



Exposition of Disgust Rasa in Fitzgerald's *the Great Gatsby*

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Abstract

This research article makes an attempt to explore the exposition of disgust Rasa in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925). Human being has strong negative feeling of aversion or sickening feeling of revulsion because they are attracted to the materialistic life now. They have been money minded and have self-centered ideas. They only want to earn money. Sometime, they do the illegal work for earning money. They have sexual shameless behavior. They are highly obsessive and abominable. They desire to establish the factories for their luxury. They have become totally selfish. So, they have the destructive morality. Moreover, the whole landscape is covered by dust and then, they have complex life and it produces the disgust rasa which represents depression and dissatisfaction. It has a powerful pessimistic affection of disapproval. This study has read the novel through the critical design that Sheldon Pollock has developed the critical concept of disgust rasa. Thus, the finding of the research is that the modern men have no morality and they have Sickening and shocking manner, etc. which product full of disgust rasa in their life.

Keywords: Complexity, Disgust, Morality, Rasa, Revulsion, Self-centered, Spiritless

Introduction

Rasa is the essence of human emotion which exists in our body and mind. It is a kind of energy that it is partly physical and mental. It is important for human life because it links our body and mind. It becomes the quintessence, the essence of the thing and the ethos of the universe itself. It is the essence of all that is inside and outside, the feeling nature of the both the self and universe. When rasa presents and it affects both body and mind. The Indian tradition recognizes nine principal rasas: *Springara* (love), *Hasya* (Joy), *Adbhuta* (wonder), *Shanta* (calmness), *Raudra* (anger). *Veerya* (courage),

Karuna (sadness), *Bhayanaka* (fear) and *Vibhatsa* (disgust). *Vibhatsa* refers to the odious sentiment or the sentiment of disgustful and its variants like sight of unwanted ugly things or events, essants (*anubhava*) like spitting and variants like untruthful or illusion. It represents disgust, depression, dissatisfaction and self-pity. It is derived from determinants such as hearing of unpleasant, offensive, impure, harmful things or seeing or discussing. It is strong negative feeling of aversion or disapproval. The symptom of disgusting person is sickening, foul, vulgar, vile, objectionable, odious, evil, hateful, loathing, shocking, etc. *Vibhatsa* rasa has the dominant state of disgust. The characters have no morality and they perform self-centered brutal nature in *The Great Gatsby*. They have no regard feeling to others. They are totally sophisticated. Their dream is ultimately foul, vulgar, objectionable, hateful, etc. and the morality of them is in the revulsion in the novel.

Review of Related Literature

Different critics have studied Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* from different perceptions as Haibling Zhang's symbolic meaning of colors, Peter L. Hays' paradoxical images, Grey Forster's mourning and unfinished grief of human being, Philip McGowan's American carnivals, Alberto Lena's distrustful corruption behavior of Tom Buchanan and Mojtaba Gholipour and Mina Sanahmadi's different psychological behavior of the characters. Lena emphasizes that Fitzgerald has attacked upon the higher class people through the character, Tom in the novel. He is one of the focal character. He is narrated "as a massive body directed by simple mind" (27). He tries to come into sight "morally upright in a negative sense, by trying to unmask Gatsby's activities" (28). He shows American "desecrated", "mutilated" and "violated" behavior. He becomes very often related with physical violence as "he breaks the nose of his mistress, Myrtle, is one of his outburst of brutality" (24). He desires to keep his identity in fixed position with a solid traditional of socially inherited wealth and he is "a sharp contrast to Gatsby, who is forever seeking to create his own personality afresh" (20). He always obtains power from money and corrupted mind. But Hays outlines that the author has used paradoxical meaning throughout the novel. He has mentioned doubleness as "chivalrous lover and cold blooded killer" (318). The characters are from opposite thought that Gatsby wants to meet women with respected social status but he meets them with "timid individual on social and sexual manners" (319). Tom does not have the high moral tone and he cheats his wife but he thinks himself a "national figure" (321) at Yale. Nick praises himself and he thinks himself morally superior to Tom's unfaithfulness but he "takes his pleasure with the girl from New Jersey" (320). Daisy incorporates the idea of perfection for Gatsby with reserved social success and self-realization but she "is hit and run

killer” (324). So every characters show the doubleness in meaning.

Forster emphasizes that the author has mentioned the wish for unified meaning of what people have lost and how they care for a future recovery instead of lost objects. The men are connected with the unfaithful desire because “it becomes the modality of it only with the vast expansion of consumer capitalism in the early twentieth century with its almost universal colonization of desire by the commodity form” (159). They favor the “capitalistic production, monopoly capitalism – vastly curtailed possibilities for self-making, transforming workers... with bureaucratic structure” (144). The writer has shown the social loss: degrading feminizing, gender devalued and capitalistic modernity. Gatsby’s car, house and parties are for winning back Daisy. Men think that they are superior over women because they have a divinely masculine self – impregnation as Gatsby says that he “is a son of God because he is both Father and Son, at once Creator and created object” (152). Women think that their beauty can create the space to them. Then, Daisy “evaporates into the objectal substancelessness of her beauty” (155). Therefore, people are not in reality but they are just behind of using modern facilities. Furthermore, Zhang makes clear that the author has used six colors in the novel to impress readers and they play very important role. The major colors are green, white, red, yellow, blue and grey. Green color represents “Gatsby’s deep love to Daisy and his American dream” (38). It indicates “the disillusion of his dream” (38). White color represents the pure beauty and “[I]t symbolizes nobleness and purity” (41). Daisy wears white dress while meeting Gatsby. She uses white color car “which made her charming in the eyes of young officers” (41). Yellow symbolizes “money, materialism and high social position” (42). Gatsby favors “golden tie, golden car, golden toilet seats, golden food and music in his lavish party” (42). Red symbolizes the symbol of violence and danger. Fitzgerald uses the color to show “the blood of Myrtle who died in front of a gas station in the Valley of Ashes and the blood of Gatsby who was hot in his swimming pool” (42). The blue color represents “melancholy”, “loneliness” and “fantasy” (43). Therefore, the different colors which the author has used in the novel, they indicate the whole life of modern people.

McGowan describes that the author has attacked the narrative of social and racial control through the carnivals. American carnival becomes with “developed beyond the well-defined European variants” (146). It suspends the social arrangement and class system that people join “under the influence of alcohol and within the highly colored carnival environment of Gatsby’s mansion” (146). Gatsby becomes the self-made hero and he enhances “the creator of the carnival” (147). Daisy appreciates the aspect of the color –

coded catalog of American society and she manages the carnival as “a by-product of contemporary American entertainment culture” (154). Most of the characters think that carnival is revolution which brings changes in the society. Gatsby’s house and Myrtle’s apartment hold “images of pre-revolution of France” (150). Therefore, Fitzgerald’s characters move in a forceful material world. Additionally, Gholipour and Sanahmadi report that how psychologists seek to recognize the role of mental function as the author has mentioned “the psychological method of writing in *The Great Gatsby*” (51). The characters are used to show the mental function of individual and social behavior. The author adds that the analysis of wealth and power which modern people show in different stories. The novel is a dream of having ideal and most wealthy life in which searching for prosperity, satisfaction and sexuality in the first priority by doing corruption against the social morality. Gatsby devaluates his “power to reach Daisy” (51). He desires to loot Daisy’s love anyhow. Tom cheats Daisy because his commodity psychology is not limited to “his relationship with women” (52). Daisy only becomes aware to grab the money. Gatsby forgets his past and he desires to influence others through present power and social standing. Daisy has the psychological problem and she exhibits the science of inferiority complex whereas it “is a need to value once’s self by others” (52). So, the novel reveals the psychological politics of the American dream that almost all characters ultimately are crushed by the tragic outgrowth. The critics have analyzed the relationship of the characters with the society that what work they do, how they manage their life and what kinds of relationship they have with others in the community but I would like to study the novel through rasa theory that the novel products disgust rasa in conclusion.

Methodology

Disgust rasa represents the depression and dissatisfaction and it has a strong negative feeling of disapproval and the rasa becomes the source of pain to people. It is foul and sickening feeling of revulsion. People have become money minded and they love luxury in the modern era. They show shameless sexual behavior. The husband and wife have a seasonal love but they do not have the emotional love. A woman becomes the wife of one but she becomes the mistress of other. They have self-centered idea. They are in unreal world because they are in illusion. They just like to spend the time in joyful movement. They never care the time and activities what they do and then, they have gloomy life. Thus, the researcher has used the notion of “rasa theory” propounded by Sheldon Pollock, especially his meaning of “disgust rasa” which means the sadness in the life.

Textual Analysis

People have no morality and moreover, they are cruel and brutal in *The Great Gatsby*. They have worldly life and it depends on the sophisticated behavior. Then, they think that they can be happy in the capitalistic situation although it makes them self-centered. William Iam Miller explains that materialistic life, which is connected with only worldly things, invites the disastrous situation in human life. People have the repulsive quality in thought and it makes them sick and the sickness does not have quality of life. Daisy is the wife of Tom but she loves Gatsby and she spends almost time with him. But she no longer goes to Gatsby with flower after his death as the author conveys, "But she and Tom had gone away early that afternoon and take baggage with them" (104). She becomes selfish and sophisticated. She has moral decay evident-behind fragile mask of beauty. No friends attend Gatsby's funeral party. Fitzgerald adds, "But neither a wire nor Mr. Wolfsheim arrived; no one arrived except more police and Photographer and newspaper men" (105). When Gatsby dies, no friends and relatives come to attend his funeral party but policemen, photographers and newspaper men only arrive at. They appreciate the physical property of him because they believe the materialistic value which helps them to make their happy life. After death of Gatsby, Wolfsheim writes a letter and says, "I cannot come now as, I am tied up in some important business and cannot mix up in this thing now" (105). But when Gatsby manages the party, "lots of people come who haven't been invited" (69). They have lack of morality. They only think of their advantage. They do not have helpful nature with the social manner but they seem self-centered and follow the disappointing relationship each other. Thus, the main characters Tom, Daisy, Wolfsheim, etc. have sickening feeling with descend hypocritical thought in their life.

People show the absurd nature and their behavior seems ridiculous. It demonstrates that they are foolish, irrational, ridiculous, preposterous, inconsistent, ludicrous, etc. Sheldon Pollock explains that the people, who are absurd, bring absurd conclusion and he further attaches, "That is, if the tragic rasa were the source of pain, we would face the absurd conclusion that works in which that rasa predominates would themselves to be source of pain" (241). Absurdities are foul sickening feeling of revulsion. The characters show vulgar behave in the novel. They are money minded and Jealous. They have negative feeling, loathing and nausea. A woman becomes the wife of one but she embellishes the mistress of other. She smiles in front of the lover but she neglects her own husband. The writer explains that Daisy, the wife of Tom, whispers Gatsby and she says, "If you want kiss me any time during the evening" (67). She kisses him openly "as he left the room again she got up and went over to Gatsby and pulled his face, kissing him on the mouth."(74). It

means that the wife never cares the husband but she looks after the lover carefully. They have the seasonal love but they have no emotional affection. They only take the way to pass the time as, Gatsby tells to Tom, "your wife does not love you. She's never loved you. She loves me" (83). Gatsby explains that Daisy loves him but she never loves her husband, Tom. They betray others and destroy own selves. Gatsby represents the American dream because he comes from nothing into wealth, power and privilege. He earns much of his financial asserts from illegal activities. He can break his close relationship with others easily. It makes clear that American people are not serious towards their friendship. Additionally, they have no certain boundaries of family life. They have no responsibility and no respectful thoughts as Gatsby mentions, "She only married you because I was poor... she never loved anyone except me!" (83). He does not seem serious and cannot distinguish good and bad. He seems a self-centered person.. So, Gatsby and Daisy show the absurd nature. They seem money minded with the negative feeling and have sickening tenderness of revulsion.

Moreover, because of loathsome people become highly offensive and they have spiritless affection and complex life. Disgust is an object and it makes people's tender dreadful as, Sara Ahmed mentions, "Disgust binds objects together in the very moment that objects become attributed with bad feeling, as being sickening" (88). Disgust creates bad feeling and people feel disgusting. Mrs. Wilson is the wife of Mr. Wilson but she gets relax "sitting on Tom's lap, Mrs. Wilson called up several people on the telephone....." (20). She gets enjoy for the short time. Tom betrays Daisy when he has an affair with Mrs. Wilson and Daisy betrays her husband, Tom when she has an affair with Gatsby. Daisy seriously tells Gatsby that she does not love Tom. She loves Gatsby by heart but she betrays him at last. When they have no favorable situation, they quarrel and blame each other. They expose each other's weaknesses because they have corrupted foundation. They are regardless on one hand and on the other hand, they have no morality. They have trailblazing nature because they only appreciate physical relationship. They like to achieve the personal fulfillment. Then, they do not have the perfect life. They always face the tragic happening as, the novelist comments, "Then, there were bloody towels upon the bathroom floor and woman's voice scolding ... wail of pain" (25). The love between Tom and Myrtle ends in violence. They never think of their morality. The husband loves other's wife and his wife loves other man. Thus, Tom, Myrtle, Daisy and Gatsby spend very complex life and they have spiritless feeling. They have sexual shameless manner. They have highly offensive, abominable and sickening behavior.

People are irresponsible and they only search for their personal

happiness. Sheldon Pollock explains that the modern people set off the odious nature and they think that offensive behavior is as their ornament which makes them perfect and he further notes, "Here the emotion called disgust is generated by the requisite foundational factor and made manifest by a physical reaction of the corresponding form. As it takes on the nature of a rasa, the macabre, which has the form of something loathsome, is considered on ornament" (56). They think that the repulsive nature is their ornament. But it is evaluated negatively because it proclaims the meanness. Disgust is related with contempt, shame, hatred, fear, horror, boredom and fastidiousness. It is connected with the society. G. B. Mohan Thampi explains that *Vibhatsa* rasa is connected with the ill-favored events. It invites illusion and becomes the cause of self-pity in human life. Gatsby manages parties the time and again. It is not common but it is enormous and vulgar. Many people attend the parties where beautiful women and men dance, eat and laugh during the night. The introduction of one person to another is forgotten in the place and time as the fictioneer narrates, "... introductions forgotten on the spot and enthusiastic meeting between women who never knew each other's names" (27). People do not know even Gatsby in the party. Young women and men are drunk and they have uncontrolled laughing. The party seems unusual, drunken spectacle, joyful movement, excited with trump, voice and color under the constantly changing light. The women are in fashionable dress and they fight with their husbands even as the writer outlines, "Most of the remaining women were now having fights with the men said to their husband" (34) there. People come and go, drink and dance but they never feel uneasy and get enjoy there. They never care what they do. They never meet even the host. The author traces, "She explained that we are going to find to the host: I had never met him..." (30). They spend the night getting full satisfaction being free. They have lack of humanity and have no secretion. They have no positive feeling but they have nature of corruption and vulgarity. The uncivilized guests attend the party and they go out not consulting the host. The host (Gatsby) becomes alone at last and he shows formal gesture of farewell to the guests. There is "... the complete isolation of the figure of host, who stood on the porch, his hand up in a formal gesture of farewell" (37). So, people show the destructive morality while attending party as the polluted landscape in the modern time.

Industrial development has affected the natural beauty negatively because the whole landscape is covered by the dust and there is no open space because of the establishment of factories and the overcrowded cities in the world. People become interested to establish the factories for the business and they place the advertisement in every corner of the world. So, every places face the problem of pollution. William Iam Miller explains that people are

living in gloomy and dark nature. He additionally draws the picture, "Disgust, however, operates in the kind of miasmatic gloom, in the realm, in the realm of horror, in the regions of dark, unbelievability and never far away from the body's and by extension, the self's interiors" (36). The modern people are facing the problem of pollution because the developed cities are filled with smoke and dust causing of the manufacturing complex. Then, they have gloomy life. The valley of ashes represents the modern world and it is like the ruined landscape or grotesque hell which is created by modern development. People have established the factories which product the ashes and smoke there as the writer reports, "They look out of no face, but instead a pair ... over a non-existence nose" (16). Human organs have no continuation in the original form. Everything of them is discolored. The environment is not polluted by the industrial development but it is affected by the smoke which is produced by chimney at house as the author reports, "... where ashes take the forms of houses and chimney rises smoke" (16). No one cares about pollution and they only think of their financial gain. They are blind for dumping grounds which are filled with ash, smoke and dust and they have been converted into isolation lands. So, people look out of no face because their whole body is covered by dust. They are spiritless and then, believe in advertisement. The advertisement of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg adds an unusual touch to the ugly view. The novelist outlines, "The eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic their retinas are one yard high. They look out no face... nonexistent nose" (16). His eyes represents God's watchful gaze over mankind. It is a god who is blind to human suffering. It shows spiritless man with light blue eyes. It is a physical desert as the writer writes, "A white dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity ... close to Tom" (18). It symbolizes the spiritless isolation that people are on the way of money collection. It is irony that "[T]his is the valley of ashes - a fantastic farm where ashes grew like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens" (16). People never care of the pollution. They always fascinate the modern life. They have become blind towards the pollution. Thus, the valley of ashes represents the execration situation of modern life where pollution and the destruction of the nature are the part of disgusting circumstances.

Rasa is the essence of emotion and it is connected with our body and mind. There is combination of different rasas and one rasa supports other rasa to make more dominant rasa in the text. Among nine rasas, disgust rasa is one which I have applied in my paper while analyzing the novel *The Great Gatsby*. Disgust represents depression, dissatisfaction and it has strong negative affection of aversion. It has disgusting tenderness of revulsion. The valley of ashes represents the melancholy of modern life because the whole landscape is

covered by dust in the novel. The people who attend Gatsby's Parties constitute spiritless manner that they are selfish and irresponsible. They have no formality. Gatsby, Tom, Daisy and Myrtle have apathetic feeling and they have sexual shameless manner. They spend very complex life. Gatsby is money minded person. Daisy is also just behind of the money and she shows the seasonal love. She is the wife of Tom but she loves Gatsby. Myrtle has sexual barefaced behavior and she gets relax with Tom. Tom is sophisticated, cruel and brutal person and he does not have any ethics. Wolfsheim is very selfish person. Thus, behavior and activities of almost all characters and the conviction of the modern development have created the revulsion which generate the disgust rasa in human life. But the author has used other different rasas in the novel, so other scholars may discuss the novel by using other different rasas.

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