

Raudram as a Tool for Restoration of Justice: A Study of Raudra Rasa in ‘Silappatikaram’.

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Raudra Rasa is one of the rasas from Bharat's *Natyashastra*, which showcases the emotion of anger and destruction and fury.

The Raudra rasa showcases a furious reaction towards injustice and or moral violation in the society as a moral duty.

In the Tamil epic poem, ‘*Silappatikaram*’, is a combination of rasa that displays the internal emotions of the characters.

Especially the female rebellion, towards the monarchy, that Kannagi showcased through her Raudra rasa, which indicates the personal grief of loss and the cosmic rage inside her mind.

In the end of the epic, the curse of Kannagi to the Pandya king and the Madurai city act as an outburst of the injustice towards her personal grief as well as the injustice, which culturally breaks down the male authority and gives rise to the ‘*Stree Raudra Bhava*’

The anklet (*silanga*) acts as a symbol that triggers the Raudra Rasa of Kannagi. It evokes the theme of power and represents it as a revolutionary weapon towards power and violation of cultural expectations.

In another stance, *The Pandya king* represents the flaw of Raudra rasa, which represents injustice. The decision of the Pandya king *Neduncheliyan* takes an ego driven action, which in *Natyashastra* is an act of destruction. This impulsive Raudra rasa causes a flawed decision which gives rise to the future of Kannagi.

This brings a contrast between the impulsive Raudra rasa and a righteous Raudra rasa, which ends the epic in the form of tragedy.

At last, the Raudra rasa act for righteous act, evoking the moral justice in the people, in contrast to *King Neduncheliyan*, whose Raudra rasa exposes the impulsive decision making system and unregulated authority making the poem a combination of ethical commentary as well as justice.

Keywords--‘*Silappatikaram*’, “*Natyashastra*”, *Raudra Rasa*, *Stree Raudra*, *Bhava*, *Neduncheliyan*, *Silanga*

Raudra rasa, expressed as the expression of anger or fury, interests as a vital role in the Indian aesthetic works of Indian literature. While the Rasa or emotion is associated with anger or *krodha*, the rasa is embodied to carry the moral justice and righteousness and raise voice against injustice. Among the 9 Rasas, the Raudra rasa embodies the emotions of anger which highlights destructive energy. Outlined from ‘*Natyashastra*’ by Bharat Muni, the Raudra rasa also work for the better embodiment of moral justice.

‘*Silappatikaram*’ one among the five great Tamil epics, provides a gripping the Raudra Rasa, which directly links with all the characters of the epic. The ‘*Silappatikaram*’ by Ilango Adigal explores the exploration of rasa through the character of the epic. The epic first revolves about Kannagi, who was showed as a devoted wife of Kovalan, who is the central character of the epic.

Gradually her anger is justified as she emerged for the restoration of justice in the court of Madhurai, the wrongful execution of her husband Kovalan, where she uses her anger, Raudra Rasa. Among the five epics, ‘*Silappatikaram*’ works as a tool of restoration or a light of moral re-establishment of that challenges the justice system of that era, through the character of Kannagi, showing the path of righteousness through the anger of fury used for moral justice and raising her voice for the wrong execution of her husband Kovalan.

“The Furious (Raudra) Sentiment has as its basis the Dominant State of anger. It owes its origin to Rakshasas, Danavas and haughty men, and is caused by fights.” (Bharat 112)

According to Bharat Muni, the Raudra Rasa was embodied by supernatural beings of the mythological beings, which highlighted anger and arrogant nature.

But in the ‘*Silappatikaram*’, the character represents the ‘*Stree Raudra Bhava*’ (Women anger) highlighting the justice.

The concept of Rasa is emerged from the philosophy of “*Natyashastra*”, which classifies the different human emotions into structured human experiences, The Raudra rasa is one of the rasa from “*Natyashastra*”, expressed through the materialization of harsh words, actions that were violent and the emotional turmoil.

“The rasa theory has a tremendous linguistic potential for an emotion cannot ever be shown or communicated directly. It can only be suggested (‘*dhvani*’) through words or their equivalents.” (Patnaik 2)

The quote by Priyadarshi Patnaik from the book “*Rasa In Aesthetics*” highlights the basic rules and principles of the Indian aesthetics, which states that the human emotions can never be stated directly, but in can be imaginary but never explained.

In the framework of “*Natyshastra*” by Bharat Muni, rasa is not clearly described but there are something experienced by the audience through the representation of arts, which was later extended by *dhvani* by *Anandvardhana* in the text *Dhyanaloka*, where the meanings are conveyed indirectly rather than suggestions.

Anciently, other way traditionally, the Raudra Rasa was associated with societal expressions like warriors, kings, and those figures fighting for their kingdom. But, in “*Natyshastra*”, the emotion of anger was seen through dual lenses, the emotion of anger was not only an expression of anger but a voice for imbalanced justice. According to literature this duality, plays a crucial role in understanding the balanced key of understanding the emotion. The epic ‘*Silappatikaram*’, the Raudra rasa is not limited only among the masculinity or the wedded context. In the epic it also highlights the main Raudra embodied in Kannagi as the protagonist in the epic, where she challenges the societal norms. This indicates the shift of patriarchal emotions to the emotions of feminine expression signifies the representation of Raudra Rasa.

“She gave it, and it was placed before the king.
 Her precious anklet she broke open,
 And a gem leaped into the king’s face.
 He saw the gem. His parasol rolled.
 His scepter bent,” (Adigal 189)

When Kannagi breaks her silence and also her anklet in front of the king, it is considered to be a powerful action in anger. Traditionally and culturally, Kannagi’s anklet acts a symbol of her courage. Nevertheless, by the time when she breaks her anklet in the public court of Madhurai, where again the anklet acts as a reclaim symbol of evidence and proving the truth of her innocent husband and seeking the justice, where it clearly reflects assertion of justice, moving beyond her passive regulations.

The epic ‘*Silappatikaram*’ act as a broad spectrum of human emotional experience, combining multiple rasa from “*Natyshastra* and explaining the rasas such as *Sringara*, *Karuna* and mainly *Raudra* Rasa. The combination and interplay of rasas enhances the emotional integrity of the epic. The major rasa like *Sringara* and *Karuna* are reflected in the middle portion of the epic, reflecting *Sringara*, the love life of Kannagi and Kovalan and *Karuna* rasa in the middle of the epic and *Raudra* rasa in the end of the epic.

In the epic, the transformation of Kannagi is crucial for the development of the story. Kannagi’s *Karuna* or grief of separation was emerged without any anger (*Raudra*). Instead, her anger bursts out towards the end of the story, in the climax where the story not only demands but also enforces a divine intervention in the story.

One of the most significant aspects of ‘*Silapatikkaram*’ is the emergence of total departure of traditional depiction of women in the Indian classical literature. Initially, the protagonist is portrayed as an ideal character of chastity and devotion towards her husband, showing her love and respect towards her marital relationship, embodying the role of an ideal wife and as an ideal women. But her transformation of her emotions into *Raudra* after unjust execution of her husband triggers her inner anger.

The anger in Kannagi was not sudden but it depicts a deep and hidden emotional suffering inside her. Her transformation of rasas from *Karuna* rasa to *Raudra* rasa is described by outlining the complex emotions of the character. Kannagi’s anger was not directly to the Pandya king, but toward the whole justice system of that era which enabled such injustice.

The manifestation of anger can be outlined as the *Stree Raudra Bhava* (Female anger emotion), an anger that urges for righteousness. Unlike the explosive anger which is mostly associated with male character and their perspective, but Kannagi’s anger was controlled and purposeful.

Her actions worked as a challenge the patriarchal system and exposed the judiciary system of that era. By encountering the king of Madurai, she exposed the truth and proved her husband to be innocent, she proved her power in the society and also demanded the justice.

The abstraction of *Stree Raudra Bhava* is relevant in the character of Kannagi as it serves a powerful example of how anger can be used as tool of empowering one self.

The anger can be symbolized not only through a person, but can also be depicted through instrument. In the epic, anklet plays an important role in the epic, initially symbolizing marital trust and faith, slowly turning into a powerful instrument for justice and destruction of injustice.

In this context, the queen’s anklet contained pearl, unlike Kannagi who had rubies filled anklet, proving Kovalan’s innocence and igniting the fire of anger in Kannagi leading to *raudra* rasa.

The anklet acts as a symbol of women power in the epic. The anklet, as an object keeps the power of transformation, which becomes an agent of justice. It represents the ability to expose the truth of an innocent and also challenging the authority.

The another form of anger was presented by the antagonist of the epic King Neducheliyan, who has a contrast anger unlike Kannagi who’s anger was on righteousness. His *raudra* is an ego driven anger, a flawed application to execute Kovalan without any proof.

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“Determinants such as anger, rage, abuse, insult, untrue allegation, exorcizing, threatening, revengefulness, jealousy and the like. Its actions are beating, breaking, crushing, cutting, piercing, taking up arms, hurling of missiles, fighting, drawing of blood, and similar other deeds. This is to be represented on the stage by means of Consequents such as red eyes, knitting of eyebrows, defiance, biting of the lips, movement of the cheeks, pressing one hand with the other, and the like. Transitory States in it are presence of mind, determination, energy, indignation, restlessness, fury, perspiration, trembling, horripilation, choking voice and the like.”(Bharata 113)

The quote from “*Natyashastra*” notes about a structured foundation of understanding the Raudra rasa only as an emotion. In ‘*Natyashastra*’, Bharata highlights emotional turmoils like insult, abuse and jealousy, which acts as emotional and moral triggering agents.

Even in the narrative ‘*Silappatikaram*’ the determinates like anger, insult and allegation are meant to justify the rise of fury. The king’s order of execution without verifying the truth.

According to the “*Natyashastra*”, anger that cannot be controlled leads to destruction. Through the example of the king Neducheliyan, who amplify the action of impulsive anger leading to the miscarriage of the justice. His failure in providing justice highlights the danger of unregulated authority and weak delivery of justice.

The king’s failure highlights the truth that can cause due to unregulated authority. Like Kannagi, her anger was guided for moral principal and justice for righteousness, the king’s anger was guided by ego, impulsive anger, which led to destruction.

Raudra Rasa in ‘*Silappatikaram*’ outlines as an influential and powerful tool for restoration of justice. Through the character of Kannagi, the epic defines anger, representing a transformation of force that challenges the injustice and cruelty, restoring the moral order and dignity.

“Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. For this reason justice denies the loss of freedom is made by greater good shared by others.” (Rawls 3)

In the narrative, the concept of injustice carried out by the Pandya King Neducheliyan, by the unjust execution of Kovalan, reflects the fact for individual happiness the process of justice is being violated.

According to Rawls, in his book “*The Theory of Justice*”, his statement of ‘inviolability’ to each individual outlining the misconduct happened in the judicial system in the Pandya king’s court.

Kannagi’s Raudra rasa, therefore can be held as a force of restoration that helped Kannagi to regain the justice. Her rage refuses to accept the death of an innocent life, especially of her husband, just for a political stability. Instead, it helps her gain the confidence and expose the corruption and injustice held in a political court.

The distinction of the anger showcased in the narrative, Kannagi’s righteous anger and King Neducheliyan’s impulsive anger, which emphasized the complexity of the Raudra Rasa.

In the end, the epic represents the anger can act as a medium of destruction and can be rightfully used for restoral of moral ethics and restoration of justice, thereby emphasizing the response to injustice and bringing a potential to have a meaningful thinking.

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