

Aesthetic Affect of Anger: Omair Ahmad's *Jimmy the Terrorist* and the Possibilities in *Raudra Rasa*

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Abstract: This paper aims to examine the dimensions of aesthetic affect of anger in the *rasa* framework in Indian aesthetics. In the postmodern times, as aesthetic emotions are formulated (packaged and predetermined) and with the digital accessibility of new media, the reader/viewer's engagement as proposed in *rasa* framework becomes relevant and helps to contextualize the debate on what is the nature of art and the aesthetic process itself. To expound on these concerns, this paper reads Omair Ahmad's novel *Jimmy the Terrorist* (2010) and a particular incident in the narrative to understand the emotion of *krodha* (anger) and the affective process leading to the protagonist's behavioural and active response. The aesthetic framework referred to is Bharata's treatise on dramaturgy *The Nāṭyaśāstra* and the interpretations offered by Abhinavagupta with some references to Śankuka's views. In contemporary postmodern aesthetics, these concerns are important as they point to the need for contextualizing the psychological makeup of readers/spectators which is an integral part of the aesthetic process itself.

Keywords: Rasa, anger, affect, narrative, behaviour

Introduction

This paper takes a particular incident in the narrative of the novel *Jimmy the Terrorist* (2010) as the point of exploration of aesthetic affect. Omair Ahmad's *Jimmy the Terrorist* is the story of a young educated Muslim youth's struggle against a pre-designed system of social prejudice and political bias that make violence appear as the only choice for the young. Ahmad has located his characters and their lives in a place that can be seen as a prototype of a north Indian city with its infrastructural chaos, urgent dreams, heavy frustrations and everyday struggles. A powerful narrative of loss and anger, it is the story of Jamaal, son of Rafiq and Shaista, who is born and brought up in the town of Moazammabad—a regular small city, with its routine life. When his friend cum brother Khalid is implicated in a minor stealing incident and tortured in lock-up, the lives of all the characters are changed forever. Khalid takes the path of extremism, while Jamaal tries to build a bourgeois life for himself. Finally, overcome with frustration and anguish at being cornered and selectively marginalized for one's cultural and religious background, Jamaal murders a policeman and ends up being called a 'terrorist'. The climax of the novel opens up a scene where Jimmy, overcome with frustration and anger, goes into the theatre to watch the film *Bandit Queen*. When he steps out of the theatre, he is so agitated that with a quotidian trigger, he ends up as a criminal. This essay is interested in exploring what happened to Jimmy's psychoemotive makeup during the film viewing experience and how it shaped his response and behaviour outside the theatre. To this end, the *rasa* framework offers deep insights into the elements, stages and resolutions of the aesthetic process itself.

The structure and classification of *rasa* in Sanskrit aesthetics focus on the psycho-emotive state of the viewer(s) as valid episteme. Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* is an ancient Indian treatise on drama that provides a systematic understanding of the art of staging, acting as well as viewing a dramatic performance. This work elaborates upon the aesthetic experience of the *sahṛdaya*, an ideal

viewer. The relishing of a work of art is considered not just to be an emotional process, but an aesthetic–philosophical one that involves the removal of the layer of mundane experiences from the consciousness of the individual leading to a plane of interpersonalization (*sādhāranīkaraṇa*). When the *vibhāva*–determinants, *anubhāva*–consequents, and *vyābhichāribhāva*–accompanying emotions and *sthāyībhāva*–abiding mental states, combine in an apt situation created by an artist, a particular *rasa* is evoked. The aesthetic bliss that is experienced by a spectator/reader is *ānanda* and is accompanied by a knowledge of emotions that is in turn the knowledge of the self. Bharata propounded eight *rasa* to which Abhinavagupta, his later commentator added a ninth *rasa*–*śānta*. A study of *Nāṭyaśāstra* and its commentaries by Bhatta Lolatta, Śankuka and Abhinavagupta point to sustained engagement with the process and scope of aesthetic affect in the audience. Śankuka’s *Nyāya* aesthetics posited ‘inference’ (*anumāna*) as the process by which the viewer absorbs the core meaning of the artwork, pointing crucially to an important dimension of the aesthetic experience – ‘affect’. Affect theory has gained prominence in Western aesthetics to understand the cognitive, psychological as well as social and political ramifications of art experience. In cinema and media theory, the work of Shaviro (2010) and Shouse (2005) along with other scholars explores the ‘affect’ of visual media on the audience. While Massumi (2002) differentiates between ‘affect’ and ‘emotion’ as the former being asubjective or presubjective and the latter as being derivative and conscious, Shouse has categorized three kinds of affective response to cinema as: Affect, Feeling and Emotion. There has been quantitative research in the field of neuroscience, cognition and aesthetics wherein emotions have been mapped as neuroscientific data when studied in response to social and aesthetic situations (Preckel et al 2018, Tripathi et al) and as indicators of wellbeing in relation to narratives (Pasupathi et al 2017). In the context of Indian aesthetic propositions, there is scope for examining the affective dimensions of *rasa* and the *viśrānti* (rest) and awareness that they bring as the primary aim of aesthetics. This paper attempts to explore Śankuka’s and Abhinavagupta’s views in the context of *rasānubhūti* to understand the affective dimensions of *rasa*, especially *raudra rasa*. This novel invites us to explore how a character’s affective behaviour is shaped by aesthetic anger when real life circumstances of marginalization have already affected his emotional landscape and the consequences therein. As postmodern cultural productions make it imperative to talk about the limitations of ‘affective labor’ in the prepackaging and fetishizing of emotions, Indian theory of emotions can offer ways of mapping and examining the psychospiritual changes that works of art generate. This will help to critically locate affective responses in contemporary contexts, especially in the domain of sorrow and anger that are ubiquitous in global socio–political lives and when art is largely being seen as serving a utilitarian and/or didactic end.

The novel under discussion is a narrative that is centered on the emotional landscape of anger. Anger (*krodha*) is recognized in the *rasa* framework as the *sthāyībhāva* of *raudra rasa*. In the sequence of *rasa* listed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *raudra rasa* follows *karuṇa rasa* which is described thus: “The *rasa* that originates from the *sthāyībhāva* of *śoka* (grief) is named *karuṇa*. The *vibhāva* (determinants) of it are: separation from loved ones, incarceration, murder, exile, immolation or involvement in vices”.

The real life emotional stimuli to grief and anger can be easily mapped onto the lives of socially marginalized characters in the novel. The death of Jamaal’s mother becomes the starting point of digression for Rafiq, when the comfort of domesticity is replaced by an uncertain present and a threatened future. Shaista’s death completes the rupture between Rafiq and Shabbir Manzil, and his obstinacy and confusion lead him to the path of fanaticism. Jamaal grows up in an environment pervaded by grief. He is brought up without his mother, and this separation proves very painful to him. Rafiq’s dedication to his ‘cause’ prevents him from providing Jamaal an organic upbringing, something Shaista’s mere presence would have insured.

The seemingly innocuous event of a young boy involved in a mischief turns momentous in shaping his future and that of others around him. When Khalid is incarcerated and tortured,

the bourgeois codes of his parents' relationships are turned over, and repressed complaints and heartbreaks are brought to the surface. Jamaal's sensibility of a diligent young boy with simple dreams is unable to comprehend the grief of Khalid's separation. Khalid's father's idealism, when faced with a brutal law of the jungle suffers a blow, as he realizes that ideals have no place at least in the warps and wefts of family ties.

The *rasa* of *rāudra* follows the *karuṇa rasa* in the order of *rasa* in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. The emotion of grief is a purifying emotion that stirs the *samskāra* (latent impressions) of individuals. The reaction of every person to grief in the novel is different. While Khalid's grief turns into agitation and rebellion, Jamaal tries to suppress it under the weight of a normal, shyly ambitious life. For some like Khalid, personal grief turns into hatred and anger, while Jamaal's grief struggles with reason, permeates his being and bursts out in a moment of impulse in the end.

The story is set in a fictional small town Moazammabad in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, strongly reminiscent of Gorakhpur and its neighbouring small towns, the little cousins of Lucknow, the state capital. The causes of the emotions of grief and anger are present in the political and religious makeup of the town. State apathy, politicians' manipulations, obstinate prejudices of the people and the clash of vague traditions and misunderstood modernity become the sources that lead to the emotions of sorrow and anger. Abhinavagupta points out in his commentary *Abhinavabhāratī* that the *vibhāva* of *rāudra* are the same in *kāvya* (poetry) and *loka* (world), therefore the *rasa* of *raudra* is not *sthāyībhāvaprabhava* (one originating from the primary emotion) but *sthāyībhāvātma*, which means one that is of the nature of the primary emotion itself. The *raudra rasa*, therefore, not merely originates from anger but is of the nature of anger itself. The *sthāyībhāva* of *krodha* is not merely felt by the character on the stage during the dramatic performance, but these bhavas correspond to real life emotions so that there is no distinction between the bhava on stage and the bhava in real life. These bhavas are felt by the characters and the audience alike. As one reads the text, one realizes how the causes that lead to the unfortunate end of a talented and promising young life are recreated/based out of real life. For instance, the indifference of the state towards a town like Moazzamabad is a familiar malaise in Indian political reality. In the novel, Moazzamabad is described as a 'half-blighted place' (p. 3) which is 'too large to be a town and too backward to be a city'.

Whether it was the white sahibs who ruled or the brown ones who took their place, they had no time for Moazzamabad.

Suddenly, now, the worthies in Delhi care. All those who run this magic lantern show we call India-they especially care. This time there was no choice, this time they had to notice, and the vultures had to swoop down, as Moazzam Shah had done long ago. They had been screaming about terrorists for so long that when Moazzamabad presented one of its own, a boy called Jimmy, how could it be ignored. (pp.5-6)

Moazammabad is a place that stands at the same crossroads at which do countless other such places in India - between history and modernity. The novel begins with locating the city in its historical context of raids, cultural exchanges and assimilations. The prologue ends with Moazammabad standing uncertain and confused on the threshold of a misunderstood modernity. In big towns and small cities across India, one easily notices this unusual mixture of fanatical preservation of tradition and zealous appropriation of modernity, a mixture that can never become a blend. In the novel, Rasoolpur mohalla is Rafiq's world. When circumstances force him to step out of his comfort zone, he finds the world to be crueler and wider, and this confrontation results in his misguided fanaticism. When Khalid goes from Moazammabad to New Delhi, it is a more momentous and dramatic clash of worldviews. These shifts reiterate the lopsided model of development that contemporary India is proudly following, and the chasms reflect the ideological and philosophical divides that exist between the powerful and the common in India.

To return to the question of the aesthetic experience, *Nāṭyaśāstra* lists *adhiksepa* as one of the *vibhāva* of *raudra rasa*, which translates as ‘any criticism of country, community, knowledge, *kula*, or action’. The prologue of this novel clearly highlights the hurt that comes from the sense of one’s country wounded. Jamaal’s father becomes a mullah in the wake of the crisis, and the young boy finds his life poised before the perplexing and parochial fundamentalism of an institutionalized religion. The cause of the crisis becomes its effect so that human lives are transported as goods between one prejudice and the other. The fabric of secular India, already tenuous, fails to repair the many holes rendered by communal bullets that have not ceased to rain till date. Jamaal’s father reacts to this insult to his community in a predictable manner, attempting to do the futile-beating hatred with hatred.

Another *vibhāva* listed by Bharata is *anrayatabhāsana* saying the inappropriate or lie. In an atmosphere of strained relationships, parasites like untruths, half-truths and sheer lies multiply rapidly feeding on reason and judgment. In the story, we come across numerous instances when exaggerated or at times fabricated accounts of violence are related in order to fuel anger and hatred.

In that compressed and wound-up space rumours spread, first like stains and then like small fires. Somebody had been killed by the police, a priest had been caught with guns in his Maruti van, a young woman had been raped—always such women were beautiful, and then ritually slashed and scarred. Always the mob was coming to kill. (p.155)

In an atmosphere of prejudice and intolerance, these half-truths assume monstrous proportions, and narratives of violence beget violence that begets more such narratives.

As Khalid’s story whirled through the mohalla, Rafiq recalled for people the recent incident of two Muslim boys going missing from the railway station in Lucknow, and their bodies turning up mysteriously in the Gomti river three days later....After all, what did it matter if Khalid was a thief? There were other thieves, and were they beaten as he had been? Nobody had tried to kidnap or kill them in broad daylight. If they were looking to kill Khalid, then, was it because he was a thief or because he was a Muslim? All Jamaal had to do was listen to his father, to see the peace on his father’s face when he recalled another violent or hushed-up incident, from another time, and showed how it all fit. (p. 150-152)

Bharata states that the nature of a person experiencing the emotion of anger is *uddhata* or one that is given to agitation. This anger is the result of injustice (*anyāyakarita*) and is a natural human reaction. In the narrative, worldly causes and stimuli to anger can be seen as easily identifiable with real life. There is a difference between Rafiq, Imam Sahab, Khalid and Jamaal to the situation of injustice. Khalid’s experience in the lock up was first hand and his anger thickened as a consequence of that. Jamaal’s constitution of spirit is different from Khalid’s and the college years of both the young men are markedly different from each other. In Delhi, Khalid involves himself with a political-religious students’ organization finding comfort and cause in the empathies and sympathies of similarly pained young men while Jamaal tries to build a respectable mediocre life for himself, preserving his sanity and his small ambitions. Following Khalid’s death, Jamaal’s consciousness begins to absorb anger building up in him a keen sense of injustice.

Maybe the knife would have been the end of it. Jamaal would have walked to work with *Jimmy the Terrorist* hidden within him, clutching the knife, the grip weakening day by day. Once in a while a certain word, a certain sentence would have brought *Jimmy the Terrorist* rising up into Jamaal’s eyes, only to withdraw, disappointed or diffident. It could not have lasted long. Jamaal was getting older, and some of his contemporaries in town had even married. Or he might have actually cleared the MBA exam. Ambition or domesticity would have dulled his anger, leached it. And in the delight of his children he would in some years have forgotten Jimmy the man who had appeared, fully formed, inside him that ordinary evening. (p.173)

At the climax of the story, Jimmy's *krodha* (anger) results from watching a film and an incident outside the theatre. The consequence of the same is the action of stabbing a man in uniform, an action Jimmy undertakes instinctively, not premeditatedly. While watching the Hindi film *Bandit Queen* (1994) at a local theatre in his town, Jamaal is overcome with disgust and anger at watching the abuse and humiliation of a powerless woman. As he steps out, he sees a local prostitute being threatened and humiliated by policemen – often acting as certified agents of state brutality. When they accost Jamaal, his reaction of spitting is a result of the building up of empathy with the powerless and hatred for the abusers, while recognizing the men in uniform to be the perpetrators of violence on Khalid, his brother. This episode highlights the possibility of resonances between aesthetic emotions and worldly emotions and the differing views of theoreticians on this subject make the explorations exciting. Abhinavagupta has countered Śankuka's views by stating that the state of *rasa* is a heightened state of consciousness, and there is no direct resonance between the emotions on stage and those outside it. He rejects the proposal that the relishing of *rasa* takes place through inference and the imitation of emotions on stage. Raniero Gnoli has pointed out that in Śankuka's suggestion, there is a problem as he does not explain how the process of inference operates in an art form like dance. In Jamaal's case, an identification with the character's situation and experiences in the film stirs his repressed emotions and he feels anger after which on witnessing a similar incident, he is deeply affected. While witnessing the scene on the street, Jamaal, through inference, remembers the incidents on the screen through a reverse imitation. The story of the woman on the street stirs his memory of the emotion of anger that he felt while watching the film. If Jamaal had not watched the film at that point, would he have reacted the same way to the incident on the street? According to Abhinavagupta, the heightened state of consciousness during the aesthetic experience is temporary and self-contained. It is the highest point of liberation when the soul has removed all ignorance and has come to recognize itself in its true nature. The question that now arises is whether watching the film was intended to evoke a *rasa* experience and if so/ why was it unable to? It is true that the cinematic text recreates anger in the spectator, but it cannot be identified as *raudra rasa*? If anger was experienced in its purest sense through the *raudra rasa* (furious), it would, as Abhinavagupta propounds, lead to *viśrānti* (rest). A touching base with the primary emotion of anger would make the waves of agitation settle in the consciousness and an individual would be better placed to understand and even accept her/his own life situations and take action in an unattached way. In the narrative, the protagonist doesn't experience *rasa* but, through identification with the character of the victim in the film, experiences an intensification of the repressed anger that he had been holding and his bourgeois ambitions had been suppressing.

Abhinavagupta lists certain obstructions to *rasa* in the aesthetic process which include "immersion in one's personal thoughts" as a component of obstruction (Mullik 265). In the narrative, it is clear that Jimmy is absorbed in his own personal thoughts at the time of entering the theatre. It is also likely that he finds himself unable to align his psychoemotive waves with the experience and the consciousness of others as his sense of social alienation is overwhelming him, a precondition for reaching "an abiding mental state" for the *rasa* experience. It is also important to dwell on the possible reasons for this troubled character to go into the theatre knowing well the real-life contexts for the narrative that abound in sexual violence and revenge. In discussing the effects of extra-fictional or real-life influences or knowledge on the film experience, Gopalan Mullik refers to Vivian Sobchack's views on the matter:

[She concludes by drawing our pointed attention to the fact that] the audiences' extra-textual knowledge of real events in the real world outside in terms of their own embodied and socio-cultural experiences of living in the world remain crucial in judging the status of "events" happening within a fictional film. Any departure from it would disturb the audiences' appreciation of the artwork in question. (Mullik 268)

In the novel, the film is a real Hindi film titled *Bandit Queen*, a dramatic recreation of the life story of Phoolan Devi, a surrendered bandit who was alive at the time of the film's release. In the Indian social context, the story of Phoolan Devi's life of struggle and the figure of a rebel woman taking up arms to revenge her sexual trauma is a dramatic plot in itself. The knowledge of "extra-textual" elements include the persona, her story and the much controversial debate on the director using a body double for the lead actress for a scene involving nudity. Moreover, for the character Jimmy, Phoolan Devi in life and on screen would be seen as a socially marginalized person, reminding him of Khalid and to an extent, himself. The identification therefore works at the level of superimposition of dramatic elements on real life and the stimuli and triggers that come from real-life events for consequent dramatic action (in real life).

In Indian literary historiography, the beginning of *kāvya* is attributed to the legendary *kraunch* episode that stirs Valmiki's consciousness and leads him to compose the *mahākāvya Rāmāyaṇa*. Valmiki witnesses an episode of immense grief (*śoka*) and from this grief follows a beautiful story of love and loss. Valmiki changes as a person, gives up his thievery and becomes the archetypal *kavi*. How does this transformation take place in Valmiki's consciousness? The purified grief of the female bird becomes the source of a story of love and loss. While witnessing the heart rending crying of the bird, Valmiki finds resonance in aesthetic emotions so that the transition is from experiential grief to aesthetic grief. This legend also establishes that *karuṇa* lies at the heart of great literature and that it holds the power to transform the human consciousness. It also highlights how the aesthetic experience (*rasāsvād*) can approximate the religious experience (*brahmāsvād*) but is not the same. Śankuka's theory of inference states that during the aesthetic experience, specifically in a drama, the emotions are realized by the spectator through the act of inference. This inference derives from the imitation of real life emotions on stage. When a spectator watches a performance for instance, of Ram and Sita's *viraha* (separation), the *sthāyībhāva* of *śoka* (grief) is experienced by the spectator through inference. The characters Ram and Sita on the stage are neither real nor unreal but exist in imitation of actual personages of Ram and Sita in the original text. The emotions on stage are also therefore neither real nor unreal but exist in imitation of actual emotions.

Based on this model of inference, Śankuka has suggested that an experience of *karuṇa rasa* can lead to the emotion of *karuṇā* (compassion) in the consciousness of the spectator. Therefore, Śankuka opens the possibility to see how it is possible for a spectator (reader) to move towards *karuṇa* after relishing the *karuṇa rasa*. However, this does not necessarily mean that every aesthetic emotion will have a direct bearing on lived emotions.

In the end of the narrative, in a moment of anger, Jamaal stabs one of the officers, and becomes 'Jimmy the Terrorist' for posterity. The transition of Jamaal to Jimmy, though stemming from *karuṇa* (compassion) that he feels for the helpless woman, yet his actions are grounded in impulse and not an aesthetic *viśrānti* (rest) as idealized aesthetic experience offers. Jamaal's actions are the result of anger, frustration and impulse but take compassion and empathy as their point of origin. Through the psycho-emotive paradigm of understanding response to art, narratives like that of Jamaal provide opportunities for reading and reflecting upon the struggles of individual consciousnesses, isolated in political and social life of the society at large.

In classical Sanskrit aesthetics, the role of the *sahṛdaya* (empathetic reader/viewer) is considered an integral part of the aesthetic process. Theorists have propounded on the stages of aesthetic engagement and the psychoemotive orientation of an ideal reader/viewer. The typology of the ideal critic/reader involves the process of de-cluttering or purification brought about by *sādhana* (meditation and contemplation) and Abhinavagupta's idealization equated an ideal viewer/reader/critic to the position of a *jīvanamukta* or one who has freed oneself in this lifetime. Sundararajan and Raina (2016) have explored the process of aesthetic appreciation of the *sahṛdaya* with parallels from quantum principle of symmetry. In their fascinating study, they

have highlighted the classical as well as modern perspectives on the principles and processes of aesthetic appreciation in Indian and Western traditions. From such studies, the possibilities embedded in the aesthetic process can be contextualized in the current social and cultural realities of the world. A question that naturally presents itself is concerned with the role of the reader/viewer in the present world where digitalization of content and democratization of art debates have made everything accessible to everyone and the proliferation of the reader response theory demands non-conventional and non-discriminatory aesthetic engagement. While such developments point towards breaking social and other forms of exclusivism and hierarchy, they don't engage with the other aspects of classical aesthetics that were concerned with the psychoemotive health of the reader/spectator. In contemporary times, it would be regressive to argue for literature and other forms of art to be reserved for a learned few, therefore, this debate needs to be contextualized in the present times. It may be rewarding to dwell on the role (and responsibilities) of the reader/spectator to align the aesthetic process with the psychoemotive makeup and the effects of the aesthetic process. Classical aesthetics especially Abhinava's postulations dwell extensively on the yogic training for being a *sahṛdaya*, one who is capable of severing mundane ties and immersing herself/himself in the aesthetic experience. In the context of didactic aesthetics influenced by Western theories rooted in Christian ethics and the multiplicity of media in the contemporary world, questions about the aesthetic experience largely concern themselves with the effects of the art experience in material terms. The individual who is engaging (or consuming?) a work of art is a differentiated (not unified) consciousness, and her/his life-situations as well as repressed emotions play out in the aesthetic process. In the novel, Jimmy's mental and emotional health is in a state of upheaval and chaos due to the personal and social developments in his life. In that state, his psychological coordinates are too attached to the life experiences and they make their mark in the aesthetic process too. The story of a woman's social marginalization and sexual trauma and the dynamics of revenge drama that is played out in the film *Bandit Queen* act as objective correlatives for his real life experiences and specific memories of social marginalization and custodial violence. When he steps out of the theatre, the incident of a woman's harassment that he witnesses acts as a trigger and sets off the drama of revenge in Jimmy's internal makeup. The act of hitting a man in uniform goes against the bourgeois aspirations of Jimmy but his anger at the helplessness of women and other marginalized people translates into violence that costs him his name and reputation. If Jimmy was not in a troubled state of mind when he went in to watch the film or if he had watched another film, would the aesthetic process have been the same with the same outcome? There have been recorded incidents of individuals committing suicide after reading certain texts or watching certain films, as also of individuals healing and registering behavioural and even physical health changes due to the aesthetic process, as is being discussed in the emerging discipline of narrative medicine.

In conclusion, it remains an important consideration when contextualizing Indian aesthetics and reading contemporary works of literary or dramatic (cinematic) production, that the purpose and design of every work of art needs to be contextualized too. There are films, novels, dramas and poems composed for political, ideological, activist and other materialist purposes. Classical Indian aesthetics is concerned with dimensions of consciousness that are focused on 'affect' but not in a tangible or translatable sense of worldly behaviour and action. Comparative aesthetics is enabling in clarifying contexts and challenges as well as the relevance of examining aesthetic propositions and contemporary works of art.

In contemporary literary and cinematic/dramatic productions, anger has come to occupy a major role in aesthetic affect. Readings, interpretations and analysis of texts often explore *raudra rasa* in sociopolitical frameworks. Spiritual psychologist Brian Weiss in his book *Messages from the Masters* (2000) points out how we have upheld the 'angry young man' fetish and project

unprocessed anger as an ideal emotional state through films and other forms of mass media. The Osborne effect has transformed into packaging and marketing of anger that sees reproductions in revenge and macabre cult cinema. When reflecting on modern Indian literature, the character of Asvatthama in Dharmvir Bharati's *Andha Yug* (1954) comes to mind. In the play, *raudra rasa* is an abiding *rasa* as the aftermath of war leaves people hopeless and aimless and this void naturally produces *krodha* (anger). Asvatthama's character exemplifies anger and his words and actions are produced as a result of rage that he feels about his father's betrayal. This warrior son realizes, after the war, that his father's death was a result of a half-lie (half-truth) and the defeat of the war sends him into a mad fury of destruction that flouts all norms of dharma. As a result, he is punished by Krishna to eternal pain. This character's anger is born of frustration and despair and his raging soliloquy on stage produces the *rāudra rasa* in the audience. The affective dimensions of this *rasa* do not lead the audience to take political/ideological positions but to a self-reflection as the causes of his anger on stage are circumstantial to which the audience can relate naturally. Deceit, betrayal and manipulation are common human traits and circumstances of conflict/war that bring these to the fore are of common experience and collective memory.

In Greek mythology, the Erinyes (Furies) are personifications of anger or curses and their roles are intimately linked to social morality. One of their features is engendering madness whose elucidation is clear in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532, 1591). The rage of Oedipus in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* (5th c. BC) that stems from guilt leads him to blind himself while Orlando is driven to madness from his rage at betrayal. Like Asvatthama, these characters lack self-reflection and take to instant behavioural patterns of destruction (of self and/or other). The savouring of *raudra rasa* doesn't coax the spectator/reader into immediate action but is a psychospiritual space of reflection and meditation. In many spiritual traditions, anger is not seen as a morally negative emotion but a stage of transformation (for instance in Ignatian spirituality). From Yahweh to Rudra and Kālī, god personas and deities are also depicted in angry bhavas. The wrath of god was of particular interest to William Blake and John Donne as appealing in its visceral power. In literature, anger has a universal place and aesthetic approaches have concerned themselves with the cognitive and psychological dimensions of anger in an action-oriented approach. The affect of anger offers an open field of inquiry to explore if aesthetic anger can be seen in non-didactic ways. I end this essay with a reference to the noted Kannada playwright H S Shivaprakash's views on depicting *raudra rasa* on stage and how non-dualism is a context that this *rasa* can be located in:

It is very difficult to produce *raudra rasa* through a work of art as we tend to take moral positions regarding the characters. In *Mahāchaitra*, I tried to place *raudra* in the context of cyclicity of seasons, and not in a didactic way. Between two contending forces in the play, I introduced the character Nilambika who has transcended the duality in the conflict.

At the end of dualism, lies *raudra rasa*. When Shiva prostrates himself to absorb Kālī's anger, an awakening is possible.

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