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## THE CONCEPT OF NAVARASA THEORY IN KATHAKALI THROUGH ANITA NAIR'S 'MISTRESS'

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### Abstract:

The concept of Rasa, initially proposed by Bharata Muni in his seminal work of Natyashastra, is central to Indian aesthetics. The Father of Indian theatrical art forms said about the importance of Rasas (emotions) in his book Natyashastra. Thalam, Bhavam, Abhinayam are the effects of Bharatam which relish the performance of dance. Rasa enable a human being to experience and emphatically express the Nuances of life in all its manifestations. Anita Nair has transformed Mistress into the performing art by getting it enacted as Nine faces of Being. The present paper discusses the effective exemplification of nine rasas by the writer in her fiction Mistress.

### Introduction:

Literature is the most effective mode of expression to represent this world. It encompasses every sphere of human life like culture, tradition, history, psychology etc. To depict the human life in all its richness, it uses diction expressing various emotions and feelings. These varied emotional expressions are called 'Rasa' in Sanskrit Language. Each 'rasa' has a permanent mood and several accessories (fluctuating moods). Anita Nair in her work 'Mistress' (2005) in prologue says that the face, the naked face is devoid of colours, and make-up, glitter and adornments. What do we have here? The forehead, the eyebrows, the nostrils, the mouth, the chin, and the thirty-two facial muscles. These are our tools and with these we shall fashion the language without words, which are also expressed by the dancers. The navarasas: Sringaaram-love, Hasya-mirth/contempt, Karunam-sorrow/mercy, Roudra-fury/anger, Veeram-courage, Bhayaanakam-fear/terror, Beebhalsam- disgust, Adbhutam-wonder/ astonishment, and Shaantam-peace/tranquility. The term rasa was coined by Bharata Muni. Rasa enhanced the intellectual beauty of an artist which relishes the psyche of an audience. In dance as in life, we do not need more than nine ways to express ourselves. Call these the nine faces of the heart. The characters act differently. They wrestle with decisions, resist, make mistakes, ask questions, hope and dream, show joy and despair. To accentuate this diverse nature of characters, Anita Nair has used the medium of art Kathakali and the Navarasas.

### Sringaaram:

Shringaram is the pioneer of all emotions. It depicted the sign of affection and love between males and females. It reflects the attractions of both genders with each other. It is discussed on romantic love, beauty, and erotic love. The other names for Sringaaram – Love, pleasure, longing, lust. According to Anita Nair, August is the month of love. There are flowers everywhere. There are no fruits in this month. The fruit of the month is paddy. Rain pours, so does sunshine. The undisputable King of all Rasas is used to portray every form of love and beauty. Devotion towards God; affinity between two close friends; a disciple's devotion towards Guru; sweet memories of beloved, etc. Love for the unknown, is also the face of Sringaaram. Think of Nala and Damyanti, Rama and Sita, they evoke the feel of Shringaram. Of lovers in Kathakali who embrace without actually doing so. Only an experienced Veeshakaran, an actor with more than mere technique, can perform that embrace. With arms that do not touch the woman, and with only his

eyes, he lets her know that he desires her. Shringaram is the mood in which we concentrate on creating a lovely atmosphere among family, friends and all the loved ones.

### **Hasya:**

Hasya is the second bhava of Rasa theory. It generates a feeling of mirth and laughter among the audience. Hasya is the rasa used to express joy or mirth. It can be used to depict simple light heartedness. Or riotous laughter and everything in between. Teasing and laughing with a friend, being amused and carefree or simply feeling frivolous and naughty--- these are all facets of hasya. When one laughs, it becomes easier to slip into a no-mind state, because the mind at this time is freed from its usual workload of thoughts, and one can simply be open, free and happy in that moment.

### **Karunam:**

Karunam is a form of grief, sorrow, and mercy. The audience can enhance the emotion of Karunam in the graveyard scene of King Harichandra in 'Harichandra Purana'. It was staged through Bharatanatyam. The performers revealed the empathy of grievance against the materialistic world. The death of a character brought karunam amid the audience. Karuna is grief and compassion. The feelings of unspeakable tragedy and despair, utter hopelessness and heartbreak, the sorrow caused by parting with a lover, the anguish caused by the death of a loved one are all Karuna. So all the compassion and empathy aroused by seeing someone wretched and afflicted is Karuna. The sympathy and fellow feeling that sorrow engenders in the viewer is Karuna. Karuna can be of a personal nature as when one finds oneself depressed, melancholy and distressed. More impersonal sorrows relate to the despair regarding the human condition in general, the feeling that all human is grief and suffering. It is Karuna of this sort that the Buddha was trying to overcome on his path to salvation. Anita Nair showed the rasa of Karunam through the feeling of unspeakable tragedy, despairs and utter happiness, where one feels betrayed, used foolish and hopeless. Compassion connects us all. Through compassion one can relate deeply and honestly with each other, it is a bridge between and helps to understand and empathize with each other.

### **Roudra:**

Roudra is a sort of anger, acrimony, annoyance, antagonism, enmity or displeasure with others. In Natyashastra the emotions of roudra can be seen through the Diety Kaali and Amman. The incarnation of Lord Vishnu is Narasimha. Due to his anger against Hiranyakasyapa (King of Demons), he killed him brutally. It made the audience to figure out the positive way of anger. Roudra is anger and all its forms. The self-righteous wrath of kings, outrage over audacious behavior and disobedience, the fury caused by an offence, the rage evoked by disrespect and anger over injustice are all forms by roudra, probably the most violent of rasa. Roudra also encompasses divine fury and the fury of nature which is used to explain unexpected calamities and natural disasters. In Indian mythology, Lord Shiva, the Destroyer, is thought of as the master of all disharmony and discard. Shiva performing the tandav-a violent dance-is what creates havoc in the three worlds namely the sky, the earth and the nether world. In anger we go into the fire. One moment of anger can destroy lifetimes of good merit. Respect anger. It represents fiery, sentiment of anger and is recognized to the most violent of all emotions combined. Raudram was described by Anita Nair as fury. Depicts a myth story of Ravana in Bali Vadham. The ultimate picture of haughtiness, the man with powers. Ravana's face reproduced; the face of a man who takes what he wants. Every fiber of his body pulsed with the measure of conquest. Everywhere he felt the need to lay his imprint on everything. When anger isn't honored it can bring up irritation, violence and hatred. Let it move through, rather than getting stuck.

### **Veeram:**

Veeram is valour, courage, bravery, confidence and pride. It is strong and vibrant. To survive is also an act of courage. The afternoons and nights of the thulavarsham, the October storms are fierce and frightening, but the day teaches endurance. But the highest feat of daring is cashew apple. It looks rosy, red, yellow sometimes orange, as it hangs from the tree. Its purpose is to sustain the nut that grows on it rather within. It is the nut that everyone wants. But somewhere within that fruit, in its fermenting ripe breath, is a need to prove itself, which is why, even when it drops to the ground with the weight of its ripeness, it will still not let go out of the nut. This is the courage to go on. Veera asserts itself when you call upon the warrior that lives inside you. It is not only strong but also vibrant. Veeram reveals the courage and valour of the characters. Courage is the fundamental source of historical warriors like Chathrapathi Shivaji Maharaj,

Jhansi ki Rani, Pandavas and so on. In an Indian epic Ramayana, the courage of Hanuman made Lanka to be burnt.

### **Bhayaanakam:**

Bhayaanakam is about fear, fright, terror, panic, and agitation. One who fell in the hands of evil will get the feel of Bhayaanakam. Doubt, worry, insecurity, when we live our lives in fear, we shut down completely. This Rasa is a tailor made to stand for the anxious feeling of suffering from a horrible circumstance, foreseen or unforeseen. Premonition of evil forces: spotting a harmful entity: looking in the eyes of death. The face of bhayaanakam requires that you remember to let fear show. The state of being frightened can stem from many things. A wild beast, an evil man, a natural calamity, a dark night. All these can fill us with fear. It is the month of April, the fields lie brown and baked, wells dry up, sweet prickles every brow, exhaustion lines every phase. We can pretend all emotions but cannot pretend fear. Fear cannot hide itself. It emanates from you even if you try to conceal it. There is one other aspect to fear. When you are afraid, you react in two ways- with utmost courage or cowardice. Continuous fear to be cheated, to lose. One do things one would never do otherwise. Fear lets you compromise. Fear will even let you seduce your husband so that he thinks he imagined your transgressions, your betrayal, and that you still are his. Overcome Bhayaanaka with inner strength, love and truth.

### **Beebhalsam:**

Beebhalsam is a kind of disgust, shameful, abominable, outrageous and harmful emotion. This rasa expresses the complex feeling of disgust or nausea and according to Natya Shastra paves the way for different, pleasant emotions. The feeling when you eat something stale; when you experience a nasty stench; sudden loud voice. Self pity, loathing, self hatred, disdain, repugnance, all are forms of beebhalsam. Only through a loving emotion you can heal and appease disgust. Abhorrence you feel for yourself and for an action of yours. The act of deceit can fill one with disgust, where we fall into a state of pandemonium and are unable to decide the course of the journey of life. More disgusting is our inability to control our wantonness. This Rasa characterizes the judgmental mind; only by cultivating loving-kindness can we heal and appease beebhalsam.

### **Adbhutam:**

Adbhutam is wonder and wonder is immediate. It cannot be premeditated or calculated. Hallmark of wonder is curiosity to know, yearning to possess and when you do, the wonder ceases. That is the nature of adbhutam, to be transient. Adbhutam is unique in its nature of suddenness and surprised emotion elevated within everyone. This Rasa is our playfulness and innocence. We enter into complete appreciation and become an explorer or adventurer. It seems like magic! Adbhutam is filled with amusement, surprise, confound or daze. The performers of Bharatnatyam were exclaimed while performing the rasa of Adbhutam. It is a sort of mere shock to the characters. In the performance of Krishna- Leela, Mother Yashoda was exclaimed when she looks into the mouth of Lord Krishna. The exclamation takes place at the time of wonder. The excess of beauty, joy and tragic actions will bring the feel of Adbhutam with the audience.

### **Shaantam:**

Shaantam denotes calmness, repose, and peace. The rasa portrays the power of being at peace, the sweet symphony that is created when mind, body and soul are on par with each other. A state of absolute bliss; tranquil moments shared between loved ones; resolving a self conflict; deep calmness and relaxation, all forms of Shaantam. In peace you become so full that you are empty. You will not find peace anywhere but within. Shaantam is a discipline. The mind does not let any thought to permeate it, if does it has to be filtered through the sheathed sacs nestling in the fiber. The last rasa depicted is Shaantam or peace where the action reaches to its extreme and falls into the origin state of being stable. The characters resolve their internal conflicts and attain a sense of peace. This rasa is reflected in deep calmness and relaxation. When we become still, quiet and at peace, we are so full that we are empty of all else but peace. We can only find peace within. The quarrel between Pandavas and Kauravas paved the way for the battle of Kurukshetra. After killing Kauravas ethics remained in the soil peacefully. The Bharatanatya performers used this rasa to pacify the fierce Deities like Kaali and Amman after killing Asuras or evil spirits. On the other hand, Lord Krishna preached the importance of peace in Bhagavat Gita, "one who abandons all desires and becomes free from longing and the feeling of 'I' and 'my' attains peace".

**Conclusion:**

Kathakali is a complex art. Anita Nair evokes in her readers all rasas while depicting the man-woman relationships. At the end, the novel fills our soul with Shaantam- the last of the nine bhavas. Rasa remains the invisible substance that gives life its meaning.

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