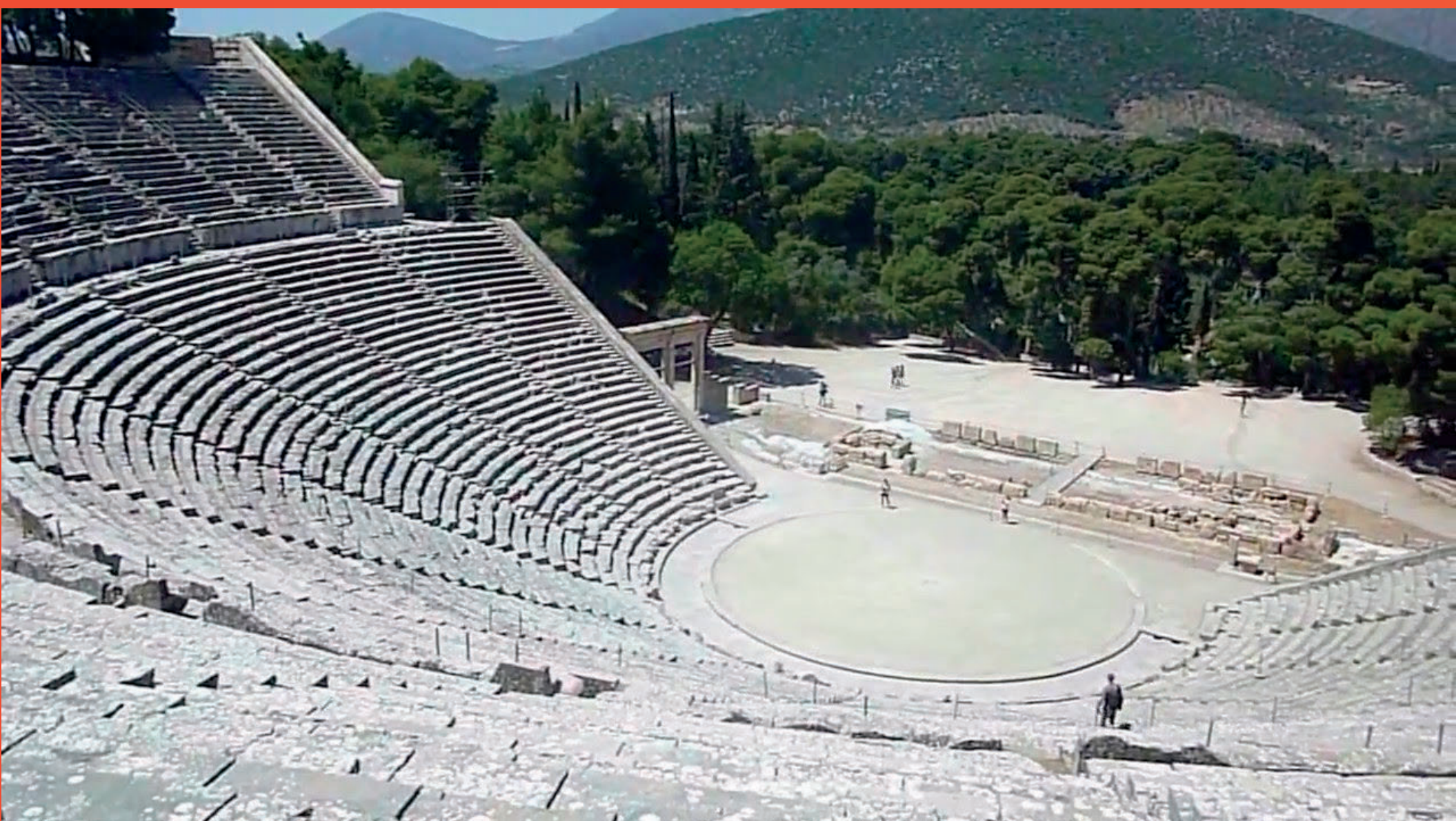


Researched by
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Early Admissions Decision
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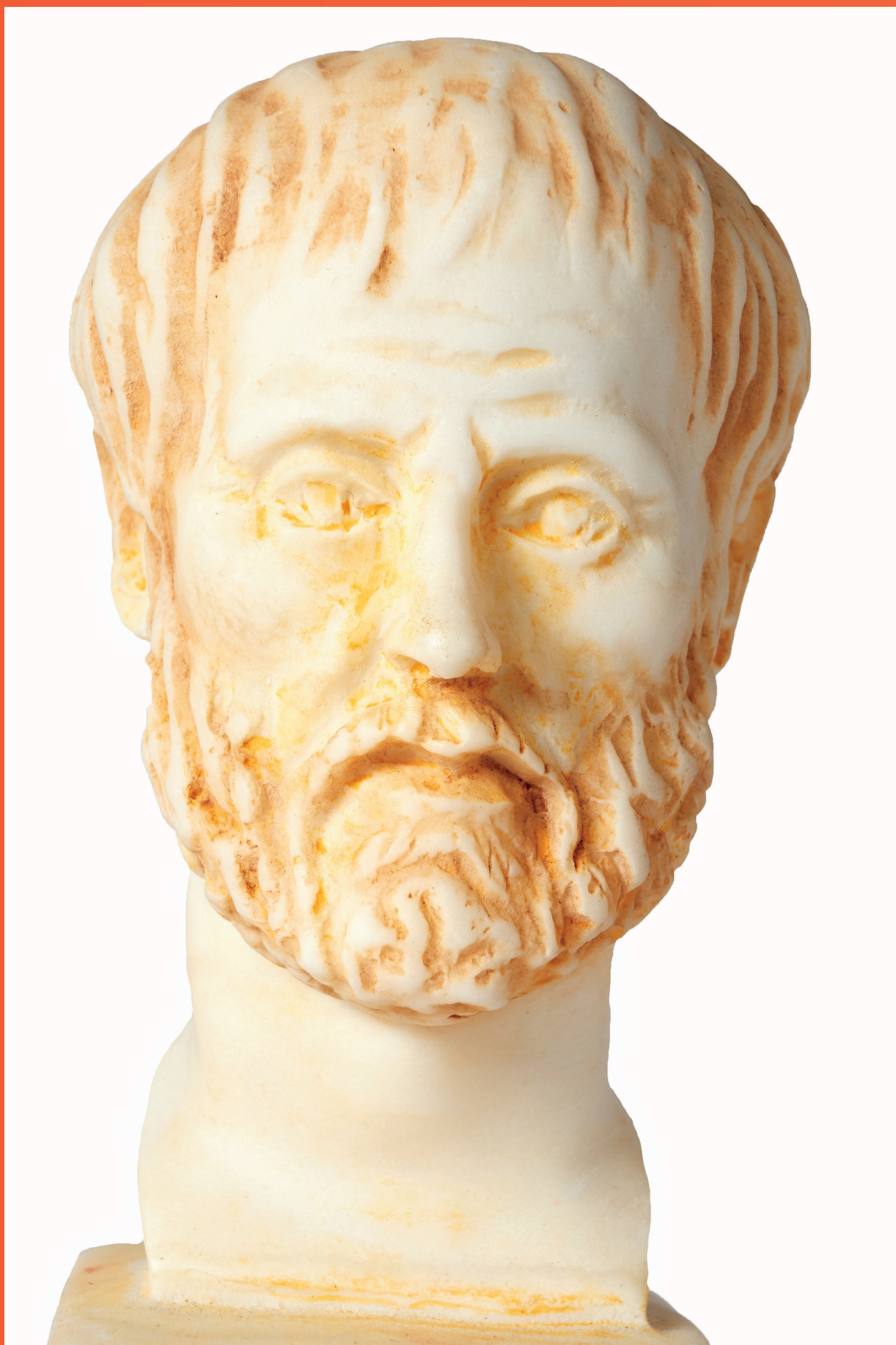
Research Sections and Methodology

- Section 1. An introduction into the similarities, differences, and main ideas of the Poetics and Natyasastra.
- Section 2. A comparative study on the aesthetic theories contained in these texts—catharsis and rasa.
- Section 3. Examples on how we can incorporate major ideas and aesthetic theory in theatre from Natyasastra and the Poetics in modern theatre practices to emphasize other cultures instead of the Western viewpoint. Including a special focus on rasabox by Richard Schechner.

What is Aesthetic Theory?
Aesthetic theory seeks to create art that intentionally triggers an emotional reaction from a viewer that can be outwardly ascertained.

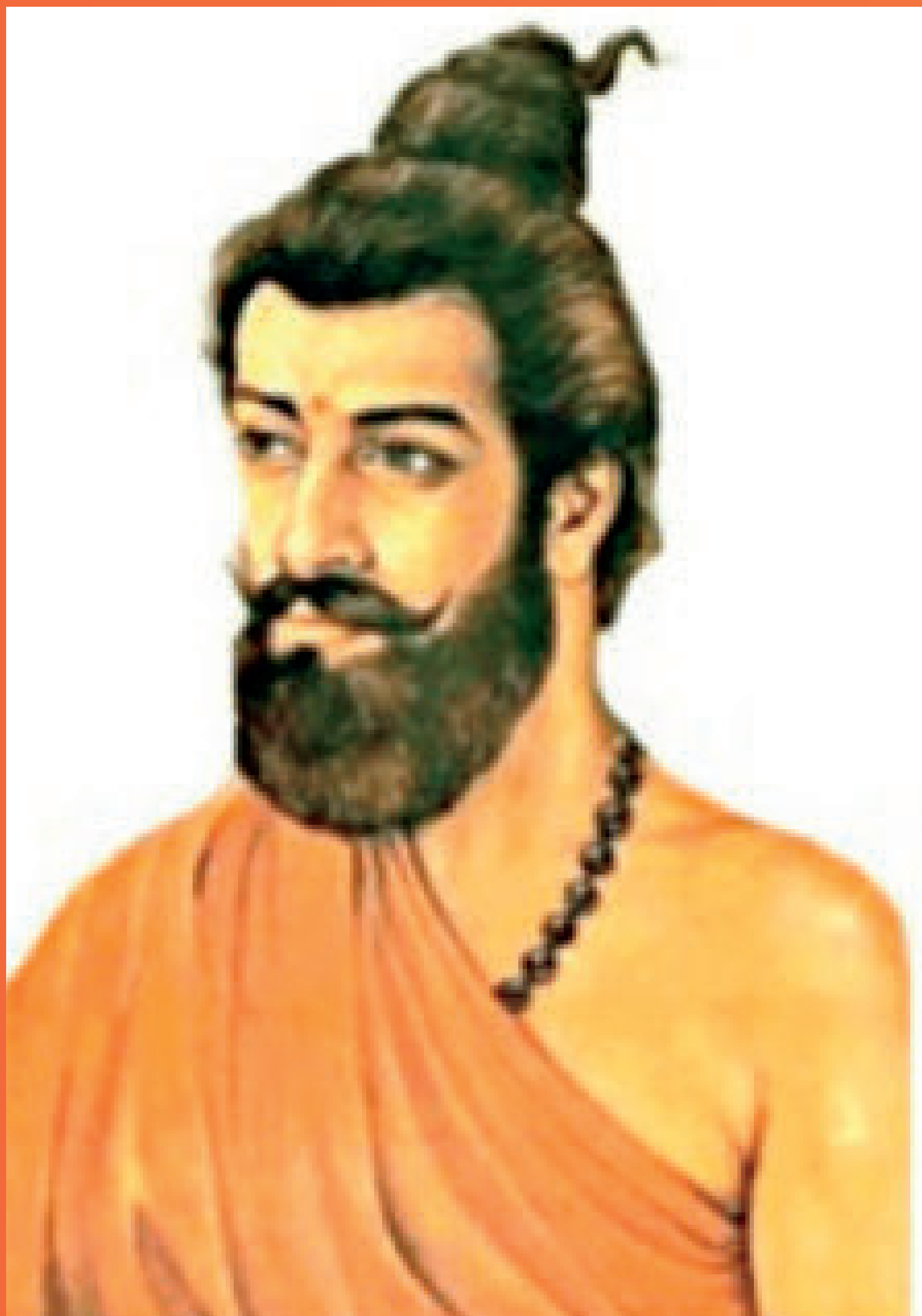


Aesthetic Theory in Performance:
A Comparative Study on Aristotle's Catharsis
and Bharata Mundi's Rasa



Aristotle

Dates: 382–322 BC
Nationality: Greek
Primary Text: Poetics
Aesthetic Theory: Catharsis



Bharata Mundi

Dates: *Estimated* 500 BC–500 CE
Nationality: Indian
Primary Text: Nāṭyaśāstra
Aesthetic Theory: Rasa

Aristotle's Catharsis	Mundi's Rasa
Seeks to cure the audience of their negative emotions. Specifically, evoking pity and fear through tragedy to purge the bad emotions that the audience sees in themselves from the mimetic transfer of theatrical story.	Can be achieved through nine different bhāvas or emotions to improve the audience member's emotional capability. It does not seek to extract negative emotion, rather it celebrates all of them.
Emotions: Pity, Fear	Emotions: Passion/Romance, Humor, Compassion, Fury, Heroism, Horror, Revulsion, Amazement, Peace that surpasses understanding

Research conducted with
Dr. Danielle Bainbridge,
Professor of Theatre at
Northwestern University.
Summer Research Fellowship 2022.

Research Question

Which ancient aesthetic theory tells a more complete truth of human's emotional capabilities?

Also, what are it's application for modern directing practices?

Conclusion

Catharsis is a purgation of our emotions, while rasa is a celebration of them. Catharsis calls for a release or subtraction of the negative inside of us to make ourselves better, while rasa calls for an addition to the recipe of the emotions that we already feel in order to become better and relish in our human emotional capability. A theatremaker's goal of catharsis according to Aristotle's definition means that they find certain emotions bad, so they must be extracted through pity and fear while watching tragedy. Catharsis “cures” an excess of emotion and reduces the emotional value by striving to experience it in moderation. It requires a distance to be established between ourselves and what we experience and feel. While certainly, some emotions are uncomfortable, rasa can still be achieved with those same emotions the Greeks wanted to extract. Fury, horror, and revulsion are also rasas created through bhāvas. By addressing the way we think about the interaction between actor and audience, this requires us to break down the nature of our humanity, beliefs, and values, all of which affect theatre today.

