



From Despair to Wonder: Scenes of Transcendence in Indian Cinema

Lalita Pandit

Abstract: This article examines how three classic Hindi films—*Pyasaa*, *The Guide*, and *Jagte Raho*—draw on Indic paradigms of devotional love and *śānta rasa* and how they use “wonder” as a resolution to distressing emotions experienced by the characters and elicited in the viewer. To this effect, the article emphasizes how socio-cultural models of appraisal elicit various kinds of emotion, and, from this culturally situated but broadly universalist perspective, it traces the journey of the protagonists from fear, dejection, and despair toward amazement and peace. Among contemporary cognitive theories of emotion, the article uses perspectives drawn from the appraisal theory.

Keywords: audio-visual emotion, despair, fear, Hindi film, *śānta rasa*, wonder

The culminating scenes of transcendence in *Jagte Raho* (Sombhu Mitra, 1956), *Pyasaa* (Guru Dutt, 1957), and *Guide* (Vijay Anand, 1965) seek narrative closure through elicitation of *śānta rasa*—the aesthetic emotion of peaceful pleasure. In Sanskrit the word for peace is *śānta*, based on the root word *śam*, which means “to cease, subside, stop, extinguish, render ineffective, purify, tranquilize, and cleanse” (Monier-Williams 1999: 1064). Monier-Williams’s lexical explanations emphasize usage that underscores “tranquilizing” effects on those who might listen to a story orally, a bard’s real-time audience. More important, however, are the embedded internal authors and auditors, those whose emotions are to be stirred in the beginning, lead through vicissitudes of various kinds of emotion intensity in the middle and tranquilized at the end of a narrative sequence.¹ Such affect-bound embedding can be found in works of classical Sanskrit literature, such as the epics. In the *Mahabharata*, for instance, the dialogic frame of Sanjaya telling the story of the “great war” to the blind king, Drtarashtra, makes Sanjaya both a character and embedded author while the king is both a character and embedded listener to Sanjaya’s narration of the war between his sons and their dispossessed cousins. Sanjaya takes par-

ticular care to use vivid imagery that would appeal to the senses and be emotive in its force, so as to make the Kurukhetra battlefield visually alive to the reader and to the mental sight of the blind king.

Though endowed with actual visual and sound dimensions, today's film viewing is not unlike listening to the oral tale. While it is true that representation of feeling and tone foregrounds a range of emotions, such as anger, fear, and despair, all these emotions in most cases reach some sort of resolution. A broad (and a metaphysical) definition of *śānta rasa* implicates the resolving note, to use a musical analogy, of any intense emotion in the audio-visual and narrative aesthetics of *śānta*. Thus, the ancient Indic model of ending a sequence in *śānta rasa*, the aesthetic emotion of tranquility, though a remnant of an ancient dramaturgy and narrative theory, has valid implications for considering the role of audio-visual emotion.

From the perspective of appraisal theory, the aesthetic emotion of *śānta* would imply a point beyond time, and, hence, beyond where goals can be formulated, appraised, and acted upon.² This does not, however, suggest an exhaustion of reactive emotion and action, or their simplistic fairy tale fruition, despair at their failure, or even resignation or acceptance of fate, but a completion, a ripeness: a point beyond which there may be no gradient of goal-oriented emotion left. Monier-Williams describes *śānta rasa* as the "sentiment of quietism or tranquility" (1999: 1064). In metaphysical terms, with reference to Jainism, he says that *śānta* refers to "the 11th of the 14 steps towards *supreme happiness*" (1064; emphasis added). According to this elaboration, *śānta* seems like a junctural emotion, preparatory for the ontological experience of mystical ecstasy. From a more modern perspective, it is clear that in *śānta rasa* the goal-oriented emotions have a retrospective significance, and the transcendence aesthetic invokes a version of the "associative network model" of emotion elicitation, a model that puts more emphasis on style (see Smith 2003: 15–40). Interlinked sensory information in *mise-en-scène*, color, sound, gesture and posture, through brain processing, will contribute as heavily to the elicitation of tranquility as our retrospective appraisal of events and their changed meaning. In this specific context, appraisal- and non-appraisal-based emotion information may work in conjunction rather than within exclusive domains and via segregated triggers.

Although the three films mentioned above are socio-culturally and stylistically modern, the temporal development of narrative in each follows the traditional emotion aesthetics of *rasa* (aesthetic emotion) and *dhvani* (verbal suggestion). In *The Nāṭya Śāstra*, which was composed between 400 and 100 BC, Bharatmuni (n.d.) links *basic emotions* with proto genres and *aesthetic emotions* as he gives detailed instructions about emotion faces, hand gestures, ways of walking on stage, body postures, and other stylistic elements.³ Included in a recent, encyclopedic volume on *Emotion and Cognition*, the lists of

basic emotions by today's emotion psychologists, such as Oatley and Johnson-Laird (1987), Ekman, Friesen, and Ellsworth (1982) and Nico Frijda (1986), no doubt, differ from each other, though there are many similarities (see Power and Dalgleish 1997: 103). More importantly, only Frijda's list contains wonder as a basic emotion (Power and Dalgleish 1997: 103). However, their idea that there are such things as basic emotions establishes a current context for the rasadhvani typology. It is very important to point out that there is consistent agreement about three to five basic emotions and emotion terms. More particularly, Power and Dalgleish draw attention to "aesthetic emotion" in the context of appraisal of events that "might have happened" rather than "what actually happened" (1997: 95). As is clear from the Aristotelian word choice, they link *emotion* to *simulation* unambiguously.

Making one keenly aware of the points of contact between ancient and modern emotion theories in the West, the Indic typology associates anger (krodha) with the terrible (raudra rasa); love (rāga) with the erotic (śringāra rasa); mirth (hāsya) with the comic (hāsya rasa); sorrow (dukha) with pathos (karuna rasa) or the tragic; valor (vīra) with the heroic (vīr rasa); fear (bhaya) with the horrible, or horror (bhayānak rasa); disgust (bībhatsa) with satire (bībhatsa rasa); wonder (āścarya) with the marvelous (āścarya rasa). Each proto genre is organized by the dominant emotion, while ancillary emotions contribute to complicated networking of both appraisal- and non-appraisal-based emotion markers (Pandit 1996: 146–147). While Bharatmuni's treatise is mostly focused on emotion elicitation through formalization of technique, later theorists, such as Abhinavagupta, add cognitive and psychological perspectives. In his final formulations, Abhinavagupta combines the concept of rasa to the idea of dhvani, that is, verbal and/or associational suggestion. Equally important is Abhinavagupta's emphasis on the distinction between bhāva—real emotion of the playwright, actor, or viewer—and rasa—the aesthetic emotion of author, actor, and spectator. According to Abhinavagupta, narrative structure triggers memory and desire traces in the mind; the source of these traces can be life experience or experience of art and literature.

In connection with recent research in emotion, cognition and narrative, writers such as Patrick Hogan and Keith Oatley have drawn attention to the ancient Indic aesthetics of emotion. Though Oatley and Hogan refer to the connections between rasadhvani and cognitive theory in a number of their works, special mention may be made of Hogan's elaborations of the connections between rasa and genre in *The Mind and Its Stories* (2003: 49–54). Equally important are Oatley's thoughts on the rasa typology, emotion universals, and mental models, as explicated in *Emotions: A Brief History* (2003: 153–54). Both writers underscore the emphasis Abhinavagupta attaches to memory and reader/viewer response. With regard to the transcendence aesthetic, it was Abhinava who added a ninth aesthetic emotion to the typology—the śānta

rasa. This addition does not correlate with genre; it evidences a concern with how stories and plays impact the human mind through the elicitation of emotion. In Sanskrit drama, aesthetic uses of wonder (or the rasa of the marvelous) quite frequently transform sorrow and despair into wonder. This is perhaps due to an underlying expectation that a play, or a reading, should conclude as a ritual does. It should have that kind of efficacy.

During the Colonial period, a cross-cultural misunderstanding of genre practices might have been caused by insufficient understanding of the social role of plays and stories. When early Indologists compared classical Sanskrit drama to Greek drama, they concluded that the Sanskrit canon had no tragedies. No doubt, there *were* tragedies, which, in the second half of the final act occluded emotively charged tragic information by superimposing transcendent narrative episodes over it. Kalidasa's *Śakuntalā* and Bhavabhūti's *Uttarāraṃcaritam* are the two most famous examples of this kind of dramaturgy (see Pandit 1995: 103–133). When the pregnant Sita (in Bhavabhūti's *Uttarāraṃcaritam*) drowns herself in despair, the river Ganges, as a deity, helps the birthing of her twins. Likewise, in the *Rāmāyana*, Sita emerges in her resplendent beauty after being subjected to a fire ordeal. In both cases disruptions in laws of physical nature, when water does not drown and fire does not burn, define the moral and epistemic limits of social norms. At the same time, the visual spectacle elicits wonder and awe.

In considering transcendence in relation to audio-visual emotion, whether we are in the East or the West, doctrinal matters of belief are of very little consequence. Wonder requires a distancing of the character from the laws governing the immediate story world, as well as the worlds of the readers'/viewers' immediate experience. In her discussion on Merleau Ponty's "Flesh-Ontology" and his "philosophy of embodiment," Sue Cataldi defines wonder as the "feeling sense of epistemic limitations" that requires a "deferential distance—and an observance of *tact*" (1993: 11, 9). She considers wonder as "the deepest" in the "cognitive cluster of emotions," such as startle, surprise, admiration, fascination and amazement (10). Like honor and reverence, this cluster of emotions requires occlusion of information and insertion of distance. From this perspective, it is clear that the transcendence aesthetic used in the three Indian films works through the viewer's sense of distance from the characters. There are also internal frames of distance and occlusion that negotiate *proximity*. It is not proximity caused by ego-identification, or distance caused by super-ego exaltation, but an elicitation of thought trends associated with empathy and abstract universalism.

Consistent with principles of universalist empathy, the films do not demand, as the older literatures did not, that viewers believe in specific supernatural agents or in benevolent universe theories. In the beginning and the middle, all three of these films deal with difficult social and political realities.

In *Jagate Raho*, an innocent villager is hounded by residents of a large apartment building in the city when he enters the compound through a broken gate wanting nothing more than a sip of water. The social distance between him and the urban habitat motivates *mise-en-scène*, montage and montage sequences, and at the end this distance is recruited to elicit tranquility in contrast to the fear and the terror. Suspense is maintained by means of shots that bring the protagonist close to water but he cannot satisfy his need because every such attempt exposes him to danger. Dutt's *Pyasa* thematizes emotion, setting the individual, a poet, against society and family. The state, and the nation are inert entities and an abject, unashamed self-interest governs public and private life. *Guide*'s protagonist reaches the end of a dream and a life plan, as relationships are tested and shattered. The emotional address of

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each film prepares us for closure in *sānta rasa*, and we feel that no other ending would have been suitable. When the self is distanced from the world, even from the body and its immediate concerns, non-adaptive goal satisfaction is privileged in favor of interests that are larger than one individual and one particular socio-historical time zone.

In his 2004 book on *Emotion*, Keith Oatley refers to, and agrees with Jennifer Jenkins' idea that the "emotional repertoire" that humans inherit from "evolutionary adaptation" is based largely on three social goals or social motivations (81). These goals, as Oatley explains, are *assertion* "of ourselves against others" for status and power; *attachment*, in which humans depend for protection on others whom they can trust; and *affiliation*, in which they commit themselves to others (Oatley 2004: 81). Their principal proposal is that emotions are "the primary means by which human relationships are structured" (81), and social goals, obstructions to these goals, facilitations, and other aspects of the process constitute emotion domains. I would like to point out here that the three films discussed in this article do not use emotions exploitatively for consumerist viewer satisfaction, as typical Bollywood films often do. Rather the filmmakers use emotion systems in relation to attachment, affiliation, and assertion goals of individuals in a postcolonial society. In this way, the films take part in a larger social discourse. Anti-social emotions, motivations, and action patterns are brought into focus, but not for the viewer's self satisfying condemnation, as is typical in mainstream Bollywood films. Indeed, assertion, affiliation, and attachment as goals are often mixed, introspectively inaccessible, at best ambiguous, and so are the emotions associated with them. In either case, however, as Nico Frijda maintains, "Emotions are the manifestations of the individual's concern satisfaction system; and: Emotions express the individual's concerns and the satisfaction state of these concerns" (1986: 478).

In *Pyasa* (starring Guru Dutt, Waheeda Rehman, Mala Sinha, and Johnny Walker), the initial emotion situation is one of extreme distress and dejection due to the protagonist's—Vijay's (played by Guru Dutt)—chronic unemployment. Homeless and destitute, he spends his days on park benches of the red light district of Calcutta. His misfortune meets some of the “critical conditions” for melodrama, as Noël Carroll (1999) defines them. Carroll suggests that in a melodrama, the protagonist should not come across as a victim or a tragic figure; the misfortune should not be his fault, but this should not allow us to see him as a victim. Conversely, he is not a tragic figure endowed with the *hamartia*, and so forth. Instead, his misfortune should benefit others; it should be a form of sacrifice and, for this reason, elicit our admiration. To some viewers, Vijay might not command a viewer's admiration. Noël Carroll believes that in a melodrama the viewer must admire the character for the way he “negotiates his misfortune” (in Plantinga and Smith 1999: 36). Otherwise, as Carroll correctly maintains, melodrama would be a sadistic genre. In *Pyasa*, Vijay's unemployment (and his lack of success at publishing his poems) is not a form of sacrifice; it benefits no one. As the film progresses, we admire him not for the way he negotiates his misfortune, because he does not negotiate it, but for its larger mirroring effects. The viewers may even distance themselves from Vijay because of his seemingly perverse attachment to suffering, but when his joblessness and homelessness assume a poetic magnitude, ironically, the aesthetic distance allows for the viewer's immersion in Vijay's mode of feeling and being. The defeated hero (the word, Vijay, means victory) wins as he loses.

Vijay's sorrow, arising from his appraisal of events (personal and historical), sensitizes him to the sorrows of others and this emotion theme established in the very first shot is insistently linked with subsequent shots throughout the film—a sequence that brings us to the high moment of emotion intensity when Vijay gives his warm coat to a beggar at the train station. His dejection is no longer self-indulgent because it has entered into the affiliative structure of the dejection of others. As a member of the middle class, Vijay could have avoided dejection, but the beggar could not have brought his poverty and abjection upon himself. The reciprocity of an affiliative structure develops further when a tracking shot shows the beggar silently following Vijay to the train tracks to prevent him from committing suicide, and in that process gets caught in the tracks himself and is killed. Abjection turns into mute valor as he throws Vijay off the fatal tracks with a vehemence one could not have imagined so famished a human being to possess. A gift (of the warm coat on a chilly night) is reciprocated with a greater gift: rescue from a self-willed horrible death. Yet, this reciprocity requires sacrifice. The saved Vijay has to witness the horrible death of his savior.

In the opening sequence of the film, not yet completely unhopeful about publishing his work, Vijay is seen reciting one of his poems, lying down on the

grass in the park, very close to a bee, enjoying the light and the sun. For Indian viewers, the emotion is somewhat “criterially prefocussed,” to use Noël Carroll’s phrase, because of the poetically salient allusion to the bee and the flower in Kalidasa’s *Śakuntalā*. In Dutt’s movie, the romantic dream memorialized in the lines of his poem, and the affiliative connection between man and nature crashes when a heavy black shoe, unmindfully, steps on the bee. The wearer of the shoe is not part of the *mise-en-scène*, only the big black shoe. Vijay’s reactive emotion, written on his face, is indicative of an appraisal that the incident means more than someone unknowingly stepping on an insect. This establishing shot, linked to a configuration of similar shots throughout the film, is first in a series of empathetic reactions to violations of nature (and the natural order of human relations between people), seen perhaps most clearly in the middle of the film when Vijay reacts to the mute pain of a prostitute. Her figure is caught in competing demands of the sick child crying for her attention, and the gyrating labor of her dance to please insensitive, unappreciative, leery eyed customers. The sound of crying connects the off-screen space where the child is to the point of view shots of Vijay and the prostitute. Vijay and this woman are strangers, but the point of view shots and eye line matches, define emotion scripts of compassionate sorrow, or *karuna*, to use the Sanskrit word. From the perspective of Sanskrit aesthetics, *karuna rasa* is the organizing *rasa* of this film. Within one frame of events, Vijay is alone, isolated, and dejected; in other frames of micro-events and emblematic images, he is not alone. His emotion is not of self-indulgent dejection, but of love for others: love as both *eros* and *agape*.

Through associational links of this kind the viewer perceives Vijay’s misfortune, though not benefiting others, providing an experiential feeling tone for their subjectively experienced shame, sorrow, suffering, and physical pain. For instance, the interlinked montage that gathers around the sound of someone coughing, with a little glimpse of his/her thin blanket in a very cold night; the shivering body of the man at the train station, his fingers raised up in the form of a wilting, withering blossom; a forcibly decked young girl being pushed inside a gate (to have sex with a paying customer); the abject faces of a group of girls raised up to the poet, as if at this moment he is not a denizen of the same streets. This montage is not part of the narrative structure but a spectacle unified by the words of Vijay’s song-lyric. The protagonist becomes a witness, an omniscient lyricist-narrator: an ideal spectator.

The central narrative thread of the poet’s encounter with the prostitute, Gulab, occurs in the context of the poet and the prostitute being cast away by society. The poet is cast away for being a dreamer and a financial failure, and the prostitute for what she does to survive. However, both of them mirror the condition of many other castaways and the bond between these two establishes a larger frame for networks of attachment and affiliation among the

less fortunate and the outcasts. As co-protagonist, Gulab figures prominently in the sorrow, shame, abjection, love, fame, and death scenarios. At one point, Vijay is believed dead; Gulab gets his poems published by paying the subvention fees with her jewels. Posthumous fame redeems him as a poet, but it also damns him because in reality he is not dead. Vijay and Gulab's first encounter begins with a shot of Vijay (Guru Dutt) in the park, as Gulab (Waheeda Rehman) softly sings lines of one of his lyrics. He asks her where she found it. Far from thinking he could be the author, Gulab considers him nothing more than a man in search of illicit pleasure. Hence, she misrecognizes the sign and lures him with another song, leading him through the dark alleys, up the stairs to her house. This sequence clearly introduces a new attachment theme in contrast to an old one: Vijay's remembered love for his ex-girlfriend (Mala Sinha) who has left him but to whom his poetry manuscript is dedicated.

In the course of the film, Dutt uses three tracking shots of Vijay and Gulab ascending and descending stairs, to constitute affect related to romance (*śringāra rasa*) and tranquility (*śānta rasa*). As an oppositional parallel to the scene of failed seduction, Gulab climbs another flight of stairs, being lured herself by a street singer's song of divine love and erotic spirituality, to emerge at the roof terrace where Vijay is standing with his back turned to her (just as she was in the park). He is wearing a white muslin kurta, while she was wrapped in a shimmering, white saree, surrounded by shadows. In this second tracking shot, inter-cut by stills, the two are shown, separately, listening to the same song; she is moving and he is still. Distances between them are diminished and re-established, but Vijay is unaware of Gulab approaching him and receding back into the shadows. With a series of stills that are like paintings or photographs, Dutt cuts from Waheeda Rehman walking toward Guru Dutt to the street below, where the minstrel is singing of Radha's love for Krishna. On the roof, Gulab comes close, is about to touch Vijay when the song ends; she withdraws and runs away.

Subsequently, after his mother's death and his exclusion from her funeral, Vijay falls ill. Gulab finds him in the streets and drags him up the stairs, trying to rescue him from the aimless wandering and the hunger. Again, a long tracking shot is used as they go upstairs, a shot that parallels the earlier song and dance sequence. The words of her seduction song become now thematically significant: "Who knows what you said / What I heard / At the turning, heart had struck a deal / Wind rustled through the leaves / someone hummed a [familiar] tune / Raising [the dust of] so many dreams / And so, the heart struck a deal." The commercial metaphor of striking a deal (between the poet and the prostitute) is altered in its affiliative significance. In contrast to the irreversible turn their relationship takes, everyone is busy striking money grabbing deals, capitalizing on the poet's posthumous fame. Idiomatically, the refrain is based on a common expression used (in Hindi and Urdu) when mar-

riage contracts (based on dowry and other considerations) are made. In this case, the contract made between Vijay and Gulab is socially forbidden; its only validity is inter-subjective.

Emotion scripts of intimacy and affiliation develop in the final moments when, defeated and denied, Vijay comes to Gulab's doorstep and almost simultaneously she rises from the sickbed rushing down the stairs.⁴ It is not clear if the music of the refrain from the earlier song about Radha and Krishna—"Today, O! Beloved, mingle my limbs with yours / So that earth and water become one"—is diegetic or non-diegetic. One can assume that, as she comes down the stairs, Gulab mentally hears recollected strains of the song, or that the soundtrack is used for the benefit of the viewer only. In either case, it reinforces the transcendental feeling tone of the final scene in which Gulab and Vijay leave together, hand in hand, but not toward any place that can be envisioned as real. There is no street, no train station, not a definite geographical direction, only something in between land, water, and ether: an analogue for the appeal made by Radha to Krishna in the song: to make land and water one with the celestial rain of his love (Figure 1).

The religious motifs clearly refer to Bhakti literature and to the male and female prototypes of the divine as described in Samkhya and other theological contexts, but the surrounding references are not limited to Hinduism. The iconography of crucifixion is clearly suggested in the two preceding sequences. In one, Vijay recites his poems at the publisher's house, and in another he

Figure 1. *Śānta rasa*:
Vijay and Gulab
leave together.



appears at his own memorial service to the delight of those who wish he were alive and the dismay of those who are to benefit from his death. It is interesting that the Jesus references come up in connection with Vijay's assertion of social power and status, even as he is denied by others. These references are, later, poetically reframed in the context of Indian thought to underscore Vijay's rejection of the world as ignorance (*avidhyā*) and illusion (*māyā*). The words of the Vaiṣṇava lyric, as different from Vijay's lyrics of lost love and loss of hope (in the nation's future), anticipate a mystical, rather than a sexual union with the woman: Gulab. The literal meaning of her name is a rose, and rose is a mystical symbol in both Christianity and Islam. The explicit Christ iconography configures Guru Dutt's screen image as larger than life, encompassing its history through attachment and affiliation, while the Hindu perspective allows for detachment from and rejection of the world in favor of *moksha* or transcendence. In his own words, Vijay's final destination is "a place from where he/they will not have to go to any other place." Such a place, no doubt, suggests *moksha* as liberation from cycles of rebirth.

In contrast to the inexplicit, though strongly suggested use of transcendence in Dutt's *Pyasa*, Vijay Anand's *Guide* (starring Dev Anand and Waheeda Rehman) explicitly concludes with its protagonist, Raju's image splitting into the body and the soul, or *ātman*. Anand's film is in color; he uses a richly textured orange fabric and contrasts it with Raju's faded, pale green or khaki uniform, with his trademark scarf. Dutt's film uses the metaphor of thirst to suggest emotional as well as spiritual thirst. In a parallel gesture, the final sequence of Anand's film uses thirst and hunger in the context of drought and famine. Though hunger and thirst are not typically thought of as basic or primary emotions, Nico Frijda considers them motivated emotion modes, especially, as he puts it, "hunger in hunger strikers and pain in martyrs" (1986: 169). In *Guide*, the social goals of affiliation, attachment, as well as of social isolation and assertion inflect explicit and inexplicit appraisals of events and consequent emotion and action outcomes. In the end, Raju renounces the world along with its ties based on family, friendship, and romantic love. He finds himself among strangers, sacrifices himself for their good and remains a semi-fictional construct for them.

Raju, the lover of an ambitious dancer Rosie, is imprisoned for fraud. Rosie is married to an archeologist, but when she falls in love with Raju she leaves her home and fulfills her aspiration to become a professional dancer with Raju's help and guidance. In this process, their relationship deteriorates, and he ends up in jail for forging her signature. After being released, he wanders aimlessly for some time and eventually stumbles into the role of a Mahatma in a remote village. During a famine, the villagers expect him to be a sacrificial hero and fast and pray for rain so they will not die of famine and hunger. Raju is unwilling to become a story-book hero. However, after violence breaks

out, he begins his fast—at first due to a misunderstanding. The historical allusion to Mahatma Gandhi’s repeated fasts to end socio-political violence cannot be missed in the film, and is directly mentioned in the novel by R.K. Narayan on which the film is based. Here again, the idea of transcendence, though primarily drawn from Hinduism, more specifically from the *Gita*, indexes Christianity insistently. In one of the shots, a crucifix is seen, etched in white on the temple wall next to the trident of Siva. However, in the end the idea of deity as savior, a central concept of Christianity, is not fully utilized. When the bodily Raju asks to be saved, the cosmic self replies: “there is no one to save, you are nothing, only *ahamkāra* [ego consciousness]; there is no sukha [happiness], no dukha [misery], no religion, no society, no world, only I.”

In the next shot, the dying Raju, lying in bed on the floor, is heard muttering the words: “only I, only I.” On the one hand, one can detect in this cinematic rhetoric the conventional recognition of the universal divine in the individual human; on the other hand, it is an assertion of power through the embodiment of a culturally validated, grandiose, mental model of the self as limitless and undying. As a culturally specific appraisal model, it serves to transform dejection into courage, and despair into wonder. Prior to his death, a very emotive montage shows Raju, surrounded by the crowd, with a dying child in his lap. The child is alive when he is put in Raju’s lap, but dies with Raju’s hand on his forehead. The mother of the child clearly expects a miracle that does not happen. As a parallel to Vijay’s compassionate tear drop at the misery of the prostitute who could not care for her sick child in *Pyasa*, Raju bends over the dead child and a very large tear falls on the little face framed in soft amber light. In addition to its viewer-directed emotive charge, the tear drop parallels with the coming of rain: the first drops falling at the moment of Raju’s death. Information about whether the rain is caused by a sacrificial death, or atmospheric change when drought conditions have exhausted themselves, is occluded. However, the very fact that Raju engaged in such a penance, or such a prayerful fasting distances him from others. Though he had not wanted to, Raju becomes the sacrificial hero of story and legend.

Again, the color scheme in the final set of shots is emblematic of Hinduism, yet the moment follows Raju’s Christ-like agape, his grief at the child’s death in his lap. This type of involvement in human affairs is not generally a trait of Hindu deities; they are distant, not visibly moved by human suffering. The proximity factor is, hence, enhanced by the Jesus allusions. The shot of Raju at this moment uses no fill light. He leans against a pillar, with shadows on his face, and mutters: “They consider me your son, but you are so far away from me.” In relation to the Krishna of the *Gita*, this utterance makes no sense. Krishna is a partial manifestation of Vishnu; he is not a son of God, nor can any Mahatma be seen as a son of God. Later, when Raju moves inside the temple, as his strength is failing, the reply to his rhetorical question comes from

the stone Śhivā, the lingam: “I am not far from you; I *am* you. Be like me, be stone.” The associative suggestion of “be like me” on the viewer is likely to elicit strong emotion, though the semantic emphasis is on becoming indifferent to grief. Dev Anand’s face shows stillness, quietism of the śānta rasa (Figure 2).

The dominant color used in this entire sequence is not white—as the color of peace might be in Islam and Christianity, or even Buddhism—but a rich mixture of red and yellow: the colors of ripeness in fruit, wheat, sesame, autumn leaves, rice and corn; the color of transcendent tranquility in traditional Hinduism.

The transcendence scene in *Jagate Raho* (starring Raj Kapoor, Daisy Irani, and Nargis) is different from the others; yet, there are significant parallels. The structuring emotion in this film is fear, with approximately twenty fear faces of Raj Kapoor that can be of interest to psychologists of emotion (Figure 3). In their resolute pursuit of the thief who is an honorable, but a very thirsty man, the residents of the apartment building disturb his mind and body through their menacing pursuit. Sequences of shots from various angles and in varied lighting (all in black and white) show his fear of falling from a great height, being poisoned, being stabbed with a knife, being burnt alive,



Figure 2. Śānta rasa: death and Raju’s ātman .



Figure 3. Bhaya: the stranger’s face of fear.

beaten to death, shamed and stoned to death—nearly all forms of fear the history of mankind has invented and inflicted on humans. Non-human agents—such as the dog of the opening shots—do not appear threatening; and objects, such as a garbage can inside which he hides for a time establish easy kinship with him. While his bodily need for water is frustrated, his affiliative link to cinematic locations and objects continues, and he becomes a witness to the crimes of others and an involuntary instrument of their exposure to the public and the authorities.

The crucifixion iconography is indexed in this film as well. In one shot, the pursued fugitive holds on to pipes to keep from falling as people below throw stones at him. One of the stones breaks a window, bringing into full view the Jesus image, presumably hanging on the wall inside the room above. What is important is that the image becomes a part of the *mise-en-scène* involving the fugitive hanging on the outside wall in a precarious position. As he is distanced from the stone-throwing crowd, he is brought in proximity to this projected image. Later, standing on top of the water tank at the roof terrace, an elevation that distances him and puts him above his pursuers, he faces the frenzied crowd to express accumulated anger in a few well-chosen words. Here too, his action of being able to quench his thirst is blocked by imminent danger and the moment of anguished assertion is followed by abject fear.

The final montage sequence is initiated by a sleepy child opening a door on the balcony that is part of the same apartment building, but the cinematic frame distances it from the rest. It seems like worlds apart, as does the child. She is not simply a child, but someone who might, in a play, impersonate the childhood of Lord Krishna. Gender reversal works well as she offers the intruder her gold bracelets, promising she will not tell anyone. The simple acceptance of a thief's possible reason to be a thief is necessary at this point. It elicits cleansing tears of capitulation, as he puts the bracelets back on her tiny wrist and says he is not a thief and he has never stolen anything. The little girl (played by Daisy Irani, the most talented child star of this period) is not surprised to see a grown man cry. She looks at his wounds and says, "Oh, look how you have hurt yourself; won't your mother be mad at you?" The fugitive's reply, "I have no mother," contributes to a finely calibrated emotion dynamics between the two. To this un-named child, the nameless stranger is not the horrifying monster he was to the deranged residents of the apartment complex; he is wounded, traumatized, and terrified. She comforts him, saves him, shows him the path to freedom.

When he wakes from a faint, a motif from the beginning of the film is repeated and reversed. At the start of the film, an off-screen distant sound of the night watchmen—thundering the warning: Jagate Raho "stay awake" (to guard your homes, properties from thieves)—is brought diegetically close to this particular quarter where a solitary man and a dog are searching for

water. One has a sense of the larger city and its entire surroundings being joined to this corner. Through sound, off-screen spaces join the focal location. At the end of the film, opening lines of a song reach where the child and the stranger are. The song, once again, celebrates the child Krishna being awakened by his mother. We know that the suggestion of the first word, *jaago*, that is, wake up, is diametrically different; it is a waking up equivalent of a lullaby, followed by a refrain in a faster tempo, the implication of which is to wake up (not to the danger of petty thieves, but to hope, love and beauty)—“Open your eyes, beloved Mohana / A new age awaits to kiss them / Wake up, all of you / As petals open to the morning sun.” Mohana is one of the names of Krishna; it means “the one who enchants the mind.” As before, the melody and the words from an unseen, off-screen location enter the space we are witnessing, but with a very different emotive intent.

The associative meanings of this line refer to Krishna of the *Gita*, his promise to be reborn in every age. When the man wakes, the child/Krishna wipes the tears from his eyes, opening a door for him. At this moment, Raj Kapoor’s face relapses into fear and Daisy Irani dispels fear with an emblematic hand motion as she says: “Go, you have nothing to fear; you have done nothing [wrong].” As he exits, the song is inserted into the montage diegetically; he hears it and walks toward it. The singer is still off-screen, but an impressive temple comes into view. The spatial relation between the apartment complex and the temple compound is not realistic. When the supposed thief leaves the apartment building, the police step aside to let him pass. There is a special kind of distance between him, the now dispersed crowd that menaced him, and the thickly armed police that guarded the building (from him) the entire night. After he walks out, the path that leads him to the temple compound is like a bridge that leads him to a painted landscape, which, for his requirement, has come alive. The temple emerges like a piece of architecture that has been grafted to the city, though the graft is very fluid. As the fearful man, released from fear, treads over a dreamlike path, the singer of the dawn song (played by Nargis), is seen watering plants and washing stone images. No words are spoken to explain the story and the situation, yet everything is understood and she (the singer) offers him water (Figure 4).

Jagte Raho is free from the usual trappings of a Bollywood melodrama. Transcendence in it is primarily symbolic and signals relief from fear. The body and mind of the fugitive emerge as allegorical for the individual self trapped in customs and dead forms that should be rendered ineffective at the dawn of a new stage in the history of a postcolonial nation. Though the cinematic style of the culminating scenes in the three films is diverse, the overlap in their in-

As they mix belief systems at will, the films do not advocate a particular religious viewpoint. Instead, they encode an epistemology and ontology of emotion to provide enjoyment (of rasa), while drawing attention to difficult social and political issues.



Figure 4. *Śānta rasa: dawn and the gift of water.*

dexing of religious and aesthetic ideas, such as the figures of Krishna and Jesus, constitutes a transcendent closure to emotion scripts of sorrow, fear, anger, and the ambivalence of love. As they mix belief systems at will, the films do not advocate a particular religious viewpoint. Instead, they encode an epistemology and ontology of emotion to provide enjoyment (of *rasa*), while drawing attention to difficult social and political issues.

Lalita Pandit is professor of English and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at the University of Wisconsin at La Crosse. She has published articles and book chapters on Shakespeare, Indian cinema, Rabindranath Tagore, Goethe, Indian aesthetics of *Rasa* as well as postcolonial literature and theory. She has also published poetry and short stories about Kashmir in print and on the Internet. She coedited a special issue of *College Literature* on “Cognitive Shakespeare: Criticism and Theory in the Age of Neuroscience,” which won the Best Special Issue Award of 2006 from the Council of Editors of Scholarly and Learned Journals.

Notes

¹ Monier-Williams refers to śānta parva, the twelfth canto of the epic, *Mahabharata*, as the “tranquilizing” canto that follows the war section. He says it is “the longest in the whole poem and consists chiefly of stories, discourses and episodes narrated for tranquilizing of the troubled spirit of Yudhiṣṭhira after the termination of the war and the slaughter of his relatives” (1999: 1064). The slaughtered relatives are not only Yudhiṣṭhira’s uncles and cousins (those against whom the battle is fought to reclaim the unjustly lost right of kingship), but also all his sons and nephews. The tranquilizing canto sets up one of the first literary precedents for a theoretical inquiry into emotion and narrative.

² The appraisal theory, dominant among theories of emotion, assumes that emotions are elicited in response to our evaluation of the success and/or failure of goals, and that the brain processes information about goal satisfaction. Cognitive psychologists have isolated core relational themes for various emotions that are verbal, involving mental language that articulates a decisive signal about how things are going or will go for the self in relation to others and in relation to environmental factors. For example, when the brain registers an irretrievable loss (of a loved person), the emotion aroused will be grief. From an evolutionary point of view, various notions of afterlife are no more than attempts to induce (in the grieving person) some sense of a recuperative hope so as to change the emotional outcome to something less crippling and more conducive for survival.

³ *The Nāṭya Śāstra* identifies emotions that can have a relation of complementarity and those that cannot. Various configurations of emotions are discussed from this point of view of dynamism and dialectic. As defined by rasa theorists, some of these emotion modes are transitory while others are permanent, some are fixed (sthāyī) and others are circulatory (sancāri). These classifying discussions lead to the formation of evaluative criteria, according to which rasa-related faults in theatrical practice can be detected and remedied. Some of these faults are attributed to mismatching of emotions when they are, in stories or on stage, constituted to complement, reinforce and juxtapose each other. Evaluative criteria for good art and bad art are, partially, drawn from an understanding of what would be a mismatch and why?

⁴ An emotion script may be defined as a brief, distilled narrative description that contains semantic (and syntactic) features to serve as biological signals for the arousal of emotion. Emotion scripts for attachment, affiliation, aggression, and so forth, are partly inherited from evolutionary history. This part may be the most universal, while in particular societies, due to the difference in appraisal models, evaluative norms and constitution of prototypical conditions (for emotion), emotion scripts may differ. For instance, being told bedtime stories in some cultures may not be part of the attachment script, while in others it may be. Similarly, sharing food may not be as much a part of the affiliation script in societies where food has never been scarce.

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