

## **The Application of *Hasya Rasa* in Shakespeare’s “My Mistress’ Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun” and Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress”**

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### **Abstract**

*Literature like poetry has aesthetic value along with social value. The expression of emotion is the power of literature that enralls readers; readers enjoy texts experiencing rasa. This paper aims to analyze Shakespeare’s “My Mistress’ Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun” and Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress” from the perspective of the rasa theory, i.e. an Eastern aesthetic theory. The poems randomly selected expose hasya rasa experience. The poets exploit hasya rasa to disseminate and propagate pleasure as well idea, thought, like erotic love, frivolous; the experience of hasya rasa is a uniqueness that enralls readers to read the poems again. The expression and realization of rasa constitute the aesthetic value and power of the poems. The poems selected here demonstrate that the formal and serious poems can be amusing, chucklesome. Although the realization level of hasya rasa may vary from individual to individual as their academic, professional, social status, and age, there is hasya rasa experience in the poems.*

**Keywords :** Rasa, hasya rasa, sthayibhava, vibhava, anubhava, vyabhicharibhava

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### **Introduction**

Interdisciplinary approaches to the field of literature have become significant practices in recent times. Such approaches help to produce new aspects and meanings of literary texts although there is a great difficulty to maintain the meaning, original beauty and grandeur of the literature of the East and the West. Here is the study of Western poetry through the Eastern tool, *rasa* theory. *Rasa* theory is an Eastern

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aesthetic theory. The primary purpose of the research work is to study Western poems through *rasa* theory i.e. an Eastern literary theory. The scope of this research is not to go into different critics of the *rasa* theory. However, the *rasa* theory is used to discuss Western (selected) poems to show how the emotions are evoked in the poems; how the readers' emotions are giving rise to *rasa* experience. This study is an applied research in the perspective of application of the research, and a qualitative research from the viewpoint of inquiry mode employed in the research.

*Rasa* theory has occupied a great space in Bharatamuni's *Natyasastra* that deals with Sanskrit theatre and dramatic art. Bharatamuni has explained *rasa* theory in the context of drama in *Natyasastra*. After Bharatamuni, the nature of *rasa* has been discussed in reference to poetry. *Rasa* exposition is seen in the play whereas *rasa* is heard in the poem because a play is performed and acted through *drisya* (audio-video) in the theatre, but a poem is recited and read aloud, and audience perceive *rasa* through *sravya* (audio, sound). *Rasa* has been extended from 'visual literature or drama to aural literature or narrative poetry' (Pollock 6). A poem is about something, and it has narration and persona. Poetry consist persons, environments, objects, animals, or personification of something, which are emotionally narrative. *Rasa* is also applicable to poetry. "The specific power of literature lies in the expression of emotion" (5); so does poetry. Dandin says, "*rasa* is found in both the language and the subject matter, and insightful people become intoxicated by it like bees by honey" (cited in Pollock 5). The emotions or heightened feelings are expressed in poems. William Wordsworth's famous definition of poetry also focuses on the experience of emotion in poetry, and he defines poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings", and "poetry has its origin in emotions recollected in tranquility" (Preface to Lyrical Ballad 2<sup>nd</sup>). *Rasa* theory originally talks about *bhava* (emotions) in drama; *rasa* is found in poetry, too. Wordsworth adds, "All excellence poetry is the self-generated overflow of mightily feelings." The language and subject matter of a poem manifest and expose the *rasa* experience. The narrative poems purvey enough room for the evocation of *rasa* experience. The sympathetic readers enjoy poems, and wish to re-read them. Pleasure, delight can be achieved through understanding the *hasya rasa* in a poem. The research problem is to find out what generate humour, pleasure and meaning in poems. The research questions of the study are: How is *hasya rasa* articulated in poems? What is its purpose in a poem? The purpose of the study is to analyze *rasa* production and its effect in the poems.

## Research Methodology and Theoretical Tool

This study uses qualitative descriptive method. This article is based on the primary sources some Western poems of different poets, and the secondary sources books and articles related to *rasa* theory. Note-taking is used as a tool for data collection from the poems. In the procedure of data collection, *hasya rasa* evoked in

the poems are identified and then analyzed their causes. Here, *rasa* theory is used as the theoretical tool of data analysis to find out *hasya rasa* experience in the poems. This paper is based on the critical textual analysis.

That which is relished in literature and art is *rasa*. *Rasa* is an emotion and sentiment generated in the sympathetic readers after reading literary texts. 'Due to metaphorical and suggested meanings it [is] used for self, bliss and pure joy' (Barlingay 85). *Rasa* denotes an essential mental state and the significant emotional theme of a text or the feeling that is evoked in the person who views, reads or hears the text. Kapila Vatsyayan says, "*Rasa* is the highly charged state of momentary freedom and emancipation which motivates inspires creation ... [and] this experience [...] facilitates an abstraction of life into its primary emotions and sentiments" (cited in Schwartz 14). The concept of *rasa* is a basic element of every text. *Rasa* is so significant to literary critics because there may not be an impressive and powerful criticism of a work if *rasa* is neglected. Lee Siegel states that "*rasa* is at once an inner and outer quality as the object of taste, the taste of the object, the capacity of the taster to taste that taste and enjoy, the enjoyment, the tasting of the taste" (9). An artistic creation evokes *rasa*. *Rasa* becomes the basis of the ability to experience and understand a person's deep feelings especially in art and literature. A reader watches and reads films and literature to escape from our daily routine. A reader laughs, cries, feels pain and pleasure, and assimilates their realities through exaggeration, fantasy and romance. Krishnamoorthy states:

*Rasa* means...supreme joy, mental feeling, and aesthetic enjoyment. All these shades of meaning somehow get fused in its ultimate connotation. So understood, it is the *ultima thule* (ultimate end) of all literature, the highest aesthetic value which is an end in itself. It can be attained only by a few gifted souls with hearts akin to the poets.... It is a disinterested, impersonal, contemplative state of ecstasy, *sui generis*. (325)

*Rasa* is the essence of literature. It animates all essential elements of literature from within. Even if *rasa* refers to taste or savour, it is connected with mental processes of understanding any text.

Among the nine *rasas*, *hasya rasa* is discussed in this article. In literature, humour is a designed element of poetry or drama that is presented to amuse or excite mirth in the readers. Humour refers to "a comic utterance, or to a comic appearance or mode of behaviour" (Abhrams 340). Humour can be in some sort of looks, dresses, acts, utterances and cartoons. Humour is linked to particular actions or situations. *Hasa* (laughter) is the *sthāyibhāva* (dormant emotion) of *hāsya rasa*. Bharata states that *hasa* is caused by means of caricaturing the actions, manners, gestures, sounds of others, loose and irrelevant talk, stupidity and absurdity (*Nāṭyasāstra* 7.20). *Hāsya rasa* creates "laughter by wearing unusual ornaments, uncouth behaviour, odd speech and words, dresses and strange movements of body in acting" (Sajjan, Mishra, and

Sharma 29). Deviated, deformed, distorted forms of physical, mental and linguistic norms create *hāsya bhāva*. In *hāsya rasa*, the sentiments, named laughter, remorse, apprehension, envy, fatigue, indolence, agility, slumber, dream, awakening and dissimulation, are used in arts. In the formation of *rasa*, realization of *rasa* results from the combination of the elements - *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *vyabhicharibhāva*, and also *sthāyibhāva*. *Vibhāva* is any cause of a particular emotion; it is “the support, cause or the stimulus for the *rasa* experience” (Mehta 83). There are two kinds of *vibhāva*: *ālambana* and *uddipana*. *Ālambana vibhāvas* are “those components of the causation or stimuli on which the *rasa* realization in a drama depends, such as hero, heroine and other dramatic persona in various relationships” (83). *Ālambana vibhāva* is also classified into *vishayālambana vibhāva* and *ashrayālambana vibhāva*. In poetry, the thing or person that evokes *bhāvas* like *hāsya* on others is called *vishayālambana vibhāva*. In which *rasa* awakens, that is called *ashrayālambana vibhāva*. *Ashrayālambana* can be only human beings (Shukla, “Chintamani” 2). *Uddipana vibhāvas* are “the auxiliary causes or stimulating circumstances for the manifestation of the basic inner state, e.g., the appropriate time, circumstances and situations of the plot” (Mehta 84). “*Hasya rasa*’s outcome is through the *vibhāvas* (determinants), such as, *vikritabhesa* (unseemly dress), *vikritalankara* (misplaced ornaments), *dharstyā* (impudence), *laulya* (covetousness), *kalaha* (quarrel), *asatpracapa* (near-obscene utterance), *vyanga darsana* (displaying deformed limbs), *dosada harana* (pointing out the faults of others) and other similar things” (Board of Scholars 77). *Hāsya rasa* is realized through the *anubhāvas* (consequents) like biting the lips, throbbing of the nose and the cheek, opening the eyes wide, contracting the eyes, perspiration, colour of the face, holding the sides and others. The *vyabhicharibhāva* (transitory states) are *alya* (lethargy), *avahittha* (dissimulation), *tandra* (drowsiness), *anidra* (sleeplessness), *svapna* (dreaming), *probodha* (waking up), *asuya* (envy), and other things.

Bharatamuni classified laughter, according to the nature of people, into three: *uttama* (refined), *madhyama* (moderately refined) and *adhama* (unrefined). *Hāsya rasa* is classified into two: *atmasta* (self-based) and *parasta* (based in others). *Atmasta* refers to the situation where a character or audience laughs to himself/ herself. The oddly placed ornaments, unseemly behaviour, irrelevant words, faulty dress, strange movements of the limbs, etc. make people in a play laugh themselves. It comes from within for no apparent reason; it is sometimes not linked to actions or events. It is also called the purest *hāsya*, the power of joy (*ahladini shakti*). It is often found in children, young people and crazy people. *Prasta* refers to the situation where the character makes others laugh. The distortions of facial features, irrelevant statements, strange movements of the limbs, odd dress, etc. of the character make others laugh.

Raghavan in his *The Number of Rasas* defines two types of *hāsya rasa*: self-laughing and laughing at. While realizing *hāsya rasa*, people may laugh in

six different ways: *smith* (gentle smile), *hasita* (slight laughter), *vihāsita* (open laughter), *upahasita* (laughter of ridicule), *apahasita* (obscene laughter), and *atīhasita* (boisterous laughter). The gentle, high rank and superior persons have *smīta* and *hasita*; the middling and ordinary persons have *vihāsita* and *upahasita*; and the base, lower and mean types of persons have *apahasita* (obscene laughter) and *atīhasita* (boisterous laughter).

## **Discussion and Interpretation**

*Hasya rasa* is one of the oldest *bhava* (emotions); it can be traced in the East *Vedas* and in the West. *Hasa* (humour) has been a major theme in the literature of the East and the West. Comic sentiment is an important emotion for human life. It relieves the mind of human beings from tension for a while. In literature, humour is presented to make readers laugh, amuse to be enlightened and sense something. *Hasya rasa* is produced with the combination of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicharibhava* which are found in a circumstance of the poem. With the help of these components, the dormant emotion laughter (*hasa*) is relished as *hasya rasa*. A broken order, unexpected comic happening, unusual language use, ironic remark, satire, etc. make readers laugh. “Where laughter (not happiness) and love are found together, the comic element will blend into the general atmosphere of fun and festivity” (Patnaik 117). *Hasya rasa* produces positive states of readers’ mind as *sringara rasa*. Humour appeals to the readers. Poets use *hasya rasa* to make good poems for pleasure and thought. Here, William Shakespeare’s “My Mistress’ Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun” and Andrew Marvell’s “To His Coy Mistress” are analyzed from *hasya rasa* theory. The poets exploit *hasya rasa* to engender pleasure as well idea, thought. Although the realization level of *hasya rasa* may vary from individual to individual as their academic, professional, social status, and age, there is *hasya rasa* in the selected Western poems.

## **Exposition of Hasya Rasa in Shakespeare’s “My Mistress’ Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun”**

*Hasya rasa* is experienced also in William Shakespeare’s love sonnet “My mistress’ eyes are nothing like the Sun”. “The fixed form does not mean a fixed expression; humour is also possible in it” (Meyer 1010). Shakespeare exploits laughter for a love theme and pleasure. Shakespeare describes his mistress in an unexpected way and incongruent relation of the images. The disorder but harmless kind of description gives rise to laughter in the poem. The speaker of the poem praises his mistress incongruously; there are strange comparisons and not suitable in a general expressions. Shakespeare has not used the word beloved but ‘mistress. A ‘mistress’ refers to as a regular sex partner but not his wife. The expression of ‘my mistress’ evokes light chuckling in the sympathetic readers because the speaker talks about his mistress but not his wife. The speaker of the poem shows deformity and incongruity

of his mistress' every parts of the body. He does not count her eyes in comparison with the Sun, her lips less attractive than the coral, her breast dun, grayish-brown in colour, not white as the snow, and her hairs as black wires, metal in the form of thin thread. By reading such amusing and incongruous comparisons, the readers laugh.

His mistress' cheeks are not like roses, "damasked red and white"; the cheeks are not attractive and lovely. The mistress' breath smells unpleasantly to the speaker of the poem. There is no delight in her breath like perfumes. Her speech sound is not pleasing like music, and her walking style is disgusting for the speaker. The readers find funny and amusing comparisons; that evoke laughter. The speaker gives a false impressions of his mistress, but still he loves her- "my love as rare/ As any...". The readers chuckle by unusual and unexpected impressions of the speaker to his mistress. Shakespeare uses unusual comparisons to engender a theme love and pleasure. He uses witty, surprising comparisons that make the readers smiling or laughing aloud. *Hasya rasa* is realized in Shakespeare's sonnet "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the Sun."

*Vibhavas* (determinants) cause to evoke emotions. Here, the speaker, his mistress and the condition of her body are *vibhavas*. Here, the feeling of hatred and cruelty to the mistress is undermined. The *vishalambana vibhava* which evokes laughter. The lady is the mistress of the speaker but not his wife. The speaker serves as the *ashrayalambana vibhava* in which *hasya rasa* is evoked. He satirizes her eyes, breasts, hairs, cheeks, walking, breath, lips and sound. He laughs at his mistress. This laughing is not negative, but is just for positive enjoyment. Laughing-at-other is called *parastha hasa* (the speaker laughs at his beloved). The condition of the mistress evokes humour. Her eyes are not good, her hairs like black wires, dun breasts, unattractive cheeks, smelling breath, displeasing sound, treading walk, etc. quicken in the articulation of *hasya rasa*. at last, in the couplet the speaker tries to console her by saying "my love as rare/ As any...." It is harmless humour. The speaker's expressions of humour in deformity in language use are *vashika* (speech) *anubhava*. The *vashikaanubhava* is the consequent of *ashrayalambana vibhava*. Response and reaction of *ashrayalambana vibhava*, the speaker is the consequent of *vibhava*. The speaker diverts his expressions and emotions of *hasa* (humour) into love in the couplet.

Transitory emotions appear while going through the poem. These transitory emotions are *vyabhicharibhavas*, that are fleeting and do not prevail longer time. These emotions excite *sthayibhava*, *hasa* and quicken the production or realization of *hasya rasa*. In this poem, *hasa* (feeling of laughter) appears when the speaker describes humourously the parts of mistress' body. There are unusual comparisons and descriptions of the beloved. The feeling of *harsa* (joy) occurs in the unusual descriptions and comparisons like hairs like black wires. The feeling of *garva* (pride) appears in the expression of love in the couplet of the sonnet. These

*vyabhicharibhavas* like *harsa*, *hasa*, *garva*, excite the dormant emotion and quicken *hasya rasa*. *Vyangya* (deformity) described in the parts of mistress' body is temporary, harmless and simulated; these descriptions are funny and amusing. These funny and amusing expressions evoke *hasya rasa*. Laughter in the sympathetic readers arises out of seeing *vyangya* (deformity). Thus, *hasya rasa* is experienced in Shakespeare's sonnet "My mistress' eyes are nothing like the Sun".

### **Exposition of Hasya Rasa Experience in Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Misterss"**

Let me analyze *hasya rasa* in the next famous poem Andrew Marvell's "To His Coy Misterss". Marvell presents the *carpe diem* (seize the day) theme through humour in the poem. Readers realize *hasya rasa* in the poem. The male speaker addresses a female persuading to love and have physical relations. He persuades her to fall in love soon because time is too short. He presents humourous arguments to seduce her. The speaker argues they have not much time and space for pure love- "Had we would enough, and time,/ This coyness, lady, were no crime." The lady seems shy and innocent about love or sex, but the speaker tries to persuade her. It is his humourous activity. He tells if they have time enough they will sit and walk together long time. He compares her with the Indian Ganges and himself with Humber, i.e. a river that flows through. He would love ten years if he had time: "I would love you ten years before the Flood./ And you should, if you please, refuse/ Till the conversion of the Jews." The readers chuckle while reading his saying "love ten years." He says "vegetable love", that is, love that exists without physical or mental activity. There is no physical attachment. Readers laugh at his saying "vegetable love". This vegetable love is boring for the speaker. The readers think that the male speaker cunningly tries to have physical relation with the lady. He is in turmoil condition by assuming the vast and slow love.

The speaker says, "If he had time, he would praise her eyes and forehead for hundred years, and two hundred for each breast, and thirty thousand to the rest." It is funny. Such expressions make readers laugh. The last age would be for the heart, that is, emotional activity. Time is short, and with the course of time, beauty fades away and disappears gradually- "Thy beauty shall no more be found." Her "preserved virginity" is no longer value: "then worm shall try/ That preserved virginity,/ And you quaint honor turn to dust." He gives funny arguments. His "lust" will also lose "into ashes all my lust." Here, 'lust' means his very strong sexual desire, where true love is not involved. He has strong desire and enjoyment of sex. He argues that they will be in the grave and nobody will hug them. The faded beauty will not be embraced. Nobody put his arms around her to express love. The readers laugh at the male speaker because of his tricky, crafty and witty argument. He wants to have sex with the lady by dishonest ways.

The poet leaves the readers grinning and laughing aloud by using witty and

tricky language. The readers laugh at the speaker of the poem. The male speaker praises her and uses the concept of the limitation of time in a dishonest way in order to fulfill his strong desire of sex, lust. The male speaker compares her 'youthful hue' with 'morning dew'. He again purposes her to play in a happy and lively way- "Now let us sport us while we may,/ And how, like amorous birds of prey." He wants to be in one, "let us roll all our strength and all/ Our sweetness up into one ball." He persuades her to have physical relation by urging the time and the changing nature. The male speaker of the poem urges humourously by showing the nature of time fleeting and transforming nature of beauty. His intention is to have physical relation. The poet Andrew Marvell presents the *carpe diem*, "seize the day", theme humourously. Marvell uses laughter for pleasure and the idea seize the day. Thus, *hasya rasa* is experienced in the poem. The level of laughter may vary from readers to readers.

Components of *rasa* production significantly play roles to articulate *hasya rasa* here. *Vibhava* is a component that causes *sthayibhava* to ignite the *hasya bhava* (laughter emotion) into *hasya rasa*. Within this *vibhavas*, the lady addressed by the male speaker is served as *vishayaalambana vibhava*, that is, a person or thing that evokes *bhava* (emotion) on others. In this poem, the lady addressed by the male speaker evokes *bhava* in his heart. Her beauty causes to evoke emotions on him. The male speaker of the poem functions as *ashrayalambana vibhava*; in which emotion awakens is called *ashrayalambana vibhava*. Here, emotion awakens on the male speaker. To fulfill his *rati* (sexual love), the speaker tries to persuade her urging the concept of *carpe diem*, "seize the day". His arguments are humourous because everyone knows his arguments and the readers know his intention. He prioritized sexual love, lust. His expressions in reference to time are *vashika uddipana vibhava*, that are expressed by words or speech of the *ashrayalambana vibhava* in the poem. Here, the speaker expresses his emotions in words.

Had we but enough, and time,  
This coyness, lady, were no crime.  
We would sit down, and think which way  
To walk, and pass our long love's day.

He urges to her by giving different funny arguments referencing the nature of time.

There appear some ancillary emotions going through the text; these emotions provide necessary support to the production of *hasya rasa* in the poem. The ancillary emotions are called *vyabhicharibhava* in the *rasa* theory. These emotions are transitory, fleeting emotions based on psychological states of mind. The *vyabhicharibhavas* quicken the *sthayibhava* and prevail until the maturity of the *sthayibhava* in the *rasa* production. In this poem, a *vyabhicharibhava rati* (feeling of sexual love, lust) appears when the speaker sees the lady ('beauty', 'virginity', 'lust', etc.). This *rati bhava* also appears in the readers. The feeling of *hasya* (mirth) occurs when the speaker's mind has been an affected state of conscious- "Two hundred to



adore each breast.” Here, the expression of the feeling of mirth can be a gentle smile. The speaker may feel a fear of losing her and her beauty; this feeling of fear is *bhaya* in *vyabhicharibhavas*. A feeling of *vismaya* (astonishment) appears in the sympathetic readers when the speaker insists on the concept of *carpe diem*. The speaker has a feeling of *sanka* (apprehension) whether the lady will be convinced or won't. The readers also feel apprehension about the speaker's intention to the lady. The feeling of *harsa* (joy) also arises when the speaker talks about the lady's beauty, the desired one. The speaker feels *sputa* (dreaming), that is, abnormal state of consciousness because of love to her. These all *vyabhicharibhavas* evoke and heighten *sthayibhava hasa* (laughter) of *hasya rasa*. These *bhava* prevail until the maturity of *hasya rasa*; then they disappear. *Hasya rasa* is experienced in this poem. Andrew Marvell uses language in an unexpected way- “Two hundred to adore each breast”, “vegetable love”, etc. The poet Andrew Marvell exploits the concept of humour for a theme *carpe diem* and pleasure.

## **Conclusion**

William Shakespeare's “My Mistress' Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun” and Andrew Marvell's “To His Coy Mistress” are analyzed from the perspective of *rasa* theory, Eastern theory. *Rasa* is which is relished by the readers in literature and art. The evocation of human emotions is the source of aesthetic delight in them. Without the evocation of *rasa*, there is no meaningful thought, theme and pleasure in literature. Readers enjoy and wish to re-read because of the evocation of *rasa* in literature. Here, the selected Western poems afford enough room for the evocation of *hasya rasa*. Deformed, abnormal, incongruous and witty languages exploited in the discussed poems evoke *hasya rasa*. The experience of *hasya rasa* in the selected poems engenders pleasure and themes, and along with the *hasya rasa* (feeling of laughter), the languages used in poems postulate messages, themes. The aesthetic value is employed in the poems of the poets, like Shakespeare, Marvell. The poets give sufficient aesthetic pleasure and thoughts; the aesthetic beauty and emotions in the poems are analyzed from the *hasya rasa* theory. Universal human *rasa bhavas* (emotions) make literature as true literature. *Bhavas* (emotions) in poems enthrall the readers, and they wish to re-visit the texts; this is the power of literature. This paper proves that formal and serious poems like Shakespeare's, Marvell's can be laughable, humorous. *Hasya rasa* is realized by the sympathetic readers through the process of *sadharanikarana* (universalization). Although the realization level of *hasya rasa* may vary from individual to individual as the status and age, *hasya rasa* is articulated in the above-discussed texts.

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