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# Exposition of Karuna Rasa (Sentiment of Pathos) in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

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### Abstract

*Rasa theory is an Eastern literary theory. Rasa realization in the works produces pleasure and conveys themes and ideas. This study has explored karuna rasa (pathetic sentiment) experience in Shakespeare's Macbeth. This study used a textual analysis method to expose karuna rasa. The finding of the study is that karuna rasa is identified angi (major) rasa in Macbeth. The karuna rasa (pathetic emotional forces) help to heighten sentiment of tragic feelings in Macbeth. The emotion of sorrow produces the rasa of pathos in the literary texts. The depiction and realization of karuna rasa (pathetic sentiment) upraises the grandeur of the play. Understanding rasa formation and rasa realization in the play make lively existence of the play Macbeth. Karuna rasa has elevated the state of being liked and enjoyed of Macbeth. The play represents human emotions and messages to audience.*

**Keywords:** aesthetic pleasure, emotion, karuna rasa, pathetic sentiment, rasa theory

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### Introduction

This study mainly aims to expose *karuna rasab*(sentiment of pathos) in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. This study exposes what and how heightens the grandeur *Macbeth* and readers enjoy the perennial play. It is because of the emotion and realization of karuna

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rasa in the ageless play *Macbeth*. “Rasa is the [...] study of emotions which deals with the delight, one takes in literature” (Poonam 5). *Rasa* theory in *Natyasastra* was first proclaimed by Bharatamuni (c. AD 500), and developed by Abhinavagupta (c. AD 1000). They used *rasa* theory in explaining the aesthetic pleasure and themes of poetry and theatre art. Bharata Muni states, “*vibhavanubhava-vyabhichari-samyogatrasanishpattih*” (*Natyasastra* VI.31) that means, the components of *rasa* formation are *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicharibhava* produce artistic taste, i.e. *rasa*. *Rasa* experience is considered as the main ingredient to heighten the messages and themes of literary works.

Readers become unable to enjoy and identify themes unless they realize feelings of *sringara* (love), *hasya* (humour), *veera* (braveness), *karuna* (pathetic), *raudra* (wrath), *bhayanak* (fear), *adbhuta* (wonder), *vibhatsa* (disgust) and *santa* (tranquility) *rasa* in works. The feeling of *rasa* does not occur from external world but a permanent sentiment of a person's sensitive heart aroused by clever means of *vibhavadi* of a play transforms itself onto *rasa* (Gupta 141). Emotions are evoked in the works. “*Rasa* theory embraces humanism as a whole. It does not leave out any of the emotions, which could produce *rasa*. *Rasa* theory therefore is an all pervasive humanistic theory” (Fernando 35). Readers lose themselves with realization of *rasa* in art and works. “The aim of performance [is] to evoke [sentiment] in the mind of audience” (Keith 314). Audience enjoys the art and literature. Different parts of our personality might react in strikingly different ways to a complex object of experience like a literary work” (Patankar 297). Modern critics ignore the relevance of *rasa* theory at present time. “Those who are totally ignorant of the literary thought in pre-British India... find the Western critical framework adequate for their purposes” or “Most of the Sanskritists ... [have] not supposed to be put to mundane uses like analysis and evaluation of modern literary works” (Patankar 291). This theory enlightens the dormant emotions and generates messages even in the modern literary texts. “In the present context of market economy and politics, *Rasa* theory can be highly relevant in negotiating many problems, relating to trans-cultural studies” (Jana 271). Themes of the texts transpire from the realization of the *rasa*.

The Sanskrit word *karuna* means pathetic emotion, sadness and the highest form of *karuna* is compassion. True compassion results of the empathy of others' sufferings. The base of the sadness is the illusion of love. When something or somebody departs from us, we feel sad because we love them. Love is the cause of suffering. Sadness is the feeling that comes when we have to detach from the dearest and nearest. After seeing or listening tragic condition of the dearest one or critical condition or death of the dearest person or thing, the

environment creates a kind of feeling or emotion in the heart that is known as *karun arasa*. It is caused by the separation of the dearest or nearest; there is no hope of reunion. “*Karuna* will surface where man has not only lost hope, but even the will to fight. ... A character hopes inside a work. But we as readers know the case to be hopeless” (Patnaik 137-38). Something bad or disastrous happenings to one's loved ones are common causes for sadness; “a nightmare can lead to *karunarasa*” (136). *Karunarasa* is produced “by means of noticing the death of a beloved one or hearing unpleasant messages or words and so on” (Sajjan et al. 29). *Karuna rasa* refers to the feeling and emotion represented by weeping quietly, faintly, lamenting, bewailing and exerting the body or striking it.

According to Abhinava Gupta's *Sankhya Theory of Trigunatamaka Prakriti*, there are three kinds of *karunarasa*: *sāttvika*, *rajasika* and *tamasika*. *Sāttvika* is the grief caused by destruction of righteousness; *rajasika* refers to the grief caused by the loss of worldly esteem and wellbeing; and *tamasika* is the grief generated by the death of the dear and near ones (Mehta n. p.). Tragic and critical situation or death of the dearest one or destructed thing can be its *ālambana* (subject). Remembrance/ reminiscence of good qualities of the dearest one are its *uddhipana* (stimulating forces). Complaining to God, asking for help, throwing body on the floor because of pain, dragging hairs, crying, etc. are its *anubhāva* (signs) and being unconscious, speaking unconsciously, etc. are its *sancharibhāva* (effect). Its permanent *bhāva* is *shoka* (sorrow). *Karunarasa* allows the twenty four *bhāvas* (sentiments). They are grief, awe, detachment, remorse, fatigue, indolence, depression, anxiety, delusion, agitation, stupor, dejection, eagerness, epilepsy, disorder, insanity, death, terror, deliberation, stunning, choking of voice, trembling, change of complexion, and tears.

Calmness is the only friendly *rasa* to *karuna* because detachment is common in both. Courage, wonder, anger, fear and disgust *rasas* are neutral to *karunarasa*. The combination of sadness, anger and disgust may cause depression. Mastering *karuna* means to transform self-centered sadness into true compassion for ignorance. Ami Upadhyaya says, “*karunarasa* is both pleasing and painful” (77). A reader or audience feels pain and pleasure while reading or viewing arts.

### Statement of the Problem

Shakespeare uses words skillfully to embody the emotions in his plays. His plays brilliantly touch the human heart. The permanent emotion of the person transforms itself into *rasa* while going through works. Pleasure, pathos can be achieved through understanding the

*rasa* in a play. The *karuna rasa* experience and the sentiment of pathos found while reading plays provoke the researcher to interpret the plays through *rasa* theory. The problem is to find out that what generate pathos and meaning are depicted in the manner, actions, activities and language of the characters in plays. The research question of the study is how *karuna rasa* is depicted and articulated in *Macbeth*.

The objective of the study is to interpret *karuna rasa* production and its effect in the play *Macbeth*.

## Research Method

The main method of this study is analysis and interpretation. This research is based on the textual analysis. *Macbeth* has been analyzed within the theoretical framework of *rasa* theory. The production of *karuna rasa* is analyzed on the bases of the components of *rasa* formation, namely, *vishayalambana* and *ashrayalambanavibhava*, *parakiyauddipana* and *swakiyauddipanavibhava*, *anubhava* (*angika*, *vachika*, *kayika* and *sattvika*), *vyabhicharivibhava*. In a nutshell, the study has analyzed *karunarasa* in *Macbeth*.

### Sentiment of Pathos, Experience of *Karuna Rasa* in *Macbeth*

*Macbeth* is about the moral corruption of a man provoked by his personal “vaulting ambition” (Nayar 71) to be the king as forecasted by the Witch. To be the king, Macbeth murders his benefactor Duncan, the king of Scotland and spoils his state, family and moreover his own 'self', and at last Macbeth is killed. “Shakespeare links the fate of the social order, subjects and kingdoms to the greed and short-sightedness of aristocrats and kings” (Nayar 71). The play takes a simple subject like personal "vaulting ambition" as the root cause of ruins, and *rasa* experience contributes to make the play alive in literary world.

*Karunarasaas angi* (major) *rasais* mainly produced in the play *Macbeth*. *Karunarasa* is the feeling and emotion caused by weeping quietly, bewailing and extorting the body or striking it. Macbeth is a heroic person driven by an obsession with a “vaulting ambition” to crimes. At the beginning of the play, Macbeth is a sensitive, brave and loyal Thane to King Duncan. Macbeth is driven by “unexamined ambition” (Daiches 282) and greed after hearing witches who foresee that Macbeth will become the king. Because of his ‘vaulting ambition’ to be king and Lady Macbeth’s encouragement, he kills the King Duncan and takes the crown. Macbeth feels guilt, fear and paranoia because of his evil actions. It leads him to commit even more murders to hide his crimes and secure his crown. Lady Macbeth also dies. Macbeth feels

the grief caused by destruction of righteousness, the loss of worldly esteem and well-being, and the death of the dearest and nearest one. At last, Macbeth is killed. He faced "the total lack of meaning in his life with fatalistic determination" (Daiches 282). Here, *karunarasa* is realized in the play *Macbeth*.

*Karuna rasa* is experienced in act iv scene iii of the play *Macbeth*. Malcolm, who has run to England from Scotland, feels sad and frightened. Malcolm and Macduff seek out a desolate shelter to express their feeling of sad.

Malcolm: Let us seek out some desolate shade, and there  
Weep our sad bosoms empty.

Macduff: Let us rather  
Hold fast the mortal sword, and like good men  
Bestride our down-fall'n birthdom. Each new morn  
New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows  
Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds  
As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out  
Like syllable of dolor. (1-8)

Malcolm tries to know whether Macduff is a trustworthy person at him or not because Malcolm is worried that Macduff may betray him to Macbeth, and Macduff left his family in Scotland, "you may deserve of him through me." Macduff says, "I am not treacherous." To test whether Macduff is trustworthy, reliable, Malcolm asks Macduff whether Malcolm is a good person to be king because he is lustful greedy and violent person. Macduff cries "Bleed, bleed, poor country." He tries to show that he is truly loyal to Scotland. Macduff feels pathetic emotion. Malcolm empathizes with the suffering of the country.

Malcolm Be not offended:  
I speak not as in absolute fear of you.  
I think our country sinks beneath the yoke;  
It weeps, it bleeds, and each new day a gash  
Is added to her wounds. I think withal  
There would be hands uplifted in my right;  
And here from gracious England have I offer  
Of goodly thousands: but, for all this,  
When I shall tread upon the tyrant's head,  
Or wear it on my sword, yet my poor country

Shall have more vices than it had before,  
More suffer, and sundry ways than ever,  
By him that shall succeed. (37-49)

Malcolm regrets that he including "the poor state" take, "him as a lamb, being compared/ With my confine less harms;" and when the secret of "vice" is opened, "black Macbeth" will be shown as the criminal. Macduff calls Macbeth "hell," "devil," "evil," "evil," and Malcolm calls him "bloody/ Luxurious avaricious, false, deceitful/ Sudden, malicious, smacking of every sin." Malcolm's emotion incites pathos in reader's heart.

The tragic condition of the state and the death of the King Duncan create a pathetic feeling at the heart of Macduff and Malcolm. Macduff emotionally repeats, "O Scotland, Scotland" and "O nation miserable!" Macduff bewails:

With an untitled tyrant blood-sceptered,  
When shalt thou see thy wholesome days again,  
Since that the truest issue of thy throne  
By his own interdiction stands accursed,  
And does blaspheme his breed? Thy royal father  
Was a most sainted king: the queen that bore thee,  
Oft'ner upon her knees than on her feet,  
Died every day she lived. Fare thee well!  
These evils thou repeat'st upon thyself  
Hath banished me from Scotland. O my breast,  
Thy hope ends here! (104-14)

Malcolm asks 'God' for help and believes "God above./ Deal between thee and me!" Malcolm assures himself that the tragic condition of the country the reign of "devilish Macbeth" will be wiped out. Ross enters and reports some bad or disastrous happening to the country Scotland that causes sadness.

Ross                      Alas, poor country!  
                                  Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot  
                                  Be called our mother but our grave, where nothing  
                                  But who knows nothing is once seen to smile;  
                                  Where sighs and groans, and shrieks that rent the air,  
                                  Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems  
                                  A modern ecstasy. The dead man's knell

Is there scare asked for who, and good men's lives  
Expire before the flowers in their caps,  
Dying or ere they sicken. (164-73)

Macduff is worried about his wife and child whom he left in Scotland: "The tyrant has not battered at their peace?" Ross reports"

[His] wife and babes  
Savagely slaughtered. To relate the manner  
Were' on the quarry of these murdered deer,  
To add the death of you. (204-07)

Macduff feels sad and pathetic emotion when he listen the murdering of his wife child, and servants. Malcolm also empathizes with Macduff , and says, "What, man! Ne'er pull your hat upon your brows;/ Give sorrow words. the grief that does not speak/ Whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break." Malcolm has the feeling of revenge to Macbeth, "Let's make us med'cines of our great revenge,/ To cure this deadly grief," and "Let grief/ Convert to anger; blunt not the heart, enrage it." Macduff remembers God,

Did heaven look on,  
And would not take their part? Sinful Macduff,  
They were all struck for thee! Naught that I am,  
Not for their own demerits but for mine  
Fell slaughter on their souls. Heaven rest them now! (223-27)

Malcolm wishes to take help from England to destroy Macbeth. Macbeth loses his wife and child; and there is no hope of reunion with them. Macduff and Malcolm lose their country. They are exiled because of the situation of the country. They bewail about the death of the family and the pathetic condition of the country. Their love to the country and the family is detached. *Karun rasa* is articulated when one hears "the death of a beloved one or hearing unpleasant messages or words and so on" (Sajjan et al. 29). The pathetic feeling emerges at the heart of Macduff and Malcolm. Thus, *karun rasa* is produced here.

In the process of *karuna rasa* formation, Macbeth, the murder of Macduff's wife and child and the evil attitude function as *vishayaalambanavibhava*; and Macduff and Malcolm serve as *ashrayaalambanavibhava*. The environments of the castle of Macbeth, his evil mind and thought, etc. are *uddipanavibhava*. Among these, the feelings and thoughts of Macbeth and his followers are *swakiyauddipanavibhava*; and the environment described by Ross is *parakiyauddipanavibhava*. In the conversations of Macduff, Malcolm and Ross, tears in their

eyes, pathetic expression, pale face of Macduff (after hearing the news of murder of his wife and son), sighs, losing memory, weeping, etc. are *anibhava*.

*Vyabhicharibhavas* are anxiety (Macduff and Malcolm feel anxiety to the country and the family), longing (wish to punish the 'black Macbeth' and maintain peace in the country), distress, weariness, exhaustion (they are unable to clearly think how to conquer Macbeth), loss of consciousness (Macduff feels after listening the death of his wife and son.), madness, turbulence and paroxysm state of Macduff and Malcolm, grief (Malcolm and Macduff feel when they listen the news of the death of Macduff's wife and son), detachment (they are away from home and their family), terror (Macbeth's activities to Malcolm and Macduff and their families), stunning, trembling, change of complexion, tears, etc. Sorrow (*shoka*) is the permanent *bhava* in this context. Abhinava Gupta in *Shankhya Theory of TrigunatamakaPrakriti* classifies *karunarasa* into three: *sattvika*, *rajasika* and *tamsika*. Here, Macbeth destroys and grabs the righteousness of Malcolm to be the king after the death of his father, Duncan, this grief is *sattvika*. Macbeth damages Malcolm and Macduff's worldly esteem and wellbeing; and that the grief is experienced is *rajasikakarunarasa*. The grief caused by the death of Macduff's wife and son is referred to as *tamasikakarunarasa*.

Macduff and Malcolm express that there should be peaceful, ordered and rule-governed country, and criminals and evil minds should be punished. The crimes happened in the country Scotland make Malcolm and Macduff worried; and this tragic condition arouses a feeling of pathos at the heart of readers or audience who wish for rule-governed, peaceful and ordered society. Thus, readers or audience do make the pathetic feeling *shadharanikarana*, and realize the sentiment of sorrow.

The death of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth is very pathetic, but it is great in its pathos. This is the source of tragic pleasure, which readers or viewers get from the play. The other characters also share the sentiment of pathos; they represent universal human feelings like pity and sympathy. The readers' sympathy is deepened because of Macbeth's struggle against fate and his endurance. A good drama ends with the sense of quietude and calm. *Macbeth* also ends with the sentiment of quietude, that is, the experience of *santarasa*. The standard of the play is enriched with the poetic intensity of emotion. As Shelley says in his poem "To a Skylark, "Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thoughts", *Macbeth's* popularity and fame is eternal because of the tragic grandeur.



## Conclusion

One experiences aesthetic pleasure not only from *sringara*, but also from *karunayasa*. *Karunayasa* is evoked by the separation, tragic condition of the dearest and nearest one, and there is no hope of reunion or regain. In the play *Macbeth*, *karuna rasa* as the *angi* (major) *rasa* is produced. The depiction and realization of *karuna rasa* in *Macbeth* attracts reader more and makes the play livelier. Aesthetic experience is different from real worldly experience. People do not like to encounter painful situations in real life but they love to go through painful experiences in literature and art because they get entertainment and pleasure. The emotional forces help to heighten pleasant and tragic feelings. Nature of *rasa* is subjective, worldly and transcendental. Level of realization of *rasa* can be emotional, inner conscience and intellectual. *Rasa* is realized on universalized and impersonal experience. The realization of *rasa* heightens the grandeur of Shakespeare's plays. Readers experience pleasure from pathetic sentiment. They read the works to enjoy but not to be afraid or to weep. Shakespeare has used witches, spirits, the ghost, murders in his play. His main aim is not to make the readers or audience afraid, but to provide them entertainment and pleasure. In the *rasa* analysis, human minds have hidden curiosities to encounter the various emotional scenes, and have interests to get pleasure as well as message in the art and literature.

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