

# Rasa Analysis of Poems in Shastri First Year

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**Yog Raj Paudel**

Department of English, Vinduwasini Sanskrit Vidyapeeth (Campus), Pokhara, Nepal

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**Corresponding Author:** Yog Raj Paudel, **Email:** [paudelyr@hotmail.com](mailto:paudelyr@hotmail.com)

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## Abstract

*Literature gets created mainly due to the creator's desire of evoking his/ her own aesthetic emotions (rasas) and wish to share with and impart similar experience upon readers. This paper has applied and analyzed randomly the selected three poems prescribed in Shastri first year compulsory English course of Sanskrit University, from the perspective of the Eastern aesthetic rasa theory of Bharat. Critical analysis of poems within the theoretical frameworks of rasa theory is the basic approach of the research. The finding shows that Karuna (sadness), Sringar(love), Raudra/Krodha (anger), Bhaya (fear), Vismaya (disgust), Advhuta (amazement) are realized in the poems. Though none of the selected poems evokes Hasya rasa, yet every poem does have one or more rasas: none is devoid of the rasa. The research indicates that teaching fundamental features of all rasas to university students is essential and it would enable students to understand and analyze a literary text well. This paper will make its readers feel this need when they go through the analysis.*

**Keywords:** Adbhuta, aesthetic, anubhava, asthayibhava, karuna, rasa, vibhava

## Introduction

Literature is a powerful source of knowledge as well as aesthetic experience. Learning and creating literature is a process of generating emotions within and evoking them. It uses aesthetic qualities of language in any genre, and poetry generally do have musical qualities like rhyme, rhythm, alliterative, assonance, etc. The symbolic and metaphorical language used in the literary works gives literature its artistic values and makes literature timeless and much interesting because values like music, symbolic and metaphoric meanings provide contentment to the perceiver. According to McFadden, literature “includes works primarily artistic and also those whose aesthetic qualities are only secondary (56). Nevertheless, the emotional conveyance of meanings often makes arts new for every generation to get aesthetic experience.

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This article presents aesthetic experience in poetry through the theoretical perspective of Bharat Muni, an Indian thinker, who has propounded eight types of components in creation and realization of art. *Natyashastra* of Bharat Muni is a discourse on theatre with details about theatrical techniques, dance, music and the way art is performed. Sangita, natya, vastu, silpa and sahitya along with various other art forms were inspired by the *Natyashastra* and its theory of *rasa* (Sebastian 268). Bharata in his *Natyashastra* discusses constituent elements of creative skills and statecrafts in a literary work, particularly of drama, which generates psychology effects on readers or audience. Dramatic works appeal to human heart through reflecting and representing social life and human sentiments. “*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). It is related to society, psychology and self-satisfaction of both creator and receiver. Bharat Muni’s principle of *Natyashastra* elaborately defines and describes fundamental nature and elements of plays and their quality of *rasa* realization. Besides providing theory of drama and its constituent elements, it is also a compendium for the directors, stage manager, actors and spectators of the plays and semantics host of other subjects (Singh 5). Stage design, music, costume and other aspects along with the performance of the characters through speech and actions. *Rasa* exposition is seen in the play whereas *rasa* is also heard in the poem because a play is performed and acted through *drisya* (audio video) in the theatre, and a poem is recited and read aloud, and audience perceive *rasa* through *sravya* or audio sound (Budhathoki 68). And its analysis of *rasa* is an elaboration of how aesthetic creation and realization of it during encoding and decoding the messages takes place. In this sense, *rasa* theory of Bharat is used as the theoretical tool of data analysis to find out *rasa* experience in the three poems recently prescribe in the Shastri First Year Compulsory English course, Nepal Sanskrit University. And the research question for the title is- what types of *rasas* are expressed and felt in the selected poems in this research? To address this question is the sole objective of this article. A course of literature becomes more effective and interesting for students if it includes texts with different features of creativity, instructions and entertainments. If prescribed texts for university students do have different representative characteristics of creation, knowledge and information, they will arise learners’ interests for learning and enrich their knowledge about life and the world. This research analysis has evaluated the selected poems from these perspectives also and has seen the significance of the prescribed poems in Shastri First Year students of Nepal Sanskrit University.

### **Literature Review**

The main contribution of Bharat is his doctrine of *bhava* and *rasa*. *Rasa* signifies aesthetic experience of various emotions through skillful enactment of a literary work, through artistic expression, music and action (Singh 8). *Rasa* is a dynamic experience between the creator of an art, the work of art, and those (audience) who receive it. When an artist experiences emotional feelings and gets overwhelmed by it, he/she seeks a medium

with which to express those feelings. The spectator or the audience viewing the artists' work receives this emotion through the artist's medium and thus experience the similar emotions felt by the creator. The degree in which the viewer or reader of art experiences the emotion felt by the creator, depends on both the creator's artistic skills and sensibility of judgement in presenting the work and the viewers' socio-cultural training to receive it. It is creator or viewer's capability of tasting (*asvadate*), enjoying (*asvadayanti*) the tastes, and attaining aesthetic content and relaxation. Dominant states (*Sthayibhavas*) of the audience are generated with words, gestures and temperament from which people perceive pleasure and satisfaction. Bharat discusses these elements in chapter iv of *Natyashastra*. These *Sthayibhavas* are: Delight (*Rati*), Laughter (*Hasya*), sorrow (*Soka*), Anger (*Krodha*), Heroism (*Utsaha*), Fear (*Bhaya*), Disgust (*Jugupsa*), and wonder (*Vismaya*). These *Bhavas* refers to eight corresponding mental states which are called *Rasas*. They are: the Erotic (*sringara*), the Comic (*Hasya*) the Pathetic (*Karuna*), the Furious (*Raudra*), the Heroic (*Vira*), the Terrible (*Bhayanaka*), the Odious (*Bibhatasa*), and the Marvelous (*Adbhuta*) (Singh 33). Basic four *Sthayabhavas* are the sources of these *rasas*. This means, the Comic arises from the Erotic, the Pathetic from the Terrible, the Horrible from the Odious, and the Sublime from the Heroic. Along with mental state and corresponding experience Bharat presents symbolic meaning of colors to the eight *rasa*: the comic is white, the erotic is light green, , the pathetic ash-coloured, the terrible red, the heroic light-orange, the horrible black, the odious blue and finally, the sublime is yellow. The 'Brahman' is the presiding deity of the 'Sublime', Vishnu is the God of the 'Erotic', Rudra of the 'Terrible', Yama of the 'Pathetic', Kaladeva of the 'Horrible', Indra of the 'Heroic'. Though learners in modern time have nine *rasas*, Bharat had presented only eight *rasas* and the ninth *rasa* is later addition from aesthetic analysts. When people talk about *rasa* in literature in Eastern aesthetic theory, people often think of the nine *rasas*. The ninth one is *shanta* or *shantam* (peace) suggested by perpetual white colour.

The most significant thing about the *Rasa* is the pleasure either creator or receiver of the art feels from the union of three interrelated components of experience – *Vibhava*, *Anubhava* and *Vyabhicharibhava*. *Sthayibhava* which is the main vehicle of the three and it drives them to stir and evoke emotions. *Vibhava* is cause of a particular emotion and "the support, cause or the stimulus for the *rasa* experience" (Mehta 83) has two components: *Alambhana Vibhava* and the *Uddipana Vibhava*. The first gets generated from the object or a person from which certain emotion is evoked and experienced and the second related to the context or environment in which that person or object is placed and becomes a transmitting vehicle of emotional experience from objects to mind. *Alambana vibhavas* 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). *Uddipana vibhavas* 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). These kinds of feelings and

experiences can easily be realization in every day contexts. Poetry also is a reflection of our daily life context and emotions.

*Anubhavas* (result from the experience) becomes a content for expression through either *Vachika*- the expressed by words or *Angika*- gestures. Through *Anubhavas* characters communicate the emotions being felt to the audience. Involuntary emotions which are called *Sattvikabhavas*: with different names on the basis of feeling such as *Stambha* (paralysis), *Asru* (becoming tearful), *Sveta* (sweating), *Romancha* (hair standing on end), *Vepathu* (trembling), *Vaivarnya* (changes in the colour of one's face), and *Pralaya* (fainting) *Svarabheta* (changes in one's tone of voice). The *Sthayibhava* (permanent mood) is a major emotion it is a combination of three *Bhavas* mentioned above and thirty- three minor feelings which are, of course transitory states of emotions like *alysa* (lethargy), *avahittha* (dissimulation), *tandra* (drowsiness), *anidra* (sleeplessness), *svapna* (dreaming), *probodha* (waking up), *asuya* (envy), and other things. Bharat calls such states or emotions *Vyabicharibhavas* but they are not under consideration in this article. Minors or major *rasa* in overall is product of "*Bhavas* (emotional fervor and state) viz. *Sthayi* (permanently dominant), *Sancari* (moving or transitory) and *Sattvaja* (originating from the mind, temperamental)" (Bharat 71). In brief, *Rasa* principle in drama as well as all types of artistic works is the experience of creation and acceptance. It is a process of creation and perception from the initiation of the art and its completion. Now following paragraphs briefly reviews on previous studies on individual poem.

Arti Nirmal analysis "Dover Beach" as a poem with various tensions of Victorian time. She focuses on the final stanza which recalls the earlier reference to the listener—"Ah, love, let us be true/ To one another! And indicates the melancholy consequences of the weakening of faith. Her analysis is on changing conditions of human faith in the poem but she does not give any attention of the emotional releases the speaker of the poem expresses even though she talks of various attitudes of the writer in the changing condition of human life and faith to each other.

"Root Cellar", among many similar greenhouse poems is considered as a much powerful and wonderful poem. Wolff in his short article on "Root Cellar", projects biographical information about Roethke onto the verse, because he understands that Roethke has expressed "rejected child's need for parental love". Karl Malkoff views that any greenhouse poem should not be interpreted going beyond the immediate context of its composition because such poems are "hardly dependent upon extra-literary references". Therefore, he does not see it in a significant emotional background. Richard Blessing also thinks that greenhouse poems like "Root Cellar" they are "too simple", with no allusions, but a clear vocabulary and syntax, and almost no abstractions.

William Blake's poem "The Fly" is analyzed by various writer about the unpredictable and uncertainty of life and fragile condition of living beings. Yet, the review does not find any analysis on its *rasa* and focus on types of emotional releases of the creator. Though it is viewed with philosophical and ironical perspective to sort out moral dilemma on who is

responsible for giving pleasure to living beings yet it is not analyzed from *rasa* perspective. In Short, the researcher's review on individual poem does not get any poem critically analyzed with *Rasa* Theory of Bharatmuni. Therefore, this research has significance relevancy of making critical analysis of the poems through theoretical bird view of *Rasa*.

### **Methodology and Theoretical Tool**

This research article is based on qualitative approach of critical textual analysis. The *Rasa* theory of Bharat Muni of Eastern World is applied for analysis of five poems in English from different Western writers. Bharata has classified the '*Rasa*' under eight categories and described them in accordance with '*Bhava*' (emotion) which results in the creation of '*rasa*' or feeling within a person or in this reference with a creator of a text. These are known as '*Sthayibhava*' or pervading stable emotions. They are '*rati*' (love), '*hasa*' (mirth), '*shoka*' (grief), '*krodha*' (anger), '*utsaha*' (heroism), '*bhaya*' (fear), '*jugupsa*' (disgust), and '*vismaya*' (wonder) (Bharat line 15). The corresponding eight '*Rasas*' with the *Sthayibhava* are '*shringara*' (amorous), '*hasya*' (humorous), '*karuna*' (pathetic), '*raudra*' (furious), '*vira*' (valorous), '*bhayanaka*' (horrific), '*bibhatsa*' (repugnant), and '*adbhuta*' (wondrous) (Bharata, line 17). According to Bharat, these eight '*sthayibhava*' are inherent qualities or emotions of each individual but the feeling vary on context and individual. Different *rasas* evoked in the poems are first identified. Then, their causes them are analyzed. Various opinions of previous analysts on *rasa* theory are used as secondary data for analysis. The article has interpreted only three poems, recently prescribed to Shastri First Year Compulsory English course of Nepal Sanskrit University.

### **Discussion and Results**

*Rasa* is *bhava* – the realization of certain emotion/s. Bharat says, "There is no *rasa* devoid of *bhava*. Nor *bhava* devoid of *rasa*" (Bharata 74). As mentioned earlier *rasa* is produced with the combination of *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicharibhava*. And these are driving components of *rasa* feeling and experiences. "*Rasa* is the... study of emotions which deals with the delight, one takes in literature" (Poonam 5). The actual purpose of studying *rasa* is to know and enhance aesthetic delight in literature and reveal what the readers feel or experience while going through literary works. This feeling makes literature lively and readers as well as creators' interest of creation also remains energetic and transfer into the audience or receivers. The aim of artistic performance or creation is to transfer similar feeling to them because while creating an art the creator naturally wishes to evoke the same impression in the mind of audience (Keith 314). This process of creation of a text and similar feeling or emotions expected from the readers makes a literary text unfading forever. Now, let's observe what types of *rasas* are pervading and how they are evoked in the selected poems.

### **"Dover Beach"**

"Dover Beach", written by Mathew Arnold, is related to a contrast between human conditions and experience of the past and of present. Though the experience in the poem



is directly related to the Dover Beach atmosphere and the speaker's brooding over the surroundings, he links the geographical contents and happening to the human life of present and of the past and makes different kind of *rasa* evocation at the moment.

Matthew Arnold perceives a lonely feelings in "Dover Beach", and expresses it through the use of imagery, simile, and personification. The poem begins with a simple statement: "the sea is calm tonight" ( Arnold 14). Though this initially gives an impression of the Santam *rasa*, a feeling of peace, immediately the poet evokes a sense of embezzlement and generates a sense of fear, the Bhaya *rasa*. Bharata in his Natyashastra (VI-68) explains the Bhayanak *rasa* evoked from fear as its permanent emotion. It arises from such vibhav as shrill noises, seeing of supernatural beings like ghost, fear or panic howling like of wolf jackals, , strange sound from a cave, forest, hearing about or seeing murder of one's dear ones and so on. (Masson and Patwardhan 54). The poet brings a lonely imagery by saying, the "cliffs... glimmering and vast", the "tranquil bay" (14). In the following lines the poets feel again melancholic and unfavorable sound in the atmosphere and says, "Listen!" ( 15) the line starts, and goes on to add to the still, silent imagery that came before it—a voice, a presence, a roar of pebbles- a continuous flow of in and out and sound of unending cycle. This imagery does appear again and again in the poem. And it has generated soka as well as krodha which means grief and anger respectively. Vyavicharibhavas of different kinds such as Visada, Cinta or anxiety, *Trasa* or a kind of panic are also evoked here those these feelings have been transitory emotions in the poems. The last two lines of the stanzas start to add the feeling accurate, more distinct and melancholic. The waves have a "tremulous cadence slow, " that brings "the eternal note of sadness in" (15).Memory of the history and feeling and experience of the historical figure like Sophocles gives the feeling of misery. "Sophocles long ago heard the eternal note of sadness on the Aegean and it brought to his mind human misery. Here we have a comparison between human misery, ebbing and flowing, and the sea, ebbing and flowing.

Arnold continues the comparison by adding another note: "not only is human misery like the sea, so too is human faith, which "was once, too, at the full,"( 14) but now depleted and ineffective. In the past the faith was "like the folds of a bright girdle." But now those who would be carefully listening would feel "melancholy, long, withdrawing roar" (16). The last stanza goes back to the beginning, to those beautiful calm images, and says, "the world, which seems to lie before us like a land of dreams, so various, so beautiful, so new," (16). It is an indication of understanding of the situation and a step to realize the Ananda *rasa* which is however not completely realized. In short, the world "hath neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor help for pain" (16). This kind of feeling is Bibhatsa *rasa*, a feeling of odious sentiment, aroused by determinants such as sight of unpleasant things, scenes from which both the poetic persona and readers here experience repugnance, disgust and aversion. The poem ends with its strongest lonely image of "a darkling plain... where ignorant armies clash by night" (16). The speaker and the listener's lonely state due to lack of love and faith, it is Bibhatsa *rasa*, the experience of fear and horror. Therefore, the speaker

intends to extend similar feeling to all humanity, perhaps with the hope that humans would be back to their past condition of faith, love and compassion to all humans and living beings.

### **"Root Cellar"**

This poem is about the will-power of coming into existence and extension of life. The atmosphere of *rasa* evocation and experience is of a cellar in which germination, growth and existence of any germs and plants are in the struggle. The cellar has decaying and stinking environment where it seems almost impossible for plants to grow, yet life seems to be growing, though unusual, yet gets into existence. Roethke asserts, "Nothing would sleep in that cellar, dank as a ditch/Bulbs broke out of boxes hunting for chinks in the dark" (Roethke 127). The speaker begins by referring to the "cellar" as "dank as a ditch." It tells us what the room looks like and gives impression of detest of the place. The poet uses words like "dank," "dangled," and "drooped" in order to evoke a particular reaction from the readers and it is a creative evocation of *rasa*, in which the poet feels *Vismaya*, the wonder and amazement or the feeling of marvelousness. The poet in the initial situation can not realize how the atmosphere. The cellar is or is not for the existence of plant life- a contradictory experience of the speaker initially, but more assertive at the end about existing power of plant life. The "bulbs" and "shoots" break out of boxes and make their way through the dark to the light.

As the poet proceeds in description of the plants as "lolling obscenely (127)" the readers are prepared to evoke a feeling of disgust, which the poet must have felt while composing the poem and it is *Adbhut rasa*. Simile in line five has been the most powerful vehicle of *rasa* expression in this poem. The poet compares the long, hanging shapes of the plants to "tropical snakes", which generates a sense of danger and creates a more exotic feeling in the readers minds and it is *Bhaya rasa*, a sense of fear. Alone with such feeling, the poet after a while, with critical observation in and around the cellar, realizes a *rasa* of wonder and astonishment and he ultimately feel *Karuna rasa* – it is because of knowledge of natural law of struggle for existence. That's why the poet says, "And what a congress of stinks!/Even the dirt kept breathing a small breath" (127). The poet emphasizes the idea of thriving and decaying conditions in the cellar. The thriving context is quite difficult and it is congested with collection of bad smells. Stinky smell is coming from the various plant matters decaying in and around.

Even if the atmosphere is decaying and the inhospitable in the cellar, nothing in it would give up life. Despite severity of cold, dirty, and dark horrible conditions of the root cellar, the plants that do reside there are hearty, energetic and struggling for existence. There seems to exist the notion of "danger and uncertain, making the speaker wrestles with the unrelenting impulse of the vegetation to persist in living. The sheer force with which the life of the root cellar endures becomes "terrifying and perverse" (Sullivan 34) forcing the reader to confront the "complexity and trauma of survival in the aftermath of birth. Nevertheless, they are determined to live, no matter of the harshness of the circumstances, the message of the lesson of the poem is an expression of hope and positivity. The writer through the feeling

of Adbhuta, comes to realize and know that the plants in such adverse atmosphere also are alive and this survival power is the reality of nature. This understanding on him makes the writer feel relaxation and this is in other words *santam rasa*, a feeling of peace through knowledge.

The speaker implies that he is impressed and disgusted by the variety of life that resides there. To convey the message the poet uses various composition techniques. Despite free verse the poem is loaded with end rhyme, alliteration and assonance along with various imagery and similes. By the end of the text, the reader should feel interested in the fact that life can survive in the most inhospitable of conditions. Through description of the variety of plant life that germinate, grow and live in a root cellar, the speaker is interested in inspiring readers to appreciate the tenacity of this kind of life, despite the terrible and even disgusting conditions for growth and prosperity. Roethke described the greenhouse as "both heaven and hell" (Malkoff 48). The imagery of "Root Cellar", with adjectives such as "obscenely" and "evil" in lines four and five, complicate the fecund nature of the greenhouse, oscillating "between the extremes of grave and nest" (Wolf 47). Therefore, the writer is generating a combination of Adbhuta and *Santam rasas* together and the readers here also can feel the same when one minutely observes and analyzes the atmosphere.

### **"The Fly"**

"The Fly" is about the complexity of living animals and human life. It is about how helpless we are in the law and power of nature, that makes every living thing victim of its grip. We are not necessarily important in the scheme of the nature, in the law of birth, life and death except that we can conceptualize and contemplate about it and feel ourselves different from insects. We feel or think that we live in a grandeur and thoughtful way and we are different from minor creature like fly. When we know the pathetic end of the fly, we realize the *Karuna rasa* to the fly, and simultaneously feel anger or the *Bhivatsa rasa* to the indifference and negligibility of the sweeper. The speaker says:

Little Fly,  
Thy summer's play  
My thoughtless hand  
Has brushed away. (Blake 209)

Yet the fly can become human life in prompting and interrupting thought. Life-style we have been adopting separates humans from the other creatures. Their world is prompted and dependent upon perpetual encounters with those creatures through which mysterious fleeting unions are formed. And this is a kind of the *Karuna* and the *Adbhuta rasas* simultaneously. The fourth stanza starts with conditional clause:

If thought is life  
And strength & breath  
And the want  
Of thought is death; (Blake 210)

This, in itself, leads the reader into a sense of false security. Lack of security is a kind of



fear. And fear comes from feeling of *Vhayanak*. The poet here identifies two speakers in the poem- one the poet as a philosopher who pretends to identify with the fly in the first three stanza and in the second the fly itself, who ridicules the philosopher for the poet's sentimentality and delusion. And it is a kind of transitory *rasa* feeling of *Moha*- an apprehension about his own life. As a result, we here feel *Karuna rasa*.

This is an attractive way of reading the image. Yet if the fly is given all the credit for the realization of sentimentality leads the poet to the condition of reality, the feeling of *Anuvhavas*, and acceptance of the law of nature, which ultimately leads to the *Santam rasa* in a deeper level because the speaker realizes that events in the world is unpredictable and seems to be *Adbhut*, a feeling of amazement. When the speaker sees the death of flies from his unintentional hands, he could not say what the law of nature is but it is in condition of amazement. The fly cannot simply know more than the narrator if it is to act that, the inspiration of thought. If the narrator has failed to identify with the fly contemplatively, he has nevertheless succeeded in creating a shared experience with the fly that is whether or not the fly is even alive. But the means by which this is discovered and the ways in which this similarity are announced create as much separation as unity between the two. If the want of thought is death, then I am a happy fly whether alive or dead (210). What an odd conclusion to a poem. It does however point to the poet's belief in life after death which, for "The Fly" is happy, whatever. "The Fly" is without responsibility, comes and goes as it pleases, haphazardly on with purpose, dancing and singing in its own inimitable way. The human interrupts this process just as this process interrupts the human's train of thought. The two characters do not become one but they belong to a greater oneness which is the realization of the truth or *Santam rasa*.

### **Conclusion**

Any literary or artistic creation is an expression of *rasa* – an aesthetic realization in creation. One would feel no meaningful thought and expression in literature if he/she fails to realize it. The evocation of human emotions takes place according to the context. The selected poems do have different contexts and expression of *rasas* feelings. "The Fly" presents *Vibhatsa*, *Adbhuta* and *Karuna rasa*. Each of the selected poem does have power to evoke different *rasa* alone with its own dominant one. "Root Cellar" is dominated with *Adbhuta rasa* yet it evokes *Ananda* or feeling of peace with a new kind of realization of the natural truth about the struggle for existence. Though the context of each *rasa* is limited and sometimes it can be slightly realized only, yet each of the three poems is dominant with particular *rasa*. *Hasya Rasa* is not found in any poem. The findings implies that basic knowledge about literary *rasa* evoked in those poems make readers feel comfort in getting into the realm of critical analysis on it.

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