



Rereading of Macbeth, the Timeless Classic

Abstract:

नाटकं ख्यातवृत्तमस्यात् | This is what Sanskrit Dramaturgy believes in. That means the plot or story of the play should be famous or historical. English literature's masterpiece *Macbeth* by one of the greatest dramatist of the world who is known as Bard of Avon is my scope. In the context of Sanskrit, Rasa is the soul of literature (drama) which has been used as my methodology. How Adbhuta Rasa could bring different end of the play? The play has an excellent combination of Veer and Shringara Rasa and other Rasa like Bibhatsa, Bhanayaka and Adbhuta come at particular time. Rereading and theme of play which is greed makes it timeless classic.

Key words: Sanskrit Dramaturgy, Rasa, Adbhuta Rasa, Pleasure, Tragedy, Comedy

Introduction

नाटकं ख्यातवृत्तमस्यात् | This is what Sanskrit Dramaturgy believes in. That means the plot or story of the play should be famous or historical. Characters should be appealing. The work has to have Veer or Shringara as the main Rasa. English literature's masterpiece *Macbeth* by one of the greatest dramatist of the world who is known as Bard of Avon is my scope. Shakespeare has somewhere unknowingly followed all three conditions in the play. At the same time I am going use the Indian or Sanskrit dramaturgy as my tool to evaluate the work. Presence of some particular elements makes the work timeless classic. Sanskrit dramaturgy is widely known for the theory of Rasa which is a feather on the crown of the Sanskrit dramaturgy. Rasa has been existed with all the work of art and life since long but Sanskrit dramaturgy has given an evidence of that.

Truly reliable or authentic sources about Shakespeare are not available. Very little about Shakespeare has come down to us from genuine sources. The available facts about his life are based chiefly on guess-work. He was born on April 23, 1564 in the village of Stratford-on-Avon in the country of Warwickshire. The great soul waved "Good Bye" to the world on April 23, 1616.

He is often called England's national poet and the "Bard of Avon". His extant works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and a few other verses, the authorship of some of which is uncertain. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright. He has described nature very well in his works. In this way, he is also the writer of nature. How much he was associated with plays that we can see in these lines –

**"All the world's a stage,
and all the men and women merely players:
they have their exits and their entrances;
and one man in his time plays many parts..."**
(*As You Like It*, Act II, Scene VII)

Shakespeare produced most of his known work between 1589 and 1613. His early plays were mainly comedies and histories and these works remain regarded as some of the best work produced in these genres even today. He then wrote mainly tragedies until about 1608, including Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, and Macbeth considered some of the finest works in the English language. In his last phase, he wrote tragicomedies, also known as romances, and collaborated with other playwrights.

Bharat Muni has given importance to three things and said –

“वस्तुनेतारसस्तेषां [नाट्यानां] भेदकः।”

(“Plot, character and rasa [essence] are the divider [base] of that [literary work]”)

The playwright’s intention is to give pleasure to the audience. Shakespeare has followed Aristotle who has given enormous importance to tragedy. There are powerful conflict scenes in tragedy. Aristotle believes in Catharsis of the spectator in tragedy. So the play has a tragic end. In the context of Sanskrit, Rasa is the soul of literature (drama). Sanskrit writers are following faithfully and with due respect the rules of *Natyashastra* or I would say as a constitution of Natya. They believe in happy ending of the play and their works give strong messages to the viewers or the readers. Bharat has asked to use Adbhuta Rasa in NirvahanSandhi to end the play happily.

The play is a renowned Tragedy by the renowned dramatist. The play is a combination of Veer and Shringara Rasa. Bibhatsa, Bhanayaka and of course Adbhuta Rasa are supporting Rasa. It is a tragedy and Veer is the main Rasa of *Macbeth*. Macbeth, the hero is following the chain of the Human Being but in descending order. Macbeth who is the protagonist at the starting of the play becomes the villain at the end of that. At the time of reading this piece of art, I felt that Adbhuta Rasa appears very beautifully in the play unlike the other tragedies of Shakespeare. Here, *Macbeth* is like *Jew of Malta*, if you consider Macbeth as protagonist than it is a tragedy but if you consider him as an antagonist it is a comedy.

Macbeth, all-time hit play by Shakespeare which has been translated in so many languages along with that it has been adapted in movies of Hollywood as well as Bollywood. Even the theme of Macbeth is with which anybody could relate him/herself. Sanskrit dramaturgy tells that Rasa is the heart of any literary work. Shakespeare was not familiar with the Rasa theory still the Rasa appears excellently in the play which makes it masterpiece as it gives variety of feelings to the audience. How Adbhuta Rasa could bring different end of the play? So what makes it classic is really the biggest question.

Scope:

Shakespeare, the greatest playwright of the world is known for his four tragedies. One of these four tragedies is *Macbeth* which is scope for my research. This is a story of the obedient soldier named Macbeth of the king Duncan. By following the basic human nature he is getting trapped in the greed of being the king. He was provoked to kill his master the king Duncan by his dear wife. He forgets all the obligations of the king. He kills the king and takes the position. He plans murder of his dearest friend Benko and his son and kills Benko. As it is said, the earth is round and whatever the person does that comes back to him/her, he/she needs to pay for that. The same case is with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth; they have to pay for the murder of the king. Lady Macbeth gets crazy or we could say becomes an insane person. Macbeth cannot control the situation. After the death of Lady Macbeth, Macbeth goes to battle field to fight with son of his previous master and friends. At last he dies in the battle field. Here, in the play we could see the transformation of the hero into the villain and his death. Thus, *Macbeth* is a tragedy of a protagonist who dies because of greed. In this world, each and every person is greedy so in this situation Macbeth's story is a kind of lesson.

Methodology:

To give pleasure to the audience is the target of both the traditions – the Indian and the Western one. In Greek tradition, they have given immense importance to the tragedy. Conflict is the soul of the tragedy. They believe in catharsis of the spectators. According to them the pleasure relies in catharsis. There is no prohibition of violent, cruel, kissing, murder and intimate, etc scenes on the stage. In Sanskrit tradition, there is a very long tradition of Vedas, Puranas, Aaranayakas, Upnishadas, etc. Kalidas's time is known as UpnashadicKal. Upnishadas have given so much importance to pleasure. They are having the concept of 4 Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. One of these four have to be the motto of the play. They have given importance to pleasure of the audience. According to them the pleasure lies in happy ending.

The various situations of life lend themselves to a more successful representation in drama than in any other work of art because drama appeals to the all the senses through eye and ear which are regarded as pre-eminently aesthetic. Drama marshals all other arts including that of poetry. In fact the main aim of Bharata's *Natyashastra* is to instruct broadly the dramatist, the director and the actors in regard to the ways and means of producing the drama, to tell them the necessary elements of the drama and the manner and material of their presentations like music, stage and everything.

In Sanskrit, it is said -

“वस्तुनेतारसस्तेषां [नाट्यानां] भेदकः।”

(“Plot, character and rasa [essence] are the divider [base] of that [literary work]”)

Thus, these three are the bases of any literary work. Plot means the general course of a story including significant events that determine its course or significant patterns of events. Character means the protagonist, antagonist, supporting character and the minor characters in the story. In Sanskrit, Neta means the protagonist (Nayaka). Rasa means a flavor, a sentiment or an emotion regarded as one of the fundamental qualities of classical music, dance and poetry.

In Sanskrit, it is said -

"रस्यतेअस्वादयतेवाइतिरस।"

(“That which is relished is Rasa”)

In Indian context, Rasa is the soul of any literary work. Critics have considered it as the main element of the work. Though the Rasa was invented at the time of Vedas but still “What is the rasa?” is a debatable subject. The Rasa is the emotional element. Bharata Muni very emphatically states in the Rasadhya of *Natyashastra* that –

नहिरसाद्रितेकस्चिदर्थहप्रवर्तते।

(“Not a single thing [No meaningful idea] in the world is conveyed [stay] if the "Rasa" is not evoked.”)

Indian tradition believes that the first Rasasutra was given by Bharata. Bharata classifies the Rasa under eight categories (ashtarasa). Traditionally, there are nine different types of Rasa-

शृङ्गार-हास्य-करुण-रौद्र-वीर-भयानकाः।

बीभत्साद्भुतसंज्ञौचेत्यष्टौनाट्यरसाःस्मृताः॥

He also gives the corresponding Bhava which gives rise to the ashtarasa. These are always already there, in the human beings so called SthayiBhavas

**रतिहश्चशोकश्चक्रोधोत्साहौभयंतथा।
जुगुप्साविस्मयश्चेतिस्थायिभावाःप्रकीर्तिताः॥**

These are known as pervading stable emotion. Every Rasa is identified with a specific colour for the use in performing arts.

RASA	BHAVA	COLOUR
Shringara(Erotic)	Rati (Delight)	Pale Light Green
Hasya (Laughter)	Hasa (Humorous)	White
Karuna (Pathetic)	Shoka (Sorrow)	Grey
Raudra (Terrible)	Krodh (Anger)	Red
Veera (Heroic)	Utsaha (Heroism)	Pale Orange
Bhayanaka (Fear)	Bhaya (Fearful)	Black
Bibhatsa (Disgust)	Jugupsa (Odious)	Blue
Adbhuta (Wonder)	Vismaya (Wondrous)	White
Shanta (Peace)	Calm (Peaceful)	White



एकएवभवेदङ्गीशृङ्गारोवीरएववा।

अङ्गमन्व्येरसाःसर्वे, कार्यनिर्वहणेऽद्भूतम्॥

Nataka must have Shringara Rasa or Veer Rasa as the main rasa. Later Karuna Rasa was also accepted as the main Rasa. Nataka can have other Rasa as the subsidiary Rasa. But if the drama has any other Rasa as the main Rasa, it would fall under the other category of Rupaka. Nataka is the best category of Rupaka like Tragedy is the best category of the drama.

Adbhuta Rasa has its own importance in each and every Nataka. With the use of this Rasa in the VimarshSandhi, the play ends happily. Bharata has said about the necessity of the using the Adbhuta Rasa very clearly in the *Natyashashtra*. Use of Adbhuta Rasa is a kind of gift or the blessing to the Nataka. It gives in a way re-birth to the drama.

To create Adbhuta Rasa, Indian tradition is blessed with some special characters. These characters are supernatural or immortal. They are like Narada and Hanuman. When a writer cannot create the situation of the Adbhuta Rasa by the event in the story, that time the writer can use these kind of characters. Here are some characteristics of these important Rasa.

Shringara - Shringara is the king of the Rasa. Shringara depicts the sentiment of love, sensuality, and erotic emotions. It is the very leading principle in the literary work. There is of two kinds – Sanyog and Viyog. It is an effective and crucial part of human life, too. It is one of the needs of human life. Nobody can live without Shringara in their life.

Veera - Bravery, heroism, and manliness are some of the attributes of this Rasa. Veer Rasa can impress anyone. If we want to stand our life, the first thing we need is bravery. Basically we identify Veer Rasa as

physical strength and the violence. It is true but we can map it in the context of bravery of a mind, too. A man can impress a woman through Veerta (bravery).

Karuna - It is Sadness, pathos, compassion, sympathy and tenderness excited by the occurrence of misfortunes depression or death. Life does not go always same. We can call it an essence of Tragedy. In Indian context, there is no tradition of Tragedy; the work must end with happiness. Like a wheel, our life is also having two sides – happiness and sadness. One cannot live happy for whole life. It is contextual. It differs person to person. Like, one tragic incident cannot affect someone but at the same time it can affect the other one badly. We are having an excellent example of Gautama Buddha.

Hasya - In this Rasa, we are having the joyful, the comic and happy emotions. It arises from ridiculous of a person's speech (dialogue), dress or deformity of another person. It presents state of cheerfulness. Vidushaka or clown is the best source of this rasa.

Raudra - This covers the realm of anger, rage, and other violent wrathful emotions. It is the sentiment of furious passion expressed in threatening language.

Bhayanak - This Rasa creates to the emotions of fear, anxiety, and uncertainty. Fear is induced by awful occurrence exhibited by trembling, perspiration and deafness of mouth (speechless), etc.

Bibhatsaya - It is having disgust and ludicrous emotions. It is influenced by filthy object or by law abuse.

Adabhuta - Wonder and curiosity are two of the attributes of this Rasa. It indicates great wonder. It is introduced by uncommon objects and indicated by exclamation, trembling and perspiration. According to Bharata Muni, the playwright should use this Rasa in NirvahanSandhi to end the play happily. Adbhuta Rasa's use before the end of the play makes the spectator surprised and happy as it brings sudden and unexpected change in the play.

Shanta - We are having contemplative, meditative and peaceful emotions form this Rasa.

Analysis:

The theme of *Macbeth* is quite appealing. Theme of politics and greed for the crown or the higher post is all time hit; any person could relate him/herself with the play. In this world, each and every person wants success. In this world of cut throat competition, everyone is ready to do anything for the promotion or higher position. So *Macbeth* is a kind of play with which anybody could relate him/herself.

According to me, *Macbeth* is a timeless classic because of the combination of the Rasa appears in the play. As I said, Rasa lies in each and every work of art. *Macbeth* is full of variety of Rasa. *Macbeth* has Veer Rasa as the main or core Rasa. Shringaraa Rasa has played major part in the play. Though Sanskrit dramaturgy rejects use of Veer and Shringaraa Rasa together but specialty of *Macbeth* is that Shringaraa Rasa excellently supports Veer Rasa in the form of Lady Macbeth and her wishes. Along with Veer and Shringaraa Rasa, appearance of Bibhatsa Rasa at the particular time gives an extraordinary touch to the play. Along with these three Rasa, use of the Adbhuta rasa before the end makes it comedy plus tragedy.

Macbeth is the greatest tragedy of Shakespeare, so just like other three best tragedies *Macbeth* has Veer as its main Rasa. *Macbeth's* bravery at the battle field and the description of his art of fighting in battle field are full of Veer Rasa. Even at the end of the play, when *Macbeth* goes to battle field for the last time after the death of his dear wife is full of Veer Rasa as reflected in his soliloquy - "**Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.**"(Act V, Scene V) Only Veer or the hero could do so.

Lady Macbeth and Macbeth's talk or intimate scenes are full of Shringara Rasa. When Lady Macbeth convinces Macbeth for killing the master Duncan, though the content is that of Veer Rasa but the way Lady Macbeth convinces Macbeth is full of Shringara Rasa.

The witches who appear twice in the play are source of Bibhatsa Rasa. The description of Witches and the place where they are staying is Creepy. The description of their look is full of Bibhatsa Rasa. The Bibhatsa Rasa arises from Bhayanaka (dangerous) and unusual things.

Bhayanaka Rasa appears when the witches emerge for the very first time in the play by saying - **"Fair is foul, and foul is fair"** (Act I, Scene I). When Birnam wood suddenly starts growing and Macbeth recalls the prophecy of the witches- **"Be bloody, bold, and resolute. Laugh to scorn the power of man, for none of woman born shall harm Macbeth."** and **"Macbeth shall never vanquished be until Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill Shall come against him."**(Act IV, Scene I) When Lady Macbeth talks with the souls and wishes for barren hood is something wearied-**"Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here, and fill me from the crown to the toe topful of direst cruelty!"**(Act I, Scene V). Such kind of wish from the lady is again matter of fear from the side of the audience. Lady Macbeth's stage of mental illness is even horrible - **"All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand"** (Act V, Scene I).

Adbhuta Rasa appears when Macbeth sees daggers in the air after killing the master - **"Is this a dagger which I see before me, The handle toward my hand?"** (Act II, Scene I). When the Birnam wood starts its march to the Dunsinane Castle is something very surprising. The prophecy by the witches is full of Adbhuta Rasa in which they describe the person who is born of the womb of a mother could not kill Macbeth, when the Birnam wood would reach the Dunsinane Castle then Macbeth would die. All these are full of Adbhuta Rasa.

Let's look at *Macbeth* from other point of view; *Macbeth* has Adbhuta Rasa at the end when Birnam wood starts moving towards the kingdom of Macbeth. It is Adbhuta Rasa. It is in favor of the hero cum villain because Macbeth has gone through the change which has made him the villain. He has killed the master Duncan though it was not purely his decision but the provoked one. We have witnessed the end of Lady Macbeth, the painful death with a lot of mental instability. Here, being an audience the death of Lady Macbeth gives pleasure to us as she was the real villain of the play. She is the person who had provoked Macbeth to do all the wrong things. She is the reason behind the downfall of Macbeth. We don't want such death for Macbeth, though he is a villain but once he was a hero or we would say the most admirable person of all. So, after the mental illness and death of Lady Macbeth, Macbeth has no motif to live the life. At that time, we wish that Macbeth should get relief from all these. At that time, Birnam wood starts increasing and that gives pleasure to us as an audience. At the same time it is a source of Bhayanaka Rasa for Macbeth as at that time he recalls the prophecy of the witches. As we know that Macbeth is a person who would never be a coward, at any cost and at any situation he is going to fight back. So, the Adbhuta Rasa at the end of the play is in favor of Macbeth.

As in the Indian plays, application of the Adbhuta rasa should be done in Nirvahan Sandhi. In the same manner Adbhuta rasa has beautifully appears before the end of the play in *Macbeth* but as we have seen that Macbeth is following the cycle of Human being but in the reversal order. Macbeth, who was working for the king Duncan and was the right hand of him, murdered the king because of the greed of the kingdom. Thus, Macbeth who was the greatest human being who was fighting for the king had started thinking for him and not only thinking he murdered the king who had the greatest faith on Macbeth. This action of Macbeth makes him beast kind of a person. Thus, Macbeth who was a hero in the starting of the drama becomes a villain at the end of a play. Just like *Jew of Malta*, *Macbeth* has a hero cum villain kind of character. In *Jew of Malta*, Barabas is a villain from the starting of the play. As in *Jew of Malta*, we want end of Barabas though he is the hero because of his deeds. In the same manner, here somewhere we want Macbeth's end or I would say good end of Macbeth's life. If we consider, Barabas as

a hero, then *Jew of Malta* is a tragedy but if we consider him as a villain then it is a comedy. The same case is with *Macbeth*, if we could consider Macbeth as a villain at the end according to his deeds, the play is a comedy but at the same time the catharsis of an audience goes with Macbeth which makes it tragedy.

Conclusion:

When I read the play, the play has an outstanding story of greedy but brave person named Macbeth with whom anybody could relate him/herself. The play has an excellent combination of Veer and Shringaraa Rasa and other Rasa like Bibhatsa, Bhanayaka and Adbhuta come at particular time. Here, Shringara Rasa excellently appears with Veer Rasa in the form of Lady Macbeth and her wishes. Adbhuta Rasa has appeared in the play like anything unlike other plays of Shakespeare. According to Sanskrit dramaturgy, the downfall of the hero is not appreciable but here due to the difference of the culture and tradition we have downfall of the hero. Here, with the fall of Macbeth we could see son of Benko as the hero as he succeeded in running away and witches had considered him as the future king after Macbeth in their prophecy. At last we see Malcolm the son of Duncan as hero as he wins the battle against Macbeth. Here, we could see the tradition of appearing the second hero in the play because no play could exist without hero. Here, our hero Macbeth becomes a villain so entry of second in the mind of audience is something new.

All such things makes Macbeth timeless classic. This kind of reading of Macbeth shows its timelessness because the work of art which could be read after years from the different point of views is an outstanding thing in itself.

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