

*Phenomenology of Aesthetics in Girish Karnad, Mahesh Elkunchwar
and Ratan Thiyam: A Study in Rasa and Dhvani*

(Thesis submitted to Nagaland University in partial fulfilment of requirements for
award of Ph.D. degree in English)

By

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Acknowledgement

The development of this thesis, from a minuscule concept into to a full-fledged work, could not have been possible without the help, support and guidance of many individuals who have extended their service during the preparation and completion of this thesis.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Mohammed Akhtar Jamal Khan, for his infinite patience in helping me develop this thesis. His knowledge and guidance have been invaluable. A scholar could not have wished for a better supervisor.

I would also like to thank the faculty and staff of Department of English, Nagaland University, for their support.

To my family and friends for their constant encouragement and support, I thank you.

Above all, I am eternally grateful to the Almighty God for His wisdom, patience and love.

Kohima, 20th May 2022

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Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to explore the *rasa* and *dhvani* elements in the plays of contemporary playwrights. For this purpose, three dramatists from three different regions of India are taken for study. They are Girish Karnad from Karnataka, Mahesh Elkunchwar from Maharashtra, and Ratan Thiyam from Manipur. Fifteen plays are analyzed threadbare for analysis in six chapters.

The first chapter devotes to trace out glorious dramatic tradition of India that has three mainstays - classical Sanskrit drama, traditional folkloric performances, and modern experimental plays. The Sanskrit theatre had its presence from 200 to 1000 CE. Traditional theatre flourished during medieval period. The modern theatre came into being with colonization. It spanned from 1800 CE to the present with two broad divisions: Colonial and Post-colonial Theatre.

Sanskrit theatre has a divine origin as narrated by Bharata Muni in his *Natyasastra*. The plot, characters, and *rasas* are three important components of Sanskrit drama. It has three main divisions: Nataka, Prakarana and Prahasana. The acting is of three types - *Vachika* (expression of speech), *Angika* (expression of the limbs), and *Sattvika* (true expression). The languages used are a mixture of the Sanskrit and Prakrit. The happy ending is one of the salient features of Sanskrit plays apart from longer duration and the role of *Vidushaka* (jester). Bhasa's political romance *Svapnavasavadatta* (*The Vision of Vasavadatta*), and Asvaghosa's *Buddhacaritam* are the earliest Sanskrit plays. Kalidasa's *Abhigyanasakuntalam* is regarded as the epitome of Sanskrit play known for its poetic brilliance.

India has a rich tradition of folk theatre that flourished in different parts of India during the medieval period. It is a composite art form with a fusion of acting, dialogue, dance, music,

and poetry. Dance and song are widely used in almost all traditional theatres. The important folk theaters are *Swang*, *Ramleela*, *Khyal*, *Yakshagana*, Nautanki, Therukoothu, Tmasha and Mughal Tamasha, Dashavatara, Bhaona, Chadheya Nata and innumerable such folk theatres flourished throughout India.

The modern Indian theatre came into being with the colonial encounter. Modern Indian Theatre started between 1800 and 1850, even though the importation of the proscenium arch was in use by the Playhouse (Calcutta) and Bombay Theatre (1776). The first modern Indian English play is considered to be *The Persecuted, or Dramatic scenes Illustrative of the Present State of Hindoo Society in Calcutta* (1831) written by Reverend Krishna Mohan Banarjee. During this time around 1870, a new kind of drama evolved called Company or Parsi Theatre. It was enormously successful all over India between the 1870s and 1930s. B. P. Kirloskar invented Marathi Sangitnataka on his *Sakuntal* (Pune, 1880) and Bengali Gitabhanaya peaked in Rabindranath Tagore's debut, *Valmiki Pratibha* (Calcutta, 1881). Post-modern theatre built its empire on the rich soil of modern theatre along with two other theatre genres – Sanskrit and traditional. Mohan Rakesh's *Asadh Ka Ek Din*, Habib Tanvir's *Agra Bazaar*, Vijay Tendulkar's *Ghasiram Kotwal*, Mahesh Elkunchwar's *Wada Trilogy*, Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajit*, Girish Karnad's *Yayati*, Mahesh Dattani's *Dance Like a Man* are some of the most fascinating plays of the post independent era. E. Alkazi, B. V. Karanth, Habib Tabvir, and Ratan Thiyam's direction has reinterpreted the popular plays in the light of traditional theatre and *Natyasastra*.

In the second chapter, ancient Indian literary theory of Rasa is described. *Rasa* is the oldest theory in Indian literary tradition. Though the seeds of *rasa* can be traced from Valmiki, the first poet of Sanskrit, it was Bharata who propounded it in *Natyasastra* as an independent theory. The theory of *rasa* primarily deals with the human emotions of varied nature, and how they are depicted, inferred, and transmitted through a work of art. Bharata's well-known aphorism '*vibhabanubhava vyabhicharisanyogyat rasanispati*' means *rasa* is realized by the

union of *vibhava*, *anubhava*, and *vybharibhava*. There are nine *sthayibhavas* and corresponding to the *sthayibhavas*, there are nine *rasas*. The *sthayibhava* of *rati* (love) leads to *sringara rasa* (erotic). Accordingly *hasa* (Amusement/ Laughter) leads to *hasya* (Comic), *krodha* (anger) - *raudra* (furious), *utsaha* (Dynamic energy) - *vira* (heroic), *bhaya* (fear) - *bhyanaka* (terrifying), *jugupsa* (disgust) - *bibhatsa* (disgusting), *vismaya* (wonder) - *adbhuta* (awesome), *sama* (equanimity) - *shanta* (peace).

Dhvani School is one of the important schools of Indian Poetics. It is developed by Anandavardhana in his path-breaking work called *Dhvanyaloka*. His theory rests on a new function of language other than the direct (referential) and indirect (metaphorical) functions. This third and unique use of language is called suggestions (*vyanjana*). This doctrine of *dhvani* is only an extension of the *rasa* theory propounded by the ancient sage Bharata, according to which the main object of the dramatic work is to rouse a *rasa* or aesthetic emotion in the audience. It took over the idea of *rasa* into the field of poetry. *Dhvani* is the quintessence of poetry; and *rasa* is the quintessence of '*dhvani*'. The term *dhvani* (sound) is derived from the root *dhvan* from Sanskrit means 'to make a sound'. *Dhvani* is inspired by *Vaiyakarana* doctrine of *sphota*. Anandavardhana divides and subdivides *dhvani* in an effort to delineate its varieties to *sahrdaya* (discerning reader) with the aid of ample examples. Broadly the division is two-fold, viz., *avivaksitavacyadhvani* (suggestion with unintended literal import) and *vivaksitanyapravacya dhvani* (suggestion with intended literal import). This division is based on the nature of the expressed meaning. In *avivaksitavacya*, the *vacyartha* (expressed sense) is not expected to be conveyed at all. *Avivaksitavacyadhvani* has *dhvani* (merged with other) two divisions: *arthantaraskramitavacya atyantatiraskritavacyadhvani* (completely lost). In the former, the expressed sense gets 'merged' or gets transformed into the suggestive sense, to adequately represent the meaning intended to be conveyed by the poet. In the latter, *atyantatiraskritavacyadhvani*, the expressed meaning is 'completely lost' or abandoned and the

metaphorical expressions are revealed through suggestions. In *vivaksitanyapravacyadhvani*, the expressed sense is intended to be conveyed, but its ultimate aim is the suggested sense. It is subdivided into two, viz., *samlaksyakramavyangya dhvani* (of discernable sequentiality) and *asamlaksyakramavyangya dhvani* (of undiscernable sequentiality) on the basis of the perceptibility or otherwise of the sequence of the cognition leading to the suggested sense. When a *vastu* or *alankara* is suggested, the sequence is discernable and such *vastu* (plain fact) or *alankara* (adorned fact) belongs to *samlaksyakramavyangya dhvani*. When the expressed meaning awakens an aesthetic emotion like *rasa* and *bhava*, the sequence between the expressed and suggested senses is not discernable, it is called *Asamlaksyakramadhvani*. The whole theory of *rasa* is merged in it. Here the *Vacyartha* generally constitutes a representation of the *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas*, and *Vyabharibhavas*. When we understand these there at once is kindled up in the corresponding emotional mood or instinct *Sthayibhava*, and this is developed to the climax where we realize our own emotion of love, etc, invariably accompanied by a thrill.

The third chapter deals with the plays of Girish Karnad. He is a prominent modern playwright in Kannad literature who has extensively used history and mythology to deal with the burning issues of his time by exposing the existential crisis of modern man. He is deeply influenced by western theatre with a firm foot in the native dramatic traditions of *Yakshagana* and *Natyasastra*. *Yayati* is an adaptation from the Sambhava Parva of Mahabharata but it is not entirely mythological. The play is developed from the story of Yayati under the influence of the tragic vision of existentialism. It is a story of aggression, rage, and fury against oppressive forces and injustices. At the heart of everything, they revolt against oppression, artificiality, and injustices. Their action is authentic but tragic as they suffer from an existential dilemma. *Raudra rasa* is thus predominant in this play and other *rasas* are being the outcomes of it are mostly *karuna* and *bibhatsa*.

Nagamandala is another play of Girish Karnad where myth is consumed to perfection for yet another successful dramatic production. The main plot opens with a marriage between two unlike individuals, namely Rani and Appanna. Rani led a life of loneliness. Kurudavva, a blind woman helps her with the magic root to feed her husband in order to win her love. In the course of events, she unknowingly invites the cobra to be her lover/ husband. *Sringara* and *adbhuta rasa* in the main plot and *karuna rasa* in the subplot are two most prominent *rasas* in the play. There are enough instances of *asamlakshyakramavingya dhvani* which help to realise *rasa*.

Tughlaq is the second play of Girish Karnad written on the historical figure of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq. Tughlaq's personality is mired with controversies, and his sultanate period is known for conspiracies and bloodshed even though he is known as a visionary, pacifist, and intelligent. The two prominent *rasas* like *raudra*, *karuna* and one less prominent *vibhatsa rasa* are at play throughout the drama. The plot of *The Fire and the Rain* is taken from a myth like most of his other plays. The myth of Yavakri occurs in the Vana Parva of the Mahabharata. The original storyline of Yavakri is about the misapplication of power of men that they receive from God. The original myth was altered to shape his play. The play is full of vengeance where a series of murders takes place which has enough scope to explore *raudra rasa*.

Hayavadana is a dramatic rendering of *Kathasaritasagara*, but more so from Thomas Mann's retelling of the story titled *The Transposed Heads*. The play has two plots. The subplot from which the title is taken is about a horse-headed man that can be translated in Kannada as '*hayavadana*'. *Hasya* and *karuna rasa* are prominent in the subplot whereas due to the deviant love in the main plot, *sringara rasa* is curtailed and *raudra* and *karuna rasa* become more prominent. *Bali: The Sacrifice* is an adaptation of the thirteenth-century Kannada epic *Yashodhara Charite* by Janna. This play brings to the forefront the conflict of two faiths and the agony of the characters involved in it on the puzzling question of violence and non-violence. The overt sexual connotation and description during the sexual encounter and thereafter, the abuse

and humiliation of the mahout to the queen, cowardice, and incomprehensiveness of the king, the rage of the mother, the delirium of the queen, and above all the blood and gore as the leitmotif makes the play a fit case of study for the *karuna* and *bibhatsa rasa*.

Mahesh Elkunchwar's plays are examined on the backdrop *rasa* and *dhvani*. Elkunchwar has shaped the modern Marathi Theater with his wide-ranging themes. *Holi* is the first play of Mahesh Elkunchwar. The play captures the young men's angst, dissatisfaction, and misdirected burst of energy. This tries to expose the darker side of the human story and how the eroding family and societal values have their repercussions in life. *Desire in the Rocks* is a psychological play. It is a story of incest. But more so it is about the loss of individuality within the individual vastness. It explores how the raw passion of man gathers into an all-encompassing force to overpower and control another being to the point of mutual self-destruction. The play portrays diverse aesthetic experiences namely, *bhayanaka*, *raudra*, *bibhatsa*, and *sringara*.

The *Old Stone Mansion* is the first play of Wada Trilogy of Mahesh Elkunchwar. It narrates how at the advent of commercialization, human feelings are commodified. Death, old age, conflict, and rage are some of the recurrent themes that bring *karuna*, *raudra*, and *bibhatsa rasa* in the play. The *Pond* is the second play of Elkunchwar's Wada Trilogy. The play captures visible changes in the rural setting of Maharashtra. *Karuna rasa* flows in the play with the separation of son from his mother, willing invitation for death. The *vibhavas* like separation, approaching death, misfortune, and loss of personal dignity are brought into this play. It is acted out by tears, laments and sighs. The *anubhavas* are tears, change of colour, languor in the limbs, etc. The *vyabharibhavas* are world-weariness, worry, longing, dejection, mental aberration, etc. *Karuna rasa* is mostly prevalent along with other *rasas*. *Apocalypse* is the last play of *The Wada Trilogy*. Being a dystopian play, the setting itself brings the *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa rasa*. The play as the title suggests brings the picture of total annihilation but reminds us of the victory of

exceptional heroic traits in some in the middle of extraordinary chaos and destruction. The play thus brings many rasas like *bibhatsa*, *bhayanaka*, *karuna* and *vira*.

Fifth chapter elaborates four plays of Ratan Thiyam. The play *Prologue* is the first play in Manipur *Trilogy*. It narrates how the universe was created and how the complex human beings' exploitive nature has ruined the beauty of the creation. It is an interesting play for the exploration of *rasa* since it is an amalgamation of two contradictory *rasas* like *santa* and *bhayanka*. *Adbhuta rasa* is the intermediary *rasa* between them. *My Earth, My Love* is a complex play of violence and destruction placing man at the center of it. But it is not devoid of space that really illumines a scope for peace. The play, in a way, is a quintessence of Thiyam's anxiety that he has felt over several years. *Bhayanaka* and *karuna* rasa are crafted beautifully in this play. *Chakravyuha*, is taken from the Drona Parva of the *Mahabharata*. It narrates the violence, and the dynamic energy of Abhimanyu. The *rasa* that are delineated here are *Vira*, *raudra*, *sringara* and *karuna*.

The thesis concludes with some of the findings and the scope for the future studies. It is found that predominate *rasas* like *sringararas* and *vira rasa* of the yester years find a negligible place in their writings of the modern playwrights. There is hardly any *vira rasa* depicted and there is mostly deviant love which curtails the *sringara rasa*. In the plays of these three prominent playwrights *bhayanak*, *bibhatsa*, *raudra*, and *karuna* are the *rasas* that explicitly churn the minds of the readers and audience alike. Only *karuna rasa* protects its dominance as the prominent one over the years. The second noticeable change can be seen in *raudra rasa*. The *raudra rasa*, as we know, has anger as its permanent emotion. While everything remains the same even in modern dramas, what is more, noticeable here is the anger that is impotent. Anger is manifested more in words than in deeds and the rage is self-directed and brings their own downfall.

On the question of whether the modern playwrights have given a conscious effort to realize *rasa* in the minds of the readers/spectators. There is no clear answer. But the theory is so

common in the Indian context that it is impossible to think it would go a miss from proficient writers like Karnad, Elkunchwar, and Thiyam. The other vital point I wish to add here in accordance with the observation of Priyadarshi Pattanaik is that *rasa* theory has to be modified to coexist with modern literature. For example, in *sringara rasa* there is no scope for deviant love which in modern days is a very common practice in all kinds of society. The scope for future study is vast and unlimited for any research aspirant to dive deep into the *rasa* and *dhvani* theories to create a new level of understanding of modern writers.

Chapter One

Introduction

Indian aestheticians classify arts into three broad categories. They are performing arts, literary arts, and plastic arts or *Sangita* (music), *Sahitya* (literature), and *Kala* (sculpture and painting). All arts are human activities arising out of human experience though they have distinct forms and mediums. In them, emotion plays a crucial role. All these art forms have at least two commonalities; firstly, they are imitative and secondly, they are imbued with *rasa* (aesthetic delight). Drama is a genre where a free play of all arts is possible among these broad categories. Elements from all the categories are combined, which is both aural and visual. Thus it is more enjoyable and popular among the mass. The message given in drama reaches all kinds of people. It is, for this reason, one of the most envied literary forms for the rulers throughout the ages as it has the reflection of current issues in society.

The names of Bharata, Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti of ancient India, and Vijay Tendulkar, Mohan Rakesh, and Girish Karnad of contemporary India bring a range of rich and diverse theatrical forms to the forefront in the history of the cultural and literary landscape of India. Undoubtedly, the genre of drama has a glorious theatrical tradition that is diverse and plural as is the Indian nation itself. Classical Sanskrit drama, traditional folkloric performances like Tamasha, Nautanki, Jatra, Manch, Khayal, Pala, and modern experimental plays are the three mainstays of Indian theatre history.

The main periods of Indian theatre history can broadly be divided into three phases - Sanskrit theatre, traditional theatre, and modern theatre. The first phase is the most talked about and much respected Sanskrit Theatre that made its presence from 200 BCE to 1000 CE. The next phase is the Traditional Theatre which flourished during the middle age after the decline of

Sanskrit theatres. This theatrical genre was not confined to any single language but somewhat scattered through every Indian language with various forms. The period of the traditional theatre is 1000 AD to 1800 AD. The Modern Theatre came into being with colonization. The time frame can be traced from 1800 AD to the present. Some theatre historians also rename these divisions as Ancient Drama, Medieval Drama, and Modern Drama according to the historical marker of Indian history. These divisions have many overlapping like that of any history and there are many sub-divisions and contours without which the proper understanding of Indian theatre with its nuances is not possible to achieve.

History of any sort cannot be put into watertight compartments. More so is the Indian theatre history. For the sake of classification, we may say that the Sanskrit theatre was the only theatric tradition till 1000 AD. “Until the tenth CE,” writes Rakesh Solomon, “Hindu culture – with Sanskrit as the language of religion, court, and literature – dominated but did not replace numerous regional languages and artistic genres, which charted their independent course without closing themselves off from Sanskrit influences” (12). Traditional theatres like *Tamasha*, *Yakhagana*, *Nautanki*, *Ramlila*, and *Raslila* have their folk origin but are closely linked with Sanskrit literary culture. Again at the peak of the revivalist movement during the colonial and post-colonial era, some modern creative minds took fervent interest to vitalize the Sanskrit and traditional theatre to counter the influx of foreign dramatic trends as part of their mission to fulfill their nationalistic aspirations. Rakesh H. Solomon has the following observation:

During this period, while the Europeans were discovering ancient Indian culture, Indian elites were discovering modern European culture. Out of this encounter, arose the new theatrical genre called modern Indian theatre, shaped by the imperatives of empire, nationalism, and nativism, this was a metropolitan genre, created by a bilingual high cast bourgeoisie, who strategically adopted elements from a gallery of models that included a Sanskrit theatre, traditional theatre, and the European theatre. (16)

Modern Indian Theatre is a synthesis of all the forms of drama available at its disposal. It is progressive and open to experimentation. It is ready to revive its old form and borrow from other theatric cultures. It is a pan-Indian phenomenon, not confined to any particular region or language.

Sanskrit Theatre

Sanskrit drama carries with itself so much weight in the consciousness of the Indian psyche that it is even compared to Veda, the sacred treasure house of Hindu religious text. The divine origin of Sanskrit theatre comes to us from the oldest extant work of legendary Bharata Muni's *Natyasastra*. It is the ancient world's most comprehensive and minutely detailed compendium of theatrical information that has recorded 'every conceivable theoretical and practical aspect of theatre' from acting to dancing and from music to prosody. The detailed analysis like shapes and sizes of the playhouses, organization and management of theatre companies, costuming and make-up, theories of emotions and sentiments, types and rules for dramatic composition, and even requirements for critics and audiences. The origin of drama is narrated in Bharata's *Natya Sastra* thus:

... the gods approach Brahma and tell him: " We want something to amuse us. Something we can see and listen to (at the same time)." Brahma agrees to create drama: "Since the Vedas cannot be heard by woman, by Sudras and other classes, I will create a fifth Veda, different from these, that will be for all people. I will create a fifth Veda called "drama" out of past stories (*itihasa*), that will lead to righteousness, to material gain, to fame, with good advice and full of wise sayings (*saṅgraha*) ... (Masson and Patwardhan, 18- 19).

The drama is an imitation of emotions found in all three worlds. It shows dharma, material gain, and mystic peace. It depicts comic situations, battles, sexual love, and many more. So drama is composed taking dialogue from Rigveda, music from Samveda, the art of representation from

Yajurveda, and sentiments from Atharvaveda. In this sense, Sanskrit drama is a harmonious combination of music, dialogue, gesticulation, and action. It gained secular status since it had access to people of all classes. It brought a new lease of air to the cast-driven society of Hindus.

Development of Sanskrit Drama

One may have some apprehension about the above said theory on the origin of drama as propounded by Bharata that it came to the human world directly from the mouth of Brahma like that of other Vedas but he may not disagree with the fact that religion played a vital role in shaping drama as a literary form in its early days. The earliest form of Hindu dramatic literature (not drama proper) can be traced from the hymns of *Rig-Veda* which contains dialogues such as those of Sarama and Panis, Yama and Yami, Pururava, and Urvashi. The words for actor – ‘*nata*’ and play – ‘*nataka*’ are derived from the Sanskrit word *nrit* which means ‘to dance’. Many opine that Sanskrit drama has its root in dancing or is derived from it.

In Sanskrit dramatic theory, *Natya* is known as *Drusya Kavya Rupaka* which is of ten types. Among them, two principal types are *Nataka* and *Prakarana*. The *Nataka* plays feature stories about kings and divine beings *Prakarana* revolve around middle-class characters and are marked with humor and satire. The acting (*abhinaya*) is of three types – *vachika* (expression of speech), *angika* (expression of the limbs), and *sattvika* (true expression). The languages used in Sanskrit plays are a mixture of the Sanskrit and Prakrit languages. The happy ending is one of the salient features of Sanskrit plays apart from longer duration and the role of *Vidushaka* (jester).

The Sanskrit drama dates back to antiquity. It emerges in fragments and in short pieces beginning in the first century AD and has steady progress till the tenth century AD. The major playwrights like Bhasa, Sudraka and Kalidasa come within the first three or four centuries of the Sanskrit dramatic tradition. Bhasa’s plays (the second century AD) are the earliest Sanskrit

dramas available to the modern reader. Though Asvaghosa, the Buddhist poet and playwright wrote his plays earlier than Bhasa, his plays survive only in fragments. Bhasa is known for his complicated plot construction and depicts love and separation amidst political turbulence and uncertainties. His political romance *Svapnavasavadatta* (*The Vision of Vasavadatta*) is his most memorable play. Asvaghosa's plays have also contributed much to the development of Sanskrit theatre. *Buddhacaritam* and *Sariputracaritam* are his two important plays. The golden age of Sanskrit drama comes with the Gupta period when Kalidasa becomes the preeminent dramatist. His *Abhigyanasakuntalam* is regarded as the epitome of Sanskrit drama derived from the *Mahabharata*. It tells about the love, separation, and reunion of King Dushyanta and Shakuntala, the foster daughter of hermit Kanva. This play is known for its poetic brilliance in a fantastic and complex world. His other two plays are *Malavikagnimitra* and *Urvashi*.

Three plays are attributed to the poet-king Sudraka of which *Mrichkatika* (*The Little Clay Cart*), is a love story with a political intriguing plot. *Ratnavali* is a complicated intrigue set in a harem by the poet Harsha. Bhavabhuti is known for his Ramayana-derived play, *Uttararamacarita* (*The Later Story of Rama*), a love story of *Malati and Madhava*. *Mudrarakhasa* (*The Minister's Seal*) is the only existing play of Vishakhadatta, with its ruthless political plot, is a kind of thriller of its time. Looking at the title of plays of the great playwrights, it is evident that the themes of their plays though mostly adopted from epics and *Puranas*, political, social, and historical themes are also taken up for dramatization. The dramatists had the freedom to work on the story independently.

Indu Shekhar in his *Sanskrit Drama: Its origin and Decline*, writes "Plot, characters and emotions are three important components of Sanskrit drama" (10). The plots are drawn from great narrations, popular tales, or from the imagination of the poet. The five elements which constitute the plot are *vija* (seed), *vindu* (drops), *pataka* (sub-plot), *prakari* (episodical incident), and *karya* (purpose). An activity is started with a special purpose (*karya*) in mind. The beginning

is the seed, the circumstances from which the plot arises. The same turns as the object or *phala* at the end. *Vindu* or drop links one part of the story to another. *Pataka* helps and furthers the main topic and *prakari* is an episodic incident of limited duration and minor importance which also assists the progress of the plot. *Karya* is the object realized at the end.

Another interesting fact about the Sanskrit theatre is that it is multilingual by itself. Many Sanskrit plays are composed having more than one language. Educated men and women of higher status speak in Sanskrit whereas all men and women of lower status speak in different regional languages or *Prakrits*, meaning original or natural languages. *Abhijnanasakuntalam* of Kalidasa was written in Sanskrit, Suraseni, Maharastri, and Magadhi, whereas Sudraka's *Mricchakatika* (*The Little Clay Cart*) is a mixture of dialogues in Sanskrit, Suraseni, Avantika, Pracya, Magadhi, Sakari, Candali, and Dhaki.

Sanskrit dramas are actor-centered as through their acting meanings are revealed and *rasas* are savoured by *sahridaya*. The heroes are of four kinds: *dhirodatta* (calm and magnanimous), *dhirodhata* (violent), *dhiralalita* (graceful), *dhisanta* (peaceful). Heroines are classified under eight categories. They are *vasakasajjika* (dressed up for union), *virahokandhita* (dressed up by separation), *svadhinabhartrika* (having the husband under subjection), *kalahantariata* (separated by quarrel), *kandhita* (enraged), *vipralabdha* (deceived), *prositabhartrika* (whose husband is on travel), *abhisarika* (who due to her infatuation is attached to the lover and gives up modesty in going out to meet him). The clown or jester called *vidushaka* is generally a Brahmin who is allowed to add social and political criticism to the play. The manager or director of the play is *Sutradhara*. He takes an active part in the actual performance of the play.

Rasa is considered the soul of Sanskrit drama. The realization of *rasa* is considered to be the real end of artistic performances. There are eight *rasas* of which are four major *rasas*. They

are *sringara* (erotic), *raudra* (furious), *vira* (heroic), and *bibhatsa* (disgusting). The *hasya* (comic) comes from the *sringara* (erotic), *karuna* (the compassionate) comes from *raudra* (the furious). The *adbhuta* (awesome) aesthetic experience comes from *vira* (the heroic) and the terrifying (*bhayanaka*) from the disgusting (*bibhatsa*). *Santa rasa* was a later addition.

By the eleventh century, the treasure house of Sanskrit literature, more precisely the heritage of Sanskrit theatre was almost waning. Since it lost its potency as a language of the people, it was limited only to the rituals or on the matter of religious deliberations. Along with it there was a real dearth of translation to other languages, and there was no royal patronage as mostly ruled by the Muslim rulers, the theatric practices of Sanskrit literature and its literary tradition were found only in the limited pockets almost imperceptible. They lie dormant for almost eight centuries till the advent of the Indologist though the *Natya Sastra* or Kalidasa were familiar names in the psyche of the people.

Traditional Theatre

Along with Sanskrit Theatre various nonelite genres flourished during and after the Sanskrit period. The European historiographer including Horace Hayman Wilson, Sylvian Levi, etc. while writing on the theatre history of India made a basic flaw by equating Sanskrit theatre with a history of Indian theatre. Levi dubs the popular non-Sanskrit theatre ‘unsophisticated’, ‘indifferent to literary qualities’, ‘offering very little originality, and a ‘mere abstraction’, (qtd. in Soloman 11). Such claims can all be seen as Indologists' fervent zeal to place Sanskrit literature as superior and a generic tongue for the whole of literary tradition. In a diverse country like India, this generalization is a grave injustice to other languages and many other different kinds of performances. Rakesh H. Soloman disagrees with the claim of Wilson and Levi that Sanskrit as a single genre can replace the Indian theatre’s rich and diverse theatrical tradition. He writes, “... the Sanskrit theatre that ended in about 1000 CE – to represent the entire theatre of a nation, and

thus they effectively erase the extraordinary variety of theatrical genres that flourished in different Indian languages during the subsequent eight to nine hundred years” (13). Solomon builds his argument by stating that during the heyday of Sanskrit literary tradition, different regional languages excelled in a rich literary performance tradition; they got enriched by their own and being enriched by Sanskrit. Like many western historiographers, Hemendranath Das Gupta’s, *The Indian Stage*, is critical to the popular theatre to the point of denigration while narrating the Gujurati traditional theatre called Bhavi that there is no dramatic literature worth the name and the wanton display of vulgarity is a shock to cultured minds. Only during the twentieth century, did the traditional theatre get its long-pending respectability in the colonial consciousness and postcolonial assertiveness.

It may sound like a repetition but worth repeating that India has a rich tradition of folk theatre that flourished in different parts of India during the medieval period between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries AD. It becomes a part of the Indian psyche and a treasure house of diverse regional cultures. It is a composite art form with a fusion of acting, dialogue, dance, music, and poetry. It is generally performed on social and religious occasions in a rural background. Special styles of dance are incorporated in the traditional theatre which reflects the living and lifestyle of common men. Dance and song are widely used in almost all traditional theatres as singing was an important part of rural community's living. For example, dance is an important tool in Bhavi of Gujurat. “In this form, quick or slow foot movement is a means of narration. The art of making the entry by dancing has been perfected in the traditional Kashmiri theatre form, Bhand Jashn. In Koodiyaattam and Ankia Naat, the entry by dancing itself is complicated and artistic. In the forms, the tempo and basic posture and gesture identify the role of the character” (Traditional Theatre).

Traditional theatre’s most distinctive feature is its simplicity. This simplicity enables the spectators to make an immediate, direct, realistic, and rhythmic relationship with the artist.

Dialogue delivery is generally carried out in a high pitch and there are many humorous instances repeated according to the typical regional peculiarity. In this theatre, after the enactment of a scene (event or incident), all the artists leave the stage or sit down on the sides of the stage conveying the change of the scene. Otherwise, there is always continuity in its theme, structure, and presentation. In some parts of the play, there is a satire on the socio-economic and political issues of the time by the clown or through other comic characters. These techniques played an important part in the growth of modern drama. Many writers like Bharatendu Harischandra, Rabindranath Tagore, Girish Karnad, Habib Tanvir, and Ratan Thiyam have incorporated them to revive the Indian dramatic tradition.

The following are some of the traditional theatric performances of various parts of India in diverse regional languages that were probably developed between 1400 AD to 1800 AD with changes and changelessness in their form and content.

Bhand Pather is a folk theatre of Kashmir. It has been performed among the Bahand community on a hereditary basis. This form combines dance, drama, mime, puppetry, and music. Satire, wit, and parody are generally used to make a contemporary social commentary. The themes are taken from legends and local heroes. The play begins with a ritualistic dance called *chhok*. *Mukam*, *swarnai*, *dhol*, and *nagara* are some of the musical instruments used in this traditional theatre.

Raasleela is a play based on the life of Krishna when he was in his adolescence where he dances with Radha and her friends. The source of *Raasleela* is the *Bhagabat Purana* and *Gita Govinda*. So the play is about divine love. Nanda Das is believed to have written initial plays of *Raasleela*. It is of two types: Braj Rasa of Mathura and Manipuri Rasa of Manipur.

Bhavi is another very popular theatre from Gujurat. It could be traced back to the fourteenth century. Asaita Thakur, a Brahmin priest has written many *Bhavi* performances. This

dramatic entertainment uses music and dance as its core constituents. This play is a rare synthesis of romantic and devotional sentiments. *Jatra* originated in the 15 century during the Bhakti Movement in Bengal. Krishna Jatra was performed in the early days in Bengal being influenced by Chaitanya's Gaudiya Vaishnavism. Later Jatra is enacted on various themes taken from mythology, history, and contemporary issues. It is a mixture of song, drama, and stylized action and dialogue. It is also very popular in Odisha and in some parts of Bihar.

Swang is a music-based theatre with a nice mixture of songs and prose dialogues. It is predominant in Haryana, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh. Religious stories and folk tales are enacted by a dozen of artists with their loud renderings of dialogues. Emotions play an important role in this form of dramatic representation. It has two important styles – one belonging to Rohtak where the language used is Haryanvi and the other belonging to Haathras in Brajghosa language. *Ramleela* was started by Tulsidas during the Mughal period in Kashi. The theme is taken from Ramayana and the characters are from that of the great epic. It is performed during Dussehra. It is very popular among all sections of society. Ceremonial Ramleela is organized every year in Ramleela Maidaan of Delhi in front of the Prime Minister and Presidents of India. *Khyal* is based on Hindustani folk dance. This theatre form originated in Rajasthan. Powerful body movements of the performers including mimes and chanting are its chief characteristics. It incorporates social, historical, religious, and love stories for its narration. *Yakshagana* is a popular traditional theatre in Karnataka. It takes its theme from popular episodes either from *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata*. It is known for its music, vibrant costumes, and unique style of dance, extemporaneous dialogue, and improvised gestures. It is another dawn to dusk performance with wide appeal across the coastal districts of Karnataka.

Taking a lead from *Sangit*, *Bhagat*, and *Swang*, *Nautanki* becomes a popular medium of entertainment in North India, more so in Uttar Pradesh. It comes into existence only in the 19 century AD. Themes of *nautanki* are borrowed from romantic tales, mythologies, and the local

personality of great importance. It is generally performed in an open space from dawn to dusk. Some of the popular *nautanki* plays are *Satya-Harishchandra*, *Indal Haran*, and *Sultan Daku*. The metres used in the verses of *nautanki* are: *Doha*, *Chaubola*, and *Chhapai*. Earlier, only male actors were taking part, but later, women also started taking part in these plays.

Therukoothu is a folk drama of Tamilnadu that means street play. It is performed in the open space in the village and at the time of the annual festivals of Mariamman (Rain goddess) to achieve a rich harvest. It is based on mythologies but more so, on the life of Draupadi. It is full of dances and songs. Colorful costumes and thick bright make-up are some other characteristics of this form. *Tamasha* is a folk theatre in Maharashtra. The most distinct feature of this play is that of its female actress. They are the chief exponent of dance movements in the play. This theatre is marked by classical music, nimble footwork, and vivid gestures. *Mughal Tamasha* is a folk play of Odisha. The dialogues are written in Odia, Urdu, and Persian. It is of two types: 'Badsahi' and 'Soudagiri'. It begins with a prayer to God and Goddess and is followed by a group dance. Late Bansiballav Goswami popularized this play in the 1720s. *Jodinagara* and *Kubji* were the main instruments.

Some other notable traditional theatres of this category are *Maach* of Madhya Pradesh, *Bhaona* of Assam, *Dashavatara* of Konkan and Goa, *Krisnattam*, and *Mudiyettu* of Kerala, and *Chadheya Nata* and *Suanga* from Odisha. These theatres mostly flourished during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries AD.

Modern Indian Theatre

The modern Indian theatre came into being with the colonial encounter. It flourished without violence and bloodshed rather susceptibly on 'the coattails of the British Raj' (Lal 31). This new genre developed during the period between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, while there was mutual respect in the literary exchanges between elite Indians and

European scholars. In these periods, according to Rakesh H. Solomon, ‘while the Europeans were discovering ancient Indian culture, modern Indian elites were discovering modern European culture’ which paved the way for the modern Indian theatre (16). According to him, this entire period of 180 years can be divided into three major phases. The first segment of this period may be called colonial India’s Orientalist phase. This begins in the late eighteenth century with the birth of Indology but its tendencies persist throughout the nineteenth century and some decades of the twentieth century. The second phase may be termed colonial India’s high nationalist phase, beginning from 1920 to 1947, and the third one from 1947 to the present marked by new post-colonial nationalism and ideologies. The theme and treatment of Indian theatre changed markedly from phase to phase.

This new theatre became a metropolitan genre. They borrowed heavily from European playwriting and staging practices, and selectively adopted a few features from the traditional and Sanskrit theatre to the convenience of the writers. Initially, the modern stage was meant for the upper crust of society but gradually it became a broad-based entertainment of the mass that was spread across the countries in different regional languages and made sweeping changes in modern Indian theatre over the next hundred years. One of the most prominent trends in modern Indian theatre is that it has incorporated both modernity and Indianness in its style and subject matter. Thus it suited well with the Indian elite as an enterprise of nation-building. The growth of the modern theatre is allegorical in the sense that its identity is modern yet deeply rooted in the fertile soil of the past so also the pan Indian nation-state was modern with scores of royal kingdoms. This is the reason why modern Indian theatre enjoyed great prestige among the intelligentsia who were busy constructing a nation on the line of the Aryan's imagined nationhood.

Though there is no disagreement on the paramount western influence on Indian drama, the agreement ceases about the date of the development of the modern drama. And whether it

was a pan-Indian phenomenon or scattered to different dramatic regions differently. Sisir Kumar Das in his Sahitya Academy endorsed a two-volume survey of 'Modern Indian Literature' finds 1800 to 1956 is the phase for modern Indian literature. Anand Lal however preferred to delay the onset of modernism in Indian theatre by half a century to 1850, even though the importation of the proscenium arch was in use by the Playhouse (Calcutta) and Bombay Theatre (1776) and to some theatric regions as late as mid-twentieth century like Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Manipuri, Rajasthani, and Sindhi. There were many traditional forms where modernity had not impacted at all, thus we find both 'premodern and post-modern theatre anachronistically co-exist today' (Lal 32). Anand Lal in his essay, *A Historiography of Modern Indian Theatre*, incorporated some of the trends of modern plays. According to him, the first modern Indian English play was *The Persecuted, or Dramatic scenes Illustrative of the Present State of Hindoo Society in Calcutta* (1831) written by Reverend Krishna Mohan Banarjee. Though this play was never staged, this play was modern because of its theme of the living conditions of his time as social criticism forms an integral part of modernism. Another milestone on the road to the modernity of the Indian theatre was the ticketed show in 1853 when Vishnudas Bhave presented a Marathi show for native audiences at the Grant Road Theatre, Bombay. This novel adoption of the dramatic sale of tickets as a commercial strategy was new and landmark practice in the history of Indian theatre. Though financial acumen was missing in Bengal theatre, by the 1850s some serious playwrights started writing plays on socially relevant issues. Ramnarayan Tarakratna's *Kulini Kula Sarbaswa* (1857) and *Naba Natak* (1867) attacked the prevailing custom of polygamy. Michael Madhusudan Dutta satirized upper-class affectations in *Ekei ki Bale Sbhyata* (1865). During this time not only Bengal Theatre but theatre in Assam and Odisha as well as Hindi and Gujurati theatre became content-based. Assamese play writer Gunabhiram Barua's *Ram Navami* (1857) on child marriage and Hemachandra Barua's farcical *Kania Kirtan* (1861) on opium addiction were much to touch the intelligentsia of that time. Bharatendu Harischandra's *Vaidiki Himsa Himsa Na Bhavati* (Hindi, 1873) on violence sanctioned by faith;

Jagmohan Lala's *Babaji* (Odia, 1877) against religious chicanery and Ranchodbhai Dave's *Lalita Dukhdarshak* (Gujurati, 1878) on women's plight gave distinction to these genres. Tagore revolutionized the Indian stage in his choice of topics on the most sensitive theme in critiquing the majority religion. *Malini* (1896) introduced Buddhist liberalism as an alternative; *Achalayatan* (1911) attacked the orthodoxies of Hinduism; *Natir Puja* revisited Buddhism as a pacifist faith; *Chandalika* (1933) dealt with untouchability; *Tasher Desh* (1933) took a satirical dig at the Hinduism.

The year 1872 and 1876 were very crucial in the theatre history of modern India. Calcutta stage went professional in 1872 with the inaugural production of Dinabandhu Mitra's *Niladarpan*, about tyrannical indigo planters. The play was blatantly polemical and anti-British. Within four years the Bengali public theatre outraged the colonial master so much that they passed the Dramatic Performance Act in 1876 to curb its subversive, seditious, and provocatively patriotic tendencies. It is an unfortunate fact that this law still exists as most state government has not repealed it which hinders many to stage meaningful political play even in our generation.

During this time around 1870, a new kind of drama evolved. Professional troupes rapidly evolved a formula combining melodrama with the musical to capture the full house. Among them for the first time, a pan-Indian populist theatre emerged having a nationwide reach, influence of heterogeneous and fairly cosmopolitan called Company Theatre or Parsi Theatre. It was enormously successful all over India between the 1870s and 1930s. There was a greater degree of western influence in the use of architectural proscenium arch which created a significant shift in stage relations. The Parsi Theatre cannot claim for itself a classical lineage but of mixed parentage, "taking the stories from the Persian *Shah Nama*, and the fabulous *Arabian Nights*, from the singing and performing traditions of the nineteenth-century Indian courtesans, from a Victorian melodrama, from Shakespeare as performed by Western touring companies, European realistic narrative structures, British amateur theatricals, and from the visual regime of

the major Indian painter Raja Ravi Verma (1846-1906)” (Kapur 45). They had enacted their plays on various themes, both idealist and reformist like child marriage, female literacy, religious sectarianism, alcohol abuse, and many other related issues of importance of that time. Radheshyam Kathavachak’s *Bharat Mata* (1918), Aga Hashra Kashmiri’s *Bharat ki Pukar*, *Ankh Ka Nasha* (1924), and Narayan Prashad Betab’s *Hamari Bhool* and *Kumari Kinnari* (1928) were played at the congress session at Calcutta. Prithvi Raj Kapur’s *Deewar* (1945), and *Gaddar* (1947) were enormously popular not only in India but in Burma, Srilanka, Java, and Africa in the 1940s and 50s. All those above-mentioned plays were highly idealistic and nationalistic. The Parsi Theatre’s influence on acting, scenography, dramatic structure, and music is widespread even today.

Besides the Parsi musicals, two other important forms of musical theatre came into prominence around 1880. B. P. Kirloskar invented Marathi Sangitnataka on his *Sakuntal* (Pune, 1880) and Bengali Gitabhanaya peaked in Rabindranath Tagore’s debut, *Valmiki Pratibha* (Calcutta, 1881). Kirloskar mixed secular folk songs with devotional *kirtans*, Hindustani with Carnatic *ragas*, and it was delivered by his actors rather than the usual practice of a chorus. Tagore boldly refashioned classical ragas and even inserted snatches of Western music in a fully operatic creation. Bharatendu Harischandra composed *Andher Nagari* (1881), an innovative musical farce on society and politics.

The other turning point in modern theatre was seen in matters of gender-related to performance. Before 1795, the female roles were acted by impersonated men. Gradually, actresses had been inducted on the Bengal Stage in the Bengal Theatre. In 1872, Dadabhai Patel had imported singer-dancers from Hyderabad for his Parsi company in Bombay, but all belonged to the euphemistic category ‘of easy virtue’. Tagore broke a major barrier when an actress from a respectable family acted before the public in *Valmiki Pratibha*. For his *Mayar Khela* (1888), the distaff side of the Tagore household enacted all the characters, including those of men. In 1892,

Tagore treated the subject of women's sexuality in *Chitrangada*. While Bengal is moving forward, in most regions of India, however, female impersonation continued. 1993 in Marathi theatre, Natyamanwantar first introduced respected ladies as actresses in S.V. Vartak's *Andhyalanchi Shala*. Breaking the gender barrier on stage is another pre-eminent step forward for attaining modernity in Indian theatre.

There were many other major changes brought to modern theatre by Tagore. One such was concerning imaginative stagecraft modeled after Sanskrit aesthetics. In the seminal essay *Rangamancha* (1902), he rebelled against cultural imperialism while advocating the banishment of painted scenery. He made theatrical innovation by structuring play within a play in *Phalguni* (1915). He developed an individualistic natural style of acting which was followed by others at a later stage. The understanding he shared with Sisir Bhaduri, writes Anand Lal, "resulted in trendsetting approaches- for instance, possibly the first intentional occurrence of audience participation in modern Indian theatre, when the cast of Tagore's comedy *Shesh Raksha* (1927), directed by Bhaduri, asked spectators to join in the wedding celebrations on stage" (Lal 38). By the 1920s, as part of his scheme for the use of dance in theatre, Tagore brought gurus of classical dance form to Shantiniketan to incorporate choreographed sequences in his plays as early as *Natir Puja*. All through his dramatic career, he stressed 'performative hybridity' much to the discontent and ire of the purists and conservatives of his time. Bijon Bhattacharya's play *Nabanna* (Calcutta 1944) under the banner Indian People's Theatre Association radicalized Indian theatre by its direct thrust and stagecraft by using no scenery, nor even makeup.

Even after *Alam Ara* (1931), the first Indian talkie, though it was a big blow for many commercial and professional companies, it could not cripple the dramatic production. "In their place," writes Anand Lal, "A new theatre emerged, avowedly amateur to protect itself from compromising the demands of popular taste, and overtly socialistic in its politics" (Lal 39). Some of the theatre groups that sprung in the corresponding decades as recounted by Lal in his essay,

“A Historiography of Modern Indian Theatre”, are the following: the touring Prithvi Theatres (1944) led by Punjabi Hindustani actor Prithviraj Kapoor, the Dravida Kazhgam Party(1944) which provoked Tamil anti-caste sentiment through C. N. Annadurai’s play’s; Kerala Peoples Art Club (1952), Thoplili Bhasi’s *Ningalenne Communist Akki* in Malayalam; the Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Front(1953) had also utilized popular drama for socialistic purposes and Marathi Dalit Theatre, inaugurated by M. B. Chitni and the play *Yugyatra* was a huge success.

In the post-independence contemporary theatre, the so-called ‘group theatre’ became the mainstay. Along with this the Sangeet Natak Academy (1953) and later National School of Drama became two national institutions of great importance in the national policy on performing arts. In the next decades, there were so many experimentations that took place in the post-modern/postcolonial or contemporary drama as modern drama to many cease to exist in 1955 but the seeds of changes were sown in this period.

Post-Modern Theatre

Post-modern theatre built its empire on the rich soil of modern theatre along with two other theatre genres – Sanskrit and traditional. It is plural, democratic, and open to resistance and experimentation. Aparna Bhargava Dharwadker in her essay “The Critique of Western Modernity in Post-Independence India” writes “. . . ‘return to tradition’ in the post-independence period reestablishes forms and conventions that colonialism had disrupted and that this restoration is (or should be) the most significant event in contemporary theatre, both in itself and as the instrument of cultural decolonization” (71). It has many offshoots and is spread across the length and breadth of the country. But initially, it was most dominant in urban pockets of Bengal, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Delhi though post-modernity in drama breathed a new lease of life from various corners of the nation.

‘The Theatre of Roots’ is one such dramatic movement that made an earnest effort to stage and to write a drama on ancient literary dramatic tradition. It became important as an organizing principle through the late 1960s to 1980s. It was an unconventional theatre which was evolved “in a post-colonial scenario”, writes Anuradha Kapur, “where retrieval of those forms that were seen to be lost under the hegemonic pressures of the colonial regime is sought” (45). In this dramatic evolution, pre-modern forms that were traditional yet ‘uncontaminated’ by western influence were sought and used. It was deeply rooted in the regional theatrical soil in various regional languages but had a ‘pan-Indian character in idiom and communicability’ and was a part of the whole process of decolonization. The modern Indian theatre under the colonial influence dislocated itself from the traditional course, the Theatre of Roots, on the other hand, returned to the same tradition in search of roots or quest for identity. Directors like B. V. Karanth, K. N. Pannikar, and Ratan Thiyam had ‘a most meaningful encounter with tradition’ and with their work, they could change the colonial course to the great *Natyasastra* tradition. In brief, they are both traditional and avant-garde in their theme and treatment.

One of the most prominent features of ‘the theatre of roots’ is that it rejected the proscenium stage. This helped the actors to take a closer and more direct relationship with the spectator from various angles and sides. It manifested in different ways like the actors' entrance and exit through the auditorium, actors sitting in the auditorium and speaking the lines from there and some of the scenes such as processional scenes and crowd scenes were enacted from the auditorium itself. The other essence of the theatre of roots is stylization which had been the hallmark of Indian traditional theatre. According to Suresh Awasthi, “The stylized approach had brought about a revolutionary change in the art and techniques of the actor, and the whole process of creating and transforming the dramatic text into performance, or what in the semiotics of theatre has come to be known as performance text” (300). The number of staging signs, in realistic theatre, is kept very minimal whereas in the stylized new theatre, the impact of staging

signs is maximized and their numbers become more. It is because of this reason that when one takes thirty to forty minutes to read the plays like *Urubhangam*, *Madhyamaviyoga*, and *Karna-Bhar*, their performing time increases threefold. This transformation from the dramatic text into performance text is very much to the theory of *Natyasastra*. In Sanskrit aesthetics, drama as text is *Drishya-Kavya*, ‘visual poetry’ and the performance is *Prayoga*, ‘skillfully arranged’. Two texts are not the same; performance text is the new avatar of the dramatic text. The use of the actor’s body as the main source of theatrical language is another feature explicitly used by the directors of this tradition and so much importance is attached to this is that some prefer to call it ‘physical theatre’.

The good thing about post-colonial theatre is that so many experiments take place in the presentation of both form and content. Disillusionment and harsh social reality were the common themes exploited by most of the playwrights. Dharamveer Bharati, Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, and all other important playwrights during the 1950s and 60s brought a modernist approach while highlighting the dark social realism of their time. They moved into an ‘existential modern vocabulary by which they could expose societal corruptions. “This is done metaphorically in the plays of Bharati and realistically in Rakesh and Tendulkar” (Kapur 46). Bharati’s *Andha Yug (Blind Age)* is an allegorical presentation exposing self divisions of the characters while Tendulkar depicts the hypocrisy of the Indian middle class.

The emergence of women directors in the last decade of the twentieth century is a new development in the dramatic scene that brought ‘the question of gender on the stage’ and shifted the debate towards ‘new forms and new subjectivities’ even more forcefully. Their works questioned the invisibility, in most cases, of gender-related subjects till then and tried to ‘visibilize’ their experience in a way that displaced the narrative strategy of their time. In the words of Anuradha Kapur in her essay, “Reassembling the Modern: An Indian Theatre Map since Independence” brings out how women directors like Neelam Man Singh Chowdhury and

Anamika Haksar's work is frequently circular, refusing resolution, character, personality, and gender are crossing society's artificially maintained boundaries of roles(51). Neelam Man Singh Chowdhury, in her theatre company in Chandigarh, has a mix of both urban and non-urban performers. The non-urban performers are called 'Naqqals', female impersonators who sing, dance, and do stand-up comedy, mimicry, and balladeering. The other performers are from cities, well-educated, and products of drama schools and universities. Through this tactful mixture of performers, Singh manages to construct before the eyes of the spectators folk tradition in collision with the contemporary Indian theatre. In this way, she destabilized gender representations" (Kapur 52). She produced three plays - *Yerma*, *Madwoman*, and *Fida* but she did not pin down women to any readymade interpretation. Amal Allan's work also finds destabilizing or deconstructing gender norms. In her production of *Himmat Mai*, she shifted and restructured the elements of gender by casting the distinguished actor Manohar Singh in the part of Mother Courage/ Himmat Mai.

The post-independence Indian theatre is blessed with a constellation of dramatic persona in the field of playwriting and directing and acting like E. Alkazi, B.V. Karanth, K.M.Panikar, Nissim Ezekiel, Dharamveer Bharati, Rattan Thiyam, Habib Tanvir, Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Dattani, Mohan Rakesh, Girish Karnad, Asif Currimbhoy, Badal Sircar, Gurucharan Das, Pratap Sharma, Manoranjan Das. Many of them are multifaceted. I am incorporating some of their contributions to the growth of Indian theatre.

E. Alkazi made a significant contribution to Indian theatre from the early 1960s to the late 1970s. He put in place a modernist realist idiom into Hindi theatre which influenced the region and across the language. He staged Mohan Rakesh's *Ashadh Ka Ek Din* (One Day in Ashadh) and Dharamveer Bharati's *Andha Yug* with a realist exactitude. He was known for his architectural discipline on stage limited to the precise cultural context indicated in the play quite

different from the decorative stagecraft of Parsi Theatre or the open improvisatory staging popularized by B.V. Karanth.

B.V. Karanth, the celebrated director and music composer tried to put forward ‘a counter-narrative to realism’. He borrowed a great variety of material both for his repertoire of movements and musical modes not only from Natyashastra and Parsi Theatre but from many other traditional sources. He used music, mime, and dances both in stylized and naturalistic modes of acting. “His creating performance text is innovative and improvisatory. He places great emphasis on theatricality in his productions and there is a strong sense of playfulness of his actors” (Awasthi 306). *Andher Nagari*, a nineteenth-century Hindi Prahasana by Bharatendu Harischandra was produced by Karanth in 1979 by employing new stagecraft. Karanth used music to sustain and enhance the theatricality of a performance, more functional and organic to be precise. It was integrated into the actor’s gaits, movements, and physical acting. He remodeled traditional texts and recycled traditional performance vocabularies. In the words of Anuradha Kapur, “Karanth’s engagement with theatre language, his interest in a wide variety of performance protocols, is a modernist commitment to reconditioning traditional vocabularies for contemporary use” (48).

Ratan Thiyam is a well-known face of the theatre of roots movement in Indian theatre. He writes and stages the plays in ancient dramatic tradition. He set up a theatre group in Imphal named, Chorus Repertory Theatre in 1976. His production of Ajneya’s *Uttar Priyadarshi* was staged at the Bharat Rang Mahotsav in 1999. His presentation of Kalidasa’s epic poem *Ritusamharam* was highly appreciated. His plays bring forth societal concerns and spiritual yearnings amid political chaos in the modern world. His plays infuse rationalized and multifaceted analyses of myriad perspectives. Thiyam is also known for his use of traditional martial arts, of Thang-Ta in his plays, such as in *Urubhangam (Broken Thigh)*, of Sanskrit playwright Bhasa itself based on an episode from the *Mahabharat*, which along with

Chakravyuh (Army Formation) is considered one of his finest works. His production of *Andha Yug (The Blind Age)*, by Dharamvir Bharati, is known for creating an intense and intimate experience, around the epochal theme, was famously staged in an open-air performance, at Tonga, Japan, on 5 August 1994, a day before the forty-ninth anniversary of Atomic Holocaust in Hiroshima. *Impthal Impthal*, *Chakravyuha (Army Formation)*, *Chinglon Mapan Tampak Ama (Nine Hills One Valley)*, and *Wahoudok (Prologue)* are written and produced by the author.

Mohan Rakesh was one of the pioneers of the *Nai Kahani* ("New Story") literary movement of Hindi literature in the 1950s. He wrote the first modern Hindi play, *Ashadh Ka Ek Din (One Day in Aashad)* (1958). *Adhe Adhure (The Incomplete Ones)*, *Lahron Ke Rajhans (Swans of Waves)*, *Pair Tale Ki Zameen (The Ground Below the Feet)* are other major contributions of Mohan Rakesh. *Ashadh Ka Ek Din (One Day in Aashad)* is centered on Kalidasa's life, sometime in the 100BCE-400CE period. It is a story of a love triangle and betrayal. The plot revolves around Kalidasa, the celebrated poet of Ujjain, Mallika, the beloved of Kalidasa, and Priyangumanjari, the wife of Kalidasa. *Adhe Adhure (The Incomplete Ones)* is the second most successful theatric contribution to Hindi Theatre. The protagonist Savitri, a middle-aged working woman is dissatisfied with her circumstances as she has an unemployed son, a promiscuous teen daughter, and a husband who has failed to provide her emotional and financial security. Mohan Rakesh has attempted to describe and dramatize the socio-economic situation of a middle-class family which is caught in the web of financial setbacks which render the head of the family almost incapacitated to do anything. She seeks to fulfill herself in relationships outside marriage, only to realize that men are the same beneath different faces. Mohan Rakesh's portrayal of Savitri is gripping as she is caught between her destiny and circumstances.

Habib Tanvir was one of the most popular Indian theatre artists in Hindi and Urdu. He was the writer of plays such as *Agra Bazar* (1954) and *Charandas Chor* (1975). He was most known for his work with Chhattisgarhi tribals, at the Naya Theatre, a theatre company he founded in 1959 in Bhopal. For him, true theatre of the people existed in the villages, which he strived to bring to the urban educated. The play, *Carandas Chor* is his masterpiece. Charan Das is a figure of the common man who is capable of virtues rare in an unjust, class-based society, a man who lives up and dies for his word. It is conceived in terms of contradictions and paradoxes – how truth and lie coexist simultaneously in a man. *Agra Bazar*, based on the life of plebeian poet Nazir Akbarabadi, is located in the heart of Agra's marketplace. Staged by Tanvir, *Agra Bazar* became a brilliant spectacle, gently stressing that literature and poetry are the prerogative of the masses, not just a rarefied few. It revolves around an invented brief and simple story. As the street vendors wait for people to buy their ware, we see them engaged in the ordinary business of every day: talking, grumbling, bickering, slowly fanning their wares with grimy towels to even, on occasion, and breaking into a fist-fight.

Vijay Tendulkar was a Marathi playwright. Two of his notable plays are *Shanta! Court Chalu Aahe (In Silence! The Court is in Session)* (1967) and *Ghashiram Kotwal* (1972). Many of Tendulkar's plays are inspired by real-life incidents or social upheavals, which provide clear light on harsh realities. In 1972, Tendulkar wrote his most acclaimed play, *Ghashiram Kotwal* (Officer Ghashiram), which dealt with political violence. The play is a political satire. It is designed as a musical drama and is set in 18th century Pune. It combined both traditional Marathi folk music and folk performances with contemporary theatre techniques, thereby creating a new paradigm for Marathi theatre. Ghashiram Kotwal is a story of the conflict between Ghashiram Savaldas, a North-Indian Brahman from Kanauj, and Nana Phadnavis, Chief Minister of the Peshwas in Maharashtra. Even the play may be considered a tragedy of power

and the conflict between Ghashiram and Nana can be seen as the conflict between power and powerlessness. *In Silence! The Court is in Session*, Tendulkar has depicted the difficulty of a young woman, who is a victim of a male-dominated society. Tendulkar has criticized the follies prevailing in society. The play carries all the vitalities of contemporary life. It focuses on the human mind and detects the ugliness in it.

Mahesh Elkunchwar is a prominent playwright of Marathi theatre along with Vijay Tendulkar and Satish Alekar. He has written plays in varied forms ranging from realistic to symbolic and expressionist to the absurd theatre. His *Old Stone Mansion* exposes the truth behind the stone walls of feudal mansions in the rural parts of India. He wrote two more plays namely *Pond* and *Apocalypse* which together are called Wada Trilogy. The play *Atmakatha (Autobiography)* shows that truth has no everlasting permanence and is an individual construct of a specific moment and situation. *Desire in the Rock* is a play of raw passion exploring the theme of incest. He had unraveled many a topic which is untouched by other playwrights due to its unperformable subject matter.

Badal Sircar was an influential Indian dramatist known for his anti-establishment plays during the Naxalite movement in the 1970s and for taking theatre out of the proscenium and into the public arena, when he founded his own theatre company, *Shatabdi* in 1976. He wrote more than fifty plays of which *Evam Indrajit*, *Basi Khabar*, and *Saari Raat* are well-known literary pieces, pioneering figures in Street Theatre as well as in experimental and contemporary Bengali Theater with his egalitarian "Third Theatre". Badal Sircar's *Evam Indrajit* went on to become an expression of the modern Indian situation with youngsters fortified in many ways than their ancestors.

Girsh Karnad is the most notable playwright of his time who has not only revived the Kannad theatre but made a huge impact on the national scene. He has used myth for present-day

consumption. His first play *Yayati* was taken from the Mahabharata and became a huge success when he was in his twenties. The other plays of Karnad are *Hayavadana*, *Nagamandala*, *The Fire and the Rain*, *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan*, and *Bali: The Sacrifice*. *The Fire and the Rain* is a multilayered enigmatic play that questions the basic human relationship against an awesome backdrop of patriarchal society. *Hayavadana* deals with a tragic theme and tries to establish a synthesis of head body dichotomy. It revolves around three characters namely Kapila, Padmini, and Devadutta. In *Tughlaq*, he has portrayed human personality in the most complex manner.

Mahesh Dattani is the only prominent Indian dramatist who has made English his native tongue. *Tara* and *Dance Like a Man* are his two major contributions. The play *Tara* is a comment on the predicament of women and dramatizes the complexities of the social setup. The play *Dance Like a Man* is one of the most wonderful dramatic creations which focuses on a dancing couple. He dealt with many complex subjects of the modern era like gender identity and discrimination, communal tensions, and the importance of human values in society.

Indian Drama has a rich literary legacy to carry forward. Modern-day playwrights like Paresh Mokashi, Sachin Kundalkar, Vikram Kapadia, Abhishek Majumdar, Annie Zaidi, Manav Kaul, and Neel Chaudhuri are some of the names achieving great feet in this field. The diverse language and literary backgrounds of different regions of India are adding newness to the already existing plurality of this medium. Interpersonal relationships, socio-economic-religious issues, social prejudices, self-awareness, and different facets of human life are being explored by these young playwrights of today. The foundation of Indian drama is strongly laid down and it will continue to grow with all its experimentation to reach newer heights.

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Chapter Two

Rasa and Dhvani: The Era and Aura

Rasa

The *rasa* is the oldest theory in Indian literary tradition. Though the seeds of *rasa* can be traced from Valmiki, the first poet of Sanskrit, it was Bharata who propounded it in *Natyasastra* as an independent theory along with many other practices of dramaturgy. It has sprinkled a variety of literary terminology and dominated the entire discussion in the field of literature till the eleventh century and even thereafter in patches in all Indian languages. Its influence becomes far and wide, not only confined to drama or other literary genres but also to music, dance, and painting. It is considered the very essence of good writing and thus, the soul of literature. “The theory of *rasa* primarily deals with the human emotions of varied nature, and how they are depicted, inferred, and transmitted through a work of art. It holds that literature is essentially about life (simulated or imagined) and its emotions” (Pattanaik 1). *Rasa* theory is considerate of the entire literary process from the mind of the artist to the heart of the perceiver who savours *rasa*. Priyadarshi Pattanaik further writes in his *Rasa in Aesthetics* that it has ‘a tremendous linguistic potential, for emotion cannot ever be shown or communicated directly. It can only be suggested (*dhvani*) through words or their equivalents’ (2).

‘*Rasa*’ as a word has a cloud of meanings due to its rich association with varied things and contexts from the Vedic period onwards. In Rig-Veda, it meant water, soma juice, and cow’s milk. In Atharva-Veda, its meaning was extended to the ‘sap of the grain’ and ‘savour’ or ‘taste’. The Ayurveda recognized six *rasas* or chief constituents in any medicine. *Rasayan Shastra* (Chemistry) also moved around the pivot of mercury or *rasa*. In the Upanishads, its use became less concrete. The word ‘*rasa*’ acquired a more filtered and ephemeral meaning than before. The meaning of *rasa* developed from the particular to the universal. Here *rasa* is used in an entirely new way. The concrete meaning existed, but a more abstract use was slowly making its presence

felt. Its signification as the essential element in concrete terms like grain, water, or milk gives way to an abstract idea as ‘essential element’ or ‘essence’. “In the Taittiriya and the Maitreya Upanishads a great step forward was taken by the fusion of *rasa* as essence with a new meaning – the highest state of joy, an expression of the nature of the Supreme Being as reflected in the “self-luminous consciousness of the Upanishadic seer” (Anand 385). *Natyasastra* retained all these meanings in its shadow but more is the abstract aesthetic interpretation.

Rasa Theory among Other Indian Theories

Natyasastra of Bharata (written somewhere between the second century BC and the fourth century AD) can be considered the first extant work that deals with poetics in Indian tradition. Prior to it, we find no treatise that discusses poetics in any comprehensive manner. Apart from structuring a play, music, dances, acting techniques, costumes, make-ups, Bharata again and again, emphasizes that drama must have the essential element - *rasa* which is the soul of any literary text. Thus according to him, *rasa* is the aesthetic objective of dramatic representation.

During the period that intervened between Bharata and Anandavardhana (9th century), the individuality of the science of literary criticism became fully recognized, and speculations on the distinctive characteristics of poetic language appear to have been abundant. In this plethora of development, the theory of *Rasa* gained little favor among the literary critics of this period, for the prevailing tendency of that time was to discover the nature of poetic form, to formulate the various decorative devices called *Alankaras* or figures of speech and qualities of the style known as *Guna* or *Riti*, and to hail one or the other of these three as the very life of the poetry. However, these critics were not insensitive to the sweetness of *rasa*, but in their fondness for their own favorite theories, they relegated the *rasa* to some corner and gave it indeed a disproportionately small place among the numerous *alankaras* and *gunas*. But the poets of this period seem to be fully alive to the importance of the *rasa* and this could easily be made out from their occasional reflections on poetry.

After *Natyasastra*, we don't have any extant work until we come to Bhamaha. Towards the seventh century, in his *Kavyalankara*, Bhamaha highlights *alankaras* as a separate school. His attitude to the *rasa* theory is distinctly that of an exponent of a rival school of criticism. He who holds that *alankaras* exhaust the chief characteristics of poetry naturally brings *rasa* also under an *alankara* called 'rasavad'. In the eighth-century Dandin wrote *Kavyadarsa*, the first work on what later developed into the *guna-riti* theory. Though Dandin was strongly influenced by Bhamah and the *Alankara* School, his emphasis was on *marga* (synonymous to *riti* used by Vamana) which broadly means diction or style. He holds that the beautiful collocation of words and ideas is the chief feature of poetry. According to him, poetic writing can be divided into two categories- *svarabhakti* (plain and direct description) and *vakrokti* (indirect or figurative language). For him, style or diction is the essence of the poetry of which *rasa* is one of the marks of excellence of diction or style (*guna*).

The *guna-riti* school was later developed in the hands of Vamana, a contemporary of Udbhata. He defines *riti* as that which separates poetic speech from ordinary speech. To him, poetry is the presentation of the 'beautiful' and the perception of the 'beautiful' gives pleasure to the critic. This beauty in poetry is attained through the absence of faults and the presence of *gunas* and *alankaras*. Elaborating on *gunas*, he distinguished between *sabdagunas*, or the skillful use of words, and *arthagunas*, or qualities of good writing or style. For him, *rasa* is a mere figure. Udbhata appears to have been a dual personality in that he was a follower of the two opposing schools represented by Bhamah and Bharata. Though like Bhamah, he treats the *rasa* under *alankaras*, he deals with them in greater detail and displays an intimate knowledge of the factors in the realization of *rasa*.

It was sometime during the ninth century come to prominence with *Dhvanyaloka* by Anandavardhana. In it, he made *rasa* the pivotal point around which his *dhvani* (suggestion) theory revolves. The several expressed parts in literature, more so in a poem, reveal the unexpressed deeper sense. Interestingly, he combines *rasa* with the suggestion to call it *rasa*

dhvani. Thus the right combination of suggestions to evoke an aesthetic mood is to be the aim of poetry. This combination of *rasa* and *dhvani* is a happy one since an emotion or aesthetic state (*rasa*) cannot be expressed directly through words, but can only be suggested.

Abhinavagupta's *Abhinavabharati* and *Dhvanyaloka Locana* are two path-breaking critical works of all time on *rasa* and *dhvani*. His aesthetics is a culmination that includes Indian dramaturgy, rhetoric, linguistics, psychology, and spirituality. According to him, *rasa* is not just an emotional response to artistic stimuli but the inner organizing principle of a distinct mode of appreciation. He discusses the *Rasa* Theory of Bharata adding his own theory. He has explained *sthayi bhavas* as those that are latent in human beings. He terms *rasa* as a process. It is *aprameya*, an unknowable entity and transcendental. It is in his hand that *rasa* becomes the subject of much deliberation.

Poet Critics of this period

Poet-critics from Kalidasa to Vikramaditya were quite friendly to the *Rasa* School first represented by Valmiki and Bharata. The outstanding figures, who were extreme enthusiasts of *rasa*, were Pravarasena, Kalidasa, and Bhavabhuti. Pravarasena, who was certainly an early poet, suggests that *rasa* could be developed through *Abhinaya* and that the poetic theme should be enlivened through the delineation of *rasa*. Kalidasa extols the histrionic art through which the eight *rasas* have to be developed. Among the *rasas*, *Sringara* is his favourite, and even here *vipralambha* or the union of lovers after a long separation is the most delectable. He is at his best in the delineation of *sringara* (erotic), but equally at home in *karuna* (compassionate) and *vira* (heroic).

Bhavabhuti is an enthusiastic follower of Valmiki and the School of *Rasa*. "According to him, a dramatist should aim at the delineation of a particular *rasa* or a combination of *rasas*, and he should so choose the incidents and characters as would lend to their development" (A Sankaran 42). He shows his expertise in the combination of allied *rasas* and even contrary *rasas* in his play *Malatimadhava*.

In the Tiger incident in the *Malatīmādhava*, Vira is introduced to aid the development of Sringara. He dexterously makes even Bibhatsa aid the progress of love . There the change from Sringar to Bibhatsa is gradually effected without a hitch through the intervention of Adbhuta. The introduction of the disgusting scene of Madhava’s selling fish in the crematory, in the course of development of love, should not be treated as being rude and out of taste, because the change of Rasa is effected naturally; and on the ruins of Bibhatsa emerges love rendered pure and more intense through experience of an ordeal. Bhavabhuti also shows how the change from bibhatsa to sringar , is skillfully brought about through the intervention of other Rasas – Bhayanaka, Karuna Adbhuta, Raudra and Harsa – all of them developed only to a small extent and made ancillary to the main Sringar” (Sankaran 42).

He emphasizes *karuna rasa* as the predominant *rasa* in drama as delineated in his *Uttararmacarita*.

Doctrine of Rasa

At the threshold of the development of the theory of *rasa* stands Valmiki, the father of classical Sanskrit poetry, an incident in whose life, related in the second chapter of the *Ramayana’s Bala Kanda* that reveals the earliest germs of the conception of *rasa*. Looking at the death of the Krauncha male bird being hit by an arrow and the bereaved female mate, he was overpowered by the feeling of pity that an exquisite and melodious *sloka* (*mainishad... Kamamohitam*) came out of him spontaneously (*Balakanda* 1.2.15). Valmiki was struck with wonder and joy at this first involuntary emanation of first measured poetry. In the later years, Anandavardhana believed the embryo of Rasa theory contained in this sloka of pathos which was developed later. Anadavardhana’s analysis was translated and interpreted by A Sankaran who narrates thus:

The wallowing of the dying bird in a pool of blood and the wailing of the surviving female to which the sage was witness were transported from the sphere of his perceptual

experience to that of his imagination and presented there as the cause (*Vibhava*) and the ensuant (*Anubhava*) that stirred up his instinct of pathos to its depths and developed it to that climax, when he reached a still mental condition with an intense feeling of pathos, in which his personality was lost, resulting in his having only a sense of joy; and this pleasant feeling of pathos that overpowered him translated itself spontaneously into the form of *sloka* 'manishad.' (Sankaran 6)

The doctrine of *rasa* emerges in a concrete shape in the *Natyasastra* of Bharata. His theory of *rasa* is an earnest attempt to indicate the character of the emotional effect of the drama, or it successfully explains the rise and the nature of the 'aesthetic pleasure' that a responsive audience experiences while witnessing the skillful enactment of play. The *Natyasastra* says that wisdom, dance, music, and *rasa* are the four primary constituents of drama. In the sixth chapter of *Natyashastra*, Bharata deals elaborately with *rasa*. To Bharata, "For without *rasa* no topic (of drama) can appeal (to the mind of the spectator)" (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. 1 46). In the relation to drama, *rasa* is indispensable, for without it nothing 'can appeal'. If we go by the above-mentioned sentence, if there can be no appeal without *rasa*, a work of art is incomplete and unfulfilled. Then the question arises to whom should it appeal? The obvious answer would be to the spectator. And to appeal, the topic must have *rasa*. *Rasa*, in this sense, resides in the text. And a topic or text will appeal to the audience only through an act of communication and if *rasa* is indispensable, it would imply that *rasa* must also be transmitted to the audience. And it is only by then *rasa* will provide aesthetic delight.

It was briefly stated by Bharata in his *Natyasastra* that the well-known aphorism '*vibhabanubhava vyabhicharisanyogyat rasanispati*' (Masson and Patwardhan, 46) means *rasa* is realized by the union of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vybhicaribhava*. A Sankaran in his book, *Some aspects of Literary Criticism in Sanskrit* analyses the terms as follows:

Vibhavas are certain causes or mainsprings of emotions like love, pathos etc. They are the heroes and the excitants of love etc., like the spring season, pleasure garden, fragrance

and moonlight etc. Anubhavas are the visible effects or the consequents of the searching of the hearts of the heroes. They are quickly moving eyebrows, sidelong glances etc. Vyabharibhavas are transitory or evanescent emotions that tend only to develop the main sentiment, such as anxiety, anger, etc.,- the path of love is never smooth. Through a harmonious blending and representation of appropriate Vibhavas, Anubhavas, and Vyabharibhavas, there arises in the audience a certain climax of emotion, invariably accompanied by a thrill of sense of joy, and this is Rasa or aesthetic pleasure. (Sankaran 15)

He has elaborated with one concrete example. Skilled actors represent Dusyanta and Sakuntala in Kalidas's *Abhigyanasakuntalam*. Their first meeting in the pleasant, beautiful groves of the hermitage becomes *vibhava*. Each, struck with the rapturous beauty of the other, casts eager, longing looks. At forced parting, Sakuntala finds an excuse to steal a glance at her lover and this glance becomes *anubhava*. In their extreme diffidence and anxiety, they pine away, one for the other. These anxieties are *vyabharibhava*. When all these are represented aided by poetry, music, and other histrionic devices, - which Bharata calls *Natyadharmi*- the deep-seated instinctive impression of love (*sthayibhava*) is kindled in the mind of the audience and developed to that climax when through complete imaginative sympathy with the situation, the audience all differences of person, time and place, this climax of emotion reveals itself in a sort of blissful consciousness. This bliss is *rasa*.

The Bhavas

Bharata says that the drama renders the *bhavas* of all three worlds. "The *bhavas* bring about poetic contents (*kavyartha*) through words, physical gestures and movements, and psychological representations; hence the name *bhavas*' ' (Devya 8-9). *Bhavas* are those elements that make the essence of literature, *rasa*. *Bhava* includes *sthayi*, *vibhava*, *anubhava*, *vyabhichari*, and *sattvika bhavas*. But Bharata contracted the meaning of *bhava* by speaking of the *bhavas* as they included only three varieties: eight *sthayins*, thirty three *vyabharins*, and eight *sattvik*

bhavas. Thus, there are forty-nine *bhavas* capable of manifesting the *rasa*. The mental states (*sattvika bhavas*) are called *bhavas* for two reasons. One because they bring *rasa* into being and make it an accomplished fact by means of three types of acting, ‘*vacika*’, ‘*angika*’ and ‘*sattvika*’, two because they pervade and intensely affect the mind of the spectators. *Bhava* means that which causes something to be (‘*bhaavana*’) and also that which affects (‘*vaasana*’). We can take *bhava* that pervades the minds of the people. *Bhavas*, on the one hand, means all the elements having the energy or power to manifest *rasa* and on the other, they stand for emotions and moods.

The *Sthayibhava*

Sthayibhava does not figure in Bharata’s definition. However, it is necessary for us to elucidate it for a better understanding of *rasa* theory. The *sthayibhavas* are the nature of *vasana* or *samskara*. “Every human being is born with a set of instinctual propensities inherited from earlier generations, and deposited on the bed of his consciousness” (Thampi, 311).

S.N. Das Gupta makes a subtle distinction between *vasana* and *samskara*:

(Samskara) means the impressions (which exist subconsciously in the minds) of the objects experienced. All our experiences whether cognitive, emotional or conative exist in a subconscious state may under subtle conditions be reproduced as memory (*smriti*). The word *vasana* . . . comes from the root ‘*vas*’ to stay. It is often loosely used in the sense of *samskara* But *vasana* generally refers to the tendencies of the past lives most of which lie dormant in the mind. Only those appear which find scope in this life. (Seturaman 312)

These *samskaras* and *vasanas* are organized around what we call emotions. Emotions are related to typical, recurrent, and universal situations and generate definable modes of conduct. They are called *sthayi* (permanent) because they always remain embedded in human organisms. It is generally agreed that there are nine such emotions possessed by all human beings:

In fact, on the basis of the principle that all beings ‘hate to be in contact with pain and are eager to taste pleasure,’ everyone is pervaded by sexual desires (Delight); believes himself superior to others, whom he is thus led to deride (Laughter); grieves when he is forced to deride (Laughter); gets angry against the causes of such separation (Anger); gets frightened when he finds himself powerless (Fear); but still is desirous of overcoming the danger which threatens him (Heroism); is attacked, when judging a thing to be displeasing, by a sense of revulsion directed just towards this ugly object (Disgust); wonders at the sight of extraordinary deeds done by himself or others (Astonishment); and, lastly, is desirous of abandoning certain things (Serenity) (Seturaman 312).

It is true that in some men some emotions predominate and in others certain other emotions, but all are capable of experiencing these emotional states. In poetic experience the latent emotional traces are aroused of some length, however, complex it may be, a single emotion will predominate over others. Usually, this emotion will be associated with the attitude and destiny of the characters.

Abhinavagupta says that *sthayibhavas* are like many-colored strings which remain sparsely tied the *vyabharibhavas* having their parallels in stones of different hues. Just as the color of the string reflects itself on the stones, the *sthayibhavas* reflect themselves on the *vyabharibhavas*. As the stones of different shades tinge intervening threads with their attractive hues similarly *vyabharibhavas* in their turn influence *sthayibhavas* and render them relishable.

The Vyabharibhavas

Bharata has enumerated thirty-three *vyabharibhavas* (transient moods) and eight *sattvik bhavas* (mental states). According to *Natyastra*, “the *vyabharins* are so called because they (the transient emotional states) move (*caranti*) prominently towards (*abhi: abhimukhyena*) creating the poetic sentiments in a variety of ways. Equipped with the acting based on speech, body, and concentrated mind, these lead or carry the spectator, in actually dramatic performance,

to the poetic sentiments; hence they are called *vyabhicarins*” (Devy 12). They do not attain the intensity of emotions; nor do they last long. They do not have any independent status. They are concomitant moods that rise with well-defined emotions and subside with them. In short, they are weak, mild, temporary, and dependent. But the permanent emotions cannot be expressed in literature without depicting these transient emotional moods. The *sthayins* are very subtle; they manifest themselves through these moods. Love is manifested in the agent’s longing or joy or bashfulness. One of the reasons why Bharata did not include *sthayi* in his definition of *rasa* may be that *sthayi* being subtle cannot be directly expressed and can only be indirectly depicted with the help of *vyabhicarins*. We should remember that in listing the *bhavas*, Bharata’s intention was not to exhaust the moods but only to give practical instructions to the producers and the actors as to how real-life situations could be represented on the stage.

The *Vibhava* and the *Anubhava*

Emotions and moods can be best expressed in literature only through images, characters, and their actions. In real life, some stimuli are necessary to cause emotions to arise in our hearts. These stimuli may be material, existing in the environment, or ideal, existing in the mind itself. These human and environmental stimuli, when described in drama or any literature for that matter, are called *vibhavas*. *Vibhava*, *karana* (cause), *nimitta* (instrument), *hetu* (reason) are synonyms. The term ‘*vibhava*’ is translated as ‘determinant’ or ‘stimulant’ because *vibhavas* determine or stimulate the emotions and moods to arouse the reader. They can be described as the objective correlative of the *rasa* (Sethuraman 3). They are called *vibhavas* because they make emotions known to us in a special way. It represents the external factors of the experience. The word *vibhava* stands for the dramatic situation. It is not the cause, but only a medium through which the emotion arises in the actor. *Vibhava* is represented as having two aspects one is ‘*alambana*’, the object which is responsible for the arousal of emotion or that on which the emotion depends for its very being. The other is ‘*uddipana*’, the environment, the entire surrounding which enhances the emotive effect of the focal point.

Anubhavas are those effects that are found on the characters consequent upon their emotional agitations. Anger causes blood to rush into the face, and the agent may curse or strike the victim of his anger. The *anubhavas* are so-called because what is represented is made to be felt, experienced (*anubhavayati*) by us. They make it possible for us to immerse ourselves in the emotions evoked. This process of immersion is called *anubhavanam* and that which causes this process is called *anubhava*. In short, they are the signs of emotions in the characters. Some of the consequents (*anubhavas*) may be deliberate (e.g., cursing, thrashing); others may be involuntary (blushing, sweating, etc). The latter has a special technical term: *sattvikbhavas*. *Sattva* is the internal character or the inner essence of the mind. Bharata felt that to create an impression of verisimilitude the actors must enact sweating, blushing, etc., on the stage. These involuntary consequents are intimately related to moods and emotions; therefore they are considered to be of the nature of *vyabharibhavas*. Thus the *sattvikbhavas* have a dual character: they can be subsumed under both *anubhavas* (consequents) and *vyabharins* (transient moods).

Numbers of *Rasa* and Their Relationship

There are some controversies over the number of *rasa* in Indian Aesthetics. Most scholars agree that there are eight *rasas* in *Natyasastra* and the ninth one, the *santa rasa*, is a later addition. Abhinavagupta hinted that Bharata was aware of the ninth *rasa* and that all other *rasas* lead to *santa rasa*. The eight *rasas* are erotic (*sringara*), comic (*hasya*), compassionate (*karuna*), furious (*raudra*), heroic (*vira*), terrifying (*bhayanaka*), disgusting (*bibhatsa*), and awesome (*adbhuta*). As all the *rasas* deal with emotion, they are very common. Thus there are many overlapping yet they hold on to their own identities. *Natyasastra* says: “The comic aesthetic experience comes from the erotic. The compassionate comes from the furious; the awesome comes from the heroic and terrible from the disgusting” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. i, 48). From this, it is very evident that *rasa* is of two types: primary and secondary. Secondary *rasas*

are derived from the primary *rasas*. Primary *rasas* include *sringar*, *raudra*, *vira* and *bibhatsa* and the secondary *rasa* are *hasya*, *karuna*, *adbhuta* and *bhayanaka*.

It gives a picture of how two different groups of *rasas* capable of drawing out two broad aspects of human life. Abhinavagupta terms them “*Shukhatmaka* (which, in the work lead to happiness), *Dukhatmaka* (those which lead to sorrow)” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. I, 76). It tells the fact that while in Greek drama, tragedy does not admit the possibility of comedy and vice versa, in Indian drama, the possibility of some elements being together in the same drama is admissible.

A Detailed Analysis of *Rasa*

Sringara Rasa

Sringara or the erotic *rasa* occupies the foremost position as it is the most delectable of all sentiments of human disposition. It is the highest and the best expression of human nature, common to children and the old. The erotic sentiment proceeds from the permanent mood of love (*rati*). In Indian literature, eroticism is more explicit. In Indian literature, violence in love, unnatural love (incest, homosexuality, etc.), and unnatural separation are rare than in the west. *Sringara* or the erotic *rasa* in *Natyasastra* has been broadly divided into two categories: *sambhoga sringara* or love in union and *vipralambha sringara* or love in separation.

Love-in-union

On *Sambhoga sringara* or love-in Union, in *Natyasastra*, it has been said that: “Of the various *rasas*, the erotic one arises from the *sthayibhava* of love. Whatever in the ordinary world is bright, pure (*medhya*), shining or beautiful is associated with love ...” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. i, 49). Love is the most dominant emotion that elicits dominant responses. Love in union is always associated with optimism that eventually leads to happiness. Mutuality in love is given priority in the Indian tradition of love. “Since *sringara* is always supposed to lead to

love in union, (for love-in-Separation finally leads to the reunion), ‘bright’, ‘pure’, ‘shining’ etc., are associated with it” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. II, 77).

The causes of *sringara*

The sources of *sringara* are listed thus: “It has for its (*alambana*) - *vibhavas* young men and women who are noble born” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol.I, 49). What gives rise to or causes love (the *vibhavas*) are chiefly men and women. Man is the cause of love in woman and woman is the cause of love in man. In other words, they are both the source and the manifestation of love. Youth is emphasized since it is them where passion rules. After marriage (due to togetherness) love loses its insecurity, uncertainty, and thus much of its interesting possibilities. And as deviant love (love for someone else’s wife etc.) is considered immoral, it does not get much scope here. But when we look at Sanskrit literature, we have many examples of deviant love. Even though some later aesthetician objects (especially Abhinavagupta), illicit love is found a place in Sanskrit literature. It arises from (*uddipana*)- *vibhavas* such as a representation of “the seasons, garlands, ointments, ornaments, people dear to one, objects of the senses, fine homes, love-making, going to gardens (and there) experiencing, listening to and seeing games, sexual play and so forth” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. i, 49). Does this mean that evil, disgusting, lowly, etc., cannot be associated with love? For one thing, if love is one-sided and forcible, it will give rise to disgust. What is important in *sringara rasa* is the mutual response. Abhinavagupta emphasizes the aspect of union where two become one.

The Effects and Consequences of *Sringara*

The *anubhavas* or effects (consequences) of *sringara* are as follows: “It should be acted out by such *anubhavas* as a skillful (use) of the eyes, frowning and side glances, flirtatious movements (*lalita*), gentle body movements (*aṅgahara*) and soft speech” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. i, 49).

These are the usual and age-old tools for the expression of love in almost all countries in the world. But it is important to note that according to *Natyasastra*, the accompanying transitory emotions that do not belong to love are laziness, violence, and disgust. It is important to note that there is the possibility of violence in love arising out of jealousy, anger, and sexual excitement.

The important ideas contained in *sringara* are mutual enjoyment and complete happiness in a union. Union is where two things merge into one. ‘Complete happiness’ is also a very significant term, for ‘complete’ means where there are no imperfections or deficiencies. A man and a woman can be completely happy only when there is nothing dividing them, nothing separating them – when what they share is whole. Thus, the possibility of reaching *santa rasa* is indicated. It also transcends physical love and is of a metaphysical nature.

Love in separation

Though in love-in Separation, the final act is that of consummation, it might throw some light on the possibilities of incompleteness in love or even final separation. It is of four kinds – (i) Affection arising before the parties meet (*Purvaraga*) when they are complete strangers to one another. (ii) Love in separation due to indignation (*Mana*) either arising from fondness or (b) arising from jealousy. (iii) Love in separation due to being abroad (*Pravasa*). (iv) Either of the two young lovers is supposed to be dead but there is a possibility of his or her to be regained through some supernatural interposition and when the one left behind is sad, it is called the separation due to sorrow.

On the effects and consequences of separation, Bharata mentions in *Natyasastra* (VI.45) as it is said: “As for love-in-Separation, it should be acted out by *anubhavas* such as world-weariness, physical weakness, anxiety, envy, fatigue, worry, longing, dreaming, awakening, sickness, insanity, apoplexy, lifelessness, and death” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. I, 49). Abhinavagupta, commenting on love-in-separation in *Abhinavabharati*, points out that in love-in-union there is always the fear of separation and separation the hope of union” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. II, p.80). Even when the fear of separation is transcended in a moment of

union, the state is precarious. The moment consummation is achieved; all the worldly fears come in again. Another aspect of *sringara* rasa that comes to light here is the immense importance of hope-despair which co-exists in love. This is particularly noticeable in *vipralambha sringara*. In love-in-union fear intensifies love. In love-in-Separation fear of losing and longing, both get intensified in the absence of the loved object.

Hasya rasa

The *Natya Sastra* (VI.48) expresses the following views where the *hasya* or comic rasa is concerned:

As for the comic (*rasa*), it consists of (or is based on) the primary emotion of laughter. It arises from such *vibhavās* as wearing clothes and ornaments that belong to someone else or do not fit (*viktra*), shamelessness (*dhurstya*), greed, tickling sensitive part of the body, telling fantastic tales, seeing some comic deformity (*vyanga*) and describing faults (*dosodaharaṇa*).

– Masson and Patwardhan, Vol.i, 50

The *sthayibhava* or the stable state - *hasa* or laughter- is generated by things that “do not fit”. As we saw above, the ‘not fitting’ aspect brings in the element of incongruity into the order of things. It is so with the possibilities of ‘deformity’ as well which can lead to the comic, and again can give rise to disgust or fear.

The categorization of the causes of laughter is very interesting: that which is born and discovered (the *vibhavas* or the causes and the *anubhavas* or the effects can be located) in the same person, and that where there is a subject (inside the text) and an object of laughter – one’s funny acts causes the other to laugh. In *Natya Sastra* (VI 48) it is said: “When one laughs on one’s own, that laughter is said to be existing in oneself. When one causes another person to laugh, the laughter is said to be existing in another person” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. i, p.50). This aspect has not been much dealt with by Bharata or the later aesthetician. But for a contemporary mind, this subtle division is important.

Distancing is the most important component of any kind of aesthetic appreciation. In *hasya rasa* its role is all the more significant. In most cases, satire, behind the laughter hides something very serious. But man can live with all the problems surrounding him without going mad only when relieved by laughter.

Hence it is very important that pity is never given the scope to emerge. This is done by putting the reader in opposition (and in sympathy with) the object that causes laughter. In fact, when a person laughs at himself, i.e., see him from the outside. The reader or the *sahridaya* must also be able to do so.

When we look at *hasya rasa* in Sanskrit drama, the earliest examples are to be found in plays such as *prahasanas*. In *Natyasastra* they have been divided into two categories: *suddha* (pure) and *sankirna* (mixed). In the first kind, we have the humorous speeches of the rich, the hermits, etc. The second set of characters is servants, eunuchs, parasites, cunning persons, etc.

Karuna rasa

Karuna rasa is a very important *rasa* that is found very markedly both in the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*. *Karuna*, the compassionate or the pathetic *rasa*, comes from the primary *rasa* of *raudra* or the furious: “The result (*karma*) of the furious should be known as the aesthetic experience of compassion” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. 1 48). *Karma* is a very important word here. Apart from meaning ‘result’, it has also a string of other connotations like ‘deed’, ‘consequence’ etc. What this implies is that *raudra* is the cause that results in or leads to *karuna*.

What does *raudra* do? How does it manifest itself? It manifests through violence, displacement, etc., irrespective of good or evil. In other words, *karuna* is generated from certain causes or *vibhavas* which are the consequence of the *anubhavas* of *raudra*. Thus, *raudra* is the source of *karuna* and hence the primary *rasa* to which *karuna* can be related.

The features of *karuna* *rasa* enlisted in *Natyasastra* are as follows:

Now the *rasa* known as *karuna* arises from the permanent emotion of sorrow. It proceeds from *vibhavas* such as curse, affliction (*klesh* or affliction of curse), separation from those who are dear, (their downfall, loss of wealth, death and imprisonment, or from contact with misfortune (*vyasana*), destruction (*upaghata*), and calamity (*vidrava*).

- Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. i, 52

The *sthayibhava* of *karuna* is *soka* or sorrow. Its causes or the *vibhavas* are such as can be related to the *anubhavas* or the effects of *raudra* *rasa*: ‘curses’ ‘affliction (from curse)’, ‘death’, ‘imprisonment’, ‘destruction’ etc.

Tragedy and *karuna* *rasa*

When looking closely we find that tragedy can be included within the categorization of *karuna*. But not necessarily in all cases – for though, in a tragedy, the waste of good leads to sorrow, there is also a spirit of resolution in it, for the very essence of tragedy is hope (not in modern tragedy, of course, where there is nothing glorious, nor any hope). And it is the loss of hope which is the essence of *karuna*, for in *Natyasastra* it is said: “The compassionate (*rasa*), on the other hand, consists in all loss of hope of ever meeting again” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. i, p.50). This is where *karuna* differs from *vipralambha sringara* where there is reunion again.

The *vibhavas* or causes of *karuna* are death, calamity, and destruction. Death implies separation, and hence brings sorrow. But all these have other associations as well. Death holds the possibility of repulsive and grotesque, and destruction and calamity are fierce and awesome. It is thus that these emotions hover around *soka* or sorrow. The unjust alienation gives rise to sorrow. A nightmare can lead to *karuna* as well as *bhayanaka* *rasa*. We saw an instance of it in Kafka’s work. In Eugene O’Neill’s, *Emperor Jones*, the play generates no sympathy from the reader for Jones, for he is a cruel tyrant and his suffering is justified. But the destruction and devastation of war lead to *karuna* along with *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa* *rasas*.

Another interesting relation is the relation between *vira rasa* and *karuna rasa*. In *vira rasa*, the consequence of heroic action leads to bereavement and separation, especially when the heroism is a sheer waste. What about the relation of *hasya* to *karuna rasa*. In the west, there is such a concept as the “comedy of grotesque”. What this consists of is a juxtaposition of the tragic and comic in such a way that neither is fully realized in the work. Since the grotesque is associated both with *hasya* and *bibhatsa*, we should not be surprised if they are combined. This possibility does exist, though no Indian aesthetician has affirmed it.

The most problematic issue that confronts us is how can the depiction of sorrow be relished? Aristotle pointed out in his theory of purgation – the negative emotions in the perceiver are purged out by sympathetic participation. In India, Abhinavagupta commenting on *Dhvanyaloka* in *Locana* says that sorrow which is the *sthayibhava* of *karuna* has been capable of being aesthetically appreciated through sympathy and identity. Once it is aesthetically enjoyable it is *karuna rasa* – when the sorrow (felt) is different from the ordinary sorrow we feel in everyday life (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. ii, 82).

What can we deduce from this? First, the sorrow experienced in ordinary life is different from the sorrow experienced in a work of art. The first is painful while the second is a pleasurable experience? But what is it that makes the latter so distinctly different? Abhinavagupta, referring to the writing of the *Ramayana* (which was inspired when poet Valmiki saw the cruel killing of the she-bird when two birds were making love) says that “Valmiki, who felt the sorrow of the male bird, at the moment of grief, burdened by grief could not have written a thing which gives pleasure” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. ii, 83-84). So, what is involved here is an aesthetic distancing which is equally applicable to the reader/spectator (the sympathetic reader or the *sahridaya*). Hence, the reader is both distanced and intensely participating, since he is objective, seeing things in more than one way (as pointed out in his “Imagination”). In this way, he is capable of relishing even the negative emotions or states that, aesthetically transmuted, can no longer be recognized as negative anymore.

Raudra rasa

What kind of *rasa* is *raudra* – positive or negative? *Natya Sastra* tells us:

Now (the *rasa*) called *raudra* has anger for its permanent emotion. Demons, monsters and violent men are its characters. It is caused by battles. It arises from (sic) such *vibhavas* as anger, provocative actions (*adharsana*), insult (*adhiksepa*), lies, assaults (*upaghata*), harsh words, oppression (*abhidroha*, according to *Abhinava*, “murderous intent” and envy.

(Masson and Patwardhan, vol. I, 53)

Abhinavagupta classifies *rasa* into *sukhatmaka* (causing happiness) and *dukkhatmaka* (causing unhappiness) [Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. II, p.76]. *Raudra* then would come under the category of the negative states as it causes pain. But if we look at it from the angle of good and evil, what is to be found here? Since it is associated with *vira rasa*, it can lead to good and the destruction of evil.

The stable and accompanying states in *raudra*

As the name suggests and the reading of *Natyasastra* goes, anger *krodha* is its *sthayibhava* or stable state. This anger can be generated by ‘harsh words’ and ‘oppression’. The accompanying states or *vyabhicharibhavas* of *raudra* (*Natya Sastra*, VI.63): “Beating, splitting, crushing, ripping open, breaking, brandishing of weapons...” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. i, 53). Here, the very basic manifestation of anger has been suggested – violence. What is more noticeable in modern western literature is anger that is impotent – which does not get an outlet and which has to make do with the fury of words. Let it be mentioned here that when anger does not have a cause that can be located (for instance, a metaphysical position like Absurd) and at which it can direct itself, after some time it might lead to despair and fear as in Absurd Literature.

In modern literature, *raudra*, or the furious is manifested more in words than in deeds. Of course, Bharata has also listed this possibility in *Natyasastra*: “Such is *raudra* rasa in which words and actions are terrifying (emphasis supplied)” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. I, 54). Thus, words can both manifest anger as well as inflict pain. Even otherwise, words communicate a furious intention, whether it is carried out in inaction or not. *Raudra rasa* is very closely linked with *vira*, *bhayanaka*, *bibhatsa* and *karuna rasa*.

The illustration of impotent rage is also the key to understanding much of the rage to be found in modern literature. When we discuss *bibhatsa* and *bhayanaka rasas* we will deal with these kinds of literature – Existential literature, Absurd literature, etc. There, in fact, we see a hoard of emotions like anger, fear, courage, etc., in the face of what is terrifying and disgusting.

Fury and Waste

In *vira* we find dynamic energy while in *raudra* it is anger. While dynamic energy is properly channelized, anger involves a lot of waste, for it involves an excited emotional state which is not very decided and does not judge and act. But much literature in modern times, what is to be noted is the fact that fury is usually associated with a sense of impotence. At times, however, it appears that at some moment the manifestation of fury is the only outlet. It is as if a lot of energy were suddenly brought alive, which is directed, but irrationally or unreasonably. It is thus that fury can result in uncalled devastation which eventually leads to *karuna rasa*. *Raudra rasa* can be considered an intermediary stage where one is not sure how exactly to act. He knows his grouse, he might even know at what it is directed but the action is not controlled as it is in *vira rasa*.

Raudra is a very vital element in modern western literature. But it has a tendency to dissolve or get transformed into something else. It cannot sustain itself for a long time, and thus its outlets are sorrow and action (heroic or devastating), and where it is impotent, it usually leads to a sense of incomprehension – the Absurd.

Vira rasa

While describing *vira rasa*, in the *Natyasastra*, Bharata says: “*Vira rasa* is properly acted out by firmness, patience, heroism, pride, dynamic energy (*utsaha*), bravery, might, and profound emotions” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol I, 54). The basic qualities that suggest heroism in a person are ‘firmness’, ‘patience’ etc. They go together and complement each other. ‘Firmness’ suggests steadiness – a certain rootedness. In other words, in the presence of danger and threat, one does not give way. ‘Patience’ is what helps this steadfastness to sustain itself. Both are sustained by what is the essence of *vira* – ‘dynamic energy’. It is this positive outlook and energy that sustain the qualities of firmness and patience. It gets its anchorage and outlet in ‘patience’ or ‘steadfastness’ where it is correctly channelized. ‘Might’ or ‘strength’ can suggest courage. ‘Profound remarks’ can come only from the insights that a heroic man gets from his struggles with life.

‘Pride’ (which we see listed in the *Natyasastra*) should not be confused with ‘vanity’ or boast. Pride is not displayed like vanity. It is something that comes out of one’s sense of achievement or even competence. Here, it should be understood as a positive quality that manifests itself through poise or elegance. Without enthusiasm or the ‘dynamic energy’ - however prudent or insightful or calm one is – one cannot act. Thus the positive state of excitement is at the root of any action or even patience that causes a courageous act of waiting.

The causes of *vira*

The causes or the *vibhavas* of *vira rasa* are the following: “Correct perception, decisiveness (*adhyavasaya*), political wisdom (*naya*), courtesy (*vinaya*), an army (*bala*), eminence (*prabhava*), etc” (Aesthetic Rapture, vol. i, 54). ‘Correct perception’ is at the root of any positive act. If it is not there, one might act rashly in the face of a challenge. In other words, it is correct perception only that can lead to any decisive (and positive) action. *Naya* has been translated as ‘political wisdom’. The word also implies goodness and a sense of justice. Thus, when one is good and just, it leads to correct perception and thus to right action.

The response of *vira*

The *Natya Sastra* tells us that *vira*: "... should be acted out by such *anubhavs* as firmness, patience, heroism, generosity, and shrewdness (*vaisardya*)" (Masson and Patwardhan, vol i, 54). Determination in the face of odds, humility, and wonder are also closely linked with *vira rasa*.

Associated emotions of vira

In the *Natya Sastra*, the *vyabharibhavas* or the accompanying states of *vira* have been listed as follows: "... happiness, alertness, pride, panic, violence, resentment, remembrance and horripilation" (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. i, 54). 'Happiness' and 'pride' follow from a sense of achievement. 'Resentment' can lead to action. It might also result from an encounter, on the part of the victim of the heroic action. 'Panic' and 'horripilation', thus, apply mostly to the object on which the heroic act is being enacted. But even in the reader, there is the possibility of fear (or awe) at the enactment of a great heroic deed. Thus, there is a scope for both *bhayanaka* and *adbhuta*. In fact, in the Mahabharata, after the war what is left is only death and devastation. Hence, *vira rasa* can also lead (apart from *karuna*) to sense fear and pity at the waste.

Vira and other rasas

Vira rasa is linked with *adbhuta rasa*. *Vira* has always the possibility of getting transformed into *raudra* and thus again leading to *bibhatsa* and *bhayanaka*. This also holds the possibility of *karuna*. There is a possibility of *santa rasa* emitting out of *vira rasa*.

Bhayanaka rasa and bibhatsa rasa

Bhayanaka rasa and *bibhatsa rasa*, that deal with terrifying and disgusting emotions, are two of the most neglected *rasas* in Indian tradition though on many occasions they are portrayed profoundly. In the plays of Bhasa which deal with the episodes from *The Mahabharata*, the consequences of heroic deeds are terrifying and horrifying. In the *Mahabharata* epic itself, we have ample evidence of both these emotions. For instance, the episode in which Draupadi, the wife of the five Pandavas, is humiliated by their cousins while her husband's watch on silently after losing her in a game of dice is disgusting. The battle of Kurukshetra is terrifying. The

Jataka Tales are also full of *bibhatsa rasa*. But later writers have not explored much on this rasa. It may be because Indian tradition has been strongly influenced by the doctrine of *karma* and the transmigration of the soul and this makes it almost impossible for one to have a tragic view of life. But these two – *bibhatsa* and *bhayanaka* – in the modern western context seem to be the most important *rasas*.

These two *rasas* are so intimately connected (both in theory and in literature) that looking at them in isolation would make their discussion a little incomplete. *Natya sastra* writes: “The sight of the disgusting (gives rise to) the terrifying” (Masson and Patwardhan, v.I 48). Of these two *rasas*, *bibhatsa* is considered primary and *bhayanaka* is supposed to follow from it. Even otherwise, a lot of their *vibhavas* and *anubhavas* are similar.

Bhayanaka rasa

“Now (the *rasa*) called *bhayanaka* has fear as its permanent emotion. It arises from such *vibhavas* as ghastly noises, seeing supernatural beings (ghosts), fear and panic due to the (cries) of owls (or the howling of) jackals, going to an empty house or to a forest, hearing about, speaking about, or seeing the imprisonment or murder of one’s relatives” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. I, 54).

The above is noted about *bhayanaka* rasa in the *Natyasastra* of Bharata. The primary state or the *sthayibhava* of *bhayanaka* is ‘fear’. What this means is that within the work, the emotion or state which is generated is that of fear. Interestingly, while *karuna* (pity or compassion) gives rise to *soka* (sorrow) and *hasya* (comic) gives rise to *harsa* (laughter), here *bhayanaka* (furious) gives rise to *bhaya* (fear). Thus, as in *raudrarasa* or *vira rasa*, a relation of opposition exists, here (*vira* leads to wonder or fear and *raudra* leads to sorrow, fear, or even anger) it is fear that is communicated to the reader or perceiver.

Bibhatsa rasa

About *Bibhatsa rasa*, *Natya Sastra* writes: “Now (the *rasa*) known as *bibhatsa* has disgust as its permanent emotion. It arises from such *vibhavas* as discussing, hearing or seeing what is ugly, unpleasant, unclear (*acosya*) and undesired” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. i, 55). It lists the following responses of *bibhatsa rasa*: “...contractions of the whole body (*sarvangasamhara*), facial contortions (*mukhavikunana*), vomiting (*ullekhana*), spitting, violent trembling of the body (*udvejana*), and similar gestures. (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. i, 55)

Ugly-distortion

What is the nature of the object that is ‘ugly’, ‘unpleasant’, ‘unclear’ or ‘undesired’? An object is ‘ugly’ when it does not look like what it ought to look like. Thus, there is a break of order or of harmony. Here also, we find a disruption in the order of things as in *bhayanaka*. Normalcy is distorted. Now if we look closely, why is that the ‘ugly’ is disgusting? Ugliness involves a distortion that can lead to pity. Then when will it lead to disgust instead? It will be so one feels alienated from the ‘ugly’ object, and underlying this must be the possibility of incomprehension; for if we understand the ugly, there is the possibility of comprehension.

Incomprehension

Incomprehension holds the potential of being fearsome and thus, in between the stimulus and response of fear, there is the possibility of *bibhatsa rasa*. In *Natya Sastra* we have already been told that ‘the sight of the disgusting (gives rise to) the terrifying. *Bibhatsa* thus in many cases is an intermediary step to fear, for in *bibhatsa* as well, the first response is one directed at a certain incongruity which leads to certain incomprehension. In this sense, it is very close to *hasya*, but here the incongruity is of a negative kind. It is rather the displacement of the normal by the abnormal.

But since we are told that the sight of the disgusting is terrifying, the disgusting thus in a sense, is the analysis of fear. A ‘dead body’ frightens us not because it threatens us; it is so because it is unnatural. It is a distortion of life and hence generates in us a feeling of insecurity – someday we might come to this. Another verse in *Natya Sastra* tells us: “*Bibhatsa* is of two

kinds: *ksobhaja* (that which arises from agitation) and pure *udvegi* (that which is nauseating). *Udvegi* (*bibhatsa rasa*) comes from (seeing) faces, worms (etc.) and the other comes from (seeing) blood, etc.” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. 1, 56-57). The passage is not clear and holds a lot of ambiguities. But we have taken it here for two basic reasons. One, the mention of ‘faeces’, ‘worms’ etc. is interesting. They are disgusting since they are ugly. They are a distortion of all that man stands for (for both can come from a man’s body, dead or alive) and thus hold the possibility of not only disharmony but incomprehension as well.

Secondly, and much more important, Abhinavagupta’s commentary on this passage is central to understanding the modern literature of the absurd and disillusionment. It also shows how *bibhata* and *bhayanaka* (that give rise to disgust owing to the manifestation of mutilation and destruction) hold the possibility of leading to *Santa rasa*. Quoting *Yogasutra*, he says, “from purity comes disgust with one’s own body” and the desire of the five senses might lead to disgust and thus lead to renunciation (Masson and Patwardhan, vol.ii, 94).

Metaphysical disgust

Disgust need not necessarily arise only from a physical displacement. True, a certain kind of disgust arises out of one’s preoccupation with one’s body, as we shall see in the case of the Buddha. But this disgust that comes from disillusionment with one’s body is actually linked with a metaphysical position. In fact, in all cases, disillusionment is the result of a realization of the gap between the ideal and the real, between what ought to be and what things really are. Interestingly, the sense of disgust comes not out of any insecurity or incomprehension, but out of cowardice. It is the lack of courage that gives way to disillusionment – modern man is only this!

There are similar *vyabicaribhavas* in *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa rasa*. In *bhayanaka* they are: “Paralysis , sweating, stuttering, horripilation, trembling, a break in the voice, change of colour, anxiety and confusion, depression, panic, rashness, lifelessness, fright, apoplexy, death and so forth” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol, i, 54). The *vyabicaribhava* of *bibhatsa* are apoplexy, agitation (*udvega*), panic, confusion, sickness, death, and the like. Many of the accompanying

states are identical. Here disgust and fear are intermixed. *Bibhatsa* and *bhayanaka* are also linked with *vira*, *karuna* and *santa*.

Adbhuta rasa

Adbhuta rasa or the emotion of wonder is an important though much-neglected rasa. It is interesting to note that in *Natya Sastra*, it comes just before *santa rasa*; and if we look closely we will find that it has a greater affinity to *santa* than any other *rasas*. It is obvious that inside a work it will generate an emotion which can be roughly translated as a mixture of surprised delight and awe that is the result of something surprising, for in *Natyasastra* it is said: “Now (the rasa) called *adbhuta* has for its permanent emotion wonder. It arises from such *vibhavas* as seeing heavenly beings, gaining one’s desired objects, going to a temple, a garden (*upavana*) or a meeting place, or (seeing) a flying chariot, a magic show (*maya*), or a juggler’s show” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol i, 56).

Causes of *Adbhuta*

The *vibhavas* or causes listed above are the following: “seeing heavenly beings”, “a magic show” or a “juggler show”. Here, what is to be noticed is the element of surprise. But more importantly, what does this surprise lead to? If it leads to fear (*pure*) or a sense of incongruity, we might have *bibhatsa* or *bhayanaka* instead. It is only because here the most important emotion generated in the work and transmitted is a wonder, that the outcome is a surprising delight.

Skill and wonder

Another important resemblance is the category, “seeing a juggler’s show”. What this involves is skill and brilliance which is surprising. If we trace back a work of art to its origin or source (which is a man or group of men), our admiration also involves an admiration of the skill of the artist. Thus, *adbhuta* rasa is very close to the kind of emotion generated by the reader. It is also an essential part of what is transmitted along with every other rasa, which is a delight. This aspect has not been highlighted by Abhinavagupta or later aestheticians since *Natyasastra* puts it

thus: “One should know that all the following are *vibhavas* of *adbhuta*: any speech that contains an unusual idea, any unusual work of art (*silpa*) or any remarkable act (*karmarupa*)” (Masson and Patwardhan, vol. 1, 56).

Adbhuta involves a certain distancing. What this means is that if we can share and empathize with the act (that generates wonder) then it will no longer generate the sense of wonder – say, a juggler watching another juggler. Thus what wonder involves is something strange and not a part of the regular order of things. It is out of the ordinary – extraordinary. Most importantly, there is a positive response to this stimulus. Thus, what is latent (and sometimes explicit) is the admiration of what is being done. It is in such a frame that we must understand “seeing a heavenly object”, “a flying chariot” etc.

Effects of *adbhuta rasa*

The *anubhavas* or the effects of *adbhuta rasa* (that are shown on the stage) are: “It should be acted out by such *anubhavas* as opening one’s eyes wide, staring, horripilation, sweat, tears, ecstatic delight... nodding one’s head (in admiration)” (Masson and Patwardhan, Vol. i, p.56).

All the effects listed are such as suggest surprise and in almost all cases, they lead to admiration. ‘Tears’ can be tears of delight or awe. ‘Horripilation’ and ‘sweating’ can be the result of seeing something strange or awesome. But the *vyabharibhavas* or the accompanying states hold the possibilities of ‘paralysis’, ‘fear’, ‘panic’, ‘lifelessness’, ‘fainting’ etc. Thus, the *adbhuta rasa* though basically a positive *rasa*, can lead to certain negative manifestations. For instance, a man with a weak heart can die of happiness.

Santa rasa

Santa rasa implies a state of calm or equilibrium; a state of quiet or repose. This *rasa* was propounded by Abhinavagupta and ‘defended with an extraordinary logical rigour’ (Devy 61). *Sama* is the *sthayibhava* of *santa*. Its *vibhavas* are ascetic practices, association with yogins, etc. It can be acted out on stage by *anubhavas* such as the absence of lust, anger etc., and its

vyabharibhavas include firmness, wisdom and so forth. The problem with this rasa is to bring the anubhavas and sancaribhavas to the stage.

In basic opposition to *santa* are the five restless senses that can never for a moment remain unstimulated and the desires that they generate and satisfy. It is only when the desires created by the senses are transcended or satisfied that the possibility of repose or calm arises. Thus from whatever emotional state one moves to *santa*, two possible ways are to be seen. One, is when there is fulfillment and hence the end of desire. Secondly, from and due to excess, there is disgust and thus a rejection which leads one away from the state of excitement and away from desire. Thus, even in the case of *sringaar rasa* there is the possibility of moving into *santa*, not only through disgust but also through a positive transcendence in the union.

The Uniqueness of *Santa*

Santa has been emphasized again and again as being unique among the *rasas* and as being different from the other eight *rasas*. The reasons are many. For one, as mentioned in *Natya Sastra*, all the *rasas* arise from it and finally merge into it. Both in *Natya Sastra* and *Abhinavabharati* it is considered the original or the ‘natural’ state of mind from which, due to various causes (desires or the obstruction of desires), different emotions arise. Secondly, in the absence of stimuli, desires abate and lead to calm. Thus, it is different from the other *rasas*, leading one away from emotions.

If *santa* leads away from emotions, how can it be a rasa, many argue, for if it is the very negation of emotions, how can it have a *sthayi bhava* or permanent state? On the other hand, it brings the possibility that all the eight *bhavas* can lead to *santa*. If through the various *sthayi bhavas* or primary states of the various *rasas* one can go to *santa*, one cannot simply reject its possibility – for the desire to transcend all desires, must, in some way, be considered a desire.

In fact, Abhinavagupta, instead of being deterred by the possibility that all the eight *sthayibhavas* can be the *sthayibhavas* of *santa*, points to the fact that some common factor in all these cases must be leading to *santa*. He identifies it as the ‘perception of truth’ (Masson and

Patwardhan, `Santa Rasa, 130). Besides, *bhava* though mostly used in *Natya Sastra* in the sense of emotion is a much more potent word. Its connotations also include contemplation (*bhavana*). Thus, an awareness of or an insight into Truth, which arises from and is intermixed with any specific emotion (here it is paradoxically tranquility), can also be known as *bhava*.

The stable state in *santa*

Hence, *santa* according to Abhinavagupta has ‘right knowledge’ or *sama* (right knowledge is the prerequisite of *sama* or the state of calm and thus *sama* implies ‘right knowledge’) as its *sthayibhava* or primary state. In *Natya Sastra* (or in the interpolated verse on *santa*) it is said: “Now *santa*, which has *sama* for its *sthayibhava*, and which leads to *moksa*, arises from *vibhavas* such as knowledge of the truth, detachment, purity of mind etc.” (Masson and Patwardhan, *Santa Rasa* 92). *Sama*, equanimity or tranquility is the primary prerequisite of *moksa* or the state of bliss. This indicates a state where one has overcome his desires. But in order for this state to be achieved, certain factors must stimulate one towards *sama*. As Abhinavagupta has also pointed out in his *Abhinavabharati*, no one is born into self-realization. At some critical point in one’s life, one is directed away from the emotions due to some reason or the other. This, if taken with a positive frame of mind, leads one towards *moksa* which is considered in Indian tradition as the realization of ultimate truth.

Causes of *santa*

What is that leads to or causes (*vibhava*) one to reach the state of *sama*. According to Abhinavagupta, “*santa rasa* arises from desire to secure liberation of the Self” (Masson and Patwardhan, *Santa Rasa* 139). This leads to the realization of ‘the truth’ that gives rise to *sama*. ‘Purity of mind’ thus is a prerequisite, as is ‘detachment’ or *vairagya*. Purity can be achieved only when one knows what is impure, and hence this involves this prior distinction at some point in time (which might lead to disgust and thus to detachment). *Vairagya*, translated as ‘detachment’, is actually a much more potent word. It connotes a certain transition. It indicates a prior state of disillusionment which leads to detachment.

What can be considered a limitation in the above list of *vibhavas* or causes is the fact that none (excepting *vairagya*) indicates an emotional cause which leads to *sama*, while in the case of *vairagya* there is the suggestion of disgust or *jugupsa*. Seen this way, Abhinavagupta's indication of the way the various *sthayibhavas* can lead to *sama* have substantive claim to be the *vibhavas* or the causes leading to *santa*.

Now, let us look at how each of the various *sthayibhavas* can lead to *santa* separately.

Apart from *navarasa*, there have been two more *rasas* coming into prominence but could not find the genius of another Abhinavagupta to put them on the pedestal of *rasa* theory. They are dismissed by later aestheticians with a view that all the emotions of the world can easily be portrayed with the nine *sthayibhavas* and nine corresponding *rasas* coming out of it. Nevertheless, the two *rasas* are *bhakti rasa* (rasa of devotion) and *batsalya rasa* (rasa of filial love). Though it is never analysed in its full context, Rupa Goswami in his *Bhaktirasamritasindhu*, has analyzed the bhakti poetry of medieval India with this important *rasa* in mind. Bhakti is presented as the highest *rasa* because it brings to the *rasika* an experience which is aesthetically superior to the experience of Brahmananda (Devy 96). In Devy's anthology, *Indian Literary Criticism: Theory and Interpretation*: it is mentioned that "the conceptualization of bhaktirasa and its incorporation in the gamut of *rasas* established by the Sanskrit poetics, are the two major developments in the tradition of Sanskrit poetics during the medieval period" (Devy 96). Rupa Goswami's text, which achieves both these tasks, is therefore an important landmark in Indian literary history.

Dhvani

Dhvani School is one of the important schools of Indian Poetics. It is developed by Anandavardhana in his path-breaking work called *Dhvanyaloka*. He lived about 850 AD as one of the contemporaries of King Avantivarman of Kashmir (855-83AD). His theory rests on a new

function of language other than the direct (referential) and indirect (metaphorical) functions. This third and unique use of language is called suggestions (*vyanjana*). He gives more importance to this suggestive meaning as the true source of aesthetic pleasure. The term *dhvani* applied to suggestive poetry (literature in general) when the suggested sense predominates over the literal sense. This has put the *rasa* theory at the center of literary deliberations where other doctrines lent support to it. “Strictly speaking”, writes Kunjunni Raja, “the doctrine of *dhvani* is only an extension of the *rasa* theory propounded by the ancient sage Bharata, according to which the main object of the dramatic work is to rouse a *rasa* or aesthetic emotion in the audience” (Theory of *Dhvani* 288). It took over the idea of *rasa* into the field of poetry. Krishnamoorthy defines: “*Dhvani* is the quintessence of poetry; and *rasa* is the quintessence of ‘*dhvani*’ (xxxii, qtd. in Anitha 23).

The term *dhvani* (sound) is derived from the root *dhvan* from Sanskrit means ‘to make a sound’. Apart from ‘sound’, it also implies ‘echo’, ‘reverberation’, ‘tune’, ‘noise’, and ‘indistinct articulation.’ It is a theory of ‘suggestiveness’ where implied or suggested sense (*pratiyamana*) is more striking than expressed sense (*vacya*). Anandavardhana defines *dhvani* as the soul of poetry. *Dhvani* is that specimen of poetic art in which the literal meaning reveals the suggested meaning and remains subservient to it. In the context of Indian aesthetics, *dhvani* being a poetic device to manifest *rasa*, it must be borne in mind that *rasa* itself is the evoked response, while *bhava* is the stimulating expression, on the part of an actor. For instance, *soka* (sorrow) is a *bhava* (*state*), and the resultant *rasa* is *karuna* (pathetic sentiment).

Dhvani is inspired by *Vaiyakarana* doctrine of *sphota* which tells that ‘words have two faces; the external face looks at the sounds (*dhvani*) and while the internal face looks at the meaning (*artha*) (Seturaman, 272). The internal aspect which is directly attached to the meaning is the *sphota* which is a partless, integral linguistic symbol (ibid). Bhartrihari emphasizes the double power of a word; it can convey an idea of the form of an expression as well as its content. Language is similar to light just as light can reveal itself while revealing other objects; the word

has the power of referring to itself as well as to the external things symbolized by it. (ibid, 274). The sounds are only the manifesting agencies and have no function other than that of revealing the symbol. Each sound helps in manifesting this *sphota*, the first one vaguely, the next one more clearly and so on, until the last one, aided by the impressions of preceding perceptions, reveals it clearly and distinctly. The term *dhvani* is applied for that which makes *sphota* evident. “*Sphota* or *Sabda*, as it is otherwise called, is different from the sounds of a word; it is the real seat of the significative capacity and it is manifested by the last sound of a word together with the impressions of the experiences of the previous sounds. The utterance of these sounds that manifest *Sabda* or *Sphota* is called *Dhvani*” (Sankaran 65). When light is brought to illuminate a pot that is in the dark, the pot is revealed immediately after the light falls on it, and the subsequent presence of the light goes to reveal the pot very clearly, and then only its true nature is realized. In the same way as the individual sounds of a word are incapable of conveying an idea and hence unreal, similarly, separate words which convey only stray concepts and not any complete idea is unreal. For sentences alone have been recognized by all philosophers that conveying any complete idea. So *vakyasphota* which expresses a complete idea is the real seat of signification. It is unitary, indivisible, and eternal. *Sphota* is what signifies an idea of a word. It is the eternal indivisible entity like the soul (Sankaran 71). The science of language envisages the existence of two types of words in the significant expression – the momentary and the eternal. Of these two, the first comprehensible by the auditory organ is regarded as *dhvani* and this *dhvani* is said to affect the revelation of the eternal sound, known as *sphota*, of paramount importance’ (Chakraborty 146, qtd in Anitha 8). The idea is integrated into aesthetics by Anandavardhana, where the suggestive unit is designated *dhvani* as it reveals the suggested. “[...], Just as the sounds of utterances (*dhvani* in the grammarian’s sense) reveal the integral linguistic sign (*sphota*), so also a good poem with its sound, as well as the literal sense, a charming sense which has a great aesthetic value” (Sethuraman 28).

Dhvani theory is the theory of semantics, meanings, and of symbolism. *Dhvani* can be revealed through *artha* (sense), which has two dimensions or levels, viz., *vacyartha* (expressed or explicit sense) from *vacya* means literal and *pratiyamanartha* (suggested or implicit sense) from *pratiyamana* means literal, much like the imperceptible beauty of a woman whereas the former is the beauty of the ornaments. Just as natural beauty is way ahead of artificial fittings, *vyngyartha* (suggested) is above *vacyartha* (expressed). But Anandavardhana formulates the nature and status of suggested meaning (*vyngyartha*) concerning two other tiers of meanings, viz., expressed meaning (*vacyartha*) and metaphorical meaning (*lakseyartha*) and suggestive meaning (*vyangartha*). Thus in *dhvani* theory, the chief function of language pertains to the three levels of signification, viz., *abhidha* (primary sense), *lakšana* (secondary sense) and *vyanjana* (suggested sense). When the primary meaning is incompatible with the context, the secondary meaning is approached. Meaning becomes clear in this metaphorical context. When this does not satisfy a discerning reader who steps further to discover the exact intention of the poet, which reveals to him the hidden third level of suggested sense. For example, an expression – ‘a hamlet on the Ganges’- may mean in its primary sense ‘a hamlet on the current of the river’ which seems of it absurd. To remove the obscurity, the secondary meaning comes to its rescue which may mean, ‘near the bank of the river’. The meaning is clear but a discerning reader may go further to the intention of the speaker and may find the third function of words called *vyanjana* or suggestions. It reveals that the speaker intends by such usage to suggest that the hamlet, by its proximity to the Ganges, is so cool, pleasant, pure, and holy as though it were on the current itself (Sankaran, 65-66). This conception of *Sabda* manifested by *Dhvani* is made use of by the exponents of the *Dhvani* School in formulating the *Vyanjanavriti* to explain the psychological process of the realization of *rasa*. They hold that literature appeals to the man of taste only because of its suggested sense (*Vyngartha*), and this is through a peculiar capacity inherent in a poetic language called suggestiveness (*Vyanjakatva*), which is different from the ordinary

significant capacities of words, *Vacakatva* and *Laksakatva*. The activity involved in getting at the suggested sense is known as suggestion or *Vyanjana*.

The *dhvani* evoked through the *artha* (meaning) is of three kinds, viz., *vastumatradhvani* (suggestion through ideas), *alankara dhvani* (suggestion through poetic figures) and *rasadhvani* (suggestion through emotions). If the suggested content evoked by the *vacyartha* (expressed sense) manifests itself in the form of figurative idea or an image, it is known as *vastudhvani* and *alankaradhvani* respectively. If it is evoked in the form of an emotional mood, then it is a case of *rasadhvani*. Both *vastudhvani* and *alankaradhvani* can be expressed by direct meaning or *vacyartha* and by suggestion or *vyangyartha*, but *rasa dhvani* can never be expressed in direct meaning of words. This conception will be clearly understood if we take a really poetical example from Dandin:

Gacha gachasi chetkanta panthan santu ne siba

Mamapi janma tatrba bhuyahatra gato bhaban

(qtd. in Sankaran 74)

“Depart my dear! If thou dost, then may thy paths be safe! Let me also be born again in that place whether thou wouldst be gone.” – This verse is addressed by a lady to her lover on the eve of his departure on a long journey. The express sense of this verse is this. The lady permits her lover to depart and wishes him a happy journey. She prays also to be reborn in the country to which her lover departs. But by desiring rebirth in the land to which her lord is bound, she really suggests that in his absence she is sure to die of the pangs of separation from him, and hence he should not start his journey. Her address also suggests the intense feeling of love for her lord. With all that, being a dutiful, modest, and loving lady she would not express anything inauspicious at the time and say bluntly “My dear, I love you intensely; so do not go. If you do, I will certainly commit suicide”. These ideas when expressly stated are vulgar and form common parlance, but when they are left to be suggested as in the above verse, they become poetry and are pleasant. Two things are particularly suggested in this verse- an idea or *vastu* in the shape of

a request not to start the journey; and (ii) a *rasa* (*vipralambha*) or an intense feeling of love and a keen consciousness of impending separation. In some verses what is suggested is an *Alankara*. The life or the vitality of poetry consists in these varieties of suggested senses. *Vastudhvani* and *alankaradhvani* can never be captivating without the presence of *rasa*. It establishes the supremacy of *rasadhvani*.

Anandavardhana divides and subdivides *dhvani* in an effort to delineate its varieties to *sahrdaya* (discerning reader) with the aid of ample examples. He bases it on the relative status of *vacya* (expressed) and *vyangya* (suggested). Broadly the division is two-fold, viz., *avivaksitavacyadhvani* (suggestion with unintended literal import) and *vivaksitanyaprayacya dhvani* (suggestion with intended literal import). This division is based on the nature of the expressed meaning. In *avivaksitavacya*, the *vacyartha* (expressed sense) is not expected to be conveyed at all. It is abandoned for the sake of the *vyagyartha* (suggested sense). So it is also known as *laksanamuladhvani*, since the primary meaning is made intelligible by *laksana* (secondary significance). It has two divisions: *arthantaraskanramitavacya dhvani* (merged with other) *atyantatiraskritavacyadhvani* (completely lost). In the former, the expressed sense gets ‘merged’ or gets transformed into the suggestive sense, to adequately represent the meaning intended to be conveyed by the poet. This type of *dhvani* is suited to individual words. Anandavardhana discusses a verse from his own poem about the value of ‘merits’, where he compares it with the lotus flower. “Lotuses will be lotuses/ only when sunshine shelters them” (II.1.39). In the latter, *atyantatiraskritavacyadhvani*, the expressed meaning is ‘completely lost’ or abandoned and ideas constituting the element of *Prayojana* (purpose) of the metaphorical expressions are revealed through suggestions. The expressed sense is no more than an end, disappearing once it has fulfilled its function. When a poet says that the mist-covered moon is like a mirror ‘blinded’ by the vapors of heavy breathing, the discrepant primary meaning is ignored and the secondary level of meaning sought which gives rise to the suggested sense. In *vivaksitanyaprayacyadhvani*, the expressed sense is intended to be conveyed, but its ultimate aim

is the suggested sense. It is subdivided into two, viz., *samlaksyakramavyangya dhvani* (of discernable sequentiality) and *asamlaksyakramavyangya dhvani* (of undiscernable sequentiality) on the basis of the perceptibility or otherwise of the sequence of the cognition leading to the suggested sense. When a *vastu* or *alankara* is suggested, the sequence is discernable and such *vastu* (plain fact) or *alankara* (adorned fact) belongs to *samlaksyakramavyangya dhvani*. The picture of Parvati, with bowed head, lowered eyes, counting the petals of lotus, overhearing a discussion of her marriage proposal, suggests to the reader's mind by slow comprehension, her coyness and flush as her approval. There is no immediate association of *Sringara* (love) because it has to be supplied from earlier contexts in the epic. The process involved here is more intellectual and less emotional than the enjoyment of *rasa*. Parvati's action of counting lotus petals might be as much due to her girlish pranks as to her *lajja* (shyness). But when the expressed meaning awakens an aesthetic emotion like *rasa* and *bhava*, the sequence between the expressed and suggested senses is not discernible. The sequence is present but not noticeable.

When the expressed meaning awakens an aesthetic emotion like *rasa* and *bhava*, the sequence between the expressed and suggested senses are not discernable, it is called *Asamlaksyakramadhvani*. The whole theory of *rasa* is merged in it. Here the *Vacyartha* generally constitutes a representation of the *Vibhavas*, *Anubhavas*, and *Vyabhicaribhavas*. When we understand these there at once is kindled up in the corresponding emotional mood or instinct *Sthayibhava*, and this is developed to the climax where we realize our own emotion of love, etc, invariably accompanied by a thrill. *Asamksyakramavyangya*, meaning the *krama* or the stages by which the suggestion is heard from the *vacyartha* are *asamlaksya*, not well discernable. Where there is the suggestion of *rasa* or *bhava* from a representation of *vibhavas* and *anubhavas* etc., it is *asamlaksyakramavyangya*; and whereas in *rasa*, *bhava* and even an *alankara* are suggested; without a clear representation of the *vibhavas*, etc., it is *samlaksyakramavyangya* (Sankaran 75).

When we hear the words *sringara* or *karuna*, there does not arise in us any feeling of love or pathos; but when we hear of the meeting of Dushyanta and Shakuntala in the pleasant groves of the forest or of Rama's repudiation of Sita in her advanced state of pregnancy there is at once evoked in us a feeling of love or pity. Why is this difference? What is it due to? The advocates of *Rasa* School were not able to answer this satisfactorily. At this stage, Anandavardhana put forward his theory of *dhvani* which furnishes an effective reply to it. He discovered that in the first instance love or pathos is expressly mentioned by the words *sringara* or *karuna*, while in the second, they are suggested from the situations; and only when a feeling is suggested does it call forth the corresponding instinct or emotional mood in us which when developed, results in our enjoyment of aesthetic pleasure. *Rasa* is never realized by express mention and it is suggested even in the absence of its express reference from a representation of the *vibhavas*, *anubhavas* etc.

The theory of *dhvani* didn't propound any rival doctrine to the *rasa* but only placed it on a firmer basis by removing its defects and shortcomings and by expounding its true significance through the wider and well-reasoned principle of suggestion. In this research paper, *asamlaksyakramavyangya* and *samlaksyakramvyangya dhvani* will be taken to explore *rasa*.

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Chapter Three

Girish Karnad and the School of *Rasa* and *Dhvani*

Girish Karnad is a prominent modern playwright in Kannad literature who has created a niche in the realm of Indian theatre with his mythological play *Yayati* in 1961 when he was merely 23 years old. Despite his diverse professional career, writing plays was closest to his heart. He has dedicated five long decades of his life producing sixteen plays, most of which were transcreated into English by the author himself. They were enacted by different theatre groups in Chennai, Delhi, and Mumbai apart from the theatre groups where it was originally commissioned in Chicago and London. Ebrahim Alkazi, Alyque Padamsee, and Satyadev Dubey were a few names who popularized his plays as directors. His name is proudly taken with some of the equally illustrated playwrights like Badal Sarkar, Vijay Tendulkar, and Mohan Rakesh. He extensively used history and mythology to deal with the burning issues of his time by exposing the existential crisis of modern man. He is deeply influenced by western theatre with a firm foot in the native dramatic traditions of *Yakshagana* and *Natyasastra*. During the 1970s, he was portrayed as a poster boy for “Theatre of Roots”. *Yayati*, *Tughlaq*, *Hayavadana*, *Nagamandala*, *The Fire and the Rain*, and *Bali: The Sacrifice* are the six plays among many of his plays taken here to explore the *rasa* and *dhvani* elements in this chapter.

Yayati

Yayati is an adaptation from the Sambhava Parva of *Mahabharata* but it is not entirely mythological. It is developed on the story of Yayati, heard from the lamp-lit corners, and developed under the influence of the tragic vision of existentialism. When the father Yayati is cursed to become decrepit by nightfall for a sexual misdemeanor, the son Pooru comes forward to take the burden of the curse. The senseless sacrifice brings him old age and immitigable

sufferings but not the desired meaning required to face the old age. By introducing Chitrlekha, the wife of Pooru, Karnad rejects the traditional glorification of the son's sacrifice for the cause of the father. Pooru faces the existential dilemma and takes a decision that may be authentic but has its tragic repercussions. His acceptance of old age from his father and the suicide of Chitrlekha can be seen as revenge against the vision and the grand design of Yayati. It is a story of aggression, rage, and fury against oppressive forces and injustices. B. Yadava Raju brings caste and gender conflict into this play by commenting “. . . not enough attention has been directed at its concerns with class/caste and gender” (80). These faultlines in the Indian society bring conflict and torment. *Raudra rasa* is thus predominant in this play and it serves as catalyst to *karuna and bibhatsa rasa*.

Raudra rasa through angry words

Anger is a permanent emotion in *raudra rasa*. In it, the words and the actions are terrifying. But in modern literature, as mentioned earlier, it can manifest more in words than in deeds. *Yayati* is replete with words that wound. All the characters while revolting against their present condition or pitted against the oppressions and injustices, it is the words that manifest anger as well as inflict pain.

There are five characters in the play that enact on the stage and two ghost characters about whom it is narrated in great detail. The common characteristics of all these characters are rage and fury. For most of them, the fury is self-directed. At the heart of everything, they revolt against oppression, artificiality, and injustices. Their action is authentic but tragic as they suffer from an existential dilemma. Sharmistha leads the charge among many other characters to spew out venom from her tongue. She is intelligent, beautiful yet has a foul tongue and belongs to a *rakshasa* tribe. Her rage equally brings further rage in other characters. This is evident when Swarnalata, a docile maidservant, raises war against her with these words: “That spiteful whore –

I would have torn her hair out if you hadn't stopped me. Taught that fiend a proper lesson. The rakshasi. You heard us, madam. Did I say a word against her? All those dirty insinuations. The nasty jibes. They are too horrible to think . . ." (Karnad *Yayati* 7). Even Sharmishtha admits to her outrageous acts are but natural to the confusing set of events in the palace that she is not deliberately nasty to anyone but just an uncouth rakshasi.

The provocative actions and harsh words of *raudra rasa* are at wanton display in this play. Three of the queens of Yayati have displayed it to the fullest. The first is, of course, the turn of Sharmistha while narrating the altercation between Devyani and her. She almost recreates the crime scene in front of Yayati,

Please, sir, bear with me. If those words had come from anyone else, I would have brushed them aside. I was used to worse. I watched myself, like in a dream, straining to stop myself but powerless to do so, as I got up and grabbed her long loose hair. I twisted the strands around my hand and pulled her up. And as she screamed and thrashed about, I dragged her to a well nearby and pushed her in. And I stood there and watched, as she crashed through the brambles that find the well. The world knows I threw her into a well. But not that I was sitting there, for I don't know how long, racked with sobs. Does that surprise you, sir? But the world only cares for the embers there. (Karnad *Yayati* 20)

When Yayati decided to marry Sharmistha as to lose her would have been too costly for him, he was weighing the cost and repercussion to confront the wrath of Devyani but not to the extent what Devyani was up to. He tried hard to pacify her anger but to no avail. She asserts her contempt by saying, 'I am no Kshatriya queen to suffer relatives foisted on me' (Karnad *Yayati* 31) worrying least about others when she has enough worries to drown her. One may call it envy, jealousy, or self-esteem, she tells Devyani, 'I will not be able to sleep a wink while his hands caress your body' (Karnad *Yayati* 33). The assertiveness are well pronounced by Pooru and

Chitrlekha and their provocative actions are not directed to harm others physically but to torture them mentally with their highest sacrifice.

***Raudra* and wastage**

In *raudra rasa*, a lot of wastage of energy and fury does take place as the anger is not properly channelized as that in *vira rasa* or else in most of the cases, lots of waste do take place in the very process of converting into the dynamic energy. Even at the best of one's intention, there are misjudgments or an iota of excess of it. Devyani rebukes Sharmistha: 'Don't you ever tire? The same old stings, the blunted barbs. They don't even hurt anymore' (Karnad *Yayati* 9).

***Raudra* in Injustices, Oppressions, and Insults**

The above *vibhavas* are very crucial ones in the *raudra rasas*. The play *Yayati* abounds with these *vibhavas*. The leading female characters raise their voices against it. Oppression is more applicable to Sharmistha, insults to Devyani, and injustices to Chitrlekha. In one of her conversations with Devyani, Sharmistha brings her fury against this oppression with a hint of a woman's envy:

I opened my eyes. You had become the Queen of the Arya race. Wife of King Yayati.
And I was your slave. My eyes have no lids now. I live staring at you, unflinchingly. Like the fish. No, like the gods. No, more a corpse, its eyes wide open. As the King crawls into your bed night after night, I want you to remember I am there, hovering around ...
(Karnad, *Yayati* 29)

It becomes more prominent on the topic of slavery. She makes Yayati understand what a miserable life that a slave is bound to lead. It turns one to become a domesticated animal. Her argument on slavery is based on her own experience, the experience of a princess falling into the pit of servitude:

To be a good slave is to have all your vileness extracted from you.

(Pause)

I snarl because I want to retain a particle of my original self. I abuse and rave to retrieve an iota of it. It's all useless of course. Scream as I may, I know there is no escape from degradation. The louder I scream, the more I declare myself a slave. That is the point. I have decided to turn myself into a performing freak. (Karnad, *Yayati* 18)

Devayani's rage knows no bounds when Sharmistha desecrates her faith. As a queen, she is not oblivious to the king's traction with other women but the thought of Sharmistha who has defiled her marriage, shook her world. Under the circumstances, the waves of her rage systematically break the thin walls of her self-restraint. She tells Yayati no less than the clearest terms in the course of the drama, 'take as many wives as you want. I don't care. But not this reptile. Not her' (Karnad *Yayati* 30) and to Sharmistha she tells, 'you are evil beyond redemption' (Karnad *Yayati* 28). She takes a stand to blur the reflections of 'His Majesty's face' forever and she has no qualms over it.

The assertion and the fury of words of Chitralkha, the newly married bride of Pooru, are ample proofs of how even in the face of adversity, one can become audaciously outrageous. She has the logic where the grand design of Yayati, the unborn yet powerful future succumbs to dust: 'I did not know Prince Pooru when I married him. I married him for his youth. For his potential to plant the seed of Bharatas in my womb. He has lost that potency now. He doesn't possess any of these qualities for which I married him. But you do' (Karnad *Yayati* 65-66). In the same vein, she pushes Yayati with extraordinary courage to make flat his own logic of lofty ideals when she says, "you have taken your son's youth. It follows that you should accept everything that comes attached to it"(Karnad *Yayati* 66). Her assertiveness is the stamp of her authority. On one

occasion she tells her father-in-law, ‘I will not let my husband step back into the bedroom unless he returns to a young man’ (Karnad *Yayati* 62).

Revenge is a natural outcome of injustices. For Sharmistha weapon is her body. And she is not ashamed of it. In an assertive tone she speaks to Devyani, ‘Yes, I got him (Yayati) into bed with me that was my revenge on you. After all, as a slave, what weapon did I have but my body’ (Karnad *Yayati* 29)? The fury and assertion against the oppression and injustice fan them further to slide into an eternal abysmal pit of no return.

Chaos and *Raudra*

‘The tumult of war’, ‘savage mutilation’, wounding, etc. produce *raudra* but here decrepitude, dementation, constant rebellion, and the battle-like situation in the palace create a chaotic environment to realise *raudra*. Sharmistha brings a racial angle to her chaotic behaviour to all the sufferings that she is undergoing in the palace. Her unabashed assertiveness to Yayati brings home this very point, “The answer, sir, is because we rakshasas have chosen to live in chaos, proud that it is a chaos of our own creation. And yet of course we also despise ourselves for not being lucid and rational, like you Aryas” (Karnad *Yayati* 18). The whole palace of Yayati during the time of his curse is chaotic. There is a decrepit son, a ‘slaughtered’ bride, a demented maid, and the ‘eerie’ faces waiting outside the palace make life incomprehensible. Chitrlekha has to make a choice between the forces of chaos on one side and her husband’s youth on the other. She was condemned to choose something new that is embracing death.

Raudra* and *karuna

Raudra is an intermediary *rasa* that can lead to *vira rasa* if it is properly channelized in a positive direction. On the contrary, it brings violence and destruction, by thus, creating *karuna rasa*. This in fact gives birth to *karuna rasa*. Rashness, resentment, panic, violence, pride, sweat

and stuttering, trembling, and horripilation are some of the *vyabhicari* bhavas that have a close link with *karuna rasa*. But what is interesting here is that both *raudra* and *karuna* can be witnessed in the same breath. The following dialogues of Yayati can bring this notion to the forefront of how both *raudra* and *karuna* can crawl together like a conjoined twin.

Old age! Decrepitude! By nightfall! And then? Then what? Sharmistha. You she-devil! You are the cause of all this. You are responsible. You trapped me with your wiles (Karnad *Yayati* 42).

Patience? Patience of a man falling into a bottomless pit. Patience? The deafening rush of emptiness. What can be more terrible than that? And suppose Pooru fails? Suppose that shriveled mendicant refuses to listen to reason (Karnad *Yayati* 42)?

In both these dialogues, one will be amazed to see a thin difference between these two *rasas*. It brings into our notice that different *rasas* cannot be put in any watertight categorization. They arise and reach to the audience/reader in a bouquet.

Impotent rage of Pooru

As mentioned earlier, impotent rage is very much a modern phenomenon in the western world. In the absurd theatre, the existential plays, impotent rage plays a dominant part. Even in modern Indian theatre, it starts to dominate mostly in the plays of Girish Karnad and Mahesh Elkhwanchur. It ‘generates an atmosphere of sadness than that of terror’ (Pattanaik 15).

Pooru is described by his wife Chitrlekha as someone who is warm, considerate, and loving and is bereft of Kshatriya arrogance. He is the son of Yayati, the scion of Bharata, the next sovereign ruler of the land of Aryas. However, he finds himself as an exception to this glorious bloodline. To him all great deeds of his illustrious ancestors are pompous. He is a seeker of something different, mired with philosophical questions. He says, ‘my forefathers were the

great eagles, keen-eyed, hovering regally in the clouds. I shall seek to be worm' (Karnad *Yayati* 37). When he takes his father's curse upon himself which he considers 'the burden of the whole dynasty', he tells Sharmistha on the question of Chitrlekha: "I am like an infant on the brink of birth. Please don't shove me back with that name" (Karnad *Yayati* 50). The fate of her mother, 'deathly silence which surrounds that face' makes him rebellious. But his rebellion was self-directed, causing harm to him only. He is born into a family where he finds himself a misfit. In one of his conversations with Sharmistha, he says, 'before I came here, I had heard a lot of unkind tales about you. How you had turned this palace into a noxious pit for those living in it. And I came rearing to meet you, to join in your rebellion against this stuffy palace' (Karnad *Yayati* 49)

Karuna and Alienation

Alienation is a recurrent topic in *Yayati*. Most characters suffer this. *Yayati*'s first wife is a case study of how alienation is self-inflicting and poisonous. Pooru mother's strange behavior during her last days is an example of it. "She was bed-ridden and even from there she continued to spew out her virulence" (Karnad *Yayati* 40). It was because she was a rakshasa woman. She was bent on vengeance as the Aryans had destroyed her home and hearth. In order to take revenge, she hid the inferno in her. She had made sure that the Crown prince of the Bharatas had rakshasa blood in him as a mark of her torture in a newfound land. Sharmistha's virulent jibes and sneers are an outcome of this alienation. Every character is a misfit in his/her environment, thus causing widespread dissatisfaction and untold suffering.

Bhayanaka rasa in Yayati

Bhayanaka is the second most discernable *rasa* in *Yayati*. Swarnalata going insane at the approaches of Sharmistha pitched at the level of the supernatural apparition is one such instance: "She is satanic. She can barge into the poisonous fumes and watch me choke while she remains

untouched. She can creep into the hidden corners of my mind, claw those shadows out, and set them dancing. I am terrified of her” (Karnad *Yayati* 8).

The fear of the unknown (death) and his enraged contempt to lead life at others' mercy make Yayati a vulnerable character. From the curse of Shukracharya onwards, he faces this dilemma and is heightened by the impotent rage of Pooru, and the rebellion and death of Chitrlekha, the madness of Swarnalata. It is acted out with such *anubhavas* like ‘terrifying’, ‘recoiling in horror’, ‘spasms of laughter in between moans and sighs’, change of facial colour, trembling are some of the *anubhavas* that are brought forth here. Yayati’s following dialogue can be interpreted from this angle:

No, no, you cannot possibly imagine the horror of it (death). You will always be an outsider. An outsider to my anguish, to my anguish, to my grief, to my nightmare. You can only watch. With such care, with such pride, I had gathered the rarest moments of my life in my palm like precious stones. So I could play with them. Relieve them. Juggle them. And suddenly, they explode, each moment hurtling through my muscles and bones like a meteorite. (Karnad *Yayati* 42-43)

Raudra and disgust

Bibhatsa rasa is also a subsidiary rasa found in this play. Unpleasant and undesired thought, action, and sight coming out of rage play their part sporadically in the whole play. In one of his conversations, Yayati tells Sharmistha:

Sharmistha, where is Pooru? Why isn’t he back? He must be celebrating his youth, his chance to rule the world. He has rakshasa blood in his veins, do you know? How could we have trusted him? The sight of me fills him with repugnance. (Karnad *Yayati* 43)

In *Yayati*, as mentioned above *raudra rasa* is the most delectable one. The existential angst of all the major characters gets a leeway to vent out their anger, and thus *raudra rasa* arises in the hearts of the audience and readers with many histrionics tools.

Nagamandala

Nagamandala is another play of Girish Karnad where myth is consumed to perfection for yet another successful dramatic production. It is based on the two oral tales from Karnataka that he had heard from Professor A.K. Ramanujan. Though there is much folklore in India where this kind of story like cobra taking shape of human form either for love or for revenge is found, this play stands out to be different due to its complexities and parallel storytelling. The play opens with a subplot where a director is cursed to death unless he could awake a whole night. In a deserted temple, he finds flames gossiping like that of humans animated him and in due course, he finds Story of Rani to narrate the whole story to him so that he can reproduce it to the mass from where the main plot begins. This play assumes significance in the study of *rasa* and *dhvani* doctrines for its complex narrative techniques and its aesthetic emotional renderings. It is to note that no emotional display can be called Rasa unless as mentioned by S. N. Dasgupta 'it is aesthetically excited' (192). Flames talking like humans, a director of a drama company trying his best to get awake a whole night to nullify the curse, a Naga taking human form and making love to the heroine of the play (Rani) who desperately needs it as her husband caged her and gifting her nothing but loneliness, a blind old woman getting mad, a young man is possessed by a spirit, a crowd's anticipation for a snake ordeal, and a common woman (Rani) reaching to the status of Devi are the befitting circumstances and situations that make Nagamandala a play worthy to explore *rasa*.

Sringara rasa in Nagamanadala

The main plot opens with a marriage between two, unlike individuals. The female character's name is Rani. She is described by Story as the only daughter of her parents. She is the 'queen of long tresses' (Karnad, *Three Plays* 27). She has "ears like hibiscus. Skin like young mango leaves. Hips like a roll of silk" (Karnad, *Three Plays* 32). Despite the enchanting beauty of the bride, the man locks her inside a room like a caged bird and deprives her of the womanly bliss that a wife should enjoy. He comes once a day to have lunch and then locks her outside. He, on the other hand, goes on enjoying his youthful life with a harlot. The man's name is Appanna. He is described by Kappana, son of Kurudavva, as the one who 'should have been born a wild beast or a reptile. By some mistake, he got human birth' (29). So Rani led a life of loneliness, daydreaming, and detachment. Kurudavva, a blind woman and one of the bosom friends of Appanna's mother, comes to her rescue to shun the life of wretchedness and makes sincere attempts so that she can lead a blissful life. What helps a blind woman can offer? The story of Kurudavva's magic root and her wealth of experience was extended to Rani like a gift of the divine kind. After the first unsuccessful attempt with the little root, when she was about to grind and mix the bigger root, Rani becomes apprehensive due to the redness of the paste. She throws the paste in an anthill and unknowingly invites the cobra to be her lover/ husband. Though he can take any form, the cobra has some limitations too. He can take human shape only at night. He gives comfort, solace, and love to Rani in the guise of Appana at night. However, the same frown, anger, and shout continue in the day by the real husband made Rani bewildered but she started waiting and enjoying the nightly visit of Naga (cobra). This enraptured newness is associated with *sringara rasa* as everything in this mundane world which is 'bright, pure (*medhya*), shining or beautiful, is associated with love' (Masson and Patwardhan 49). Both Rani and Naga are *alambana bibhava* to each other. Her beautiful long hair reminiscences to Naga as 'a dark, black, snake princess' (41). The mere presence of Naga 'sets each fibre' in Rani 'on fire' and the absence forces her to 'spent her nights crying, wailing, pining for him' (Karnad, *Three Plays* 49). The *uddipana vibhavas* that help to commensurate the union between two

lovers are the darkness of the night, a well-furnished bedroom, the smell of the blossoming of the night queen, honeyed talks, gentle touch, embracing, and lovemaking. On the arrival of Naga after a conceivable period of absence, Rani utters, “There it is ... The smell of the blossoming night queen! How it feels the house before he comes! How it welcomes him!” (Karnad, *Three Plays* 49). Its *anubhavas* are soft speech, shyness, gentle body movements, etc. Naga playing with her loose hair, the spontaneous laugh of both the lovers, the dance of Naga and Rani. Rani gets assurance and doesn’t feel afraid when Naga is beside her. She is blessed with conjugal bliss that was unknown to her prior to this. These natural phenomena are well summarized by Naga thus:

Frogs croaking in pelting rain, tortoises singing soundlessly in the dark, foxes, crabs, ants, rattlers, sharks, swallows – even the geese! The female begins to smell like the weight earth. And stung by her smell, the King Cobra starts searching for his Queen. The tiger bellows for his mate, when the flame of the forest blossoms into a fountain of red and the earth cracks open at the touch of the aerial roots of banyan, it moves in the hollow of the cotton wood, in the flow of the estuary, the dark limestone caves from the womb of the heavens to the dark nether worlds, within everything that sprouts, grows, stretches, creaks and blooms – everywhere, those who come together, cling, fall apart lazily! It is there and there and there, everywhere. (Karnad, *Three Plays* 45)

The bliss is so consummate for Rani that the sign of singing of birds to mark dawn is unbearable to her. She laments, “Why don’t those birds choke on their own songs? Who has given them the right to mess about with other creatures’ nights?” (Karnad, *Three Plays* 45).

Sancharibhavas in sringar rasa

Agitation, despair, contentment, anxiety, delusion, longing, apprehension, and dreaming are some of the *vyabharibhavas* of *sringara rasa* in this play. The contentment on one hand and

the longing on the other are quite evident in the love life of Rani. His mere presence gives strength and contentment but each parting moments breed apprehension and longing. After the first sexual union between the two, during the time of parting, Naga tells to Rani that he would be coming every night and lists out some do's and don'ts and requests her not to ask why to which Rani retorts, "The pig, the whale, the eagle – none of them ask why. So I won't either. But they ask for it again. So I can too, can't I" (Karnad, *Three Plays* 45)? When Rani gets pregnant but finds no joy no reciprocity from Naga, her agitation knows no bounds, she chides him, "I was stupid, ignorant girl, when you brought me here. But now I am a woman, a wife, and I am going to be a mother. I am not a parrot. ... Why do you play these games? Why do you change like a chameleon from day to night?" (Karnad, *Three Plays* 51). The anxiety, the longing, the agitation, the apprehension were gripping on part of Rani when Appana brands her adulteress and calls the village elders to prove her chastity. In the absence of Appanna, Naga comes and assures her that she would get back all those that she wishes for, Rani could sense something beyond her comprehension. She becomes impatient and impassioned, and talk thus:

RANI: Wait!

(She suddenly rushes to him and embraces him)

Please hold me tight. I'm afraid. Not of the cobra. Nor of death! Of you. For you. You say you'll become my slave tomorrow. That will be together again. Why then your heart hammer so frantically? I had not even noticed it until now. And now, why is it fluttering like a bird ambushed in a net? Why this welcome to my child?

(He slowly moves her away. Unable to look at him, unable to keep quiet, she leans her forehead against the wall.)

The night is almost over. You must go. But I know this is not like a morning like any before. Tomorrow won't be a day like any other day. I don't want any tomorrows. Or days after. I want this night to last forever. Remain unchanged. I mustn't let you go. I must listen to my heart and hold you back. Take you like a baby in my arms and keep you safe. (Karnad, *Three Plays* 54)

Adbhuta rasa in Nagamandala

Adbhuta rasa, in this play, plays a second fiddle to *sringara rasa*, rather it enhances *sringara rasa* and *santa rasa*. When the news of the snake ordeal, to prove the chastity of Rani, spread far and wide, people in great numbers come pouring in to witness a rare spectacle. She was afraid to death to take the snake ordeal. Her talking with Kurudavva has made her realize the importance of Naga's assurance. With a dash she goes to the anthill and pulls the cobra out and holding it in her hand, she utters the oath which is suggestive that since coming to the village as a bride and wife of Appana she didn't touch anyone but her husband and the snake. She further speaks:

. . . Except for these two, I have not touched any of the male sex. Nor have I allowed any other male to touch me. If I lie, let the cobra bite me.

(The cobra slides up her shoulder and spreads its hood like an umbrella over her head. The crowd grasps. The cobra sways its hood gently for a while, then becomes docile and moves over her shoulder like a garland. Music fills the skies. The light changes into a soft, luminous glow. Rani stares uncomprehending as the Cobra sleeps back into the anthill. There are hosannas and cheers from the crowd.) (Karnad, *Three Plays* 58-59).

Owing to this miracle, Rani becomes a divine being, goddess incarnate. Everyone falls at her feet. Appana's grudge is stifled and he was put into the service of her wife. Even he falls at her

feet. This episode of *vismaya* helps to heighten *sringara* and *santa*, as tranquility and peace of mind are established after this.

Karuna rasa in Nagamandala

Karuna rasa is also an ancillary *rasa* in this play. Both sorrow and joy played hide and seek in the life of Rani. But the life of Kurudavva is a real study of *karuna rasa*. The causes of her sorrow are a curse, affliction, and separation. She was born blind, her husband dies at a young age of dengue. Her only joy and support in her life was her son Kapanna. He is truly devoted to her mother. In one of his conversations with her mother, he speaks: “Do you know what I ask for when I pray to lord Hanuman of the Gymnasium every morning? For more strength. Not to wrestle. Not to fight. Only so I can carry you around” (Karnad, *Three Plays* 29). Under a kind of spell, he is separated from his mother. A spell may be from a yaksha woman or a snake woman. ‘Suddenly the door burst open. The rushing wind shook the rafters. He slipped from my hands and was gone. Never came back’ (Karnad, *Three Plays* 57). The helplessness and loneliness of Kurudavva can be sensed from her own account: “Now I wonder about calling him. They tell me he is not in the village. They think I am mad. I know he is not here. I know he won’t come back. But what can I do? How can I sit in the house doing nothing? I must do something for him” (Karnad, *Three Plays* 57). Her wandering around day and night calling out the name of her son, the suffering, the realization of her son not coming back, and her mental aberration makes a fit case to study *karuna rasa*. Here also, it contributes to realizing the prominent *rasa* (*sringara*). The disappearance of Kappanna by an ogress is enough clues for Rani to realize the import of Naga’s assurance and puzzling happenings in her life.

Tughlaq

Tughlaq is the second play of Girish Karnad written on the historical figure of Mohammad Bin Tughlaq which was published in 1964. Popularly known as the mad sultan of India, Tughlaq's personality is mired with controversies, and his sultanate period is known for conspiracies and bloodshed even though he is known as a visionary, pacifist, and intelligent. His complex personality makes the plot intricate. This play can also be read as a political allegory as it reflects the political disillusionment of the time of its publication. U. R. Anantha Murthy in his "Introduction to Tughlaq" writes, "Another reason of Tughlaq's appeal to Indian audience is that it is a play of the sixties, and reflects as no other play perhaps does the political mood of disillusionment which followed the Nehru era of idealism in the country" (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 143). Other factors contributing to the success of the play as Murthy points out are its complex symbolism and 'irreducible, puzzling quality which comes from the ambiguities of Tughlaq's character . . . (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 144).

The play opens in the yard in front of the Chief Justice in Delhi where people in large numbers gather to witness a verdict of a lawsuit filed against His Merciful Majesty, Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq, by a so-called Brahmin named Vishnu Prasad on the charges of illegal seizure of his land by the officers of the State. After a careful study of the case, it is found by Kazi-i-Mumalik that the Brahmin's case is just and His Merciful Majesty is guilty of illegal appropriation of land. By following the course of justice, the Brahmin gets back his land along with five hundred silver dinars and a job in the civil service as compensation. A lawsuit is a very rare case and the rarest is the delivery of justice. It sets the tone of the play with regard to the lofty ideals of Muhammad and the price he has to pay as this much-hyped and anticipated justice delivery system has glaring loopholes. It is evident that the real beneficiary of this royal pronouncement was not Vishnu Prasad, a Brahmin but Aziz, a Muslim dhobi. The play moves from this pacifist side to many other novels moves like shifting the capital from Delhi to

Daulatabad and introducing copper currencies instead of silver ones. They are the initiatives clearly ahead of time but all these steps prove to be disastrous because of corruption, internal strife, and a clash between religion and politics. There is an air of suspicion also that plays a spoilsport. These make the Sultan the most vulnerable. He tries to quell rebellions in an iron fist but this brings him insomnia and almost insane. There is a blood bath, hanging people in suspicion and anarchy, hunger and willful acceptance of death over hunger epitomize the reign of Muhammad and Sultan a tragic figures at the end. Thus the two prominent *rasas* like *raudra*, *karuna* and one less prominent *vibhatsa* are at play throughout the drama.

As already mentioned in *raudra rasa*, anger is its permanent emotion. The *vibhavas* of this *rasa*, as mentioned in *Aesthetic Rapture*, are anger, provocative actions, insult, lies, assault, harsh words oppression, and envy. The appropriate actions are beating splitting open, crushing open, breaking, brandishing weapons, hitting so as to inflict a wound, drawing blood, etc. (Masson and Patwardhan 53). The play Tughlaq is full of such *vibhavas*. Tughlaq is first challenged by Ain-ul-Mulk, his childhood friend to whom he made the Governor of Avadh, with an army of thirty thousand, and Sheikh Imam-ud-Din, a Muslim clergy, who publicly announces that the sultan has forfeited the right to rule, by murdering his father and brother at the prayer time. Both have incensed the sultan but against both he is vulnerable. He has only six thousand soldiers to the strength of thirty thousand strong armies of Ain-ul-Mulk at the border and the inflammatory preaching by Sheikh inside the kingdom in the places like Kanpur where the city is scorched by the followers of Sheikh. He has to get rid of them quickly and surreptitiously. Sheikh Imam-ud-Din's resemblance with the sultan comes to his rescue. he gets rid of them with a single stroke by sending Sheikh as an emissary to Ain-ul-Mulk and putting them into a trap. Raging a battle on both of them, Muhammad has made the bloodiest massacre. The death of Sheikh at the battlefield is described by Ratan Singh thus: "His face was twisted with fear. . . . Arrows poured into him and within minutes he looked a gory human porcupine" (Karnad,

Tughlaq 173). The other one is when Shihab-Ud-Din and Amirs fail in their conspiracy to kill Muhammad and they were caught red-handed. The betrayal after betrayal infuriated Muhammad. He decided his might, his dagger, and blood bath would be the answers to the growing discontentment against him. Shihab-ud-Din's protest, 'You want to solve all problems in the flash of the dagger...', may seem prophetic but does not sink well in that fateful time (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 184). Muhammad stabs him to death. "Then almost frenzied, goes on to stabbing him. Hits out at Shihab-ud-Din's dead body with a ferocity that makes even the soldiers holding the body turn away in horror" (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 185). Trembling all over, he tells Najib to "see that every man involved in this is caught and beheaded. Stuff their bodies with straw and hang them up in palace-yard. Let them hang there for a week" (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 185). He chokes with his voice yet orders to send these dead bodies of Amirs to every part of his kingdom to let everyone see the cost of the mutiny. Muhammad's composure, his personality, and everything make a sharp turn from this episode onwards. He becomes more dominating and tries to solve everything with his brutish might and perish everyone without the slightest doubt. He makes the royal proclamation that everyone living in Delhi must go to Deaulatabad without any exception to be made. He makes it clear when he says, "Not a light should be seen in the windows of Delhi. Not a wisp of smoke should rise from the chimneys. Nothing but an empty graveyard of Delhi will satisfy me now" (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 186). He even vents his anger on prayer which once made it compulsory in his kingdom. He finds, 'prayers too are ridden with disease, and must be exiled' and gives further orders, "anyone caught praying will be severely punished. Henceforth let the moment of a prayer walk my streets in silence and leave without a trace" (186). When Najib, one of his closest friends, is poisoned to death by his stepmother as is confessed by her, he is frenzied once again and maybe for the last time in his life. He loves three persons on earth and what an irony it proves to be for him that among them one is a murderer and the other is murdered. To the justification of the stepmother that the kingdom becomes 'a kitchen of death' because of Najib and he has to die, he is not convinced rather he accuses her of jumping into the game with

an ulterior motive to control him. He is almost impulsive to pronounce the judgment of death, “there is only one punishment for treachery – death!’ (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 205). The love in one hand and agony on the other are silenced in ribs of stone which is evident in the following dialogue:

Muhammad: The others died unjustly. You deserve to die –

(Two soldiers enter.)

You are worse than an adulteress. But I can’t think of worse punishment for you. Take her to prison.

(The Step-Mother stands petrified. The soldiers are also baffled.)

(Screaming.) Take her away!

(The soldiers hold her. She tries to back away.)

Tell the Nayab Vizier I want her stoned to death publicly tomorrow morning. (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 205)

Thus we get *raudra* rasa where words and actions are terrifying. There are armed assaults, cruel actions, and deeds, bloodshed, and murder. The play *Tughlaq* is an intense play where all those are gripping and absorbing.

Karuna rasa in Tughlaq

The *karuna* is the outcome of *raudra rasa*. It is a secondary *rasa* while *raudra* is the primary one. But in no other play of Girish Karnad, parallel storytelling takes place. Each act of *raudra* is followed by *karuna*. The permanent emotion of *karuna* is sorrow. Among many *vibhavas* separations from those who are dear and downfall, calamity, and curses are important

ones in the play *Tughlaq*. Here apart from personal loss, separation from his ideals plays a crucial part. Muhammad is an idealist. From Scene-1 itself, he spells out his vision. He wants to make his kingdom deliver justice ‘without any consideration of might or weakness, religion or greed’ and wanted to light up their ‘path towards greater justice, equality, progress, and peace – not just peace but a more purposeful life’ (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 149). In a conversation with his stepmother, he tells about his lofty ideals where he appeals to his countrymen to confide in him their worries so that they can share joys. He gives enormous importance to prayer in his kingdom. He speaks up, “Let’s laugh and cry together and then, let’s pray. Let’s pray till our bodies melt and flow our blood turns into air” (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 155). But all his ideals dash into pieces. The rebellions, betrayal, corruption, and his past act of parricide come on the way and start hunting him. Despite his unwillingness, he has to quell every act of upsurge by shedding blood or kissing death. The killing of Shihab-ud-din in his own hand, he reaches a hysterical pitch of *raudra*, but it splits his personality. In the midst of his uncontrollable frenzy, he gets anguished and asks Barani, “Are all those I trust condemned to go down in history as traitors? What is happening? Tell me Barani, will my reign be nothing more than a tortured scream which will stab the night and melt away in silence? (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 185). It suggests his downfall as an emperor and how his dear ideals are leaving him. It echoes the same sentiment when to a young sentry Muhammad confides his weariness and longing- how his great ideals fell apart? He searched his vision of what had dreamed once in the ramparts of an old fort at Daulatabad and he is still searching. But in the last few years, he had only seen the woods clinging to the earth, heard only the howl of wild wolves and the answering bay of street dogs (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 194). After ordering his stepmother to be stoned to death to which he had an utmost attachment, the other side of Muhammad gets dejected. Falling to his knees and clutching his hands to his breasts he seeks God’s glory to purge him:

God, God in Heaven, please help me. Please don't let go of my hand. My skin drips with blood and I don't know how much of it is mine and how much of others. I started in your path, Lord, why am I wondering naked in his desert now? I started in search of You. Why am I become a pig rolling in this gory mud? Raise me. Clean me. Cover me with your infinite Mercy. I can only clutch at the hem of your cloak with my bloody fingers and plead. I can only beg – have pity on me. I have no one but You now. Only you... You... You... You... (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 205-206)

The above-uttered prayer may seem most sincere but to Muhammad, those are the prayers learned by rote that left no echo in his heart. He finds no peace even after this prayer. He is 'teetering on the brink of madness.' The insanity, mental aberration, dejection, depression, and fright which are the *sancaribhavas* of *karuna rasa* are in profusion. The insanity of the Sultan is described by Aazam in the following words:

On the night we came here, I was so nervous I couldn't sleep. So I was standing by the window, looking at those heaps. They looked like giant ant-hills in the moonlight. Suddenly I saw a shadow moving among them. I stared. It was a man wondering alone in the garden. He went to heap, stood there for half an hour, still as a rock. Then he dug into the heaps with his fists and let the coin trickle out. It was frightening. And you who it was? Your Sultan. He does that every night – every single night – it's like witchcraft – (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 212)

Calamity is another *vibhabha* of *karuna rasa* in this play where the sorrow of the common man is captured. Tears lament, drying up the mouth, panic, fright, trembling, and death are its *sancaribhavas*. Scene 11 of *Tughlaq* is full of *karuna rasa*. The drought in Doab where hungry people are shouting for food. People are being killed on the way to reach Daultabad and the shortage of food shows how calamity can bring the *karuna rasa*. Death is considered to be

more fortunate than that living. An old man utters, “I survived. But my family is fortunate. They all died on the way” (Karnad, *Tughlaq* 192). The above-said line would have been in some other context demanded suggestive meaning but here it is a fact that living is much harder and death is worth searching for.

Vibhatsa rasa in Tughlaq

Vibhatsa rasa whose *sthayibhava* is disgust is found in many parts of the play. It arises from such *vibhavas* as discussing, hearing, or seeing what is ugly, unpleasant, unclean, and undesired. Its *vyabharibhavas* are apoplexy, agitation, panic, confusion, sickness, death, and the like. Scene Eight and Scene Eleven are full of *vibhatsa rasa*. Scene Eleven opens after the royal announcement that the public prayer will commence in their land which was muted before, and to grace the occasion, Ghiyas-ud-din Abbasid, the descendant of Khalif will bless and purify Daulatabad. The simple demand they make is food. There is nothing to eat. There is drought in Doab and it is spreading everywhere. The general demand is that they don't need prayer but food:

FIRST MAN: Prayer! Prayer! Who wants Prayer Now?

SECOND MAN: Ask them to give us some food. . . .

FIRST MAN: We starve and they want us to pray. They want to save our souls.

It doesn't end there their tale is full of hunger, death, and diseases. It is almost apocalyptic in nature:

THIRD MAN: He says the roads are lined with skeletons. . . . In Doab, people are barks of the trees, he says. Yes, and women have to make do with skins of dead horses.

THIRD MAN: He says we are much better off here. Not them. On his way here he saw people crowding round a butcher's shop. You know why? To catch the blood spurting from the slaughtered breasts and drink it!

SECOND MAN: Shut up you butcher – (150)

He attacks the Third Man. There is a fight. The Second Man throws the Third Man down, sits on his chest and beats him. He is crying even as he beats him. He is crying even as he beats. The others watch. So, the vibhatsa rasa is at full display in this play.

The Fire and the Rain

The plot of this play is taken from a myth like most of his other plays. The myth of Yavakri occurs in the Vana Parva of the Mahabharata, the longest epic in the world. The original storyline of Yavakri is about the misapplication of power of men that they receive from God and ends with divine intervention where wrongs are corrected with a warning not to use it recklessly any further. Girish Karnad first read the story from C. Rajgopalchari's abridgment of the Mahabharata when he was still in college. In Appendix 1, "Note on The Fire and the Rain", Karnad has explained how he struggled with it for the next thirty-seven years to give some kind of manageable shape to make a play out of it. The original myth and the alteration that was necessitated to shape his play *The Fire and the Rain* are described thus by Karnad himself in the "Note on The Fire and the Rain" in Appendix – 1 that Rishi Bharadwaja and Raibhya were two friends and both of them were learned sages and busy on their ascetic practices. Raibhya had two sons - Parvasu and Arvasu and Yavakri was the only son of sage Bharadwaja. Yavakri had a kind of grievance that his father did not receive the respect that was his due; rather it was usurped by Raibhya and his sons. Being dissatisfied with this affair of this world, he went to the jungle to gain knowledge from Indra. After gaining the knowledge, he misused it to take revenge Raibhya by molesting Vishaka, the daughter-in-law of Raibhya and the wife of Parvasu.

Raibhya took revenge on him by invoking *Kritya* spirit. “He tore a hair from his head and made an oblation of it to the fire. From it sprang a woman who looked exactly like his daughter-in-law. From another hair, he similarly brought forth a *rakshasa* (demon)” (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 292). The spirit in the woman form of Vishaka seductively stole the urn (*kamandalu*) and emptied it making Yavakri vulnerable to the power of Brahmarakshasa who eventually kills him with his trident. When Bharadwaja came to know all these, he got infuriated and cursed Raibhya that he would be killed by his elder son. After realizing his mistake of cursing his friend, he got shocked and immolated himself. One day while coming back home, Parvasu mistook his father for a wild animal as he was wearing deerskin, and killed him by shooting an arrow. He told then his younger brother Arvasu to perform the penitential rites as he is incapable of managing the fire sacrifice. Arvasu did the same as told by his brother. But when he returned to the fire sacrifice, Parvasu alleged him as the killer of his father, a Brahmin and thus he should not be allowed to the sacrificial chambers. Arvasu pleaded to be innocent to no avail. Dejected by the way of the world, he prayed to the sun God and he asked him to restore Yavakri, Bharadwaja, and Raibhya to life and make Parvasu forget his crime and evil act. Yavakri was reprimanded for his folly and was asked to use knowledge judiciously.

Aparna Bhargava Dharwadekar in her “Introduction” brings the alteration made by Girish Karnad to make the play more intense than the original. She writes: “In his elaboration of the myth, Karnad forges closer connections between the principal characters, gives them rounded personalities, and inserts an unambiguous intentionality into their actions” (xvii). Unlike the original myth, in the play we find that Raibhya and Bharadwaj are not friends but brothers, Vishakha is not a stranger to Yavakri but a former lover, Parvasu does not kill his father out of mistake but it is a willful act of patricide out of hatred, the spirit in the shape of Vishakha does not come to Yavakri to drain out the water from *kamandalu* but the real Vishakha. Nitilai is a pleasant addition who happens to be the beloved of Arvasu (Arvasu in the original myth) to find

a contrast between the Brahminical form of complex worship with the easy and spontaneous life of tribals.

Raudra Rasa in The Fire and the Rain

Raudra rasa is a *dukhatmaka rasa* that causes unhappiness. Anger is its permanent emotion. Violence is its basic characteristic. It arises from such *vibhavas* as anger, provocative actions, insult, lies, assault, harsh words, oppression, murderous intent, and envy. The accompanying states of *raudra* are correct perception, dynamic energy, panic, resentment, rashness, violence, pride, sweat, trembling, horripilation, stuttering, etc. (Masson and Patwardhan 53). *The Fire and Rain* is a play of vengeance. A series of murders and death makes the play complex and intricate. Nitilai brings this aspect to Arvasu to dissuade him not to indulging in this fire of vindictiveness in the following words, “Look at your family. Yavakri avenges his father’s shame by attacking your sister-in-law. Your father avenges her by killing Yavakri. Your brother kills your father. And now you in your turn want vengeance - where will it end”(154-55)? Apart from this, there is a murder of Nitilai, a fatal blow to Arvasu, molestation of Vishakha, and many more acts of vengeance. Raudra is the rasa crafted by the playwright in this play as the prominent one, other *rasas* like *karuna*, *bhayanaka*, and *bibhatsa* are mostly a byproduct of it. There are instances of *sringara rasa* but it could not develop but it elicits *karuna* instead.

Injustices and Raudra

Yavakri had the resentment from his childhood that despite his father’s brilliance the humiliation is piled on him. He was the most learned man on the land but was ‘scorned’ while his unscrupulous brother ‘grabbed all the honours’ (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain*130). Yet his father is always forgiving to his brother. It was so despising for him that he fled to the jungle to gain knowledge with a sole purpose to take revenge. When he returned from the jungle after ten

long years of austerities, he was with more power but even more so, he was more vengeful. He speaks to Vishakaha, “The past is not gone. It’s here inside me. The time has come to show the world what my father’s son is capable of” (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 130). This one-point agenda drives him blind. He could not see the proportion of his vengeance. Even he challenged Lord Indra to retain this very venom in him. His interaction with Indra is as follows in the words of Yavakri:

One night in the jungle, Indra came to me and said: ‘You are ready now to receive knowledge. But knowledge involves control of passions, serenity, objectivity.’ And I shouted back: ‘No that is not the knowledge I want. That’s not knowledge. That’s suicide! This obsession. This hatred. This venom. All this is mine. I’ll not deny anything of myself. I want knowledge so I can be vicious, destructive!’ (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 131)

To make his revenge work, he used Vishakha as a tool. Vishakha was his beloved before he went to the jungle for austerity. She is now the wife of Paravasu. He used Vishkaha’s utter loneliness to his advantage as her husband left her alone to attend the royal sacrifice. But to Yavakri, it was good that she yielded to the desire of Yavakri otherwise he had to use force. Such is the madness of Yavakri. He wanted to kill Rabhya, his uncle and the father of Paravasu, to see the effect of it on Paravasu’s attending the ritual. The most incendiary remark comes at the height of his rage, “There was only one way to force them to confront me. Catch Paravasu by his scrotum. Squeeze it so that he could not even squirm” (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 132).

Raibhya, the father-in-law of Vishakha, takes the fornication of Vishkha in the hand of Yavakri as an opportune moment to take revenge on Yavakri by doing a *kritya*. When Vishakha reaches home with torn cloth and her back covered with mud after her sexual encounter with Yavakri, she is faced with the scowl of her father-in-law. This filthy sight of Vishakha like a

buffalo rolling in the mud is not gone unnoticed by her father-in-law. He grabs her by her hair and starts beating and kicking her. He is even threatening to kill her to know the truth. When he hears the truth from Vishakha he is so enraged that he sits cross-legged and sinks into deep meditation bringing horror to the mind of Vishkaha and Arvasu. He invoked the *kritya* to kill Yavakri by sending a Brahma Rakshasa, a demon soul after Yavakri. He dares Vishakhe to go inform Yavakri that if he wants to be alive, he can only hide in his father's hermitage and cower in there like a dog, lest he will be dead. If he survives twenty-four hours, Raibhya shall accept defeat and enter the fire. And he succeeded in his *kritya* by killing Yavakri.

The rage of Raibhya once again surfaced when Paravasu willfully transgressed the rules one month before the royal sacrifice. He is infuriated at the imbecile behaviour of the chief priest of the sacrifice who walked out from the ritual with the ritual bracelet on. He explodes at the defecation of the sacrifice, "The Chief Priest of the royal sacrifice sneaks out at night, crawls home, his face covered like a leper and you think the gods won't know? They won't retaliate"(138)? When Paravasu brings home the topic of Raibhya's age as a factor in the king choosing him for the sacrifice, the frozen anger cinders the whole moment:

I see. So you measured my life-span, did you - you and your kings? Tested the strength of my life-line? Well the sacrifice is almost over and I'm still here,. Still here. Alive and kicking. Tell the king I shall outlive my sons. I shall live long enough to feed their dead souls. Tell him the swarm of dogs sniffing around my daughter-in-law's bottom keeps me in good shape. (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 138)

The possible reason for the resentment and rage of Raibhya is narrated by Vishakha to Paravasu that from the day the King invited Paravasu to he has been drying up like a dead tree. As no one else is there, he takes his rage out on her (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 142).

Parvasu kills his father with the same intent to mitigate the injustice committed to him. This time the rage measured. When Vishakha is spitting out anger against her father-in-law and offering herself for a human sacrifice, Parvasu has not yet experimented. He moves the arrow in the direction of Raibhya and shoots. Vishakha gasps at the sight of horror. Interestingly everyone has a readymade justification for their senseless acts and Parvasu has one too, “He deserved to die. He killed Yavakri to disturb me in the last stage of the sacrifice. Not to punish Yavakri but to be within me. I had to attend to attend to him before he went any further”(Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 142).

A sensible man like Arvasu is also not devoid of vengeance. Knowing well the treachery of his brother, he decides to do something because ‘if such an evil man continues as the Chief Priest of the sacrifice, it’ll rain blood at the end -’(Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 154). When he got the opportunity to avenge on this as Vritra, the actor, he enacted it as a divine actor descended only for it. “*He attacks Indra with a ferocity which takes Actor-Manager by surprise. They fight. The Actor-Manager is agile and well trained. But Vritra’s violence shakes him. He runs. Vritra chases him*” (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 170). In his high pitched dialogue, he is determined to raze his befouled sacrifice to the ground. In his chase, he pounces on a guard and grabs a torch from his hand while rushing toward the real sacrificial enclosure. Two other guards try to stop him but he is uncontrollable. He proclaims himself as a Rakshasa who can kill anyone who tries to stop him. One guard narrates his action in the most glowing term that brings wonder to the mind of readers, “. . . he is not human, Sir. His feet don’t touch the ground. He flies in the smoke like Rakshasa - he disappears in the flam (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 171). He couldn’t kill Parvasu but this made him go up in flames while Arvasu stood there watching, untouched.

Raudra and bhayanak

Raudra rasa is the predominant rasa in the play. It gives rise to *bhayanaka*. The death of Yavakri in Act One brings *bhayanaka* rasa to the full extent. After Raibhya invokes *kriya* by sending a Brahma Rakhsasa to kill Yavakri and Vishakha pouring the water out from his *kamandalu*, Yavakri becomes a vulnerable character. He gets restless in search of drops of water to save his life. By then a strange wail is heard from the distance. It is unearthly, terrifying, and evil. Vishakha gets frightened at this fearful sight and urges Yavakri to run for his life. While he is running, she finds the Brahma Rakshasa standing right behind her. She sees him, gasps, and falls down in a faint. Yavakri runs, digs water, and not finding any again runs to save his life. He is about to step into his father's hermitage, Andhaka jumps and grabs him, but doesn't let him move. By this time, Brahma Rakshasa comes and spears him. Yavakri collapses in Andhaka's arms. The demon pulls out the trident and goes away. Arvasu comes running and stands frozen with horror. Here the *vibhavas* of the *bhayanaka rasa* are strange, unearthly, and terrifying wail, the Brahma Rakshasa, panic for life, savage mutilation of Yavakri by pushing the trident. It is acted out by heavy gasps, running for life, falling down in a faint, standing frozen, and so forth.

Nothingness and *Karuna*

When Raibhya invoked Brahma Rakshasa, we find him thin, almost naked, and holding a trident. He makes strange wails, unearthly, terrifying, and evil. He comes and kills Yavakri without much effort. Thus it gives an impression of a very powerful spirit. But it is not. There is an obvious discrepancy between appearance and reality. He is asking Parvasu to liberate him from the pain of being a Brahma Rakshasa. He is telling his plight of perennial suffering, the pain of a Brahma Rakshasa:

A soul locked in nothingness like foetus stitched up inside its mother's sac. You cannot imagine the horror of that existence. Nothing to look forward to: no birth, no death; nothingness stretched endlessly. Your father plucked me out and put me back in time, in

order to kill Yavakri. I didn't want to, but I obeyed. And as a result, now I have something new. Hope. of release - from this state - (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 146).

He has been immortal yet longs for death. When Indra is pleased, and fulfills the wish of Arvasu. The Brahma Rakshasa pleads with him to ask for his release. In his words, “. . . you are a human being. You are capable of mercy. You can understand pain and suffering as the god's can't -” (175). Arvasu wants Nitilai to come back to which Brahma Rakshasa counters at the cost of a soul writhing in pain. His argument is based on universal goodness in Nitilai. He says, “Nitilai came to help you because she cared for you. She would have cared for me. Wept at the thought of my endless life in death”(175). He is bringing, again and again, the theme of torment, hell hole and condemnation, and the wishful desire for death.

Loneliness and *karuna rasa*

Vishakha, the lover of Yavakri and the wife of Parvasu leads lonely life of neglect. Yavakri left her and went to the jungle to gain power so that he can take revenge on the humiliation of his father. After one year of her marriage with Parvasu, he too left her to become the chief priest of the royal sacrifice. Vishakha was forced to live alone with her father-in-law who vents out rage against her. Else silence is the only companion. When Yavakri plotted to molest her. Her yielding to the temptation was pure to get free from the hell of loneliness. She speaks up to Yavakri, “I live in this hermitage, parched and wordless, like a she devil. And words are like water - precious”(122). On the other occasion, she narrates her state, “Alone I have become dry like tinder. Ready to burst into flame at breath”(123).

Sringara rasa* in *The Fire and the Rain

The play depicts the love between Arvasu and Nitilai. Arvasu is a Brahmin and Nitilai is a tribal girl. But both committed to each other. The play opens where two lovers Arvasu and Nitilai are

chatting about the formal marriage proposal that Arvasu is about to ask the hand of Nitilai from her father and elders in an open assembly. Both are young, Nitilai is fourteen, Arvasu bit older than her. Both are *alambana vibhavas* to each other. In a unique rehearsal with Nitilai, Arvasue though seemingly nervous yet tells what he has to say to her elders, “Yes, I know. I know: just stand there and say: ‘I want to take her as my wife. I am potent. I can satisfy all her needs. . .’” (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 110). Suggesting his limitation to Andhaka, he says, “All I want is to dance, sing and act. And be with Nitilai” (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 113). While responding to Andhaka on another question, he says that if his brother is not willing to this match, he would tell him. “‘ I can’t give up Nitilai. She is my life. I can’t live without her – I would rather be an outcast – ’” (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 113).

Union after Separation

Towarrds the end of the fire sacrifice, Arvasu meets Nitilai outside the city gate. Arvasu was unconscious till that time, but when he was aware of the things around him and the presence of Nitilai by his side, it was a magic moment.

ARVASU(*Unbelieving.*): Nitilai! You - ?

It can’t be - it isn’t -

NITILAI (laughing): Yes, it is.

(*Suddenly Arvasu laughs happily like a child.*)

ARVASU: Nitilai! Nitilai! Am I dreaming? Or are you really here? You won’t disappear again, will you? Nitilai! Whre have you come from, Nitilai! You are Nitilai, aren’t you? Don’t melt away please. Nitilai - stay, now that you are here.

(*Grabs her hand.*)

I'll hold on to Nitilai now. I won't let Nitilai go.

(Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 149)

Their union brings so much positivity that it rekindles a dying fire in them. They feel happy. They also find it is beautiful to be together. When Arvasu is on the top of the world feeling like 'flowing down to torrent of wind' (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 150) despite his severe health condition, Nitilai on the otherhand asks a spare corner for her.

Love and sacrifice

Nitilai is a lover, mother, sister - all rolled into one. She is a universal figure of love and sacrifice. When she heard the terrible story about Arvasu, she left in search of Arvasu. Three days she has been moving around and nursing Arvasu without worrying much about her own life. The Actor-Manager narrates her sacrifice to Arvasu thus: "I didn't save your life. She did. I only found you. You were lucky that she turned up soon after and it's she who has been nursing you. Mopping up your vomit, wiping your bottom. Like a baby" (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 156). Even the Brahma Rakshasa brings this aspect of Nitilai of what makes her a beautiful person - sacrifice, love and care.

Arvasu is a Brahmin and Nitilai is a tribal girl. Caste plays an important role in determining destiny in Indian culture. Caste is definitely a barrier for a Brahmin boy to marry a hunter girl. This in fact brings innumerable hardship to both of them. Arvasu finds the series of murder is a planned conspiracy because he wanted to reject his caste to marry Nitilai. He further says, "Can't you see it? I wanted to strike out my own. So first a corpse curls itself round my ankles. Yavakri. Then it's father. Bodies drenched in blood. Like rats that pour out during the plague and die vomiting blood" (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 154). To Arvasu thinking on this line is not nonsense. Yavakri, his father and brother can do this. They "can bring out the terrors

from the womb of the earth and play with them. They sat this foul nature against you. Can't you see the design in it at all? Corpses pursuing me - evil, like stink emanating from that sacrifice” (Karnad, *The Fire and the Rain* 154).

Hayavadana

Hayavadana is a dramatic rendering of *Kathasaritasagara*, but more so from Thomas Mann's retelling of the story titled *The Transposed Heads*. Kirtinath Kurkoti in the *Introduction to Hayavadana* makes the difference between the two by stating,

The Sanskrit tale, told by a ghost to an adventurous king, gains a further mock-heroic dimension in the Mann's version. The original poses a moral problem while Mann uses it to ridicule the mechanical conception of life which differentiates between body and soul. He ridicules the philosophy which holds the head superior to the body. The human body, Mann argues, is a fit instrument for the fulfillment of human destiny. Even the transposition of heads will not liberate the protagonists from the psychological limits imposed by nature. (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 69)

The play has two plots. The subplot from which the title is taken is about a horse-headed man that can be translated in Kannada as '*hayavadana*'. He was born from the union of the princes of Karnataka and a white stallion of Arabs. After fifteen few years of their marriage and a few years of his birth, the father horse transformed itself to become a beautiful celestial being, a Gandharva. He was a horse for the stipulated time because of a curse from Kuvera due to some of his misbehavior. After getting back to his original form, he asked Hayavadana's mother to accompany him to his heavenly abode. But she gave a condition that she would go with him provided he returns to horse again. This infuriated him and gave her a curse to become a horse herself. So mother became a horse and ran away, the father went back to his heavenly abode. Only Hayavadana was left behind. The peculiarity of him was that he had a human body and a

horse's head and that could speak and think like a man. So he took part in every human activity. But all became a failure because he did not find a society suitable for him. Thus he wanted to become a complete man. Was it easy? Definitely not. Divine intervention is surely required. He went to most of the famous sites of worship and at last to the Kali of Mount Chitrakoot. And when he said that if he would not be helped, he would chop off his head. Mother of all nature, goddess Kali appeared before him. When Hayavadana fell on her feet and asked her to make him complete, he became a complete horse. Is this a travesty of blessings? Head determines one's identity and thus goddess was not at fault. The subplot creates *hasya* and *karuna rasa* at the same time in the mind of the readers and audiences as the plight of Hayavadana is tragic as a man with the head of a horse. At the same time, the incoherence and illogical series of events give way to *hasya rasa*.

In the main plot of *Hayavadana*, there are three characters Devadutta, Kapila, and Padmini. Devadutta and Kapila are two bosom friends. Devadutta happens to see Padmini and instantly falls in love with her. Kapila turns out to be a cloud messenger for Devadutta and becomes the sole force to strike the match between them. In course of time, Kapila and Padmini are attracted to each other. One day, while the three of them are going to Ujjain Fair, Devadutta, at the height of jealousy, goes to the temple of Mother Kali and offers his head. When Kapila finds his friend Devadutta has sacrificed his life, he follows suit. Waiting long for them, Padmini searches them out. When she finds both the friends have left her, fearing social outcast and blame, she too offers her head. Goddess intervenes at the right time and offers her a boon. She asks the goddess to make them alive. Goddess asks her to join the body, in the frantic moment; she exchanged the heads with the limbs. Thus when they get alive, Kapila's limb is having Devadutta's head and Devadutta's limb with Kapila's head, thus creating two new individuals. Initially, both are happy. The crux of the matter becomes Padmini. The question arises who is the rightful husband of Padmini. Both stakes claim for her with their valid reasons. They went to a

hermit, who pronounces that just like Kalpabrikshya (Bunyan tree) is the king among the trees, the head is the king among all the parts of the body. So man having Devadatta's head is the Devadatta and rightful owner of Padmini. Padmini gets the best of both men and naturally becomes exhilarated at the prospect of her conjugal bliss. Devadatta, too, was very happy as he was having the sinewy muscle of Kapila, the chief reason for Padmini's attraction towards him. The only loser is Kapila. Being dejected, he went to the jungle. But the new exhilaration is short-lived. Devadatta's tight body loosened up. He is more preoccupied with his study than outer activities. Padmini's urge for the lost love for Kapila starts blossoming up. One day, in the absence of Devadatta she goes to the jungle with his son in search of Kapila. She finds Kapila. Kapila narrates his story of struggle and his days of uneasy response to life and Padmini about her longing. Devadatta too reaches the jungle and challenges Kapila for a duel. Both fight like cocks and are killed. Padmini performs Sati. The son of Padmini grows up in the jungle among the huntsmen as the son of Kapila and after the age of five he was nurtured by Devadatta's father and grows up as the son of Devadatta. The play is a love triangle with existential crises. Different kinds of *rasas* are crafted here. The important *rasas* in this play are *sringara* but not the usual ones, *hasya*, *karuna* and *raudra*.

Sringara rasa in Hayavadana

Hayavadana is a love triangle and depicts deviant love. In Indian context, loving someone else's wife is immoral and does not constitute something that are bright, pure, or shining as basic requirements of *sringara rasa*. But in many Indian literatures, there are ample examples of deviant love. But still we can apply the ancient theory of *rasa* in this context. The outcome of this love cannot lead to the fulfillment of *sringara rasa*. It is simply because; the outcome of this deviant love will either lead to disgust or meet a tragic end.

The main plot of *Hayavadana* begins with an engrossing tale of Devadatta's crush on a girl at the first sight. Though he is a serial offender of such a crush, this is new. The girl Padmini is the *alambana vibhava* for Devadatta. He describes her to Kapila, "as the Shyama Nayika - born of Kalidasa's magic description - as Vatsayana had dreamt" and in one appearance she becomes his guru in the poetry of love and wonders whether she would ever assent to becoming his disciple in love itself (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 85). When Kapila meets her for the first time as a cloud messenger for Devadatta, he exclaims in the same manner, "But this one! You're right - she is Yakshini, Shakuntala. Urvashi, Indumati - all rolled into one" (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 87). In the thrill of the ecstasy, he can not concentrate on anything as his whole being is only thinking of her and craving for her. The mere thought of her enraptures him with positivity. He declares, "If only she would consent to be my Muse, I could outshine Kalidasa. I'd always wanted to do that - but thought it was impossible . . . But now I see it is within my reach" (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 85). Thus, the youth and the beauty of Padmini become the *alambana vibhava* for Devadatta. A sense of insecurity, uncertainty and a whole lot of interesting possibilities come on the ways which are essential elements to savour *sringara rasa*.

Apprehension, violence, and jealousy in *sringara*

Apprehension is one of the *sancharibhavas* of *sringara rasa*. Devadatta is apprehensive about winning Padmini's hand. He speaks with anguish that she is not meant for the likes of him (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 85). He further tells that the girl is beyond his wildest dreams. But her thought over him is gripping. The longing and apprehension create in him the outburst of anger which is violent in nature. Violent is not inimical to *sringara rasa*, rather it gives pleasure if it is not life threatening. He proclaims, "I swear Kapila, with you as my witness I swear, if ever get her as my wife, I'll sacrifice my two arms to the goddess Kali, I'll sacrifice my head to Lord Rudra . . ." (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 85). It goes to the extent of insanity when Devadatta believes

that the hand and the head are of no use if he would not have her. Even Kapila admits Devadatta is not the type to talk with such violence barring this case of his heart's longing.

Jealousy is the most prevalent *sancharibhavas* in *sringara rasa*. The presence of Kapila in the conjugal arena between Devadatta and Padmini creates a stir in his mind of Devadatta. He is off guarded when he finds Kapila around them. Padmini's drooling over Kapila all the time upsets him. He quips, "But shouldn't he (Kapila) realize I'm married now. He just can't go as before . . . (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 91). He wishes to spend time with Padmini undisturbed, without anyone around. He expresses his dissatisfaction to Padmini not to hop around him twittering 'Kapila' 'Kapila' every minute when Kapila is around. Despite Padmini's assurance to Devadatta not to be annoyed about Kapila's presence telling him, "You are my saffron, marriage-thread, my deity" (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 92), Devadatta is not quite at ease. In one of the dialogues in aside, he sums up his assumption, "Does she really not see? Or is she deliberately playing this game with him? Kapila was never the sort to blush. But now, he only has to see her and he begins to wag his tail. Sits up on his hind legs as though he were afraid to let her words fall to the ground. And that pleading in his eyes - can't she really see that" (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 92)?

The deviant love

Kapila's love for Padmini and vice-versa is a deviant love as Padmini is the rightful wife of Devadatta. But their attraction towards each other is mutual. For them also a brief separation is heart wrenching. It creates a sense of emptiness. Devadatta could reluctantly convince Padmini to cancel the Ujjain trip citing health issue. This comes as a shock to Kapila as all his enthusiasm related to the trip abruptly ends. His mental state can be analysed in the following dialogues, "What am I to do for the rest of the day? What am I to do for the rest of the week? Why should it feel as though the whole world has been wiped out for a whole week? Why this emptiness . . ."

(94). Padmini's change of mind has completely altered the situation. To which Devadatta quips to himself, "And my disappointment? Does that mean nothing to you" (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 95)?

On the way to Ujjaini fair, Kapila climbs the tree of Fortunate Lady's flower which arrests both the attention of Padmini and Devadatta. When Padmini is absorbed with Kapila's ethereal shape, broad back, and feminine waist. Devadatta finds her enticing gaze for Kapila is the betrayal of his love for her.

PADMINI: (Aside.) He is like a Celestial Being reborn as a hunter. . . . How his body sways, his limbs curve - it's dance almost.

DEVADATTA: (Aside.) And why should I blame her? It's his strong body - his manly muscles. And to think I had never ever noticed them all these years . . . I was innocent - an absolute baby.

PADMINI: (Aside.) No woman could resist him.

DEVADATTA: (Aside.) No woman could resist him - and what does it matter that she's married? What a fool I've been. All these days I only saw that pleading in his eyes stretching out its arms, begging for a favour. But never looked in her eyes. And when I did - took the whites of her eyes for their real depth. Only now - I see the depths - now I see these flames leaping up from those depths. (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 96)

In the fit of his anger, he walks to the temple of Kali and cuts off his head as promised in return of fulfilling the deepest craving of his life that is Padmini. Finding Devadatta beheaded, he moaned for him and given the ultimate sacrifice for his friend. Padmini gets the blessing of Mother Kali when she too was ready sacrifice her life. Before they are blessed to life, Padmini

mixed up their heads, thus creating different personality with body relations. They term it as gift and three of them dance with glee.

What a good mix!

No more tricks!

Is this one that

Or that one this?

Ho! Ho! (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 105)

The frantic claims and counterclaims to possess Padmini after the transposition of the head by both Devadatta and Kapila bring out the deeper subconscious longing for Padmini. Devadatta is happy to take Padmini home with the celestial body of Kapila. Kapila's claim for Padmini is based on a sound logic that Padmini is the wife of Devadatta. Raising his hand, he claims, "This is the hand that accepted her at the wedding. This is the body she's lived with all these months. And the child she's carrying is the seed of this body" (106). He is triumphant at the foul language and brute force used by Devadatta. Triumphantly, he speaks, "He is using force! And what language! Padmini, think! Would Devadatta ever have acted like this? This is Kapila's violence . . ." (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 107).

Padmini, on the other hand, is happy at the prospect of a new dawn in her life. He despises Kapila once his crown possession is taken away by Devadatta. Kapila surmises her state, "I know what you want, Padmini. Devadatta's clever head and Kapila's strong body..." (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 108). Padmini unabashedly calls Devadatta her 'celestial-bodied Gandharva and her 'sun-faced Indra' (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 111). On another occasion, she calls her Devadatta "comes like a bridegroom with the ornament of a new body . . ." (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 111). This is the climax of the love triangle. Now Padmini could find almost a

mythical person who has the better of two men. Will that end the yearning of Padmini for the other? Logically one can surmise so but human life dwells more in grey than black or white.

Resentment, Rebellion and Pain as the out come of Deviant Love

After the episode of the transposition of the head, Kapila went to the jungle and lived a life of dejection while Devadatta and Padmini enjoyed every drop of conjugal bliss. In course of time, Devadatta changed little by little till he completely transformed himself as Devadatta before the days of transposition. And Padmini is fed up with the monotonous domestic life with Devadatta. She slips into the jungle once to meet Kapila. The resentment, rebellion, and pain in Kapila were still fresh in him. He kept on torturing and despising the body that he got from Devadatta. He did not look much at the body as if it is of some strange construct. When it came to him it was a Brahmin's body soft like a prince's that had undergone a sea change. Kapila brings the pain and torture in shaping up his body in the following words, "When this body came to me, it was like a corpse hanging by my head. It was a Brahmin's body after all - not made for the woods. I couldn't lift an axe without my elbows moaning. Couldn't run a length without my knees howling. I had no use for it. The moment it came to me, a war started between us" (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 124). This dialogue of Kapila narrates his struggle to cope with the foreign body. It does not stop there; there is a long list of struggles that he has undergone. Even the inner organ like the stomach of the body had a rebellion once. While narrating his condition, he tells Devadatta, "It resisted. It also had its revenge" (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 128). To which Devadatta sums up both of their condition in this poignant line, "You lived in hate - I in fear"(Karnad, *Hayavadana* 129).

Despite Kapila's claim that he has succeeded in uprooting the memories, Padmini's presence has started digging them up once again. The faceless memories of his skin once buried have surfaced once again with all his ugliness. Kapila's struggle is that of epic proportion. He

narrates them all to Padmini in these words, “One beats the body into the shape, but one can’t beat away the memories in it. . . . That the body should have its own ghosts - its own memories? . . . I have never touched you, but this body, this appendage, laughed and flowered out in a festival of memories to which I’m an outcast . . .” (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 126).

Hasya rasa

The main plot of *Hayavadana* is about deviant love, where the *sringara rasa* does not end in consummation but end in death bringing and pathos or *karuna*. The subplot is replete with *hasya rasa* and occasional *karuna rasa*.

Disorder and *hasya rasa*

The subplot is akin to the main plot on the theme of the search for completeness. Here *Hayavadana* is presented as a man with a horse head but a human voice, human thinking, and a human brain. This incongruous sight just like a mythical creature brings this *hasya rasa* at the initial phase of the play. As we know, in *hasya rasa* laughter is the primary emotion. It arises from the *vibhavas* of mismatch, shamelessness, telling fantastic tales, seeing some deformity, describing faults and many others. When the play is about to open and Bhagabata is giving the introduction to the play, Nata, the actor creates a comic scene through his unusual behavior. As described in the stage direction of the play *Hayavadana*, he comes running in, trembling with fear. He rushes on to the stage, runs around the stage once, then sees the Bhagavata and grabs him (74). Bhagavata does not comprehend the matter and tries to free himself. The actor grabs him again. He reprimands him this kind of shouting and screaming in front of the audience. Here, *hasya rasa* could be generated by breaking the order of the schemes which is harmless. Nata breaks this standard order of the stage by frightening all become a cause of laughter.

Many such breaking of order takes place in the play to create *hasya rasa*. Nata narrates tremblingly how his heart is going to burst what he saw while coming hurriedly to take part in the play as an actor. As he drank a lot of water, his stomach was full and was going to pull out his dhoti to relieve himself, a deep thick voice reprimanded him not to commit nuisance on the main road. The voice was coming from nowhere but from a horse. With this, the following witty remarks and desperate responses catapult to *hasya rasa*:

BHAGAVATA: What did have you to drink this morning?

ACTOR: Nothing, I swear. Bhagavata Sir, I haven't been near a toddy-shop for a whole week. I didn't even have milk today.

BHAGAVATA: Perhaps your liver is sensitive to water. (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 75-76)

Deformity and *Hasya*

Deformity though arouse laughter, any extention of it can bring *cuelyt* thus bringing *karuna rasa* in the minds of *rasikas*. *Hayavadana* is a source of laughter and sympathy at the same time. When the entry of *Hayavadana* is challenged with the entry curtains, he starts sobbing behind the curtain. The terror is terrified. When the curtain is lowered completely, we find *Hayavadana* is having a man's body but a horse's head and he is sitting on the floor hiding his head between his knees. He hesitantly comes to the centre-stage. *Bhagavata* thinks him as man with mask. This notion false identity further gives comic relief to the audience. *Bhagavata's* reprimand to *Hayavadana* is based on this notion of mistaken identity, "First you go around and scaring people with this stupid mask. And then yo have the cheek to disturb our show with your clowning? Have you no sense of proportion? . . . Enough of this nonsense now. Take it off - I say, take off this stupid mask"(Karnad, *Hayavadana* 77-78)! The following course of events are both comic and pathetic in the same vein. *Bhagavata* tries to pull out the mask. The actor comes and holds him by his waist while the *Bhagavata* pulls at the head and *Hayavadana* offers no

resistance but can't help moaning to escape pain. When the realisation dawns Bhagavata that it was not a mask but his real head, it is quite a surprise for every one.

Satire and *hasya rasa*

Describing faults is also a *vibhava* in *hasya rasa*. This leads to satire if it is mildly put as “a satire focuses on the relatively less serious defects (which a perceiver shares and so can find funny) or it makes relatively serious problems look much less serious” (Patanaik 106). In *Hayavadana*, Bhagavata many such incidents in this fashion. When Nata is disturbing the stage out of fear, Bhagavata tells him not to be afraid there as he is on the stage surrounded by people. He makes him aware with this satire by describing at least one perennial fault of the audience, “I am here. The musicians are here. And there is our large hearted audience. It may be that they fall asleep during a play sometimes. But they are ever alert when someone is in trouble” (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 75). This kind of laughter does not come from eccentric actions, words, or bodily movements but from smiles and slight laughter which are the characteristics of the best characters. On another occasion, his tryst with completeness and how he visited every religious shrine but not Tirupati. In a veil attack to religious superstition, he says, “(Pause. Shyly.) You know I hate this head - but I just can't help being fond of this lovely, long mane. (Pause.) - I had to give the miss to Tirupati” (Karnad, *Hayavadana* 81).

Fantastic tale and *hasya*

Hayavadana's horse's head is not anyway related to a sin, a curse, or of any kind. He was born with it. Behind this, there is fabulous story ofcourse. His mother was a princess of Karnataka. She was also very beautiful. When she came to her marraigable age, her father made a swyambara by inviting princes from all the corners of the world. They were from China, from APersia and from Africa. She did not like any one of them. Prince of Araby came at the end, the

princess saw the handsome prince sitting on his great white stallion. Instantly, she got fainted. The father thought the prince of Araby was the man for his daughter. The wedding arrangement was made accordingly. When the princess woke up, she said she won't marry the prince but his horse. She stuck to her decision and didn't give any heed to his father's persuasion to change her mind. Finally she married to the beautiful white stallion and lived with him for fifteen years. One morning, the horse turned to be a beautiful celestial being, a *gandharva*. He was cursed by god Kuvera for his earlier misdemeanor. After fifteen years of human love, he got back his original self. He asked her to accompany him, but the princess told him she would go only if he became a horse again. Infuriated, he cursed her to be a horse and went to heavenly abode. The prince happily ran to the pasture. Hayavadana was left behind without much care of either of his parents. The *hasya rasa* here is the by product of *adbhuta rasa*. The concealment in the story give rise to excitement and the incongruity and disorder give to *hasya rasa*.

Bali: The Sacrifice

Bali: The Sacrifice is an adaptation of the thirteenth-century Kannada epic *Yashodhara Charite* by Janna. There were two more even older Sanskrit renderings of the same by the two notable poets namely, Vadiraja and Somadeva. This play brings to the forefront the conflict of two faiths and the agony of the characters involved in it on the puzzling question of violence and non-violence. The supremacy of violence over non-violence or vice versa is displayed at a personal level to set the trend of the general is however a misconceived notion if we take these characters as individuals, not the type.

Bali: The Sacrifice presents four characters. Among them, three are from royal quarters – the king, the queen, and the mother and only the mahout from the lower strata of the society. Each one among them is disillusioned and insecure. They are suffering from incomprehension and alienation. For example, the Jain queen finds herself alienated in a palace, passing sleepless

nights listening to the bleat of sheep taken out for sacrifice. In the moment of utter disillusionment, she commits adultery, and her high moral ground on nonviolence crumbles. She goes hysteric. There is no end to her torment. The cock of dough comes alive to her. She prefers to kill herself than pierce the blade in the dough. The king is caught between two poles – the progressive Jainism which propounds nonviolence and the age-old practicing Hindu religion, his wife on the one hand and his mother on the other, the (calculated) violence which is instinctive on one side and the doctrine of nonviolence which is unnatural on the other. Amidst everything, the desecration of his queen becomes the ultimate stroke to go insane. He loses the power of comprehension and becomes regressive. The mother lives a life of pariah in her own palace. Her gods are desecrated, faith deserted, her son betrayed. The mahout is a bundle of contradictions. He is ugly yet has a divine voice. He is sensible and sensual, forceful and humiliating on one hand and timid and superstitious, abusive and lonely on the other. He is a catalyst – a life force to the queen and a filthy beast to the king, a part of the story but not a party to it.

The implicit and explicit tension between two faiths, a sexual encounter of the queen, and a method of purgation to erase the sin of the encounter make a circle that sums up the play *Bali: The Sacrifice*. The overt sexual connotation and description during the sexual encounter and thereafter, the abuse and humiliation of the mahout to the queen, cowardice, and incomprehensiveness of the king, the rage of the mother, the delirium of the queen, and above all the blood and gore as the leitmotif makes the play a fit case of study for the *bībhatsa* (disgusting) *rasa*.

Bharata in his *Rasa Sutra* writes:

Now (the *rasa*) known as *bībhatsa* has disgust as its permanent emotion. It arises from such *vibhāvas* as discussing, hearing, or seeing what is ugly, unpleasant, unclean (*acosya*) and undesired. It should be acted out by contractions of the whole body

(*sarvāngasamhara*), facial contortions (*mukhavikunana*), vomiting (*ullekhana*), spitting, violent trembling of the body (*udvejana*), and similar gestures. Its (*vyabhicari*) *bhavas* are apoplexy, agitation (*udvega*), panic, confusion, sickness, death and the like. (Masson & Patwardhan, vol i, 55)

The sexual interplay in *Bali: The Sacrifice* is both implicit and explicit. The union between the queen and mahout brings the break of order in more than one way. The queen is beautiful, belongs to the topmost corridor of power, is married and monogamous, and on the other hand the mahout is a savage beast, from the lower strata of the society, unmarried and polygamous. The union takes place in the inner sanctum of a ruined temple which is highly undesirable. It is a place of worship not a place of desecration. The queen's anxiety and fear and mahout's pervasiveness make their presence disgusting. In the course of his persuasion, mahout exposes his aggression and his promiscuity as taking women to bed is a plaything. He tells the queen, "I am ugly. Ugly as a bandicoot. I know. But I've had women plenty. When I've wanted a woman – needed a woman – my voice has never failed me" (Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 75). The queen is just another woman having stronger nails than others and he likes everything in bed and claims to be a better lover than her husband. The humiliation and abuse of the woman (queen) mixed with the queen's ecstasy and anxiety make the situation queer and incomprehensible.

On another occasion, when they are about to be exposed in the inner sanctum. They are panic-stricken. Fear, worry, and anxiety grip them. The queen jumps to her feet and tries to run behind the pedestal. The mahout devises a plan to answer every knock at the door that they must pant and simulate the sounds of copulation as if they are making love. He demonstrates the painting, 'Hunnh... Hunnh... Yes. Like that. Come on.' The queen moans in anguish. The desperation and the humiliation are evidently clearer when the aggression of the mouth gives

birth to fear and timidity. He tells the queen, ‘and I don’t want to get caught with you, whoever you are. God alone knows whose wife you are’ (Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 84). The extramarital relationship due to its unacceptable nature brings *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa* instead of *sringara*.

The distasteful physical contacts between king and queen on more than two occasions give rise to *bibhatsa* rasa. On the first occasion, both king and mahout join to rip her apart:

MAHOUT: Touch her here on her shoulder. Rub gently. And you’ll see for yourself what happens.

KING: The right shoulder!

(Goes near the queen and inspects her shoulders.)

The right one. Here. I see. I must bear that in mind. I knew that sometimes caressing and pressing her down here – near the hips – that worked like magic. But this right shoulder thing, this is new to me.

QUEEN: Enough, sir. Please, you are making it worse for yourself.

KING (ignoring her, to the Mahout): Any other – shall I say, vulnerable – sports, would you say? Erogenous?

QUEEN: Don’t you dare. I am not a piece meat for you to pick and paw at.

(Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 117)

In the second instance, the king needed a strange assurance from his queen that she would not betray him again. He wants to repeat the act that mahout has done with her ‘where it all

happened in front of an absent god and a snoring beast. He begs and she kneels. He kisses and caresses her; she pushes the king and rolls away. A virtual scene of rape in the presence of the third person is both pervasive and humiliating. In this unusual long scene, the *anubhavas* that a reader can mark will be interesting to trail the *bibhatsa* rasa. She startles and is in horror. She stands petrified and vicious and defiant at the same time. She trembles with humiliation and is almost on the verge of tears.

Aggression and *Bibhatsa Rasa*

Aggressors in the play are the victims and victims are the aggressors. Their search of meaning brings alienation and incomprehension. The mahout resorts to physical pain for the queen only to stay long with her. The king humiliates the queen and also makes physical assault the queen with the only hope to take her back. The queen sums up the mental position of the king thus: ‘you have taken this to save me, haven’t you? To ensure that your mother doesn’t contaminate me with her violence’ (Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 111)? The king wishes to punish mahout for his sexual misconduct but in the end turns out to be a figure of mockery, a figure with a sword only for decoration ‘like fangs in a sparrow’s beak.’ The mother is an outcast in her own house, a tragic figure herself yet a supportive force to his son’s torment. She utters what kind of man are you? You have lost your manhood. You, you impotent...’ (Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 112). All these make the play a confusing state of affairs where disjunction and displacement make the situation absurd.

Cowardice and *Bibhatsa*

As I have mentioned earlier, the characters are not only aggressors but also victims in the same yardstick. They, too, are cowards. The inability to act brings again to the forefront their confusing states of mind. The cowardice of the king where brings incomprehension, and inner turmoil, thus breeding displacement and alienation, the queen’s fear and cowardice bring anxiety

and identity crisis and in the case of the mahout, it is black humour. The following conversation between king and queen, gives us a picture of a king shackled with inaction.

QUEEN (taken aback): How long have you been here...all this while? Listening to everything going on inside?

KING: What else could I do?

At midnight, he started singing in the distance. I felt you wake up. I felt you slide out of my bed. Left. I opened my eyes, saw you press yourself against the window, and listen. And then, slip away. I followed. Through the biting chill and you didn't even have a shawl on... you went out of the royal garden... into the street. You entered this ruined temple. The singing stopped. Those noises began. Those horrible, animal noises of copulation. I couldn't... breathe.

(The queen covers her face in horror)

I was numb, couldn't breathe. I needed fresh air. I ran. I ran back into the garden.

(The king runs into the garden. Almost breaks out into a scream but gags himself with his fists. Sits clutching his head. Controls himself). (Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 101-102)

He becomes a tragic figure who could have set everything right with the sword or at least set an example of it. He refuses to 'throw her (queen) to the dogs' as she has betrayed him, he seeks help and is content with the bloodless sacrifice of cock of dough. The dough sacrifice becomes imperative for him without which he cannot tackle the problem.

Blood and Gore

Bibhatsa is of two kinds: *ksobhaja* (that which arises from agitation and pure udvegi (that which is nauseating). Udvegi (*bibhatsarasa*) comes from (seeing) faeces, worms (etc), and the

other comes from (seeing) blood etc (Jasson & Patwardhan, vol I, 56-57). Thus blood plays an important part in bringing about the *bibhatsa* rasa. Because of this, it becomes an intermediary rasa between *bhayanaka* and *raudra*. No other word has gotten more prominence than the 'blood'. Its opening song of the queen at the beginning of the play brings this very dilemma about the relation of blood (bloody acts) with man. The queen sings:

so also the human soul,

the habitation of gods,

is split into two realms –

one of the spirits that adore

the blood and gore

of the bright, shining blade

slicing smoothly

through the lamb (Karnad, Bali: The Sacrifice 73)

The blood is mostly hinted at in this play except once when the blood of bird reoils queen in horror. She bewails: 'Blood. Poor birdie! It's bleeding'. She keeps caressing the bird and refuses to relinquish it even for the burial. The word 'blood' keeps coming both at the time of triumph and at the time of crisis. For example, the queen becomes aggressive, when she becomes certain of her pregnancy, she utters:

Can you man imagine what it feels like? To pretend you are unaware of their gaze as they scrutinize the roundness of your belly, the stain of your thigh! Line after line of carrion crows, watching, waiting, ready to caw at the palmful of blood that spurted. And spurt it

did – every bloody month. How I hated myself when that happened. (Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 95)

Mother wants to take avenge the queen's betrayal as she demands: 'Throw her bones to the dogs. She has betrayed you. You are not bound by your vows now. All this nonsense about non-violence. It had to go. Let it go. Kill the harlot and her lover' (Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 107). The violence, aggression, and blood go hand in hand.

Melodramatic narrations of blood, scream, and pain makes the play a true specimen of *bibhatsa rasa*. The first one is about the birth of the king. Here, the mother is narrating everything to the queen with awful details:

... You have a fickle womb. False pregnancy! Miscarriage! Mine is made of steel. We were ecstatic. But labour began and the child refused to come out. They said the foetus was set to transverse in the womb. For four days and nights I screamed in pain. I prayed for death so my child could live. Ultimately they pinned me down on the floor, spread-eagled, and the nurse shoved her hand into my uterus, twisted him around and pulled him out. I was screaming through the gags they had thrust into my mouth. ... and saw him drenched in blood, half wrapped in my placenta, and I began to laugh. (Karnad, *Bali: The Sacrifice* 115-116)

The birth of the mahout is no less melodramatic. Here again, it is blood, fear, scream, and superstition. Mahout is reasoning out to the queen why he was ugly. His recollecting of his mother's words about how a snake had crept into the sparrows' nest and gobbled the eggs, the chirping of the sparrow, the scream of the mother, the birth of the mahout, etc. set the play realize *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa rasa* at the same time.

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Chapter Four

Aspects of *Rasa* and *Dhvani* in the Plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar

Mahesh Elkunchwar is one of the most influential and progressive dramatists of Marathi theater in post-independent India. He is a part of the trinity, with Vijay Tendulkar and Satish Alekar, who have shaped the modern Marathi Theater. The wide-ranging themes of his plays bring him much critical acclaim in his literary career. The passage of time and mortality, identity and sexuality, religious tensions and gender issues, human bonds, and alienation are some of the most talked-about themes in his great works. Sayan Dey in his book *Decolonial Existence and Urban Sensibility: A Study on Mahesh Elkunchwar* writes,

“The plays of Elkunchwar try to explore the colonially hierarchized postcolonial existential problem of urban India which punctuate the pluriversality of the Indian society. The paradigmatic shift of existence is underpinned with attitudes that counter the hegemonically dominant ideologies as observed through the contemporary patterns of class, caste, communal, economic, political and gendered hierarchies" (1). He is widely appreciated for his innovative spirit, immaculate craftsmanship, the sweeping canvass of his subject matter, and his deep understanding of the human psyche. However, the renowned Pune-based theater director Mohit Takalkar, who has made a new documentary feature on Elkunchwar, says, “Elkunchwar is acclaimed, but not popular in the mainstream. This is because his play addresses subjects that make the audience uncomfortable” (D’Souza, web).

The plays of Elkunchwar symbolize the dramatic vision and skill of a man who has played a seminal role in changing the face of urban theater in India. His plays are translated into English and many other Indian languages for scores of unforgettable performances on the stage. His plays are translated by Shanta Gokhale, Supantha Bhattacharya, Irawatati Karnik, Ashish Rajadhyaksha, and the playwright himself into English. He can be easily termed as one of the most translated and performed playwrights in India. He is the recipient of several prestigious

awards, including the Saraswati Samman (2002), the Sahitya Akademi Award (2002), the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1989), and the Brittingham Fellowship, University of Wisconsin, USA.

Among many of his acclaimed plays, *Holi*, *Desire in the Rocks*, *Old Stone Mansion*, *Pond*, and *Apocalypse* are picked here for the analysis of *rasa* and *dhvani*. The last three plays mentioned above are a sequel called *The Wada Trilogy*.

Holi

Holi is the first play of Mahesh Elkunchwar. It is written by the playwright when he is barely thirty years old. It was directed by Vijay Mehta and staged in Bombay in 1970, and subsequently, it was produced as a film in 1985 by Ketan Mehta. The play captures the young men's angst, dissatisfaction, and misdirected burst of energy. This tries to expose the darker side of the human story and how the eroding family and societal values have their repercussions in life. In the "Introduction" of *Collected Plays of Mahesh Elkunchwar, Vol-II*, Anand Lal writes, 'The play highlights the frustrations of Indian students faced with a bureaucratic and authoritarian administrative system impervious to their needs and grievances. At the same time, it is quite clear that student indiscipline is an equally worrisome problem' (xv). The decision of the Principal to arrange a Cultural Programme on the day of Holi instead of declaring it a holiday was the trigger point of a long-standing dissatisfaction against the college authority. In the turn of events, there are rage, protest, conspiracy, a mob attack, and the loss of a precious life. If we put these events in the *rasa* doctrine of Bharata, it shows how *raudra* becomes the predominant *rasa* in the play and among the youth of the modern days, others being *karuna* and *bibhatsa*.

Raudra *rasa* has anger as its permanent emotion. "It arises from (sic) such *vibhavas* as anger, provocative actions (*adharsana*), insult (*adhuksepa*), lies, assaults (*upaghata*), harsh words, oppression (*abhidroha*) or according to Abhinava, 'murderous intent' and envy (Masson

& Patwardhan, vol.1. 53). It can lead to *vira*, *karuna* and even *bibhatsa*. This comes under the category of *dukhatmaka* rasa as it causes pain. The various accompanying states of *raudra* are correct perception (*asamoah*), dynamic energy (*utsaha*), panic, resentment, rashness, violence, pride, sweat, trembling, horripilation, stuttering (*gadgada*) and so forth (Masson & Patwardhan, vol.1. 53). It can be acted out by red eyes, puffing out of the cheeks, wringing of the hand and similar gesture.

Injustices and *Raudra*

The major characters in *Holi* are young students in their twenties. They perceive and presume things in a peculiar way. They are full of energy and their misguided energy is always a cause of concern. The socio-economic baggage also determines their social life and often plays a spoiled sport. For instance, Pande rebukes Banarjee saying, ‘the whole world knows where your mother whores ...’ (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 14). This causes the scuffle between them where Banarjee bruises Pande following which the Principal takes a hasty decision and rusticates Banarjee. This is sheer injustice on the part of the Principal that has united the students to raise voices against the college authority. Lalu narrates that Ranjit is an orphan and these neglected personal angles play a big part in their moments of the wound.

The real flashpoint of conflict arises when the Principal denies a holiday on Holi rather he arranges a cultural day and a show of educational films on the same day. On the day when students ought to enjoy the festival of colors and be on their own, they are gagged from attending the program with the imposition of a fine. This autocratic order along with much-misappropriated conduct by the Principal in the past has made the student community rage. Gopal lodges his anger thus: ‘Bloody pimps go on reducing our holidays. Has even this Principal’s father ever seen a holiday for Holi curtailed’ (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 3)? Ranjit is not less aggressive in his contempt against the Principal’s decision when he says, ‘scoundrels have turned the college into a school, really’ (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 7)! The anger of the students against the insensitive decision of the Principal gets louder when it is added to another injustice by the

Principal. And this time it is the rustication of Banarjee, the fall out of the scuffle between Pande and Banarjee on the accusation of Banarjee's mother whoring in the town. The palpable anger among the students is quite visible:

GOPAL: Buddy, there's bad news. Banarjee is rusticated all of a sudden.

TIMUR: That Principal is a fucking bastard!

MADHAV: Rusticated so quickly?

GOPAL: Buddy, didn't even make an inquiry. Saw his nephew's eye injured and took the step. . . .

GOPAL: But this is sheer injustice. (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 15-16)

The stage is ready for confrontation between Ranjit and his gang on the one side and the Principal on the other. Chaos, laughter and loose comments have made the stage ready for a unique showdown. An intentional intervention by Ranjit followed by the ruckus created a war-like situation. Explosive laughter, booing, screams, firecrackers, stampede, and throwing of eggs forced the principal and Chief Guest to leave the stage. The action of the students infuriated the Principal and demanded retribution. This made seven of the students including Lalu and Gopal detained for one year and expulsion of Ranjit. This is part one of the aggravated anger of the students and the retribution by the Principal. This is a story of anger, fury, and brazenness, no less tormenting than a war. Here the words used are harsh and rough, actions are violent and rash.

Raudra, and the Frenzy and the Grotesque

The actions of Ranjit and his friends had no remorse but more fury after the action taken against them. There is joy and utmost satisfaction. Vasanta quips, 'But what fun we had. The fucker literally put his tail in his ass and ran' (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 20)! They know the repercussions but are not worried about it. Right after Karkhanis informed them about the Principal's decision, there is no remorse; rather they are brazenly searching for the person who

might have given the names to the Principal. Timur assures Ranjit saying, ‘we shall raise fucking hell’ (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 21)! This rashness and resentment are unique *vyabharibhavas* of *raudra*. Once they get the person behind licking the names, there is madness and frenzy. Anand, the poor chap who disclosed the name to the Principal, became the target of hysteric aggression. He was forced to drop his pants and wear the sari. He was slapped on the face, shaved off his eyebrows and tonsured his head, and was dragged to the campus in a sari. At the same time, he is at the receiving end of verbal ridicule like ‘bastard’, ‘a painted whore’, ‘nautch girl’ etc. Initially, Anand was terrified inside but externally calm then he got really timid. He also ‘tries bluster to convert threats into jokes’ uttering, ‘laugh at a poor bugger’, and at the end, he was on the verge of tears and was giving a loud sob. Every single plea of Ananda went unnoticed because of the frenzy of Gopal and his friends. This unpleasant scheme of things is repulsive and gruesome. This fury is not targeted against the enemy of an alien land but at a friend who has failed to comprehend the situation and made a wrong decision. This depiction brings the hollowness of mankind, thus disgust.

Anger through words

Raudra rasa is not only about terrifying actions but of words. In modern literature, *raudra*, or the furious is generally manifested more in words than in deeds. In it, words communicate ‘a (furious) intention’ but not necessarily the action. The play *Holi* is replete with such instances. In the battle of ideology, the young mass has a very negative viewpoint on the culture-vultures who sermonize the greatness of Indian culture but in action, they are the ones who contaminate it. Vasanta fumes at this, ‘You bastards making shaven widows pregnant, how dare you holler about culture’ (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 6)? In the same breath on some other occasion, Vasanta speaks to Thakur:

I have seen so many like you. These bloody culture-wallahs really need to be praised.

Build temples and gobble up the money. Spouting religious shit all the while. Who’s that

Desaiji coming today? Supposed to be a blessed one. Keep looting bastards, in the name of god, religion and the nation! You bloody Brahmins have fucked up everything!
(Elkunchwar, *Holi* 14)

Ranjit is equally vocal in spitting out poison against the ‘khaddar-wearing freaks’ and fat businessmen. He speaks out, ‘I have just one effing ambition. Collect some pot-boiled ministers, some fat businessmen, and remove their clothes in some public square, kick them on their naked asses’ (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 13)! This Marxist outburst makes the play into ideological warfare. It is different though to note that most of their social outbursts are fit cases of impotent rage that necessarily do not bring any kind of physical damage or destruction.

Raudra and karuna

Raudra is associated with injustices and violence. Injustices breed contempt. To set it right, it invites more violence and it seems there is no end to it. It makes a vicious circle. More violence means more destruction and suffering. Thus it raises *karuna rasa*. The autocratic Principal has forced the students to their knees. There is widespread discontent with this. When Ranjit and his friends take it to the forefront, there are casualties. Unfortunately, Anand becomes the soft target of the collective violence thrown at him. Anand’s hapless plight and the overindulgence of force on him make it a fit case for *karuna*. His ‘lying on the mattress in his sari and crying’, and to his utterance, ‘I’ll kill myself. I’m telling you to bring out his vulnerability at the jeer, scorn, and force at the adversary forces. His suicide ends the most feminine character of this play. His love and concern for Shrivastav and the betrayal of him by Shrivastav, his different sexual orientation, and the loss of precious life bring sadness and fear towards the end of the play. It is acted out by gasping and clenching of teeth with fright, abruptly running out and sobbing. They evoke a sympathetic response from the readers/audience.

Hasya rasa

Apart from *raudra*, *hasya* is another important *rasa* in this play. Laughter is the stable state of *hasya* (comic) *rasa*. The *Natya Sastra* expresses the following views about *hasya rasa*:

As for the comic (*rasa*), it consists of (or is based on) the primary emotion of laughter. It arises from such vibhavas as wearing clothes and ornaments that belong to someone else or do not fit (*viktra*), shamelessness (*dhrsty*), greed, tickling sensitive part of the body, telling fantastic tales, seeing some (comic) deformity (*vyanga*), and describing faults (*dosodahana*).

(Masson & Patwardhan, vol. I 50)

In the run-up to the Cultural Programme and its abrupt end, there is a series of comic elements (break of order) to make the event truly hilarious. The boy's speech and rebuttal from his friends in the gallery make the boy psyched out and in the end, meekly sits down without completing the memorized speech. The boy's speech goes like this:

Hunh? (Laughter. Boy has forgotten his speech and is flustered.) So he is excellent. His education, I mean, is quite a lot, I mean, he has studied abroad, but he's a Hindu, I mean thoroughly religious and performs rituals and all. Moreover, he is even born and all. (Tremendous laughter) I mean, born in a noble family. His father was excellent and being a great devotee of Lord Hanuman one night Lord Hanuman appeared in his dream and said ... and said ... (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 17)

Apart from this hilarious speech, the physical deformities of Mummy and Timur, mostly at the jeers by friends and their brave faces to deal with it, become a cause of laughter.

RANJIT: See guys. Even the girls want a holiday.

TIMUR: Mummy's a girl.

PATEL: You want to make sure?

BANARJEE: Don't worry, pal. I made it sure. Long ago. Mummy is not insured any more!

MUMMY (punches Banarjee): Scoundrel! Letting out our secret to the world!

(Moves over to the girl's group.)

TIMUR: Banarjee get your back xrayed! (Elkunchwar, *Holi* 11)

The play *Holi* succeeds in bringing out the inner turmoil of the restless youth – its assertiveness, frustration, anger, and angst. It has become a trend in the modern drama that mostly deal with postcolonial traits like the feeling of otherness, caste hierarchy, patriarchy, class struggle, etc. In the above said context, when one tries to analyze *Holi* as per the rasa theory, one may notice – more *raudra*, *bibhatsa*, *bhayanaka* and *karuna* than some of the other prominent *rasas*.

Desire in Rocks

Desire in the Rocks is a psychological play. It is a story of incest. But more so it is about the loss of individuality within the individual vastness. It "explores how the raw passion of man gathers into an all-encompassing force to overpower and control another being to the point of mutual self-destruction" (Elkunchwar, xv). In one of the interviews, Elkunchwar tells to Samik Bandyopadhyay: "Even before I started writing the play, I knew that this play had a white-hot passion that should cut like a laser beam. There was no place for any other thing. I didn't want anything to pollute the purity of this expression" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* xvi). This portrays diverse aesthetic experiences namely, *bhayanaka*, *raudra*, *bibhatsa*, and *sringara*.

Place as *Vibhava* of *Bhayanaka*

The setting of the play in the opening scene unfolds the *vibhavas* of *bhayanaka rasa*. It is acted out in the old mansion on a pitch-black night. The mansion is carved in teak but the village is full of rocks. There are no trees. Just burnt and stunted scrub. There is no water either. It is a place broken away from the whole world. Lalita's comments on this place are interesting: "How rocky the place is! Such huge stones. Like heavy frozen shadows. Standing still in their places" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks*, 71). The lurking fear in her mind comes in repeatedly in the opening scenes. Her questions are impregnated with fear, "Hem! (Pause.) Are we going to live here now" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 70)? In the same breath, she asks again, "Will you never go back from here" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 71)? The lonely place keeps on hunting her till the end of the drama. Lalita feels exhausted to the core. She finds Hemakanta a

petty, ungenerous man. She is so much broken that she wanted death. She utters, “What if we simply freeze as we are, where we are now? If we turn into stone?” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 101).

Terrifying tale and *bhayanaka*

The setting of the play is a rambling old mansion that has a story of its own. The mansion is of rich pedigree. It is the village of rocks, an invitation to sculptors. But it is not the end of it. It is a village with no trees. “Just burnt, stunted scrub” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 71). Lalita describes the place thus: “What kind of land is this? No water anywhere. No trees. Even the houses are like stone tombs. Like a mysterious threat looming on either side of the road” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 78). The only mansion of wood in the rocky terrain has a story that is both mystifying and terrifying. Hemakant has a story that is claimed to be true that “the mansion wouldn’t stand. Kept collapsing. Fires would start. Someone said, offer human sacrifice. A beggar woman and her child were buried under here. The mansion stayed up” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 78). As a result, everyone had to adopt an heir. It was the curse of the beggar woman that children were stillborn and others died at birth. The terror continues throughout the play.

The fear of loneliness in her past life, the fear of losing Hemakanta, committing incest in the back of her mind, the darkness, and the human sacrifice for the mansion culminate into an outburst of fear. She appeals to hold her hand tight. Her heart starts pounding. She appeals, “I’ll die of fear” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 79). When Hemakanta narrates how every soul in that place remained unfulfilled. Deep breathing, sighs, and laughter could be heard. Lalita screams. She gets mistaken for a chandelier to be a skinned animal strung up. She was so terrified that she wanted to go back.

HEMAKANTA: Back where?

LALITA: Anywhere away from here. (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 81)

On another occasion in Scene I, the procession of Goddess is taken on the road outside. The drums reach a feverish crescendo. A woman possessed by goddess sways in trance. Lalita being paralyzed with fear cries out to shut the window. She trembles, screams, and clings to him in desperation. It is acted out by such *anubhavas* as screaming, trembling, paralyzed with fear, pounding of hearts, holding and clinging to someone in desperation, etc.

Deviant Relationship and *Sringara rasa*

The play portrays the love between Hemakanta and Lalita. Love is deeply rooted. It is the raw passion of two consummate lovers. After initial confusion and fear, Lalita is deeply committed to this relationship. She laughs out seductively and appeals to Hemakanta to soothe her excruciating pain. “How sweet you are! Cruel and sweet”, she describes Hemakanta (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 85). She is like any good lover who wants to express her love like any girl next door. She expresses her heart out in her following dialogue: “Hem, I want to enter your eyes. Deep into them. I’ll become a tiny drop of blood and travel through your body, through your heart, brain, mind, soul. I’ll talk to all your secrets. Discover all your dreams. Then I’ll turn into a tiny pupil and live in your eyes. Will you let me” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 86)?

The unending urge for physical joy to its insanity is beautifully captured in Scene II. The kisses of Hemakanta have scattered live coals in Lalita’s body. To the series of kisses to every part of her body, she whispers out, “I’m going to faint. My breath can’t take the weight of so much bliss. (*He pulls her roughly to himself.*) Oh! Hem! (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 90). With this, she looks like a self-willed Palash tree flaming with red blossoms. Hemakanta wishes to capture it in his sculpture. The scene is acted out with teasing, laughing, flaring up, aggression, pauses, murmurs, and repeated utterances of the words like a queen, bewitching, beautiful, etc. In the debate about the involvement of the mind with the body, Hemakanta could convince her that physical experience must be experienced in its purity. He further says, “It’ll (mind) corrupt the purity of the physical experience, Lali. Let the mind watch. Be vigilant.

Aloof. So that you can live the experience. Fresh and full” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 93). He forbids her not to sway with meaningless questions but to realize, ‘the body is only truth’ (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 94). Lalita’s fear, apprehension, doubt, distantness, and frigidity give way to divine understanding and the pleasure associated with it, as it goes:

LALITA: Yes. Yes. And how beautiful it is! How wonderful!

HEMAKANTA: Yes, Lali. Beautiful and wonderful.

LALITA: You showed me. You told me. Can the human body be so beautiful? Filled with so much insane joy? I can offer up my life for this joy. (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 94)

The joy of physical love triumphs over the fear of the goddess. It seemed to be her final liberation but actually not. But for a moment, it looked like exactly that one:

What Goddess? What people? And what sin I am guilty of? Let her see. Let the goddess also see. She cannot have ever seen such a wild celebration of physical pleasure. Take me. Take me. Hold me close. I shall become one with you to beat of these drums. Look. Look into my eyes before they close with happiness. Do you see fear? Doubt? Terror? You will see chandeliers of desire blazing there. Extinguish them one by one. With your lips. Hands. Body. Let only the burning torch remain. To prevent accusations. As a witness to the uninhibited bliss of man and woman. A symbol of my eternally burning desire. Come to me. Come. Come. (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 94)

There is a deep conflict between Lalita and Hemakanta. In the wild ecstasy of physical love, there is a saturation point for Hemakanta. But the desire for it burns bright in Lalita. It is love enveloped with a sense of insecurity. She searches for her identity. The womanly love is bruised at every point by the ego of a male artist, Hemakanta. She objects to being sculpted without a thought of her in the mind of the sculptor and asks him, “do you think I’m also lifeless, like the stones” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 89). She recognizes her weakness and her being so full of yearning that Hemakanta takes a free ride without giving her due. She urges him

to take her in her entirety. The sense of fulfillment is also different in these individuals. The following dialogues bring these aspects in greater clarity.

HEMAKANTA: I smell the heady scent of your hair. I feel the exciting saltiness of the sweat off your face on my lips. I feel I'm burning as I sink deep into a red-hot fire. And then comes darkness. It envelops everything. Quite, exhausted. A void.

LALITA: How different! What a difference!

HEMAKANTA: What's different? . . .

LALITA: That's why you become a sudden stranger. Distant.

HEMAKANTA: I'm always near you.

LALITA: You are. And you aren't. Now I understand. I've tried so often to hear the call of the waves in your body. I still do. And the flute. And the bells. I have never heard these sounds. I call out to them but receive no reply. Why, Hem? Can you not hear the resonance of my mind? (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 92-93)

The more she thinks of him, the more distant he goes away from her. Her mind searches him through the whole space but he slips away and goes far away with his chisel.

Abject Feeling and *Karuna*

The relationship forged between Hemakanta and Lalita is highly hierarchical. They are brothers and sisters with so much of an age gap. Apart from this relationship, Hemakanta has a dream to become a sculptor, and Lalita is completely dependent on him with no other creative urge. The foundation of the relationship between them is based on love, of course, but more so to eradicate fear. The fear of loneliness on the part of Lalita. This becomes a tool of exploitation for Hemakanta. This overdependence becomes the seal of Hemakanta's authority over her. When she says, "I am nothing but a pile of dried leaves without you; a mere sapless plant trailing on the ground. One glance from your eyes and I sprout tender green leaves" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 96), it is not only the expression of her love but her helpless without him. She further tells, "How abject you've made me" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 96). The same thing is echoed

by him when he reprimands her telling him it is not good to carry life as if you have no spine and 'don't become abject like a destitute dog' (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 99).

Loneliness and *Karuna*

When she gets pregnant and needed Hemakant the more, he becomes cold and stony. He thins it as a ploy to fetter him. He declares this piece of news does not give him happiness and that not a drop of blood stirs in him. She tenderly tries to convince him that it will stir when you see him physically. She pleads about how she needs him badly at that state and how her child needs him. When Hemakanta tells Lali to go away from him so that he will lose himself in the forest of stones. Lalita's pleading is quite appealing, "We need to hold on to each other now" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 107). It is enacted with so many pauses and gloom to bring out *karuna rasa*.

The fear of loneliness becomes a weakness for Lalita and an instrument of blackmail for Hemakant. Time and time again, this is depicted in the play. When Lalita tells him not to call her by any other name except Lalita, Hemakant shows his stubbornness and brings fear to the table that mostly haunts Lalita. "I will. Else I'll stop talking. Completely. Forever. I'll go away from here. Would you like that" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 75)?

The two lovers bring out their past when they are just brothers and sisters. we can find one recurrent theme of their discussion - fear. It is Hemakant who is returning from Europe after the death of his father after spending there almost fifteen years. Lalita was a little girl of five then. In the following conversation, the same recurrent subject of fear is very much striking. She was recounting one thing about Hamakanta as she speaks up she was afraid of him even then.

Abuse, Insult, and *Karuna*

In the temple, women insulted Lalita by telling her as an evil woman for holding and doting a baby. First Woman calls out to tear her hair out and her back broken. The second woman tells her bluntly, "If you want to sin, go sin in your cursed mansion. Don't come to defile this place" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 110). The third woman considers her a filthy rich

who has no shame. When the scene ends, we find - Lalita wandering, lost, and returning once more to the jungle of her sculptures. The words like sinner and beggar reverberated in her ear. She is desperate to talk to someone. No one is there to talk to her. The dark place is suffocating for her. The following monologue narrates her pathetic condition thus:

Hem! Hem! Where are you? Where are you? I'm choking with fear? H-E-M! (*She runs in and out of the sculptures in rising panic.*) Am I lost? (*Terrified.*) I'm lost. Lost. (*A sinister darkness fills the stage.*) Hemakanta! Hem! (*Screaming.*) Hem, Hem! I'm lost. Lost.

(*She wanders blindly, calling out in mounting hysteria, her voice torn to shreds with terror. A solitary voice, lonely calls, answered only by their faint far away echoes. Finally she collapses. Something within her has snapped, and she whimpers.*)
(Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 111)

Death of the Child and *Karuna*

In Scene Five, Lalita gives birth to a still child. To a mother, it is the most difficult phase. It is a double whammy for her as the whole villagers were hostile to them. The song of Lalita for the dead child, her reluctance to hand over the child for burial, and her appeal to lay flowers under him, over and around him so that no thorns and stones prick him are very moving episodes of the play. When Hemakanta gives the child to a beggar to do the last rite in order to avoid the villagers who were up in arms against them, Lalita is completely broke. She protests this with Hemakanta telling, "What a pity! Oh, what a pity!" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 114). Death as *sancharibhava* is very unique because it is not an emotion but it brings pain, sadness and separation to which there is no equivalence.

Concept of Sin, Self Retribution, and *Karuna*

A question haunts her at the death of the child - "Why have I been punished" (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 113)? To this self-made question, she gets a self-consuming answer that every wrong thing is happening to her because she is a sinner. The sin of incest with

her brother. Hemakanta tries to convince her that it is not a sin to any avail. The thought of incest has nested in her mind. She considers herself to have committed a terrible sin. That is the reason why the whole village has risen in anger against them. She starts imagining things that the goddess is coming in a dream and commanding the villagers to punish her. She chooses to become a prostitute. And that is part of her retribution. Nobody but she has chosen this punishment for herself. In Scene Six, She speaks up to Hemakanta: “I am inflicting this on myself. I have sinned. Mustn’t I be judged? I am going to burn myself in this fire of retribution, Hem. I want to be pure again. Hem, I have laid this body under so many bodies. As retribution” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 124).

Anger and fury in love

Rage may be considered inimical to sringara rasa but not always so.. The feeling of Lalita that she is nothing eats out her core. This existential fear and angst hinder her progress. She nauseates over her predicament. With this feeling of nothingness, she revolts and often accuses and quarrels with Hemakanta. This draws both revolt and sympathy from him. Her usual accusations against him are being hard, aloof, and remote. She finds that he gets bored, becomes indifferent, and being false to her. In one of her frenzied retorts, she tells him, “And how can your mind be empty? Why am I not there? Why are memories of me not there? Tell me. Tell me, you brute!” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 98). The response is equally strong and angry, “You don’t want me to draw breath without your permission. I must accept being imprisoned within your sight. Everything must happen under your watch” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 98). Constant interference and frequent questioning have made his life unbearable. He asks, ‘if I wake up before you why I did that? If I fall asleep before you, why?’ (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 99). This doesn’t end here the list of dissatisfaction and irritation is quite long. Whenever he tries to share his experience, she flares up into a jealous rage. His final retort is quite telling, “You insist that every part of my life where you don’t exist, your name doesn’t exist, your shadow doesn’t exist, must be exercised out of my life as well. It’s ego! An arrogant ego! You

are an egotistical, self-centered, jealous petty woman! Don't you try to control me, Lali” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 99)? This is pure rage. But they know their love is equally strong like that of the anger. The rage and love cling to each other. This is acted out in the following way. She weeps as he scolds. She spreads her hair out in his way, he doesn't like this idiocy. She hugs his foot and puts her head on it. He frees himself. This eventually leads to a better understanding even though for a short period of time. A fragile truce could be seen with the sympathetic look of Hemakanta and Lalita's realization that she should not have clawed at him till he bled.

Lalita loves Hemakanta and is quite dependent on him. The response on the other side was cool like that of an ungenerous man even after giving her everything without thinking twice. She equates him with 'swine, brute and a selfish monster with no heart' and 'a leach that lives off sucking other people's blood' (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 103). At the height of her fury, she curses him. “You will have to pay the full price for this one day. My rage won't go waste. My curse is on you”(Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 103). When Hemakanta wants to laugh out everything Lalita reprimands him not to hide his inadequacy under laughter. She further tears him apart saying, “Artist my foot! You aren't even human. Your body is filled sawdust. And a heart as lifeless as those stones of yours” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 103). She terms his jealousy is because of his inadequacy. He is an impoverished man.

In their retorts, allegations, and counter-accusations, Lalita calls his sculptures not true art but expressions of vulgar passion. To this Hemakanta taunts him to create something and show him. Lalita discloses to him that she is going to have a baby and it is proof that she can create a new life - a real human being. To Hemakanta, it is ordinary, not anything like creating a sculpture, a poem, a song, or a painting. He says, “All women bear children. Not everybody is an artist” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 105). To which she retorts, “Then all women are greater than artists, . . .” (Elkunchwar, *Desire in the Rocks* 105). Anger and quarrel are the familiar sights in courtship and among the lovers. jealousy, horripilation, etc. are various *sancharibhavas*

of *sringara rasa*. In this case, *sringara rasa* could not develop due to its deviant nature. Rather it brings *raudra*, *bibhatsa* and *karuna*.

Old Stone Mansion

The *Old Stone Mansion*, *Pond*, and *Apocalypse* form the Wada Trilogy of Mahesh Elkunchwar. It narrates how at the advent of commercialization and modernization, human feelings are commodified. It talks about post-independent India's reality under the backdrop of a Zameendaar Brahmin family with the surname of Deshpande dealing with the new reality of their time. Depiction of hierarchic patriarchy, the disintegration of the feudal order, social collapse, cultural fragmentation, and keen awareness of reputation have been heavily indicated and resulted in an adverse effect on the family. All the characters are trapped in chaos. They try to find their identity in the postmodern scenario. The major disease of postmodernity is an existential crisis that hides the characters' original identity. All the above aspects of the play elicit different *rasas*. Thus it is an interesting study to explore its different contours. The see-saw between historical time and the timelessness of hereditary memories is played out on this terrain, as four generations housed in the Wada come to terms with a death in the family and the visit of two members of the family who have moved out of the ancestral home and relocated themselves in the metropolis. The real and the surreal jostle throughout the play.

Old age and *karuna*

Old age takes quite a toll on a person. It's an age of helplessness. This is beautifully depicted in the play *Old Stone Mansion*. "The play opens in 'dead silence', lasting till Dadi's voice breaks upon this silence, tearing it to pieces, calling on the departed Vyenkatesh, her son! - that amounts almost to an invocation of the dead, and a denial of the real: 'The wretched time does not pass'" (Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* xxii). The intermittent call of Dadi 'Vyankatesh' brings the permanent emotion of sorrow to the character. Her oblivion that her son has already died is what we may call her misfortune. Her insanity and worries are clearly

reflected in her call, “Vyankatesh ... Arrey Vyankatesh! Where has gone *bappa*? ... What time is it? (*Sounds of man’s rhythmic snoring.*) Time moves so slowly, the pest” (Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* 133). It is enacted with trembling voice and fright. She laments that everyone has abandoned her. She hovers between life and death, time and timelessness. Her own state is unknown to her. A state where pride comes and gets scattered away. The insanity of old age described by Vahini looking at the plight of Dadi is to show how the loss of hearing and sight can bring the timelessness of time. It all depicts the permanent emotion of sorrow and the *vibhava* old age is like a curse to be lived in pain. It is enacted by tears, laments, panic, and fright.

Death and *karuna*

Old Stone Mansion presents a family reunion after the death of Vyankatesh, the owner and the father of three sons and a daughter. But the real pain comes to his widowed wife. Her pride was easily be broken into pieces with the death of her husband. She underwent a state of mental aberration, world worries, dejection, and depression. These are the *vyabhicaribhavas* of the *karuna rasa*. Here it is acted out by tears and a change of colour. When Sudhir, the middle son comes from Bombay, he does not know how to face his mother. There is silence. When he opened up, the dramatist brings the following tragic picture before us:

SUDHIR: We got the telegram very late.

(*Suddenly Aai begins to sob as if a dam has collapsed.*)

Aai (*weeping*): Our shelter’s gone.

(*Silence. On the verandah, Vahini wipes her eyes. Bhaskar is expressionless.*)

(Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* 138)

The death of her husband makes her weak and the conflict between her sons makes her dejected, the demand of her daughter makes her compassionate. In the end, she becomes a shelterless woman. Death, old age, conflict, and rage are some of the recurrent themes that bring *karuna*, *raudra*, and *bibhatsa rasa* in the play.

Impotent Anger and *Raudra*

As already mentioned earlier, impotent anger is one of the usual occurrences in the modern literature. It is enacted with full force by Prabha. She is the only rebel who is fighting for her rights and the rightful place in the family. There were enough injustices committed against her because of her gender. Her father did not allow her to study because she was a girl. She became unmarried through out her life because no proper match was struck. The father did not speak to her till his death. The pain of it was narrated by her to Sudhir in a choked voice. She was given any information when her father died though she was nearby there in a Panchayat library. She could understand her deteriorating stature in the family and says ‘when the father dies, the daughter must look out for herself’ (Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* 141). She distastes to live a life that is dependent on the thrown away crumbs of her brother. The father stopped her study, one brother tried to strike a match with uneducated farmers, the other one gave her a false promise of finding a match in Bombay. She expressed her dissatisfaction with the scheme of things in the following bitter expression that singed with pain, “Don’t think I’m panting to get married. It’s done with now. It’s too late. But don’t think that’ll stop me from holding a mirror upto your faces” (Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* 166). The following dialogues show her pent up anger against every thing:

SUDHIR: Where have you been all this time?

PRABHA: In the storeroom. Waiting till you are through. You’re the grief-stricken ones.
Not me.

SUDHIR: There you go as usual. (140-41)

The Condition of Women and *Karuna*

Four characters in the play that makes us with their plight. They are Dadi, Aai, Prabha and Chandu. Chandu hides the pain and embarrassment within himself and generally it doesnot get reflected. His sad plight is reflected in the other plays of the trilogy. Dadi is demented. Aai and Prabha’s mental condition is portrayed in Scene II of Act II which is quite moving. It is

night. The verandah is dark. Aai and Prabha are sleeping there. From the movement of Prabha's body, Aai made out that she is crying. After much of Aai's gentle probing, she opens up:

PRABHA: What's going to happen to us, Aai?

AAI: It's all in their hands my dear.

PRABHA: You simply gave away your part of the house.

AAI: Prabha . . .

PRABHA: You're so gullible.

AAI: Say that if you like, dear. But tell me one thing. Where would I go if I hurt my children? Do you really think I don't know what's going on? But things were different when He was alive. (Pause.) Prabha, let me tell you one thing. Don't fret. My day is over. Now it's your sister-in-laws reign here. . . .

PRABHA: They are selfish, all of them. (Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* 181)

Prabha in this dire state asks to pursue her B.A. She wishes to leave the hell and go to Amaravati. A little happiness that she wanted to have. She wanted to stand on her own feet so that she doesnot have to live on others charity. Aai does not have the power to take decision on these. Her plight is no better than Prabha. She tries to make Prabha understand with this statement: "My dear, even when He was alive, I didn't have the power to give anything to anybody. Now I'm altogether dependent" (Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* 181). Here both the women feel pity on others of the pain the other has under gone. "How much will you endure" is the question which is self explanatory (Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* 182). Aai ruminates Prabha's brilliance and cleverness and how one wrong decision has completely ruined her life. Here vibhavas of the karuna rasa are misfortune, loss of wealth and death of the father figure and the vubhicaribhavas are world-weariness, worry, longing, weariness, dejection, etc. It is enacted with tears, laments, languor on the limbs etc.

Old Stone Mansion is a different play altogether. It is quite different from the impassioned surges, punctuated with terse, sparse and clipped snaps. The poetry here lies in

silence (Elkunchwar, *Old Stone Mansion* xxiii). In this context we find rasas are lost in its realistic presentation. Two rasas are obvious - *karuna* and *raudra*. Dadi, Aai and Chandu belong to this category. Prabha is a rebel and a victim at the same time. Her rebellion brings the *raudra rasa* which impotent with harsh words only. The clash of words exposes her vulnerability thus she becomes a sad figure and heightens sorrow as the permanent emotion of *karuna*.

Pond

The *Pond* is the second play of Elkunchwar's Wada Trilogy. The play captures visible changes in the rural setting of Maharashtra. The human relationship and the societal trends of the day make it a compounding play for study. The play opens ten years later and involves nearly the same set of characters as the first play, *Old Stone Mansion*. In this play, the clan gathers together to celebrate the double wedding of Parag and Anju. It is noted that in the first play, the gathering was possible for the funeral of Tatyaji of Bhaskar and Sudhir. It brings a somewhat contrasting background to the previous one. Here, the characters are mellower than in the previous one. The dejection of Prabha, renunciation of Chandu, the resignation to life by Aai, a dignified Anjali, a mellowed Vahini, and temperate Abhay, and more so comprehensive newly married bride Nandini. Through Parag, it talks about 'small-town aspirations, the rise of nouveau rich, and the general moral degradation of the society. . .' (The Indian Express).

Ten years have already passed between the *Old Stone Mansion* and *Pond* as Parag who was in his matriculation then is now at a marriageable age. In fact, it was on the occasion of marriage that the Deshpande family was gathering together. The mansion also looks different and has undergone many changes. It doesn't have the dilapidated, dying look that comes from neglect and poverty during which the *Old Stone Mansion* is now spruced up. The walls are painted; there are new steel folding chairs on the verandah, a sofa set, and a cassette recorder in the sitting room. The playwright brings out the point that "there has been a change in the financial status of the inmates, but so also in the taste" (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 208). Though the

financial status of the inmates changed considerably, the life of Prabha, Chandu, and Aai turned in a different direction.

Dejection and Renunciation to life and *Karuna*

Prabha, the rebellious girl of the *Old Stone Mansion* has resigned herself from life. For the whole year, she has not eaten more than a nibble here and there. Vahini in her conversation with Anjali says, “I don't think she's slept a wink in the last year. Go to her room anytime, her eyes are wide open, fixed in the sky outside the window” (Elkunchwar, *pond* 219). She has become so thin that bangles can be slid up to her elbows now and every rib of her body can be counted. Her hairs have all gone white like carded clouds. It is not sickness or any sort of accident but mere mental resolve to die. Her dying condition is further revealed when Anjali visits her, “Prabha is utterly still. But she is not asleep. Her wide-open eyes are fixed on the stars outside her window. Unblinking” (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 219).

The death is certain and it is about to come to Prabha. She has revenge on the patriarchal society which has made her a living corpse. Else it may be her greater realization that nothing comes our way as we expected it to be. Whatever be the causes, her near end can be nothing but soothing, the state of it was divine. The death of Prabha comes when Parag is trying to connect himself with the cosmic things of stars, constellations, and galaxies. When Parag is questioning, “Has the umbilical cord between me and that power snapped” (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 240)? Prabha is on her journey to connect her with that divine power:

After Parag's monologue, there is a brief silence, Prabha is still. Then she stirs and rises. She is breathing hard. She goes to the window and looks out; then turns round, walks about in the room and emerges from it. Her hair is completely white. She wonders like a shadow all over the house like a sleepwalker. She crosses the verandah and the courtyard and goes out to the gate. We hear the rattle of the gate. Prabha returns the same way to her room. Now her breathing has become laboured. The rest of the house is steeped in a deathlike slumber. Prabha's breathing gradually turns into a death rattle. It grows

unbearably loud, then suddenly stops. The stage darkens. The stars begin to dim. They trace a band across Prabha's wide open eyes, then disappear. Darkness. (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 240)

Chandu is another character who can be studied as someone who is known for renunciation. In the *Old Stone Mansion*, he was leading a servile but blameless life as an ideal son and devoted brother. In *Pond*, we see him as a man who has left the house and is living in a temple near to the house. Throughout the trilogy, he never asked for his share nor demanded anything rather he is the one who is willing to give. At the approaching marriage, the following dialogues of Bhaskar and Vahini sum up how complex his personality is and how little others know about him:

BHASKAR: I don't see where all this renunciation comes from!

VAHINI: You get that way when you've suffered a great deal.

BHASKAR: Suffered? How much? Did we suffer less?

VAHINI: Alright.

BHASKAR: His left leg is a little lame. So? He's not cripple, is he? And didn't we do our best?

VAHINI: It need not be just the leg. Something might be hurting him inside. How do we know? (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 210)

Chandu in the end decided not to take food from home and leave for a journey of soul searching. "Where will you go?" when asked by Aai, he responds in the most philosophical way possible, "I don't know. I'll find my path. Or a new path will for automatically under my feet" (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 250). As a true son, Chandu needed the permission of her mother even though he was 'free the moment the umbilical cord was cut' (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 251). The unblemished character of Chandu, the suffering that he had undergone without uttering a word of protest. Karuna rasa flows at the unique conversation between the mother and a son with the *vibhavas* of separation from those who are dear. It is acted out by tears, laments and sighs:

CHANDU: Aai, my mind wants to break out. It's thirsty. There is a pond that keeps calling me all that time. It won't let me think. Let me go, Aai.

AAI: Go if you must, son. Only tell me where.

CHANDU: Who knows where or how far the pond is? But its call pulls me more strongly now than you.

AAI: Too much injustices has been done to you. . . .

CHANDU: The tender call of that pond is now irresistible to me. I must go to it. I see it before me all the time. In my dreams, in my waking hours. It lives in my mind like a reflection. I feel its pull like water to water. Still as the sky, pure as the moonlight, full to the brim with water. The sky above reaches down into its very depths. Birds and beasts, insects and reptiles, the good and the bad - they all come, drink from it, and go away. The pond is oblivious to all of this. It just is. It is where it is, submerged in itself, replete with bliss, unaware even of its own pondness. Where can this pond be, Aai? Its call will not let me linger here any more.

(Long silence.)

AAI: The pond is in you, son. (Pause.) You are the pond. (Long still silence.) Go. My blessings are with you.

(Chandu makes his namaskar to her from where he stands and leaves. Aai remains where she is overcome. The light changes gradually to daybreak. Birds twitter. The horizon lights up. Aai is still, dazed. Was that real or illusion?...) 251

From that day onwards Aai decided to live in the verandah. She would not go inside anymore but follow the path of Chandu as long as lives. She says to Vahini, "No, dear. I have also left home now. Left it far behind. This is my place now, on this verandah. My sight is gone but my eyes will follow him from here, wherever he goes" (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 252).

These three characters in *Pond* make a trinity who are the real soul of the play but also dissatisfied with their life. These three have chosen different paths to engulf their dissatisfaction.

Prabha choseth death as the ultimate force to liberate her, Chandu chose the path of renunciation and went out to attend the call of the pond, and Aai decides to live a life of an ascetic, freeing herself from the comfort of the home. So all their states are unique. But they bring the Karuna rasa in this play with emotions of sorrow. The *vibhavas* are separation from those who are dear, misfortune, and loss of personal dignity. The *anubhavas* are tears, change of colour, languour in the limbs, etc. The *vyabharibhavas* are world-weariness, worry, longing, dejection, mental aberration, etc.

Old-Age and Karuna

If Dadi is in the Old Stone Mansion, Aai is in the Pond brings the torment of the old age into the play. In Scene Two, in the middle of the night, “she gets up. Stepping lightly, she gropes her way to the verandah and sits down, leaning against the wall. Her face suggests that she can hear something. She listens to whatever it is with deep happiness and concentration . . .”(220). She hears the bell in the temple and conch shells. She dreams of Chandu asking both Vahini and Anjali a favor to look after Prabha and Chandu. She wanted to do really something for Prabha and Chandu but couldn’t do it and was haunted up to the time of her hallucinatory stage. Her whole personality was summed up by Vahini; “What a strong, proud woman! And now she’s as sensitive as an unhealed wound. See how her gut is tied up with the children. Some bring joy, some don’t. But whatever happens, love never dries up”(221).

Resentment and Raudra

The resentment and misunderstanding have boiled down to a full-fledged spat between Sudhir and Parag. Parag is portrayed as an angry young man who was having reservations against Sudhir, and Bansilal. Parag could not make peace with himself after the fact that his uncle Sudhir betrayed him. Parag avoids him with a bundle of frustration against them. In order to let them know his frustration on one occasion, he says by purposely raising his voice, “Tell those people with all those feelings to take back all the things they’ve brought. . . . We have

everything we need. We don't need anybody's obligations. Tell them that" and in the same breath, he asks, "Hell! Where were they when we were in trouble" (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 226)?

"Did they inquire about us or come down in the last ten years? A postcard every four months and that's the end of their responsibility they think! Even the card is filled with hymns to themselves. Our son has won a scholarship. Our son is now a doctor. Our son is off to America. When your son was off to America, the other Deshpande son was neck deep in muck trying to dig his way out." (Elkunchwar, *Pond* 230)

Parag has been growing up with one resentment in mind that part of Wada was bought by Bansilal. In the course of time, the resentment transformed into antagonism. Parag is introduced when his fury is in the seventh sky. When family members are getting up for dinner, Parag's roar reaches them from outside. *"I'll break both your fucking legs and them to you, you bugger! Squeal to Bansilal did you mother fucker! Get out! Out. If I catch you again, I'll flay the skin of your back. Now scam!"* The sound of heavy blows. Then someone scrambling away. On the verandah, everyone is stunned. Parag enters in a fury. Halts when he notices people on the verandah. Then walks rapidly into his room. Roars, 'Ranje water.' He peels the shirt off his back and flings it away. A moment later Ranju enters his room, quaking, carrying a lota and a tumbler, Parag gulps down the water noisily and throws the lota in the corner, startling the people in the verandah" (216). The anger as the permanent emotion in raudra rasa is depicted here with the vibhavas like provocative actions, insults, harsh words, etc. Its vyabharibhavas in this episode are panic, resentment, rashness, violence, trembling, horripilation and so forth.

Yuganta

Apocalypse is the last play of *The Wada Trilogy*. The Marathi title of it is *Yuganta*, the play came out, as opined by Elkunchwar, "not from the desire of a gimmick but the creative recesses because the characters refused to die out" (DSouza, *The Indian Express*). It is a one-act play divided into four scenes. On stage, it can be performed in 45 minutes and is largely

composed of soliloquies and monologues, and is set in a dystopic future. The setting of the play is Despande's mansion like the other two plays of this trilogy. The dramatist mentions the timelessness of the stage set by saying, "Time: Today, tomorrow or any time in the future" (207). It brings the two cousins Abhay and Parag, who are in their 30s, face to face to understand their roots and reevaluate their decisions (The Indian Express). The play takes us into the spiritual world, where one forgets the realities of the mundane world and starts thinking about something beyond that. Though there is less physical activity in the play yet the characters grow spiritually. They have a more mature and enlightened attitude towards life at the end of the play.

Being a dystopian play, the setting itself brings the *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa* rasa. It arises from such *vibhavas* as hot weather and desertification, empty houses, moaning of the wind, dust cloud, and murder of human beings. The wind keeps blowing in billows of hot dust. It is very quiet, except for the occasional moaning of the wind. Each time the wind sighs, a cloud of dust blows in. A flute is heard playing a brief desert tune, like the deep sigh of the desert being engraved on the silence, and then stops will be heard again only at the end of the play.

The play opens ten years after the family gathered together for the double marriage of Parag and Ranju. Abhay returns to Wada from Sweden when there was a sea change between then and now. He is 'covered in dust, knocked out by the heat, painting, licking his parched lips, wiping his perspiring neck and forehead'. Abhay is fully exhausted. When he meets Nandini, She is in a stupor but has a contented glow on her face. The place was almost like an inferno. Nandini and Parag had a boy who was having a fever. The whole village and region have turned into a desert. When the play opens, Parag has gone to Kashi to immerse the ashes of her grandmother thinking that 'at least she won't have dried up completely' (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 258). The play as the title suggests brings the picture of total annihilation but reminds us of the victory of exceptional heroic traits in some in the middle of extraordinary chaos and destruction. The play thus brings many rasas like *bibhatsa*, *bhayanaka*, *karuna* and *vira*.

Blood and *bibhatsa*

The *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa* rasa are the most vivid ones in the *Apocalypse*. His journey to the ancestral mansion is described by Abhay as a dystopian place unfit for humans. He managed to drag himself through the blistering heat. There was not a tree, not even a bush on the way. There was a blazing sky like a furnace burst open. “The earth cracked and fissured as far as the eye could see” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 259). It was barren all around. Not a single bird to be seen in the searing heat. He “saw one skeleton first. Couldn’t tell whether it was a cow or bull, or something else. Then another. Then clusters of skeletons in twos and threes. There was an eerie sound . . . of the hot wind blowing and echoing through them. And they shook and stirred where they lay” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 259). There are no animals left except a few dogs. People have hunted them down and eaten them all. Abhay further narrates his experience to Nandini, “When I had walked a little away, a shadow seemed to fall across my eyes. Looking up I saw dozens of vultures wheeling overhead. Further ahead, there were patches of dried blood darkening in the dust everywhere. And dogs attacking a corpse nearby” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 259).

Desertification and *bhayanaka*

It has been eight years since the rain has lashed the area. The boy of Parag of around eight years has not seen the rain from the day he was born. Not even a palmful of water in the rivers or lakes even to immerse the ashes of the deceased, not a single bird to be seen in the searing heat. Abhay is describing his tryst with Wada, “In fact, I couldn’t see a road at all. Just barrenness” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 259). There is nothing left in the orchard, not even brambles. The wells dried up and filled up with dust. The majority of the people had left the village. Those who have stayed back do only one thing rush out from the home to take the water. That’s all they live for. Occasionally, the loud wail from a distance is the only indicative of

someone's death but they are not enough people to carry the bier. These scenes are acted out by constant pauses, sighs, dodging one's looks, etc.

Futility and sorrow

Chandu's arrival with Parag from Kashi opened up a new tale of horror of human life to its extremities that is nothing but that of a *karuna* rasa. When Chandu left in the *Pond*, no one knew that pond's calling would be so tormenting for him. One can find the toil that he had undergone merely by looking at the cracked and blistered state of his feet. Parag narrates his unlikely encounter with Chandu when he was sitting on Dashaswmedha Ghat in a row of beggars with hair matted, beards growing wild, filthy nails. It was hard for Parag to recognize him at first. Chandu refused to be Parag's Chandukaka. He ran towards the river and was about to jump when he was timely pulled back by Parag. The sight of him was so unbearable that Parag had to take him to a barber to get him shaved and then an hour of rigorous washing could make him look like a man. In the life of Chandukaka, Parag wonders about the futility of human life, "This who'd cut off all ties to go on some unknown quest, how could he have ended up in line of beggars?" (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 264).

His futility is further enumerated by Chandu himself how earth rejected him and the vastness of the sky could not hold his loneliness. He whimperingly speaks to Nandini: "There was no pond. There never is. I had created my pond and deluded myself all along. My life was over. Finished. I had wasted it, running after that mirage" (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 277). He realized the senselessness of his quest for the pond. "There is no joy, no pond", he further speaks except "this body and its writhing pain . . ." (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 278).

Wretchedness and *Karuna*

The physical pain of Chandu universalizes the pain and suffering of human life. A life of neglect takes a toll on both the physical and mental state of a man. Chandu suffered on both counts. In the Dashaswamedha ghat of Benares, Chandu was living a life of a beggar. His hair was matted, his beard grown wild, filthy nails. When was provided to him, He fell upon it so

hungrily that Chandu had to turn his face away. His mind and body were in tatters. His falling upon the food narrates a whole story of its own. In Scene III, the excruciating pain of Chandu is described thus:

. . . he suddenly doubles up as if stabbed in the stomach and moans. Nandini lays her hand gently on his back. He recoils as if with an electric shock and staggers into the house. He is groaning. The groaning gradually turns to howling, like a cancer patient racked by pain. As he wanders around the house howling like an wounded animal, Parag, Nandini, and Abhay stand stunned. (Elkunchwar, Apocalypse 276-77)

The next moment, Chandu made a whimpering call to Aai. He lay on the floor curled up like a fetus. Chandu starts talking to Nandini while she is stroking his head. Abhay and Parag cannot hear what he is saying but they are aware that a wordless dialogue is going on between them. He is communicating with Aai about his self-realization and the futility of running away from life. His running away from the house did not solve anything. He underwent all kinds of pain thinking that it would be retribution for sins he might have committed in his last birth. Else it could be his destiny. He accepted everything and the pond sustained him through his anguish. Gradually the search eluded him. He gave pain to his body by walking through the jungles and thorny bushes following the wild call of the pond but nothing was to be found. He spent time on the open ground so that the blinding rays of the sun could pierce right into his eyes with the hope to destroy his to negate the yearning for the pond. None came to his rescue. At last the realization: “There is no joy, no pond. The body and its writhing pain are the only truth” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 278).

Exodus, Death, and Karuna

The hostility of Nature in the form of continuous drought for more than eight years makes life unbearable. The entire region is nothing but an inferno. There is a mass exodus from Dharangaon in the Vidarbha region to other parts of the country wherever they could find water. Those who chose to live there were completely out of touch with the outside world. All the roads

leading to the village had vanished under the dust. The village turned into a desert. Initially, they went one by one as the water turned unkind after observing all the rituals. More exodus followed with more frustration and anger. They ‘walked out on broken legs, leaving behind heaps of rubble that were once their homes. They got as far as the edge of the village and then lost courage; they threw themselves down and wept, broken-hearted, wetting their earth with their tears’ (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 269).

Frenzy and *karuna*

There are three sounds that become the motif of the play - sough of the wind, wailing/cry, and commotion. When the sough of the wind is nature’s fury, wailing is the sorrow of man and signal of death, commotion originates from the frenzy of man out of violence. Maina, the widow of Yadav, who had an affair with Parag after her husband's death is a tragic figure in the *Apocalypse*. When the relationship with Parag ended, she set up a shop quite openly. It was not an issue with anybody, rather the villages were pleased with it. Then came the drought, the morality of the villages suddenly woke up. They accused her of defiling the village with her sin. The villagers ‘dragged her out by the hair and kicked her all the way to the edge of the village and threw her out’ (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 272). The more she tried to come back; she was driven out of the village with more vengeance with sticks and canes. The noise grows and becomes violent. It's about an angry mob chasing someone who is screaming with fear for his life. Gradually the noise fades away. The noise is the noise of flesh to hunt one down and make revelry. When life is chaotic, human life has hardly any value. Maina who was having a sexual affair with Parag in the *Pond* is a terrible creature of this illogical yet all-powerful patriarchy. When the relationship with Parag ended, she set up a shop quite openly. Parag narrates further, “Everybody was happy. It suited her, it suited the villagers. Then came this drought and the village suddenly woke up. There were whispers, gossip, and then open accusations: ‘She has defiled the village. Her sins have brought this calamity on us.’ The elders sat in judgment and asked her to leave the village. She refused to go. One day they dragged her out by the hair and

kicked her all the way to the edge of the village and threw her out. Furious, she tried to come back. But they drove her out again with sticks and canes" (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 272). It didn't end there. Whoever sneaks to her for the desperate need of flesh, they punish him. Everyone is watching everyone else. Chandu succumbed to this vigilantism. When he decided to go to Maina as no one was with him, he was chased and hacked to death by the villagers.

Rootlessness and *karuna*

Abhay's rootlessness is depicted beautifully in this play that brings *karuna rasa*. Death is the only certitude. As we all know Abhay was a brilliant doctor and married to an equally brilliant doctor, Cynthia. Everything was going on smoothly. One morning when he was still happy, the cold entered his world. He ruminated, "I saw a funeral procession pass mutely by. People dressed in black followed a black coffin over dazzling white snow under a brilliant sky. The ultimate, inevitable journey. The intimation of death rose in me gradually like a rising fever" (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 273). That made him see the end of the world including the perishability of Cynthia and his relationship. The world creates havoc in him that once he had gone that everything that was his would have gone. "Anger and hatred smoldered in me. My whole being was filled with poisonous fumes. Then one day, I stopped suddenly in the middle of my work" (274). This new sense of death stretches between Cynthia and Abhay like a vast frozen wasteland. He lives in despair thinking that one day they will be buried and finished leaving no trace behind. The philosophical questions also haunt him in search of the meaning of life: "I am willing to accept punishment by extinction, but I must know the reason. This body will perish one day. Turn to ashes. But what about the desires, hopes, passions that lived in it - and where will they go? The will float disembodied under the sky" (275)?

He could not firm his foot in the alien place. When death starts tormenting him, his search for a home gives no solace either. He dragged half all the way to Wada for the satisfaction of finding a home before he died as he could not gel well in that alien soil. In his childhood, his parents didn't give him the comfort of home. In his youth, he couldn't make it so. He accepted

the ultimate eventualities in life which was death though he was afraid of it. He accepted that death was the only truth and the only certitude in life. This realization was not devoid of enough torture and torment.

Choice and *Vira*

Vira is a dynamic energy that reflects in a person when he accomplishes a great task. But *Vira rasa* was extracted in the face of diversity by Parag. Every act of his demonstrates these *vibhavas*. Here *vira rasa* elicits not of enduring great tasks but bravely facing the adversity that circles so badly in the life of the protagonist. At the severest of the drought when most of the villagers are leaving the village, he decided to stay. In a question of Abhay in this regard, he replies, “This is my choice. To stay here. Let death come when it comes. But till it does, we have to make choices every minute” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 268). “*Vira rasa* is properly acted out by firmness, patience, heroism, pride, dynamic energy, braver, might and profound remarks” (Masson & Patwardhan 54). A realization begins to unfold in him that if the cycle of nature is so well regulated, the drought might have its significance. Then it amplifies, “Why should I run away from it, then? In a way, I am responsible for what’s happening. In that case, I certainly shouldn’t run away. Abhay, everybody has to make a choice between facing life and escaping from it” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 270). His acts of engaging himself in the scores of cremation of the deceased and the final decision to take food for Maina are examples of extraordinary bravery, firmness, and courage. Even Nandini exhorts him, “We only need to make sure that we face every moment with courage. That’s the only thing we have that is ours. Courage” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 276). The rescue of Chandu from the life of drudgery and beggary by Parag may not seem a great act of valor but one sees it in the middle of perennial drought. The *vibhavas* are correct perception, decisiveness, courtesy, and might. Chandukaka refused to recognize him at first when he first traced him out among a row of beggars - his hair was matted, his beard growing wild, and having filthy nails. Then he suddenly got up and started running to

jump up into the river when he was pulled back by Parag. He took him to a barbershop and spent hours washing him to make Chandukaka look like a human.

The struggle of Epic Proportions and *Karuna*

Karuna rasa is again the most dominant rasa in the entire play. The life of this inferno is a struggle for survival. Many have left the village. The lame and old stayed back and they are mostly lying down in their houses, behind closed doors. Many people have died in between. Those who have stayed back or survived, “have just enough energy when the water tanker comes and rushes out with the largest vessels they can find. That’s all they live for” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 260). Nandini’s life is not bereft of struggle in the face of adversity. As there is nothing left, not even brambles. The condition of the house is the worst. The wells dried up long ago and became filled with dust. The outer wall is full of gaping holes. People can walk through the man-size gaps in the walls. They windbreaks into the house like dacoit. In this terrible condition of hostility, Abhay asks Nandini about the vital aspect of human life - livelihood, “No rains, No farm. No truck. How do you manage” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 260)? Even though there is nothing to answer, her answer is striking concerning the uselessness of ornament. It was acted by the *anubhavas* like panting, licking the parched lips, wiping the perspiring neck and forehead, closing the eyes with stupor, exhaustion by the heat, etc.

Renunciation and *Santa*

The adversity gave way to greater realization. The love for wealth in *The Old Stone Mansion* declined considerably in the *Pond* and was completely evaporated in the *Apocalypse*. Jewelry in traditional Indian families is a proud possession that narrates the story of its ancestors. Here, they were sold without an iota of resentment. In one of his conversations, Nandini tells Abhay, “There’s nothing more useless than ornaments. And they’d have chaffed in this heat” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 261). Most importantly they were sold not to eke out their living but for the sake of others in the locality. In another conversation, Parag says to Abhay, “The village

was devastated. There was an acute shortage of money and no shortage of needy. One day, she put her jewelry box before me” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 266). Parag gave a noble perspective for donating things to the people around him. When people are dying one after another who is very close to the life of Parag, he realizes that it is the time to do his little bit for others. He finds himself as part of the greater system. A realization dawns on him, “The time has come when I must see the destruction, bit by bit, of all that was dear and familiar to me once in this environment” (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 266). Denouncing a better life for the loved ones gives *Santa rasa*. Abhay thinks both life and death is a punishment and there no escape from them. No choice is available. Parag thinks otherwise but affirms in his long monologue the reason for it.

This is my choice. To stay here. Let doth come here. Let death come when it will. But till it does, we have to and must make choices every minute. (*Silence.*) I can’t tear myself away from this village Abhay. (*Silence.*) . . . They are all gone one by one. Only a few remain here. And as long as they remain, I will remain here. (*Pause.*) (Elkunchwar, *Apocalypse* 268-270).

Apart from many instances of *samlakhyakramavigya dhvani*, at least two instances *asamlakhyakramavingya dhvani* add *rasa* in this play. In the play *Apocalypse*

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Chapter Five

Rasa and Dhvani in the Master Craftsmanship of Ratan Thiyam

Ratan Thiyam is one of the well-acclaimed names in the field of Indian Drama. His versatility in this field is much more diverse than one can possibly dream of. He is a playwright, director, actor, and the sole force behind the establishment of Chorus Repertory Theatre which was set up on the outskirts of Imphal in 1976. It is now one of the important centers of excellence in India for contemporary theatre. Dharendra Nath Bezboruah while writing the *Foreword* of Ratan Thiyam's *Manipur Trilogy* says, the Chorus Repertory Theatre "will perhaps remain his greatest contribution to Manipur and the vibrant world of Manipuri performing arts. It will remain an everlasting reminder not only of all that Ratan Thiyam has done for Manipur and for drama but also of what actors, directors, and playwrights of Manipur can do for themselves. To everyone in his fraternity of the performing arts, he has bequeathed the abiding gift of sustaining self-esteem" (1).

Manipur owes to Thiyam as much as he owes to Manipur. Putting it simply, he is a product of rich Manipuri dramatic tradition and folklore and is not the only dramatist who is having such a radical dimension to Manipuri theatre. The first original native Manipuri play was *Narasingh* which was staged way back in 1925. It was a historical and patriotic play by Lairemanyum Ibungogal Singh that depicted prince Narasingh who fought for the liberation of his kingdom from the occupation of the Burmese. Subsequently, many plays were fashioned by converting such mythical and historical materials for dramatic productions. From 1950 to 1975, writes Nigamanada Das, "Manipuri drama underwent many changes in form, content, and style in production and playwriting. Plays are written during the twentieth century in Manipur highlight the various socio-political issues of the time" (Das, *Contemporary Manipuri Drama* 39).

Arambam Somorendra, Kanhailal, Athokpam Tomchou, N. Shribiren, Pacha Meitei, W. Kamini Singh, Khundrakpam Brajachand, and others have built up a new standard for Manipuri drama. The modernism in Manipuri theatre, printed in *The Telegraph*, started in the Seventies by two great theatre personalities named H. Kanhailal and Aribam Shyam Sharma. During that time, performance style changed which became sleek and fast-paced (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 117). At later stage, this movement took off by Ratan Thiyam, ‘the artist humanist’ who has brought international laurels to Manipuri theatre (Das, *Matrix of Redemption* 181).

In the *Foreword to Manipur Trilogy*, writes Bezboruah, “Ratan Thiyam’s plays present a remarkable juxtaposition of traditionalism and the demands that a remorseless technological world makes on all of us” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 1). As technology becomes powerful, the only habitable territory in the universe is at stake. It is for this reason war is always a concern for Thiyam. He puts across the clear message that ‘unless mankind resists war, halts the rat race of frenetic existence and reverses the destruction of the only planet that we have, there is only doom in store for us’ (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 1). He pointedly asks a question on the matter of what we are going to give our younger generations except ‘a war-torn, highly unstable future riddled with umpteen insecurities’ (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 112). We shall have to keep running from the destroyers of the world in search of more habitable territory that will turn out to be increasingly elusive with each passing day. His lament of the diverse ways in which we have destroyed or perverted the world of today is heard against the backdrop of august presences in the mythical world of Manipur deities and damsels, of mothers and wise men. In the ultimate analysis, his plays represent the victory of abiding traditional values over the world of wars, conflicts, violence, greed, and inequity. Through it, all runs the thread of Ratan Thiyam’s intense patriotism (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 1)

The English translations of three of Ratan Thiyam’s plays – *Hey Nungshibi Prithivi (My Earth, My Love)*, *Chinglon Mapan Tampak Ama (Nine Hills, One Valley)*, and *Wahoudok*

(*Prologue*) were translated from Manipuri language by Tayenjam Bijaykumar Singh. Since the Manipuri language is very old and dates back to the eighth century AD, it has a huge treasure of archaic words. Singh in his Translators Note writes, “Thiyam, in these plays, has meticulously crafted each line of the dialogues using a liberal dose of choicest archaic words – most of the dialogues in all the three plays are nothing but beautiful verses and odes” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 3). In all the three plays of the *Manipur Trilogy*, myth is linked with reality. It encompasses a wide spectrum of human evolution right from the birth of the universe, based on the myth of the Meiteis to the modern times, broken up into four distinct episodes; the birth of the Universe, the creation of living beings, the outset of human civilization and the modern times. Thiyam’s *Chakravyuha (The Wheel of War)* was performed numerous time across the globe. These plays are enacted without intervals. Thiyam continues his examination of the human condition, expanding his explorations of war in his search for enlightenment, reconciliation, and peace.

Ratan Thiyam’s plays are full of rituals and magic symbols. “The messages arrive in the sweeping movement of waves from the cadence of words, music, rhythm which invariably lead toward a burst of primal feeling. The assiduous movement of the cast emerges from a sublime imagination of their creator” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 4). He brings violence on the stage to show the dehumanising side of it. He unfolds sheer magic with myth, traditional dance and contemporary terrifying incidents of the world. In his presentation, both the readers and spectators savour different types of *rasas*, the prominent among them are *karuna*, *bhayanaka*, and *vira*.

Prologue

The play *Prologue* is the first play of Thiyam's *Manipur Trilogy*. It is a translation from the original play entitled *Wahoudok*. It brings the past to the forefront. It has four scenes that explain the creation as per the Meitei traditional folklore and mythology. It narrates how the universe was created out of the void and how the complex human beings' exploitive nature has ruined the beauty of the creation. The play narrates about a time when there was nothing, total darkness prevailed everywhere – the black void of space. Almighty Lord cried '*Hoong*' and a gaseous halo of seven colors appeared out of nowhere. Then he kept on creating different creatures on earth. Every living entity enjoyed the bounty of the nature. The world was at its perfect best.

With the passage of time, man underwent a sea change. He became greedy and at the same time nature's bounty became scarce. Natural calamities gripped the earth. Man fought with each other. As a result, no advancement could save the man from the hell of their own creation. The play looks myth with reality. It encompasses a wide spectrum of human evolution right from the birth of the universe, based on the myths of the Meiteis, to the modern times, broken up into four distinct episodes; the birth of the Universe, the creation of the living beings, the outset of human civilization and modern times. It is an interesting play for the exploration of *rasa* since it is an amalgamation of two contradictory *rasas* like *santa* and *bhayanka*. *Adbhuta rasa* is the intermediary *rasa* between them. *Hasya* and *karuna rasas* do accompany the dominant *rasas* in some sections of the play.

***Santa rasa* and the state of affairs of the world**

A narrator (*Ojha Sheishkapa*) propitiates the almighty by singing His glory to the accompaniment of *Pena* (a traditional bow and string instrument) and relating His accomplishment in creating the Universe. The *santa rasa* is reflected at the birth of the universe

where the man-nature relationship was at its peak during its early days. It brings a state of calm, quiet, or of repose. The environment of an independent society existed then thus:

bereft of maltreatment

to the weaker sections

without torturing

the guiltless ones

(Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 14)

Sama or right knowledge is the *sthayibhava* or primary state of *santa rasa*. The realization of truth gives rise to *sama*. Purity of mind and detachment are prerequisites to this *rasa*. The *Prologue* brings forth this greater realization. More than the beauty of nature, man's supreme realization on the wheel of time on the cycle of birth and death is something one can wander about. The Death of man is beyond torture, pain, and agony. They come as a natural phenomenon, or as a wish of a divine thing: "Many a full month makes a year/ After passing many a year/ The soul seeks separation from the body" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 14).

Those who believed and those who did not believe in the existence of God, all were all equal in the eyes of the creator. There was no organized religion, imposition, and bloodshed because of it. Might was not right as we often confront in our society. *Ojha Sheiskpa* writes: "The strong body, using all its might/ Cannot force the door open ..." (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 15). The person with a pure heart, could understand the mystery of the creation. If this was not a just society then what it was? God's blessings were everywhere and man was blessed in all accounts. *Santa rasa* is traced at the end of the play when the narrator is narrating the beauty of the earth with a hint of *adbhuta rasa*. It describes how the hills of green, black, saffron, and white are kissed by the passing clouds.

Paradise is this. There is no paradise better
 than the earth. Eyes never tiring to behold
 making the mind restless only at smelling,
 filling the heart with joy only at touching,
 immensely satisfy the tongue only at tasting,
 once captivating melody to hear, words fail
 to describe it.

Look, isn't the earth beautiful? (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 41-42)

Adbhuta rasa and the creation of human being

The Devine mother suddenly springs out of the *puya* (book) and the creation of human beings is acted out to create *adbhuta rasa*. “Leaves of Puya are thrown out one after another. Lairembi springs out from the Puya. She stands in a dancing pose” (15). *Lairembi* starts dancing slowly. The dance choreographed is in itself is aesthetic. *Ojha Sheiskpa* moves closer and sings *Hoirou* to the accompaniment of the *Pena*:

Aa fire continued dance step by step

Aa it danced in *Hayichak* . . .

It danced in *Langbachak* and *Khunungchak*

It danced because of the birth of *Korou*

It danced because of the birth of the universe. (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 16)

The incarnation of Mother Goddess from *Puya* to the birth of the universe and the whole evolutionary process is done with a delicate movement of dance which is a marvellous sight to behold. The divine dance movements and song almost like that of *Vedic* chanting which is at the core of *adbhuta rasa*.

The Customs and beliefs of the ‘Modern Man’ have changed completely. They gaze in awe at the relics of the past, never fully comprehending the wealth of knowledge hidden in it. But in spite of all these happenings, the mother earth remains beautiful. It is really beautiful if you have to look at it and courage to protect it. The description of Goddess *Lairembi* is again full of *adbhuta rasa*.

Divine gentle Mother Goddess!

Endowed with immortality,

free from sufferings . . .

You who can see all the four directions

eight barriers and nine boundaries (*Thiyam, Manipur Trilogy 15-16*)

The creation of the human body on the image of the almighty father as described in the play exemplify *adbhuta rasa*. It is choreographed with song and music. Father’s image was cast on the vast expanse of clear brimming water. Looking at the image of the Supreme Soul, the human being was created at first making the upper portion and sides of the head.

1st WOMEN: Let’s dance making forehead, brows,

Corners of the eyes and eye sockets.

ALL WOMEN: (in unison) Let’s dance.

1st WOMEN: Let's dance making upper and lower lips,

gum and chin. (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy 24*)

The dancing and creation continued till the soul was put to the creations one by one. All become humans.

Satire and hasya rasa

There are many instances *hasya rasa* as an intermediary *rasa* between *adbhuta* and *karuna*. The creation of the toad and monkey are beautiful instances of it. In order to create human beings, the sons of the Almighty failed to produce in their second attempt something which didn't resemble that of humans. The almighty asked the creature, "Can you turn into human beings? Can you transform yourself? hangsoi-sa! (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy 17-18*).

Their response is quite comic. It expresses joy in every form of life:

HANGOIS: Goga goga goga ga ...

Goga goga goga ga

Can't turn into human beings,

allow us to live in rain ,

play and grow up

amidst wild arum plants

Goga goga goga ga (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy 18*)

They created many creatures but none of them resembled a human being. They created a being which was having most striking resemblance was a monkey. As per the stage direction, "A

monkey comes in running from the downstage left. Scuffling and tussling, he plays with the monkey for a while (19).” Almighty orders him to go to the jungle and lead a life as the leader of imperfect creations and further tells, “Whenever a human being does any mischief, everyone would say – *ha*, it’s monkey business” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 19).

Human Suffering and Karuna

With increase of population, the resources shrank. Disease, war, calamities made human being suffer. The play starts delineating *karuna rasa* by exhibiting the pain and suffering of modern man. Seven *Maichous*, the Wise Men, foresee a bleak future for mankind. They predict in the following way. Man will turn into a beast; man will stop loving man, man will devour man. Fire breathing out from the mouths of the rich nations with sufficient arms and military power will start burning the weaker nations. Fortresses will start fighting one another. Fire will start burning with the earth as wick and water as fuel. Killing and wanton murder, arrest, and kidnapping will happen more frequently, and news of wars and devastations will reverberate in all four directions and eight corners. Wrong pens will start scribing on departmental scrolls forcibly; the purse of the dignitaries looking after departments will start bulging. Thus in the second part of the play, the suffering of the modern man is highlighted with *karuna rasa*.

4th *MAICHOU*: During the course of history, groups of aliens

with the thought of devastating our society

have inflicted serious diseases on the future

generations and poisoned their minds, but

You have disclosed the remedy,

O’ Father!

5th MAICHOU: Ancestors and the new generations; a fissure

has started developing in the bond between them. (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 37)

They have also predicted how the ancient traditions and their value is on the wane in the minds of the young generations. The truth will have no place on their prized land and the ‘flower of love’ will scatter in the ground. For this pitiful condition men will solely be responsible as it is their own creation. The *vibhavas* of these human sufferings are degradation of human values, misfortune, and calamities. They are telling the impending times of sorrow as their downfall is imminent in the changing times. It is acted out by lament and sighs by the Maichous.

Intermingling of *Bhayanaka* and *Bibhatsa Rasa*

Bhayanaka and *bibhatsa rasa* become dominant when the basic quality of the good of man gets replaced by greed in man. It is more of a prediction that is to come to human society. These are the words of caution for mankind ingrained with fear. The Maichous predicts the fall of the essential value of mankind in the following words with the cries of anguish heard in the background.

3rd MAICHOU: Man has turned into beast, man will stop loving another man, man will devour man.

4th MAICHOU: Fire breathing out from the mouth of the rich nations with sufficient arms and military power has started burning the weaker nations.

5th MAICHOU: At the onset of *Langbachak*, white cloths have started unfurling in rows on Koubru. The world has taken complete transformation. (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 38)

Anguish, fear and panic, speaking about death in war, man turning into beast are the *vibhavas* of *bhayanaka rasa*. It is acted out by the trembling of the hands, changing of facial

colour, etc. The awful predictions by the Maichous bring the *bibhatsa rasa* as they are speaking and hearing the undesired and unpleasant things. Agitation and panic are some of the *vybhicaribhavas* that are reflected here. The peaceful equilibrium is disturbed by the actions of modern man as Maichous' have started narrating the tale of destruction; "Fortresses have started fighting one another. Fire has started burning with earth as the wick and water as the fuel" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 38). In drama, *rasas* come in bouquets. There is no water-tight compartment to separate them. In this play, two contradictory *rasas* like *santa* and *bhayanaka* are delineated with the intermediary *adbhuta rasa*. In this play, *santa rasa* is heightened with the introduction of *bhayanaka* and *bibhatsa*.

My Earth, My Love

My Earth, My Love (Hey Nungshibi Prithivi) is the second play in the *Manipuri Trilogy*. It is a complex play of violence and destruction by placing man at the center of it. But it is not devoid of space that really illumines a scope for peace. The play, in a way, is a quintessence of Thiyam's anxiety that he has felt over several years. The wheel of time rolls on to capture the history of mankind. The present, past, and future are deeply interconnected. The present is a small link between the past and the future. No one knows for sure what is in store in the bank of time for the future of mankind. If the future is to be seen from the mirror of the past, then the images of the future are disturbing and bleak, 'an uncertain gloom hangs in the air' (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 45). It is simply because widespread injustices and devastating horror have already been committed by the men in power. In Manipur itself, the Burmese had devastated the land with the hordes of children were being suffocated to death with the smoke of burning chilies and people of various strata and ages "tied with cane-splits passed through slits in their ears and palms had been dragged away as slaves" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 45).

The play is not only an outcry against the instability of Manipur but also the devastation of the world. The whole world is under the grip of terrifying incidents. It starts from Stalingrad to Pearl Harbour, Nagasaki to Kampuchea. Prophecies of wise men for the recurrences of such incidents in the future reverberate in the air. It the duty of the present generation to reform and bring peace and harmony to the Earth for a better future for mankind. It is a creative exploration in search of wisdom to create almost a utopian society which is devoid from conflict and turbulence.

Torture, Extermination, and *Bhayanaka*

In the play, seven sisters, celestial nymphs (mythological characters), weave cloth, the traditional symbol of love, peace, and honour, on a loom for offering to the Almighty with a prayer to put a stop to war and bring peace to Earth. History is personified as an old man. The adventure of seven celestial nymphs, who can assume any form, fly around the earth as birds and incarnate as human beings to open the chapters from the past soaked in blood. They also fly to West Asia and Europe to see the demolished Ottoman bridge on the Neretva river built by Suleyman, the Sultan of Mostar, and many other places of conflict, death, and destruction “amidst the frightening and unfathomable tortures and extermination”(Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 54). The major part of the play is no doubt acted out by *bhayanaka rasa* with intermittent doses of *karuna*. As already discussed, fear is the permanent emotion of *bhayanaka* and it arises from such *vibhavas* as ghastly noise and hearing about, speaking about, or seeing the imprisonment or murder of one’s relatives or large-scale destruction of something closer to one’s heart.

One nymph recalls her general observation after returning from the places near home and outside in the following painful words: Seven years of devastation is over. Genocide by

suffocating with the smoke of burning chilies is also over. I had thought, the time of slitting ears with cane – splits was over but there is no stop to war. The earth eaten bare to bones by its children would one day be annihilated, definitely” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 53).

Bhayanaka, Karuna and Bibhatsa: Intermingling

The manner of human annihilation not only brings compassion (*karuna*) but disgust (*bibhatsa*) at the same point. As the narration continues we find the ‘smell of blood in the air’, moaning due to the ‘excruciating pain’, ‘dead body sans cloth are piling’ in all directions, ‘killing each other like wild beasts’. Because modern man has experienced everything in all the places and times, the images are more vibrant in the minds of the readers/spectators. The nymphs are not the detached characters but part of human civilization even occasionally crying rolling on the ground. The image of humans is hit very low the nature becomes one *vibhavas* to bring disgust. In this case, a petite flower lamented and said to one of the nymphs whom the flower thought to be the human: “please don’t pluck me/ I hate the stench of the humans/ Full of greed is your world,/ brimming with eternity” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 56).

The modern man being part of this suffering understands it in a better way. The tension and sorrow in the suffering of the past and present are heightened by the prophecy of the future when “the nymphs are seen to be calling in and trying to communicate with the Unseen Force” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 56). Having completed their communication with the Unforeseen Force, we see Hi-Liema assumes the form of a bird and perches on the loom. Puwari, on the other hand, walks in by pulling a cart loaded with dead bodies and many other articles repeating

the prophecy ‘infiltrators will dilute and subdue the sons of the soil’. He further brings a revelation of how anguishing even holding a pen, Konok Thengra, a scholar who had earnestly written the *Puya*, postulates the passage of time.

Puwari, a personified ‘History’ or *Epu* (grandpa), introduces himself more like horror stories of mankind rather than pleasant ones. He narrates, ‘the horrible stories written on my chest are taught in schools to be learned by children like you; I’m ‘History’ who has been traversing through eons picking up dead bodies, over and over again, of those killed after torturing in the struggle for power, those killed in battlefields – fathers, uncles and brothers’ (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 59-60). But the sad part is the torturing and extermination is not over yet. The *bhayanaka rasa* is described as the description of the ghastly act of mankind.

Tale of Horror and *Bibhatsa Rasa*

The *bibhatsa rasa* in this play arises from the *vibhavas* described by hearing what is ugly, unpleasant, unclean, and undesired. Raping of fifty thousand German women by Russian soldiers to take the revenge for killing five hundred thousand of their people at Stalingrad, the half-dead women reduced to skeletons because of starvation during the Khmer Rouge regime, the atomic explosion and its cries of agony, the excruciating pain that was found in the middle of the smoke of war. The aftermath of the atomic explosion is described by Hi-Leima in the following words:

The whole of the city was covered with mushroom-shaped huge clouds, coloured like that of an elephant. . . . those who had escaped from the inferno, some scantily clad and some wearing thin clothes, were shivering with cold. Amidst the stampede of naked and blood-

smear people, innumerable men, women, and children died. The injured persons were wailing and crying for help but no one came to their rescue. Green pine trees were reduced to charcoal. All the orchids that were blooming on the branches of trees had also been reduced to cinder. (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 63)

Karuna Rasa in the Cemetery Scene

The cemetery scene is quite moving one that brings *karuna rasa* at the forefront from the *vibhavas* of separation from those who are dear, death, destruction, and war. It is acted out by laments. At the cemetery, Puwari is seen to be fixing crosses of those which are out of order, and at the same time, he is offering flowers at the graves. The martyrs' age is ranging from 20 to 29. The epitaphs are full of loving memories of dear ones. At the first grave, it is written as Puwari reads out "At the going down of the Sun/ And the morning we remember him" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 64). The second grave witnesses even far more moving epitaphs, "A loss no victory can repay/ Always in my thoughts" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 64). The fourth epitaph is read by Puwari, "A silent sorrow/ Time has not lessened", and the fifth one, "Not a day do/ we forget you/ In our hearts you are always near" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 64). The sixth and seventh ones go like this, "Not forgotten, / my dear husband/ While in life and memory last/ I will remember thee" and "In the shadow/ of his wings/ Our beloved one rests" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 65). It is needless to say that though it brings the tragic end of valiant young men as sheer waste of productive lives and the pain that is ingrained in them, they also bring criticism of war and its futility of it. Most importantly, the playwright has deliberately made the *vira rasa*

absent from these wars of death, revenge, and starvation to make it bleeding to the maximum extent possible.

The *bibhatsa*, *karuna*, and *bhayanaka* are combined in respect to the plight of women and children. In order to capture the sad anger of a Cambodian woman, the scene is made moving. In the setting of the stage, we find souls dancing, and wild animals' roars can be heard intermittently. A statue of Buddha is there. Several human heads are scattered everywhere. A woman in tatters with a small bundle on her back, carrying a child in her arms, comes in running and utters, "Husband murdered, house put on fire and gutted down, all my close relatives dear ones killed – where shall I go with the starved child" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 70). She further narrates and compared them with the past days how golden paddy was playing in the green fields with the highways turning into killing fields. "It has become dance-platform for the souls turn into vulture" (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 70). There were ceaseless sounds of bullets, and fireballs playing amidst the cries of agony. The disabled persons, orphans, destitute, prostitutes, disease, and malnourished children are brought up by women widowed at a tender age and are led to an unknown place under the might of the gun. The scene moves dramatically when the child of the woman was opening its eyes. She bewails bringing an inhuman and atrocious presence of her time:

Listen, my precious, open your eyes.

I'll feed you my dried up ambrosia.

Don't keep your eyes closed,

What happened to you? (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 71)

The child refused to cry even though the hungry mother tried to squeeze out at least a drop of milk for the child. The plight of women and children in war is a product of unimaginable agony. Every step is marked with disillusionment. It is come before us with the *vibhavas* like the barking of dogs, running footsteps and painting of women, soldiers chasing them from behind, raping women, etc. One of the profound statements made in this respect is done by a woman of Mostar:

War, You have made us prostitutes.

War, you have made us prisoners.

War, you have made us bonded slaves.

Never-ending story of revenge and invasion

in the fight of supremacy, (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 73).

She narrates her pain and humiliation. Women and children are the most distressed creatures in the war. They are fed to war. The epic of voluminous chapters would not be sufficient to describe the woes and sufferings of women alone. The helpless woman had to bear the deep internal anguish with her mouth shut tight. She is forced to be pregnant.

Awk ... Awk

[She feels nauseous and holds her stomach.]

Look, this is war's gift!

[Shows the interior of her womb.] (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 73).

The conflict between the physical as well as mental violence in the form of rape and the delicate condition of motherhood is tossed and it seems the hatred against rape is winning over the love of motherhood. The First Woman narrates her story of pain and suffering in the most telling way possible. The lump of blood grows day by day in her womb after meeting the enemies. She wonders what name shall she give to it. She is undecided whether it is the mother's 'Precious Lump' or 'Enemy's Child'. It is an unbearable pain yet a test of her motherhood. She bewails:

I feel as if it is calling, "Mother . . . Mother."

No, no, it can't be.

It's a leftover of some inhuman and
characterless one.

Leftover, *khak thui*

(She spits out aloud in hatred.)

(Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 74)

The tragedy is not dying down easily. She asks the child a question that no mother can ask thus: "Why don't you die in the womb"? It narrates unbearable pain

I hate myself for being alive.

Each follicle all over my body has become a

spring and impure blood

has started to gush out. . . .

Let me go – enemy’s child.

My precious lump, I’m leaving. (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 75)

It is enacted on the stage with their sobbing and lights going out. When the stage lights up, we find the women’s dead bodies with ropes hanging from the branches of a tree. A baby is lying on the floor. It describes the pain, death, suffering of the the women and children due to war. Here the *bhyanaka* and *karuna rasa* are explored to bring the dehumanising effect of war.

In the epilogue, the nymphs are seen to offer a weaved cloth to the Father, the creator of living beings. And a prayer to end the war and bring peace and prosperity in perfect harmony on the Earth. While praying Nurahal, the elder nymph comes under a spell. She falls down. After some brief moment, she turns into a bird and flies away. Puwari comes crawling after them. He wraps himself with the cloth they had offered and questions how many days more, that he has to write events of history with blood. When the light comes in on, an open history book is seen lying on the wheelchair. On the platform, flags of the UN are there. Birds, frozen in flight, are also there. Light goes out slowly.

The play ends with nymphs, symbolizing the peace-loving citizens of the world, offering the cloth they have woven so meticulously to the Almighty with a prayer of peace and harmony. Assuming the form of pigeons, they fly off to collect dust from the place of Bamiyan where the colossal Buddha once stood peacefully, and sprinkled it over Ground zero, where the twin towers of World Trade Centre once stood firmly. History crippled with atrocities on women and children is reduced to an open book in a wheelchair.

Thus the play is a tale that brings unimaginable and terrifying incidents caused by men for their mankind. At the same time, it makes the stage ready for better days ahead that can bring peace and understanding. The play is crafted in such a way that many of the *rasas* can be savoured by the sympathetic spectator in the course of the play. They are *karuna* (compassionate), *bhayanaka* (terrifying), *bibhata* (disgusting), *adbhuta* (awesome) and *shanta* (peace).

Nine Hills, One Valley

Nine Hills, One Valley (*Chinglon Mapan Tampak Ama*) reminisces the dreamland of Manipur. A mystical land comprising nine concentric ranges of hills encircling a valley, an erstwhile paradise exists in a secluded corner of the earth. An unfortunate turn of events through the passage of time has deprived it much of its glory. In the *Prologue*, Seven Old Women, the sentinels guarding the cultural traditions of the land invokes the evil spirits and try to propitiate them to leave their land and let the people live in peace. They call upon the Wise Men, who have faded into oblivion, to save them.

Bhayanaka rasa in the dream sequence

In the first scene, the Seven *Maichous*, Wise Men, thought to have vanished and gone into a deep slumber, turn in their sleep after seeing a disturbing dream. The dream analysis is based on the traditional convention of what is known as a bad omen. The first Maichous dream is filled with pain, fear, and disgust: “Today I saw a bad dream. It’s not good. Peepal tree was on fire; dead bodies were floating in a row in the river; for how long we, Maichous, have been sleeping. . . .” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 87). The second Maichous feels a muscular spasm in his left arm and quivering of his left eyebrow. The fifth Maichou hears “the sound of wrong footsteps in the land”; the sixth Maichou can sense “the land is heading for utter chaos that will result in war” and the seventh Maichou could hear the sound of “a mournful voice, children were swimming in the river of blood, with no one to save them. . . .” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 88). Everyone realizes that this age Langbachak or Kali is a different eon. The prediction for this eon is full of tragic and horrible encounters as the following: “The earth will start burning like a wick fed with water as the fuel”, “famine will visit the land”, etc. (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 89).

In brief, they awake to decipher the dream and recognize the crisis that haunts the land but didn’t take any steps to set the land right. They go to sleep again. When they sleep again, in their dream, they see many Gopis performing Bhangi dance in the form of a sequence of Raasleela, exquisitely performed by a group of dancers, revealing its rich repertoire of rhythms, postures, and gestures. It is rudely and brutally disrupted by a demon called Matam referred to as Time appears to slashes the dancing wrists, symbolic of the destruction of art and culture. The episode is full of *bibhatsa rasa*. When the wrists of the dancers were cut and thrown away, the

amputated hands start dancing. A frightened Matam starts laughing in astonishment. The Gopis, with their hands amputated, continue to dance. That stirs the mind of the Maichous and all of a sudden, they awake. Fourth Maichou reasons out the phenomenon, “our dance forms and music that we were so proud of, our showpiece in the world have been discarded like Kyamlikphang, the traditional gold necklace, lying neglected in the ground” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 92). The traditional things including the bow of the *Pena* are broken just like enchanting flowers on the hillside are wasted in vain. In order to reverse the chaos in the land before it is completely devastated, they “proceed to the beloved land to write an easily understandable *puya*, ‘on the back of time’ as the scroll, with the knowledge of the olden *Puya* as the ink, anew *Puya* that carries a lot of meaning, one that can be carefully followed by the new generation” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 94).

In the second scene, the Seven Wise Men wake up again to see their dreams turned into a horrible reality. The Wise Men are disheartened to find that their beloved land has transformed completely while they had been asleep. Time has almost completely devoured their children along with all their cultural traditions. Time has completely changed. Genocide, political instability, venality, unemployment, and extortion by unlawful elements – news happening around every nook and corner of the globe filter in. The news comes through the newspaper reading. “August seven, nineteen ninety-eight, Dar-es-salam, two hundred twenty-five dead, injured over hundred”. “The United States of America, nine eleven, suicide hijackers crash four aircraft into the world trade Centre and Pentagon, killing nearly three thousand people, Ground Zero”. “US attack Hill Brasa, Baghdad, Shiya-Sunni fight”, “April eleven, Two thousand two,

Tunisia, suicide bomb attack”, and the list goes on. There are many unfortunate incidents happening in India and Manipur itself. Lack of development, taxes of innumerable types, protests, strikes, economic blockade, Armed Forces Special Powers Act, and the like.

Seven Maichous, the humble servants and innocent progeny of God, decide to write a new *Puya* on the pages of the topsy-turvy eon. In it, they include the testament of peace: “Don’t say ill of others with jealousy when you see the beautiful belongings that they have earned with hard labour – try to question yourself” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 100). The more profound them are, “In the new age, independence comes in many forms. Independence starts with self” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 101). “A man who is not endowed with compassion and forgiveness will never get peace of mind”; Only when can rout out completely from our minds the feelings of revenge, anger, envy, arrogance, and over-ambition, we will get peace”; One who is truthful is beautiful both physically and mentally. If one is compassionate, then his character is good. if his character is good, then his family is peaceful. If each of the families is peaceful then society or a nation can have pace” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 102).

The *Puya* is written by Maichous with a prayer to ‘make a beautiful new world,/manured with goodness and love,/ where gentleness and peace prevail’ (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 103). After writing, they place their scrolls in a neat pile. Then they join in the people shouting “Hey... Ho” in the distance. All of a sudden, *Hiyang Hiren*, the traditional dragon boat, appears with a roaring noise. They move in, then they leave riding on it, four mothers each with a baby on her back, run after the Maichous, looking towards the directions they have gone. The crimson sun has set behind the hills manifesting the peace of many ages. The play ends with the song “We

would not be able to repay you for your ambrosia, Hey compassionate Mother” in the background (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 107). Thus good days and lasting peace prevail everywhere. The Wise Men come forward to protect and save their people from the miseries.

In the third scene, they call upon the celestial nymphs and the mothers to help them write a new book of knowledge drawing upon the ancient scholars, ancestors, and *ojhas* (preceptors), who had been the pillars of wisdom. As they complete their book that contains the wisdom of freedom, peace, religion, politics, economics, human rights, and duties for the present times, the deity emerges from the water in the form of *Hiyang Heren*, the traditional Dragon Boat, and carries away the Seven Wise Men who leave behind the book of knowledge for the younger generation.

Thiyam reiterates as published in the Expressnewslines, it has no story line but “a collage of thoughts that deals with issues of peace and restlessness in the world” (Thiyam, *Manipur Trilogy* 120). In the Epilogue, Mothers relate to their children their past history, and the unwelcome changes that have taken place in recent times. The mothers sing lullabies to console their children and plead with the Wise Men to return. Lamps are lit on the hilltops and in the valley to enlighten and remind the people of their past glory to bring back the peaceful days once more.

Chakravyuha

Chakravyuha, taken from the Drona Parva of Vyasa’s *Mahabharata* is the most celebrated play of Ratan Thiyam. It was scheduled to be premiered at Bhubaneswar on 31

October 1984, as a part of an East Zone Theatre Festival, sponsored by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, a package of new productions directed by young directors under 40. Due to the death of Indira Gandhi, it was staged in Delhi for a couple of months. The play was invited to the Commonwealth Arts Festival in 1986 where it won a First Fringe Award. Though the story is taken from the fairly well-known part of mythology from the Mahabharata but to Ratan the poetic ambiance in which the play is set matters most than the story (Bandyopadhyay, *Chakravyuha* vi).

Among many plays that are staged in the Repertory Theatre, *Chakravyuha* was a special one. The vigour, the intensity, electrifying patterns of rhythm, speech, movement, scenic design, a rare sense of colour, style, and drapery in costume, emanating from Ratan's interaction with Manipuri tribal and Meitei culture through a singular appropriation of classical texts and folklore had reached its pinnacle in *Chakravyuha* (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* xxi)

Abhimanyu's question in his last speech (am I scapegoat or a martyr?) addressed to the audience is not the only question the play asks. Nor it is necessarily the seminal one. But it paves the way to many more existential ones that every individual has to ask oneself at a political moment before he chooses his action. He has to be sure to what extent he is being manipulated or controlled by a power formation operating only too often through cultural, rational or ethnic constructions mistaken for natural sentiments like heroism or patriotism. (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* viii)

Bhasa offered Ratan the model of a different approach to the Mahabharata characters, as he chose for his heroes characters traditionally ignored or denigrated in Brahmanic exegesis. As he identified with Bhasa's characters, non-heroes turned into heroes, Ratan was taking a position in relation to the mainstream institutionalization of the mythical heroes. Duryodhana and Karna – read in Bhasa's term and Ratan's own Abhimanyu, in *Chakravyuha*, are part of continuity. Karna in Bhasa's *Karnabharam* is very close to Thiyam which brings the identity crisis of the character. Thiyam picked one line to elaborate it 'I was born to Kunti, but brought up by Radha, and hence known as Radheya.' That single line is the whole play. And how much pain, how much thinking, imagination have gone into the writing of this one sentence by Bhasa. It is a line that centers on the identity crisis, and Thiyam's production of *Karnabharam* is built on it. Duryodhana in *Urubhangam* who always protests and is aggressively materialist is like a modern man. He swears by an ideology, and stands by it, performing the right duties, within a system. Abhimanyu trusting his technique so foolhardily is a symbol of the younger generation. (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* ix)

Violence is the central theme of the play *Chakravyuha*. It is violence that brings his central character to question himself, to try to rediscover himself. Violence and the question of identity are inextricably intertwined in Ratan's perception of reality. He tells Samik Bandopadhyaya in one of his conversations, 'When doing a production, I have to choose a theme according to my own thinking that should have some link with reality.' The one persistent theme that Ratan pursues relentlessly is that of an individual trapped by the powers that be to participate

in violence – more as a scapegoat than as victor or victim – under a spell in which he is divested of his identity, rising at the end to seek his lost identity and maybe to have a glimpse of it.

Rattled by Arjuna after Bhishma was pierced and rested in the bed of arrows with the help of Shikhandi, Duryodhan demanded the arrest of Yudhistira to end the war. Shakuni insisted Guru Drona create the *Chakravyuha*, the cosmic formation of military warfare. Knowing well that Arjuna is preoccupied with *Narayani Sena* (army) and no one else among the Pandavas who could penetrate the *Chakravyuha*, they waited for the eventful day, when Abhimanyu, a young lad of mere sixteen could make the plunge.

Abhimanyu learned the art when he was in his mother's womb. He listened intently to the conversation between his parents and learned the art and skill and the mantra that will be required to destroy the *chakravyuha*. His only lament of him was that he does not know the mantra that will be required to come out of it because by the time the father could tell the thing to his mother, she was asleep. When he narrated this to the camp of Pandavas, Yudhistira and Bheema did not give much importance to it as saving the day from the defeat was important. He did it valiantly. Not only he could penetrate the *chakravyuha* with ease but also made Kauravas face an imminent defeat when they decided to make a combined attack and kill him inside the *vyuha* (army formation).

The theme of bravery and sacrifice, rage and retribution, fear and sympathy are delineated. The treatment of Ratan Thiyam has made the play a more complex one than what one can see on its surface level. Though the dominant *rasa* in the play is *vira*, other *rasas* like

karuna, bhayanaka, raudra, sringara and *hasya* can be savoured from the different sections of the play. *Vira rasa* consists of dynamic energy (*utsaha*). The *vibhavas* of this are “correct perception, decisiveness, political wisdom, courtesy, an army, bravery, skill in the battle, might, eminence etc. It should be acted out by such *anubhavas* as firmness, patience, heroism, generosity and shrewdness. (Masson and Patwardhan 54, Vol. I). It is to be noted that shrewdness here is not opposite to goodness but to foolishness. Its *vyabharibhavas* are happiness, attentiveness, pride, panic, violence, resentment, remembrance, and horripilation. It usually arises from various causal factors, be it arrogance or injustice in the face of some injustice. This dynamic energy innate in man ensures holding up to courage otherwise it would lead to failure eliciting *karuna rasa*.

Dynamic energy

On the thirteen days of the Mahabharata War, Guru Drona created Chakravyuha. The information broke Yudhisthira as the best wielder of Pandava, Arjun went out to fight with Narayani soldiers and no one else knows how to penetrate the cosmic arrangement of warfare. Abhimanyu comes to the rescue during this critical time. He volunteered himself to go to war. His dynamic energy can be seen in his speech”

ABHIMANYU: I said there is a way out, O Maharaja. (Abhimanyu kneels before Yudhisthir, back to audience.) When Dharmaraja Yudhisthira is himself the elder uncle; when Bheemasena, who holds the great mace called Kaumudi (moves to Bheema, touches the ground near his feet with outstretched right fingertips. He rises miming the

swirling mace.) is the second uncle; when courageous masters of warfare like Nakula and Sahadeva are third and fourth uncles; (moves downstage in a circular motion and mimes picking up a large bow as he speaks) when sovereign of the great bow Gandeveva, the mighty Arjuna, is the father of this Abhimanyu who is born from the womb of Subhadra, sister of the director of the universe Lord Krishna (He makes the classic flute gesture, turns around and kneels at the feet of Yudhisthira and Bheema) ... why wouldn't there be a way? (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* 27)

This speech brings out the power of Pandava, his pride for the wondrous lineage, his heroism, and overall his humility before the elders. He hints out and convinces his uncle that victory cannot be of the other camps but eventually be theirs.

Bala

Bala or might is another important *vibhava* in *vira rasa*. It is acted out with firmness and heroism which is amply displayed in the character of Abhimanyu. In one of his dialogues he brings forth this very aspect of it in the following words:

Like the insect that jumps into the wild fire, I will leap on the army deployed by Dronacharya. Though I may be young and alone, I swear to kill all the major and minor charioteers of the enemy force to save the honour of the dynasty of my parents. Let Lord shree Shree Govinda bear witness to this. (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* 35-36)

He is however not a blind believer in his strength. He knows the power of the other camp. But his heroism makes him not value the life of an individual in the context of collective goodness.

In this case, the win of the war against the Kauravas is the supreme: “Do not worry, grandfather. If I enter the Chakravyuha with you as my chariot driver, I will shatter single-handedly the power of the Kauravas. I shall surely defeat the enemy, or lay down my life as a valiant Kshatriya in the field of battle. ... When I die my spirit will wing in heaven” (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* 38).

Though the premonition of death is latent in his speech, it is enveloped by the courage and mental resolve to go and fight for the victory for their side. This heroism is further accentuated in the run-up to the war when he is getting ready before taking the final plunge:

Decorate me please with the finest costume worn by a warrior. Dress me in gold and silver and chest guard studded with diamonds. Stock my chariot with munitions – strong bows, swords, maces, spears, shields. Also place at their appropriate places the large maces and sixteen Turkish hand-held arrows. And do not forget the conch embossed in gold. Bring me golden ropes to capture the elephants. Grace my flag with the peacock sign with a garland of fragrant flowers. (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* 38)

Determination in the face of odds is one of the qualities of *vira rasa*. It is a dynamic energy that emerges from the causal factors like “decisiveness, not giving way to depression, and being surprised or confused” (Masson & Patwardhan, Vol i, 54). While going to the Kurukshetra war, he tells his charioteer:

O great sire, with the loudest of war cries we shall drive this beautiful chariot framed in gold, bedecked with golden canopies, shining bright like the rays of the sun and moon, into the

battlefield. Just before I embark in my mission, make ready all the ingredients required for the auspicious rituals. (Kneels down.) Bring *ghee*, incense, milk, oil lamps, brass and gold utensils to invoke the god ceremoniously. (Gets up) Sound the drums, beat the gongs, let the trumpet players strike the highest note and pitch. Command each musical instrument to ring the bell of victory for the Pandavas. (Thiyam, Chakravyuha 38-39)

Vira in Adbhuta rasa

The extraordinary skill and courage of Abhimanyu are described with the touch of *adbhuta* rasa or the emotion of wonder. The scene is enacted in such a way that it does not look like an ordinary war but enacted in a remarkable way that leads to surprise or wonder.

... The war inside the Chakravyuha takes the form of a great battle with each fade in and fade out. The soldiers pull sharp arrows from their quivers, mount and release them in quick succession. Abhimanyu cuts these arrows and they fall harmlessly about him. The warriors enter. The great maharathis use the Bhedmukhi, Karmukhi, Barunadanta, Singhadanta, Amaratha, Sanaratha, Mahabale, Vishnujal, Agnijal, Indrajal, but all these godly weapons coming from all directions, south, north, east and west are rendered ineffective before Abhimanyu's superior martial skill. His arrows pierce the chests of the front flank of warriors who run and fall. Others run off the stage as the light fades out.

(Thiyam, Chakravyuha 43)

When *adbhuta* rasa comes from *vira* rasa, admiration is a natural outcome of this. The skill of Abhimanyu in the art of warfare brings nothing but admiration even from the members of the

adverse camp. Shakuni brings this aspect of *adbhuta rasa* when he says, “Abhimanyu though young in years, is as versatile as his father in the art of warfare. Like a lion club tearing the flesh of a deer, he has mauled the major charioteers. The Kaurava soldiers are running helter-skelter creating chaos in the chakravyuha” (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* 43).

Vira rasa and Anguish

Dronacharya, the guru, and Pandavas and Kauravas is a great warriors. But the valour and pride that was sparkling in Abhimanyu are missing in the persona of Dronacharya. Age and understanding of the devastation of war are far clearer to Dronacharya than Abhimanyu. Dronacharya, the commandant chief of Kauravas in the war of Mahabharata after the death of Bhishma is portrayed as a man known for his skill and valour in the warfare. His decisiveness and mental resolve are undoubtedly his greatest strength. In one of his angry exchanges with Dushasana, he says, “Dronacharya is not afraid of insects like you that hover over a flower, not afraid even of Yama, the god of death. You must remember this” (Thiyam, *Chakravyuh* 17).

Duryodhana poms up Guru Dronacharya for his ulterior motive, but he brings forth his bravery of him, “If you have determined to take him (Yudhisthira), let alone Arjuna, even the gods could not have prevented you. If you decide to defeat the Pandavas, nobody in the three worlds can stop you” (Thiyam, *Chakravyuh* 19). It is followed by highly charged larger -than - life speech pattern and structured movements flattering praise of Drona in the Kaurava Song:

Like Indra among the gods

Like Kubera among the Yakshas

Like Shava among Rudras

Like the Sun among the planets

Like Vashishtha among the Brahmans

Like the moon among the stars - - - (Thiyam, *Chakravyuh* 19-20)

But Drona's song is quite opposite to what is spoken by Kaurvas. He brings forth the fact that was comprehended by him quite well. Unwillingly, he declares, "I shall embrace death to prove that I am on the side of Kauravas. And this promise I hope will erase all doubts from your hearts" (Thiyam, *Chakravyuh* 20). This agony of Drona to fight in the wrong side could be marked by Shakuni when he says, "One engages in battle to fight and kill the enemy, not to torture oneself" (Thiyam, *Chakravyuh* 20). He remembers Bheeshma on the eve of making *Chakravyuha* stated there is no right and wrong on the battlefield of Kurukshetra.

Sringara rasa

Sringara rasa in Indian context is not inimical to *vira rasa*. This rasa in the context of *Chakravyuha* is intrinsic to the growth of the plot. Here Arjuna and Shubhadra are the *alambana vibhavas* of each other. They are young and noble-born. It arises from *uddipana vibhavas* such as (the representation) of the seasons, garlands, and ointments. Ornaments, people dear to one, objects of the senses fine homes lovemaking (*upabhoga*), going to gardens (and there) experiencing, listening to, and seeing games, sexual play, and so forth. In *Chakravyuha*, the night

is described by Subhadra thus, “the night is so beautiful. The world is swathed in silvery moonbeams. The Mallika, Jati, Pushpa, Shringar, Chini-Champa blooms are exuding their fragrance” (Thiyam, *Chakravyuha* 29). Responding to this Arjun’s speech and actions are imbued with *Srinagar rasa*: “Intoxicated with the sweet aroma of these flowers (mimes blossoms), these bees, who have sucked the nectar from the flowers the whole day, are still thirsty for more. . . . That bee (*Arjuna mimes the movement of the bee. Subhadra laughs as she tries to brush it away from her face.*) which is trying to get into the petals of the flower, again and again, is no one else but me. (*Subhadra laughs*)” (Thiyam, *Chakravyuh* 30). The soft speech and flirtatious movements are the *anubhavas* of *sringara rasa*. Despite everything, it cannot blossom in its true height as true *sringara rasa*. Firstly, Arjun and Subhadra are married and Subhadra is in an advanced stage to give birth to a baby. She is more worried about the future of her baby in the backdrop of the imminent war of Mahabharata. Thus *sringara rasa* is curtailed by *bhayanaka* and *karuna rasa*.

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Chapter Six

Conclusion

In the preceding five chapters, we have come across the growth and development of Indian drama; *rasa* and *dhvani* theories of Indian aesthetics and their inseparable bondage with the dramatic genre; the plays of Girish Karnad, Mahesh Elkunchwar, and Ratan Thiyam which are replete with varying artistic emotions from which diverse aesthetic relish are achieved. It is discussed in a detailed manner in the individual chapters dedicated to these contemporary playwrights who hail from the south, west, and northeast of India.

As drama is an imitation of action imagined or simulated, playwrights have crafted a bundle of emotions not only to cater to the need of their themes but to please the audience/readers. In Indian literary tradition, it is believed that without *rasa* there can be no meaningful dramatic or literary productions. It is such a predominant theory in the psyche of the Indian mass that without any conscious effort it does reflect in plays of Indian writers. Since it is an ancient literary theory, the question that comes to our mind is the extent of changes that have taken place over time with regard to the theory and practice. If we compare the ancient Indian literary theory with the plays of the three modern Indian dramatists discussed in this thesis, there is a marked shift in the portrayal of emotions. In ancient literature, the dominant emotions used to be *sringara*, *karuna*, and *vira*. It is found to be contrary among the modern writers. This is my obvious finding that the neglected *rasas* of the yesteryears play a predominant part whereas the prominent ones become negligent. In the plays of these three prominent playwrights *bhayanak*, *bibhatsa*, *raudra*, and *karuna* are the *rasas* that explicitly churn the minds of the readers and audience alike. The historically dominant ones like *sringara*, *vira* and *santa* are the neglected ones and occupy a secondary position in the dramaturgy of these great writers. Only *karuna rasa* retains its stature as the prominent one over the course of time.

One may wonder why such a change actually takes place. The obvious answer may be when the *rasa* theory was envisaged, the play was enacted to glorify the valour of the nobilities as the fights were between good and bad. So *vira*, *raudra*, and *karuna* are reflected in such kinds of heroic tales. And love as a perennial subject of positivity was bound to get prominence. Indian tradition was giving importance to the four *Purusarthas* as the ultimate goals of human existence. They were *artha*, *kama*, *dharma* and *moksha*. In order to attain this, all the noble qualities are required and thus they were exhibiting valour, love, serenity, and thus, culminating in major *rasas*. If that is the case, when modern writers are taking mythical and historical themes as the subject of their deliberations, they must reflect in the same way where major *rasas* do play a prominent part. But this is not the case. When modern writers like Girish Karnad is portraying the character of Yayati for example, he is questioning his grand design rather than supporting it as portrayed in the myth. So they are using the technique of counter-narrative based on modern social and literary theories like existentialism and postcolonialism and so forth to portray the theme from a completely new perspective. It is for this reason that the delineation *rasa* becomes different. In the post-colonial era, questioning from the perspective of marginality assumes significance.

Let us discuss the portrayal of important *rasas* by these three modern dramatists to find out the visible alterations. There are six dramas of Girish Karnad elaborated in this dissertation to find out the *rasa* and *dhvani* aspects. None of the six plays have *sringara rasa* in the real sense of the term. In *Yayati*, there are three sets of characters where there is an erotic angle. The first one is Yayati, Devyani, and Sharmistha. Here, Yayati succumbs to the temptation of the beauty of Sharmistha even though he is married to Devyani. This infuriates Devyani and it follows the wrath of Sukracharya and the curse of decrepitude. So, instead of *sringara rasa* it brings *raudra* and *karuna*. The second set of characters narrated in the play is Swarnalata and her husband. Her husband becomes suspicious of his wife. So he is so tortured that he left home. The *vipralambha sringara* is hinted at but their story is narrated just a bit and they do not have any major role in

the play. Chitrlekha's marriage to Pooru would have been a classic case of a love story eliciting *sringara rasa* from the audience. Both are young and of noble birth. One is a prince and the princess of Anga. Their love is short-lived. Pooru accepted the curse of the father and becomes decrepit, Chitrlekha in turn commits suicide. In no case, there is *sringara rasa* which gets prominence. In *Hayavadana*, there is a love triangle and the outcome of this love is not *sringara rasa* in the proper sense of the term because of its deviant nature. It leads to *raudra* and *bhayanaka*. But it is to note that there are enough *vibhavas*, *anubhavas*, and *sancharibhavas* that bring *sringara rasa* despite its deviant nature. In *Bali: the Sacrifice*, too the queen has a sexual encounter with a mahout in a deserted temple which leads to repugnance and death. In *Nagamandala*, Rani is tortured by her husband, but there is enough *sringara rasa* from the Naga who makes a night visit to his beloved. Here too there is deviant and unnatural love. *The Fire and the Rain* are all about vengeance. Only Nitilai and Arvasu's love story elicits *sringara rasa* to some extent. By analyzing the plays of Karnad, it is found that *sringara rasa* is either nonexistent or plays a second fiddle to other *rasas*.

The same is the case with Mahesh Elkunchwar. Not a single play from the five plays of him that I have discussed in this dissertation brings this *rasa*. In *Holi*, there is no love angle at all. *The Desire in the Rocks* is all about incest. Though it is leading to *bibhatsa*, *bhayanaks* and *karuna*, there is some aspect of *sringara rasa* with respect to breaking the forbidden. The three plays of Wada trilogy are basically silent on *sringara rasa* except in *Apocalypse*, we find a gradually stronger bond evolving between Parag and Nandini. It does not play in any major way. Ratan Thiyam's four plays that are discussed here only in *Chakravyuha* we find delineation of *rasa*. The love scene of Subhadra and Arjun is portrayed with proper *vibhavas*, *anubhavas*, and *sancharibhavas* as depicted in *Natya Shastra*. Here too, it is not the predominant *rasa*.

In classical literature, *vira rasa* plays an important role in shaping the drama. It arises from such *vibhavas* as correct perception, decisiveness, bravery, might, eminence, etc. and it is acted out by firmness, patience, heroism, generosity, and shrewdness. In the entire fifteen plays,

this *rasa* is displayed very rarely. It is most evident in Ratan Thiyam's *Chakravyuha* where the bravery and might of Abhimanyu are displayed. Thiyam's intention is not to glorify the war but to bring its senselessness and meaninglessness to the forefront, thus this *rasa* is being shunted. Abhimanyu is described as a scapegoat in this Great War in Kurukshetra. Parag exhibits bravery and generosity in a dark time in *Apocalypse*. The play presents this *rasa* in a dystopic world in an extreme and hostile natural setting. Pooru's acceptance of his father's curse comes into this category which is very rare. Apart from these three plays, *vira rasa* has not got enough scope to delineate itself because the theme and context of the plays are quite different.

The second noticeable change can be seen in *raudra rasa*. The *raudra rasa*, as we know, has anger as its permanent emotion. Evil men and women are its characters. It arises from such *vibhavas* as anger, provocative actions, insult, lies, assault, harsh words, oppression, and envy. While everything remains the same even in modern dramas, what is more, noticeable here is the anger that is impotent. Anger is manifested more in words than in deeds that were usually enacted through beating, slitting, or brandishing weapons. Except for *The Fire and the Rain*, no play by any of these three playwrights has the *raudra rasa* portrayed with the full force of the assault. In *Apocalypse*, a sporadic incident of mob violence of lynching and killing is portrayed and so is also in the *Desire in the Rocks*. In most of the other cases, *raudra rasa* occupies the center stage only with harsh words and is generally impotent in nature. Be it Pooru and Sharmistha in *Yayati*, the queen in *Bali: the Sacrifice*, Prabha in *The Old Stone Mansion*, or Lalita in *Desire in the Rocks* brings this *rasa* in full force with jibes and harsh words but in the end, it brings harm to them only. The rage is self-directed and brings his/her own downfall. The anger is impotent and loses its power of inflicting pain on others.

On the other hand, *raudra*, *bhayanaka*, and *bihatsa* in *Tughlaq* and *Yayati*; *raudra* and *bhayanak* in *The Fire and the Rain*; *bibhatsa*, *bhayanak*, and *karuna* in *Desire in the Rocks*; *karuna*, and *rage* in *Old Stone Mansion* and *Pond*; *karuna* and *bibhatsa* in *My Earth, My Love* and *Nine Hills, One Valley* outnumber the prominent *rasas* as described in the other plays. Even

where there is *vira* and *sringara*, *raudra*, *bhyanaka* and *bibhatsa* play a dominant part thus shunting their role in relishing them.

On the question of whether the modern playwrights have given a conscious effort to realize *rasa* in the minds of the readers/spectators. There is no clear answer. The theory is so common in the Indian context that it is impossible to think it would go a miss from proficient writers like Karnad, Elkunchwar, and Thiyam. Karnad himself was an actor and connoisseur of art and literature, Elkunchwar is a professor of English, and Thiyam is a product of the National School of Drama. Looking at their illustrious background, it is quite natural they might have given a thought to this while writing plays. While reading and watching some of their plays, it can be inferred that of Barata's *rasasutra* is there in the back of their mind. I find them abundantly present in the plays of these writers. Among these three playwrights, girish Karnad's plays evoke rasas more, whereas Mahesh Elkunchwar's portrayal of *rasa* is more gripping. This finding may vary as relishing of *rasa* is a personal experience like that of religious practice. The same play which we seem to have fewer ingredients of *rasa*, may evoke *rasa* quite profusely had it directed by a good director and enacted by good actors with proper stagecraft. The plays of Ratan Thiyam are a bright example of it. When it is enacted on the stage, it takes quite an epic proportion. Kavita Nagpal in her Pre-Text to *Chakravyuha* writes: "The vigour, intensity, electrifying patterns of rhythm, speech, movement, scenic design, a rare sense of colour, style, and drapery in costume emanating from Ratan's interaction with Manipuri tribal and Meitei culture through a singular appropriation of classical texts and folklore had reached its pinnacle in *Chakravyuha*" (xxi). So there is a marked difference between reading a text and watching the performance text in the theatre.

The other vital point I wish to add here in accordance with the observation of Priyadarshi Pattanaik is that *rasa* theory has to be modified to coexist with modern literature. He made the following observation:

Every interaction is also a series of modifications. When the ancient theory of *rasa* is brought face-to-face with modern literature, what we inevitable have is more in the nature of a confrontation than a meeting. In the process, both will lose or be modified to some extent by the interaction if they are both to co-exist. It is with this in mind that we must proceed. (71)

In this context, I think there is enough scope to modify the *rasa* theory without losing its basic essence. For example, in *sringara rasa* there is no scope for deviant love which in modern days a very common practice in all kinds of society. Much great literature including the writings of Girish Karnad, brings *sringara rasa* even in deviant love without much obstruction. The *alambana vibhava* in *sringara rasa* as mentioned in *Rasadhyaya* is young man and woman of noble birth. Here birth and age are two deciding factors that can easily go away with. As long as there is passion, mutuality, and ecstasy between man and woman, it should suffice to relish *sringara rasa*. The same is in the case of *raudra rasa*. It is described that demons, monsters, and violent men are its characters. In the modern era, people are of a split kind. Even the best of man can have anger and provocative actions. Sometimes anger can not be located and this leads to despair as in absurd literature. At other times, it is misdirected and self-inflicting to take revenge on the other. In all the nine *rasas*, without losing their basic tenets, minor revisions can be made to make the theory modern and accommodative.

Talking about my limitations, there are two glaring ones. The first one is my little knowledge of Sanskrit. As it is an ancient theory, the treasure trove of this theory is vastly present in that language only. The translations to the original text are tiring. So I have to read the commentaries of the modern writers to grasp the theory. My second limitation is the lack of exposure to real drama on stage. Though there are enough parenthetical inputs of the stagecraft by the author, the magic environment is surely being missed while writing the thesis. I had to stretch my imagination based on my previous experiences of watching the theatre, Jatra, Pala,

etc. However, I may point out that these plays are written in such lucidity that the action can really take place before us and the characters come to life even in our reading. The reader can savour the *rasa* unhindered if he/she can turn himself to be a *sahridaya* (sympathetic reader).

There is enough scope in the field of *rasa*, *dhvani*, and Indian drama for future study and analysis. *Rasa* and *dhvani* though are clubbed here together; they can be studied quite separately as two separate branches to bring out many new findings. There are nine rasas and each *rasa* has many vibhavas, anubhavas, and sanchari bhavas that can be explored separately. There are many dramas of these three dramatists that can be explored separately. Many prominent dramatists like Mohan Rakesh, Mahesh Dattani, Vijay Tendulkar, Satish Alekar, Badal Sircar, Dharamveer Bharati, etc. can be taken to reread their texts from this perspective. Three prominent *dhvanis* - *vastudhvani*, *alankara dhvani*, and *rasa dhvani* can be studied separately like that of individual *rasa* theory. The western and Indian writers can be compared through the prism of this theory. The ancient literary theory can be compared and contrasted with these ancient Indian theories. Many other Indian or western writers plays can be taken for analysis. Thus, the scope for future study is vast and unlimited for any research aspirant to dive deep into the *rasa* and *dhvani* theories to create a new level of understanding of modern writers. I would end with a quotation of Paravasu from Karnad's *The Fire and the Rain* to bolster my point on the immense possibilities of this ancient theory for future exploration:

You asked a question. It evoked an answer. Suppose, you repeated the same question - precisely - in the same words. You would get the same answer. You ask again. Would that have helped? Yes, certainly. Each time the question and the answer were repeated, a new nuance would have arisen. Do you know, you could repeat a question and an answer without altering a syllable, endlessly, and create a whole new universe of meaning, more acceptable to you. (139-40)

There is no end to any kind of research, particularly in literature. Near about a same topic by a different researcher may bring many new things that can completely new and refreshing.

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