alertness and excitability. By connecting this training to some of the points discussed in the earlier chapters, I am establishing the reciprocity between practice and research. The chapter offers less of an analysis of the material but rather an introduction to raw research material that beckons for further research. Despite the fact that I have conducted the emo lab, workshops and class work, the potential of the exploration has not yet been fully realized. As part of my overall thesis this chapter supports my claim that emotion training in the 21st century is only just beginning to develop, but could potentially not only enhance current acting techniques but also create a bridge to research in other disciplines.

Chapter 5: Faking Suicide: Emotion Training for Jocasta's Cathartic Death

Here I investigate the application of the rasaboxes exercise and other emotion strategies to production rather than the training itself. This chapter, like the previous, is also based on empirical research with undergraduate acting students. It investigates the embodiment of emotion and its application during rehearsal and performance of *Oedipu*s by Canadian playwright Ned Dickens in spring 2009. In a threefold approach, the chapter aims to link script analysis to the production process and the particulars of the applied emotion training in order to show how intricately these aspects counter-influence each other. On the canvas of emotion techniques, I am investigating the role of the chorus and catharsis in contemporary

tragedy, and the complexities of staging Jocasta's suicide. Some of the actors had trained specific emotional states within an affective framework as laid out in the rasaboxes exercise prior to the beginning of rehearsal, others did not. I am looking at strategies of how to reconcile such discrepancies within an ensemble and the rehearsal process. With an up-close look at the Jocasta's suicide sequence, I want to show how the actress navigates between technical demands and an emotionally filled performance. Situated within a re-emerging field of affective studies in performance, this investigation is concerned with a technique that trains repeated access to performable emotions.

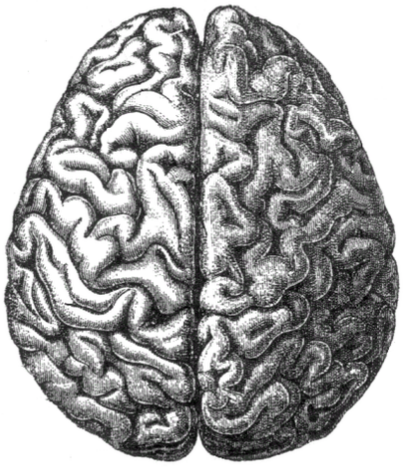
Conclusion: Transcending Emotion: Rapture

In the final chapter of my thesis, I explore the fleeting state of rapture. Rapture like rape is an extreme emotion. I want to bookend my thesis with this very different state of being "carried away."[33] I look at the possibilities that extend beyond the performance of emotion, a metaphysical overstepping of the framework of acting aiming for the desire for transformative moments experienced in live performance by both performers and audience. Here the binary between performed emotion and lived emotion collapses. Rapture can be experienced suddenly when encountering a certain cadence in a voice, in an erotic encounter, in devotional meditation and in the awe-inspiring meeting with beauty in nature or art. These moments have been described in many of the historical examples I have discussed in earlier chapters, such as in Sanskrit drama or its contemporary forms such as Kathak, by eighteenth century audiences and actors, or in ritual or ritual-inspired performances beyond the conventional stage.

Yet the example I am using, Peter Schumann's performance of Penelope in Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses*, shows once more, how a potentially rapturous moment is a carefully built composition. Here rapture can only happen because the performer is able to let go within the constructed space. A continuation of the discussion on catharsis from chapter five is aimed to shed further light onto the most elusive yet most powerful moments in live performance. I propose that the art and craft of performing emotion is a necessary tool in achieving the state of "being moved" that can only happen in the here and now of the moment. How this moment is theatrically framed is an entirely different discussion.

[33] Rape like rapture is rooted in the same Latin word "raptus" meaning to be carried away, see Conclusion.

Chapter 1:
Performing Emotion at the Affective Turn
The Affect-Emotion-Feeling Triad



When talking about the performed emotion today, a very wide field of emotion research outside of performance practice needs to be taken into consideration. Research and discourse across the humanities, social sciences, and sciences have taken what has been termed an "affective turn." In the foreword to Patricia Ticineto Clough's "The Affective Turn" Michael Hardt proposes, "the affects pose a problematic correspondence across each of the divides: between the mind's power to think and the body's power to act, and between the power to act and the power to be affected."[1]

Much of the current research on affect and emotion in the sciences and social sciences is concerned with the biological and cognitive processes that occur in an emotion event. Human brain function becomes more explicable with the enormously refined possibilities in the neurosciences including the fact that non-invasive research can be undertaken more easily. The more detailed understanding of emotion processes, and thus human behavior, leads on one hand to a more refined manipulation and adjustment of that behavior through chemical and behavioral therapy and a deeper understanding of the cause and effect relationship between the affecter and the affected on the other.

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[1] Hardt, Michael. "Foreword: What Affects are Good For." in: Clough, Patricia Ticineto, Ed. *The Affective Turn*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007: X f.

How does this knowledge influence the techniques of the performing artist who performs emotion on all levels and in all shades of expression and for a variety of dramaturgical goals? In an Aristotelian dramaturgy the emotion is to be mimetically co-experienced in order to induce pity and fear and ultimately catharsis in the audience; in a Brechtian context the detached presentation of emotional behavior shows how behavior is culturally and socially determined; in a postmodern setting the fracturing of the emotional score underlines the precariousness of identity in an art form that is based on embodiment. The current findings in emotion research also throw new light on the old acting conundrum, "from the inside out" or "from the outside in." Theories of cognition are pitted against theories of embodiment and theories of the unconscious; some of the ensuing debates and inquiries correspond well with those in the theatre. And though these current emotion theories show that the body/mind divide can no longer be supported, the debate is still ongoing in the field of acting.

As an empiricist and practitioner, I am looking at the embodied emotion - specifically in the context of theatrical performance. As such the affected as well as the affective body of the performer is my locus of inquisition. And even though "affect becomes a focus of [my] analysis"[2] it does not in and of itself attempt to "conceptualize affect" or turn it into both subject and modus of critical inquiry. I do see myself however situated in a quagmire of affect and emotion theories that vary from discipline to discipline, from personal outlook to alignments with influential and potent streams. Writing from relative seclusion, I find the multiplicity of impulses highly stimulating. Looking at theater itself as one big mirror neuron in the societal transmitter pathways, certain questions posed by researchers outside my field are more easily understood within the setting of performative practice.[3]

One of my stumbling blocks has been to delineate the difference between the affective states: most pressingly between affect and emotion, as well as feeling, but also between sentiment, passion and mood. As mentioned earlier, the difference between those states could be defined on a temporal scale, concerning speed of onset and duration. Affect, or what is more precisely called core affect has the shortest onset-time; the emotion process is just slightly slower, followed by the experience of

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[2] Clough 2007:1.

[3] I.e. Damasio's much debated "as-if loop", Damasio 1999, Prinz, Jesse. "Embodied Emotions." in Solomon 2004:48 can be compared to Stanislavski's "if" in *An Actor's Work*, Routledge, 2008: 48 ff.

feelings.[4] The duration of core-affect is short, emotions are considered to last from seconds to a few minutes and feelings can linger a bit longer. Moods of course can last several hours, even days, but continuous or rapidly switching states of intense moods might be considered pathological states such as depression or bipolar disorder.[5]

Yet, in current scholarship many complex, and qualitatively differing definitions of affect, emotion and feeling are being used. Often there is no agreement amongst researchers as to what is called an "emotion" and what is called "affect" and how one might be differentiated from the other. Another possible approach to this dilemma would be to use the terms "affect" and "emotion" synonymously like for example English professor Sianne Ngai in "Ugly Feelings" suggests: "... I use the two terms more or less interchangeably" (2005, 27).[6] In contrast to Ngai I am finding that a more precise delineation is desirable when trying to pick apart the business of performing affective states. Because if there is a difference between what these terms imply then this might mean that there need to be different processes or techniques to approach these states in performance.

Working with source text in different languages and from many historic periods further complicates the differentiation between these states. In Roman, as well as 17th and 18th century literature and corresponding research the term "passion" is often used, "affect" too is common in the early 18th century, during the 19th century the term "sentiment" is more often used. Yet all these terms are still in use today, as for example the translations of the *Natyasastra*, where bhava is translated as sentiment, or as book titles such as *The Player's Passion* show. However, research in neuroscience or psychology rarely makes use of the terms "passion" or "sentiment," and thus it will be difficult to align them clearly with the already complicated "affect – emotion – feeling" triad. I will attempt to shed some light on those latter terms in chapter three.

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[4] Feldman-Barrett, LeDoux, Damasio.

[5] There are also researchers who consider some of the emotions, such as anger, to last much longer than minutes, but days or even weeks.

[6] Ngai does cite several definitions of affect and refers to the basic difference between affect and emotion as: "... originated in psychoanalysis […] with affect designating feeling from an observer's (analyst's) perspective, and "emotion" designating feeling that "belongs" to the speaker or analysand's "I."" (25) She further qualifies: "the difference between affect and emotion is taken as a modal difference of intensity or degree, rather than a formal difference of quality or kind." (27) At this point Ngai's definition seems to further complicate the matter in this context, yet it might shed light on the definition of affect within some areas of critical studies. Unfortunately the psychoanalytic sources for this definition are not cited.

Among some fields of research such as anthropology, history, and critical studies, the cultural circumstances that shape emotional responses are of main concern. In ethnographical or historical case studies specific behavioral events are described and discussed[7]. In theater studies usually a combination of geographically and historically defined circumstances and the corresponding behavioral models have been applied to the analysis of emotional states. In *The Player's Passion*, Joseph Roach investigates the close link between the scientific knowledge of the emotion process of a given period with the corresponding understanding of the performed emotion. Peta Tait examines in *Performed Emotions* the implicitly gendered emotions in Chekhov's plays, specifically in the performances directed by Stanislavski featuring Chekhov's wife, the MAT actress Olga Knipper.[8]

I only partially agree with Peta Tait's suggestion that "the prevailing beliefs about emotions in the theatre and its scholarship are that they are culturally neutral and can be performed."[9] Rather I believe that though in principle theater makers are aware of cultural and historical differences, performance practice rarely allows for a deep investigation of those specific practices and too easily reverts to the available contemporary. And yes, emotion is performed but rarely with the acknowledgment of the fact that there is a specific choice to be made. This particular statement by Tait and its implications for performance practice deserves a much deeper discussion elsewhere. There is now a growing body of research available that investigates affective states during specific historic periods. Detailed literature on the application of these affective states, as opposed to textual or cultural analysis (other than of course the many source texts), is however not easily found.[10]

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[7] See for example: Lutz 1988, Reddy 2001, and Rorty 1980.

[8] Tait explains that "Knipper exemplifies the actress as intermediary between the writer's and the director's instructions about the acting of the female character's emotions." She argues that the specific position of Knipper, portraying key characters in Chekhov's four major plays and the ample amount of secondary sources relating to these performances allow for a critical examinations of the gendering of emotions in Chekhov's plays. Tait, Peta. *Performing Emotions*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2002: 9.

[9] Tait 2002:1.

[10] A good overview of mostly central European acting theories and their different treatments of emotions from baroque to the 20th century can be found in: Roselt, Jens. *Seelen mit Methode. Schauspeiltheorien*. Berlin: Alexanderverlag, 2005.

Emotion Process

Before defining the terms emotion, affect and feeling for my own usage and suggesting how they can be applied to the performance context, I will attempt to summarize some of the different emotion and affect concepts that have been of interest to my investigation. At once elusive and ever present, emotions are hard to pin down. Researchers in the sciences, social sciences and humanities alike have tried to define and re-define what emotions are, but are often not talking about the same phenomena. Neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux expresses his view thus:

> A scientific understanding of emotions would be wonderful. It would give us insights into how the most personal and occult aspects of the mind work, and at the same time would help us understand what may go wrong when this part of mental life breaks down. But […] scientists have not been able to agree about what an emotion is. Unfortunately one of the most significant things ever said about emotion may be that everyone knows what it is until they are asked to define it.[11]

In biological terms Antonio Damasio suggests that emotions are complicated physiological processes, which involve a variety of substances in specific brain areas and result in both outwardly visible and imperceptible changes throughout the body.[12] New possibilities in neurological research have allowed us to learn in more detail how these processes work and have enabled us to pinpoint certain areas in the brain that are involved with one or more specific emotions. For example the amygdala, located deep inside the temporal lobe, underneath the uncus and near the brainstem, is apparently involved with fear.[13] Should both amygdalae get damaged, a person may no longer be able to properly evaluate a situation that could be potentially frightening. The person cannot experience the emotion of fear, and thus must live without the benefits of fear's protective function.

The ability to both evaluate a situation, which is a cognitive process, and to experience the appropriate emotion in response, the physical reaction, are closely

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[11] LeDoux, Joseph. *The Emotional Brain*. New York: Touchstone, 1996: 23

[12] Damasio (1999). I will return in more detail to discuss how Damasio and others have expounded on the William James theory of emotions and its inextricable linkage to bodily change when discussing "feeling".

[13] See LeDoux (1996), and Damasio (1999).

interrelated. The counter-dependent connection between cognition and emotion had already been recognized by Aristotle and the writers of the Natyasastra,[14] and point to what is today considered to be the basic function of the emotions, namely to appraise or evaluate a situation and by doing so to help us with decision making, or goal-oriented behavior. In a linear analysis this would mean that in a given situation an emotional stimulus manifests, this information is processed and results in an emotional response, which is made up of physiological and mental changes, leading to an action in response to a trigger.

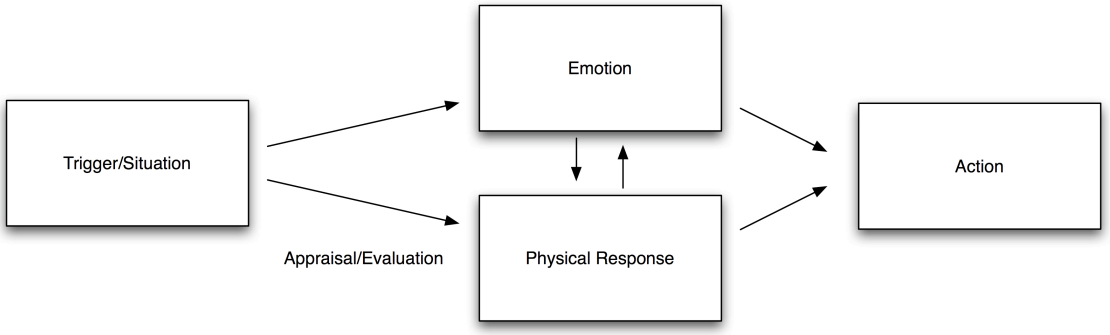

Figure 4. Diagram of emotion process.

As to the question of whether this process of appraisal and decision making takes place in the conscious or subconscious realm, psychologist R.B. Zajonc and cognicist psychologist R.S. Lazarus engaged in a public debate during the eighties and nineties. In reaction to the fact that cognicists began to treat emotion merely as another cognitive process, Zajonc tried to relocate the emotion processes at least partly back to the realm of the unconscious.[15] The so-called cognition-emotion debate was carried out when emotion research in psychology, cognitive science, neurobiology, philosophy and anthropology intensified. In 1980, Zajonc had provoked the debate with an article that stated (and it is important to note here that Zajonc speaks of affect rather than emotion): "Affective reactions can occur without extensive perceptual and cognitive encoding, are made with greater confidence than cognitive judgments and can be made sooner."[16]

[14] I will discuss Aristotle's definition, and the construction of emotion in the Natyashastra in chapters 3 & 4.

[15] I will pick up the thread of conscious and unconscious affective states at a later point. In the past 30 years, the understanding of cognition has changed considerably, so that today one can speak both of conscious and unconscious cognition. For further reading, see Solomon, 2004: 79 and LeDoux 1996: 69.

[16] Zajonc, R. B. "Feeling and Thinking." In: *American Psychologist*, Vol 35, No.2, 1980, 151-175.

Which Lazarus countered in 1982 with: "Thought is a necessary condition of emotion"[17] and later paraphrased this response in 1999:

> […] The position that emotion could not occur without both cognition and motivation. Emotion is always a response to meaning, which includes the implications of a transaction for one's personal goals, regardless of how that meaning was achieved. And in creating meaning out of the person-environment relationship, personal motives play a fundamental role, since without a goal at stake there would be no emotion.[18]

In his 1999 essay: *The Cognition-Emotion Debate: A Bit of History*, Lazarus reviews the argument and offers a meta-theory that reflects what cognitive scientists seem to have by now widely agreed upon, namely that the basic element in the emotion process is deep goal-relevance which implies a cognitive process as well, concluding that emotion and cognition function as one tightly interrelated web created by neurotransmitters and somatic markers. Zajonc's thread about the primacy of affect has been picked up by later researchers and I will return to this discussion later in the chapter. What interests me about this debate beyond trying to understand the biology of emotion processes is to what degree this debate mirrors the debate in acting theory about the performed emotion: is cognition necessary to express emotions? I will pick up this thought in chapter four and five.

Perhaps LeDoux challenges the idea of one unified definition of emotion to such an extent because on one hand he understands emotion to be an umbrella term for a variety of different affective processes which in lay terms seem to all be part of a distinct group of behaviors, commonly known as emotions; and on the other his research shows that not only the physiological processes between distinct emotions differ, but that there are also at least two different types of processes possible for a single emotion.

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[17] Lazarus, Richard S. "Thoughts on the Relations between Emotion and Cognition." In: *American Psychologist*, Vol. 37, No. 9, 1982: 1019-1024.

[18] Lazarus, Richard S. "The Cognition-Emotion Debate: A Bit of History." In: *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*. 1999:8.

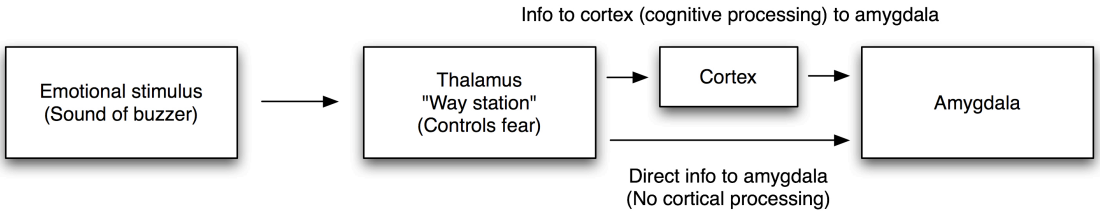

Figure 5. "The High Road" and "the quick and dirty processing pathway" by Joseph LeDoux.[19]

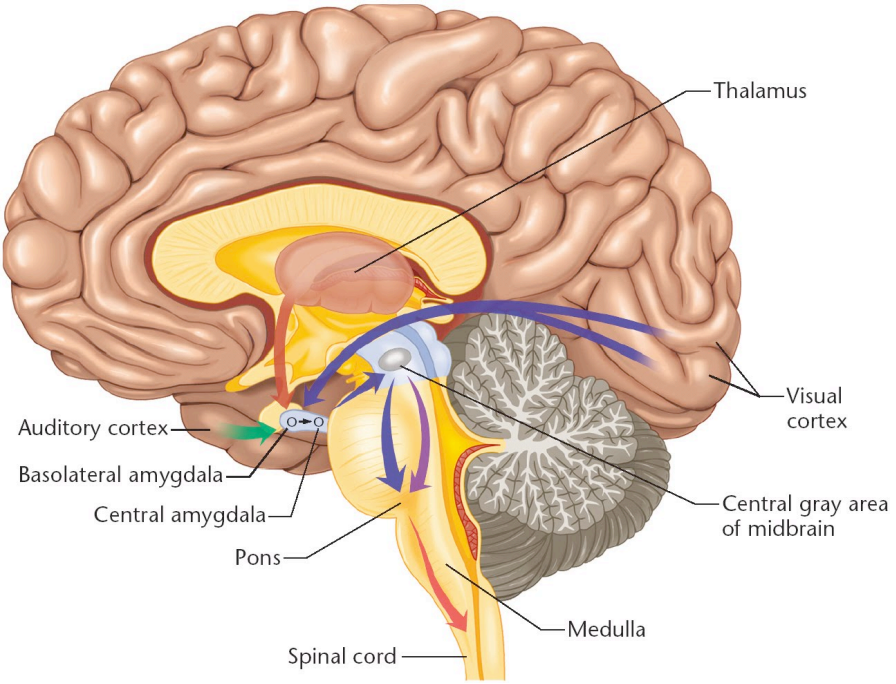

Figure 6. Brain areas involved in emotion processes.

Already in 1991, Lazarus also differentiates "between two modes of appraisal: one automatic, unreflective, and unconscious or preconscious, the other deliberate and conscious," which corresponds with LeDoux's cortical and non-cortical processing ways. Looking at these two forms of emotional processes several researchers now manifest this delineation which leads both to a qualitative as well as a temporal difference in the use of terminology: they refer to the "quick and dirty processing pathway" as affect or core-affect, and the "high road" as emotion process.

In the recent decades scientists such as Paul Ekman, one of the leading

[19] Two ways of processing an emotional stimulus discovered by Joseph LeDoux in an experiment with rats; LeDoux 1996: 164. I drew this diagram in response to Jenefer Robinson's article in which she analyzes LeDoux' processing pathway: "Emotion, Physiology, and Intentionality." In: Solomon 2004: 35 f.

psychologists in emotion research who has been investigating the facial expression connected to emotion events since the 1960's, also differentiate between two forms of evaluation or appraisal (appraisal being the linking event between stimulus and emotion): a fast, automatic appraisal; and a much slower, cognitive appraisal. In 1999, the research regarding automatic appraisal had still not been conclusive, yet Ekman suggests that there "might be the appraisal which occurs in a sudden loss of support, or when an object is perceived to be moving very quickly directly into one's visual field. But such examples are probably rare. Perhaps they act as metaphors for many other events to become associated through experiences with emotion."[20] Curiously, his writing on unconscious appraisal mechanisms reminds one of linguist George Lakoff and philosopher Mark Johnson's primary metaphors and image schemes. For me the question arises whether or not emotion models like this can be applied to acting and audience perception.

When trying to imagine the emotion process as it occurs during performance, I am thinking of one of the early steps of rasa box exercises, called by Minnick and Cole "Embodying the Rasa;"[21] the performer jumps into one of the rasa boxes and immediately assumes a physical pose that is meant to embody that specific emotion. The question that immediately arises is how does she do it? How does she work? The cognitive process has begun before entering the box, the exercise has been explained to the participants, by choosing a box the performer knows the rasa that is to be expressed. The goal, to express the rasa, is the given of the exercise, the motivation is implicit, as well as the assumption that the participants want to learn how the exercise works. Yet in the world of theatrical reality we are talking about reality twice removed, so that the outer parameters do not necessarily reflect the individual performer's goals and cognitions, let alone motivations. Neither do the above-mentioned goals and motivations prepare the performer for any one specific rasa. So the preparation remains at best generic, and one is thrown back to the question: how does the performer create in just a few microseconds goal, motivation and emotion when jumping into a rasa box without any situational givens aside from the here and now of the rehearsal space? Or in correspondence to Lazarus' theory: to what "meaning" does the performer respond? Are there primary metaphors and image schemes at work when the performer immediately

[20] Ekman 1999: 52.

[21] Minnick, Michele and Cole, Paula Murray. "The Actor as Athlete of the Emotions: The Rasaboxes Exercise." In: Potter, Nicole, ed.: *Movement for Actors*. New York: Allworth Press, 2002: 218.

takes a body protective pose in the fear box (bhayanaka) or puffs up his chest in the courage box (vira)?

This question has of course been asked many times. Aristotle defined emotion as evaluative response to a trigger; Roman schools of rhetoric defined both the orator's build of emotional delivery as well as the resulting audience response. In the 18th century the debate about the performed emotion intensified, and along with it a great number of acting manuals, including the resulting provocations and rebukes were written. Yet the question wants to be asked again today in light of the current turn towards affect: how does the performer do it?

My own empirical approach results from my activities as teacher/observer and participant/observer. Thus I do not only suggest the use of empirical studies with other performers and student performers as the subject of my investigation but also my own experiences as teacher/participant, which is, in one historian's view, "the bridge which only asses cross."[22] Yet, I want to argue with Bruce McConachie for the validity of such an empirical, experiential approach. In his essay, "Doing Things with Image Schemas: The Cognitive Turn in Theatre Studies and the Problem of Experience for Historians," he lays out numerous positions that criticize convincingly the value of experience in scholarly discourse. Joan Scott, for example, brings the poststructuralist critique into focus when she writes:

> When experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience or the historian who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence on which explanation is built. Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one's vision is structured--about language or discourse in history--are left aside.[23]

The validity and poignancy of such a critique has to be both absorbed and overcome in order to be able to continue with my project. In the course of this thesis I want to argue that the precarious position of the observer/practioner is well situated to explore the fragile craft of performing emotion. It is this practice itself that is in

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[22] Pickering, Michael. *History, Experience, and Cultural Studies*. NY: St Martin's Press, 1997:208. As quoted in McConachie, Bruce. "Doing Things with Image Schemas: The Cognitive Turn in Theatre Studies and the Problem of Experience for Historians." in Theatre Journal 53(2001) 569-594, The Johns Hopkins University Press. Complete quote: "From the poststructuralist viewpoint, […] the bridge which only asses cross."

[23] Scott, Joan. "The Evidence of Experience." *Critical Inquiry*, 17 (Summer 1991) 773-97.

performance often purposefully veiled in order to achieve an illusion of reality. The observer who wants to know what technique lies behind the performed is bound to either investigate appropriate schools of acting or to question the performers themselves. The observer/practitioner however is trained to move within the realm of the performed, the realm of the not me/not not me.[24] Her observation cannot simply be called "experience," which of course it is, but at the same time it is also the self-observation of the performer that is built on and feeds her knowledge about the art and craft of acting. The practitioner can add phenomenological inside to the investigation that as of now cannot be gotten otherwise. Though it would be very curious to rehearse and perform attached to electrodes so that one's brain activity and physiological reactivity could be measured, the gained scientific data would still not capture the whole of the performative process. David A. Saltz cautions in his editorial comment to Theatre Journal's *Performance and Cognition* issue that "when celebrating the untapped potential of empirical research, one should be wary of falling into the trap of physicalism, or scientism, which reduces all phenomena to physical facts and privileges scientific methods as the only legitimate means of accessing truth." He suggests that: "Scientific research methods lend themselves extremely well to certain types of questions …" yet he implies that there are questions regarding performative practice that might need additional, empirical approaches in order to find more complete answers.[25]

Back to McConachie's "ontological question of how humans process their interactions with the world and come to understand them as "experiences": does discourse shape experience or are there prelinguistic structures in the mind that constitute all experience, including discourse?"[26] A possible answer comes from cognitive science, whose goal is to understand how human beings perceive the world and construct their experiences. McConachie is leaning specifically on Lakoff and

[24] A term introduced by D. W. Winnicott and later taken up by Victor Turner and Richard Schechner (1985). Not me is the actor as character – not him or herself. Not not me is the actor embodying a role on stage while at the same time remaining him or herself.
[25] Saltz, David A. "Editorial Comment: Performance and Cognition." In: *Theatre Journal*, Volume 59, Number 4, December 2007, Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008.
[26] McConachie 2001:575.

Johnson's embodied realism theory as laid out in their *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought*.[27]

> Lakoff and Johnson's embodied realism holds that mental concepts arise, fundamentally, from the experience of the body in the world. As "neural beings," humans must make meaning within certain "basic-level," "spatial relations," and "bodily action" schemas, plus other concepts resulting from the interplay of experience and patternings in the brain. "Primary metaphors" flesh out the skeletal possibilities of many of these foundational schemas. […] Regarding spatial relations concepts, the "source-path-goal" schema, for instance, which humans learn at an early age by crawling from a starting point to an end point, undergirds numerous metaphors that organize certain events in our lives as narratives with a beginning, middle, and an end. "Balance," a bodily action schema, provides many metaphors for mental health, ethical behavior, and public justice. These primary metaphors are "creative," in the sense that they create an analogy linking to phenomena through similarity […]. Because these and numerous other primary metaphors link everyday experience to sensorimotor phenomena, most conceptual thinking cannot occur without metaphors. Metaphors originating in the cognitive unconscious structure the human perception of all experience.[28]

In his essay McConachie now relates primary metaphors that correspond with historical circumstances directly to theatrical performance analysis. By finding primary metaphors that relate to the cultural setting and tapping into the cognitive unconscious of the Zeitgeist, so to speak, McConachie tries to validate such experience-based source materials as reviews, playbills, interviews, etc. He does however add that a purely cognitive approach to history does not suffice and must be amended with other approaches such as systems theory, social practice theory and hegemony theory – as long as they are compatible with the basic ideas of embodied realism.[29] In respect to the actor-spectator relationship McConachie further suggests that

> spectators project themselves onto the "presence" of actors, a presence constituted both by the body of the actor and by the actor's significance in the performance. […] Hence, spectators project their subjectivity onto the presence of an actor on stage. In advisory projection, the spectator reads his or her own values into that presence. When the projection is empathetic,

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[27] Lakoff, George, and Johnson, Mark. *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought.* New York: Basic Books, 1999.

[28] McConachie 2001: 577-78, all quotations by the author.

[29] When talking about an American 1950's performance, *A Hatful of Rain,* he looks for period relevant image schemas that relate to the play. Among "containment, part-whole, compulsion, iteration, and counterforce," he focuses on containment. The image schema, containment, becomes a rich metaphor to investigate both the dominant American culture of the fifties, including politics and foreign policy as well as all aspects of this play, including its setting and audience response. (McConachie 2001: 584-5).

> spectators take what they perceive are the values of that presence and read them into their imaginative experience of it.
> Projection onto the presence of an actor is the first step in the dynamics of dramatic rhetoric and response on stage. Spectator projection of a metaphor binding these actor-characters together in a narrative is usually the second.[30]

It has yet to be investigated if the analysis via metaphorical similes can be fruitful for the understanding of applied acting theory, historical or contemporary. The principle of kinesthetically attained meaning making tools as put forth in Lakoff and Johnson's embodied realism theory however, offers a persuasive starting point to look at perception and experience in the theater.

The scientific definitions are of interest to the theories of acting in that they heighten the awareness of emotions and their purposes in human interactions, as well as that they draw attention to the different ways emotions can be produced and re-produced on stage. Psychologist and theater researcher Elly Konijn comes to the conclusion in her study *Acting Emotions* that actors on stage are mostly involved in task-emotions rather than character emotions as perhaps the audience assumes, independent of the style or aesthetic of the performance. Task emotions are concerned with the performer's self on stage rather than with a Stanislavskian "as if." I find Konijn's analysis somewhat one-sided in that it rests too much on the idea that the strongest driving source for the actor is his or her ego and the need for recognition, rather than, for example, a desire to play. She applies the goal relevance of the emotion processes to a generalized "actor's goal" rather than to role or situation specific goal. This also means that the actors "me" and not the "not me" would dominate in performance, which I believe many performers will repudiate – at least when put in this particular polarity. Before further discussing emotion theories as applied to acting I want to turn to some other emotion and affect theories.

Emotion and Affect

The philosopher Brian Massumi suggests that emotion itself is the mediated expression of affect, dependent on the multitude of information bits that

[30] Ibid 582.

shape behavior whereas affect is the most immediate response to a given trigger. Lisa Feldman-Barrett, a psychologist and emotion researcher, has worked extensively on core-affect, defining it as the "first" response: flight or fight, reward or punishment (Sylvan Tomkins), negative or positive. Only from this initial response follows the more differentiated, emotional response. Barrett suggest that core affect is one of the constituting elements in emotion experience. Core affect is an immediate reaction to a trigger. It is what makes one experience a situation on a scale between pleasure and displeasure, a feeling less specific than individual emotions but constituting a basis or root for an emotion. In her anthology
Emotion and Consciousness several of the writers actually use a modification of "flight or fight", they instead refer to "avoidance and approach," which sounds like a more imaginable definition of the same reflexive response to the contemporary mind.[31]

The idea that the emotions can themselves be divided into positive or negative groups, situated between pleasure and displeasure, has been researched by a number of psychologists and anthropologists. Historical anthropologist William M. Reddy for example cites a number of anthropological studies. In an attempt to list the existing emotion terminology for a specific people, these researchers place the emotion terms on a grid divided by double-axes, one dimension being pleasure–displeasure, the other arousal-sleepiness. These valence/intensity grids were used to trace and compare emotion families between different populations and showed in many cases names and concepts of emotions, that seemed to be in conflict with the six universal emotions proposed by Ekman. Further down in this chapter I will discuss in more detail theories pertaining to "basic" or "universal" emotions.

For theatrical practice the idea of pleasurable or not-pleasurable emotions might only be valid on some levels, but at closer examination one is reminded that the experience of pleasure does not necessarily correspond with the emotions that might be considered positive, like joy, love, or awe, nor that displeasure necessarily corresponds with so-called negative emotions such as anger, sadness, fear, and disgust. Seneca wrote about the pleasure in anger, and its potential usefulness. We recognize that sadness and even disgust can be pleasurable to a degree. The feeling of love might call up displeasure when it is experienced at a moment when it might be

[31] Barrett, Lisa Feldman, Niedenthal, Paula M., Winkelman, Piotr, eds. *Emotion and Consciousness*. New York & London: The Guilford Press, 2005.

undesired. Thus it seems that core affect adds a ground layer, a qualifying layer, to the complex system of emotion phenomena rather than to give information about the relationship between specific emotions that might be called up by the core affect.

The question then arises if Massumi's genuine affect or Feldman-Barrett's core affect can have a place in performance in addition to the performed emotion? Is it even possible for an actor to experience affect in performance, and would it actually be desirable? In the context of theatrical performance, can a moment of affect arise? It is easy to imagine that an actor on stage is exposed to a strong food smell, the actor privately might have an instantaneous affective reaction to that smell – avoidance or approach, yet in the performance situation this affective reaction might need mediation according to the given circumstances. When I was for example performing as Hitler in Richard Schechner's production of *FaustGastronome,*[32] towards the end of the play Faust is being fed Chinese Food, freshly delivered to the stage by the closest take-out joint. In addition to Faust, some of the other performers were eating the food on stage, at first eating with Faust, then feeding him, finally force-feeding him and defiling his bare body with the food until his final demise in an over-sized cooking pot. My character was not involved in the feeding but merely watching. Personally I do not like to eat while I am performing and the strong smell of this particular food became rather revolting to me, a reaction that set in as soon as the smell was perceivable. But because I was in performance, I transformed my own personal core-affect of avoidance to a more mediated performed expression of disgust mantled in superior disdain. In this case my negative core-affect matched and colored the character emotion (disgust, unsurprisingly, is considered to be a negative emotion). The other performers who were directly involved in the feeding and eating could not afford the core affect of avoidance. It is possible that the character emotion might overpower the actor's own affective response in order to perform the appropriate character emotion. In which case it would be true that personal affect only has a place on stage when there is room for it.

[32] *FaustGastronome*, directed by Richard Schechner and produced by East Coast Artists was performed ca. one hundred-times during the years 1992-95, in NYC, regionally and in the UK. This production was developed and performed prior to the work with the rasabox exercises.

But it might also be the other way around, that the actor develops an affective disposition for the role, which might in turn affect his or her disposition for the valence of their core-affective reaction. Obviously there is no actual proof that the immediate reaction to the smell of the food is what Barrett calls core-affect, for that I would need an expert's opinion, or even a set of electrodes, however I am trying to pick apart how on stage the performer deals with different levels of affective response, some on a personal level, others situation or role driven. My main point here is that I see core-affect as a process that affects the performer's self and has to be translated to the state of "not me/not not me" the performer inhabits during performance.

In case core-affect is induced by metaphors and image schemes the actor's reaction might depend entirely on the characteristics of the trigger. Imaginable scenarios include triggers that lie outside the performative frame, such as stage accidents, from the dropped prop to the broken limb, or events like blackouts or natural catastrophes. On the other hand it is also imaginable that the actor is trying to heighten her affective, pre-emotive responsiveness with the help of specific types of psychophysical training. Grotowski's early work on performer training with the plastiques and especially the corporals come to mind. The intense movements of the spinal cord in the corporals (extreme forwards and backwards bends as well as twists and undulations) are meant to access a level of being in the performer that could be called pre-emotive and pre-mediated, not-me, and not-not-me. I will explore this aspect of affective performance techniques in the final chapter of this thesis.

At this point I see the definition of affect widely differing between disciplines. Barrett, as well as LeDoux and other neuroscientists, cognicists and psychologists seem to lean towards a definition that stresses the temporality and valence potential of affect. When LeDoux differentiated between the two appraisal models he found that the pathway directly from thalamus to amygdala is twice as fast (twelve milliseconds in a rat) than the cortical pathway. Neither LeDoux himself, nor Lazarus, nor Ekman actually refer to "affect" as opposed to emotion when they talk about the thalamic pathway (the quick and dirty processing way). However the two different pathways they describe are used in other studies (Barrett) to differentiate between core-affect and emotion. Zajonc, when suggesting a pre-cognitive process for affective states, talks about affect, not emotion. The debate between him and Lazarus might have turned out differently had either of them defined more clearly how they

were using the terms affect and emotion respectively. To complicate things further, some researchers, for example Tomkins, speak exclusively of affect, which in his use seems to be synonymous with the term emotion used in more recent research. Damasio's translation of Spinoza's use of the Latin "affectus" offers yet another option: "drives, motivations, emotions, and feelings – [are] an ensemble Spinoza called affectus."[33] This definition of affectus corresponds well with my use of affective states as the overarching category.

Cultural theorists are more focused on the qualitative difference between affect and emotion. Affect as opposed to culturally mediated emotion, allows for the possibility of pre-cognitive behavior that as such opens up a potent, an as of yet little theorized area in human and animal behavior. Cultural anthropologist Kathleen Stewart opens her book *Ordinary Affects* (2007) with what could be called an ode or long love poem to the infinite possibilities she sees in affect. I will quote excerpts from the four-page sequence:

> Ordinary affects are the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies, and emergencies. […] At once abstract and concrete, ordinary affects are more directly compelling than ideologies, as well as more fractious, multiplicitous, and unpredictable than symbolic meaning. They are not the kind of analytic object that can be laid out on a single, static plane of analysis, and they don't lend themselves to a perfect three-tired parallelism between analytic subject, concept, and world. They are instead, a problem or question emergent in disparate scenes and incommensurate forms and registers; a tangle of potential connections.[34]

To me Stewart's definition of affect is an inspiration and reminder not to forget that aside from the scientism David Z. Saltz warns of, there is poetic potency in performance and in the performer's expression of emotion. When I admire the craft of an actor it is often because I can perceive this potency of affective possibilities in her play.

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[33] Damasio 2003: 8. Please note that the terms drive, motivation, emotion, and feeling here are used specific to Damasio's own reading of these terms. A discussion of drives and motivation might also be fruitful in connection to performance but has unfortunately no room here.

[34] Stewart, Kathleen. *Ordinary Affects*. Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007 1-4. Stewart cites as her sources and inspiration Deleuze and Guattari, Lauren Berlant, Roland Barthes and Raymond Williams.

Though, even when running in danger of creating one of the binaries dreaded by theorists, I agree with Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick who repeatedly criticizes the anti-biological stand in current theory.[35] When recently I went to a conference, I felt both shamed for my use of the term emotion rather than affect, as well as for the fact that my writing was based on findings from neurobiology, psychology and philosophy rather than critical theory, that is, a definition of affect rooted in Deleuze and Guattari's work and further expanded by Brian Massumi and others. There is a great enthusiasm attached to the seemingly new potentialities of affect, yet I am finding little in the literature I have looked at that I can directly apply to my investigation of the performed emotion, not even a definition of affect that would stand up to the manifold work that has been done in this area by other disciplines in recent decades. I don't mean to simply brush over a whole area of work in affect studies but know that this line of inquisition is not so relevant for this investigation at the moment.[36]

In several cases, affect has already become as vague a category as performativity has been accused of being.[37] When I came as a student to NYU's Performance Studies and the department had just turned ten years old, I, like most of us was swept away with enthusiasm for our new field; yet when I returned to my previous field, theatre, U.S. performance studies seemed to become more a field of insiders, surrounded by outsiders; and the study of mere theatre seemed to be viewed from the performative vantage point as old-fashioned in comparison. I am not at all bemoaning progress in theory and research, but I am wishing for more inclusivity and open-mindedness. These comments, beyond their anecdotal value, are supported by a palpable sense of unease within the field that shows itself in the move towards new topics such as the different "turns"; for example, some of the scholars associated with (American) performance studies are now following the cognitive or the affective turn.

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[35] Sedgwick 1995, 2003

[36] Here is a list of some of the recent works on affect that I cannot further address in my study: Terada, Rai. *Feeling in Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001. Aside from their introductions, Patricia Tincineto Clough's *Affective Turn,* Susanne Ngai's *Ugly Feelings*, Denise Riley's *Impersonal Passions*, and Kathleen Stewart's *Ordinary Affects.*

[37] Some of the remarks by panelist Johannes Fabian as well as acidic reviews in Berlin newspapers regarding the final festivities of the Sonderforschungsbereich *Kulturen des Performativen, Performing the Future* at the Freie Universität Berlin, 2001 to 2010 attest to this prejudice.

But it is not because of this developing body of theory that I chose to write about emotion rather than affect. Though the performer affects and is affected, the stage of being in performance is a stage of extreme alertness and a hyper awareness of the mediation of emotion. Many acting teachers encourage the actor to make choices, "make a choice, make a choice" echoes in my ear both from my experience as a performer as well as a teacher and director. The state of making a choice I believe is this infinitely small moment between core-affect and emotion that I described earlier. It is the moment between inhale and exhale, between exhale and inhale, when your lungs are either full or empty of air.[38] It seems that this moment could be the moment of affect described by Stewart, but I know it actually as a moment of intense emotion-cognition, where you define the goal and outcome of your next action. I am talking of cognition not as a conscious thought process but as Robert Solomon says: "Cognition is not to be understood only as conscious and articulate. There are primitive, pre-conceptual forms of cognition."[39] LeDoux speaks of the cognitive unconscious early in *The Emotional Brain*, and adds at a later point that "the hallmark of cognitive processing is flexibility of responses on the basis of processing. Cognition gives us choices."[40]

Feeling

It is even trickier to define the line between feeling and emotion, than to negotiate between affect and emotion. In popular understanding, feeling is linked foremost to our five senses, namely touch. But there are other definitions as well. "Having a feeling" sometimes refers to a pre-shaped, perhaps core-affective reaction to a stimulus, a so-called gut-reaction. It also connotes in theater talk the affective saturation of a performed emotion state as in "do it again with feeling." And finally, in lay terms, feeling constitutes the opposite to thinking. Why then has feeling become the choice term for researchers in different areas over emotion and affect? Robert Solomon admits that he in his earlier theories completely ignored the body and bodily feelings in his analysis of emotion, in 2004 he rectifies his former definition and states his "concern about the kinds of bodily experience that typify emotion and the bodily manifestations of emotion in immediate expression. These are not mere

[38] This breathing technique is based in yogic extended breathing practices.
[39] Solomon 2004: 79.
[40] LeDoux 1996: 69.

incidentals and understanding them will provide a concrete and phenomenologically rich account of emotional feelings in place of the fuzzy, and ultimately content-free notion of 'affect.'"[41] Several of the philosophers in Solomon's collection of essays, *Thinking of Feeling* investigate the relationship between emotion and feeling, and cognition and feeling. Martha Nussbaum points towards two kinds of feelings, those with a "rich intentional content" such as unrequited love, or those "feelings without rich intentionality or cognitive content – for instance feeling of fatigue, of extra energy."[42] In her view the former category may be connected to emotions, the latter may or may not accompany emotions but is not a necessary part of them. Nussbaum's thesis opens up the question of how feelings are tied to emotions and under what circumstances.

The answer comes from the neurosciences in the form of Damasio's third book, *Looking for Spinoza*. On the first page of his book Damasio points out that he uses "feeling" always in its principal meaning: "The principal meaning of the word feeling refers to some variant of the experience of pain or pleasure as it occurs in emotions or related phenomena; another frequent meaning refers to experiences such as touch as when we appreciate the shape or texture of an object."[43] He goes on to analyze the relationship between emotion process and feeling and their temporal interrelatedness. The feeling of pleasure or pain, as of now, cannot be made visible to the researcher's eye. Yet feeling undoubtedly exists, thus Damasio calls it "of the mind", being elusive to investigation, rather than the thoroughly measureable, bodily emotion processes. He says: "In the narrow sense emotions are externalities."[44]There are several points in his analysis which resist a popular understanding of feeling. When he states more than once that "emotions and related reactions are aligned with the body, feelings with the mind,"[45] I am tempted to object; isn't feeling the ultimate body experience? However, goose bumps on the skin are not feelings but part of the emotion apparatus and are wholly measureable. The question is, when do we begin feeling that we have goose bumps?

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[41] Solomon 2004: 85.
[42] Nussbaum,Martha. "Emotions as Judgments of Value and Importance." in Solomon 2004: 195.
[43] Damasio 2003 -3n.
[44] Damasio 2003: 29.
[45] Damasio 2003: 7.

He further states that the emotion process always starts first and is then followed by feeling: "Feelings [...] are mostly shadows of the external manner of emotions."[46] In his research of measuring skin conductivity, he found out that "*changes in skin conductance always preceded the signal that a feeling was being felt*. In other words, the electrical monitors registered the seismic activity of emotion unequivocally *before* the subjects moved their hand to indicate the experience had begun."[47] So in biological terms the body's reactions start before they are registered, which means feeling is a kind of knowing. How does this play out in performance? I believe my example from earlier, "once again with feeling" still holds true. The actor can show the signs of emotion without endowing them with feeling. Damasio's thesis also supports the James-Lange theory about the sequence of the emotion process beginning with bodily changes. In his essay "What is an Emotion?" (1884), William James states that "*the bodily changes follow directly the* PERCEPTION *of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur* IS *the emotion*."[48] His dictum, considered by some as counter-intuitive, remains a provocation to current researchers and has been refuted and adjusted numerous times.

In his re-reading of James-Lange, Damasio' includes the possibility of the "as-if" loop, and the many variations of unconscious and conscious parts of the emotion process this allows. The as-if loop suggests that without actual chemical or electrochemical reactions, quasi bypassing the body, messages can be conveyed to the prefrontal cortex and result in an emotion.[49] But for the actor these are all questions of choice: of choosing how to enact an emotion sequence within the given circumstances of a production. If parts of an emotion process are meant to seem unconscious, it is the portrayed character, who is unconscious, not the actor. On the contrary, it is one of the worst criticisms for an actor to be accused of acting unconsciously. Not that all actors are fully aware of what they are doing at every microsecond on stage, but if they are not, it is not because they choose not to, but because they may not be able to. Stanislavsky was looking for ways of how to tap the actor's unconscious through conscious means in order to use this hidden wealth of affective memories for

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Damasio 2003: 101. Italics are by Damasio.
[48] James, William. "What is an Emotion?" In: Solomon 2003: 67, italics and capitalization by James.
[49] Damasio 1999: 279-84

performance. This process and the subsequent changes in Stanislavsky's outlook on the system, away from affective memory towards the line of physical action, have been discussed in depth by Carnicke, Blair, Benedetti and Roach among others in recent studies and don't need to be repeated here.[50]

In *The Actor, Image and Action*, Rhonda Blair bases her decision to apply the term feelings rather than emotions to the actor's work on Damasio's thesis, but I am arriving at just the opposite conclusion. In my mind the actor's work on emotion may or may not be endowed with feelings. But the work I am discussing here, the performer's techniques of performing emotion, has more to do with the bodily processes of emotions then the mind processes of feelings. In order to further differentiate between different emotion processes I will turn to a discussion of basic emotions.[51]

Basic Emotions

> You don't have to be long out of theory kindergarten to make mincemeat of, let's say, a psychology that depends on the separate existence of eight (only sometimes it's nine) distinct affects hardwired into the human biological system.[52]

Taking a look at different theories about basic emotions, I want to examine how they can be related to the list of eight rasas that the rasic performance theory in the Natyashastra is based on, and, in extension, investigate how this particular aspect of emotion theory might matter to performance practice. The basic emotions are also sometimes referred to as primary (Damasio) or universal (Ekman, Prinz) emotions, terms, which lend themselves to more controversial readings. For the purpose of my research I will stick with the adjective "basic".

Paul Ekman alludes to three currently relevant definitions of what "basic" could mean in this context. First, basic could point to "a number of separate emotions that differ from each other in important ways [as in] their appraisal, antecedent events,

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[50] Carnicke 2009; Blair 2008; Roach 1993;Benedetti,Jean. *Stanislavski: A Biography*. New York: Routledge, 1988.

[51] A forth-coming book on affect in theatre by McGill Professor of English, Erin Hurley, also applies the term feeling in respect to acting. At his point, I have not had a chance to look at this book.

[52] Sedgwick and Frank in the introductory essay to *Shame and its Sisters, A Silvan Tomkins Reader*. 1995:2.The numbers of affects refer to Tomkins' list of eight or sometimes nine of what he calls primary affects.

probable behavioral response, physiology and other characteristics."[53] LeDoux suggests that particularly the physiological processes vary so strongly that a common grouping under the heading "emotions" hardly makes sense in biological terms. LeDoux and other neuroscientists helped to pinpoint the specific brain areas that are involved in the different emotion processes.

Secondly the word basic can introduce an evolutionary viewpoint to the understanding of emotions "indicating instead the view that emotions evolved for their adaptive value in dealing with *fundamental life tasks*. […] Each emotion thus prompts us in a direction which, in the course of evolution, has done better than other solutions in recurring circumstances that are relevant to goals."[54] Damasio further expands on this evolutionary theory by pointing towards the parts of the brain these emotions are connected to. These parts are in evolutionary terms older than others, i.e. amygdala and limbic system, connecting the basic emotions to those brain centers that are anatomically more closely linked to those of nonhuman animals. Some evolutionary theorists also propose that the basic emotions are cognitively simpler than the other, evolved emotions, the former geared to help with survival, the latter developed to function within social relationships.[55] Ekman aligns himself with both the first and second definition.

Lastly he turns to a third, seemingly more simple reading, namely that "the term basic has been used also to describe elements that combine or form more complex or compound emotions,"[56] – a category that is not further explored by Ekman. The philosopher Jesse Prinz, however, in his own investigation of basic emotions follows this last model. He states that basic emotions have to be unique, in that they cannot be a mix of or derived from other emotions. With this premise in mind he puts Ekman's list of six basic emotions to the test. This results in his proposition of a revised list of possibly basic emotions.[57] Prinz also points out that Ekman has been adjusting and extending his own list during the past decade (these more recent emotions are listed in brackets in Ekman's column of the basic emotion chart below). Robert Pluchik, adding acceptance and anticipation to Ekman's basic six, designs an emotion wheel with his

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[53] Ekman, Paul. "Basic Emotions." In: *Handbook of Cognition and Emotion*. Eds. Tim Dalgleish & Mick J. Power, Chichester, UK: John Wiley & Sons. 1999: 45.
[54] Ekman, 1999: 46, author's emphasis.
[55] See: Oatley, Keltner, and Jenkins. *Understanding Emotions*. Chapter 1, "Evolution of Emotion." Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
[56] Ekman 1999: 46.
[57] Prinz 2004: 79-102, 150-57.

eight basic emotions. These eight make up the inner part of the pie, and the primary and secondary mixed states, (dyads) form the concentrically widening outer rings of the wheel.

Basic Emotion Chart (next page): Based on: *Natyashastra*, several translations, see bibliography; Darwin, Charles. *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, ed. Ekman, P., Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1998; Kosofsky, Sedgwick & Frank, eds. *Shame and its Sisters, a Silvan Tomkins Reader*; LeDoux, Joseph. *The Emotional Brain*. N.Y.: Touchstone, 1996:112-114; Prinz, Jesse. *Gut Reactions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. This list is far from complete; there are many other theorists, contemporary and historic, who have come up with their own lists of basic emotions. For example Descartes listed joy, sadness, desire, love, hatred, and wonder as primitive emotions in his *Passions of the Soul*. Spinoza listed joy, sadness and desire; see also Solomon (2003) and Prinz (2004).

Basic Emotion Chart:

Natya-shastra (8)	Darwin (numerous)	Tomkins, also Izard (8)	Ekman (6/15)	Pluchik	Panskeep 4 (6)	Prinz (9)
Hasya (Humor, Mirth, Laughter)	Joy, High Spirits, Love, Tender Feelings, Devotion	Enjoyment Joy	**Happiness** (Amusement)	Joy	(Joy)	Satisfaction, Stimulation, Attachment
Karuna (Sorrow, Pathos, Compassion)	Low Spirits Anxiety Grief, Dejection, Despair (Suffering, Weeping)	Distress, Anguish	**Sadness** (Distress)	Sadness	(Sadness)	Separation - Distress
Bhayanaka (Fear, Dread, Shame)	Fear, Horror linked to Surprise	Fear, Terror	**Fear**	Fear	Panic (Fear)	Panic, Anxiety
Raudra (Anger, Fury)	Hatred, Anger	Anger	**Anger**	Anger	Rage	Frustration
Adbhuta (Wonder, Astonish-ment)	Surprise, Astonish-ment	Surprise, Startle	**Surprise**	Surprise		
Bibhatsa (Disgust)	Disdain, Contempt, Disgust, Guilt, Pride	Disgust, Humili-ation	**Disgust** (Contempt)	Disgust		Physical - Disgust
Vira (Heroic, Enthusiasm)		Excitement, Interest	(Excitement)	Antici-pation	Expectanc y (Desire)	
Sringara (Erotic Love)			(Sensory Pleasure)		(Sexual Lust)	Same as: Satis., Stim. & Attach.
	Self-Attention, Shame, Shyness, Modesty	Shame	(Embarrass-ment)			Aversive Self Conscious-ness
	Reflection, Meditation Ill Temper, Sulkiness, Determi-nation			Accep-tance		

The basis, on which the above researchers have arrived at their lists, varies considerably. The writers of the Natyasastra cross-referenced their work consistently with other major, mostly Vedic texts of their time, which are not part of this investigation. The understanding of the emotion process that is brought to rasa, the aesthetic of emotion only experienced in food and performance, is highly sophisticated. Emotion is trigger or situationally based, thus employing cognition in its process, and involving involuntarily bodily changes as well as behavioral-expressive physical changes. "Rasa is the cumulative result of vibhava (stimulus), anubhava (involuntary reaction) and vyabhicari bhava (voluntary reaction)."[58] The rasa aesthetic also functions within a highly formalized cultural context where it is pre-determined who (what type and gender of character) can have an emotion, what can cause it, and towards whom it can be directed.

Charles Darwin, as Ekman describes in his afterword to *The Expressions of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, used a variety of ways to gather his data, some of which do not stand up to current scientific standards. For example, he would base his findings on the information he gathered from a number of acquaintances, which had been travelling to, or were living in distant parts of the world. Their accounts deemed sufficient to confirm his questions regarding the universal expressions of emotions. "Ironically, Darwin's insight that facial expressions of emotion are universal has stood the test of time, but his evidence has not."[59] Without further discussion of his emotion theory, I am including Darwin's large list here because of his seminal position in basic emotion theory based on his detailed work on facial expression.

Similarly, Silvan Tomkins's affect theory had larger impact for its insightful observations and arguments than for the scientific basis of those arguments. His writings on emotion have found renewed interest in the area of critical theory through the recently published and re-edited *Silvan Tomkins Reader* by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick and Adam Frank. Tomkins, like Darwin, suggested that his set of basic emotions: "represent(s) innate, patterned responses that are controlled by ""hardwired" brain systems."[60] His theoretical work from the 50's and 60's places him as the father of cognitive psychology. Both Tomkins and Pluchik, in following Darwin, pioneered the research on discrete emotions in the mid-twentieth century. Pluchik, also an evolution

[58] Rangacharya, transl. & ed, *Natyashastra*. 1996: 55.
[59] Darwin (1998: 366) afterword by Ekman.
[60] LeDoux 113.

theorist, did not solely investigate facial expression but other bodily signs as well. His list varies little from Tomkins' adding "acceptance", replacing "excitement" and "interest" with "anticipation", and leaving out "shame". Carroll E. Izard, an advisee of Tomkins, arrived at similar findings ten years later, focusing her research specifically on child psychology.[61] Ekman too can be considered to be a follower of Tomkins. Tomkins like Darwin had focused on facial expression and gave his own research photographs to Ekman for further study.[62] Panskeep, a neuroscientist, instead of looking at facial expression or other human traits experimented with rats. He arrived at four basic emotions: fear, rage, panic and expectancy. When writing about humans on the other hand he does accept Ekman's list.

Ekman himself has gathered data on the facial expression of emotions for nearly five decades. He has identified six basic emotions: happiness, sadness, fear, anger, surprise and disgust, and connected them to specific facial expressions. In numerous field studies, he showed photographic images of such expressions to people from different communities around the world who were all able to recognize the emotions and name or describe them appropriately in their own language. From this he concluded that those six
emotions are biologically hard-wired and began gathering additional data on related biological phenomena such as heart rates, tear-duct secretions, skin conductivity, and

[61] Izard and Ackerman. "Motivational, Organizational, and Regulatory Functions of Discrete Emotions." In: Lewis and Haviland-Jones. *Handbook of Emotions*. 2004: 253.
[62] Ekman, 1998, 375.

Figure 7. The six universal emotions proposed by Ekman.
Top L-R: anger, fear, disgust; bottom L-R: surprise, happiness, sadness.

hormone levels.[63] In the 1980's and 90's, these studies had been widely criticized and spurred a number of alternative positions in the field; referred to as the "forced choice" critique, the main criticism was directed at the way in which Ekman and a large group of scientists researching this field had conducted their experiments. Forced choice refers to the process in which the research subjects were asked to align photographs of facial expression with words for the six basic emotions. Critics suggested that instead they should been given the opportunity to freely chose from all emotion words in their respective languages a term that would match the expression in the photograph. Ambiguous data on the autonomic and endocrine system states also turned up.[64] In a more recent article, Ekman (1999) rebuts these critics and proposes new readings for his findings. Of main interest to this investigation is that Ekman does not pose his theory in opposition to for example the findings in cultural anthropology. He acknowledges the

[63] Reddy, William M. *The Navigation of Feeling*. Cambridge University Press, 2001:12.
[64] Ibid, 12-13.

many differences in expression, evaluation and social importance of emotional states in addition to those basic six emotions. That being said, there is today enough research to firmly support the idea of basic emotions, and the list of six that Ekman has used, has been widely applied in research and literature.

What does this mean for the performer? That the expression of basic emotions can be read by audiences all over the world? That there are simpler and more complex emotion processes and that the performer has to portray them appropriately? That emotions other than the basic six are firmly rooted in cultural specificity and thus need to be very carefully looked upon, particularly when dealing with material that is foreign to one's own culture? I suppose these questions can be generally answered with yes and do not come as a great surprise to theatre practitioners. Basic emotions maybe universal in that many cultures differentiate between the same distinct emotional states. Some of these basic emotions signs overlap with the signs recognized by many cultures, while others don't. Those that overlap can be read cross-culturally in their extreme state of expression. The subtler the display of joy, anger, fear, etc., the harder it becomes for the observer to read the emotion correctly.[65]

When working with the rasabox exercises however, some more specific questions arise. In the rasabox exercise the eight rasas proposed in the *Natyasastra* are being used. On a first view, of those eight only sringara (love) and vira (heroic) do not match up with Ekman's six. Vira when translated as vigor, courage, or enthusiasm sounds similar to excitement and interest, but within the historic setting of the *Natyashastra* it seems to correspond more exclusively to the emotions associated with heroic epics. Vira is the rasa that is connected to leading male characters like King Dusjanta in *Shakuntala*, or any of the heroes in plays derived from the *Mahabharata* or *Ramayana*. Sringara (erotic love) is one of the most important rasas in Sanskrit drama. Sringara encompasses love for a human partner but also to a god. Of all rasas it lends itself most easily to transcendence (in union with a god) and blissful rapture, as the most desirable experience for the rasika (connosseur of rasic performance). In contemporary basic emotion theory the closest affect program to sringara is sensory pleasure (Ekman) or sexual lust (Panskeep) neither of which includes the concept of transcending to a metaphysical state.

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[65] See: Lutz, Reddy.

I will further discuss the relationship between basic emotions and basic rasas when taking a closer look at the actual exercises in chapters four and five. In that context I will also talk about the so-called mixed states or, as Damasio refers to them, secondary emotions.

To conclude I want to point out that in the emo lab context we often discussed if the eight rasas should be the only emotion states we work with. Are shame, jealousy, and guilt states that are of a different order? Yes, according to several researchers these emotions are considered to be cognitively more complex and thus called secondary emotions. Would it make sense to rename the boxes depending on what play one is working on? Or are there other ways to address play, setting, or period specific affective states? When looking at Darwin's or maybe Tomkin's lists it becomes very clear that each basic emotion is an umbrella for a host of variations that include states in different levels of intensity, directedness, urgency, alertness, etc. Working within these eight "families" has already opened up an abundance of possibilities, and saturation with the exercise has not been reached.

Terminology

Damasio proposes,

> … that the term feeling should be reserved for the private, mental experience of an emotion, while the term emotion should be used to designate the collection of responses, many of which are publicly observable.[66]

Finally for the record: in the terminology used in this thesis, affective states include all affective processes, core-affect, emotion, feeling, and mood. By core-affect I mean the most immediate, pre-mediated and pre-emotive reaction to a trigger on a level of avoidance or approach. If not otherwise noted, I call an emotion the response to a trigger that involves both bodily changes and cognition. This reading of emotion determines how one reacts to the trigger. Its expression is culturally and situationally determined, but there is a certain number of emotions that can be recognized anywhere. What is here defined as feeling is the knowledge or awareness of the performer that an

[66] Damasio 1999: 42

emotionally triggered bodily change has taken place, but feelings are not outwardly readable signs. And as I currently understand it, any and all parts of the before named processes can happen consciously or unconsciously.

The term affect as in critical theory is understood as a phenomenon of potency, pre-mediated, which can be applied to people but among other things also to situations, spaces, moments in time, music, and language and more. Thus, I conclude in this context that the actor as a human being knows and experiences all affective states. When performing she is mostly concerned with the performance of emotion with or without applying feeling. The actor can be affected and can affect others but cannot play affect.

Chapter 2:
Is there Rasa in the Rasaboxes?

> For wherever the hand moves, there the glances follow;
> Where the glances go, the mind follows;
> Where the mind goes, the mood follows;
> Where the mood goes, there is the flavor (rasa). [1]

The rasabox exercises[2] are a form of actor training in which the performance of emotion becomes the focal point of the training. Other aspects of actor training such as vocal work, movement training, period styles or text analysis become the means and/or objectives of investigation in the rasabox exercises. By this I mean you can work in the rasaboxes by, for example, focusing exclusively on vocal work, using your previous vocal training as your means but also expanding and investigating the vocal work by applying the special lens of emotion. The rasabox exercises are directly concerned with the performer's expression of emotions and her ability to differentiate between affective states. Here the actor's emotional agility is trained within a spatial framework. Before talking in more detail about the exercises themselves, I will discuss the meaning of the term rasa and rasa theory within the context of Sanskrit drama theory in some more detail. The aesthetics behind the term rasa as a part of Sanskrit terminology is in fact not directly related to the rasabox exercises. The detailed analysis of the emotion process as laid out in the *Natyashastra* can however throw light on the contemporary practice. I will argue, that rasa in this sense constitutes a provocation and possibly an ideological goal for the performer, yet the current practice is not directly related to the Sanskrit acting method. For this reason, I will continue to use the term "performed emotion" and not rasa in the context of the rasabox exercises.

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[1] Nandikesvara. *The Mirror of Gesture, Abhinaya Darpana*, transl., Ananda Coomaraswamy and Opala Kristnayya Duggirala. New Dehli: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1970: 17. (This translation was first published by Harvard University Press, 1917 following a request by Gordon Craig 'If there are any books of technical instruction [...] tell them to me, I pray you." 1.)

[2] I want to clarify the issue around the name of this form of training. In my experience and use of the training I have always called it the "rasabox exercises", but when Cole and Minnick trademarked the training they named it "rasaboxes exercise". I do not quite agree with the choice and prefer rasabox exercises, which rolls better off the tongue, unless I refer simply to the rasaboxes, leaving out the word exercise altogether. But aside from a pronunciation preference I want to argue that while there are indeed nine rasaboxes, they are each assigned to a different rasa and contained in one larger square or rasabox. In this case rasa becomes the overarching principle like emotion, divided into its different sub categories, the rasas or emotions. There also is a large and growing number of exercises associated with this approach, which is why I prefer to talk about exercises in the plural.

Rasa

Rasa can be translated as "that what is being tasted or enjoyed", but also as "flavor, essence, and emotion".[3] The *Natyashastra*, the ancient Sanskrit text on the performing arts, must be regarded as the primary source for the study of rasa. Originally a Vedic text ascribed to the mythical sage Bharata Muni, the *Natyashastra* is now regarded to be a conglomerate of writings by a number of scholars over a period of several hundred years. Since many of the commentaries on the *Natyashastra* keep referring to Bharata as the author rather than to a group of scholars, I will do so as well for operational ease.[4] The Sanskrit word *natya* means dance drama, and *shastra* stands for treatise or scripture, referring generally to knowledge, which is based on principles that are held to be timeless.[5] Using literary style and textual references as indicator, core parts of the *Natyashastra* (*NS*) are dated as early as 500 BCE and later parts could have been added until about 400 CE[6] though some scholars date it between 200 BCE and 200 CE.[7] The *NS* is a comprehensive compendium of the performing arts, practical, theoretical and religious. Everything that comprised Sanskrit drama, from poetry to music to architecture, from devotional practice to acting, costume, make-up and audience involvement is considered here. All performative elements together shape the encounter between performers and audience in order to achieve the "multisensorial, heightened aesthetic and emotional state"[8] called rasa. It is both the performer's process itself, as well as the resulting aesthetic

[3] Bharata-Muni. *The Natyashastra*, transl., Manomohan Ghosh. Ch.6, in the different translations rasa sometimes is also translated as "feeling" or "sentiment" instead of "emotion". Different commentators focus on the different aspects of meaning of the word rasa.

[4] In addition, this choice is based on Vatsyaya's discussion of authorship, 1996: 2-12.

[5] Olivelle, P., "Explorations in the Early History of the Dharmaśāstra." in Olivelle, P. ed. *Between the Empires: Society in India 300 BCE to 400 CE*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2006:169.

[6] Singal, R.L. *Aristotle and Bharata*, Punjab, India: V.V.R.I. Press, 1977: 17-21.

[7] This timeline is given for example by Sanskrit scholar Kapila Vatsyayan. *Bharata The Natyasatsra*. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1996, ch.1 -12; or in Zarrilli, P.B., McConachie, B., Sorgenfrei, C. F., *Theatre Histories*, ed. Williams, G.J., New York: Routledge, 2010: 103.

[8] Chakravorty, Pallabi. "Dance, Pleasure, and Indian Women as Multisensorial Subjects." *Visual Anthropology*, March, Vol 17 (1), 1-17, 2004.

experience, which in Sanskrit drama is equally shared between performer and audience, between rasa and rasika.[9]

The word rasa has been used prominently in other contexts than the performing arts, first and foremost it is associated with the flavor and taste of food. "The crucial elements of rasa as they pertain to food are the process of refinement, the balance of qualities, the blend of characteristics, the hidden or underlying basic elements (as stock is to soup), the particular and specific ways in which foods create physical life, and how food produces the transformation of the physical and metaphysical at once. Rather than thinking of flavor as an enhancing additive, Indian traditions view flavor as an essential, defining quality of food." [10] Secondly, rasa refers to an element in Indian alchemy, specifically an Indian equivalent to quicksilver or mercury, which functions as a curative agent.[11] It also has a meaning in ayurvedic medicine, but its main meaning leads back to "extract" or "essence"; and as its essential quality it came to mean "taste."[12] Bharata when asked to explain rasa answers:

> 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, etc., if they are sensitive, enjoy the different tastes and then feel pleasure (or satisfaction); likewise, sensitive spectators, after enjoying the various emotions expressed by the actors through words, gestures and feelings, feel pleasure, etc. This (final) feeling by the spectators is here explained as (various) rasas of natya.[13]

In the performance context rasa stands for that which is communicated between the performer and the audience through means of a highly conventionalized system of signs. Theatre historian Erika Fischer-Lichte suggests that rasa might be "a human disposition activated by the sign."[14] A similar notion is voiced by Sanskritists Coomaraswamy and Duggirala in their 1917 translation of the *Abhinaya Darpina*, the *Mirror of Gesture*. They state that "according to the Indian view, the power to experience aesthetic emotion [rasa] is inborn, it cannot be acquired by mere

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[9] Rasika is the enlightened observer. See: Schwartz, Susan L. *Rasa: Performing the Divine in India*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004: 26.
[10] Schwartz 2004: 9
[11] Schwartz 2004: 7
[12] Siegel, Lee. *Sacred and Profane Dimensions of Love in Indian Traditions*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1978: 43
[13] Muni, Bharata. *Natyashastra*, transl. Adya Rangacharia. New Delhi: Munchiram Manoharial Publishers, 1996: 55.
[14] Personal commentary by Erika Fischer-Lichte, July, 2009.

study…"[15] In its highest form during the Sanskrit period, rasa was considered to be a blissful state of union between humans and gods, rooted in the very bodily sensations of flavor and taste.

The *Natyashastra* differentiates between eight natya rasas:[16] sringara (love), hasya (humor), karuna (pathos, sorrow), raudra (anger), vira (heroism), bhayanaka (fear), bibhatsa (disgust) and adbhuta (wonder, surprise). A ninth rasa, shanta (white light, bliss or nothingness),[17] was added to the first eight some hundred years later by scholars, who argued that Bharata had already mentioned shanta, embedded in a clause in an early version of the text. The addition of shanta rasa was further supported by Abhinavagupta (ca. 950-1020 CE) in his famous commentary on the *Natyashastra*, the *Abhinavabharati*. Several of the currently available translations of the *Natyashastra* however have not included the additions regarding shanta, despite the high respect attributed to Abhinavagupta's scholarship. Abhinavagupta is in many cases considered one of the most important commentators of the *Natyashastra*. He wrote during a period when an entire sub-caste (Alankarikas – scholars of ornate poetry) was dedicated to scholarship of among other texts the *Natyashastra*. Some of the primary and secondary sources available during that period are now lost.[18]

Another aspect of this discussion about the inclusion of shanta circles around the fact that each rasa is paired with a so-called sthayi (dominant) bhava. Bharata however does not list a sthayi bhava for shanta. So scholars have been suggesting different bhavas that could be considered to be the sthayi bhavas for shanta, either "nirveda (repose resulting from indifference from worldly pains and pleasures) or sama (perfect tranquility)."[19]

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[15] Coomaraswamy and Duggirala 1970: 6. The Abhinaya Darpina is compared to the *Natyashastra* (NS) a much abridged treatise on gesture, which is supposed to be based on the Bharatanarva, another ancient treatise on dance that may have preceded the Natyasatra. Some scholars state that Basa's work is based on the Abhinaya Darpina, rather than the NS, as opposed to Kalidasa's, who is considered to be a master in the application of the dramatic rules of the NS.

[16] Pande 1996: 311. "It is worth noting here that the terms vibhava, anubhava and vhyabhicaribhava refer to stage representations, not to the realities of life. It follows therefore, that the rasa they produce must also be a stage effect rather than some aspect of real life. That is why the rasas are called natya-rasas."

[17] Translations of the rasas from compiled from Schwartz, 2004:15.

[18] Singal 1977: 61; Schwartz 2004: 16-17. As with many details regarding early Indian history the treatment of dates and time periods remains vague, and ultimately is not given the same importance as in Western historic scholarship.

[19] Singal 1977: 62.

Whether or not shanta may be considered one of the basic rasas still remains a point of debate. "Abhinavgupta accepted the shanta text of the NS, and established shanta not only as one of the rasas, but as a maharasa, the basic rasa. The relish of all rasas, he maintains, comes to reside in tranquility, after the withdrawal of our senses from their interests. All emotions when they come into contact with their stimuli […] emerge from shanta, and again merge into it, on the disappearance of those stimuli. Shanta is thus the basic rasa, the all-embracing sentiment, the bliss which is the annihilation of all ego."[20]

In order to achieve rasa the performer expresses the corresponding sthayi bhavas (conventionalized emotional states) by means of abhinaya (acting) in a combination of highly differentiated facial, and body movements. Language, music, and costume are also contributing elements to the rasic experience. Bhavas, and its many sub-divisions, are the elements a performer uses to compose an emotional state; the corresponding rasa is the experience of this state by both performer and spectator.

In the rasabox exercises the meaning of rasa and bhava is somewhat conflated. The boxes are named with the Sanskrit term for the basic rasas, but for the instruction given to the actor, the English translation of the corresponding sthayi bhava is used. The English translation of the sthayi bhavas can be transformed directly into a physical action and is thus more easily understood and applied by the performer rather than the abstracted state that constitutes rasa, i.e. the rasa "bibhatsa" is translated as "the odious", the corresponding bhava "jugupsa" is translated as "disgust'. For the performer, "disgust" can be played whereas "the odious" is an abstraction. In the *Natyashastra* the bhavas concern the actor's technique, specifically a technique that is rooted in traditional Sanskrit drama, which has carried over to many of the classic Indian styles of dance drama practiced today. The basic rasas and their corresponding sthayi bhavas in their English translation are:[21]

[20] Singal 1977: 61

[21] The names of rasas and bhavas are taken from two translations of the Natyashastra: Board of Scholars, 1986: 71, *and* Rangashara, A., 1986: 54.

Rasa		Sthayi Bhava	
Sringara	the erotic	Rati	(erotic) love
Hasya	the humorous	Hasa	merriment, joy, humor, laughter
Karuna	pathos	Soka	sorrow, grief, compassion
Raudra	impetuous anger	Khroda	fury, horror, anger
Vira	the heroic	Utsaha –	enthusiasm, courage
Bibhatsa	the odious	Jugupsa	disgust
Adbhuta	the mysterious	Vismaya	astonishment, wonder
Bhayanaka	terrific	Bhaya	fear, dread, terror

Each bhava is defined as a set combination of body movements, comprised of directions for the feet, legs and hip (stance), arms, shoulders, and head, and in particular detail, single movements of the fingers and hands (mudras), and the face, including the eyes. The quality of the emotional states varies according to the gender, age and social standing of a character, and can also be adjusted in tone to a character's overriding rasa within a play or an act of a play. Other determinants include the nature of the emotional trigger and at whom the emotion is directed. In addition, rasa does not only concern the expression of the individual performer but is a dramaturgical concept which gives guidelines on how to artfully juxtapose specific rasic states in order to achieve a guiding rasa for the whole of the performance. In many of the extant Sanskrit dramas, for example in Kalidasa's *Sakuntala*, that guiding rasa was sringara rasa. In sringara the sensual and devotional love to another person is expressed as well as the devotion to a deity, thus fulfilling the primary purpose of performance as ritual offering.[22] Another rasa that became the main rasa for many plays based on the Mahabharata was vira rasa, the

[22] Schwartz 2004

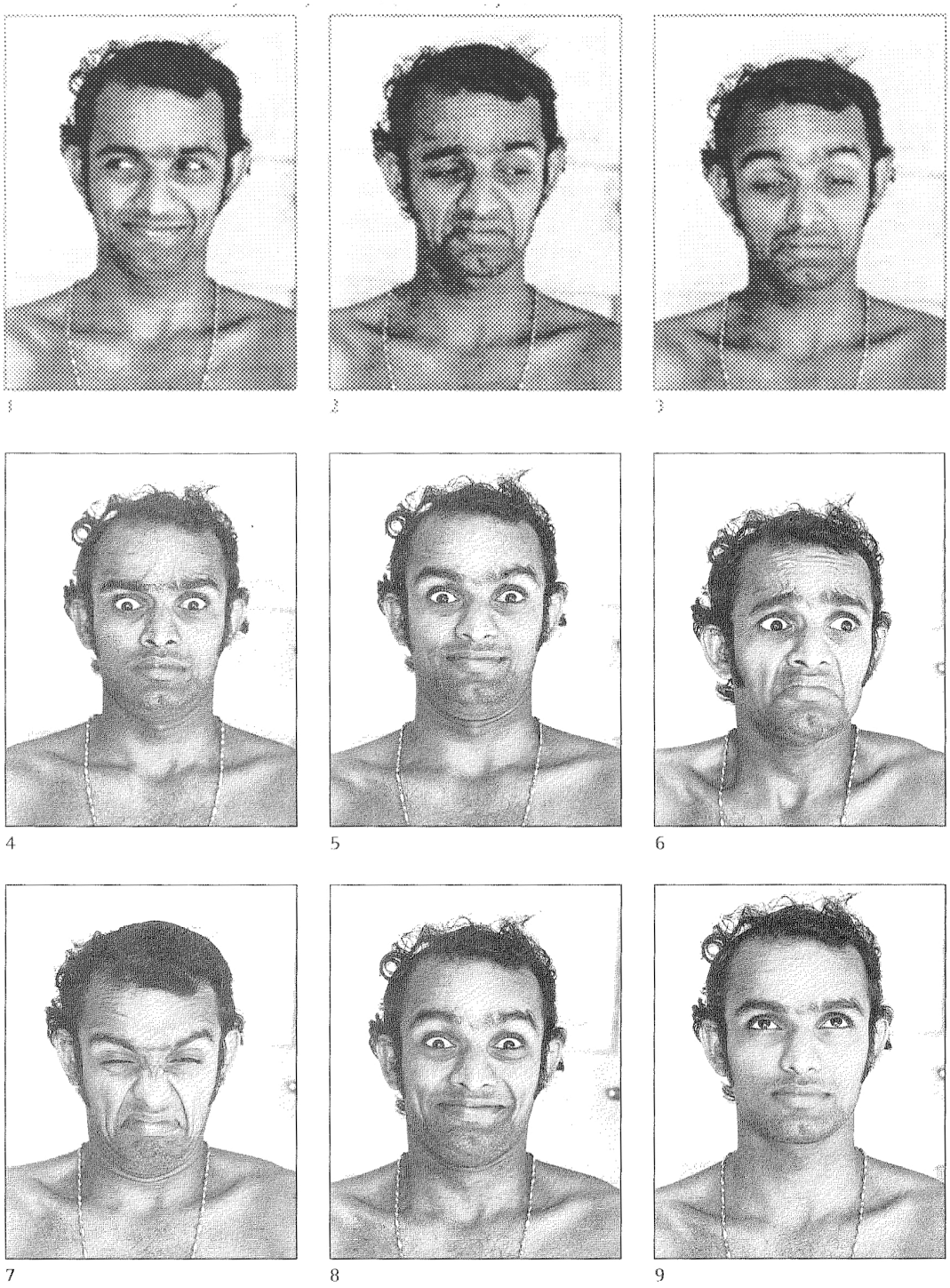

Figure 8. Facial expression of the nine rasas in Kathakali training. Photograper: Phillip B. Zarrilli.
1. Sringara, 2. Hasya, 3. Karuna, 4. Raudra, 5. Vira, 6. Bhayanaka, 7. Bibhatsa, 8. Adbhuta, 9. Shanta

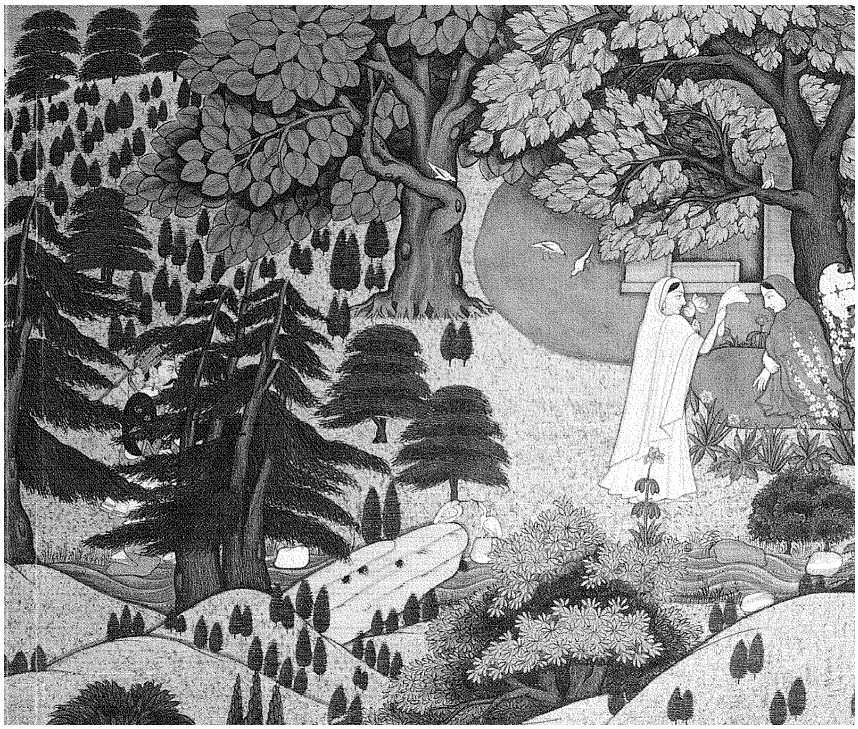

Figure 9. Sakuntala expressing sringara in loss in the forest of the hermitage.

heroic. The variations between different types of vira rasa, heroism, are exemplified in the different members of the Pandava and Kauravas clans, such as the bright heroism of Arjuna, leader of the Pandavas, and the much darker courage of Karna, his illegitimate older brother, fighting for the Kauravas.

As I quoted already in chapter one, when further defining rasa it is stated in the *Natyasastra* that "rasa is the cumulative result of vibhava (stimulus), anubhava (involuntary reaction) and vyabhicari bhava (voluntary reaction)."[23] This dictum on rasa or "rasa sutra" does not only lay out how Bharata[24] analyzed the emotion process, which is very similar to a contemporary cognitive definiton, but also details the performative ingredients for this process. In other words the different kinds of bhavas, vibhava, anubhava and vyabhicari bhava, combined in performance endlessly reiterate this emotional process of stimulus, involuntary reaction and voluntary reaction. The cause for the ensuing emotional state, vibhava (stimulus) is often embedded in the story or text of the performed play. Anubhavas are the "involuntary" physical

[23] Rangacharya 1986: 55.

[24] Regarding my recurring reference to Bharata as the author of the *Natyashastra* see footnote 4

reactions to the stimulus, sometimes these are simply translated as "consequences."[25] The vyabhicari bhavas describe the "voluntary" reactions, the consciously chosen, gender, age, and status appropriate outward signs of the emotional state. There are 33 vyabhicari bhavas described in the NS. In addition, there are the eight sattvika bhavas, such as tears, change in skin color, or shaking. These bhavas could also be identified as an involuntary response[26] and they correspond to what is called in current North American psychology somatic or somatovisceral events.[27] The sattvika bhavas are performed with the help of stylization; the Sanskrit performer was not expected to actually cry or change the color of his/her skin. So, even though there is a clear differentiation made between two kinds of emotional reaction to the stimulus, involuntary and voluntary, as can be observed in the emotion processes in everyday life, in performance both types of reaction are performed using conventional means of expression. All types of bhava are performed through words, gesture and facial expression, that is through the means of abhinaya.

In the long line of interpretations of the rasa sutra above, opinions about the meaning of the sutra vary. One of the questions that the rasa sutra brings up is how the sthayi bhava is contained in this formula without being named. Gupt argues, since "the second sutra explicitly states that sthayi bhavas are transformed into rasa when they are combined with various bhavas which are expressed through the abhinaya of verbal, gestural and sattvika types, […] it can be presumed that the second sutra covers vibhavas in its ambit. The mixture or union that leads to the emergence of rasa, consists of four things; vhibavas, anubhavas, vyabhicaris and sthayi bhavas."[28]

Another aspect of the debate is mostly concerned with the relationship in which the rasa sutra stands to the experience of emotions in everyday life. One of the earliest known Sanskrit scholars, Lollata,[29] is said to have understood vibhava,

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[25] Vatsyaya 1996: 87

[26] In the NS and in the commentary the exact relationship between the different bhavas is not completely clear, thus commentators have debated these interrelationships.

[27] Caccioppo et al, "The Psychophysiology of Emotions," in Lewis & Havilland-Jones, eds. *Handbook of Emotions*. 2000: 173 – 191; Prinz 2004: 212-213

[28] Gupt 1994: 262

The second rasa sutra follows the first immediately through further references to food: "Just a s through molasses and other articles, spices and herbs six kinds of tastes are produced so also the Sthayi Bhavas in combination with different Bhavas attain the state of Rasa." *Natyashastra*. Board of Scholars, 73.

[29] Mukherjee, Sujit. *A Dictionary of Indian Literature*, Vol. 1. New Delhi: Baba Barkha Nath Printers, 1999: 207.

anubhava and vyabhicribhava as rooted in real life experience:[30] "We have here on the one hand, a psychology of emotional attitudes. Under certain situations certain trains of emotions are generated and developed into intense experiences."[31]Whereas the later Abhinavagupta clearly points to the fact that those bhavas as well as the resulting rasa are experiences exclusively resting in the realm of spiritual metaphysics. "Feelings are not presented or represented through any imitation on the stage. They are apprehended in terms of an immediate and subjective experience brought about by the evocative power of acting or words."[32] This analysis of feeling as not physically presented on stage corresponds to Damasio's definition of feeling as a mental rather than physically manifested state.[33]

Yet, another definition suggests that "Rasa is a depersonalized condition of the self, an imaginary system of relations."[34] The bhavas, or emotional states that the performer portrays become communicable through the process of abstraction and aestheticization in form of stylized movement. They are not linked to the performer's personal feelings and memories but physically abstract representations of emotions that are learned through imitation and repetition. The teacher/guru teaches the form, the students has to learn it, repeat it, internalize it, until it becomes second nature, or learned behavior, and then can be transformed by the performer into "filled" expression.

Contemporary Practice

The contemporary Odissi dancer Nandini Sikand asks:

> How does one 'learn' to express rasa in performance? Within the performing arts, there is this idea of riaz or sadhna, the repetition of a performed activitiy that is routine like. But it is not simply bodily habit but rather this bodily practice is necessary to get to the evocation of rasa. And unlike other schools of acting where the actor or performer draws on similar emotional experiences to bring out a particular emotion during performance, in this context the sheer repetition will ultimately result in emotion.[35]

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[30] Pande 1996: 314. See also: Gupt, Bharat. *Dramatic Concepts Greek and Indian*. New Delhi, D.K. Printworld, 1994: 260-273.
[31] Pande 1996: 314.
[32] Pande 1996: 318.
[33] See chapter 1.
[34] Ramanujan, A.K. in Dimock et al. *The Literatures of India: An Introduction.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1974:128.
[35] Sikand, Nandini. "Examining Intention: The Use of Rasa in Odissi Dance." Unpublished paper presented at PSI # 13, Happening/Performance/Event, NYC, 2006.

Figure 10. Nandini Sikand. Odissi performance.

Anthropologist, practitioner and teacher of Kathak, Pallabi Chakravorty points out that these artistically performed emotions are not automated or void of feeling. On the contrary it is understood that a more mature performer with a greater realm of emotional experiences will be able to achieve greater depth in expression.

During the period of Sanskrit drama the learning of this performance technique required many years of strict schooling and had to be started at a young age to guarantee the necessary suppleness of the body. The performer had to learn how to control every movement of the body, and needed the time for riaz to become second nature. In the so-called classical dance-drama of contemporary India some of these principles of training and performance aesthetic can still be found, for example in Kathak, Kathakali, Odissi, or the synthetically re-invented 20th century form, Bharatanatyam.

However the overall change in lifestyles and societal organization in current India is drastically altering the approach to training and performance practice and is today producing many hybrid forms between the traditional and western forms,

especially in the diaspora.[36] Amongst North American performers one finds that many first generation immigrants from India have trained in one of the so-called classical dance-drama forms while growing up in India. As a consequence troupes performing in the different styles can be found in the larger North American cities, mostly on the East and West coast. Also immigrant Indian performers are often teaching either privately or within college or university settings, and thus educating a new generation of multi-racial performers. As a result both the first generation immigrants as well as the American trained performers are branching out and collaborating with Western trained performers in order to create hybrid theatrical events. Both Chakravorty and Sikand, among many others, are actively involved in this trend.[37]

When talking about the state of dance drama in contemporary India, Chakravorty suggests that today's practice of such forms as Kathak fulfills a variety of needs for the practitioners, mostly young, urban, Indian women, who are often students or housewives. They see their weekly practice not as primarily devotional or as preparation for a career as professional performers, but as a social event outside their domestic or professional obligations, that allows them to learn minute body knowledge and to experience the pleasure of their bodies in performance. Chakravorty documented in her study current Kathak practice in Calcutta during the late nineties and early 2000's. This study supports her point that Kathak practice had become rather than devotional practice more of a social activity for women during their pastime, an opportunity to get out of the house and come together with other women.[38]

To Chakravorty such reinterpretation of rasa theory allows for a new approach to both practice and writing critical theory. In its evocation of food and flavor, rasa aesthetic does not only privilege the visual and aural aspects of performance, but suggest an alternative that includes other senses of perception. Because of the connotation of food, one could think of smell and taste, but this seems too literal and

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[36] For example at the new annual Indo –American Dance festival, in New York City, sponsored by the Indo- American arts council, http://www.iaac.us/, programs of the 2009 & 2010 festivals are listed. Erasing Borders 2009: http://www.iaac.us/IAAC_dance_fest09/program_aug19_artist.htm, or some of the works produced by Montreal-based company Teesri Dunja.

[37] Chakravorty, Pallabi and Gupta, Nilanjana. *Dance Matters: Performing India on Local and Global Stages*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

[38] Chakravorty, Pallabi. *Bells of Change: Kathak Dance, Women and Modernity In India*. Seagull Books, 2008.

is only indirectly supported by the *Natyashastra.*[39] Instead, she suggests that because the emergence of rasa during performance implies a communal experience, involving both performer and spectator, rasa acts on a more inclusive as well as heightened perceptual level than for example Aristotle's cathartic model.[40] Sanskritist Lee Siegel explains this co-relationship thus:

> Rasa is at once an inner and an outer quality as the object of taste, the taste of the object, the capacity of the taster to taste that taste and enjoy it, the enjoyment, the tasting of the taste. The psychophysiological experience of tasting provided the basis for a theory of the aesthetic experience which in turn provided a basis for a systematization of a religious experience, devotion to Krisna.[41]

Together with other practitioners/theoreticians of classical Indian dance and dance drama, Chakravorty reinvestigates the sexual/sensual empowerment of the performers through their artful mastership of the rasas, and follows Uttala Asha Coorlawala's lead in re-reading Laura Mulvey's gaze theory through rasa aesthetics. By focusing on the communal experience of rasa the subject-object divide diminishes and thus allows the performer to more fully embody emotional states. Instead of viewing the performer as the object of desire, the audience member becomes complicit with the performer and is equally transported. This complicity suggests that as opposed to the Aristotelian idea of developing feelings vis-à-vis the characters' sufferings, in Sanskrit drama a more direct transfer of the rasa is desired, in that the spectator and the performer merge in the experience of rasa and thus the spectator through the enjoyment and the tasting of the taste experiences devotion. As an aesthetic principal it could well become a new paradigm for performance analysis. By integrating postcolonial discourse as well as the developments in feminist theory, rasa aesthetics foreground a more complete sensual and affective experience in addition to visual and aural perception, an experience that includes both performer and audience and thus closes the divide between them. In practice that means that writer/practitioners in the performing arts like Chakravorty, Phillip Zarrilli, or myself

[39] I was not able to find direct reference to the use of incense (to activate the sense of smell) for example, though I have seen its use in Katathakali and Odissi performances as part of the now much abridged devotional practice or benediction before the beginning of the actual performance. In the NS chapter five on purvaranga details the actions, from the set up of the musicians, to a number of songs and dances, including the introduction of the play, in order to achieve a full benediction.

[40] A more detailed discussion of catharsis can be found in chapter 5.

[41] Siegel 1978: 43

among others, attempt to produce scholarship that is both inclusive of critical theory as well as empirical data and will turn performance experience into an analyzable subject and equally valuable agent of knowledge. By refocusing the discourse towards details of practice as embodied knowledge a reevaluation of the performer's position as equal participant in the writing of that discourse is again becoming more accepted, as can be seen in the shift towards practice/research as topics for work-groups and journals in the English speaking area.[42]

Figure 11. Pallabi Chakravorty with Courtyard Dancers in an hybrid kathak performance.

In the United States, several approaches to the practice of rasa in a variety of traditional or hybrid Indian performing styles can be traced. A number of practitioners many of whom have immigrated from India teach in colleges, universities, as well as privately all across the United States and Canada. The purpose of their practice, in my observation, has been multi-layered, from keeping up their performance practice to passing on a skill, to building community, as well as to reach out beyond that specific practice and collaborate with practitioners from a variety of other performing styles in order to experiment with hybrid forms.

[42] I am referring to the growing number of working groups concerned with practice-based research at ATHE, ASTR, CATR, ADSA conferences, or journals such as *Theatre Topics*, or the British *TDPT* (Theatre Dance Performance Training).

Among Western practitioners, Zarrilli achieved recognition over the many years he taught both Kallaripayattu and Kathakali at the graduate level in both the US and Great Britain.[43] His book, published in 2000, *Kathakali: Dance-Drama* is a performance-ethnography of Kathakali as practiced today in Kerala, India. In his book Zarrilli explains the role of rasa aesthetics as intrinsically linked to the understanding and the connoisseurship of its audiences, who are initiated into this particular form of dance-drama. Though aware of the changes in contemporary Indian society and its effects on performer training, Zarrilli implies and fosters the idea of a relatively intact and homogenic art form, a view that has been challenged by cultural anthropologists.

In an article in *The Drama Review* in 2001, Richard Schechner is for the first time publicly discussing the rasabox exercises. Here Schechner elaborates on his adaptation of rasa aesthetic to Western actor training, an aesthetic that is ruled by rasa, which in itself is an aesthetic concept of perception. Often criticized for his cultural borrowing, Schechner is not attempting to create or imitate a codified body language for the rasabox exercises as the precise poses and gestures that are described in the *Natyashastra*. He is primarily interested in the exchange between performer and audience, the experience of rasa, which is why the training is called rasabox and not bhavabox exercises.

> In the rasic system, there are "artistically performed emotions" which comprise a distinct kind of behavior (different perhaps for each performance genre). These performed emotions are separate from the "feelings"—the interior, subjective experience of any given performer during a particular performance. There is no necessary and ineluctable chain linking these "performed emotions" with the "emotions of everyday life." In the rasic system, the emotions *in the arts, not in ordinary life* are knowable, manageable, and transmittable in roughly the same way that the flavors and presentation of a meal are manageable by following recipes and the conventions of presenting the meal.[44]

Schechner calls this the "mouth-belly-gut" experience, implied by the connotation of food through the word rasa in its multiple meanings. As an educator, in his theater practice and his writings, Schechner has been looking for ways to participate in the project of reinvigorating the theatrical arts in North America. In rasa

[43] Zarrilli has taught at the Graduate Drama program at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and at the University of Exeter in Great Britain.
[44] Ibid, 32.

theory he found a form of performer-audience communication that tries to reach beyond the visual and aural exchange that has been the focus of the North American mainstream theater for the past century despite the experiments of the sixties and their repercussions in contemporary performance.[45]

The Rasabox Exercise

Aside from the practice and aesthetic of rasa, Schechner cites the emotion studies by behavioral scientist Paul Ekman and Antonin Artaud's concept of the actor as the "Athlete of the Emotions" as his other most influential sources in developing the exercises.

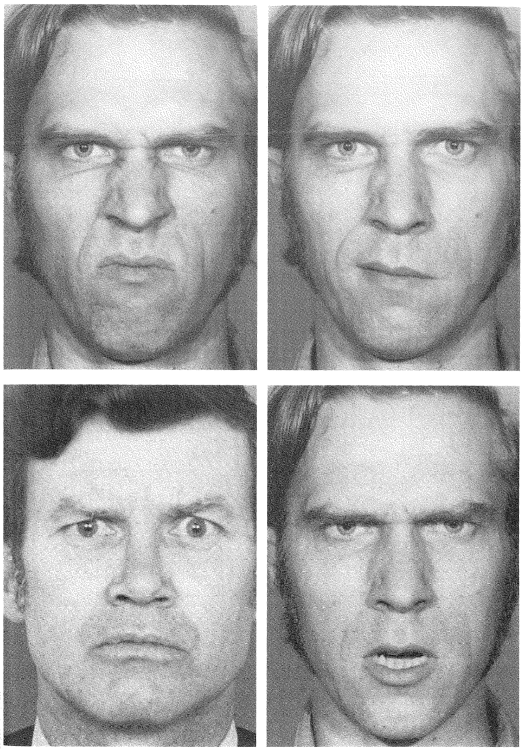

Figure 12. Emotion recognition practice in Ekman's *Unmasking the Face*.

[45] In his own theatrical work, Schechner has integrated multi-sensorial experiences for the audience, i.e. the smells of different foods cooking throughout *Faustgastronom*e. In performance art there has also been a much franker approach to audience's sensual involvement, famously done so by Annie Sprinkle, when for example during the intermission of her performance pieces, such as *Post Porn Modernist*, she invited audience members to step up one by one, and have pictures taken with Sprinkle's breasts draped over the audience member's head.

Ekman's work on basic emotions and the accompanying facial expressions is linked to the so-called hardwired, early evolutionary patterns of emotion processes. His findings resonate with the ideas of conventionalized expressions of emotions as described in the NS in that they scientifically prove that there are specific expressions linked to an emotional state; but rather than to investigate the performed emotion, Ekman looks at emotional expression in everyday life. In my experience of the rasabox exercises however I have never worked with Ekman's facial expression charts. In his book *Unmasking the Face*[46] that is particularly geared towards non-specialized readers who want to be better equipped to read other people's emotions, such as nurses or police officers, there is an exercise, in which the reader can look at a series of photographs and guess herself what particular emotion is portrayed. My success with this exercise is based on my ability of imitating the expression in the photograph, and through that process of imitation, and the resulting physiological changes in my expression, I am getting an internal "reading" of the emotion. Through a process that might be linked to the activation of mirror neurons, I can imitate the outer signs of the emotion, arouse the emotion in myself, and identify it. When we tried to work on an analysis of facial expression in the lab however, the facial expression between lab participants working on the same emotion varied considerably. It quickly became clear that it was not in our interest to find commonalities in expression between the performers, but to work on differences, or in other words on specifics relating to a role or a part. Each lab participant had chosen different triggers and goals for their emotion, different levels of intensity and outward expressiveness, thus the expressions varied.

Artaud suggests in his essay *Affective Athleticism* (*Un Athlétisme Affectif*)[47] that the performer has "a kind of affective musculature which corresponds to the physical localization of feelings."[48] He stresses the practice of specific breathing patterns for the performer as described in the Cabbala. In his opinion, the expression of emotions in performance can and should be trained, in ways analogous to the athlete's training of the muscles. In the lab we experimented repeatedly with rasa-specific breathing patterns and found them both powerful and easily accessible. In this

[46] Ekman, Paul and Friesen, Wallace V. *Unmasking the Face.* Cambridge: Malor Books, 2003.
[47] Artaud, Antonin. *The Theatre and Its Double*. New York: Grove Press, 1958: 133-141.
[48] Ibid, 133.

case too, we neither followed cabbalistic breathing patterns, nor did we apply the breathing patterns studied by Bloch in her acting technique called Alba Emoting.[49]

When the participants in the emotion lab each had established clear, repeatable breathing patterns for the different rasaboxes, we sat in a circle and demonstrated these patterns, observing our own reactions to them. We then proceeded to repeat some of those patterns as a group and found that we could stimulate emotive responses in ourselves. These responses triggered by breathing patterns that were not our own often called up a kind of variant of that emotional state that might not have been part of our "personal" realm of experience or imagination, thus opening up each person's repertoire

A goal of the exercise itself is that through practice and repetition, and the mapping of their individual techniques, the actors learn to immediately create distinct emotional states. They can then infuse these states into a theatrical situation like an extra layer. The technique is loosely based on the Pavlovian principle of conditioning reflexes[50] wherein an emotional state can be reached by using a specific "trigger." Techniques based on the principle of conditioning and reflexology have been used by Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, and most prominently in the U.S. by Lee Strasberg in his sense memory exercises. While Carnicke suggests that Stanislavsky was deeply influenced by the French behaviorist, Ribot, his lip service to Pavlov was rather forced by the political circumstances in the mid 1930's.[51] Meyerhold and his student Eisenstein however, experimented extensively with the Pavlovian conditioning principle.[52] One could say that the excitability trained in the biomechanical etudes is based on conditioned reflexes.

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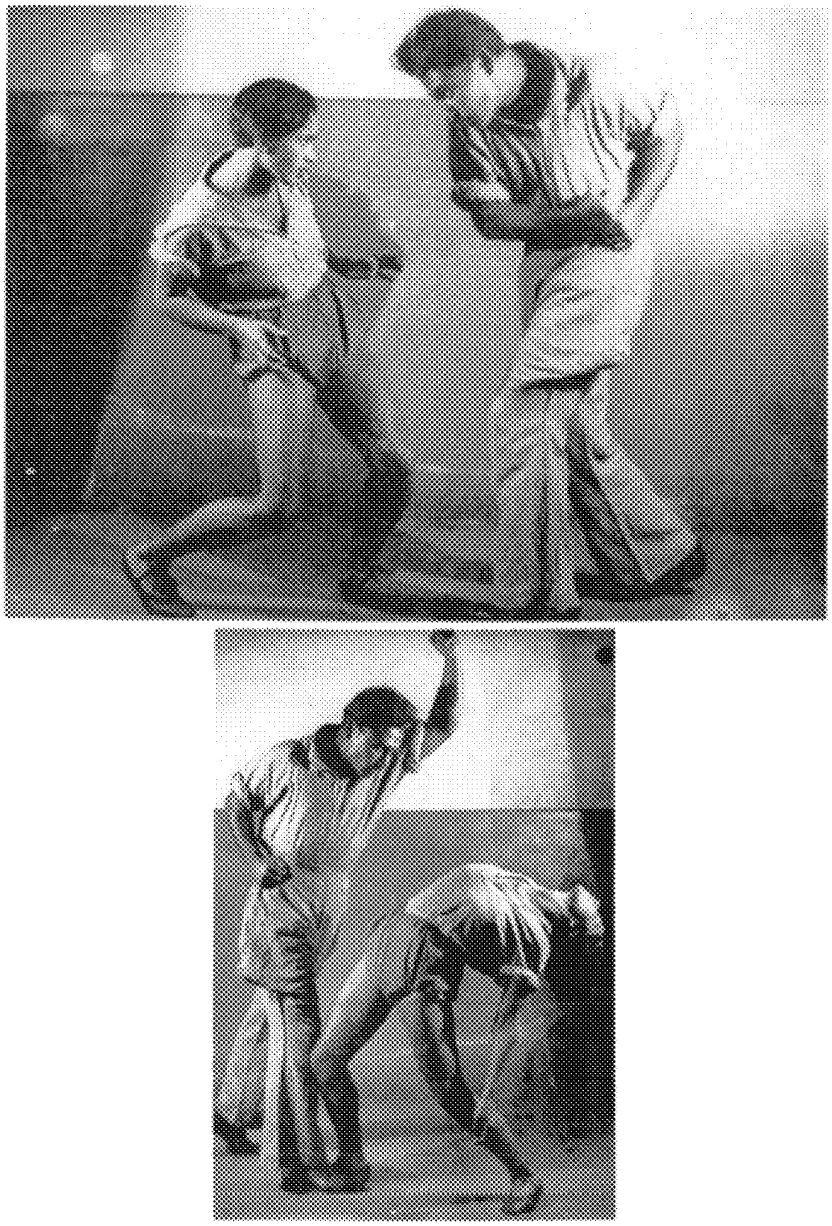
[49] Bloch, Susana, Pedro Orthous and Guy Santibañez-H. "Effector Patterns on Basic Emotions: a psychophysiological method for training actors." In: Zarrilli 1994: 197-218. Chahora, Pamela D. "Emotion Training and the Mind/Body Connection: Alba Emoting and the Method." In: Krasner 2000: 229-243.

[50] In the conditioning process, an unconditional stimulus (food) is given to the subject (dog), which causes a reflex of its own (salivating). Now, the unconditional stimulus is given along with the stimulus that is to be conditioned (the sound of the bell), which doesn't cause a reflex. After a while, only the conditional stimulus (the one that originally didn't cause a reflex/the bell) is offered, and now it will cause a reflex because the subject has associated that conditional stimulus with the unconditional stimulus. http://schoolworkhelper.net/2010/08/the-life-and-work-of-ivan-pavlov/

[51] Carnicke, 162-3

[52] Law and Gordon, 1996, XX Law, Alma, and Mel Gordon,. *Meyerhold, Eisenstein and Biomechanics*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 1996.



Figures 13 & 14. Meyerhold's biomechanical étude "stab with a dagger."

In Strasberg's sense memory exercise you begin by re-creating physical objects through your sense memory, like for example a cup or a small personal object such as a key chain. When recreating the sensual attributes of the object through memory (smell, touch, taste, sound, sight) you might find that the memory of an emotionally charged situation is attached to the object. You proceed to investigate and define your emotional state within that situation, all the while keeping the sense of the

triggering, remembered physical object alive. Once you find a trigger and the linked emotional experience, you repeat the process, slowly reduce the trigger to just one sensual aspect of it, i.e. a smell, or a sense of touch, so that eventually, in performance, all you need to do is call up the sense trigger and the emotional state will follow. In this case the performer conditions herself to respond to a specific sense trigger with a corresponding emotion. "The notion that recall of emotion can become easier with repetition amounts to self-conditioning on the part of the actor. 'That's how we trained,' Strasberg said, 'not from Freud, but from Pavlov.'"[53]

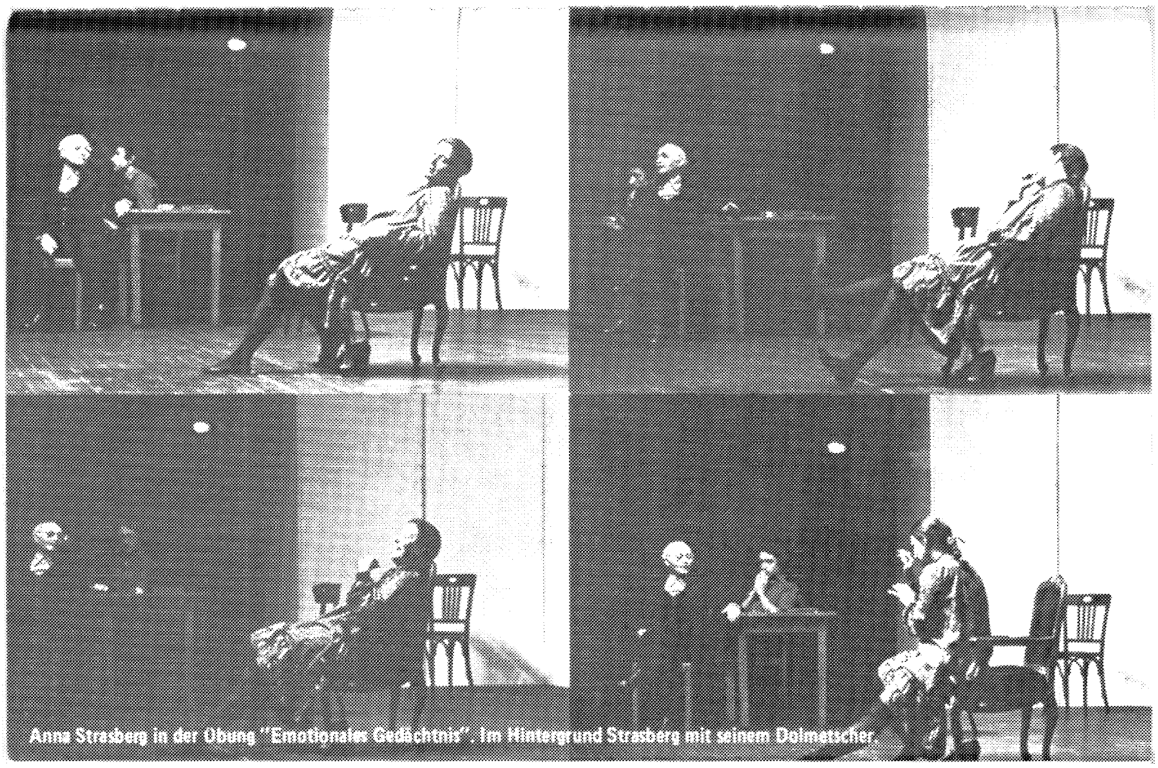


Figure 15. Anna and Lee Strasberg in a sense memory exercise.

Whereas it has become common practice within the realm of American realism to train internal triggers, in the Rasabox exercise, the trigger can be a number of different things, varying from physical to mental cues, for example specific breathing patterns, a physical pose, a facial expression, a memory, an imagined

[53] Carnicke, Sharon. *Stanislavsky in Focus*, 2nd Edition. New York: Routledge, 2009: 163. Citation within quote is from Munk, Erika, ed., *Stanislavsky and America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1966: 198.

situation, or anything else proven repeatedly successful. Performer/director Vernice Miller pointed out during a talk-back at PSI 13[54] that the actor who is in the run of a show often creates an emotional map linked to the physical score, e.g. if an emotional moment is preceded by a specific gesture, like lifting the arm in a certain way, then this lift of the arm will work as a physical trigger for the following emotion. The trigger is created through repetition. While this technique is certainly reminiscent of Stanislavsky, I often ask myself if what we understand today as physical score can simply be equated with Stanislavsky's line of physical actions? In my mind a physical score is the sequence of movement-actions the performer goes through during a performance, this can take any form, abstract, realistic, non-sensical, interrupted, etc. The line of physical actions on the other hand is the line of logical actions that is the result of a deep understanding of the character and the given circumstances, based in a realistic sequence of actions, i.e. first you wash your hands, then you dry them – not the other way around.

In order to develop these triggers, specific training is required. The Stanislavsky System of course considers emotions in depth but still does not really explain in technical terms how to train for an emotionally truthful performance. The techniques laid out in "An Actor Prepares"[55] are either based on recall of personal memories, on imagination, or on imitation. How to exactly shape or treat the remembered, imagined or imitated emotion in repetition is not discussed: "First establish the Given Circumstances, genuinely believe in them, and then, "truth of the passions" will arise of its own accord."[56] Later adaptations of the System, such as Strasberg's Method,[57] base their emotion work on techniques usually referred to as "emotional recall." This process is hotly debated for its questionable efficacy and effectiveness – especially in respect to stage acting. Not many acting teachers are willing to explore the technique in the undergraduate classroom for fear of psychological risks to the students.[58] However, it can be said for Strasberg that he

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[54] PSI 13: Performance Studies International's annual conference held at New York University in New York City in November 2007.

[55] Stanislavski, Konstantin. *An Actor Prepares*. Routledge: New York, 1961.

[56] Stanislavski. *An Actor's Work*, transl. & ed. Jean Benedetti. NY: Routledge, 2008: 53

[57] Strasberg,Lee. *Schauspieler Seminar*. Bochum: Schauspielhaus Bochum, 1978.

[58] Because the students need to recall memories from their personal experiences, the immediate reactions and psychological effects on the student are not foreseeable. Even when instructed only to work with memories that lie in the distant past, students are tempted to work with what they consider to be potent. Thus the exercise is commonly considered as too risky. See also Carnicke, 2009: 164-5.

consequently developed his conditioning technique, and prescribed a very clear method of how to call up remembered emotions.

Curious among the currently popular acting training methods, Anne Bogart eliminated emotion as a category from the Viewpoint Training as opposed to Mary Overlie's original six viewpoints[59] that did include emotion as one of the viewpoints. Stephen Wangh, on the other hand, describes clearly in "An Acrobat of the Heart"[60] how he works with his students on emotional awareness, yet here too, the translation from the acting student's emotional awareness in personal life and training to a repeatable stage technique is not fully developed.

In many of these techniques and approaches not so different from the Stanislavsky quote above, it seems that the actor is mostly expected to somehow calibrate emotional expression by defining the circumstances surrounding the emotion, such as character history, given circumstances and objectives; or the performer is to simply follow the line of physical actions or the performance score. By doing so she/he is expected to "naturally" arrive at the appropriate emotional expression. Or else, as in Bogart's case, realistically motivated emotion is not considered to be an intrinsic part of the performative expression.

Stanislavsky's acting system and its various American offshoots have lead to a realistic style that now dominates much of North American acting. In a counter-move, the American avant-garde, emerging in the fifties and sixties, has continuously investigated non-naturalistic styles. The current work on Rasa aesthetics as a practice stands in that tradition. Within my realm of experience, Richard Schechner's rasabox matrix[61] enables the student to analyze and perform emotions in highly differentiated shades without necessarily having to follow a line of realistic, i.e. internal motivation.

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[59] See: "In 1993 Mary Overlie told me, (...) that the Viewpoints were conceived of and have always been Space, Story, Time, Emotion, Movement, and Shape (with the mnemonic STEMSS)" 1998-2005, Jucha, Brian: *Working With The Viewpoints*. www.jucha.com/viewpoints.html. See: Bogart, Anne: *The Viewpoint Book.* New York: Theatre Communication Group, 2005: 5-6. See Anne Bogart on Emotions in: *Balancing Acts: Anne Bogart and Kristin Linklater Debate the Current Trends in American Actor Training*. Moderated by David Diamond, in *American Theater*, 2001 or at: http://tcg.org/publications/at/2001/balancing.cfm

[60] Wangh, Stephen. *An Acrobat of the Heart*. New York: Vintage Books, 2000: 125-135.

[61] See my discussion of rasabox training in Ch. 2 as well as: Schechner, Richard: "Rasaesthetics." In: *The Drama Review* 45, 3 (T171), MIT Press, Fall 2001.

Within the class or lab context students most often raise the question whether or not the experience of rasa can be stripped of its cultural context and applied to an historically and geographically different actor training and audience-performer relationship. So why do we talk about rasa rather than emotions, affect, or to stay within the Sanskrit framework, the performer's conventionalizing of emotion through bhava? The answer may lie in the fact that the concept of rasa presents a much broader, multi-layered perspective on the phenomenon of performed emotion than the other terms imply. Not only does rasa, aside from emotion, connote flavor, taste and essence, but it also refers to the communion between the performer, the performed and the audience. Furthermore rasa is defined as an aesthetic principle referring specifically to artistic expression. The use of the term is rooted in the performing arts, specifically dance drama and music, but can also be applied to other arts such as poetry and sculpture. Thus rasa refers to the artistically expressed emotion, emotion mediated for performance and experienced through performance, rather than to just the actor's expression or to emotion in general.

Several students prefer to call the Schechner exercise simply emotion boxes – as not to imply a level of physical practice not common in North American college training or many if not most of the current Western acting practices. Another point of ideological discomfort for the students is that Sanskrit drama was primarily a devotional practice, in addition to its entertaining and educational goals, as are today still many of the so-called classical Indian dance drama forms.[62] In an exclusively secular setting such as a Canadian university the idea of a (unified) devotional practice in the classroom is out of place. The mixture of different beliefs and non-beliefs, from the so-called great religions to small urban ritual practices, would allow for individualized variations of devotion only. In regards to rasa and an adoption of this aesthetic to a North American setting, the question arises of how devotional practices and transformative performance styles might be connected. And this indeed leads to further questions regarding the role of ecstatic performance and trance in the North American context, which I will only briefly address in the conclusion of this thesis.

[62] At least a form of performed devotion is often part of classical performance tradition, such as the blessing of the performance space.

To me both the excitement and conundrum that is inherent in the rasabox exercise is the possibility of working towards seemingly completely diverging goals. On the one hand the exercises allow for a detailed analysis and practice of performed emotions, using the findings almost like a new psychophysical alphabet that allows for affective resonance in both performer and observer. Here the work is based on a system of physical signs that when acted out fully will result in an emotional state, a process that could be linked to Meyerhold or Eisenstein's reading of Pavlov's reflex conditioning. Through repetitive motion, sound or breath this same grid of boxes can become the gateway to ecstatic or trance-like states. This process resonates more with the ecstatic transformation in the Indian bhakti tradition.[63] On the other hand the grid can be a place for scene work and realism-based character work, befitting American realism. When exploring the grid with a comedic mindset the possibilities for comic enlargement and overemphasis of the emotional state, and a parodic reversal between trigger and reaction can become very clear. For the moment I will only investigate to what degree the term rasa can be useful to the exercise.

Can a theater student in all seriousness be expected to experience and transmit rasa? At the minimum, physiological change in the self and in the other can be achieved, if we allow for Teresa Brennan's provocative thesis to stand up. Brennan suggests that the idea of a homogenic being with its skin as an absolute boundary cannot hold up in emotion theory. As emotions create physical change in the body, hormones are released into the bloodstream; blood pressure, breathing patterns, heart rate, muscle tone change, pupils dilate or contract, sweat glands go to work, and a multitude of other sensory signals, such as smell, voice tones and touch are emanated, we automatically and involuntarily change the chemical make-up of those around us as well.[64] Brennan talks here specifically about the excretion of ectohormones or pheromones, which are perceptible via smell. This may explain one of the aspects that make up the refined experience of rasa. If we accept Brennan's thesis then not just a

[63] The Bhakti movement flourished in Hindu devotional culture during the early middle ages as a counter movement to the Sanskritized Vedic culture, co-fertilized by the increasing influence of Islam. Kathak dance was very much influenced by the Bhakti tradition. Its influence can be seen for example in the footwork and twirling typical for Kathak. See Chakravorty 2008: 35-39.

[64] See Brennan, 2004: Introduction, 68-69, and footnote 165.

visual and aural but also an olfactory exchange takes place between performers and audience, as well as among the audience members.[65]

Methods like the rasabox exercises call into question the currently practiced approach to acting in North America that for the most part appears to be still firmly rooted in American realism. This psychologically motivated performance style attempts to appear "natural" and resists a "boxing in" of separate emotions; rather a smooth flow from beat to beat, "authentically" portraying what is considered an imitation or recreation of "everyday behavior" is commonly demanded from the contemporary American actor. Of course at many points over the past century this has been put into question and the avant-garde, the countless "experimental" companies and performance art has experimented with more theatricalized types of theater, drawing attention to its artfulness as opposed to its naturalness through a number of strategies. Behavior twice removed, restored behavior (Schechner) or the extra-daily (Barba) are only a few of the expressions used to bring attention to this constructedness, or simply heightened quality of staged behavior.

In the first research phase of the Emotion lab study (fall 2006), the student performers only began to differentiate between "artistically performed" and "felt" emotion, rather than to consider the integration of an audience. The idea of transforming the performed into an aesthetic experience and consciously reaching for a communion between audience and performer did not really come into play within the early training process. "Rasa", provocative as this aesthetic principle may be, remains an abstract concept within the setting of the emo lab, a goal towards which to work, but certainly not a common occurrence during this phase of actor training. The students have renamed the training: working on the grid, or emo lab, in what I see as an attempt to familiarize the technique.

Thus the term rasa in this context functions more as a catalyst of ideas than a historically or culturally specific concept that is applied directly to the work. Of course one could argue that as soon as there is an observer in the room, be it the observing participants, the videographer, or myself as teacher and coach, the possibility for rasa is given. It seems to me though that the performer first has to learn to differentiate between emotion and performed emotion and then begin to hone her

[65] Obviously this type of exchange would take place not jus between performers and audience but also between the members of the audience and between the performers on stage. Brennan is using the example to explain crowd behavior.

craft before actively pursuing rasa. Rasa needs to be understood as artistically shaped emotion performed to achieve a specific effect in the observer. Rasa implies not only the knowledge of craft but its mastery and ultimately its sublimation. What takes place in the studio could be called something like “dirty rasa”, an un-shaped, accidental experience which is nevertheless not without effect to both participant and observer.

For the purpose of this thesis I will mostly translate rasa, with its many layers of meaning, as “performed emotion,” though its meaning is closer to “performed emotion experienced by performer and observer,” whereas simply “performed emotion” connotes bhava. In addition I will continue to use the term emotion, rather than affect, passion, or feeling. It is also important to remember that rasa stands for a group of related emotional states differing in intensity and duration and depending on which of the corresponding bhava states are employed. To go deeper into the meaning of the different Sanskrit words that relate to emotion and the practices associated with them, rasa, bhava, etc., in their many differing translations into English, would require expert knowledge of Sanskrit, thus this excursus to Sanskrit performance practice will conclude here.

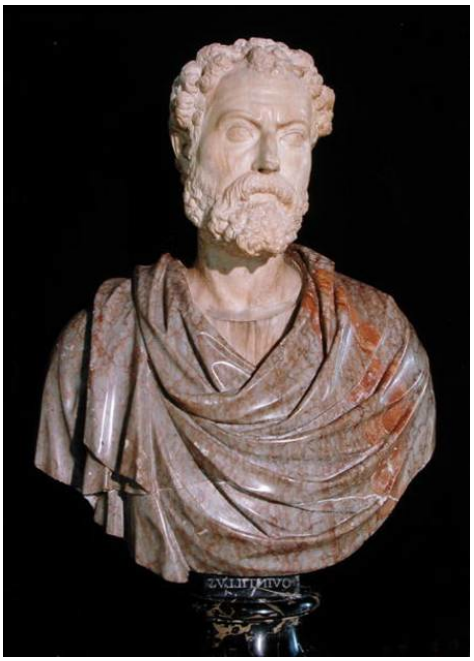
Chapter 3:
The Passions
A Grammar of Expression

After discussing current emotion theories and the rasa-bhava aesthetic of Sanskrit drama, I now want to turn to the Central-European acting theories of the eighteenth century, looking at examples from England, Germany[1] and France. Here I am particularly interested in the different positions regarding the performance of emotions. Performing emotions was considered to be an essential element of performance practice, and the codified language of the passions was applied not just by theatre practitioners, but also in the visual and the performing arts, as in painting and sculpture, as well as oratory and opera performance. By investigating the styles of a historical period, where, not unlike today, the debate about affect, emotion and passion took center stage, I am not only hoping to illuminate our contemporary debate about affect, but specifically the actor's practice. In order to further my own investigations in the emo lab, I will focus specifically on how emotions were portrayed and in what way practitioners and theorists perceived of those techniques and their effect.

The eighteenth century did not bring forth one canonical text on acting or drama theory as can be said in retrospect about the *Natyashastra* for the Sanskrit period or the *Poetics* for ancient Greece, but a multiplicity of manuals and theoretical treatises, reflecting on cultural and language divides as well as on the rising assertion of individual voices as authorities. Nevertheless, cross-cultural comparisons of a gestural language for the stage from baroque to enlightenment have been undertaken, such as Dene Barnett's study, *The Art of Gesture*, in which he investigates similarities and discrepancies between manuals from a number of European countries. If there could be any main sources named that informed the gestural language of the time, it would be the Roman texts on rhetoric taught in schools across Europe such as

[1] When referring to "Germany" here and in the following, I mean the geographical region that understood itself culturally and linguistically as Germany, long before the establishment of a nation state called "Germany."

Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* rather than any contemporary text.[2] These then well-known treatises on rhetoric were either appropriated or right out rejected to fit the understanding of the biological emotion process of the time and by extension the acting techniques.[3]

Figures 16 & 17. Diderot and Quintilian.

In the midst of an ongoing debate about the most effective approach to the performance of emotions in France, England and Germany, Diderot epitomizes the polarization between acting styles of his time. In his essay, *Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien*, (1773), he differentiates between "hot" (inspirational) and "cold" (technical)[4] styles after encountering the British actor David Garrick during his visit to Paris (1764). This encounter apparently supported the change from his own earlier position (1750's) that the actor needs to feel, to the exact opposite, that the actor should not feel at all. William Archer in *Masks or Faces?* (1888), refers to these positions as emotionalist and anti-emotionalist: "After a careful search for less cumbrous expressions, I have been forced to fall back upon the terms 'emotionalist'

[2] Barnett looks at manuals from the following countries: England, France, Holland, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Italy and Poland; Barnett, Dene with Janet Massy-Westropp, *The Art of Gesture: The Practice and Principles of 18th Century Acting.* Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1987. Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, Loeb Classic Library, 1920/1996.

[3] Roach, Joseph. *The Player's Passion.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1985, 79

[4] Roach, 1985, 83

and 'anti-emotionalist' to indicate the contending parties in this dispute. They are painfully clumsy; but the choice seemed to lie between them and still clumsier circumlocutions."[5] The division between these two positions is often traced on one hand to the emotionalist tractates by Pierre Rémond de Sainte-Albine, *Le Comédien* (1747) and Luigi Riccoboni, *Dell' arte rappresentativa* (1728) and on the other hand to the latter's son Francesco Antonio Riccoboni's anti-emotionalist *L'Art du Théâtre* (1750).[6] But Quintilian already began the argument, when he spoke about the "feeling" orator, using his own experience as example. In book six of the *Institutia Oratoria* he states: "The heart of the matter as regards arousing emotions, so far as I can see, lies in being moved by them oneself." He closes the same chapter with the following remark: "I have certainly often been moved, to the point of being overtaken not only by tears but by pallor and by a grief which is very like the real thing."[7]

Yet, is there really such a clearly defined divide between acting styles? Today, despite the enormous progress in emotion research in psychology and neurobiology, and the resulting in-depth understanding of the physiological emotion processes, the nature of the "performed emotion" still remains elusive. Actors and teachers are still debating as to which might be the most effective techniques to arrive at a repeatable performance practice. Some of the current schools of acting promote techniques to train the performance of emotion while others circumvent emotion entirely. Yet, the new research in the neurosciences suggests that these seeming oppositions have begun to fold in on themselves. The Cartesian dualism between body and mind resulted in the two opposing acting theories of the eighteenth century, an internalized, "feeling" kind of acting and an external, "rational" acting. Today, research has shown that emotions can be induced through physical changes in body posture and facial expression as well as through mental triggers.[8]

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[5] Archer, William. *Masks or Faces*? London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888, 11.

[6] Cole,Toby & Helen Krich-Chinoy, Eds. *Actors on Acting The Theories, Techniques, and Practices of the World's Great Actors, Told in Their Own Words*. New York: Crown Publishers, 1970, 59, 161; Roselt, Jens Ed., *Seelen mit Methode*. Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2005, 46, 112

[7] Compare Engel, volume 7, 117-118; Quintilian. *Institutia Oratoria, The Orator's Education*, transl. Donald A. Russell. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001, lib.6, ch. 2, lines 26.1-2, lines 36, 8-10.

[8] Niedenthal et al, "Embodiement in the Acquisition and Use of Emotion Knowledge." in: Barret, Niedenthal and Winkielman. *Emotion and Consciousness*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2005, 21-50.

In the following, I want to examine the positions of the following 18th century practitioners and theoreticians: Franciscus Lang, Johann Jakob Engel, and David Garrick, with a side-glance at Diderot. Early in the eighteenth century German Jesuit priest Franciscus Lang (1654 –1725) wrote the Latin *Dissertatio de actione scenica,* which might be the first acting manual to be published in Germany (1727).[9] In 1768, German critic and theater director Johann Jakob Engel (1741-1802) attempted in his acting manual *Ideen zu einer Mimik* (1785) to develop a methodological approach to the performance of the affects.[10] The stage conventions and acting styles between these two publications changed considerably. One of the actor who embodies this change is David Garrick (1717-1779). Engel and Diderot (1713-1784) were both familiar with the "phenomenon" Garrick, who became one of the first international acting "stars".[11] All four, Lang, Engel, Garrick and Diderot, can be considered to fall within the group of externalist, or anti-emotionalists, though only Diderot explicitly defended this position.[12] From my current vantage point I want to examine how stable these positions actually were.

During the 18th century, the role of the theatre and its practitioners shifted from the fringes to a central position in society. Not only did the location of theatres within the urban space and its sponsorship change but the awareness of the social space of the salon as a kind of theatre also increased. The move towards the professionalization of the craft further propelled the publication of the many acting manuals and how-to guides. With that shift not only dramatic literature, but also performance itself became the subject of much literary discourse.[13]

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[9] Earlier works on rhetorical speech, and to some degree gesture, published in what was to become Germany include, for example, Christophe Arnolds's "De Actione ac prununciatione oratoria, ex variis collecta rhetoribus," in: Vernulaeus, Nicolaus. *De Arte dicendi*. Nuremberg, 1658.

[10] In this chapter, I will be using the terms passion, affect and emotion for the most part interchangeably. My use of affect as discussed in chapter 1, does not correspond with the 18th century reading of the term. Franciscus Lang and Engel use the term "affect" in their acting manuals in a similar way I today would use "emotion," namely as the actor's technical means of expressing emotional states. The biological understanding of these processes, however, differs considerably.

[11] Roach, 1985, 2009.

[12] I am only looking here at Diderot's *Paradoxe* and am not investigating his earlier "emotionalist" stand as expressed in his early plays such as *Le Fils naturel* (1757), and *Le Père de famille* (1758) and the critical essays accompanying it such as *Les Entretiens sur Le Fils naturel* (*Conversations on* Le Fils naturel).

[13] The Salon will not be part of my investigation since very different rules for affective behavior seem to have been applied to the salon than to the stage, even though some of the same people who wrote about stage acting were involved in the salon culture.

Lang's *Dissertatio de actione scenica* proposes a precise movement codex for the actor defined very much by a baroque sensibility. According to Lang's definition "the art of acting consists of the proper pliability of the whole body and voice suitable to excite the affects."[14] At this time German theater was generally situated either in the market place for the entertainment of the crowds or used as an educational tool in the many Jesuit schools. The courts of the period were more interested in spectacular entertainments such as masques, ballets and operas rather than in text-based drama. For many years, Lang was in charge of the theatrical endeavors of his students at Jesuit schools in several Bavarian towns and cities, where he adopted the role of *choragus*[15], that is of playwright, acting teacher and director. It is possible that Lang recognized the decline of the codified baroque theater and the shift in theatrical paradigms at the beginning of the eighteenth century. He states that his fear of the fickleness of this new century is what prevents him from writing a manual in the first place: "Who would expect anything in return when presenting one's knowledge to such a fickle century?"[16] It remains open to discussion what this fickleness could refer to, but among other things he could have spoken about the slow departure from the stage conventions of the baroque period or the change of the understanding of where exactly the passions stem from.

In the course of the eighteenth century, the understanding of the emotion process shifts. Lang still writes from the baroque perspective that the emotions, or more precisely called by him the "affects," befall a person. The Latin "afficere" implies the impression of something onto something else, as in "einwirken, antun, anregen".[17] This reading of the emotion process accounts for the idea that the "affects" are potentially dangerous to a person and need to be shaped and controlled by means of theatrical conventions, rather than evoked, as in some 20th century techniques. The baroque understanding of affect thus has to be read separately from

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[14] This and all other translations from Lang's text are done by the author from the German translation by Rudin: "Als Schauspielkunst in meinem Sinne bezeichne ich die schickliche Biegsamkeit des ganzen Körpers und der Stimme, die geeignet ist, Affekte zu erregen. In: Lang, Franciscus, Alexander Rudin, trans. and ed. "Abhandlung über die Schauspielkunst [Dissertatio de actione scenica, Franciscus Lang]." In: *Deutsche Barock Literatur*. Bern/München, 1975, 163.

[15] Lang: 209. In this chapter XI Lang defines the abilities a good choragus needs to have.

[16] Translated from: "Wer dürfte sich denn etwas davon erwarten einem so wählerischen Jahrhundert zu verkünden, was er weiss?" in: Lang, 1975: 159. One can of course argue that this "fear" of harsh criticism is a convention to show the humbleness of the writer, and a quote from one of Lang's letters in Rudin's afterword suggests, that he was very much wishing to find enough free time to actually write an acting manual, see pg. 322.

[17] Roselt, 43

our contemporary use of the term, or the definition of affect used in the later 18th century. Jens Roselt points towards a reading of the baroque affects as human dispositions that are above an individual's disposition. On the stage this lead to the formation of "affect types" rather than of individual characters as was more desired in the second half of the 18th century.[18] This is one of the reasons, which seem to have given the *Dissertatio* already the quality of a historical document when posthumously published in 1727.

The *Dissertatio* is divided into three parts; the first about the craft of acting, the second about playwriting and dramaturgy and the third an alphabetized catalogue of the allegorical figures in which the use of color, costumes and props is described. The first part is of most interest to this investigation; here Lang calls for the artfulness of a trained and practiced craft that takes the form of a highly artificial stage language. He is concerned with the expression of the affects in a way that is clearly regulated by the social code of the time and the etiquette of moderation that was practiced in the public sphere of the baroque court.

All three parts of the *Dissertatio* were meant to offer instruction and guidelines to enhance the effect of a theatrical performance, namely the audience's experience of affect. The translator and editor Alexander Rudin suggests that when Lang began writing, he only had the first part about the actors' art in mind, since neither title nor foreword make mention of the second and third part of the book. The *Dissertatio* was published shortly after Lang died, but seems to have been mostly ignored both by his fellow Jesuits as well as by the general public. From the current vantage point it seems that the third part of the book, describing the allegorical figures, particularly situates the *Dissertatio* as firmly rooted in a baroque aesthetic and thus "dated" for the practitioners of the 18th century. This, in addition to what I mentioned above about the changed understanding of the meaning of affect, might all have contributed to the fact that the *Dissertatio* did not find its readership.

Because of his many years of practical experience, Lang was highly aware of the shortcomings of words and illustrations when trying to describe the physical processes an actor undergoes in order to evoke the audience's emotional engagement.

[18] Roselt, 44

He admits that acting can only be taught in practice; nevertheless he tries to bridge the gap between intellectual perception and physical expression by finding an appropriate language that is able to name the actor's physical actions, and by setting down rules for a repeatable performance style. The actual instructions for the display of "affective states" are not as detailed as for example in F. Riccoboni's *L'Art du Théâtre*, but much more focus is given to the situation-based rules of physicalization. Among the passions, Lang only describes "grief" in detail, mentions "joy, love and yearning" combined in two sentences, and concludes with a slightly more detailed discussion of "anger and furor." In a later chapter on the modulation of the voice, Lang lists what he might have assumed to be the common affects: love and hatred, joy and sadness, fear and courage, anger, spite and awe, and lastly grief or wailing (querela).[19]

Figure 18. Grief in Lang's *Dissertatio*.

Lang's descriptions of the actor's movements, however, are specific and detailed, directed at particular body parts, always adhering to the strict movement

[19] Lang ch.8, 198-201, 206-7, the above list can be found in the Latin original on page 58.

code of the court. He does stress that the artificiality of the courtiers should not be imitated in all aspects, for example he advises not to wear gloves on stage so as not to hide the expressivity of the hands. Though he does mention the eyes and face as an important means of expression, Lang does not talk about facial expression in much detail, so it is no surprise that the illustrations of his text show male bodies[20] in courtier's or classical costume in the described physical poses but with more or less neutral or at times even haughty facial expressions. The images clearly focus on the gestural language of feet, knees, stances, arms and hands. This is not to mean that facial expression was not part of the portrayal of the passions, but it is curious that in this otherwise detailed manual, facial expression is omitted. Lang actually makes the today seemingly surprising proposition

Figure 19. Note the focus on stance and arm gestures above facial expression in Lang's illustration.

[20] Lang wrote for and had worked with the exclusively male pupils at the many Jesuit schools in Germany and Austria.

that the student of acting should study correct facial expression by observing themselves and others, as well as by studying befitting examples in painting and sculpture.

> But how [the facial expressions] should be applied to the different affects cannot be put into words easily, I am the first to admit. Accordingly, it is necessary that each person studies on their own the subject with diligence so he can be better able to decide which expression of the face and the eyes in his opinion is more appropriate to the different affects. For this purpose, I suggest that it is very useful to study attentively the paintings and sculptures of experienced artists.[21]

Today much research has been done regarding the relationship between the visual and performing arts of the 18th century. Beginning with Le Brun's classification of the passions (1619-1690), it seems that actors copied from painters and vice versa, as in the case of Garrick and Hogarth.[22]

To Lang, the correct placement and posture, beginning with the soles of the feet and ending with the expression in the actor's eyes, are there to serve the best possible conveyance of the emotions that underlie the text. Lang's accurate descriptions illustrate the understanding that both the actor's and the spectator's experience of the affects can be achieved through precise physical poses which comply with the behavioral code of the baroque. When one however separates Lang's understanding of the emotion process from the baroque decorum it does not seem to be as exclusively tied to his time. Mostly, Lang sees acting as an imitative art that is based on the actor's physical flexibility and imagination. He suggests that the actor should first develop the character's actions in his mind and then let the body and voice imitate the imagined action.[23] In his general discussion of the importance of facial and eye expressions he states that indeed the "seat of the affects" is located there, and that through eyes and facial expression the actor's own emotional state (Gemütsverfassung) and the affect that moves him on the inside will be made perceivable to the audience.[24] When he talks about the actor's own emotional state

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[21] Lang 191: "Wie sie aber für die einzelnen Affekte zu gebrauchen sein mögen, kann mit Worten so leicht nicht erklärt werden, was ich gerne bekenne; vielmehr ist es nötig, dass jeder sich der Sache mit eigenem Fleisse widme, damit er desto eher richtig entscheide, welchen Ausdruck des Gesichts und der Augen die einzelnen Affekte nach seinem Urteil zu erfordern scheinen. […] Hierzu sage ich jedoch, dass es sehr viel nützen kann, wenn jemand die Bilder erfahrener Maler oder die Skulpturen von Künstlern […] oft und fleissig betrachtet […]."

[22] For example: West, Shearer. *The Image of the Actor.* New York: St Martin's Press, 1991

[23] Lang 166

[24] Lang 190

"that moves him on the inside," it sounds as if he is including the idea that the actor experiences these states. In the way he describes the emotion process he stresses at several points that "first the perception of things takes place in the imagination (Vorstellung): this stimulates both feelings and the body, even before the mind works and expresses the felt affect in words."[25] That means perception/imagination precedes feeling and bodily reaction, which in turn precede the expression of emotion through voice and text. So, only after the perception or imagination of the trigger, and after both feeling and physical changes have taken place, can the actor express the emotion through his voice. This emotion model equates cognition with vocal expression and states that emotion is the result, not the cause, of physical changes.[26] Roach points out that this understanding of emotion is deeply rooted in a Cartesian viewpoint. "[Descartes] treats the physical symptoms of emotions in such detail, that he has been interpreted by historians of psychology as anticipating the James-Lange theory of emotion."[27] By extension, this definition of the emotion process can be compared directly to Damasio's current definition of feeling as I have discussed in chapter one. When attempting to place Lang within the debate between emotionalists and anti-emotionalists his position is not absolutely clear. It can be assumed that Lang looked at theater as a completely codified and controlled art form, set firmly in the ceremonious gestural code of the baroque, employing the outer signs (externi signi) to represent emotions. The purpose of his teachings is to pass on this code to younger generations, specifically the students of the Jesuit schools, who were trained in the style of the stoics. So it becomes clear that his descriptions of the actor slamming his head against a wall represents a character driven by emotions[28] and does not refer to the actor's emotion but to the performed character's state. Fischer-Lichte's graphic citation of the same sequence in her *Semiotik* also points out that it is the character's state and not the actor's that leads to such extreme behavior, yet the actor has to somehow arrive at this state.[29] It seems that Lang does not exclude the possibility that the actor actually feels as he performs. His refusal to give detailed instructions about facial expression and his assertion at the same time that the face and particularly the

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[25] Lang, 196 "Die erste Wahrnehmung der Dinge geschieht in der Vorstellung: diese erregt das Gefühl und die Glieder, noch bevor der Verstand arbeitet und den empfundenen Affekt mit Worten darlegt."
[26] I am using the term "emotion" here instead of Lang's term "affect" in order to link more clearly to the argument I made in chapter 1.
[27] Roach, 1993: 84
[28] Lang, 196
[29] Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Semiotik des Theaters*, Band 2. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag, 1999, 38-69.

eyes are the main site for the expression of emotions might mean that he sees little purpose in a strict codification of those expressions, despite his advice to study the representation of affects in the arts. It is a curious instance since at the time Le Brun‘s lecture on the passions “Conference sur l’expression” (1698)[30] had been widely disseminated and translated into several languages, offering very precise descriptions of the facial expressions appropriate to a number of the passions. In other writing on acting in the 18th century, Le Brun’s guidelines have been frequently adapted; Engel for example quotes him repeatedly. Despite these questions, it would have been unusual for Lang to pay any attention to the performer’s own emotions and if so only to the degree that they could enhance the performance of his role and thus the affective response in the audience. The “real” affects however were considered to be potentially dangerous and thus left to children and fools.

During the following decades, Germany's theatre developed quickly to the level of professionalism and quality of performance that had long since been achieved in neighboring countries such as Italy, France and Holland, as well as England. However, Lang's work seems to have been, for the most part, abandoned in favor of what was then considered a more natural approach to acting. With the closure of many of the powerful Jesuit schools in 1773, Lang's acting system lost its last potential students. According to Simon Williams, some evidence of Lang's influence might still be found in Goethe's *Rules for Actors* (1803), particularly in regards to the actor’s position on stage.[31] In the following example, an excerpt from Lang's manual is followed by one of Goethe's rules. One needs to remember that both Lang’s and Goethe’s instructions were written for a theater lit only by footlights, some sidelights behind the proscenium arch, and possibly overhead chandeliers that did not help in highlighting facial expression.[32]

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[30] Montagu, Jennifer. *The Expression of the Passions*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1994. Montagu’s book includes in addition to her own writing a complete version of Le Brun’s lecture in both French and English.

[31] Williams, Simon. *German Actors of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985, pg. 43.

[32] Penzel, Frederick. *Theatre Lighting before Electricity.* Middletown, Connecticut; Wesleyan University Press, 1978, pg.11

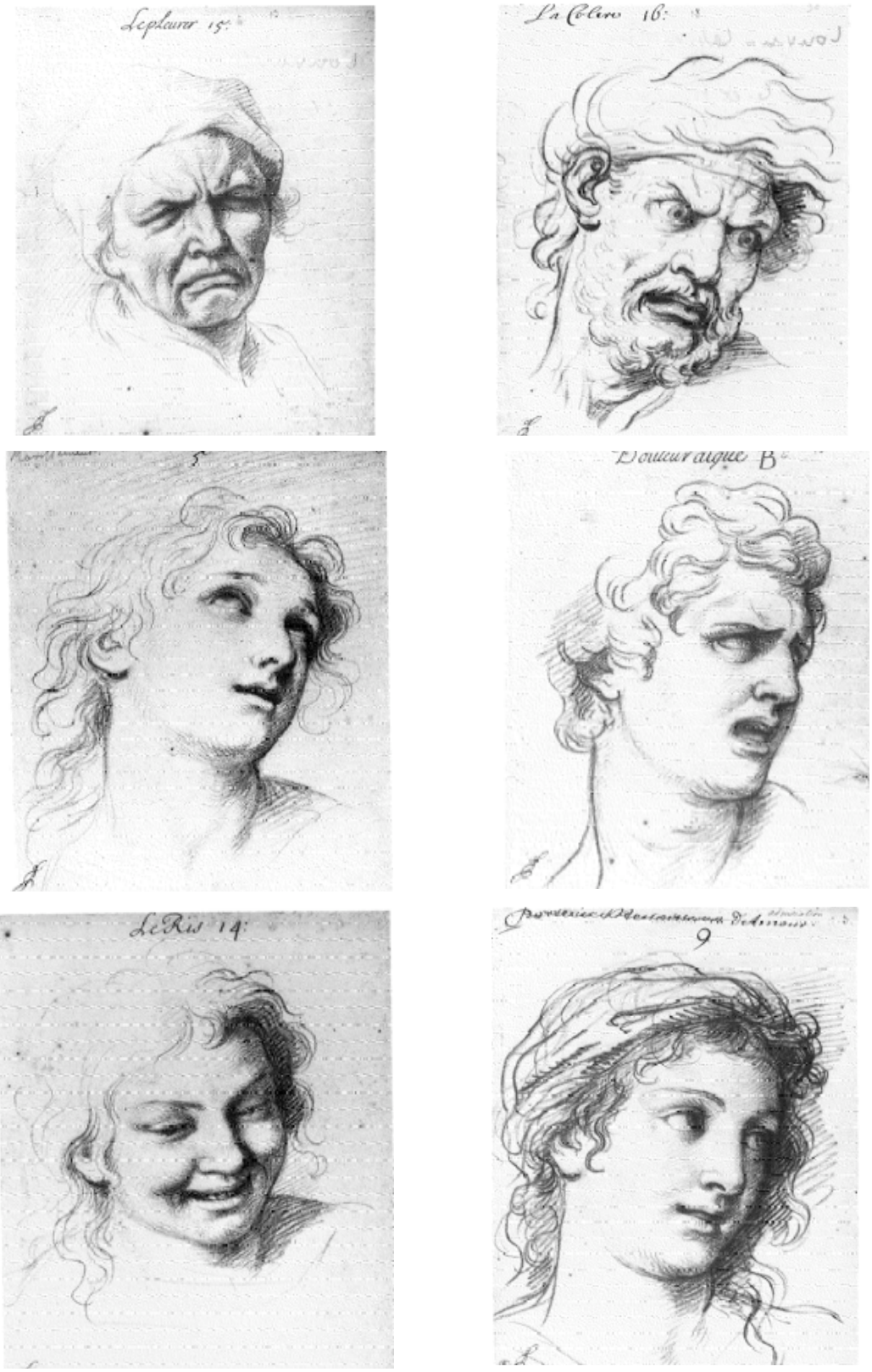
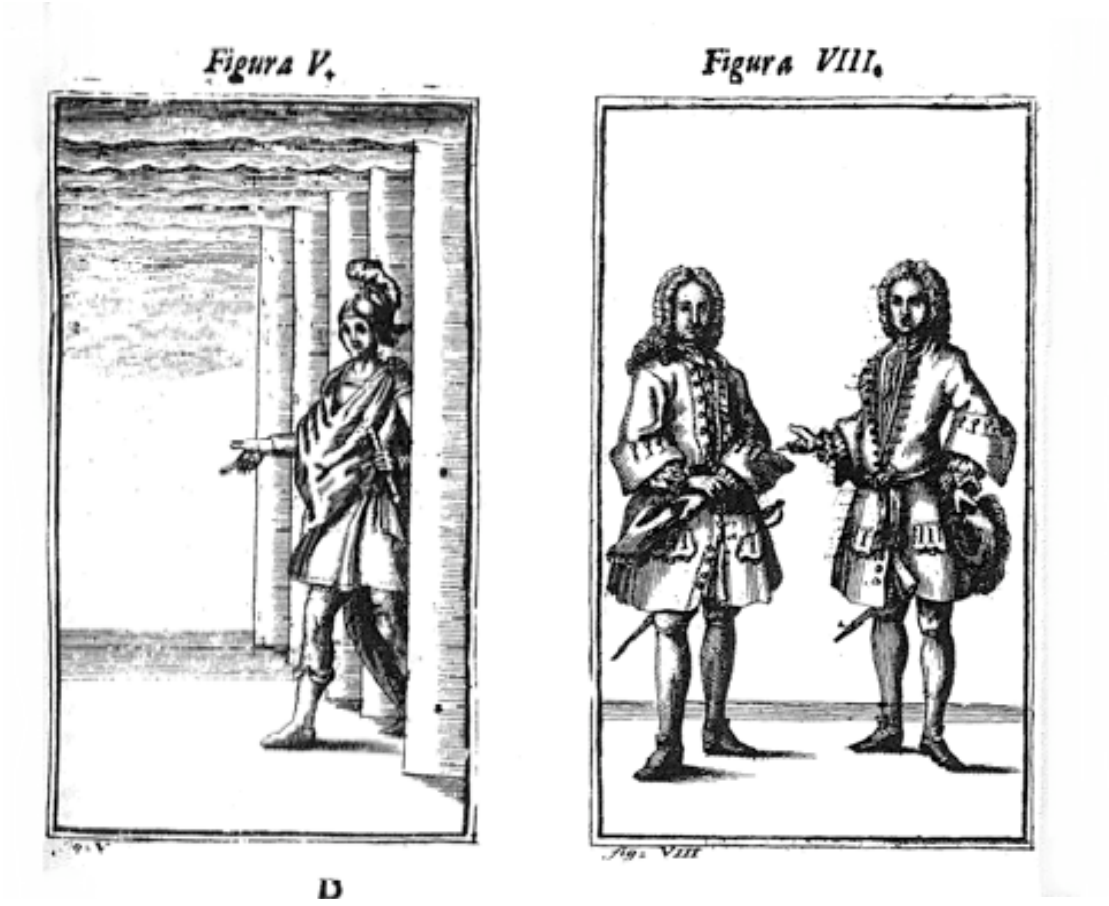


Figure 20. Le Brun's renderings of the passions. Weeping, anger, rapture, acute pain, laughter, love.

> Moreover, let the face and the chest be constantly turned towards the spectators, for since the whole performance takes place for the sake of the spectators, respect for the latter demands that the actor face them completely.[33]

> Let the position of the body be erect, the chest up, the upper half of the arms to the elbows close to the body, the head turned slightly towards the person to whom one is speaking, yet so slightly that three quarters of the face is always turned towards the audience.[34]

The body position described in these two manuals, chest and face squared off towards the audience, can be found in a number of manuals of the time, and does not by itself provide enough evidence that Goethe might have indeed quoted Lang. Rudin's research shows that the *Dissertatio* only resurfaced towards the end of the 18th century



Figures 21 & 22. Entrance and dialogue in squared off positions in Lang.

[33] Lang, Franciscus. *German and Dutch Theatre, 1600-1848*, ed. George W. Brandt. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 60.

[34] von Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. "Rules for the Actors," in: *Quarterly Journal of Speech Education Vol. XIII,* No. 3, (1927): 247-264. In Cole and Krich Chinoy, 136. See also: Williams, Simon. *German Actors of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985, pg. 43. Trans. Arthur Woehl

after Goethe had already written his *Rules for the Actors*.[35] In fact when studying the illustrations of several acting manuals of the period, with the exception of greeting poses, most bodies are portrayed in positions squared off to the viewer.[36] This fact is still intrinsically linked to the conditions of lighting and staging of the time, which indeed has been a factor in the perpetuation of the bodily and gestural performance codes of the time. Also, the predominance of the proscenium arch in eighteenth century theatre mattered greatly, as well as the resulting pictorial staging, which was particularly true for Goethe's theatre in Weimar. Lang's Jesuit theatre on the other hand was driven by baroque conventions and not necessarily performed on proscenium stages only but also outdoors for mass audiences of up to three thousand.

In addition, it is worth noting that Lang's manual, similar to Goethe's *Rules* was written with the instruction of students in mind, which might explain some of the more seemingly over-exacting details. Goethe's penchant for declamatory speaking style and posture seemed to have stood in closer relationship to the baroque code and French neo-classicism than to some of the more current developments in the German-speaking regions at the time. Thus Goethe's *Rules for the Actors* stood in contrast to other less neo-classically influenced manuals of the late eighteenth century, as for example Engel's *Ideen zu einer Mimik*.

Today, Lang's manual remains nearly forgotten. There is little mention of his name in English language theatre criticism of the past six decades. Overall, an uninformed discomfort towards the codified and regulated performance style of the baroque can be encountered among contemporary theater practitioners. Dance historian and style advisor to historic productions, Giannandrea Poesio states that: "Expressive fixed gestures and postures depicting emotions, feelings, events and actions are regarded today as part of a somewhat ridiculous and obsolete tradition."[37] And Joseph Roach reminds us that "each acting style and the theories that explain and justify it are right and natural for the historical period in which they are developed and

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[35] Rudin, Alexander. Nachwort: *Franz Lang Leben und Werk*. Lang/Rudin: 322-3.

[36] Compare Lang, Engel, Austin or Jeglerhuis in Barnett, 1987. In Siddons illustrations of his translation of Engel's *Mimik* more figures in ¾ turn can be found, see: Siddons. *Rhetorical Gesture and Action*. London: Sherwood, Neely, and Jones, 1822.

[37] Poesio, Giannandrea, "The Gesture and the Dance," *Nineteenth Century Theatre and Film* 29 (2002): 40-50.

during which they are accepted."[38] On the other hand, there are cases to be made for productions, in both contemporary opera and theatre, where a very careful reconstruction of the 17th, 18th and 19th century acting codes has been undertaken. Some historical movies as well have investigated these languages of gesture.[39] It would thus be desirable that a greater knowledge and examination of these historic methods could become part of theater education and practice, for the sheer detail and scope of Lang's manual merits closer attention during a time when all aspects of emotion have become such a focus of debate.

A similar point can be made for Johann Jakob Engel's *Ideen zu einer Mimik*, published in 1785. Engel (1741-1802), aside from his engagement as director of the Royal Theater in Berlin (1788- 1794), was a playwright and philosopher, part of the "Berliner Aufklärung" (Berlin Enlightenment). Prior to his position at the royal theatre, Engel was a teacher; his work on the *Mimik* lead to his work as director of this newly founded theatre. Engel's manual presents a marked departure in the understanding of the emotions to Lang's late baroque theater code. Though, unlike Lang, not a teacher of acting, Engel's sensibility towards the actor's work on emotion shifts the reader's attention from Lang's more general, type-oriented practice to an approach of individualized character development; while Lang speaks of performed emotions in general, Engel speaks of performed emotions as informed by class, age and gender. Despite the fact that he still uses the same terminology as Lang, namely he speaks of the "affects," his position clearly demonstrates the newly found interest in "feeling," a search for the inner causes of emotions, such as the feelings within oneself, the other, as well as in the character.[40] Aside from Garrick, several German actors embodied this new approach, first and foremost among them Konrad Ekhof (1720-1778) followed by Friedrich Ludwig Schroeder (1744-1816) and August Wilhelm Iffland (1759-1803) among others.[41] The discrepancy between the focus on inner feelings and an externalist approach to acting has to do with difference between what was understood as "felt" emotion and "performed" emotion. The performed emotion at the time is considered to be an imitation, not the actual thing.

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[38] Roach, 15

[39] For example April de Angelis' *Playhouse Creatures* in a production at the People's Light and Theater Company in Malvern, Pennsylvania, 2001; *Pride and Prejudice* by the BBC, dir. Simon Langton, featuring Colin Firth, 1996; *Stage Beauty*, dir. Richard Eyre, featuring Billy Crudup, 2004

[40] Roselt, 44

[41] Cole & Krich Chinoy, 255-56

The *Mimik* is written in the form of forty-four letters. As if addressing the reader directly, Engel slowly unfolds his acting philosophy, which is not based on a precise movement code like Lang's, but on a movement grammar. He moves from larger defining principles such as the typification of gestures and emotional states to the minute differences in the actor's physical language depending on each of the paradigms defined earlier. He recognizes the actor's behavior on stage as a sign language that, like other languages, can be analyzed through its grammar. The elements of this grammar can then be added and combined like any other language. The more intricate the understanding of character, not as type but as individual, is becoming, the more intricate the gestural language has to become.

He lays out this grammar by dividing the actor's gestural language into two areas, gestures of painting and gestures of expression. The former are gestures that imitate (paint) subjects that exist in the real world following the principle of similarity or partial similarity, the latter are gestures that express the state of the character's soul, differentiating between a) physiological gestures such as crying, turning red or pale etc.,

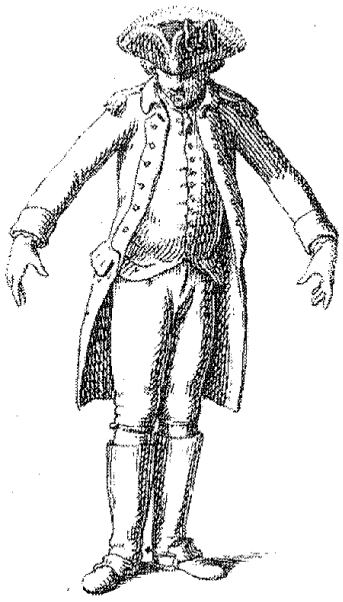

Figure 23. Painting gesture indicating a bucket of water in Engel's *Mimik*.

b) purposeful gestures, movements that are what he calls the "natural" response to an affective state and c) analogous gestures, that imitate an affective state rather than an outside object (as in painting gestures). Here one is reminded of the different categories of bhavas in the *Natyashastra* as mentioned in chapter two, and can see certain parallels in the construction of a physical stage language of the emotions. Physiological gestures correspond with sattvika bhavas, which include sweating, trembling or pallor;[42] the purposeful and analogous gestures correspond with sthayi bhava and vyabbhicari bhavas but not following the same distinctions between purposeful and analogues that Engel makes.[43]The main difference I see is that the *Natyashastra* suggests that the gesture is the emotion, whereas Engel suggests that the gesture is a reaction to an emotion.

Engel's division of gesture, deeply imbued with later 18th century semiotics, is still a very useful tool for contemporary performers including my lab participants. While gestures of painting are less used in dramatic performance today, they find their place in comedy. For example: while actor A has her back turned to the audience, actor B imitates her actions in order to draw the audiences' attention to the ridiculousness of that imitated action. In the context of the emo lab gestures of expression take much more focus; work on expressive gestures leads the actor to more clearly define and expand their personal gestural repertoire as well as to find character specific gestures. In a recent research project at Concordia University, some of my former lab participants are working on a project entitled "The Rhetoric of Passions;" an attempt to reconstruct the physicalization of passions for the early nineteenth century play *Witchcraft* by Joanna Baillie (1762-1851). [44] The acting research for this project is strongly informed by illustrations from Engel's *Mimik*, as well as by the later added images from Siddons' translation/adaptation of the *Mimik*.[45] The illustrations show mostly purposeful or analogous gestures.

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[42] Rangacharya, 76

[43] Rangacharya, 64 ff.

[44] *Witchcraft* was published in London as part of a three-volume play collection entitled *Dramas* in 1836.

[45] One of the main differences between the two books is that Siddons decided to adapt the illustrations to the English stage. Baillie was acquainted with Henry Siddons, and it can be assumed that she was familiar with his book.

Figures 24 - 29. Comparison between Engel's (L) and Siddon's (R) illustrations. Note the difference in mannerism in the top pair (delight); Siddons seems more guarded due to the position of the face. Siddon's illustration of despair (middle), though more detailed in portrayal of garment, is less convincing than Engel's in facial expression. Finally, note the similarities of Engel's laziness and Siddons's dejection (bottom).

In Engel's process, he then asks for the gestures to be modified according to nationality, social status, age, gender, and personality of the character. Overall however, he is focused less on the cultural circumstances of the character than on the careful crafting and gradation of the emotional states, which are expressed by the actor. He develops in his *Mimik* an interconnected grid composed of what he defines as the primary states of the human soul, and all other, secondary states are simply gradations and combinations of the primary states.[46] This principle again reminds one both of the sthayi bhava and subcategories in the *Natyashastra*, as well as of the basic emotions and mixed states in emotion research. In chapter one I referred to Tomkins and Ekman, as well as the critical work by Jesse Prinz on basic emotions.

In the German original, Engel uses instead of primary states the terms "reiner, einfacher" which translated literally mean "more pure and simple." Siddons translates the passage in the following way:

> The player who wishes to be accomplished in his art should not only study the passions on their broad and general basis; he should trace their operations in all their shades, in all their different varieties, as they act upon different conditions, and as they operate in various climates.[47]

However, one looks in vain for any list of primary and secondary passions in the *Mimik*. At several points throughout the book Engel expresses his inability to do so; he seems to want to avoid in practice what he set up as a classification in the early chapter, and instead argues that the passions are too complicated and changeable depending on circumstances to simply separate and classify them.[48] It seems appropriate that in one of the last chapters Engel turns to David Hume's metaphor of the string instrument from his *Dissertation on the Passions*:

> Now if we consider the human mind, we shall observe, that with regard to the passions, it is not like a wind instrument of music, which, in running over all the notes, immediately loses all the sound; but rather resembles a string-instrument, where, after each stroke, the vibration still retains some sound, which gradually and insensibly decays. The imagination is extremely quick

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[46] Engel, 32

[47] Siddons, 10

[48] Compare this to Fischer-Lichte's diagram of Engel's "States of the Human Soul." Engel divides these states in several tiered groups, the first tier divides between quietude and activity, the second tier, in a Cartesian manner, divides between activities of the head and of the heart. The diagram shows clearly how Engel's classification substantially differs from other models that are based primarily on a division between basic and mixed emotional states. Fischer-Lichte, 1983, 165.

> and agile; but the passions, in comparison, are slow and restive: for which reason, when any object is presented, which affords a variety of views to the one and emotions to the other; though the fancy may change its views with great celerity; each stroke will not produce a clear and distinct note of passion, but the one passion will always be mixed and confounded with the other.[49]

By applying Hume's theory to the emotional gradations characters undergo even just within a brief passage of a play, Engel finds that indeed each of the passions is colored by a previous, by changes in tone and intensity according to circumstance, and simply cannot be generalized. This reminds me again of the idea of emotion "families" as suggested by Minnick and Cole when talking about the rasaboxes exercise; here, as inspired by the *Natyashastra*, the "basic" emotions are only "basic" in that we understand them as quasi umbrella terms for each of the "families," in other words the largest, recognizable categories. When going back to my discussion of basic emotions in chapter one it is notable that Ekman in his more recent research had added numerous emotions to his list of six basic emotions. Darwin, whose work was so influential to Ekman, never reduced his long list of emotions down to a few basic ones.

Through his detailed grammar Engel hoped to achieve what he felt had been impossible thus far: a methodological approach to the categorization of the affects for the purpose of devising a transmittable acting system. In a certain sense, the rasaboxes exercise fulfills a similar need. One of the exercises' goals is to make the participant aware of affective states and, with practice, able to repeatedly call up specific states. Within the exercise, there is room to investigate the qualities and physical elements of each emotional state. In advanced practice these states can then be mixed and combined, and infinitely refined. A difference between Engel's work and this contemporary practice is that the rasaboxes exercise does not work towards a general grammar of gesture but towards a flexible application of a deepened knowledge and understanding of emotional states to a variety of practices.

At its time, the *Mimik* became quite successful, and was immediately translated into several languages.[50] By sponsoring the ideal of "naturalness" in the

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[49] Hume, David. *A Dissertation on the Passions*, www.davidhume.org, Section 1.10.

[50] In 1803, Henry Siddons's English translation and adaptation was published to much acclaim. He added a number of "updated" illustrations based on the British actors of his time.

actor, Engel draws attention to a wealth of typological observations that could be considered predecessors to some of the principles of twentieth century psychological realism, such as sense memory and personal recall. Engel proposes that the root of the emotions lies in the individual actor's experience of a feeling leading automatically to a "natural" expression thereof. With this proposition, Engel aligns himself with other philosophers of his time who saw the natural expression of the emotions in the spontaneous expression of the physical reaction through gesture as opposed to the controlled and rational mind whose reactions are filtered by language.[51] The performed emotion however, needs to be shaped and tempered. In the ninth letter, Engel discusses the physiological gestures, such as turning red or pale, or breaking out in tears. Here he "excuses" the actor from trying to achieve these signs, since they are not reliably repeatable. He quotes Quintilian's own experiences of being moved to tears during an oratory, and the famous example of the fourth century Greek actor Polus carrying the urn with his son's ashes on stage to achieve "authentic" grief in his role as Electra.[52] But Engel warns of those techniques, calling them dangerous, and advises only the most experienced actor to resort to them. "Before the actor resigns himself to the government of his feelings, he ought to be sure that he shall retain the power of guiding and correcting them when they are growing too impetuous."[53] He like many other acting teachers, past and present, fears the breakdown between the personal and performed emotion, but rather than fearing for the actor's psyche, Engel is concerned with proper stage decorum, ruled by taste and moderation.

Amongst European actors, David Garrick (1717-1779) was considered to be the leading proponent of the "new" natural style of his time. His fame spread from his native England all over Europe. Not believing that the actor must truly feel an emotion in order to convince an audience, Garrick proclaimed that

> Acting is an Entertainment of the Stage which by calling in the Aid and Assistance of Articulation, Corporeal Motion, and Ocular Expression,

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[51] Korte, Barbara. "Theatralität der Emotionen." *Emotinalität*, ed. Claudia Benthien, Anne Fleig, and Ingrid Kasten. Köln, Weimar & Wien: Böhlau Verlag, 2000, 147.

[52] Engel, 120, see also Cole and Krich Chinoy, pp. 5 & 14-15. As an interesting side note I want to quote part of the description of the Polus anecdote by the Latin grammarian Aulus Gellius (c.113 – c.165 C.E.), "After he (Polus) felt that he had indulged his grief (over his son's death) sufficiently, he returned to the practice of his profession." (Cole & Krich Chinoy, 15) This can be directly connected to the currently common rule of thumb, when working with personal replacement, techniques such as Strasberg's method, to never use "fresh" memories, but only those that lie a few years back and are thoroughly processed.

[53] Siddons, 47

> imitates, assumes, or puts on the various mental and bodily Emotions arising from the various Humours, Virtues and Vices, incident to human Nature.[54]

Garrick epitomized the well-prepared actor in control. He used his tools: speech, movement and facial, specifically ocular expression to the fullest and with great control. "Garrick left nothing to chance. Every attitude, however it might have the appearance of immediate impulse, was the result of various trials in the closet."[55]Apparently he was able at the same time to convince his audience of his complete merging with the role perhaps similar to what we call today "authentic" performance. Contemporary writer, James Boswell (1740-1795) mused:

> My conjecture is that he must have a kind of double feeling. He must assume in a strong degree the character which he represents, while he at the same time retains the consciousness of his own character.[56]

In particular, his use of gesture and physicalization stood in stark contrast to his famous predecessors. Up until the middle of the 18th century British actors were compared to Thomas Betterton who had been the star of London's stages until his death in 1710. His performance was greatly influenced by the neoclassical French style using declamatory speech and heroicized gesture:

> His left hand frequently lodges in his breast between his coat and his waistcoat, while with his right hand he prepared his speech. His actions were few but just. [...] His voice was low and grumbling, yet he could tune it by an artful climax, which enforced universal attention, even from the fops and orange girls.[57]

Garrick on the other hand, was known for his full play of gestures and pleasant tone of voice, or what we call now muscular excitability. His performance style revolutionized the theatre of his time. Though not the first in England or Germany, for that matter, to "naturalize" his speech, and to create character based on the given circumstances of the role, he developed this new style to greatest success. Before him several others, among them Aaron Hill, author of *The Prompter* and a poem *On the*

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[54] West, Shearer. *The Image of the Actor*. New York: St.Martin's Press, 1991, 4

[55] Reynolds, Joshua. “Portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds.” ed. F.W. Hilles, 1952. Quoted in: Benedetti 2001:198.

[56] Boswell, James. "Remarks on the Profession of a Player." *London Magazine*, Aug, Sept, Oct (1770): 16-18. In: Benedetti, pg.199.

[57] Aston, Anthony. "A Brief Supplement to Colley Cibber Esq., His Lives of the Famous Actors and Actresses, London 1747," in *Theatre in Europe: A Documentary History, Vol. I Restoration and Georgian England 1660-1788,* (Cambridge, 1989). In: Benedetti, Jean. *David Garrick and the Birth of Modern Theatre.* London: Methuen, 2001

Art of Acting, the actor Charles Macklin, and in Germany, Ekhof and the Hamburg school, leading among them playwright and theoretician Gotthold Ephraim Lessing each examined the sources for a more "naturalized" acting style, and the difference between inspirational and technical acting. In his *Hamburg Dramaturgy*, Lessing proposes: "If he [the actor] only imitates well these things that can be imitated, his acting will thus infallibly cast on his mind a dim feeling of anger that will react on his body and will there produce such changes as do not solely depend on his will."[58] Joseph Roach puts the question this way: "Does the actor's emotion begin inwardly, mentally, and then work its effect on the body or does the simple performance of the outer bodily actions associated with the emotion adequately produce the feeling itself?"[59]

But Roach in his discussion of Lessing proposes an uneven comparison. He assumes that the emotion that "begins inwardly, mentally" is the true, authentic emotion whereas the "outer bodily actions" merely "produce a feeling." He is thereby echoing the cognicist emotion model of the 1980's where an emotional response in everyday life is understood to be a chain of events, initiated by a trigger event, followed by appraisal, and resulting in emotion. However, not only the James-Lange theory from 1885 but also cognicists today contend that the physical reaction to a trigger might be the first event in an emotion response, prior to appraisal, very similar to what Lessing suggested. Current emotion research reinforces this idea. Niedenthal's and his associates' review of a number of studies reveals

> that people's expressive behavior not only facilitates but can also produce the corresponding emotional experience. Facial expression, bodily posture, and vocal expression have emotion-specific, facilitative effects on self-reported emotional feelings, as well as effects on other measures of emotional experience. Facial, postural and vocal embodiments not only modulate ongoing emotional experience but also facilitate the generation of the corresponding emotions.[60]

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[58] Lessing, G. E. "Dramatic Notes, Selected Prose Works of G. E. Lessing*",* translated by E. C. Beasley and Helen Zimmern, ed. Edward Bell, London: George Bell and Sons, 1879, pp. 240-248. In: *Actors on Acting The Theories Techniques, and Practices of the World's Great Actors, Told in Their Own Words*, ed. Toby Cole and Helen Krich Chinoy. New York: Crown Publishers, 1970, 263.
[59] Roach, 78
[60] Niedenthal, et al, 30

In acting theory, the two approaches Joseph Roach lays out above are commonly referred to as "inside out" or "outside in." Lessing was particularly well situated to find a middle ground between the existing positions, as a translator he had been intimately familiar with the texts by Sainte-Albine, Francesco Riccoboni, and both Diderot's early and later work. In the few places where Lessing explicitly speaks about acting and the emotions he seems to consider both the emotionalist and the anti-emotionalist position, and simply considers both paths as possible solution for an affectively successful performance.[61] In the emo lab we examine both processes as well, since we know that both can lead equally well to what Stanislavsky calls truthful performance. The differentiation between these processes seems easy enough, but even this sometimes becomes indistinguishable. Differentiating between affect and emotion in the way suggested in chapter one is a more difficult process. It implies that the affective reaction is immediate, within the performer's self, and that the performer is in a state in which she is not distinguishing between self and role. The special role of affect as the most immediate response to a trigger is still debated and assumes a fundamental difference between affect and emotion, that I already discussed in chapter one; the latter being a culturally mediated state versus the pre-cultured immediacy of affect.[62]

Referring again to Lisa Feldman-Barrett, I want to reintroduce her definition of core-affect as the "first" response: fight or flight.[63] Core affect is what makes one experience a situation on a scale between pleasure and displeasure, a feeling less specific than individual emotions but constituting a basis or root for an emotion. Curiously, Franciscus Lang also defined the first response to a trigger as either positive or negative. He states that: "He who listens, will discover within himself right away a movement of the soul (Gemütsregung), which shows, if that, which he has

[61] The treatise on acting he had planned to write was never completed, but Engel makes plenty of reference to Lessing's plan in the early pages of the *Mimik*.
[62] See: Massumi, Brian. *Parable for the Virtual - Movement, Affect, Sensation.* Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2002.
[63] See: Duncan, S., & Barrett, L. F. "Affect as a form of cognition: A neurobiological analysis." *Cognition and Emotion 21*, (2007): 1184-1211.

heard, is agreeable or disagreeable. And this he notices before his mind (Geist) is able to find words to express his opinion."[64]

Returning to the lab context, I am reminded of the free exploration period at the beginning of many sessions, during which the actors can enter emotional states according to their own preference or impulse. The same actor might switch approaches from one emotion to the next. For example when entering the physical space for "anger/raudra" the actor might begin by stomping the ground, wringing his hands and pulling his hair. Within half a minute or so, with the additional aid of a strong breathing pattern, the actor can be in a state of palpable and frightening anger induced through an outside-in process. After leaving the physical space, his breath calms, he physically relaxes and moves on to a different emotion box.

In another example an actor will enter the space, calmly sit or stand for some seconds, then suddenly a smile crosses the face, laughter bubbles up, and the actor's body takes on a position of abandonment and joy. In this example the observer can infer the actor calling up an image, a scene or a memory that results in a smile, and then possibly a full episode of laughter and mirth, in an inside-out process. Here too the actor will leave the physical space, calm herself and move on, or possibly switch without pause into another emotional space working from a pose to the emotional state, in other words from the outside in. (Photo)

When Garrick went to Paris in 1764, he amazed Diderot and other admirers with his quick display of a whole array of emotions without apparently having any personal involvement. A scene like this is only imaginable if the actor has internalized the physical attributes of a conventionalized facial gesture, specific to each separate emotion, and trained through constant repetition, by shifting his facial muscles from one "mask" to the next. Technically this would be either a merely externalized "gymnastic" process, or as in other conventionalized forms, such as the traditional dance styles from India, the

[64] "Wer zuhört entdeckt in sich sogleich eine gemütsregung, durch die er anzeigt, ob ihm das vernommene angenehm oder unangehenmist, und dies bemerkt er, bevor der Geist imstande ist, die Worte zu finden, um seiner Meinung Ausdruck zu geben." Lang, 195

Figure 30 – 32. Martin Boersma in raudra sequence. Rasa workshop with first year students.

Figure 33. Group in hasya box in rasa workshop with first year students.

emotion itself would be evoked through the repeated practice of the emotion-specific mask. Calling this “outside-in” is a rather crude way of referring to what I would really call a mimetic process resulting in emotion and possibly feeling.

Figure 34. David Garrick in *Hamlet*.

For Diderot watching Garrick do his “act,” confirmed his belief that the actor should be in control of his or her emotions and not depend on instinct. In order to elaborate the point in the *Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien* he pitted the acting styles of the two leading French actresses of his time, Mlle Marie-Francois Dumesnil (1713-1803) and Mlle Clairon (Claire-Josephe-Hippolyte Leris de la Trude Clairon, 1723-1803) against each other. Written between 1769 and 1773, the *Paradoxe* was not published in book form until after Diderot's death in 1830. In it Dumesnil embodies the “hot” actor, Clairon the “cool” and controlled one.

Mlle Dumesnil was known for her powerful portrayal of suffering mother characters. Her diction was clear, but apparently, her voice was not particularly

pleasing. Her acting style was generally known as being uneven: “Her play is good only where she has to show passion and fury. Otherwise no dignity, no nobility; love is badly rendered, pride only moderately well; she is often rhetorical.... But where she is good she is

Figure 35 & 36. Mlle Dumesnil and Mlle Clairon.

unsurpassed, she makes you forget all her faults and all her ungracefulness.”[65] Calling on the force of nature, Dumesnil stood in great opposition to her rival, Mlle Clairon. While Dumesnil's moments of greatness seemed to have outshone any of her contemporaries’ performances, Clairon was known for her great physical beauty, clarity of analysis and delivery, and most of all, for the consistency in which she mastered her parts.

Dumesnil demanded that you “neither play nor even represent. You are not to play Achilles, but to create him. You must not represent Montague, you must be him.” To which Clairon responded: “My dear, you labor under a great delusion. In theatrical art all is conventional, all is fiction. ... I am neither Clytemnestra nor Dido. I wear their dress in order to delude the senses, and I have the figure and face of a woman, which completes the illusion. But you must remember that what I want to produce is illusion, and I do produce it, and that, however successful I am in attaining my end, it

[65] Charles Collé in Cole and Krich Chinoy, 174.

can never be anything but play."[66] The truthfulness of this quote may be questioned, it is a transcript of a conversation supposedly overheard by a third party, but the relevance of the quote lies more in the content of its statement, and who is saying it, than in its historical factuality. It is also plausible, that Clairon's remarks from 1787 are already shaped by her or the note-taker's knowledge of Diderot's *Paradoxe*. Clairon and Diderot were most certainly acquainted at the time since Clairon's lover was writing for Diderot's *Encyclopédie*.

It seems, however, that in some instances Garrick was also aware of experiences that could be considered closer to Dumesnil's when he writes about the craft and talent of Mlle. Clairon:

> Madame Clairon is so conscious and certain of what she can do, that she never, I believe, had the feeling of the instant come upon her unexpectedly; but I pronounce that the greatest strokes of genius have been unknown to the actor himself, till circumstances and the warmth of the scene, has sprung the mine as it were, as much to his own surprise, as that of the audience.[67]

This quote reminds one that John Hill in his translation/adaptation of Sainte-Albine's treatise, *Le Comédien* (1747), uses Garrick frequently as example for the emotionalist style. Hill's *The Actor: a Treatise on the Art of Playing* (1750) defines the qualities an actor needs to succeed on stage as fire, sensibility and understanding[68] and in his opinion Garrick displays these qualities fully. Hill does however qualify, that because of built, tone of voice, and his specific level of energy, Garrick is not equally suited to all the roles he performs. Hill argues in favor of a kind of type casting that is based on the aforementioned qualities and every actor's unique dispositions towards specific roles, and the passions required to play them, such as the heroic. Regarding the performance of the passions he says:

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[66] Conversation between Dumesnil and Clairon at the Boule Rouge Theatre in Paris in 1787. Regnault-Warin*: Memoires historiques et critique sur F.J. Talma* (1827), pp.240-252, quoted in: Mantzius, Karl: *A History of Theatrical Arts in Ancient and Modern Times*, Volume V: The Great Actors of the Eighteenth Century. New York: Peter Smith, 1937, 2776-78. In: Cole and Krich Chinoy, pp177. Note that this supposed conversation takes place after the *Paradoxe* was written and privately circulated, Dumesnil and Clairon would have been respectively 74 and 64 years of age.

[67] Garrick in a letter to his Danish correspondent Sturz, in: James Boaden, ed. "The Private Correspondence of David Garrick with the Most Celebrated Persons of His Time" Vol. I., in Cole and Krich Chinoy, 136-7.

[68] Hill, John. *The Actor*, *Or, A Treatise on the Art of Playing*, London 1755, reissued New York: Benjamin Blom, 1972.

> The player may have from nature a great deal of pathetick, and maybe very able to raise the passions of an audience by raising them first in himself; for this is the great art of doing it. But still, if this power is not under the guidance of a good understanding, it will often expose him who possesses it to contempt, than raise him any applause. Nature will do all that can be expected as to the execution of these things alone, but nature will not be able to guide and regulate them, unless with the feeling, there will be an understanding, and that be employed in attention to rules. Without this, nature, be the ever so powerful, goes blindly as well as violently on; and the more violently, the more blindly always.[69]

Hill's and Sainte-Albine's call for a sympathetic approach to acting divided audiences and critics, who tried to equally employ a given actor's art as proof for their viewpoint. When publicly referring to his craft Garrick lets one imagine that he too, like Clairon, was at all times in control of his performance and not in a state of having "feelings of the instant come upon him unexpectedly." Yet in a letter about his performance of Macbeth, of which a critique had accused him for adding a pause in a line where there shouldn't have been one, Garrick writes: "When ye mind's agitated, it is impossible to guard against these Slips." And in a similar accusation regarding Hamlet, Garrick adds: "I really could not from my feelings act it otherwise."[70]

In Roach's analysis of Diderot, he points to other ways of reading the *Paradoxe*, casting Diderot himself in the role of the over-sensible, easily excitable writer/philosopher who has been out-argued in his own life repeatedly by others with a more controlled and reserved countenance.[71] In looking at Diderot's work with this biographical knowledge in mind, it is no surprise that one can read the *Paradoxe* not just as a discussion of binaries but as the circumventive approach to an understanding of the actor's hard to achieve paradoxical position: to be both in control of and "unexpectedly befallen" by passions. In a similar vein, Stanislavsky, in the early twentieth century, proposes that "the fundamental principle of our art [is]: "unconscious creativeness through conscious technique.""[72]

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[69] Hill, 33

[70] Woods, Leigh Alan. *David Garrick and the Actor's Means*, PhD, University of California, Berkeley, 1979, Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 348. Woods cites from: David M. Little and George F. Kahl, eds., *The Letters of David Garrick*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963, vol. 1, 351.

[71] Roach, 118-9

[72] Stanislavski, Konstantin. An Actor Prepares. New York: Routledge, (1936) 1989.

Based on his teachings, most western actors in the twentieth century have developed an approach to performing emotions which is rooted in the understanding that emotions emerge most “naturally” and “unforced” when not directly addressed, but coaxed into the open, by a deep familiarity with the role and its given circumstances. This practice is referred to, after Stanislavsky, as “living the part.” Actors today talk about motivation and objectives but not about emotional states, per se. This however is a reversal of the emotion process as understood by cognitive science. In the appraisal model, motivations and objectives would be merely the result, but not the cause of the emotion.

In the eighteenth century and far into the nineteenth, actors (despite their attempts to “naturalize” their acting) still relied to a large degree on the recognizable codification of emotional expression. From Garrick to Agnese Schebest, a mid-nineteenth century opera star in central Europe, performers modeled themselves to the examples found in the visual arts. Rules of codification, such as Le Brun's school of expression, left a deep and long lasting mark. Only during the twentieth century has the knowledge of these codified emotional states slowly been erased. So that today such distinct codification has become an exotic curiosity, found only in “far-away” places such as the codified “classic dance theatres” of India or in the distant past.

One of the many exercises we undertake in the Emotion Lab is geared towards a codification of emotional states for specific characters, by finding fixed poses that can be learned and assumed at will. These poses are initialized by the actors and then enhanced by using principles from other, more recent physically based actor training styles such as Meyerhold's Biomechanics, or Eugenio Barba's techniques, including counterpoint, play with balance, three-dimensionality, dynamism, etc. These principles of movement-based acting styles are of course themselves rooted in historical forms. I will talk about specific examples of this kind of work when discussing the production of *Oedipus* in chapter five.

At this point in time, the work of the Emo Lab has not often been applied to full theatrical productions. However, this training would likely be most accessible and useful when employed as a tool with which to explore the emotional expression of specific historical and cultural contexts. In work with "period" pieces, such as Baillie’s *Witchcraft* mentioned earlier, the work of the Emo Lab is well positioned to access and explore the rich history of codified expression noted by careful observers such as Lang and Engel and employed by actors such as David Garrick. But to

perpetuate the discussion about the value of external versus internal styles and vice versa seems unnecessary in the light of the recent research. It seems that in the North-American context, where the psychological approach to character is still so widespread, it is important to train both the psycho-physical way envisioned by Lessing, and later elaborated by Stanislavsky, as well as the heightened awareness of the emotional states, that was so highly developed during the eighteenth century.

Chapter 4:
Training in the Emo Lab:
The Art of Controlling, Shaping and Letting Go

My practical experience with the rasabox exercises began in 1994 during rehearsals for *The Three Sisters* with East Coast Artists, a theater company co-founded in 1991 by Richard Schechner along with Rebecca Ortese, Maria Vail Guevara, Ralph Denzer and myself. Schechner had devised a new exercise for the company that he called "rasaboxes." Members of the company have been experimenting with rasabox exercises ever since, and Michelle Minnick and Paula Murray Cole trademarked the technique in 2004. A long-term associate member, I have been participating in further exploration of the method and have been teaching it in acting classes since 1996. Since 2006, I have been using the exercise as a vehicle for my research into "performed emotions" in the emotion laboratory at Concordia University.

My empirical research in the lab has been divided into several lab phases, a few introductory workshops, and the lab, rehearsal and performance phase of *Oedipus*. The lab sessions took place in the fall of 2006, the fall of 2007, and the winter of 2008; the lab phase for Oedipus started in fall of 2008, continued in January and February of 2009, rehearsal were in March through April, and performances took place in April and May of 2009. In addition, I taught classes based on the rasabox exercises as recurring part of the curriculum, but not as the exclusive training method. I also held a number of introductory workshops, both for students at Concordia and at other venues. The lab work at Concordia was approved by the Ethics Committee on Research with Human Subjects and serves as the basis for this chapter. Each session was videotaped and/or photographed. In addition, I asked participants to provide me with journal entries, or in some cases, I used questionnaires. While I refer mostly to the first lab phase in 2006 in the introductory chapter of this thesis, this chapter is mostly based on the lab phases in 2007 and 2008 as well as on a single workshop in 2007.

In 1994, Schechner introduced the exercises for the first time to his company in much the same way as teachers, myself included, are still introducing the work to a new group of workshop or class participants. The emotion matrix consists of a square

grid of three times three boxes, taped out on the floor of the rehearsal space, each box roughly six by six feet in size depending on the size of the room. Each box is associated with one of the nine basic rasas (eight plus shanta) described in the *Natyashastra*. The allocation of a rasa to a specific box is done by the participants according to chance and varies from session to session. The Sanskrit names for the eight basic rasas without English translations are written on pieces of paper: sringara (love), vira (courage), raudra (anger), bibhatsa (disgust), hasya (joy), karuna (grief, compassion), adbhuta (wonder), bhayanaka (fear).[1] Participants take these papers and put one in each box, thus completing the grid for the exercise. Only the center box on the grid, which is not directly reachable from the outer edges of the square, remains reserved for the same rasa, shanta (bliss, nothingness), the ninth rasa. In the *Natyashastra* all the other 33 conventionalized rasas are considered mixed states, comprised of more than one rasa layered on top of each other.

Writing: First Step in a Sequence

Figure 37. Alexandra Draghici, Paola Baldoin, Liz Neale, Rachael Kess, "writing."

[1] See my discussion in chapter 2 about the understanding of rasa and bhava within Sanskrit drama theory, and their inter-relationship, as well as their application to the rasabox exercises.

In a workshop or class context, the rasabox exercises are usually taught in a specific sequence. The first step of the process involves techniques that both de- and re-familiarize the participants with individual emotional states. During the first session in a rasaboxes workshop, or at the beginning of a new set of sessions, the performers are asked to write and/or draw reactions to each Sanskrit word on the floor of its corresponding box, either by directly chalking onto the floor or onto large sheets of paper taped to the floor. The Sanskrit words have been translated to the participants, yet the English terms are avoided in the exercise. This way the emotional state that is associated with each rasa is to a degree defamiliarized and thus more open to a variety of meanings. It is also easier to work with an unfamiliar word as an umbrella term for a family of emotion, rather than to pick one of its English translations. For example when raudra is translated only as anger, it doesn't automatically open itself to the full range of the states of anger, from furor to mild indignation. Working with the unfamiliar term raudra allows the performer to open up the range of responses beyond the most familiar.

When all are done, the participants view each other's responses. The very process of writing or drawing is unfamiliar in an acting studio setting, especially when made visible to the other participants, and thus already a performative expression in an unfamiliar medium. This part of the process allows beginners to focus on each separate emotion and to distinguish clearly between the boxes. It is also a first step towards de-familiarizing the emotion, which helps the student to start distinguishing between the performed emotion and the personal emotion experience. The writing/drawing is a physical act and functions as such like a first imprint of the performer's relationship to the rasa. The physical nature of these exercises, moving literally from box to box and responding to each rasa separately, creates a body-map; the participants learn kinesthetically and cognitively where each rasa is located on the grid. This step can be repeated as needed and is sometimes used as a warm-up at the beginning of a session to give participants the chance to reacquaint themselves with the rasas and possibly to come with a new perspective to the boxes.

Free Exploration

In the next and all the following steps the performers are spread around the outside of the grid and enter the different boxes according to changing sets of rules. In the beginning of the training an ample amount of time as well as freedom of expression in a pre-verbal state is key. In this kind of exploration the use of language is discouraged. Many of the performers have experience in verbal improvisation; if they apply this skill, a need to "perform"[2] and verbally express, i.e. "narrate their inner life," immediately overpowers their exploration. Here, the difference between "externalizing" and "internalizing" needs to be clarified. These expressions are commonly used in actor training to indicate the difference between an action done for an outside observer, "externalized," or for the performer's self-discovery of a process, "internalized." This does not necessarily need to be connected to the use of language or non-language, but in practice it is often more helpful to work pre-verbally when exploring process. Another way to look at it is to apply anthropologist Michelle Rosaldo's definition of emotion as "embodied thought," stressing the idea of embodiment rather than verbal expression.[3]

I personally tend to work with minimal instruction in the beginning to allow each performer to explore their intuitively chosen technique within the boxes. By that I mean I do not instruct them on how to reach an emotional state, be it via memory, physical pose, breath and sound, imitation, or imaginary circumstance. Only after this initial exploration are they asked to work with a specific technique. The more familiar they become with the boxes, the more complex the instructions or rules for exploration will be. It is important for the beginner to learn that each emotion is kept within the physical space of its box, and is not mixed with others. Only after these nine basic states are firmly understood can the boxes be removed, and the actors can play freely with the emotional states and begin to explore the mixed states.

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[2] In this context to perform means to perform for an audience, meaning to look for a result in performance rather than an exploration of the means, it often also connotes to "impress" or "show."

[3] Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist. *Toward an Anthropology of Self and Feeling*. 1984:143

Figure 38. Joseph Bembridge, free exploration in karuna.

Awareness, Control

In one of the next steps of rasabox exercises, called by Minnick and Cole "Embodying the Rasa," the performer jumps (or steps) into one of the rasaboxes and assumes a physical pose that is meant to embody that specific emotion. This certainly calls for a leap of faith in the performer, yet I want to suggest that within the setting of an acting studio, the ability to take this leap is one of the first prerequisites. Acting students spend much time training their agility and responsiveness to a wide range of instructions, so this first contact with the boxes is often treated like an improvisatory game. The name of the rasa, and each actor's understanding and translation of it, is the trigger, the box is the situation. These parameters give enough information for the actor to "jump."

My observations[4] show that participants use a variety of techniques often unconsciously applied, particularly by student-performers. It might actually take a few seconds or minutes until they actually find and strike a clear pose. Some participants will jump into a box taking a pose clearly mimicking another member of the group who has gone previously, others seem to mimic an image they have in mind of what they believe the emotion should look like when it is physicalized. These poses are often stereotypical representation of an emotional state, such as a one-legged kneel with hands on heart and an upward turned face to demonstrate sringara/love. Other participants seem to be immediately able to internalize the emotion and allow it to shape their body. Yet others clearly create an imaginary situation to support the rasa with given circumstances. They might work with imaginary partners, in imaginary settings, with obstacles, objectives and/or motivations. Some seem to simply use images, whereas others use the here and now of the space and the other participants for motivation. For most participants these processes vary spontaneously from box to box.

Already in this early step does the performer work with issues of containment of movement and control of expression. After the initial period of simply exploring emotional states in the different rasa boxes – using body, breath and voice but no specific stylistic guidelines – the task of compressing this experiential search into one fixed, repeatable pose is difficult. It is at this moment, in the fixation of the position, the temporary development of individual ”conventions,” that the first hurdles appear. At this moment some of the student actors encounter for the first time very consciously the experience of “not feeling”, of using “signs” rather than “authentic” feelings, the difference between emotion and performed emotion. As I said earlier, the acting student often expects to learn to reproduce “felt” emotion and the concept of performed emotion is unfamiliar. This can lead to a strong sense of disenchantment because almost no student in undergraduate acting schools has experience with a system of repetition, or with stylized or conventionalized forms of acting. And here I mean not even a full background in such a style but any experience with repeated, fixed movements. Many of the beginning students cannot even repeat precisely a simple scenic score, let alone

[4] I have been teaching the rasabox exercises in acting classes since 1996, at University of California Santa Cruz (1996-99), at Swarthmore College (1999-2005) and at Concordia University (2006 to present). I participated in rasabox workshops with Richard Schechner as a member of East Coast artists in 1994-96, and with Michelle Minnick in 2003, 2004 and with Minnick and Paula Murray Cole in 2005. I have also taught an adaptation of the exercises to pre-school children.

specific gestural choices, beyond the most stereotypical. I am quoting lab participant Thomas Preece:

> I found the more specific the poses become […] my energy is drained from actually feeling the emotion or being the object that embodies it, and is poured [instead] into trying to get the pose exactly right and indicating the emotions.[5]

This feeling of loss, or better, the loss of feeling, is hard to transform without actually learning the conventionalized form to a degree where it becomes second nature; only then can the performer choose to re-infuse the form with feeling. This process, which Odissi dancer Sikand refers to as riaz, takes time, in fact years of training.[6] "Within the [Indian] performing arts, there is this idea of riaz or sadhna, the repetition of a performed activity that is routine like, […] this bodily practice is necessary to get to the evocation of rasa."[7] Within the limited amount of time in a workshop or lab session, the process cannot be completed. In a class or rehearsal setting however, as for example in the *Oedipus* project, further discussed in chapter five, the originally stylized poses become integrated into the overall performance score and thus in a certain way "naturalized" within that framework. They become part of the physical score, or, in Stanislavsky's terms, the line of physical actions for that particular performance.

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[5] Excerpt from Tom Preece's emotion laboratory diary (Nov 2006). Each of the lab participants was asked to keep a log of each session.

[6] On a side note, in the North American academy there is a constant tug of war between the performing arts and other departments because it gets harder and harder to finance classes that meet for the amount of hours required for performance training. The result of shortened hours however leads to the reduction of educational depth and results in more generic form of training that achieves fast, generic results.

[7] Sikand, Nandini. "Examining Intention: The Use of Rasa in Odissi Dance." Unpublished paper presented at PSI # 13, Happening/Performance/Event, NYC, 2006.

Figure 39. Thomas Preece, fixed pose in hasya.

Cultural Difference

In the narrative of the first lab group (fall 2006) a refocusing on the many cultural and physical factors that determine emotional expression took place. In an ethnically mixed society such as Canada or the United States, many acting students navigate cultural differences in their personal life. Part of their training as actors entails becoming aware of such differences and the ensuing consequences. Within a few weeks of the lab sessions, the group became acutely aware of such differences and began to understand the multi-layered implications such differences pose for the beginning actor.[8]

[8] My research in the field of ethnic and cultural differences in the expression of emotions among student actors is only in the beginning stages and results directly from the work in the lab.

Figure 40. Chantria Tram, working with breathing patterns in karuna.

For example, this photograph shows Chantria Tram demonstrating her breathing pattern for grief. Outwardly, no big change in her expression is to be detected; inwardly she is working hard, her intensity is palpable for the other lab participants. She told us later that, though she grew up in Canada, her Cambodian family, specifically her mother, taught her that the display of emotions is not suitable for girls and women.[9] For Tram, the lab became a place where she could experiment with outwardly more visible forms of emotions such as grief. In her path of training to be an actress within a North-American context, she had to relearn some of her cultural forms of expression. As Catherine Lutz states, "emotional meaning is fundamentally structured by particular cultural systems and by particular social and material environments. […] Emotional experience is not precultural but pre*eminently* cultural."[10]

[9] Concordia Emotion-lab, November 20, 2006.
[10] Lutz, Catherine, "Unnatural Emotions" in Solomon, 2003, 142-51.

Emotions however, are not only shaped by cultural determinants such as race, gender, age, body type, sexual orientation, and belief, but they are also dependent on immediate life circumstances, as for example the time of day, level of hunger, general health, time in menstrual cycle, state of mind, etc. The performer is faced with the triple task of not only having to understand his/her personal cultural make-up and the differences in his/her daily varying constitution, but also the demands of the part to be played. In this context, Stanislavsky's proposal to divide the actor's training into two phases, work on him/herself and work on the role, gains new meaning for me in that the young actor first has to recognize his/her own inherent material, before beginning to shape a role.

Figure 41. Chantria Tram & Vance DeWaele, fixed pose in vira.

Sample Class

In November 2007 I held a one-session three-hour workshop as part of an introductory acting class. The students had been working together for two months. Many of them had previous acting experience and the class as a whole had become a cohesive group with a strong desire to explore. A number of the participants took to

the exercises with full commitment and vigor, radically unlocking their emotional expressivity during this first encounter with the rasabox exercises.

Figure 42. Explaining the rasaboxes exercise

After a brief explanation of the exercise and the Sanskrit names for the emotions, the students had some time to write or draw first reactions in their notebook. As explained above, this first step usually takes more time and is done in a more open and shared way by either chalking these first reactions on the floor of each box, or onto large pieces of paper taped to the floor, so that all participants can see and react to them. In this short, three-hour workshop, however, I asked the students to do individual journal entries in order to save time. Since these students had already had many opportunities to get to know each other it seemed that this step, that involves some risk taking within a setting in which use of writing and drawing is not the common medium of expression, could be foregone.

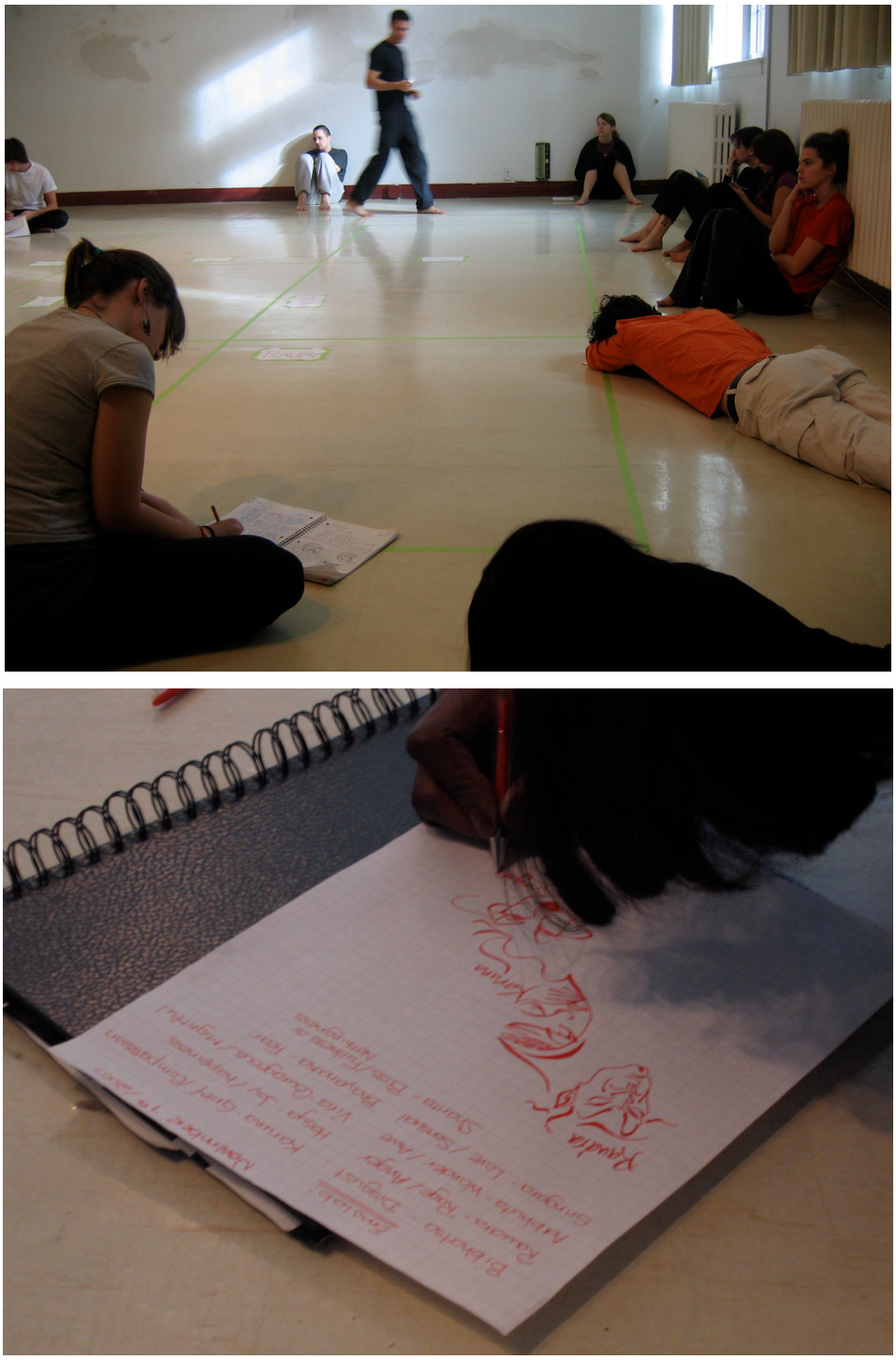

Figure 43 & 44. Step one, responding to the rasas.

In the second step all participants, students and teacher entered each box together for a short period of time - no longer than a minute, just enough to internalize each emotion and to create a body map of the grid. After that, the students

were invited to freely explore each of the boxes as step three. I asked them to use their bodies and voices, their breath, imagination, memory, pre-conceived or stereotypical ideas, but no words and no direct contact with one another physically or otherwise. In order not to create barriers between doers and onlookers, all were invited to work at once, with the limit of no more than two people to a box. With a group of eighteen students that meant that at any given moment there could be two students in each box.

Figure 45. Step two, communal exploration of the boxes, bibhatsa

After the debriefing session following step three they went back into the boxes. This time they were asked to create fixed poses in three boxes of their choice (step four), then each worked with a partner who was to heighten each of the poses through active, physical sculpting (step five), and in the end the pairs put together a brief pas de deux, using their six poses as material to build a short choreography moving simultaneously from box to box.

These six steps varied considerably from one another in regards to group dynamics and intensity. Whereas during the second step, the first exercise on feet, all together in one box, the group was not only physically close, but also energetically on

a similar level, composed yet intense and intent to search out these states - the third step of simultaneous, individual work, took participants in very different directions.

Figures 46 & 47. Step two, communal exploration of the boxes. Adbhuta above, sringara below.

Over a fairly short period of time, circa seventeen minutes – the time it took for each student to enter every one of the nine boxes at least once – a number of the students went into what I will call a "deep emotional state." Afterwards, in the debriefing session immediately following the exercise (step three), three students described that they felt as if they had crossed a threshold in some of the boxes and had come to a feeling of what they called "pure emotion." Rio Mitchell explains: "In some of the boxes it felt to me like all those barriers were broken down, I didn't think of a time when I felt fear, because those barriers really only exist within the context in which you are feeling something, but when you just go into a box it feels like pure emotion…"[11]

Mitchell's observation is provocative, especially when read against the cognicists' view on emotion as always trigger based and goal oriented. Her idea of "pure" emotion opens up a number of questions regarding the nature of emotion in general and the performed emotion in specific. I want to suggest that the state Mitchell calls "pure emotion" is a state of emotional agitation. Not agitation in general, but I mean a state of high alertness when one embodies one particular emotional state within one specific rasabox. In this heightened state of embodied emotion the performer can let thoughts pass through her mind without latching onto them, similar to techniques used in meditation. This means that the performer can also choose to let the specific cognitive aspects of the emotion state pass through her mind without latching on to them. These aspects are the recognition of a trigger, the direction of the emotion toward someone or something, and the goal relevance of this information. Even if highly specific cognitive aspects of an emotion that may originally have been induced by physical signs materialize in the actor's mind, the actor can choose to ignore them, or let a whole slue of them pass through her mind, yet maintaining a strong sense of "being in an emotional state." This state might then be more physically defined by, for example, a specific breathing pattern, tension in certain body parts, posture, and maybe facial expression rather than through cognitive triggers. For the moment, it is merely important to note that the students experienced a strong shift toward the awareness of their own emotional states, and a first idea of what might constitute those states.

[11] Transcribed from video documentation, Nov 07, 2007, videographer: Andrea Rideout.

In many of the acting students I see a strong yearning to immerse themselves in emotions. The Rasaboxes open up an official place to indulge in emotions within a class setting. This wish to actually "feel," and to make those feelings big and strong goes along with the idea that emotions in acting need to be "real, true, felt" – in one magic word – "authentic." It is for that reason that during the second part of the session we moved towards "fixed" poses (step four), imitation (step five) and composition (step six).

The fixed poses, where the performer is now trying to find precisely repeatable forms of embodiment, almost as if working towards conventional poses, is the exercise where the difference between performed and "real" emotion becomes clear. As described earlier, this step of working with fixed poses often goes along with a period of disenchantment before the performer learns through repetition how to fill the pose again (riaz). In a one-time workshop session, as I am describing here, there is no room for repetition, but neither is the stage of disenchantment quite reached, since the performer is still engaged with the objective of finding and fixing the pose. Disenchantment only begins to happen when working repeatedly with the same poses.

In step five, the performers work with partners and teach each other some of their fixed poses. Depending on the available time they can work on a minimum of three poses each, but better is at least five. That gives each pair a vocabulary of at least six common poses. Which, in step six, they choreograph into a brief two-person composition within the rasa grid. The process of teaching each other the poses is often an experience of surprise for the student. I would say that it is not common in North-American actor training to imitate one-another. Exercises of imitation are usually focused on animal exercises, where the actor imitates an animal in order to learn a physicality different from her own, or else when playing the part of a living or historical person, as in docu-drama or historical drama.[12] But to imitate your co-actors is not a common process, at least judging by the surprise of workshop participants. The curious thing is that if the process of imitation is adjusted to a more common setting of transferral, namely learning a choreography from one another as in dance, the effect changes to a purely external imitation of a pose, however when the imitation happens with the intention of mimicking an emotional state, the imitating

[12] In regards to the animal exercises, the often-adapted Strasberg exercises come to mind, in respect to docu-drama the work by Anna Deveare Smith, or the performances of historical characters from Hitler to King George.

actor may experience an aspect of her partner's emotional state. This method seems to call up not only the process of experiencing emotion via physical expression as in the James-Lange theory, but also the idea that mirror neurons might be activated in this course of action. What the exact biological process looks like can only be deducted from scientific experiments. From a purely experiential standpoint what takes place is that an actor in the moment of embodying the other person's pose and emotional state, often to her great surprise, can almost taste or feel the other person's state. However, making references to tasting and feeling indicates different schools of acting. "Taste" of course immediately connects to rasa and Sanskrit drama, yet it is not the idea of Sanskrit drama that I want to evoke but the idea of physically experiencing. "Feeling" on the other hand might make one think of different realist traditions, but means here to recognize or to know. In regards to the exercise, it opens up the performer to the variety within each of the emotion families, and to aspects of emotional states, which might have not been within his or her range of personal experience.

Schechner cites as his second inspiration for the rasabox exercises Artaud's call for an affective athleticism. In his essay of the same name, Artaud claims that "our actors cannot scream anymore" – so how, and when can the primordial scream, the 'Urschrei', become unlocked? After two months of regular acting classes (three hours twice a week), this particular group had developed a level of trust and yearning for transformative exercises that had become palpable in other aspects of their work, which is why I wanted to try out the rasabox exercises with them. Usually I consider the rasabox exercise an advanced acting exercise though non-actors and beginning actors have participated. The level on which the exercise operates depends entirely on the setting and the participants. During the third step of the workshop, the period of free exploration, a number of outstanding moments changed the group and individual dynamics considerably. I will focus on what I call "the three screams."

The first scream came from a woman in the raudra box (anger). Carmen Cartterfield had spend some time in the box, kneeling on all fours, moving back and forth as if to find an outlet for her slowly rising anger, her breathing became more intense and finally she began to vocalize. With about three breaths, she developed a

loud, low, guttural scream that palpably affected the room. It seemed as if everyone knew that a new level of intensity had been reached. To use Teresa Brennan's terms I would conclude that an aural change had taken place on a large enough scale to create a shift in the room noticeable for both performers and observers.

Figure 48. Carmen Cartterfield, free exploration in raudra.

The second scream came from another woman. Hailey Lewis was in the center box, the shanta box, and for me it was the first time that I had observed somebody not just vocalizing but screaming in this box. Lewis bent her torso several times back and forth in an extreme arch, and then while lifting her arms and slowly letting them down, let out a breathy scream, sounding both like a release and a remainder of held anger.

Videographer and research assistant, Andrea Rideout, suggested later that it seemed as if Lewis was looking for release in the shanta box, but needed to clear herself with the help of a scream to get to a state of nothingness. During the debriefing Lewis was actually among the most outspoken of the participants and shared that she felt completely overwhelmed and nearly physically invaded by this

outburst of high emotions from so many of her class mates. Much of the assault she felt had to do with the intense noise level in the room. Between heavy breathing, unstoppable laughter, sobbing and screaming, the soundscape had an intensity that one might associate with an advanced rehearsal for *Marat/Sade* but not necessarily with the work of first year acting students.

The third scream came from one of the male students, Martin Boersma (see figure 30-32, pg. 103). Martin had already pushed himself hard in a few of the boxes, so when he finally entered raudra, the anger box, it did not take very long for him to peak. He walked back and forth for a bit, wringing his hands and arms, pulling his hair; he pumped his breathing and finally let out a very loud series of short screams. His breathing and scream were so loud and of such high intensity, that the whole room once again seemed to change. At this point, I began looking for a moment to bring the work to an end. It seemed that people had already exhausted themselves, or were actually afraid of the energy that had been released.[13]

In retrospect, I want to find out much more about these borders that both the lab participants and myself experience. A certain level of intense expression seems to be considered as unbearable. The threshold surely differs from person to person, one participant, Cassandre Mentor, for example said that she herself didn't pay attention to anyone else in the room while she was working and thus didn't even hear the screams. My colleague Robert Reid, with whom I debriefed after the session, suggested that these states of intense emotions are trances or trance like states. With this type of intense physical, nearly paratheatrical work, as with trance or other trance like states, there lies an implied sense of danger, a fear of overstepping the threshold and possibly not being able to return. These fears, both in the facilitator and participants, are also a type of meta-emotion. On the one hand, these meta-emotions can function as control mechanisms within this type of school setting – on the other hand, I ask myself as a researcher if these protective meta-emotions prevent a certain level of exploration. It is probable that this type of work can only be explored with professional actors. Within the learning environment of a school, the responsibility for the wellbeing of the students lies with the teacher. When working with professionals, the participants are self-responsible. Their previous training is meant to enable them

[13] The fear of these intense emotions might have to do with the fact that not all students in class are there to become actors. A first semester acting class at Concordia is composed of students of all areas of training within the department of theatre. This includes design students, playwriting students, students of theatre development, majors and acting students.

to clearly differentiate between personal and professional engagement with the material; their techniques of cool-down and detachment from the work are already in place.

Figure 49. Isabelle Fortier, free exploration in sringara.

When going back to Artaud one could say that this might be one way to unlock the scream that he puts at the center of his affective athleticism, his call for an athlete of the emotions as Christopher Innes[14] translates it. What exactly is affective athleticism in Artaud's terms? In the essay he describes different breathing techniques through which he believes this can be reached, his sources are pranayama and the

[14] Innes, Christopher. *Avant Garde Theater, 1892-1992*. New York: Routledge, 1993, 95.

breathing work described in the Cabbala. He points to Jean-Louis Barrault as the prime example for a successful application of the cabbalistic breathing pattern. Artaud describes in awe Barrault's performance of the centaur, the man-horse, in which he sublimates his perfected technique, his "being" the centaur. It is the only other performance that seemed to have reached the intensity he experienced when watching the Balinese theater. Artaud longed for the primordial scream – a painful realness that shatters the boundaries between affect and emotion, that transfers the mediated, performed emotion back to its roots in the immediacy of affect.[15]

In chapter one, I discussed briefly my reading of Brian Massumi's *Parables*. His understanding of affect seems relevant here. I understand that to Massumi the emotions are the mediated expressions of affect, dependent on the many pieces of cultural information that shape behavior, whereas affect is the most immediate response to a given trigger. He states that affect is intensity, and further on that "intensity is the unassimilable."[16] It seems to me that Artaud's affective athleticism is already pointing to what Massumi was going to define as affect. Yet, Massumi's definition allows me to understand more clearly what Artaud might have meant. Furthermore, I am wondering if what Mitchell has described during the debriefing as "pure" emotion is as close as one can get to affect in the rasaboxes. Affect, understood as a pre-mediated state, would be free of all cultural and personal lenses, unassimilable means that it cannot be assimilated by cultural norms. As I analyze "pure" emotion, it is not a pre-mediated or unassimilable state but rather a state in which one is aware of cognitive mediation yet able to resist it. Sreenath Nair states in his study of breath in regards to consciousness and rasa that "the yogi combines the mundane and divine into samadhi, a state of modified consciousness of non-dual existence. It is a state of freedom from the bondages of temporal limitations of here and now."[17] Further on, in his reading of Abhinavagupta's commentary on the *Natyashastra*, Nair suggests, "santa as a rasa refers to a neutral state of consciousness placed within the 'gap' between inbreath and outbreath."[18] Of course, I am not suggesting that during the rasabox exercises the participant enters into a state of yogic meditation, however, the connections are not arbitrary. In their regular class warm up

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[15] Artaud, Antonin. *The Theatre and Its Double*. New York: Grove Press, 1958, 133-146.
[16] Massumi, 2002, 27
[17] Nair, Sreenath. *Restoration of Breath: Consciousness and Performance*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2007:187. Samadhi refers to a higher level of yogic concentrated meditation.
[18] Nair, 2007:187, quotation marks by the author

this particular group of students had been practicing a form of hatha yoga along with yogic breathing techniques. The awareness of breath, including the "gap between inbreath and outbreath" was familiar to all participants. Since during this workshop in the period of free exploration (step three) a focus on breath was encouraged, it is likely that several of the students experimented with modulations of their breathing patterns and thus possibly altered their states of consciousness. A further discussion of breathing in this context would need more specific training in breathing techniques, and a sequence of lab sessions dedicated to this investigation.

In my work as a theater teacher, practitioner and connoisseur, I am looking for intensity of expression, but find that this requires a navigation of both affect and emotion towards an experience that can be repeated by the performer and digested by the audience, ultimately reaching a mutual experience that culminates in some form of heightened, extra-daily communication, which might be most closely related to the phenomenon that in Sanskrit aesthetic is referred to as rasa.

Chapter 5:
Faking Suicide
Emotion Training for Jocasta's Cathartic Death

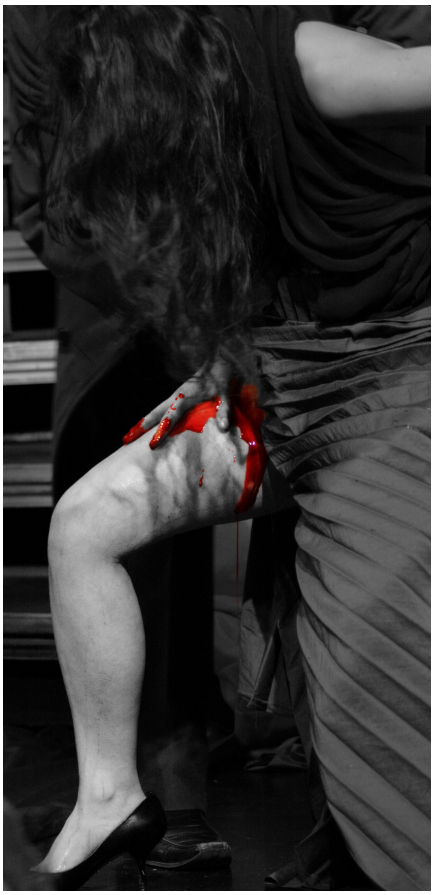

Figure 50. Alexandra Draghici as Jocasta

OEDIPUS

This day is new but all its woes are old.

How tired I am already, and afraid.

JOCASTA

To think of fear is human, to feel it natural,

To speak of it does not befit a king.

A king, charged with the desperate manage of a tortured state,

Must plant his courage firmly in the ground,

That all may cling to it and him

Against the wild torrents of despair.[1]

[1] Dickens, 2008, p. 16

The story of Oedipus evokes extreme emotions. In the world of this play, the taboo of incest is intact and the basic relationships and prohibitions that drive the myth are not in question. The more I think myself into Jocasta's place the more horrific becomes the moment when she has to recognize her incestuous relationship to Oedipus[2]. As a director and acting teacher, I am confronted with the question of how to "play" such a moment. Will the actress playing Jocasta have to "feel" the performed emotion in order to move the audience? Will the work with the rasabox exercises help the performer to create repeatable emotion scores? Will these scores help to define performed emotion and possibly a clearer definition of "felt " emotion in performance? I am not attempting to answer these questions exhaustively but a search for some answers has guided me through the workshop and rehearsal process of *Oedipus* and they remain provocative for me as a teacher, director, and performer.

In chapter one, I briefly discussed the difference between feeling and emotion based on Damasio's research into the subject matter; I also mentioned that Blair chose the term "feeling" when discussing emotions in acting. In this chapter, I am once again investigating the difference between these terms in their practical application. The work on the production of *Oedipus* by contemporary Canadian playwright Ned Dickens with undergraduate acting students at Concordia University came as a welcome opportunity to investigate the performance of emotion by applying the rasabox exercises to scene work and performance. In *Oedipus,* acting students were forced to explore their emotional range and depth and to measure themselves against this ancient myth.

In the spring of 2008, I began preparations to direct Dickens' *Oedipus*, a part of his seven-play cycle *City of Wine*. Seven theatre schools across the country each worked on a production of one of these plays during the 2008/2009 academic year. Then, in May 2009, we all brought our shows to the *City of Wine* Festival in Toronto hosted by the Théatre Passe Muraille.[3]

As I was replacing my colleague Sarah Stanley in the Concordia segment, I joined the project later than some of the other participants, and only had a limited number of plays to pick from. Initially I was drawn to *Laius*, one of the original plays

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[2] This adaptation does not question the basic relationships and prohibitions that drive the myth. For other contemporary adaptations of the Oedipus – Jocasta story see Helene Foley, 80-89.

[3] This large-scale project was dreamed up, produced and dramaturged by the Toronto-based dramaturgical company *Nightswimming,* namely its artistic director Brian Quirt and producer Naomi Campbell.

within the cycle not based on one of the surviving Greek plays,[4] because it promised opportunities for exploratory work. But another school had already selected it, so I ended up choosing *Oedipus*, which was the first play written in the cycle.[5] It had a successful, award-winning run in Toronto in 1994 under the direction of Sarah Stanley.[6] It was also Ned Dickens' first play and became the centerpiece of what was to become *City of Wine*, a re-telling of the story of Thebes familiar to us because of its treatment in so many well known plays such as *The Bacchae, Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Antigone*, and *Seven Against Thebes,* as well as literary re-renderings such as *Cadmus and Harmonia*.

Contrary to my initial understanding of the Oedipus myth the play's cathartic highpoint in Dickens' version hinged on Jocasta's on-stage suicide rather than on Oedipus' off-stage self-blinding. Dickens' *Oedipus* owes much more to Seneca's version than Sophocles', specifically citing Ted Hughes' translation as a source. Seneca's as well as Dickens' *Oedipus* veer away from the Sophoclean play at many points, yet the Aristotelian dramaturgy of emotions, catharsis through pity and fear at the turning point from recognition to reversal, remains intact. However in the Dickens version the emotional effectors, pity and fear, are not triggered by the protagonist's journey alone but are infinitely multiplied by the telling of each character's tale of suffering and finally climax not in Oedipus' act of self-punishment but in Jocasta's suicide.

Among the many historical and contemporary re-readings of Aristotle's catharsis I assume the stand that catharsis is experienced by the audience, yet I am not excluding the possibility that catharsis is also part of the process a character undergoes within the play as part of the plot structure, or that a performer can experience catharsis while performing.[7] In the *Poetics*, Aristotle stresses the purging or purifying function of theater through the cathartic release of the emotions.

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[4] Actually the first play in Aeschylus now partially lost Theban trilogy was *Laius*, the second his version of *Oedipus*, but only the third, *The Seven Against Thebes,* survived. See: Frederick Ahl, 63.

[5] The *City of Wine* cycle consists of seven plays: *Harmonia*, *Pentheus*, *Laius*, *Jocasta*, *Oedipus*, *Creon*, and *Seven*.
The plays are available through Nightswimming, http://pages.interlog.com/~bquirt/currentevents.html.

[6] Toronto's Dora Award for best production, 1995.

[7] For an in depth discussion of catharsis see: Orgel 1995, 133-151, also Andrew Forde, and Elin Diamond in the same collection by Kosofsky Sedgwick and Parker. See also: Auslander 1997, 13-27, as well as several essays in Oksenberg Rorty 1992. Fischer-Lichte (2009) discusses the connections between catharsis and emotional contagion, and Rachel Zehiran gives a current feminist re-reading of catharsis (Zehiran 2010).

"Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is […] through pity and fear effecting the proper catharsis of such emotions."[8] Elin Diamond reminds us that Gerald Else's translation of the Poetics from 1957 "removed catharsis from the bodies of spectators to the formal workings of the tragic plot."[9] At nearly the same time, with the avant garde of the 1960's a movement towards theater's roots in ritual led to explorations of the performer's own cathartic journey during performance, as for example in the work of the Performance Garage, the Living Theater, and Joseph Chaikin. This work was partially picked up in the 1980's and 90's by performance artists such as Karen Finley. Diamond specifically searches for the "cathartic shudder" in Finley's work, yet insists that this too remains a performed emotion, "because this is true performance not true psychosis."[10]

In an uncanny way, Aristotle's definition of emotion as laid out in the *Rhetoric* has not really been challenged in its basic conceptions by recent research. "We shall define an emotion as that which leads one's condition to become so transformed that his judgment is affected, and which is accompanied by pleasure and pain. Examples of emotions include anger, pity, fear, and the like as well as the opposites of these."[11] In other words, an emotion changes a person's condition, or state of being, and by doing so the person re-evaluates a situation. This change of a person's condition can be either pleasurable or painful. This analysis does not only seem to be echoed by contemporary philosophers, but also by cognicists and psychologists, who connect emotion to judgment (Nussbaum, Solomon), appraisal (LeDoux), or goal-relevance (Oatley, Reddy).[12] "It is the goal relevant intensity and valence of emotions that renders them inherently enjoyable or inherently uncomfortable."[13]

In respect to this version of *Oedipus*, I suggest that it depends on the treatment of the chorus and Jocasta's suicide how we are dealing with catharsis within

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[8] Aristotle. *Poetics*, part 6, trans. James Hutton. New York & London: Norton and Company, 1982, 50
[9] Diamond, Elin "The Shudder of Catharsis in Twentieth Century Performance", in Parker & Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1995:164
[10] Diamond 165
[11] Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, book 2, part I, in: Solomon, 2003, 6
[12] LeDoux 1996; Nussbaum in Solomon, 2003; Oatley, Keith. *Best Laid Schemes: The Psychology of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992:162; Reddy 2001; Solomon 2004
[13] Reddy, 2001, 119

these changed parameters. Aristotle's take on the emotions, is echoed in the eighteenth century manuals I discussed earlier, and still reverberates with this contemporary adaptation.

The Play

I will briefly analyze Dickens' *Oedipus*, specifically the role of the chorus in the play's dramatic structure in order to lay out the framework within which our production process took shape and finally to examine the details of Jocasta's suicide and the emotional score the actress developed.

Dickens' *Oedipus* differs most noticeably from Sophocles and Seneca's versions in his treatment of the chorus. In this play and subsequently in all the other six plays of the cycle, Dickens introduces, instead of the chorus, a group of characters, the *Unnamed*, who represent social archetypes. They are Bread, Water, Cloth, Firewood, Blade, Bottle, Bowl and Blood. Only some of these characters, in some of the plays, are gender defined. Their relationships with one another shift throughout the cycle, though some maintain certain characteristics that are suggested by their names: for example, Water is a host of sorts; Bottle likes to drink.

The openness in the construction of these characters calls for actor involvement and ensemble work, which in turn - at least in our production - resulted at times in a certain over-importance of these largely actor-developed personas. In addition to the central plot, the author gives each of the Unnamed the opportunity to tell parts of her or his story in order to illustrate the horror of their situation. In an act of "democratization," we hear part of everybody's story. Scenes that in both Sophocles' and Seneca's *Oedipus* swiftly move the plot along serve in Dickens' version to illuminate the complex relationships between characters, not only within the realm of this play but within the *City of Wine* cycle, thus imagining a whole history of Thebes. Many times the audience's awareness is directed to the suffering of the Thebans in their plague-ridden city; we are constantly reminded that they are lacking food, drink, water, firewood, shelter and proper burial sites for their dead, thus encountering the thick tapestry that was Thebes.

One of the functions the traditional tragic chorus can perform is to distance itself from and reflect upon the protagonist's actions, thereby giving the audience a

certain amount of space to critically view the hero's actions;[14] Dickens' individualized group of citizens however is not enabled that way. Instead, their multiple stories illustrate, match and multiply Oedipus' sufferings. This characteristic of the Unnamed corresponds with Hans-Thies Lehmann's description of the postdramatic chorus: "... figures talk not so much at cross-purposes but rather in the same direction so to speak. Such non-conflictuous, additive language causes the *impression of a chorus*."[15] However, if the postdramatic chorus is thus defined, then in the change from the dramatic to the postdramatic, at least one of its possible roles has shifted here, namely from being in dialogue with the protagonist to that of multiplying a one-directional force. This intensification of the emotional arc of the play becomes at times very overwhelming for an audience and presents a challenge to North American viewing habits.

While working on *Oedipus,* the postdramatic choric strategies within the play's otherwise more traditional dramatic structure became unwieldy. The hierarchy between the stories of the Named[16] and the Unnamed collapsed at times, yet the many characters on stage could not maintain this continual, unranked multiplicity. Remaining a plot-based play, the enormous emotional energies of the Unnamed had little space to crescendo. The scenes amongst the Unnamed were all of high intensity focusing on one or the other character's personal catastrophe. Only during Creon's long speeches or during the bacchanal following Manto's sacrifice could their emotional intensity ebb and rise. Yet, in the end their voices had to be quieted to allow Oedipus' and ultimately Jocasta's story to climax.

Process

The acting ensemble for *Oedipus* consisted of sixteen mostly second and third year students from Concordia University's BFA program in theatre.[17] Seven out of the

[14] It is another investigation to find out to what degree the reactions are pre-determined by the playwright's structuring of the play, specifically the evocation of pity and fear.
[15] Lehmann, 2006,129, italics by Lehmann
[16] The Named are Oedipus and Jocasta, her brother Creon, the seer Tiresisas and his daughter Manto.
[17] *Oedipus* was cast through an audition process open to all students, second year and up, who had fulfilled a set of prerequisites. When making my choices I was looking for students who could play leading parts, such as Oedipus and Jocasta, Tiresias and his daughter Manto. Knowing many of the students from previous classes certainly influenced my choices, but there were also other criteria that played a part. Decisions were to be made for pedagogical reasons, the ability of working well in an ensemble context, dynamics of gender and race within the ensemble, the performer's ability to play a character of a certain age, previous experience, etc. Two of the participants, directing assistant Mike

sixteen had not previously worked with me on the rasabox exercises; five had worked with me in an intensive second semester first-year acting/movement class where we had explored the rasabox exercises extensively. Four of the cast members had been participants in my emo lab the previous year.
List of student cast members:[18]

Name	Character	Emo Lab	Emo Class	Oedi Lab 08	No prior exp.	Had class w/me	Year Area
Joseph Bembridge (Late cast – Jan 09)	Tiresias	X				X	4/TPER
Martin Boersma	Bowl (UN)		X	X		X	2/TPER
Alexandra Draghici	Jocasta	X		X		X	3/TPER
Stephanie Greer	Water (UN)				X	X	3/TPER
Kristen Gregor	Manto	X		X		X	3/Major
Olivier Lamarche	Creon				X		3/TPER
Cassandre Mentor	Cloth (UN)		X	X		X	2/TPER
Mireck Metelski	Bottle (UN)		X	X		X	2/TPER
Robert Montcalm	Blood (UN)	(Video-grapher)		X		X	3/Major
Samuel Platel	Blade (UN)				X	X	3/Major
Darien Pons	Old Men (UN)		X	X		X	2/TPER
Jessica Ranville	Shepherd (UN)				X		3/TPER
Jennifer Roberts	Firewood (UN)			X		X	3/TDEV
Jon Silver	Oedipus			X		X	3/TPER
Jon Verral	Glass (UN)	X		X		X	3/Major
Maria Waslenko	Parent (UN)		X	X		X	2/TPER

After an early audition process in April 2008, a year before opening, the conceptual work for designers and assistants began in September of 2008. We held regular biweekly meetings. Only a few actor-related activities took place during the fall term. In November of 2008, we were asked to present a short scene of the play during the inauguration celebration for Concordia's then new president, Judith Woodworth. I

Czuba and actress Jennifer Roberts (Firewood) had been involved in Sarah Stanley's summer intensive class (2007) workshopping the whole *City of Wine* cycle. Their intimate knowledge of the Theban cycle was very beneficial to our understanding of the relationship between the plays, the characters, and especially between the Unnamed.

[18] This list reflects the students' status during the time of the *Oedipus* project. The abbreviation UN stands for Unnamed. The area abbreviations in the last column refer to the different areas within our Theatre BFA program: TPER stands for Theatre Performance (Acting), Major in Theatre (student chooses area of concentration), TDEV stands for Theatre and Development (theatre for social change). In addition, we offer a BFA in Playwriting, and in Design for the Theatre (DFTT).

took this chance to work with Jon Silver and Alexandra Draghici on one of the Oedipus/Jocasta scenes. Even though we met only a few times, we laid some of the groundwork for these characters during that time. We explored their sexual attraction and love for each other. We found that Oedipus can be brooding and insecure and often looks towards Jocasta as a stronghold, "Lend me your courage, Queen."[19] Jocasta is disappointed that their relationship as a co-governing royal couple has changed of late and is longing for the younger, more "heroic" Oedipus, The tension between two kinds of love, a mother/son and a husband/wife love became very palpable during these explorations.

> You know, I love you well.
> I chide your fear, not you.
> That you may conquer fear,
> As you have conquered all who dared oppose you.
> […] As you climbed through the spray to face the sphinx,
> Your sharp eye up, your youthful body straight.[20]

Figure 51. Jon Silver (Oedipus) and Alexandra Draghici (Jocasta) in rehearsal.

In October and November, some of the cast members met with me for some voluntary, exploratory emo lab sessions. The group of participants varied from session to session, depending on the student's availability. One of them, Maria

[19] Dickens, 2009,16
[20] Dickens, 2009, 17-18

Waslenko, cast as one of the Unnamed, Parent, had worked with me intensely on the rasabox exercises during her first year as a student of Theatre Performance. She states that the work in the emo lab gave her "an understanding of the emotions and different ways of tapping in to them. [...] Breath work, I find, is a really great trigger to get into grief or anger, there is just a change of breath [between them]. The emo lab helps me make these triggers, whether they are physical, mental, or [based on] breath."[21] Approaching the different emotional states through breathing patterns has been one of the basic exercises in the lab and class context.[22]As discussed in chapter four, several of the actors who had been previously in class with me, were familiar with both yogic breathing patterns as well as with the exploration of the boxes using breath as a guiding principle. While the patterns differ among individuals, certain similarities can be found, like short, sharp intakes of breath lead to fear/bhayanaka, or brief expulsions of breath pulsed from the diaphragm on the syllable "ha" result in laughter/hasya.

We completed that early lab period with a first, full cast reading of the whole play for the author, Ned Dickens, as well as for the designers and support team. Early on in the winter term we had a few mandatory labs, by then only four cast members (Greer, Lamarche, Platel and Ranville) were new to the boxes, but it turned out that it became more difficult for them to be integrated into the work.

Usually the process in the rasaboxes starts with the performer's work on oneself, only when the different emotional states are explored and understood does the performer begin to work in character. But so close to the start of a short, six-week rehearsal period, we did not take the time for the newcomers to explore the boxes freely, meaning outside the *Oedipus* framework, especially since part of the cast had already began to explore character. Olivier Lamarche (Creon) comments: "Because of the fact that I wasn't in the initial workshop, and entering the rehearsal process starting in the emo lab being with people who had [already] been in there, I personally found it very difficult to start […]. I entered the boxes, and a lot of people already knew what they needed to go towards to and they were already very big in what they were doing, and really exploring. And I was kind of distracted by what they were

[21] Waslenko 2009

[22] I am aware of the Alba Emoting Method and its focus on breathing patterns to evoke emotional states but have at this point not studied it in depth or attempted to apply it to the rasaboxes. See: Zarrilli, Krasner, Blair. The simple, non-conventionalized breathing patterns lab participants come up with have so far been effective.

doing and thrown off by trying to figure out why they were doing specific things."[23] It is easy to understand what Lamarche refers to when observing the rasabox exercises, the intensity of the work, the heavy breathing and sounding, the short climactic moments of peaking in an extreme emotion might seem from the outside as the work of crazed, self-involved mad men. Yet, as with many acting exercises, you cannot enter the work while at the same time watching (and judging) your colleagues. This confirms that the uneven experience with the exercise was becoming a hindrance to the process particularly for the four without any prior knowledge.

The other students had already internalized the matrixed, spatialized approach to emotion, on which the rasabox exercises are based, during their time in the lab or classroom. When rehearsals began, those actors were able to apply their previous work on character-specific emotional states in the boxes to their scene work. This included a character specific understanding of what an emotion might mean to a specific character, by what it might be triggered, and at whom it might be directed. It also meant that they had developed a character specific gestural language based on the exercises with fixed poses, which they were soon able to control and shape within the context of the play.

One of the most commonly used techniques resulting from the rasa work during *Oedipus* became the adding and layering of emotional states in order to arrive at more complex forms of expression. For example the combination or layering of love and disgust, one considered being a "positive" emotion, the other "negative"[24], seemed a potent mixture for Jocasta who learns of Oedipus' true identity. Or, as Kristin Gregor puts it working on Manto's long narration of Oedipus' self-mutilation: "If I am doing something and I am getting too sad about it (karuna), [the director will] just throw out a raudra (anger) and I know that means I need to get angrier. Or [50%] hasya (joy, laughter), I know that means I am still in a sad place but laughter and happiness comes into that sad place and so it turns into this laugh-cry. Instead of someone who didn't have that language, you'd say [to them] be happier, and they might just come out of that sad place. But to be told 50% hasya, I know I've

[23] Lamarche 2009

[24] See discussion of positive and negative emotions in chapter 1.

maintained my "sad" but happiness has just tainted it."[25] The image Gregor evokes for me here is that of Hume's string instrument in his *Dissertation on the Passions*. When one string is stroked it will continue vibrating even if the next and the one after is stroked, arriving at a sound that includes the vibration of all the strings stroked. When citing a string instrument as the metaphor for the emotions, Hume showed that each emotional state is influenced by those that preceded it.

Throughout the rehearsal process for Oedipus we grappled with challenges posed by the emotion work itself, its possible limits and achievements: for example the difficulty of tempering and shaping the emotional states through physical and vocal control; or the containment and/or spillage of affective energies within the ensemble, as well as between audience and performers; or the fear of encountering the violence which some emotional states can cause (i.e. during the fight or impact scenes). Some of these issues could be addressed during the process but others will have to be explored in a future project. To me one of the main problems arose from the difference in experience with the rasabox exercises among the performers.

These issues of inequality in experience with the rasabox exercises made me return to the boxes only a few more times after full rehearsals had started in March. As a result, some cast members had developed a larger, character-specific repertoire for each of the rasas than others, i.e. breathing patterns, gestures, postures and walks, vocal masks, as well as an inner, imaginary life. The gestural language, for example, became useful in the choric moments and helped to compose and maintain dynamic and lively tableaux. In addition, the actors developed a character specific understanding of the emotional states.

How one character differs from the other, and all of the characters in Oedipus from those in other plays, was already noted by Engel in his *Mimik*, namely it "depends on national and personal characteristics, social status, age, gender and a hundred other circumstances."[26] Gregor notes: "I know what the hasya (joy, laughter) of this world is and it's not just happiness. […] Hasya, in this world, full of plague and death and stench and all, that is not my hasya, is not my hasya in my everyday life."[27] Aristotle in the *Rhetoric* states that each emotion needs to be examined according to

[25] Gregor 2009
[26] "Vielmehr komme es auf National und persönlichen Charakter, auf Stand, Alter, Geschlecht, und hundert andere Umstände an." Engel, 1804, 56
[27] Gregor 2009

three questions, he uses the example of anger to explain this: "we will ask what the temperament is of angry people, with whom they most often become angry, and at what sort of things."[28] With these three questions, Aristotle confirms that emotions are not universal in expression but depend on a person's character in the way they are expressed. The way an emotion is expressed implies that a person is part of a social stratum and because of that directs her anger at specific people, those who arouse anger and not at others who are below the "anger radar" so to speak. Aristotle also points at the qualitative differences between different objects of anger. In short, the expression of anger or any other emotion depends on who gets angry at whom about what.

But not all performers were able to reach the different character specific emotional states or apply different levels of intensity to them. Gregor earlier describes how she mixes the emotional states in percentage rates, such as 50% karuna and 50% hasya. In this case, she mixes the ratio between two different states, but she could also regulate the intensity level from a 100/100 down to 0/0. This means a gradation from a level of 100% intensity in physical expression plus 100% inner intensity to a level of 0/0, equaling a state of neutrality. In emotion research, the span of intensity is measured on a scale between sleepiness (minus hundred) and high alertness (plus hundred). The scaling also calls Aristotle's line between pleasure and pain to mind, for example he positions anger as a distressing emotion on one side of a continuum and on the other end its opposite or respective pair, in this case the lack of anger.[29]

Obviously, these numbers and percentages are not truly measurable but they present a clear image to the actor of what to work towards. So, in a lab session we would practice these differentiations of inward and outward expression and the layering of distinct rasic states. A typical lab session could begin with the exploration of the performer's own emotional states, as opposed to character states, then the participants play with levels of intensity up to a hundred percent; after this is internalized, they work on the division and relationship between inner and outer

[28] Aristotle. *Rhetoric*, book 2, part I. In: Solomon, 2003, 6
[29] Aristotle 2002, 1125b-1126b; in: Solomon 2003

intensity. At this point, the performer starts to feel slightly fatigued[30], and the reduction of outward expression combined with an increase in inner intensity can result in very powerful performances.

After this process is understood, it can be applied to character work. But, as mentioned, not all cast members had this training, so that at moments of choric swells the control of the levels of intensity was less successful, and, as some of the actors mentioned in their interviews, since we did not all share the same language,[31] a simple note to the actors after rehearsal would not have been sufficient. In respect to *Oedipus,* I suspect that a more finely tuned approach would have given a more modulated force to the play rather than the continuous level of high intensity that we achieved.

Some of the performers did develop a very specific more modulated emotion score.[32] Alexandra Draghici (Jocasta) explains it this way: "You start to look at your script and see each line, or each little section, […] we would separate them into beats, instead [we] separate them into emo boxes. So it would give you a way to articulate a line based on those emotions."[33] Or, in Gregor's words, "I feel that I make a map for myself, the same way that I usually make an internal dialogue. I make an emotional map, and the thing that the boxes give you is just one clear word, and you know where you're going. And if you have to get more specific, you can put a number or a percentage on it.... It's clear and you can step from one to the other instead of feeling your way blindly."[34]

In order to somewhat remedy the discrepancy in rasabox background amongst cast members, I brought in a number of images from Greek and Roman statues, reliefs, vases and fountains. The actors experimented with imitating these poses and finding corresponding emotional states for them. Exercises in mimetic copying, for example another actor's pose for a specific rasa, are part of the introductory set of rasaboxes exercise. The performer practices the use of those copied bodily and facial

[30] The work in the emo boxes is not so much physically exhausting compared to something like Suzuki training, butoh or acrobatics, but the level of focus and deep psychophysical commitment demanded in the box work is very tiring.
[31] The language is related to this set of exercises and shared particularly by the lab participants and to a degree by the class participants. The language develops out of practice, the participant hears a certain set of instructions and learns how to apply them.
[32] The emotion score works instead of or in addition to a movement score, a score of physical actions, the line of intentions, subtext, or whatever other means the performer uses to break up a script or score.
[33] Draghici 2009
[34] Gregor 2009

expression in order to trigger a feeling or an imitation of emotion. "Evidence for the emotion-initiating power of facial expression was found in other studies in which emotion-specific facial expressions, manipulated by muscle-to-muscle instructions, resulted in self-reports of the associated emotion, especially for participants […] who were more responsive to their inner bodily cues than to external situational cues."[35] This technique of imitating works of visual art has of course been very popular during the eighteenth century as discussed in chapter three. Both Lang and Engel prescribe to the actor to study and imitate the physical postures and facial expressions in paintings and sculpture.

In *Oedipus*, the poses based on the Greek and Roman artifacts became the building blocks for a movement sequence at the very beginning of the show. Inspired by the classic images the cast composed a sequence of seven tableaux illustrating the Oedipus myth. They transitioned in slow motion from one tableau to the next, all the time staying physically and emotionally fully committed. The composition process and the integration of this sequence into their daily warm-up routine set a tone for the entire cast as to the level of physical and emotional engagement expected throughout the play. Set as a preshow it immediately signaled to the audience that they had entered an extra-daily world in which the heightened physicalization of emotional states is the norm. This exercise that was integrated as a building block into the show, allowed the cast members without prior experience in the rasabox exercises to find a matching language with the rest of the cast.

In creating the emotional landscape of the play, each of the performers worked on the strata of their emotional scores, thus each moment on stage became multi-leveled and more complex. This complexity and multiplicity of emotions too, reminds one of the layering and mixing more consciously practiced in the eighteenth century, as for example J.J. Engel had called for. This layering, a resistance to a one-dimensional reading of complex human relationships, becomes possible again in a contemporary setting with this type of training that clearly differentiates between performed emotions. Only after distinguishing between emotions, can they be mixed and layered. In the play, instead of the linear succession of one emotion at a time, one action alone, one single stranded plot, Dickens replaces it with the relentless overload of multiple voices. My directorial process towards a multi-leveled emotion-scape

[35] Niedenthal et al., 2005, 28

further increased this effect.

In summation, the exercise functions both as an expressive tool as well as an analytical method, allowing the performer to gain a clearer understanding of a character's emotional reasoning. The actor relies on the lived experience of rasa practice to beckon emotions in performance, however she has to transfer this experience to the stage reality and adapt it to a physical score specific to the performance. Alexandra Draghici's experience with Jocasta will serve as an example.

Jocasta's Suicide

In Dickens' *Oedipus*, as in Seneca's, Jocasta chooses a much bloodier approach to suicide than her off-stage hanging in Sophocles' version. In Greek mythology, the separation of the female body from the ground through the act of hanging is connected to a number of rich metaphorical images concerning the relationship of the female body to the earth's surface; such as the image of the young virgin on the swing, detached from the ground.[36] In Dickens and Seneca however, Jocasta does not separate herself from the very ground she walks on but instead ends her life by inserting a sword via her vagina into her womb. In Frederick Ahl's translation of the Seneca, the stage direction reads: "Jocasta drives the sword between her legs and upward, and then collapses on the stage,"[37] thus equating the sword with a phallus and turning this suicide into an act of deadly self-penetration. Ned Dickens only says: "Jocasta stabs herself in the womb."[38] Yet, as a director, I could not erase the powerful image of Ahl's stage direction from my mind, so that another form of stabbing was never even discussed during our process.

Jocasta's self-mutilation and the annihilation of her sexual and reproductive organs is, rather than a metaphorical image, an in-your-face act, illustrating graphically the horror of her recognition. "To interest a popular Roman audience in a stage "death" when the games afforded ample opportunity to see real death must have been difficult, and perhaps the horrendous on-stage suicide of Jocasta in Seneca's *Oedipus* is an attempt to do so,"[39] argues Frederic Ahl in his critical analysis. He suggests that where the Sophoclean *Oedipus* is artfully constructed, Seneca's version,

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[36] Cantarella, 1986
[37] Ahl, 2008, 247
[38] Dickens, 2008, 58
[39] Ahl, 2008, p.118

in adjustment to the taste of his time, chooses a more primal course of action.

In our production the design team needed not only to decide on a form of presentation of Jocasta's suicide that fit the overall aesthetic of this particular staging, but they also needed to gain an understanding of the performer's emotional process in order to solve the problem. A metaphorical representation, such as pulling red strings out from under the dress, was rejected by the designers and myself early in the process, but realistically staging the act of vaginal self-mutilation presents quite a problem, as we shall see.

In this particular process, much focus was moved from the deed itself to the operation of a prop. The primarily female production team all seemed to have simultaneously decided to address this upsetting act with an overdose of stage business, involving the construction and operation of multiple mechanical devices in order to distance themselves from the possible impact of even the imagined act. Astoundingly even among seasoned professionals like Concordia's production staff[40] did the particular form of Jocasta's suicide illicit affective responses. This reaction might fall into the category of gut reactions[41] that are located on the line between fight and flight. While most men cringe at the thought being hit in the testicles, most women will cringe at the thought of a sharp object inserted into the vagina. Yet, Jocasta's act is not designed to purely elicit pity and fear for the queen, but attempts to go beyond this level of emotion to maybe a state of awe and horror for the unfathomable potential of the female anatomy.

It is not easy to rig a blood pack for vaginal mutilation so that it reliably and repeatedly expels the right amount of stage blood, in just the right moment, covering precisely the targeted area of the exposed leg. The contraption must be built and attached in just the right way to fulfill its purpose. Issues of size, weight, and functionality, as well as volume, velocity, substance, color, consistency, washability, and last but not least mountability, all play a part.

Like the intricacies involved in the operation of a seemingly straightforward prop, the actor needs to build the theatrical moment that involves the prop. In a row of perhaps outwardly mundane, technical steps, the performer develops a score in which

[40] At this point in time, Concordia's theatre department had an all female team headed by production manager Maggie Ewing, shop supervisor and technical director Marlene Lucas, props mistress Mairi Robertson, and costume shop supervisor Marija Djordjevic.
[41] Prinz 2006

the dramatic moment can still powerfully unfold and maintain its emotional impact.

> Alexandra/Jocasta:
> *At first, I felt that the technical requirements had stolen my ability to let go and feel my emotions fully… and I felt I needed to… and they were getting in my way….*[42]

What at first seemed to be a series of obstacles turns into a new set of emotional triggers. Elly A. Konijn describes in her book *Acting Emotions* the relationship between spontaneous and imagined emotions[43] but I want to draw attention to a third kind of emotion in performance, which is triggered by the physical score applied to the muscle memory developed during the rasabox exercises. In Draghici's case, the imagined and physically triggered emotions combined in the state called by Winnicott and later Turner and Schechner "not me/not not me."[44] Whereas Konijn stresses that imagined emotions, or emotions called up by sense-triggers are not "real" or "spontaneous," this differentiation does not matter within the state of performing because the performer is not herself but at the same time not not herself.[45] The double negative here does not simply dissolve into a positive but remains in that fragile performative space where performer and actor become indistinguishable. One way in which the performer generates emotion states is through physical triggers, which in their bodily manifestation do not differ from otherwise triggered emotions and thus can be felt by the performer. Yet those performed emotions too need to be carefully learned and understood in order to be shaped and controlled on stage.

At times more than fourteen people were busy trying to make the blood contraption work (props mistress, supervisor, costume shop supervisor, student designer, design supervisor, two design assistants, three stage managers, four actors and the director). Alexandra Draghici remained surprisingly calm throughout this process. While the others were talking: tubing, taping, preparing glycerin and color, she was plotting her scene. Even after the Montreal run (April 2009) and the re-

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[42] From here on, I will be interspersing my text with excerpts from a personal letter that Alexandra Draghici wrote to me about her performance of Jocasta. (September 2009)
[43] Konijn 1997: 93
[44] See chapter 1, Winnicott 1971:53, Schechner 1985:110
[45] Schechner 1985: 109-110, Blair 2008: 49-50

mounting of the show for the *City of Wine Festival* in Toronto (May 2009) we did not arrive at a one-hundred-percent workable solution to the technical problems, yet the scene itself grew more and more horrific and awe inspiring with each performance.

> Alexandra/Jocasta:
> *Later, after running the last part of the play and getting over certain bumps and letting all the little details sit into my muscle memory…. They became part of the world for me…. I started to accept them and their challenge as I didn't see them as obstacles but additional trigger points and as I said, part of Jocasta's world. When they became familiar in my body…. I could find my emotions as I moved through them. I had a sort of graph in my head of the emotions I would slip into throughout the play, sort of like a heart rate on a screen…I could access this graph through the movements and positions I assumed as they each were colored with an emotion for me….* [46]

In a recent conversation with Martin Boersma, who played one of the Unnamed, Bowl,[47] we discussed the difference between exploring emotional gestures during a rasabox session and the application of those gestures in performance. Boersma suggested that, "the exploration leading up to the decision for a final pose can be more useful than the final pose. It can also occasionally be very difficult to find the fullest extent of the emotion associated with the pose without that exploration. The pose might represent the apex of a journey of the emotion rather than a full embodiment of it." But as Draghici suggests above, the actual performance score might then replace this emotion journey Boersma describes. This process is not merely an act of Pavlovian conditioning of reflexes but the creation of a repeatable psychophysical score that triggers emotional states during performance.[48]

A performed emotion is ultimately defined by its quality of being perceivable by an audience member. The spectator should be able to notice the emotion, however this awareness does not need to be conscious. It could be argued that depending on the type of performance it is not desirable for the performed emotion to be consciously noticeable by the audience, or if so only in specific moments. Yet emotional states, and perhaps more so the shifts between them, need to be perceivable to the audience on some level if we assume that emotion processes form the basis of human behavior and human behavior is part of the theatrical project. But the way in which those shifts

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[46] Draghici, personal communication, Sep 2009
[47] Boersma, personal communication, May 2010
[48] Blair, 2008: 34-36

are perceived cannot be unanimous. The frame within which the performed is presented in addition to stylistic choices, all influence the way in which emotional states are performed and perceived. They are shaped by the playwright, the dramaturge, the designers and the director, last not least the performers ability to perform the emotion and the respective shifts, yet how exactly the communicated is perceived remains variable. For example at the end of *Oedipus*, the emotions of the Unnamed become merely a background color which heightens the audience's experience of pity and fear in the face of the play's catastrophic finale, and performed emotions operate very differently if seen up close through a camera lens, than when observed on a proscenium stage by an audience of five hundred.

Dickens refocuses the audience's attention at the end of the play away from Oedipus towards Jocasta. Oedipus chooses blinding himself as his punishment for breaking the taboos of patricide and incest. But his blinding is not only an act of bloody punishment but also one of transformation that puts him outside the norm and opens up possibilities of seeing that which lies beyond what those who have eyesight can perceive.[49] We cannot forget that in the continuation of the myth, Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus gains entrance to the sacred grove at Colonus where he does not die like a mortal but in a mysterious act not seen by human eyes, he vanishes into a realm beyond reach. Jocasta, on the other hand, loses all her powers of transformation except for one; at the end of the play, she is turned into a literal vessel of shame that can only be destroyed through a deadly act of self-mutilation. This moment, Jocasta's suicide, operates so well in Dickens' version because the multiplicity of voices is finally calmed. The project of multi-layering is replaced by a single focus. And this moment grandly, yet for a feminist director most unfortunately, portrays Jocasta, mother and wife, as the ultimate and singular bearer of the incestuous shame of the Theban royal house.

Here my conflict as a director was great. Where was I to focus the audience's emotions? Who deserves our pity and fear? While directing I did not think of this as a match between genders, between husband and wife, mother and son, but I knew that I did not like the idea of showing Jocasta as a mere victim. We had briefly considered

[49] Guest lecture by George Harrison (Classics) for *Oedipus* design team, Concordia University, Sep 26, 2008

that Jocasta would strip out of her dress into a white slip, but this nightgown version of Jocasta, which evoked visions of an ever-drowning Ophelia, did not sit well with me and made us look in another direction. Instead, we decided to pull all stops and go for grand emotions, horror and awe. So, we framed Jocasta as empowered, in control of her actions, a figure larger than life who prepares herself for her impending suicide like a high priestess choosing her own death as the only possible outcome – the only transformative act left to her.

When rehearsing the final scenes of the play, we set the beginning of Jocasta's denouement at the moment of her recognition: when the Old Man (the Corinthian in Seneca) reveals that Oedipus was not the biological son but the adopted child of the Corinthian king and queen. At this point Oedipus is still searching for more proof of the inevitable truth, that he has indeed killed his father and married his mother; Jocasta on the other hand understands the full impact of the Old Man's revelation and retreats to the palace to prepare herself for death.

She disappears behind a screen where three of the town's women, Water, Cloth and Parent, take off her dress and clothe her in the sacrificial robe. They are seen lit through the screen during this costume change where Jocasta is first stripped down to her underwear and then redressed in a splendid robe. During this change, one of the actresses, Stephanie Greer (Water), now needs to mount the blood pack, while the others shield her with the robe. Without much time or sufficient light, Greer needed to strap the pack to Draghici's lower back, feed the tubing through the underwear and attach the hose on the inner right thigh, high enough to stay out of sight. Not an easy task when under pressure. Then all is covered by the robe. The women descend back into town leaving Jocasta to put on her grand make-up and do her hair, another part of Jocasta's ritual preparation, visible only in the close-up video projected frontally onto the screen, behind which she is changing. This detached projection of the queen exudes an eerie calm, she seems to be entirely focused on her final transformation.[50] In performance, this projected image of Jocasta preparing for her sacrificial death is juxtaposed with the frenzy surrounding Oedipus' denouement: his recognition, breakdown and reversal; as if two musical tempi were played against each other.

[50] Yet all involved know how many technical details the actress has to deal with, from finding an array of small props in the dark, without actually moving much, to putting on the right amount and color of make-up, to ensuring that the pack and robe are all in place.

Figure 52. Alexandra Draghici (Jocasta).

> Alexandra/Jocasta:
> *I felt the beginning of the end for me was [at] that exact moment […] when I find out that Merope is not Oedipus's biological mother. I feel like that moment is the destruction of my world on all levels. When he leaves me disguised in the coat and I have one last moment of holding on. … Following that... everything became internal for me... I felt the acceptance of what needed to happen... numbing and coma like. Bhayanaka, shanta, vira, adbhuta. [Fear, bliss, courage, awe]*[51]

In the meantime, Oedipus has visited town in disguise to hear one more report detailing the killing of King Laius. Then the shepherd who passed on the newborn to the Corinthian is found. And when finally Oedipus hears that this child, Oedipus, was born to Jocasta, he leaves to seek out punishment for his deeds. His self-blinding is described in gory detail by Manto, the seer Tiresias' daughter (the messenger in Seneca) after which Oedipus, now with empty, bloodied eye sockets, returns to the scene. And only then does Jocasta descend, splendidly robed and made-up, from the palace.

[51] Draghici, personal communication, Sep 2009

She asks Oedipus to kill her, but he refuses, and scolding him for his cowardice, she grabs the sword from him and "... drives [it] between her legs and upward and than collapses on the stage."[52]

Figure 53. Alexandra Draghici (Jocasta) and Jon Silver (Oedipus) in rehearsal.

Though I saw the scene many times I would still become involved each time I watched it, experiencing both horror and awe. And, yes, it might have been because I was so acutely aware of the fragility of the operation. More than once the glycerin-based blood would begin dripping down Draghici's leg before she even descended the steps (covered by her long dress). Since glycerin is extremely slippery, it became not only an issue of timing but of safety. When she finally reached downstage, she had to carefully negotiate her placement. She needed to grab the sword from Oedipus with her right hand without actually touching him, open her dress, which had a split down the front slightly towards her right. She needed to grab and lift the seam with her left hand, low enough to give a wide opening, but not too wide, as not to reveal her underwear and the contraption. The left hand, while holding the front seam of her dress, had to be placed on her lower back so that she could pretend to stab herself

[52] Ahl, 2008, 247

between the legs with her right hand and at the same time squeeze the blood pack in her lower back with the left. Right afterwards she had to bend forward to reveal the blood flowing down the inside of her right thigh, and smear the blood to make it more visible, let the sword roll down onto the floor, renegotiate her placement in order to fall precisely in the spot that wasn't covered by a large red cloth, so as not to spill on it, leaving enough room for the "blind" Oedipus to maneuver and to land exactly in Creon's arms in order to give her upper body a slight lift as to achieve a better angle of visibility; all the while of course maintaining an emotional intensity that had to leave the audience breathless.

It seemed ridiculous to load up this highly dramatic moment with such an excess of technical detail. And yet this over-complicated sequence, scored micro-moment by micro-moment, demanded just the right amount of focus and crazed determination that Jocasta (Draghici) needed to commit (perform) this horrific act. Hanging appeared so clean in comparison.

> Alexandra/Jocasta
> *I had made up some sort of rational, emotional and fantastical explanation for all the tech stuff, which helped to fuel me rather than deter me… Sometimes... the dress was a struggle… and I am not sure if that fear of not hitting the mark and getting everything into place…though I felt regardless death would come… I don't know if it disturbed me or added to my Jocasta… it probably affected me in a way that I am not completely conscious of... when I was stripped I felt rebirth... like the acceptance could not be turned off… that I would go all the way… and be powerful about it… cause I was not feeling that I [Jocasta] was in the wrong... completely. I felt freed.*[53]

[53] Draghici, personal communication, Sep 2009

Figure 54. Alexandra Draghici (Jocasta).

In looking at my descriptions of the *Oedipus* I find myself not unlike Tomkins[54] weighing endless strings of actions against one another both weaving and untangling the multiple layers of theatrical representation, all the while further searching for a deeper understanding of the actor's process of performing emotions.

> Alexandra/Jocasta:
> *The make up in the dark... was actually how I believed she would have done it… it didn't matter anymore… all that mattered is that it happened... my ritual to death…*[55]

Draghici said that before beginning work in the emo lab, emotions would simply flood her; she would enter "the magical space" and just see where it would lead her.[56] Now she feels that she has a number of bodily rooted triggers that she can access when necessary, a flood still, but one, which may be controlled, and more importantly, is repeatable.

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[54] Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1995

[55] Draghici, personal communication, Sep 2009

[56] Post performance interview with the actress Alexandra Draghici by research assistant Gabrielle Cryan, May 2009.

Conclusion
Transcending Emotion: Rapture

In closing, I will briefly turn to another extreme emotion, the fleeting state of "rapture," because I want to show how rapture and other states of transcendence might bridge performance styles in order to induce a transformative experience in the audience. In the introduction, I discussed rape, in and of itself not an emotion, but an extreme event in the human experience accompanied by a mixture of extreme emotions. Rapture itself is also not a single basic emotion but a state of mixed and overlapping emotions. "Rapture," like the word "rape," comes from the Latin word "raptus" meaning: carried off, which in Middle Latin became "raptura" for seizure, rape, or kidnapping.[1] Today, rapture has several interrelated meanings; "an expression or manifestation of ecstasy or passion" or **"**a state or experience of being carried away by overwhelming emotion" or "a mystical experience in which the spirit is exalted to a knowledge of divine things."[2]

Rapture here is defined among other things as a state of extreme emotion with a clearly positive connotation, meaning it is linked to positive emotions such as joy, bliss and love as opposed to negative ones such as anger and grief. It is both biologically and experientially linked to other states such as exaltation and ecstasy on the one hand, or transcendence, trance or trance-like states on the other, the latter ones being less attached to positive emotions. Common to all of these states seems to be the connotation of emotional excess or overflow rather than that of control, shaping or containment of emotion. Yet, despite their seemingly unruly nature, I want to argue that within the context of performance there are techniques, which can be taught and learned, that will help to reach such states. These techniques are often derived from ritual or meditative tradition, or practices such as yoga, but can also be based on movement and gestural language. Another common determinant between these altered states is that they are considered to be transformative, thereby achieving in the audience the sense of being transported and thus making the experience of live performance unique and profitable in the metaphysical sense, or as Fischer-Lichte

[1] http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/rapture
[2] http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/rapture

puts it, "by transforming its participants, performance achieves the re-enchantment of the world."[3]

Within the framework of twentieth century western performance (in the theatrical sense), certain names come to mind such as Artaud and his exploration of cabbalistic breathing patterns and Grotowski's proposition of translumination.[4] Different as their ideas may be, they demand from the performer a radical commitment to psychophysical exploration and expression. Artaud himself reaches states of feverish rapture in his writings, perhaps more so, or more lastingly so, than in his theatrical endeavors; Grotowski's leading actor from the early years of the Polish laboratory, Ryszard Cieślak, is repeatedly described as transcending any conventional understanding of acting. In the context of the eighteenth century, the actors discussed in chapter three, Garrick, Ekhof, Dumesnil and Clairon, all have at times enthralled their audiences; in the early nineteenth century, performers such as opera diva Agnese Schebest are described by their admiring audiences as rapturous and exhilarating. In Sanskrit theater, the desired highpoint of a performance is often intended to be an ecstatic form of sringara, the devotional, erotic love to a god. One would be right to argue that the above mentioned examples are rooted in almost opposing techniques and styles, the commonalities may be found however within the attempt to reach the aforementioned altered states. But as discussed in relation to the experience of emotion and in the context of catharsis as mentioned in chapter five, in performance, one must differentiate between the performer's state and that of the audience member. Here, as in the introduction, I will briefly explore the experience of the audience member before turning to the performer's techniques, by returning to a discussion of rapture.

Rapture can be experienced suddenly when encountering a certain cadence in a voice, in an erotic encounter, in devotional meditation and in the awe-inspiring meeting with beauty in nature or art. Other moments of rapture, more closely related to theatrical performance, have been described in the historical forms I have discussed

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[3] Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *The Transformative Power of Performance*. London & New York: Routledge, 2008:181

[4] "Translumination is achieving a state of sacred theatre, in which spontaneity and self-discipline co-exist and mutually reinforce each other." Nair, Sreenath. *Restoration of Breath: Consciousness and Performance*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2007: 121. Meyer-Dinkgräfe, Daniel. *Approaches to Acting: Past and Present*. London & New York: Continuum 2001: 164. Zarrilli, 2010: 519

in earlier chapters, such as in Sanskrit drama or its contemporary forms such as Odissi dance or Kathak; as well as within eighteenth century theatrical practice.

A personal encounter with rapture takes me to a performance of Claudio Monteverdi's baroque opera, *The Return of Ulysses*, in the early summer of 2010 directed by Peter Schumann of the *Bread and Puppet Theater* and under the musical direction of Eric Milnes of *Montréal Baroque.* During the open dress rehearsal, Peter Schumann played the part of Penelope, and one of his long-time collaborators, actress and puppeteer Genevieve Yeuillaz, played Penelope's nurse, Ericlea.[5]

Over the years I have seen both Schumann and Yeuillaz perform many times in a variety of shows, from the giant Bread and Puppet circuses and pageants of the nineteen eighties and nineties, to small indoor shows like *Joan of Arc*, or one of Schumann's solo fiddle sermons. In many of these shows, I experienced moments of rapture, as participant, as viewer, and as viewer/participant.[6] But the particular experience of rapture I want to discuss happened during the *Return of Ulysses*. It was a moment between Penelope and her nurse Ericlea during Scene 1 of Act 1. The passage is mostly a long aria by Penelope, with a few interruptions by the nurse, during which she describes the many years of waiting for Ulysses, the ten years he spent in the Trojan War, and the ten years it has taken him trying to return home. "It is like a long lamentation (11 minutes, 10 seconds)."[7]

For this rehearsal, the orchestra and the singers were placed stage left while the puppetry took place stage right. Schumann as Penelope was wearing a white dress, long and billowy, his female mask seemed to bend its head slightly forwards and to the right, lending the character, though not conventionally beautiful, a madonnesque air of demureness, enhanced by the hip length, "blond" hair, made from sisal cord in

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[5] Schumann was invited to direct a puppet version of the piece with Concordia theatre students alongside the professional orchestra and singers of the Montreal Baroque Festival. Other members of the cast included three puppeteers from the *Bread and Puppet Touring Company* (Gregory Corbino, Maura Gahan, Shauna Lucey) supported by a cast of nineteen Concordia students. The performance I saw was a dress rehearsal, open to the public, that took place in the University's 350 seat D.B. Clarke theatre. Ultimately, the piece was to be performed in a variety of locations including outdoor settings.

[6] Being both viewer and participant simultaneously is a curious state that I know only from those large scale B&P puppet shows, during which the individual performer has long moments of stillness behind or underneath a large cardboard puppet, a vantage point from which one can watch peacefully other parts of the show unfold.

[7] Personal e-mail from Genevieve Yeuillaz to the author, January 1, 2011

many rough strands.[8] Yeuillaz was wearing a shorter white dress and a helmet-like wig; the pair was moving in front of a long table, set up for the chorus of suitor puppets. During the long scene, Penelope has moments of heightened exasperation and yearning for Ulysses. As the singer performs the long aria, the puppet moves and dances. Then comes a moment of stillness, at which point the nurse approaches from behind and lifts Penelope's arms high in the air, a gesture full of despair and longing. This moment touched me, as audience member, as rapturous. The performed emotion was so deliberately executed and precisely timed with two recurring refrains in the music, that it fit the movement perfectly and immediately translated itself into a heightened moment of audience perception.

> Tu suol del tuo tornar (repeat)
> Perdesti il giorno" ("only you have lost the idea of the return")
>
> Torna, Torna, (repeat)
> Torna, Torna, (repeat)
> Torna Ulysse! ("Come back, Ulysses")[9]

[8] This particular mask has been used by Schumann many times in a number of different roles; I saw it for the first time in the re-staging of Joan of Arc in 2009.

[9] Quoted in Yeuillaz, 2011, from *Ritorno d'Ulysse in Patria*, music by Claudio Monteverdi, libretto by Giacomo Badoaro, Venice 1641

Figures 55 – 57. Peter Schumann and Genevieve Yeuillaz in *The Return of Ulysses*.

The moment was carried by multiple means: the sounds of the baroque orchestra including the singer's voice, the unfolding story of Penelope's plight – though I was not really able to follow the details of the Italian libretto – the visual impact of different sized puppets in juxtaposition with each other, and Schumann's forlorn dance as Penelope, all these layers peaked in a gesture that seemed to fully embody the core experience of Penelope's longing. Were I to apply the rasa vocabulary to this moment, I would say Schumann's gesture consisted of a mixture of sringara (love), adbhuta (wonder, awe) and karuna (grief). In terms of the baroque movement language, we know from different sources including Lang's *Dissertatio*, that a gesture of lifting the hands and arms above eye level is only appropriate in moments of extreme emotion. "It is wrong and inappropriate to raise the hands above the shoulders or the head, however it can be allowed for someone who is extraordinarily pained or pushed to despair by the furies."[10] At this moment in *Ulysses*, this old rule seemed to truly fulfill itself. The raising of the arms high up in the air marked a moment of extreme emotion, Penelope, not pushed to despair by the furies, but by the long absence of Ulysses.

In my communication with Yeuillaz, she further explains: "I was coming behind Penelope and lifting her arms toward the sky in a prayer/exaltation position. It happened 5 times during the Penelope solo."[11] When reading Yeuillaz' description, I realized that in my mind the five moments had compounded in my memory to just one moment of exaltation. And I am unable to recall if they all seemed the same or if my mind erased the repetitions. I do however remember that much later in the piece there were two other similar moments when the nurse manipulates other puppets in a similar manner, yet its impact while strong did not reach the rapturous height of Penelope's opening scene. In the later repetitions, the arm manipulation seemed to become a recognizable convention rather then the seemingly "natural" extension of an emotional state. While there were a number of external reasons why those latter arm movements had less impact on me, I suggest that it was to a large extent the gestures themselves.[12] Those later two moments involved two characters each; they took place

[10] "Falsch und unschicklich ist es […] die Hände über die Schultern oder den Kopf emporzuheben, obgleich das einem übermässig Gepeinigten oder einem von den Furien zur Verzweiflung Getriebenen erlaubt werden kann." Lang, 187-8

[11] Yeuillaz, 2011

[12] It could have been due to the nature of this particular run-through. Two of the soloists for different reasons had been kept from arriving on time, so, while the orchestra and puppeteers performed, the

during the recognition scenes between Telemaco and Ulysses (act 2, scene 4) and Penelope and Ulysses in the final scene (act 5, scene 2). The gestures, rather than an emphatic lifting of the arms, were in both cases an embrace, a gesture of address that itself is more closed off from the audience and intimate in nature. In Engel's terms, the gestures above fall into two different categories, both under the sub-heading "expressive gesture," the lifting of Penelope's arms in scene one may be placed in the category described as "analogous gesture, that imitates an affective state," whereas the embraces in acts two and five fall into the category described as "purposeful gestures," movements that he calls the "natural" response to an affective state.[13] Applying these differentiations to my viewing experience of *Ulysses,* I conclude that the analogous gesture, applied to a more extreme state of emotion, allows for a deeper experience of emotion for the audience than the purposeful gesture.

The analogous gesture, however, is defined as "imitating an affective state" thus linking it to mimesis in the Aristotelian sense. Schumann, who is known for his Brechtian strategies, uses the tragic means to emphasize Penelope's role as victim.[14] Enforced by the familiar masks, puppets and banners, Penelope is another war bride hounded by greedy and unforgiving males. At the same time as he is involving his audience in a moment of rapturous identification through his performance, possibly leading to cathartic relief, he points with his general staging towards the circumstances that led to Penelope's plight. Schumann's performance brings to mind what Fischer-Lichte describes as "the semiotic body which brings forth the expression of suffering, while the phenomenal body does not actually suffer."[15] Yet, my discussion of the emotion processes (Damasio, Niedenthal) questions this statement. Does not the physical, bodily imprint of the gesture set in motion the emotion process within the actor's body? Thus, allowing him, even for just a millisecond, to give himself over into experiencing the emotion? Would this not lead to a moment where

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other singers were switching off roles in order to cover all the parts until finally the missing singers had arrived. It was also noticeable that the latter part of the piece was still somewhat under-rehearsed which in my opinion prohibited the puppeteers from letting themselves completely commit to the performed moment.

[13] See chapter four of this thesis, page 13, Engel, Ninth Letter, 109 ff. Siddons, Letter Seven, 41 ff.

[14] Schumann employs in his pieces frequently the so-called Brechtian means of distancing – the puppetry itself is a means of distancing performer from role, frequent use of signs and placards, music, song, choric dance numbers, etc. combined with political messages, reference to specific events and a focus on the mechanics and manipulations inherent under those circumstances.

[15] Fischer-Lichte, Erika. *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual. Exploring Forms of Political Theatre.* New York: Routledge. 2010: 4

the performer is being affected, or is feeling the performed emotion? And as such would this be the necessary ingredient in the performance of extreme emotions that would allow performer and audience to co-experience the moment? Biologically this seems possible. Practically I am afraid we are left between arrays of theatrical choices.

Thinking back to the *Oedipus* process, there was a difference in opinion between the actress playing Manto (Kristin Gregor) and myself as her director regarding the acting style. It concerned the scene of the sacrifice, immediately preceding the bacchanal at the end of the first half of the play. Gregor approached the scene almost like an intense moment of trance-like possession whereas I had the idea of an emotionally somewhat more distanced approach. In the scene Manto, daughter of the seer Tiresias, is guided by her blind father's instructions in a great blood sacrifice. Close to a massive fire, she has to slaughter a white bull and a heifer, in order to divine the fate of Thebes by reading from their entrails, the shape of the flames, and the smoke of the fire. But the sacrifice is "magically" corrupted, the heifer appears to be with calf, and the bull's heart, which should be warm and still beating, is rock-hard. The increasing intensity and frenzy of the scene allowed for deeper and deeper identification of the actress with the moment.

During different phases of the rehearsal process, we had worked the scene using the rasabox exercises. Gregor as an experienced practitioner did not need to use the physical boxes but it was sufficient for her that I would call out different "rasas" while she worked through the scene. In this instance, she used the rasas to slowly increase her emotional engagement until she almost pushed herself to hyperventilation and subsequent collapse. While her gestures, though colored by the emotional journey, were mainly linked to the physical aspects of the sacrifice and the direct instructions of Tiresias, her breathing, voice and facial expression were the main carriers of the performed emotion. But the scene, already theatrically dense, became too thick. Gregor as Manto needed to stay in control and pull back from her too intense emotional involvement in order to leave the audience the so-called breathing space to be carried along. The actress was interested in finding a way to physically achieve transformation through a state of extreme emotion, not the positively charged state of rapture, but a more negative state, in which fear and disgust competed with awe and courage. Fear and disgust as the leading emotions in the latter part of the scene are, within the context of the emo lab, both linked to breathing patterns that

favor the intake (fear) and the holding of breath (disgust) rather than regular exhalation.[16] Thus, the breathing patterns linked to these emotions lead more easily to hyperventilation, which is induced by the forced inhalation and the resulting oxygen saturation of the blood.

Figure 58. Kristin Gregor as Manto during the sacrifice. Bibhatsa rasa (disgust).

[16] Compare to the breathing pattern used in Alba Emoting for fear/anxiety: "The respiratory pattern consists of a period of inspiratory hypopneic movements followed by passive incomplete exhalations." Bloch et al. in: Zarrilli 1994.

Figure 59. Kristin Gregor as Manto during the sacrifice.
Bhayanaka (fear) mixed with bibhatsa (disgust).

This scene in *Oedipus* clearly describes what neuro-behaviorists and psychologists Joan H. Hageman et al. in their study on trance term as "'possession trance' in which an alleged incorporeal agency takes possession of a medium's volition, speech, and bodily movements."[17] Manto functions as the "medium" between the onlooking Thebans, including Oedipus and Jocasta, and the sacrificial elements, including beasts, fire, and smoke, while looking for signs that could be interpreted as answers to the riddle of the plague. The inclusion of sacrificial ritual practices is a typical aspect of Senecan tragedy, and one of the elements that defines the difference between the Greek and Roman versions of the *Oedipus*. Yet, in this 21st century adaptation one must look anew for potent performative means in theatrical representation. Gregor was of course not attempting to achieve possession as in the above definition,

[17] Hageman, Joan H. , et al. "The Neurobiology of Trance and Mediumship in Brazil." In: Stanley Krippner, & Harris L. Friedman, Eds. *Mysterious Minds. The Neurobiology of Psychics, Mediums, and Other Extraordinary People.* Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2010: 86

but an altered state that could perhaps imitate aspects of possession. By using the techniques gained from the rasabox exercises she achieved, certainly in some of the rehearsals, states of trancing. I am using the gerund of trance as suggested by ethnomusicologist Judith Becker. She explains that she prefers "trancing" to "the more common terms "trance state" or "altered state of consciousness," as both of the latter terms imply a static situation, a fixed form."[18] She further defines "trancers" as people who "welcome emotion, they offer themselves to emotion as they enact emotion."[19] In this sense, Gregor was looking to give herself fully to the emotions she was enacting to the degree of reaching a state of losing consciousness through hyperventilation. Theatrically speaking, Manto's collapse at the end of the sacrifice was dissolved into a tumultuous bacchic celebration by the Unnamed. This bacchanal was not a ritual expressly dedicated to Dionysian worship, but an excessive feast with wine, food, music and dance in the midst of plague-ridden Thebes. The bacchanal is peculiarly situated in this version of Oedipus, happening at a moment of uncertainty and confusion, compounded by and immediately following the strange events happening during the sacrifice. Manto's trance-possession and collapse do not lead to any resolve but only pose more questions that are momentarily drowned in drunken stupor. A truly cathartic moment cannot be reached yet, and the demand that the actress stay in control has also to do with the fact that we are not at the end but in the middle of the play, still building the dramatic arc.

Aside from the particulars surrounding the *Oedipus* I want to draw attention to the different forms such transformative moments can take during performance. Schumann and Gregor both worked towards transformation, though their means, as dictated by the material and artistic choices, were entirely different. While Schumann's process could be referred to as "working from the outside in," Gregor is using the rasabox exercises to achieve an internal process that is based in breath manipulation. In both cases, music is supporting and heightening the transformative moment for the audience as well as the performers. Both also worked with excess, Gregor used the

[18] Becker, Judith. *Deep Listeners, Music Emotion and Trancing*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2004: 7
[19] Becker 1

overemphasized breath intake to achieve an excess of oxygen leading to a trance-like state, whereas Schumann used his extended arms to show exaltation and rapture. I propose that it is in such moments that the binary between performed and lived emotion, if briefly, collapses. Training and experience help the performer to achieve such transformative moments. The training to consciously perform emotion is one such means that empowers the performer and can be added to the canon of techniques that enable live performance to become transformative for both performer and audience.

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Erklärung

Hiermit versichere ich, dass ich die vorgelegte Arbeit selbständig verfasst habe.
Andere als die angegebenen Hilfsmittel habe ich nicht verwendet.
Die Arbeit ist in keinem früheren Promotionsverfahren angenommen oder abgelehnt worden.

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Die Seiten 180 – 185 bleiben frei, da der Lebenslauf aus Gründen des Datenschutzes hier nicht veröffentlicht wird.

Deutsches Abstrakt

Performing Emotion – Das Aufführen der Emotion

Das „Aufführen der Emotion“ im Theater ist ein komplizierter und vielschichtiger Vorgang, den ich in meiner Dissertation aus verschiedenen Perspektiven beleuchtet habe. Meine Arbeit basiert zum einen auf verschiedenen wissenschaftlichen und historischen Materialien, zum anderen auf einer empirischen Untersuchung, die ich über einen Zeitraum von vier Jahren (2006-10) mit Studenten an der Concordia Universität in Montreal durchgeführt habe.

Zunächst habe ich untersucht, wie die – in den letzten Jahrzehnten gewonnenen - Erkenntnisse der Neuroforschung die „Emotionsprozesse“ im Schauspiel verdeutlichen können, dann habe ich mich den „Schauspielmanualen“ des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, die sich ja sehr detailliert mit dem Aufführen der Emotionen befasst haben, zugewandt. Der empirische Teil meiner Arbeit basiert auf Richard Schechner’s „Rasaboxes Exercise“. Um zu verdeutlichen, in wie weit die Rasaboxes mit der Rasalehre des *Natyashastra* zusammenhängen, bin ich kurz auf die historischen Auslegungen der Rasatheorie eingegangen. Darauffolgend habe ich die Resultate der praktischen Arbeit in den Rasaboxen mit Studenten der Concordia Universität besprochen, und anschließend die Anwendung der Übungen in einer Regiearbeit mit Schauspielschülern an einer kanadischen Adaption des *Ödipus* erprobt.

Mein Ziel ist es, auf Grund meiner Nachforschungen sowohl auf dem wissenschaftlichen als auch auf dem empirischen Gebiet, zu einer gegenwärtigen Emotionstheorie für das Schauspiel beizutragen.

1. Kapitel

Die Begriffswahl in der englischsprachigen Affektforschung ist nicht immer einheitlich. Generell wird in der Psychologie, Neuroforschung und in der Kognitiven Forschung hauptsächlich mit dem Begriff „Emotion“ gearbeitet. Emotion wird als ein Zustand, der sich körperlich und geistig manifestiert, verstanden. Es wird heute von verschiedenen Seiten argumentiert[1], dass gerade die Emotion die geistigen und

[1] Damasio 1995, 1999.

körperlichen Vorgänge vereinigt und somit die dualistische, kartesische Vorstellung dieser Zweiteilung auflöst.

In der Emotionsforschung geht man heute von dem folgenden Emotionsmodell aus: zunächst wird durch einen Auslöser (trigger) ein biomechanischer Vorgang ausgelöst, dieser wird durch die Kortex geführt, und leitet damit gleichzeitig einen körperlichen und kognitiven Prozess ein, der sich als Emotion darstellt.

Durch die enormen Fortschritte in der non-invasiven Hirnforschung kann man aber inzwischen auch die unterschiedlichen Vorgänge, die diverse Emotionen unterscheiden, klar differenzieren. Der Neuroforscher Joseph LeDoux benutzt zwar auch den Überbegriff „Emotion" in seinen Arbeiten, weist aber deutlich darauf hin, dass sich die Teile des Gehirns, die an den verschiedenen Emotionprozessen beteiligt sind, stark unterscheiden.[2] LeDoux ist es auch, der durch Experimente mit Ratten nachweisen konnte, dass sich nicht nur die betroffenen Gehirnregionen bei den einzelnen Emotionen unterscheiden, sondern dass es auch mindestens zwei verschiedene Arten von Emotionsprozessen gibt: einmal den oben beschriebenen kognitiven Vorgang, in der die auslösende Information durch die Kortex geleitet wird, und zum anderen einen schnelleren, direkteren Vorgang, der die Kortex auslässt. Diese Entdeckungen haben zur Folge, dass heute in der Psychologie und Neuroforschung von zwei Emotionsprozessen ausgegangen wird. Der schnelle und direkte Weg löst einen affektiven Zustand aus, der von einigen Forschern auch als „Core-affect" bezeichnet wird.[3]

Dies führt nun zur Begriffsklärung. Man könnte also sagen, dass der Core-affect, ein schnellerer, direkterer Vorgang ist, der sich zunächst in einer reflexiven Reaktion äußert, nämlich dem „fight - or - flight" Reflex. Diese direkte Reaktion „färbt" dann quasi die sich daraus entwickelnde Emotion.

Core-affect ist also ein Vorgang, der sich durch seine temporalen Eigenschaften auszeichnet. Auch andere Zustände aus der Affektgruppe werden zunächst auf Grund zeitbedingter Eigenschaften unterschieden. Diesem Schema entsprechend wäre Core-affect der schnellste Prozess; Emotionen zeichnen sich auch als nur Millisekunden langsamere, direkte Reaktionen mit einer begrenzten Dauer aus.[4] Als länger andauernde Zustände bezeichnet man die „moods", was aber

[2] LeDoux 1996.
[3] Barrett 2005.
[4] Damasio 1995. 2-3 minuten.

im Englischen einen weniger negativen Beigeschmack hat als die deutsche Übersetzung „Launen." Bei affektiven Zuständen, die länger als ein paar Tage andauern, spricht man von möglicherweise krankhaften episodischen Veränderungen, wie zum Beispiel Depressionen. Diese zeitbedingten Kategorien bleiben recht ungenau und lassen sich nicht in allen Fällen auf die Anwendung im Schauspiel übertragen, besonders wenn man über die sogenannten „tiefer sitzenden Gefühle" wie Liebe oder andauernde Ängste spricht, die in der Darstellung durchaus eine Rolle spielen und nur selten auf krankhafte Stimmungszustände hinweisen.

Die wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnisse aus der Emotionsforschung sind außerdem relevant für das Schauspiel, da sie die Erklärungsmöglichkeit eröffnen, dass die diversen Unstimmigkeiten zwischen den sogenannten Emotionalisten und Antiemotionalisten auf zwei unterschiedlichen Emotionsprozessen basieren könnten.[5] Diese beiden Prozesse unterscheiden sich nicht nur durch Geschwindigkeit, sondern insbesondere dadurch, dass in dem langsameren Prozess die Kortex und dem zu Folge ein kognitiver Vorgang mit eingeschlossen ist, während der schnellere Weg die Kortex auslässt und auf funktionellen Körperreaktionen basiert. Dies zeigt, dass der dargestellte Emotionsprozess im Schauspieler sowohl durch kognitive als auch durch körperliche Vorgänge ausgelöst werden kann. Welcher der beiden Prozesse für den Schauspieler besser zu kontrollieren und zu wiederholen ist, bleibt jedoch zunächst dahingestellt.

Basis Emotionen

Neben den Debatten um Core-affekt und Emotion und den diversen damit verbundenen neurologischen Vorgängen, ist noch ein weiteres Thema von Interesse für das Theater und zwar die Diskussion um die sogenannten „basic emotions." Paul Ekman hat die bereits von Silvan Tomkins aufgestellte These aufgegriffen und durch seine extensiven Forschungsarbeiten nachgewiesen, dass es eine Gruppe von sechs universellen Emotionen gibt. Diese sechs Basisemotionen nach Ekman: Wut, Ekel, Traurigkeit, Freude, Furcht und Überraschung, sind aus evolutionärer Sicht älter als die sogenannten gemischten Emotionen, wie zum Beispiel Eifersucht, Scham oder Schadenfreude. Die neurologischen Prozesse, denen diese Basisemotionen unterliegen, sind außerdem verhältnismäßig einfacher in ihrem biologischen Ablauf

[5] Diderot, Archer.

als die der gemischten Emotionen und in geringerem Masse von kulturellen Unterschieden abhängig.

Die Diskussion um die Universalität der Basisemotionen ist insofern von Interesse für das Theater, als sich daraus Konsequenzen für die äußere Form der dargstellten Emotion ergeben könnte. Besonders die Anthropologen lehnen die Universalität der Basisemotionen ab[6] und weisen in ihren Studien daraufhin, dass selbst scheinbar ähnliche Emotionen in diversen Kulturkreisen unterschiedlich ausgedrückt und verstanden werden. Als Theaterschaffender ist man oft mit Material konfrontiert, das entweder zeitlich oder räumlich, sprich kulturell, weit von den eigenen Umständen entfernt ist. Daraus ergibt sich folgende Frage: Ist es ausreichend, das vorliegende Material mit Hilfe der Emotionen des eignen Erfahrungskreises vorzustellen oder ist eine weitreichendere Recherche auch der emotionellen Ausdruckssprache einer gegebenen historischen Periode oder geographischen Region nötig? Selbstverständlich weitet sich diese Diskussion auch auf Geschlechts- und Status-spezifische Darstellungsweisen der Emotionen aus. Sich darauf zu berufen, dass es einige wenige universelle Basisemotionen gibt, erscheint mir für das Theater nicht als hinreichend, bietet jedoch einen greifbaren Ansatzpunkt für die praktische Arbeit.

Der Neuroforscher Damasio wie auch schon der frühmittelalterliche Sanskritologe Abhinavagupta weisen darauf hin, dass Gefühle (auf englisch: „feelings“) nicht äußerlich sichtbar sind. Es sind die physischen Zeichen der Emotion, die körperlich sichtbar, messbar and darstellbar sind. Zwar kann der Schauspieler von Affekten oder Gefühlen befallen sein, er kann sie auch im Zuschauer hervorrufen aber als theatralisches Ausdrucksmittel kann er nur die Emotionen darstellen; und ob diese dann mit Affekt oder Gefühl einhergehen, sei dahingestellt.

2. Kapitel

Um die Hintergründe der Rasabox Exercises zu verdeutlichen, habe ich zunächst das *Natyashastra* und die diesbezügliche Sekundärliteratur genauer untersucht. Das *Natyashastra* ist ein praktisches und gleichzeitig philosophisch-theoretisches Kompendium, das detailgenaue Instruktionen für die darstellenden

[6] Lutz & Abu-Loghud 1990, Lutz 2002, Rosaldo 1984, Reddy 2001.

Künste Schauspiel, Musik und Tanz, aber auch für Architektur, Bühnen-, Kostüm-, und Maskenbild der Sanskritära enthält.

Die Urheberschaft und das Entstehungsdatum des *Natyashastra* sind nach wie vor unklar und bewusst von dem/n Autor/en, dem mystischen Weisen Bharata Muni, in einen mythischen Zeitraum verlegt. Es wird heute weitgehend davon ausgegangen, dass der Text zwischen 200 BCE und 200 CE als Werk einer Gruppe von Autoren entstanden ist. Dennoch wird Bharata Muni, auch von mir der Einfachheit halber, weiterhin als Autor genannt. Der für diese Studie relevante Teil des *Natyashastra* umfasst die Rasalehre. Rasa wird im Deutschen oft als „Geschmack," „Saft" oder auch als "emotionaler Zustand", im Englischen ähnlich wie im Deutschen als „taste", aber auch als „sentiment" oder „aesthetic rapture" übersetzt.[7] Das Natyashastra befasst sich mit acht, beziehungsweise neun Rasas und den damit korrespondierenden Sthayi Bhavas (auch als permanente Emotionen übersetzt). Zusätzlich wird zwischen 33 gemischten Vyabhicari (voluntary states) und acht Sattvika Bhavas (involuntary states) unterschieden. Die letztere Gruppe korrespondiert mit den sogenannten somatischen Vorgängen (Tränen, Verfärbung der Haut, etc.) in der Emotionsforschung. Wichtig im Zusammenhang mit den Rasabox Exercises ist die Beziehung zwischen Rasa und Bhava. Während sich Rasa auf einen ästhetischen Moment bezieht, das „Schmecken" der dargestellten Emotion durch den Zuschauer, aber auch den Darsteller, versteht man unter Bhava die dargestellten Zeichen der Emotion. Diese Zeichen setzten sich aus Fuß und Beinstellung, Körperhaltung, Arm, Hand und Fingerbewegungen (Mudras), Kopfhaltung, und der besonders artikulierten Mimik zusammen. Hinzu kommt das Zusammenspiel von Text, Musik, Kostüm und Geschichte, das zusätzlich dazu beiträgt, den richtigen „Emotionsgeschmack" zu erzielen.

Während die Rasalehre eine außerordentlich differenzierte Sprache für die Darstellung der Emotionen entwickelt, ist der Einfluss der Rasaästhetik auf die Rasabox Exercises eher auf einer allgemeineren Ebenen zu sehen, nämlich, dass in der Rasalehre klar zwischen dargestellter und erlebter Emotion unterschieden wird. Zwar kann der Schauspieler mit der Zeit mehr und mehr zwischen den verschiedenen Emotionen, ihren Ursachen und Wirkungen und den möglichen Formen der Darstellung unterscheiden, jedoch zielen die Rasabox Exercises nicht daraufhin, eine

[7] Fischer-Lichte 2008: 191

konventionelle Zeichensprache der Emotionen zu entwickeln. In dem Sinne bleibt das *Natyashastra* eine Inspiration für die Rasabox Exercises, wird aber nicht direkt als praktisches Lehrbuch angewandt. Wenn wir während der Übungen das Wort „Rasa" verwenden, meinen wir nur die Namen der Emotionen auf Sanskrit, die wir den verschiedenen Boxen zugeteilt haben, aber nicht den Rasabegriff, der im *Natyashastra* angewandt wird. Die Arbeit in den Rasaboxen trägt auch dazu bei das Verständnis des Schauspielers von der reinen Psychologie zu einer Physiologie der Emotionen zu erweitern.[8]

3. Kapitel

Um auch den Hintergrund der Emotionslehre im westlichen Kulturbereich etwas eingehender zu beleuchten, untersuche ich einige Schauspielmanuale und Theorien aus dem achtzehnten Jahrhundert, insbesondere Franziskus Langs *Dissertatio de actione scenica* und Johann Jakob Engels *Ideen zu einer Mimik*. Die Diskussion um die Darstellung der Emotionen im achtzehnten Jahrhundert ging hauptsächlich um die Frage, ob der Schauspieler die Emotion nur zeigen soll oder ob er sie auch fühlen muss. Und ob er dies nur durch äußerlich sichtbare Zeichen (cold/technical) oder auch mit Hilfe von Vorstellungskraft (hot/inspirational) erzielen könnte.[9] Diese Frage wurde insbesondere von Diderot in seinem *Le Paradoxe sur le Comédien* behandelt, war aber schon weit früher heftig diskutiert worden. Während sich einige Schauspieler klar auf die eine oder andere Vorgehensweise berufen (Clairon und Dumesnil werden von Diderot als Beispiele aufgeführt), so zeigen historische Quellen doch, dass einige Schauspieler, wie auch David Garrick, beide Vorgehensweisen anwenden oder sich zumindest derer bewusst sind.

Lang und auch Engel behandeln in ihren Manualen vornehmlich die äußerlich sichtbaren Zeichen der dargstellten Emotionen, gehen aber beide auch immer wieder auf die gegebenen Umstände, die eine Emotion auslösen, und die betreffende Situation ein. Lang ist in seiner *Dissertatio* noch eindeutig in die Barockästhetik eingebunden. Er entwickelt eine stark kodierte Schauspiellehre, die noch auf höfischem Umgang und Dekor basiert. Sein Emotionsverständnis beruht auch auf der für das Barock typischen Vorstellung, dass die Affekte den Menschen befallen und wenn sie unkontrolliert bleiben, zur Gefahr werden können. Obwohl Lang nicht

[8] Katie Mitchell 2009.
[9] See chapter 3, page 79.

auszuschließen scheint, dass der Schauspieler selbst fühlt, so soll dieses Gefühl doch kontrolliert und auf konventionelle Weise ausgedrückt werden. Engel dagegen, der eine wichtige Position in der sogenannten Berliner Aufklärung einnahm, vertritt eher den Fortschrittsgeist des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts. Er spricht von einer Grammatik der Zeichen, die zwar auf festgelegten Ausdrucksformen basiert, sich aber durch die unendlichen Möglichkeiten der Kombinationen als sehr viel flexibler als Langs Zeichensprache darstellt. Engel, beeinflusst von David Hume, vergleicht die Emotionen mit einem Saiteninstrument. Er spricht von den nachhallenden Schwingungen der einzelnen Emotionen und den daraus resultierenden Mischungen der Emotionen. Das Mischen und Gradieren von Emotionen ist auch eine Technik, die von den fortgeschrittenen Teilnehmern des Emotion Lab oft angewendet wird.

4. Kapitel

Die Arbeit im Emotion Lab selbst basiert, wie bereits erwähnt, auf Richard Schechner's Rasabox Exercises. Das Ziel der Übung ist es, den Schauspielschüler in einer klar strukturierten Vorgehensweise mit den neun Basisemotionen vertraut zu machen. Die neun Emotionen, die in dieser Übung zunächst trainiert werden basieren auf den acht, beziehungsweise neun Rasas, die in dem *Natyashastra* vorgestellt werden: Sringara (Liebe), Raudra (Zorn), Bhayanaka (Furcht), Vira (Mut), Karuna (Trauer, Mitleid), Bibhatsa (Ekel), Hasya (Freude), Adbhuta (Staunen), und Shanta (Fülle, Leere, Glückseligkeit). Die sanskritischen Namen der neun Rasas, die den einzelnen Boxen zugeteilt werden, bekommen die übergeordneten Begriffe, die gesamte Emotionsfamilien beinhalten und den jeweiligen Umständen in Dauer und Intensität angepasst werden können, z.B. Raudra beinhaltet nicht nur Zorn und Wut, sondern auch Ärgerlichkeit und Irritation.

Auf den Boden des Arbeitsraumes wird ein Raster aus drei-mal-drei Quadraten geklebt, und jedem dieser Quadrate wird ein Rasa zugeordnet. Die Schauspielschüler werden dann aufgefordert eine Box nach der anderen zu begehen, und in jeder so lange zu verweilen, bis sie den betreffenden Emotionszustand erreicht haben. Die Instruktionen werden mit der Zeit und wachsenden Erfahrung immer genauer. Während die Teilnehmer zunächst an sich selbst arbeiten, werden die Übungen später in verschiedenen Rollen und Charakteren angewandt. Die Boxen eignen sich auch sehr gut dazu, in Zwei - bis Drei-Personen-Szenen oder aber auch in Monologen und chorischen Sequenzen zu arbeiten.

Besonders im nordamerikanischen Kulturbereich liegt ein Hauptpunkt dieser Vorgehensweise darin, den Unterschied zwischen persönlicher und dargestellter Emotion zu verdeutlichen und zu zeigen, dass es neben den psychologisch motivierten Emotionen auch physiologisch konstruierte Emotionen gibt. Letztere kann man auf unterschiedliche Weisen darstellen; zum einem, in dem man rollenspezifische Konventionen entwickelt und diese dann durch Wiederholung automatisiert, oder aber indem man mit Nachahmung arbeitet. In beiden Fällen arbeitet der Schauspieler sozusagen von außen nach innen, ein Vorgang, gegen den sich viele nordamerikanische Schauspielstudenten sträuben, da sie nicht glauben, auf diese Weise die dargestellten Emotionen auch fühlen zu können. Die Ergebnisse in der Neuroforschung zeigen jedoch dass dies durchaus der Fall sein kann.[10]

Außerdem hilft die Arbeit in den Rasaboxen dem Schauspieler, einen Text mit den Mitteln der Emotionsanalyse zu verstehen. Besonders wenn man davon ausgeht, dass jede Emotion bereits Reaktion (auf den Auslöser) und Aktion („goal relevance“) beinhaltet, kann man zeigen, dass die Emotionsanalyse in keiner Weise ein passives, sondern ganz im Gegensatz ein sehr aktives handlungsausgerichtetes Verhalten unterstützt.

5. Kapitel

Um die Rasabox Exercises in ihrer praktischen Anwendung zu besprechen, beschreibe ich den Proben- und Aufführungsprozess einer Inszenierung des Ödipus, die ich 2008/09 mit Schauspielschülern der Concordia Universität durchgeführt habe. Diese Version des Ödipus wurde in den neunziger Jahren von dem Kanadischen Schriftsteller Ned Dickens geschrieben und basiert in großen Teilen auf Senecas Ödipus. Leider hatten nicht alle teilnehmenden Studenten denselben Erfahrungsstand hinsichtlich der Rasabox Exercises, und einige kamen völlig unvorbereitet in diese Arbeit. Dementsprechend habe ich diese Technik auch mehr in Einzelproben und in einem Vorab-Workshop als in den Ensembleproben angewendet, und bespreche deshalb hier auch die Rolle der Jocasta genauer.

In Dickens Ödipus wie auch in Senecas wird der Selbstmord der Jocasta mehr ins Zentrum des Geschehens gerückt, zum einen, weil er im Gegensatz zur griechischen Konvention auf der Bühne selbst stattfindet, zum anderen weil es sich

[10] Niedenthal et al.

dabei nicht nur um Selbstmord, sondern auch um Selbstkastration handelt, da Jocasta sich Ödipus Schwert in den Unterleib einführt. Die Grausamkeit dieses Aktes bekam der sogenannte „Stumbling Block" unserer Produktion.[11] Die Schauspielerin musste die technischen Schwierigkeiten dieses realistisch inszenierten Moments verinnerlichen und mit einem extremen Spiel der Emotionen verbinden. Alexandra Draghici, in der Rolle der Jocasta hatte bereits seit anderthalb Jahren als Mitglied des Emotion Labs mit den Rasaboxen gearbeitet und benutzte nun diese Technik, um den Moment wiederholbar herzustellen. Während man mit Sicherheit in einem solchen Moment auch mit den Mitteln Stanislavskys, insbesondere der physischen Handlungen herangehen kann und es auch viele Überlappungsmomente gibt, nämlich die wiederholte Handlung zum Emotionsauslöser wird, ist die Unterteilung des Texts in Emotionen und das daraus resultierende Spiel in Dauer und Intensität aber auch den gemischten Emotionen doch etwas anderes. Während Draghici selbst sich vielleicht nicht in jedem Moment in Kontrolle ihrer Emotionen fühlte, so wirkte sie doch nach außen hin gefährlich kontrolliert und damit noch erschreckender.

In diesem Fall war ich als Regisseurin mit der Anwendung der Rasabox Exercises zufrieden. Die Resultate waren jedoch nicht für alle Ensemblemitglieder gleich erfolgreich. Bei einigen Schauspielern schien die Konventionalisierung der Gesten zu einer gewissen Steifheit des Ausdrucks zu führen. Eine Studentin hatte Angst die Technik auszuprobieren (sie fürchtete durch die Arbeit in unkontrollierbare psychisch-extreme Zustände versetzt zu werden); zwei andere sahen keinen Sinn in der Vorgehensweise, da sie gelernt hatten, dass man Emotionen nicht spielen darf, sondern sie „kommen lassen" muss. Insgesamt würde ich sagen, dass von den sechzehn Ensemblemitgliedern etwa zwölf mit weitgehend gutem bis sehr gutem Erfolg die Rasabox Technik angewendet haben. Von diesen zwölf hatten neun bereits vorher mit mir im Emotion Lab oder in einer Schauspielklasse daran gearbeitet. Drei haben die Technik in dem den Proben vorausgehenden Workshop gelernt, darunter Jon Silver, der Ödipus spielte; und die vier, die die Arbeit nicht anwandten, hatten auch nicht an dem Workshop teilgenommen. Ich folgere daraus, dass die Rasabox Exercises zunächst in mehreren Schritten gelernt werden müssen, bevor sie erfolgreich angewendet werden können, demzufolge kann man auch von

[11] Carl Weber, Dramaturgie Seminar, NYU 1991.

einer Rasabox Technik sprechen. Die Schauspieler mit der meisten Erfahrung konnten die Technik auch am weitgreifendsten anwenden.

Zusammenfassung

Die Vorgehensweise der Schauspielschülerin Kristin Gregor in der Rolle der Manto (Tochter des Tiresias) zeigte außerdem, wie die Arbeit in den Rasboxen auch zu einem trance-artigen Zustand führen kann. Obwohl ich aus dramaturgischen Gründen mit ihrer Interpretation der Rolle nicht ganz einverstanden war, so war ich doch neugierig zu sehen, wie sie die im Emotion Lab gelernten Atemmuster dazu nutzte, um sich zum Ende der langen Opferszene durch eine Art Hyperventilation zum Kollaps zu bringen.

Als weiterführende Arbeit im Emotion Lab und auch auf theoretischer Ebene plane ich, die extremen Emotionszustände mit Hilfe von Atemtechniken und Stimmarbeit eingehender zu untersuchen. Zustände wie Verzückung, Ekstase, tranceartige Zustände, die zu einer Transformation sowohl des Zuschauers als auch des Schauspielers führen können, scheinen mir am besten geeignet, um die Beziehung zwischen Affekt und Emotion in der performativen Darstellung genauer zu verstehen. Die Beziehung zwischen Affekt als Erfahrung und Emotion als Darstellung lässt noch viele Fragen offen.