



ASCENDANCY OF RATNA IN MAHESH DATTANI'S DANCE LIKE A MAN

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ABSTRACT

Mahesh Dattani is considered as one of the most effective dramatic voices in Indian English dramatic world. Dance Like A Man is a play that highlights a woman's ambition and passion on traditional dance stimulates a man to fall in worsening circumstance. Dattani exhibits realistic event and circumstance of familial relationship in this play that they can be easily observed in the contemporary society. Ratna, Jairaj and Amritlal are major characters of this play. Dattani portrays the character Ratna, the most dominant woman in this play. The whole play browses in the ascendancy of Ratna to attain an awful position on dance and Dattani distinctly exhibits the mysterious twin of woman's approach through her incorrigible behaviour. Dattani makes use of flashback as one of his dramatic techniques which appears in the second part of the first act. It is for highlighting the disagreement exists between art and family. Ratna wants to continue her traditional dance so she makes her husband a victim for attaining her ambition. She plans to join her hands with her father-in-law, Amritlal, his determination to destroy Jairaj's passion on dance and career as a dancer. The construction of disagreement among the characters is different level of Indian society.

Keywords: *Dance, Passion, Indian Society and Family.*

INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to reveal a woman's ambition and passion on traditional dance stimulates a man to fall in worsening circumstance. Most of the Dattani's plays deal with unusual contemporary issues of Indian society and this play is particularly in different level. By the way he exhibits the realistic events and circumstance of familial relationship in this play can be easily observed in the contemporary society. In this play, the characters are sharply portrayed with their ideas and issues of contemporary modern society in the space of three generations. *Dance Like AMan* reveals the true feelings of artists, they are different from

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ordinary people having jealousy and ready to encounter any difficulties for achieving their passion. Once the artist has tasted his notoriety and reputation in the field, it can stimulate him towards further steps. It may ruin the family relationship for the sake of satisfying individual ambition and passion. Saikia states that,

Dance Like a Man is a play dealing with gender, through dance: one of Dattani's principal passions. Dattani uses Traditional Dance as a medium that creates conflict in the play within the minds of the other characters. As the play goes forward and the actions take place, Dance takes centre the stage and pushes the characters outside. (86)

Dattani portrays the character Ratna, the most dominant woman in this play. The whole play browses in the ascendancy of Ratna to attain an awful position on dance and Dattani distinctly exhibits the mysterious twin of woman's approach through her incorrigible behaviour. As she belongs to South India, she has got married with Jairaj, a Gujarati and she serves food in the home as her wishes of South India dishes. She completely controls the lives of her husband and daughter. But her daughter Lata exceeds the limit like her mother in the passion of dance. Dattani portrays these two characters are ruthless and outspoken. Saikia highlights that, "Ratna not only spoils Jairaj's life but tries to mould her daughter Lata's life also by making her a traditional dancer" (88).

Dattani makes use of flashback as one of his dramatic techniques which appears in the second part of the first act. It is for highlighting the disagreement exists between art and family. At the beginning of the flashback young Jairaj and Ratna getting oppose from Amritlal Parekh, father of Jairaj for not practicing dance furthermore.

In the past, Jairaj and Ratna wanted to expand their career as popular dancers. They felt dance is not their only hobby or sideline of their life but also engrossed with their spirit. When Jairaj was a young man his father Amritlal decided him to practice dance that would feel him to acquire solace, a part of boldness. But Jairaj began the practicing of dance is not a sideline rather than the idea of his father. Amritlal believed his son's desire on dance would fade up from his life later on but it did not occur in that way. Jairaj prolongs his dance-practice in spite of having all the resistance from his father and obviously reveals himself as revolutionist to his father's obsession. After that he has turned out of more stubborn given by his father because of the encouragement of his wife, Ratna who is much interested in traditional dance. Amritlal doesn't want his son to become a Bharathanatyam dancer.

Amritlal worries about his son's life because he believes that the obsession of dance never leads him to get a good place in his life. Jairaj cannot support his family in future by this

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profession. Generally everyone wants male to take care of family in the society, Amritlal knows that dance never helps Jairaj to earn adequate money to lead a good life. Surely it makes him pitiful in the ambition of his wife, Ratna.

Ratna serves dance as perpetual passion that steers her throughout the play. Dance is the only factor exists behind all her action. It is easy to recognize her character a selfish and incorrigible. Her sincere affection on Jairaj aims to fulfill her passion on dance and believes her talent can execute her ambition. Amritlal believes that the dance is good as far as continues a hobby but it should not be taken as an only profession in life. Ratna wants to sustain her passion on traditional dance so she makes her husband a victim for attaining her ambition with the help of Amritlal. She plans to join her hands with her father-in-law, Amritlal, for his determination to destroy Jairaj's passion on dance and career as a dancer.

Though Jairaj has a passion on traditional dance, he feels it is suitable to female gender when comparing male. Lakhotia argues "... a dance which is usually performed by Women" (315). Ratna uses this possibility and achieve her passion on dance and it helps in earning eminence and money along with admiration in the world of dance. Finally Ratna destructs Jairaj's aims to become a popular dancer and says "You're not even good at that anymore" (160). It is the tactic that she has taken a benefit of Jairaj's love, her status as a wife and finally leaves Jairaj a failure and simple dancer.

Mahesh Dattani creates the disagreement among the characters in the play through the strong passion of individual woman on traditional dance. Dattani portrays the play with the gender discrimination that exists behind a woman's passion on the dance leads destruction in the life of man.

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