

## Treatment of Karun Rasa in Abijanansakuntalam and Hamlet

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The theory of *Rasa* was propounded by Bharatmuni in *Natyashashtra*. He refers to *Rasa* as the delight that the audience derives from its experience of the generalized emotions presented in the drama. Seeing any evil or good action, one gets delight or sorrow. This sorrow or delight is known as *Rasa* in literature. According to Bharatamuni in this world 'nothing exists or excels without *Rasa*'. Similarly, in literature, without *Rasa*, the purpose of composition can not be achieved. There are eight *Rasa* in *Natya* of representation (Amarkosha 1, 7, 17).

Out of the eight *Rasa*, *Karun Rasa* is one of the prominent *Rasas* which has its *Sthayibhava* as *Shoka* or grief. The theory of *Rasa* is built around the concept of *Bhava* which is divided into *Vibhava*, *Sthayibhava*, *Sancharibhava*, *Anubhava* and *Sattvikabhava*. *Rasa* and *Bhava* are mutual illuminators. Bhavabhuti in the *Uttar Ram Charitam* has explained *Karun Rasa* as the main *Rasa*. When one feels very sad or sorrow, seeing one's plight condition, that situation is of *Karun Rasa*. It may occur due to many reasons such as death, separation, journey, plight condition etc. The drama which predominantly portrays and evokes the emotions or sentiments of pathos is a drama that belongs to *Karun Rasa*.

On the basis of Abhinava Gupta's *Sankhya Theory* of ' *Trigunatamaka Prakriti*', *Karun Rasa* is of three kinds, the grief caused by destruction of righteousness is *Sattvika*, the grief caused by the loss of worldly esteem and well being is *Rajasika* and the grief caused by the death of someone one's own is *Tamasika*.

In the West, drama has been chiefly divided into two classes—comedy and tragedy. Western criticism, developed from Aristotle's principles claims that conflict is the core element of any drama. In India, the class of a drama is determined by the *Rasa* or sentiment which the poet or playwright chiefly intends to embody in his drama. Aristotle also talks of the “pleasure” that is proper to tragedy, apparently meaning the aesthetic pleasure one gets from contemplating the pity and fear that are aroused through an intricately constructed work of art. Thus, it signifies that the end of the tragedy is a *katharsis* (purgation) of the tragic emotions of pity and fear.

Kalidasa and Shakespeare have universal appeal and their characters are not of one age and country but of all ages and countries. It is very striking to note that Kalidasa has not written any tragedy whereas Shakespeare is more popular on account of his tragedies like Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth are few to name them. Adya Rangacharya (1988: 117) rightly remarks that the more we study Kalidasa the more we find that drama as an art is entirely changing into his hands.”

In the *Abhijnansakuntalam*, first three acts are comic and its second three acts are tragic. The Hamlet is primarily the tragedy of Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark. As tragedy invokes the feelings of pity, naturally it comes under the category of *Karun Rasa*. According to Bharatmuni *Karun Rasa* arises from the permanent mood of sorrow, and this sorrow results from curse,

calamity, separation from relatives, loss of property, murder, defeat, disease and ill-luck. At the backdrop of this, an attempt is made in this paper to study *Karun Rasa* in the Abhijnansakuntalam and Hamlet.

In the Abhijnansakuntalam, charming character of Śakuntalā represents a tale of love but love appears to be nothing but a shocking and painful contradiction in this drama. In Greek tragedy, we find the hero and Fate in conflict. In the Abhijnansakuntalam, we have Śakuntalā, the heroine of the play in conflict with her fate. The curse of Durvasa was made responsible for all the cruelty that was shown to poor Śakuntalā, to culminate in a great tragedy. This curse becomes the pivot on which the whole tragedy revolves around. This affirms our faith that the Abhijnansakuntalam though deals with the sentiment of love, is predominantly a drama of *Karun Rasa*.

At the end, reunion of Śakuntalā and Dushyanta is shown therefore it is less tragic and fearful than Hamlet. Death is not the only agency that can turn a drama into tragedy. Living a life full of miseries and agonies is worse than death. Śakuntalā underwent misery and suffering not only due to a mere curse but she accepted the faith and fortune, which a woman of her time and age has to face and bear. For Śakuntalā suffering becomes a tool to overcome pains of separation from her beloved husband. Suffering brings out the hidden traits of her feminine character.

In her love, in her suffering, in her death, Śakuntalā never leaves her innocence. She does not know about the *Rishi* Durvasa's curse and how to cease the effect of the curse. It shows that she is very innocent and docile. Moments of great joy and misery leave her at a loss and she does not know how to express herself. The two young and recently married lovers are to be

inevitably, cruelly separated. They are to go through a severe process of emotional and spiritual maturing before they can meet again.

The fourth Act of the drama is very heart touching and arouses our feelings of *Karun Rasa* when Śakuntalā bids good-bye to her parents, her parents, though sad, feel a sense of satisfaction, as they know that she is going to the house of her beloved husband. Undoubtedly, this parting brings sorrow brings happiness that silently smiles across the corners of the tearful eyes. Kalidasa portrays the farewell scene very touchingly. The scene of departure and the lover suffering in separation evokes *Karun Rasa* in the spectators too. The whole ashram is plunged in sorrow. Kanva, maids, all shed tears at departure of Śakuntalā; even the trees, plants, and birds bow down with grief. The sage Kanva was sighing in grief:

"My lonely sorrow will not go,  
for seeds you scattered here  
before the cottage door, will grow;  
and I shall see them, dear." (Act IV, 21)

In Act V, when Śakuntalā arrives at the court of King Dushyanta and is allowed audience, she feels broken-hearted to find that the king does not recognize her. Due to the ill fate, the king denies having had anything to do with Śakuntalā he does not recognize her when her veil is removed. Moreover, Śakuntalā lost her ring of recognition during the course of her journey. Mutual recriminations lead to nothing and she and her party leave the court. The irony

of the king's remark cuts like a sharp knife and aggravated her suffering. The curse of Durvasa, loss of Dushyanta's memory is the main reason of the lovers' separation and suffering. These lead to the shedding of tears, sorrow and grief for both Dushyanta and Śakuntalā.

Act VI depicts the king Dushyanta's world of sorrow and regret. Dushyanta realizes the great injustice he has done to Śakuntalā. Two policemen enter with a fisherman who claims to have found the royal signet ring in the belly of the fish. As he sees the ring he recollects all the promises he had made to Śakuntalā. He is guilty of insulting her. He forgets all the merriments of life. Even the celebration of spring festival is banned. Life becomes insipid for him. He curses himself for his rudeness towards Śakuntalā;

"Alas! My smitten heart, that once lay sleeping,  
Heard in its dreams my fawn-eyed love's laments,  
And wakened now, awakens but to weeping,  
To bitter grief, and tears of penitence". (Act VI, 7)

Dushyanta appears to be deeply grieved but he is helpless. He is so grief -stricken that the Royal duties are also neglected by him. Chamberlain remarks that Dushyanta becomes a prey to remorse:

"He hates the things he loved; he intermits  
The daily audience, nor in judgment sits;

Spends sleepless nights in tossing on his bed;

At times, when he by courtesy is led

To address a lady, speaks another name,

Then stands for minutes, sunk in helpless shame". (Act VI, 5)

Dushyanta finds himself very alone and can easily remember the pitiful state of Śakuntalā when he rejected her:

"When I denied her, then she tried

To join her people. "Stay," one cried,

Her father's representative.

She stopped, she turned, she could but give

A tear-dimmed glance to heartless me--

That arrow burns me poisonously". (Act VI, 9)

Dushyanta withdraws all his interest from worldly pursuits and repents on his cruel behaviour towards his beloved:

"I treated her with scorn and loathing ever;

Now o'er her pictured charms my heart will burst:

A traveller I, who scorned the mighty river,

And seeks in the mirage to quench his thirst". (Act VI, 16)

In distress, Dushyanta speaks to Madhavaya that how can he endure a grief that has no respite?

"I cannot sleep at night

And meet her dreaming;

I cannot see the sketch

While tears are streaming." (Act VI, 22)

On the other hand, Shakespeare's Hamlet is the tragic character of all tragic characters. The play ends with stage full of blood and sorrow. It clearly indicates that *Karun Rasa* dominates it, results into the death of the hero in the final scene. Hamlet's grief that was so great that he plunged into madness not knowing when he would come out of it. Thus, Hamlet's mental confusion and sorrow generates *Karun Rasa*:

*"To be, or not to be: that is the question:*

*Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer*

*The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,*

*Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,*

*And by opposing end them?" (Act III Scene I 56-60)*

In this soliloquy, Hamlet struggles with his internal conflict of whether or not to kill himself in light of recent events which have depressed him greatly. He asks which of the two alternatives is nobler whether to suffer the cruelties of fate or to fight against the miseries of life. He is unsure what death may bring and can't be sure what death has in store.

Hamlet's affection for his father was so great that when he died, Hamlet grieved for a very long time. Claudius says "the clouds still hang" upon him, as Hamlet is still wearing black mourning clothes. (ACT I Scene II 66) This shows Hamlet's sorrow towards the death of his father. And, after Hamlet confirmed that his Uncle killed his father, he took revenge and was enraged. He suffers emotionally due to this fact and it culminates *Karun Rasa*.

Hamlet is disappointed with Ophelia for not responding to him. Ophelia's rejection of his sincere love intensifies his grief, what he calls the "pangs of disprized love" (Act III Scene I 70). He discloses his contempt for the whole women race; "Frailty, thy name is woman". (Act I Scene II 146) Ophelia's death can bring out no other emotion other than sadness or *Karun Rasa*. The harsh humour might provide some mental relief but may not draw laughter, as Ophelia's tragedy lies too heavily on the minds of the spectators. The funeral scene of Ophelia culminates *Karun Rasa*. Hamlet is shocked to hear the news of Ophelia which is followed by intense grief. The queens parting words doubles his pain:

*"Hamlet. What, the fair Ophelia!*

*Queen Gertrude. [scattering flowers] Sweets to the sweet. Farewell.*

*I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife.*

*I thought, thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,*



*And not t' have strewed thy grave" (Act V Scene I 235)*

Both Hamlet and Laertes in their bereavement lose their tranquility, which is but natural in the face of grief, and end up in a brawl.

*"What is he whose grief*

*Bears such an emphasis, whose phRasaae of sorrow*

*Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand*

*Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,*

*Hamlet the Dane." (Act V Scene I 247-251)*

Gertrude cannot help but notice Hamlet's outward appearance of mourning, but Hamlet makes it clear that the evident signs of grief do not come close to conveying how much sorrow he feels inside:

*"For they are the actions that a man might play,*

*But I have that within which passes show,*

*These but the trappings and the suits of woe." (Act I Scene II 84-86)*

Hamlet's sorrow is intensified by lack of feeling by those around him, and more significantly, by the cold-hearted actions of his mother Gertrude, who married her brother-in-law within a month of her husband's death.

In the end, Hamlet kills the real villain, the king, and another righteous man Laertes behaving like a villain at the instigation of the real villain. But his death gives birth to *Karun Rasa*.

Thus, it is revealed that in the Abhijnansakuntalam and Hmalet, the leading characters suffer very badly. Their suffering arouses our sentiments of *Karun Rasa* and we feel restlessness to find them in mournful state. Both Hamlet and Śakuntalā represent pitiable picture of the infinite helplessness and irremediable weaknesses of humankind. In the Abhijnansakuntalam, the curse becomes the pivot on which the whole tragedy revolves around. This affirms our faith that Abhijnansakuntalam though deals with the sentiment of love, is predominantly a drama of *Karun Rasa*.

In the Hamlet, Hamlet suffers on account of tragic flaw in his character. Śakuntalā's suffering brings its reward in the form of her reunion with the king Dushyanta. Dushyanta also suffers due to separation from Śakuntalā. He appears to be struggling against the supernatural forces that are beyond his control. His suffering parallels that of Śakuntalā. Moreover, in the Abhijnansakuntalam, *Karun Rasa* is mingled with Vatsalya Rasa hence, it does not appear to be tragic and painful like in the Hamlet. On the contrary, Hamlet suffering leads him to meet untimely death. Hamlet's main problem is that he cannot confront with his situations whereas Śakuntalā and Dushyanta face their difficult moments with boldness and conviction. We find that the righteous persons suffer on account of certain uncontrollable forces and this suffering as Abhinavagupta rightly points out that the adverse situation of a righteous man produces *Karun Rasa*.

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