The Poetics of Anger in Ali’s Dramatic Art

Abstract:
Anger is a strong feeling of indignation and displeasure; it is the fundamental human emotion which has a potential for destructive as well as constructive motives. Outrageous displeasure is both style and material in his actor compositions, which marks him out as a contemporary lobbyist. This examination paper plans to dissect the utilization of outrage in Ali’s chosen plays: The Guilt (2014), The Last Metaphor (2014) and The Odyssey (2016), where the utilization of outrage is obvious and piercing. For this reason, the analyst draws upon the idea of outrage speculated by Harriet Lerner in her book The Dance of Anger (1985). The investigation features that outrage is the beginning stage for Ali and presumes that outrage is the rousing power and material for Ali’s emotional work in addition to this. The findings reveal that although anger enunciated in Ali’s plays seems to be frenzied, yet it is very much cerebral.

Key Words:
Anger, Frenzied, Cerebral, Stimulus, Aspiration, Style, Material

Introduction
This research paper aims to analyze the use of anger in Usman Ali’s plays: The Guilt (2014), The Last Metaphor (2014) and The Odyssey (2016). These Pakistani English plays intend to bring positive change in society by concentrating on social ills. This study draws on anger, a basic human emotion, which is related to the field of psychology, sociology, culture and literature. This singular notion is central to the study of Ali’s selected plays. Anger is pertinent and integral to the dramatic art of Usman Ali, an English Pakistani playwright. The paper explores how anger is reproduced in Ali’s dramatic texts. Anger seems to be the doctrine and practice of Ali’s art of writing which qualifies his work as the poetics of anger. The term ‘poetics of anger’ is conceived in relation to Ali’s profound concern and disappointment with social conditions. The poetics of anger is manifested by the characters of Ali’s plays, which reveals his consciousness and determines his creative impulse. In addition to this, the current study is also interested in revealing that the use of anger in Ali’s plays does not diminish his art of writing. The expression of anger in any situation can be a stimulus for aspiration to change prevalent circumstances. The reification of outrage gives a unique device to consider society. Anger seems to be a characteristic feature of Usman Ali’s dramatic art.

According to Lerner (1985), a person expresses anger when his rights are violated or when he is dissatisfied with the prevalent circumstances (p. 1). So anger is a way to protest against the irritating conditions or problems, to evoke awareness and to magnify the need for change in circumstances.

A writer has to confront a number of predicaments prevailing in his society, viz. social, psychological, political and economic. Often, most of the issues engage his interest, and he responds to these ills in various
ways. At one time, he portrays a pathetic picture of a society where people accept their circumstances as their inevitable fate, but at the other, he takes up his arms in disgust and moral outrage. Deploying the tool of angry language in his writings, he overtly strikes against the social ills with the intention to alarm the audience to a realization that there is an urgent need to change the circumstances. This study is concerned with the playwright who is intensely vexed by socio-political and economic predicaments of his age and thus deploys his dramatic art to as a laboratory of social engineering. Anger is a strong feeling of indignation and displeasure; it is the fundamental human emotion which has a potential for destructive as well as constructive motives. Outrageous displeasure is both style and material in his actor compositions, which marks him out as a contemporary lobbyist. This examination paper plans to dissect the utilization of outrage in Ali’s chosen plays: The Guilt (2014), The Last Metaphor (2014) and The Odyssey(2016), where the utilization of outrage is obvious and piercing. For this reason, the analyst draws upon the idea of outrage speculated by Harriet Lerner in her book The Dance of Anger (1985). The investigation features that outrage is the beginning stage for Ali and presumes that outrage is the rousing power and material for Ali’s emotional work in addition to this, the findings reveal that although anger enunciated in Ali’s plays seems to be frenzied yet it is very much cerebral.

In the tradition of English drama, there is no dramatist except Usman Ali and John Osborn who has been so bitter and condemning. From Shakespeare to Edward Bond, no playwright has confronted the society directly like Osborn and Ali. The dramas of Shakespeare, Ben Johnson, Richard Sheridan and Oliver Goldsmith have been pandering to the artistic taste of society. The dramatists of 19th and 20th century like Norwegian Henrik Ibsen, Swedish Strindberg, Italian Pirandello, American Arthur Miller and Russian Anton Chekhov also followed the trail even though the art of drama was being used to deal with extremely serious issues. George Bernard Shaw is the first English dramatist who used the genre of drama in order to deal with serious issues. Some of the other dramatists including Christopher Fry, W. H. Auden, W. B. Yeats, C. Isherwood, J. M. Synge and T. S. Eliot struggled to re-establish the spirit of dramatic art through poetry. John Osborn, an English playwright, has already been extensively studied in the context of anger. Therefore, the researcher, with the intention to understand the social ills through the tool of anger, has selected Usman Ali’s dramatic art, where anger seems to be an integral component.

In the context to deal with social ills through dramatic art, Usman Ali, an English Pakistani writer, is a leading light in this age of bloodshed, suicide bombing and the war against terror. Born on 8th March 1978, Ali is a contemporary playwright, theatre director, translator and above all a teacher who has translated a book entitled The Speaking Silence (2008) and written five plays: The Guilt (2014), The Last Metaphor (2014), The Odyssey (2016), The Breath (2017) and The Flute (2017). His dramatic writings deal with the ills of society and human sufferings. Edward Bond (2014) says that Usman Ali has an acute power of observation and a compassionate understanding of human beings, of their sufferings and dignity… In these troubled times, he has something useful to say to an audience…” (Blurb, p. back cover). He has a natural talent to convey direct experiences in dramatic form (Bond, 2014) The anger of Ali’s characters refers to the anger of the modern man. In the context to encapsulate Ali’s work, Lisa Schlesinger (2015) comments: “the playwright articulates his own process of finding the means to speak and to portray a violent, alienating world of brothers, broken families, brothers, of broken and violated people” (p. 8). By doing this, Ali’s basic concern is the welfare of human society (Bond, 2017).

**Objectives**

The principal objective of this paper is to analyze the use of anger in Usman Ali’s selected plays: The Guilt (2014), The Last Metaphor (2014) and The Odyssey (2016). Explicitly, the study intends to investigate why the characters of Ali’s plays remain in agitation and anger. Moreover, the paper seeks to determine whether anger represented in Ali’s dramatic art is hysteric or cerebral. In addition to this, the researcher attempts to trace how anger becomes a tool to change society. The following questions facilitate the researcher to achieve the aforementioned objectives:
1. What is the reason behind the characters of Ali’s plays agitation and anger?
2. What is the nature of anger represented in Ali’s dramatic art – whether it is hysterical or cerebral?
3. How does anger become a tool to change society?
4. What is the function of anger in Ali’s dramatic art?

**Literature Review**

This review of literature in the related field of knowledge sets up the scope of the study and thus fills the gap in the germane area of knowledge. This writing survey covers the examination work done on Ali’s sensational workmanship specifically, and the past takes a shot at the investigation of outrage by and large. The scientists have investigated different elements of Usman Ali’s emotional works in subjective just as in quantitative research. In a paper, A Socio-Cultural Study of The Odyssey by Homer and The Odyssey by Usman Ali: A Comparative Analysis, Maria Musarat (2017), by applying Faiz Ahmed Faiz’s hypothesis of Culture and Identity (2006), explores socio-social contrasts and likenesses spoke to in The Odyssey (2016) by Usman Ali and The Odyssey (1974) Homer. In her paper Struggling for Resolution: In the Wake of an Artist’s Murder, Theater itself is the Greek Tragic Hero, Zainab Muhammad Shahid(2017) justifies the auditorium introduced in the play The Guilt (2014) as a heartbreaking Greek saint. Khadija Mariam’s paper Locating Existentialism in the Play The Guilt by Usman Ali(2017) places Usman Ali among the contemporary screenwriters who address the issues of present-day man through their sensational workmanship. Muhammad Adnan Ali (2017), in his paper entitled The Dynamics of Power: A Study of Ali’s The Odyssey, investigates power elements in Ali’s play The Odyssey (2016). In the area of the show, outrage has additionally been concentrated by Bosede F. Afolayan. The scientist, in a paper titled Poetics of Anger in John Osborne’s Look Back in Anger and Femi Osofsian’s The Chattering and the Song(2012), investigates the governmental issues of outrage in the emotional works of Osborn and Osofsian and reasons that sensational resentment is accustomed to getting positive change society. The specialist has discovered that outrage is the least tended to the territory of Usman Ali’s plays. Accordingly, by dissecting the utilization of outrage, the current investigation fills the hole in the developing group of research on Ali’s work. The commitment of the present examination is to consider the utilization of outrage in Usman Ali’s sensational craftsmanship. The current research is noteworthy to comprehend the utilization of outrage in Ali’s plays, and along these lines, it supports the helpful utilization of outrage in dramatic compositions. Along these lines, the cutting edge screenwriters can figure out how to utilize outrage to acquire positive change society.

**Research Methodology and Framework**

In order to study the use of anger in Ali’s dramatic art, the qualitative paradigm of research has been used as it provides a better understanding of any phenomenon. This research paradigm is useful to gain novel insights into things which are difficult to investigate quantitatively. Three plays of Usman Ali The Guilt (2014), The Last Metaphor (2014) and The Odyssey (2016) are selected to analyze the use of anger. The characters and events of the plays are studied. To increase the authenticity of research, the research includes textual evidences.

For the purpose to analyze the use of anger in Ali’s plays, the researcher draws upon Harriet Lerner’s concept of anger she has theorized in her book The Dance of Anger (1985). Generally, anger is perceived as an indecent, abominable, impulsive, anti-social, hostile, aggressive, immature, unpleasant and destructive emotion. Although it seems to be an ignoble emotion, yet it can also be used as a tool of self-assertion for it is ignited by a sense of wrong. When a person is mistreated or when other people refuse to follow law and order, he or she is bound to be angry. So, anger is an emotion ignited by sexism, racism, injustice, etc. in the context to theorize anger, Lerner (1985) writes:

> Anger is a signal and one worth listening to. It may be a message that we are being hurt, that our rights are being violated; that our needs or wants are not being adequately met or simply that something is not right. (p. 1)
To Lerner (1985), anger exists for a reason, and it has its root; it is not the case that anger comes from nowhere. So anger is worth listening; it deserves attention and respect. Anger destroys the patterns of relationships, and thus this seemingly destructive force should be used for constructive purposes. According to Lerner (1985), the destructive dance of anger can be transformed into a constructive force. So, the people should neither restrain their anger nor they should express it through belligerence; they should discover the ways to deal with it positively – for the good of all involved in the process of anger. In this way, she introduces novel insights to establish constructive approach. In addition to this, anger is a very valuable tool that helps to unlock new understanding and new perspectives of tyrannical conditions which have been unquestioned. In brief, instead of putting a deaf ear to the expression of anger, the people should pay special attention to it because it is a way of communicating something worth listening to which is if taken sensibly, affirmative of positive change in society.

Data Analysis
The data is analyzed through textual analysis. Anger is considerably present in Usman Ali’s selected plays: The Guilt (2014), The Last Metaphor (2014) and The Odyssey (2016), where it reflects Ali’s criticism of his society and particularly of social structure, class consciousness and representation of religion.

Anger seems to be the basic emotion of the characters in Ali’s play The Guilt (2014) They are angry with their relations and the audience. They express their anger through their violent behavior towards their blood relations, audience and even towards the non-living objects. The play revolves around the story of artists – a father, his two sons and a female dancer. Shera, the father, is suffering from an actor’s block. He, in his sixties, seems to be angry with his audience as he often stares at them. Gamma, the elder son of Shera, is suffering from writer’s block. Throughout the play, he remains in agitation and expresses his anger through his gestures, look and words. When the play opens, he stares at his typewriter, and its page in anger breathes heavily with rage in his eyes and stares at the audience savagely as if he were a wounded hunter (p. 2). At the beginning of the second act of the play, when Shera coughs blood, Gamma becomes infuriated with coughing and yells at his father: “can’t you stop coughing?” (p. 28). Then he begins to type on the typewriter and “his facial expression changes continuously from despair to anger” (p. 29). Billa, the younger son, is suffering from dancer’s block, and consequently, he exhibits his anger physically and verbally. During the course of the play, he often abuses punches, slams and holds his father in his stranglehold. He also exerts his anger by breaking the statue with a hammer and tearing it apart with his both hands. Like his elder brother, he also stares at the audience savagely. The mute female dancer who dances at the end of each act expresses her anger through her dance; the movements of her dance resemble that of the fight. She punches and kicks in the air. Like other characters of the play, she also “stares hard at the audience” (p. 23). In short, anger seems to the basic characteristic of all the characters of the play.

This characteristic element of anger present in all the characters of the play The Guilt (2014) represents the anger of Pakistani people due to the prevailing injustice in the country. Shera is forced to waste his classic talent of an actor in the theatre which still thrives on slapstick, vulgar jokes and obscene dance by female dancers; throughout his life, he remains unable to secure a good job in some standard channel, and it is due to marked nepotism in the country. Gamma, the angry writer, is unable to write a story because he is not provided with proper facilities and environment. Billa, the angriest character in the play, strives to become a dancer like Hrithik Roshan; he joins bodybuilding club, exercises very hard and learns swimming in a deadly stream but his muscles remain stubborn. The angry dance of the female dancer refers to the exploitation of her art by Pakistani society. She has the potential to perform a variety of dance including national and international, but her potential is suppressed by the audience that is only interested in vulgar kind of dance, and it is due to lack of proper education. Exploited by the unjust system of society, all the characters exert anger verbally and physically. According to Lerner (1985), anger is a valuable message which suggests that someone is being hurt and that someone’s rights are being exploited (The Dance of Anger, p. 1). Therefore the anger of characters is
a message that their rights are being exploited and they are being hurt; there is something wrong with the social structure which needs to be corrected. In this way, anger is a staunch criticism on the social institutes that put a deaf year to secure the young talent and do not patronize the artists. So, anger is used as a tool by the dramatist to criticize the unjust system of society. In this way, the use of anger in the play is not merely hysteric; it is very much cerebral because the playwright intends to change society through constructive use of anger.

The play The Last Metaphor (2014) publicizes the anger of its author and characters, which is levelled against the audience, social ills and institutional cruelties. In the play, anger is refined from impulsive and destructive emotion to an artistic tool for the purpose to draw the attention of the audience to make them realize that there is something wrong with the social structure which needs to be corrected.

Usman Ali’s anger, at various social ills, is championed by Telemachus, the protagonist of the play The Odyssey (2016), who enunciates the disillusionment of “war against terror” (p. ii), in Pakistan. The play The Odyssey (2016) is written “in the horror of war against terror which has set Muslim against Muslim, has resulted in the deaths of countless thousands of innocents and has unleashed a nightmare that has enveloped the whole of our world” (Kutti, 2016). This war is claimed to be affirmative of peace in Pakistani society. Contrary to the promises made by the state, the war against terror proves to be ironical as it results in more deaths and destruction. Telemachus yells at the ironies of this war against terror in these words:

My father fights for the state. But his son is alone… Where is he? The state he fights for can’t give a single free cup of tea to its people. Where is he? (Breathing heavily) Those who were living are dying, and those who are dying can’t be buried. You go to the funeral in your father’s land, and someone enters and blasts himself. It is not acceptable. (p. 11)

This tirade reveals the ironies of war against terror; it is harsh criticism on the state and its policies. As obvious by the above lines, Telemachus poses many questions in the play. By using interrogative sentences, the playwright Usman Ali shows Telemachus’ frustration at the predicaments of his time. Here anger is enunciated against the establishment and its false policies. The establishment means the government and its apparatus. Odysseus is a Pakistani soldier who fights the war against terror, and thus he represents the establishment. Telemachus takes Odysseus as a part of the establishment which, to him, is responsible for the death of countless innocents. Moreover, Odysseus, Telemachus’ father, fights for the state whereas his own son is molested at home. In the context to curse the cruel policies of the establishment, Telemachus condemns his father in front of his mother:

What the hell can be bigger than this state for which your husband fights… You coward Odysseus (he snaps some of the branches with his hands and he is in extreme agony) Be damned where you are. You will die. You’ll never become a martyr. Cursed are those who call you martyr! (p. 12-13)

The language of Telemachus is strong and harsh; it directly condemns the person of Odysseus and what he represents – Pakistani establishment and its politics. By the use of indignant language, the playwright Usman Ali intends to penetrate spectators’ indifference and disenchantment towards the ironies and injustice prevailing in their society. Ali is anxious that his people are not giving attention to the prevailing predicaments; so he demands attention by force of language. In this way, Ali expresses the despair of a frustrated idealism.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, the analysts have endeavored to investigate the portrayal of outrage in Usman Ali’s sensational workmanship. For this reason, the specialist has used Lerner’s hypothesis of outrage. The investigation of language utilized by Ali’s characters decides the utilization of rants, condemnations, castigation, affront and similitudes of misuse. Practically all the characters stay in tumult and outrage for they are denied of their fundamental rights by the unreasonable arrangement of their general public. Through displeasure, they express that they are being harmed, their privileges are being damaged, and their requirements are not being satisfactorily met. In the wake of directing a definite investigation of the chose plays, the analyst has discovered
that outrage, however, a censure feeling is a tasteful and scholarly structure fundamental to Ali’s sensational workmanship. Ali’s outrage is refined through his emotional workmanship; it doesn’t devour him as an essayist rather it encourages him to communicate his disdain at the crooked social structure and to call for making a superior framework for his general public. Thusly, outrage turns into an interpretative device for Ali that empowers him to decide human condition. Through this valuable instrument of outrage, Ali verbalizes his dissent, scrutinizes foundation and offers vent to his aversion at the degenerate arrangement of his general public. Thusly, outrage turns into an intentional trigger for positive change. Along these lines, the indignation utilized in Ali’s sensational work isn’t simply hysteric; rather, it is cerebral displeasure which is intervened and sifted through emotional workmanship.

Uncommonly, Usman Ali has presented an intriguing show in Pakistani English writing. This dynamic type of dramatization mirrors Ali’s furious attitude and reviles the common social ills. Along these lines show turns into an apparatus for pivotal issues and an instrument through which the dramatist’s indignation is passed on and through which he at last tries for change.
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