



Analysis Of Mahesh Dattani's Play *Dance Like A Man* By Applying The Sanskrit Theory Of Rasa

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Abstract:

The purpose of this essay is to identify the Rasa and Bhava aspects in Mahesh Dattani's drama *Dance Like a Man*, which depicts the suffering of a young girl who was sexually assaulted by her own uncle. Mahesh Dattani is an Indian English dramatist who has attempted to use his theatrical abilities on an Indian stage to draw attention to the horrifying problem of incest. In relation to *Dance Like a Man*, this will also emphasise Dattani's contribution to Indian theatre. Theatre is a type of art that occurs in the "now" since it is a stage where live actors perform in front of a live audience. One of the unique delights of the theatre for both the artists and the audience is the live actor-audience interaction. The audience can enjoy the Rasa, a Sanskrit word with multiple connotations that is best grasped in its whole in the Sanskrit phrase *Param Asvadniya Tattava*, which is essentially the essence of drama, through dramatic performance since it directly appeals to their sensory organs. In *Rasadhaya* of *Natyashastra*, Bharatmuni advanced the rasa idea.

KEYWORDS: Mahesh Dattani, Rasa Theory, Karuna Rasa.

Mahesh Dattani, the first dramatist from India to get the prestigious Sahitya Akademy Award, has addressed the subject of humanism in general and injustice meted out to the socially oppressed in particular. When he stated that "everything is bent towards Rasa," he accepted the classical Indian dramatic idea. He stands out among contemporary playwrights due to his profound concern for rasa. Theatre is no exception to the rule that everything in India is a direct descendant of God. Pains and sorrows were supposedly unknown to man in the Golden Age, but as the cosmos was stirred by conflicting passions, a craving for spectacle and sensual entertainment emerged. Even though the four sacred Vedas are thought to be the source of all wisdom and knowledge, the general public did not have access to them. The fifth *veda*, also known as the *Natyaveda*, was created as a result of the gods, led by

Indra, being dissatisfied with the state of things. They pleaded with Brahma, the Creator, to create something that everyone could enjoy.

Dance like a man

Mahesh Dattani's *Dance Like A Man* is a good piece of writing to start to study a transitional shift. The piece casts a shadow on the new metaphorical totem's power while also reflecting the historical shifts occurring in the neighbourhood.

The focus of the piece is the cultural distinction between male and female genders. The play's first Act's use of the flashback technique makes this emergence of a new societal belief clear. The Amritlal family in the year 1940 is the main subject of this Act. Whereas Amritlal, the family's provider, spearheads the creation of a new cultural belief through actions within the four walls of the home.

He is the archetypal figure who originates and propagates new political ideologies in contrast to the long-practiced *Bharatnatyam* dancing form.

This change can be seen in the severe control the father exercises over his son Jairaj by preventing him from engaging in the traditional art form that depicts the father placing limitations on his tribesmen's wants to assert dominance over his land. The tribesmen become unhappy as a result of these constraints. The Indian Aesthetic Approach of Rasa Theory can be used to analyse this psychological anguish or grief at a deeper level.

The deficient Jairaj in the drama experiences the dominant Karuna Rasa (Pathetic). From the very beginning of the drama, the prevailing Karuna (Pathetic) Rasa can be seen. As Jairaj has developed, he lacks the emotional fervour that was present when he was younger to challenge his father's firm ideas. When he requests that his future son-in-law take away the expensive item (a shawl) that belonged to his late father, his frigid feelings against his father become apparent.

Jairaj: Please put the shawl back.

Vishwas: Yes, yes... (Folds it clumsily)... I'm sorry... it is a lovely shawl.

Ratna: Give it to me (stretches out her hand) (15 Dance Like a Man)

His father interprets his son's dance as a disrespectful way of addressing his personality as a result. The gender roles in the family start to shift as a result of this violation of the governing laws. As a writer, Dattani accords women a specific privilege in the field of cultural practise.

Here, Ratna, Jairaj's wife, supports her in gaining dominance over the cultural realm in contrast to her husband. Because there is still the ideological presumption that there is a collective unconscious, the impact endures. Since only women are anticipated to make advancements in the cultural arts in the new generation, The unintentional efforts of both Jairaj and Ratna, who are always encouraging their daughter Lata to succeed in the cultural field of her choice, have drawn attention to this.

However, the emotional needs of the family's men are neglected. Two people can be used to study the effects of this ignorance. The first is Jairaj, the family's son, who struggles to succeed in the cultural sphere because of the ongoing obstacles placed before him by society and family members.

When he indulges in his act of oral fixation—drinking alcohol—the emotional agony of this neglect comes to light. His Karuna (Pathetic) Rasa expresses itself through an emotional outburst while he is intoxicated. Where he accuses society of failing to give him support in the form of financial rewards.

When he notices his wife being abused by her close relative, this constraint causes him to go back to his father's doorstep. In doing so, he is able to preserve his wife's chastity but is forced to submit to his father's rules. He is reduced to failure due to the totemic influence of society and his father since he is unable to make any significant progress in the areas of his artistic interest.

Even his wife Ratna contributes to limiting his development by working with her father-in-law. He then makes a commitment to support her artistic proclivity. This is demonstrated by the fact that he permits her to succeed in the craft of her choice. She complies with and submits to her father-in-Totemic law's rules in return. Although the control also has an impact on the development of other family men. The mother, Ratna, shows the fatal effects of this totem influence in her behaviour by neglecting her kid. By turning to giving the child opium so that he wouldn't interfere with her craft, as a result of the mother and maid giving the son a double dose of opium, the son dies as a result of this action.

RATNA: She too has given ... Shankar... ?

JAIRAJ(gets up) : What do you mean?

A low beat of mridangam is heard. Ratna looks at him terror-stricken. Jairaj advances towards her.

What did you say? She too has given Shankar? (Grabs Ratna.) What did you say? She too has given Shankar ? (lets go of her.) You?

RATNA: (screaming). No! (Dance Like a Man 73)

Karuna (Pathetic) Rasa lives with the perpetual grief of losing Jairaj's son. Due to the mother's efforts and sacrifice, her daughter Lata is eventually able to realise her aspirations. Even the son-in-law is considered as being in a very subservient position because he vows to accept all of Lata's marital requirements and not get in the way of her cultural pursuits. This demonstrates how society encourages women to pursue the finer skills while demeaning men who pursue them. The significant totemic influence in culture fosters such a belief.

Conclusion:

When it comes to aesthetic experience, Rasa in modern, society, is permissive in itself that is willing to accept homosexuality as a part of society and literature, which is why such homosexual characters can also be a charioteer of Rasa, but when a person with a heterosexual inclination watches such plays, the experience that they relish is not Rasa but HasyaRasa or Bibhatsa Rasa.

Thus, by analysing Dance Like a Man, it is possible to come to the conclusion that, unlike traditional Indian drama, modern Indian English drama cannot represent just one Rasa to the diverse audience of today, who encounters a variety of performances by various drama companies in various locales or via various media, such as street plays, theatre productions, television productions, etc.

Based on their affiliations, psyches, understandings, experiences, etc., people from various groups may have distinct Rasa from the same drama, scene, or sentence. As a result, a theory of Rasa is applicable to contemporary Indian play, but it needs to be changed or new conclusions need to be made to make it more applicable in the modern era.

After studying the play *Dance like a Man*, written by Mahesh Dattani in the light of the Rasa Theory, the readers see various Rasas such as; Sringara Rasa is seen through Love & Attractiveness in the young romance between Lata and Vishwas, which adds a gentle, tender energy to the play. We see a relationship between Jairaj and Ratna, especially their shared love for dance, also initially carries elements of romantic and aesthetic love.

Hasya Rasa appears during the interaction between Lata and Vishwas, particularly around his awkwardness about dance and tradition. Some dialogues, especially the ironic or sarcastic remarks from the older characters, offer dry humor that relieves tension.

If we talk about the main Rasa, present in this play it will be the Karuṇa Rasa as it is one of the dominant Rasas in this play. When Jairaj & Ratna lost their son Shankar, this incident evokes a deep pathos in the heart of readers. Apart from this, when Jairaj's wasted potential and unfulfilled dreams also create a sense of emotional pity and tragedy.

Raudra Rasa is expressed through the confrontations between Jairaj and Amritlal, and between Jairaj and Ratna. The suppressed rage of a son against a controlling father and the bitterness of a husband who feels betrayed by his wife drive key dramatic moments.

The essence of Bhayanaka Rasa the fear of failure, rejection, and societal judgment pervades the characters' lives is there in this play when. Jairaj's fear of never achieving recognition as a dancer haunts him. There is also emotional fear—Ratna fears her daughter may not live up to her dreams, and Jairaj fears confronting his past.

Rare in the play, but we can feel an essence of Śānta Rasa in a momentary sense of resolution occurs toward the end when the characters come to terms with the past and Lata's future in dance seems assured.

In *Dance Like a Man*, Mahesh Dattani skillfully included multiple emotions in various character which are very helpful to evoke various Rasas and provide a powerful and layered emotional experience to the readers/audience. However, Karuna Rasa (pathos) and Raudra Rasa (anger) are the main & dominated Rasas, but we can find some shades of other also as Vīra, Bhayanaka, and Sringara which makes the play a compelling example of modern Indian drama that aligns with classical aesthetic principles.

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