

CHAPTER IV

ANALYZING THE PLAYS OF

MAHESH DATTANI

THROUGH THE LENSES OF

PSYCHOLOGY OF *RASA*,

EMOTIONS AND EXPERIENCE

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“यत्र मुख्यफलोपाय उदिभन्नो गर्भतोधिकः ।।
शापाच्चैः सान्तरायश्च स विमर्श इति स्मृतः।”

“One’s pause over the seed that has sprouted in the
Development on account of some temptation, anger or
distress, is called Pause”

- *Dasharupakam*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores and discusses the stage plays of Mahesh Dattani on the basis of previously mentioned psychology of *Rasa*, emotion and experience. Mahesh Dattani, an Indian playwright, excels in creating emotionally stimulating narratives and captivating character portrayals. His theatrical works, characterized by intricate examination of human emotions and diverse experiences, provide a compelling framework for delving into the workings of the human psyche. The dramatic oeuvre of Mahesh Dattani has garnered considerable acclaim from scholars and critics alike owing to its intellectually provocative essence, as it explores a diverse array of social and psychological motifs. This chapter delves into the complex layers within Dattani's stage plays, using *Rasa* theory as an enlightening framework. The analysis aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the underlying emotional dynamics that permeate his narratives, examining the interplay of various emotions. The examination of Dattani's plays serves two purposes: recognizing the intrinsic universality of human emotions and exploring the unique cultural and social environments that influence these experiences as Mahesh Dattani has garnered global recognition and acclaim for his contributions as a playwright. He possesses a wide range of intellectual abilities and talent. He is currently operating at the zenith of his creative abilities, consistently engaging in the exploration of novel forms and modes of artistic communication. Dattani is a prominent emerging playwright from India, known for having high expectations of his audience (Kuthari, 2005). The chapter explores all ten stage plays of Mahesh Dattani, examining the emotional terrains they depict and their significant impact on spectators.

Although *Rasa* holds significant importance in Indian aesthetics and classical theatre, it is largely believed that *Rasa* does not possess a direct association with the Modern Indian English Drama produced by Mahesh Dattani. The concept of *Rasa* pertains to the emotional or aesthetic response elicited in the spectators during a theatrical presentation. The concept of theatrical expression encompasses a wide range of moods, sentiments, and emotions that are effectively conveyed through the integration of various artistic elements, including dialogue, acting, music, and stagecraft. The concept of *Rasa* holds significant prominence in the realm of classical Indian theatre, specifically within the *Natyashastra*, an age-old compendium dedicated to the study of performing arts. In contrast, Mahesh Dattani delves into current social concerns, interpersonal connections, and cultural conventions within the framework of his theatrical works. The author's literary works frequently explore topics such as gender, sexuality, identity, religion, and human rights. Several notable plays authored by him encompass *Where there is a Will*, *Tara*, *Final Solutions*, *Dance Like a Man*, *Tara*, *Bravely Fought the Queen*, *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, *Where did I Leave My Purdah?*, *Seven Steps Around the Fire*, and *The Big Fat City*. Dattani's theatrical works are renowned for their authentic depiction of characters and their examination of intricate human emotions. According to the prevailing belief, Dattani's plays are primarily aligned with modern theatre techniques and narrative structures, rather than closely adhering to the traditional classical notions of *Rasa*. This debate has led to the emergence of the Neo *Rasa* theory, as there is a significant disparity between traditional and contemporary Indian plays. The traditional framework, consisting of Bharata Muni's nine *Rasa*, the ninth *Rasa* of Abhinavgupta, and two additional *Rasa* - *Vatsalya* and *Bhakti*, proves insufficient while analyzing all ten plays across various themes. Consequently, the subsequent chapter delves into the discussion of the Neo *Rasa* theory.

One of the oldest available treatise on the science of drama (dramaturgy) is the *Natyashastra* by Bharata Muni, in which he has stated,

“वस्तुनेतारसस्तेषां [नाट्यानां] भेदकः।”

“Plot, Character and *Rasa* are the divider (base) of that (literary work)” (Unni, 2014).

The interconnection and mutual dependence of the plot, characters, and *Rasa* contribute to the creation of a unified and cohesive dramatic experience. The plot functions as the structural foundation upon which the dramatic elements are constructed. Aristotle also considers plot as the most important element of the literary work. The text presents a chronological series of events that serve as catalysts for the characters' development, encompassing various challenges, conflicts, and opportunities for personal growth. The narrative structure of a story plays a significant role in shaping the behaviors, choices, and predicaments encountered by the fictional individuals, thereby propelling their personal growth and impacting their emotional trajectories. The plot is advanced and given vitality and individuality through the characters' interactions and decisions.

On the contrary, *Rasa* is manifested as a consequence of the effective amalgamation of the narrative structure and the portrayal of the individuals involved. Through the deliberate creation of compelling and relatable characters and their placement within intriguing situations, the drama effectively evokes distinct emotional responses from the audience. The emotional reactions elicited from the audience align with the *Rasa* that the playwright or director intends to convey. As an illustration, a tragic work of art may endeavor to elicit emotions of sorrow or compassion, whereas a comedic piece endeavors to elicit amusement and delight. The seamless integration of the plot and characters effectively cultivates the intended emotional terrain, facilitating a heightened level of audience engagement with the performance.

In essence, the narrative structure, character development, and emotional resonance, commonly referred to as *Rasa*, are fundamental elements that constitute a dramatic work. The plot serves as the foundational framework and narrative trajectory, while the characters imbue the story with vitality and complexity. Additionally, *Rasa* elicits distinct emotional responses within the audience. Collectively, these elements coalesce to create a unified entity, forging a potent link between the theatrical production and its audience, thereby augmenting the overall dramatic encounter.

The dramatic works of Mahesh Dattani have received significant recognition from critics due to their intellectually stimulating nature, as they delve into a wide range of social and psychological themes. One of the primary factors that contributes to the achievement of his literary works is his proficiency in the art of characterization. The characters in Dattani's works possess a depth and complexity that reflects the intricacies

inherent in the human condition. Dattani demonstrates a remarkable ability to construct characters that possess multifaceted personalities, effectively capturing the intricate nature of human behavior, they do not readily conform to traditional archetypes of heroes and villains, instead occupying a morally ambiguous space and exhibit both positive and negative qualities, as well as areas of proficiency and limitations, thereby enabling the audience to actively connect with their challenges and ethical predicaments. This section aims to analyze the unique attributes of Dattani's characterization in his plays, emphasizing his aptitude for depicting authentic and relatable individuals. The analysis is substantiated by illustrations drawn from a selection of his noteworthy literary compositions.

In the play *Final Solutions*, the character Javed is depicted as a multifaceted representation of a Muslim adolescent who has undergone radicalization. While Javed engages in acts of violence, Dattani extensively examines his psyche, delving into the underlying factors that precipitated his metamorphosis. The playwright employs Javed as a means to challenge oversimplified assessments and encourages the audience to contemplate the impact of societal factors on an individual's behavior.

Realism and relatability are key factors that contribute to the resonance of Dattani's characters among audiences, as they are depicted in a manner that closely mirrors real-life experiences. The author demonstrates a meticulous approach in observing and incorporating human behavior and intricacies into his literary works. The characters depicted in his plays exhibit a sense of authenticity, characterized by their imperfections and susceptibilities, thereby rendering them relatable and identifiable.

The examination of gender and sexuality is a prominent theme in the works of Mahesh Dattani, wherein he frequently explores the intricate dynamics and confronts prevailing societal conventions and biases. The characters in the text challenge conventional stereotypes and adeptly navigate the complexities of their identities, thereby offering a nuanced viewpoint on these matters.

In *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, Dattani acquaints the reader with the character of Kamlesh, an individual who identifies as homosexual and undergoes a struggle between conforming to societal norms and pursuing his personal desires. The narrative of Kamlesh's journey serves as a poignant illustration of the inherent conflict experienced by

numerous individuals within traditional societies. Dattani's exploration of the theme of homosexuality serves to underscore the significance of embracing and comprehending diverse sexual orientations, thereby compelling viewers to critically examine prevailing biases.

Dattani's theatrical works consistently delve into the intricacies of cultural conflicts and the multifaceted nature of identity within a diverse and multicultural society. Dattani explores the juxtaposition of tradition and modernity, emphasizing the difficulties encountered by individuals who find themselves entangled in contradictory social and cultural norms.

Dance Like a Man portrays the narrative of a *Bharatanatyam* dancer family. The characters within the narrative engage in a profound struggle with their individual aspirations, the inherent conflict between different generations, and the profound influence exerted by cultural traditions. The theatrical production explores the intricacies of maintaining one's cultural legacy while simultaneously pursuing individual aspirations and ambitions. The characters in Dattani's work grapple with issues of identity and contend with external influences that significantly impact their lives, thereby rendering the narrative a poignant portrayal of the cultural milieu in India.

It can be observed that Mahesh Dattani's adeptness in character development within his plays serves as a testament to his prowess as a playwright. The author employs multidimensional characters to construct a complex portrayal of various human experiences, thereby questioning prevailing stereotypes and encouraging deep self-reflection. Dattani's adeptness in depicting authentic and relatable individuals enhances the complexity of his narratives, enabling audiences to actively connect with the challenges, tensions, and ethical predicaments confronted by his characters. Through an examination of various themes such as complexity, realism, gender, sexuality, cultural conflicts, and identity, Dattani skillfully constructs a multifaceted and varied collection of literary works that persistently engage and stimulate audiences, inciting significant dialogues.

4.2 *Where Did I Leave My Purdah?*

Where did I Leave My Purdah? The title of the work evokes a sense of inquiry, melancholy, and perplexity, therefore heightening the viewer's interest. The play revolves around the character of Nazia, while the plot unfolds in a non-linear manner, transitioning from the present to the past. The play encompasses a time period from 1946 until its date of publication. The unique artistic composition of *Abhigyanshakuntalam* is characterized by its incorporation of a variety of emotions, *Rasa*, and character experiences, against the backdrop of the India-Pakistan partition and the present day.

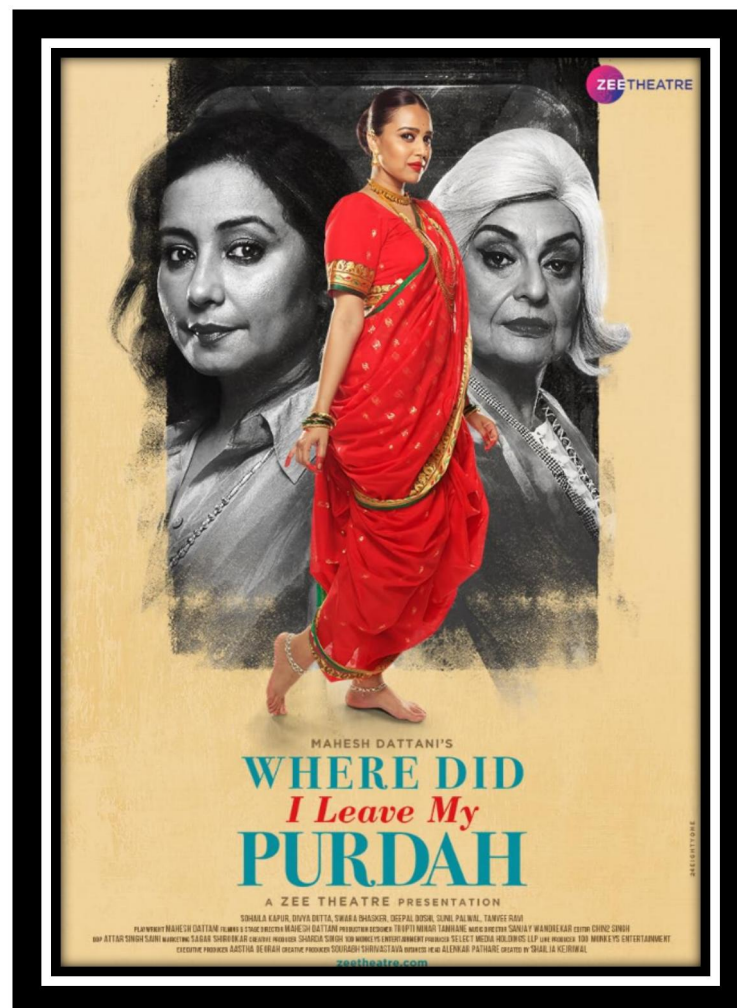


Fig.19 <http://surl.li/jbgsl>

Poster of Where Did I Leave My Purdah?

The character of Nazia is portrayed as a well-developed individual. She is depicted as an elderly theatre actress who is actively seeking opportunities in the Indian film industry. However, she consistently finds herself being typecast in the role of the

protagonist's deceased mother. The individual in question resides within a self-constructed realm of the imagination, wherein she assumes the role of the sovereign ruler of the theatrical domain. The subject has experienced significant adversity in various aspects of her life, including her personal identity, marital status, familial relationships, motherhood, and professional career as an actress. She has encountered challenges and hardships in every role she has played throughout her life. Dattani has adeptly crafted and intricately developed the character. She serves as a conduit for multiple *Rasa* in the theatrical performance.



Fig.20 <http://surl.li/jbguh>

Nazia and Vinay in the Scene I

The opening scene of the play, in which Nazia startles, or rather astonishes, Vinay, her manager, with a portrayal of a heart attack, is the sole scene that evokes the Hasya Rasa in the play. In this particular scene, Dattani introduces the character of Nazia as a jovial woman who engages in light-hearted banter, including mocking Vinay's homosexuality. Dattani, widely regarded as India's pioneering playwright who has provided representation to the LGBTQIA+ community, including homosexuals and Hijra individuals, through works such as *Seven Steps Around the Fire* and *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, deviates from his usual approach by incorporating humor pertaining to homosexuality in this particular play, which may be perceived as unconventional by Dattani's audience. In this context, the audience is provided with an opportunity to observe the inclusion of homosexual individuals as supplementary characters, which

serves as a means of eliciting the emotion of amusement and *Hasya Rasa*, a common practise within the given society made popular by Bollywood. According to Kshemendra's theory of *Auchitya*, any unconventional or non-traditional characters or actions do not result in the intended aesthetic experience known as *Rasa*. Instead, they lead to a distorted representation of *Rasa*, known as *Rasa Bhasa*. For instance, in the romantic scenes involving Sharad and Kamlesh or Prakash and Kamlesh in the play *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, the portrayal of *Shringar Rasa*, or love, can be considered as *Rasa Bhasa*. However, it is important to note that this experience of *Shringar Rasa* may be applicable to individuals with a homosexual orientation, but not necessarily to those with a heterosexual orientation, as their sexual preferences differ. This is the reason why Dattani employs homosexuality as a means to evoke *Hasya Rasa* in this particular instance, by portraying the character of Vinay whose amusement is derived from the actions of Nazia. Consequently, the play is presented to the audience in a notably jovial manner and tone.

“Vinay goes to the body on the floor. Nazia is a wrinkled, frail woman in her eighties. She is dressed in a white sari and wears a wig, a grey one with a grandma bun. She looks like the quintessential widowed dadi maa of television and Bollywood movies.

Nazia comes around and lets out a series of gasps. Vinay quickly gets her Some water. She gestures she doesn't want any. She motions that she wants to get up. Vinay tries to help her up. She clings to him. Vinay's cell phone rings. He can't answer it.

Nazia's breathing is more forced now. Nazia goes limp in bis arms. The cell phone continues to ring. Vinay rests her on his knee and gives her mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.

NAZIA: And that is how Sleeping Beauty woke up.

VINAY: Oh no! Oh, ma'am! How could you:

NAZIA: Answer it. Answer it.

VINAY: (*on phone*), Hello. Yes! I am coming! is ready.
(*To Nazia*) Ma'am, please hurry, the shot is ready.

Nazia has gone to a video camera.

NAZIA: I win the bet! I win the bet! You know,

I told Waheeda that I will have you in my arms kissing me
as if it were a matter of life and death.

She owes me a lunch at Wasabi. Vinay's cell phone rings
again. He cuts the call.

VINAY: Ma'am, please! Ranbir, Deepika and Rishi sir are
all on the set. Sanjay sir is screaming!

NAZIA: (*checking out the video*). Let him. Let them all
scream! Ah, Waheeda was so sure she would win. Wait till
she sees this video. Nanda too! She thought you would
rather die than... But I knew you would do it. Those girls
are in for a surprise..

VINAY: That was not fair. You took advantage.

NAZIA: It's okay. I know you are gay.

VINAY: I am not gay! Who told you that?

NAZIA: Nobody told me. I know.

VINAY: But I am not! gay.

NAZIA: Oh no! You poor boy. You don't know you are
gay!" (Dattani, 2014)

Nazia possesses multifaceted qualities that engender fascination and intrigue. Nazia possesses the physical attributes of a woman in her middle years, emanating an aura of refinement and cultivated taste. The individual is commonly observed donning

customary Indian garments, notably an exquisitely adorned purdah, which assumes a symbolic role in representing her identity and cultural heritage.

Nazia exhibits a robust disposition accompanied by a keen cognitive capacity. She exhibits a high level of intelligence, autonomy, and perseverance, demonstrating a steadfast refusal to adhere to prevailing societal conventions and expectations. Nazia engages in critical examination of conventional beliefs and societal norms, actively challenging the established order and pursuing personal autonomy and empowerment. Nazia's strong personality serves as a catalyst for the experience of *Veera Rasa*, as evidenced by her actions such as employing a firearm to protect the life of her romantic partner, Suhel, and navigating the challenges of existence independently.

“NAZIA: (*quietly*). Zarine. I didn't think twice about killing that man to save my Suhel.” (Dattani, 2014)

Nazia possessed progressive ideas that surpassed the era in which she lived, positioning her as a prominent advocate for Women Empowerment and Feminism. Additionally, her advocacy serves as a catalyst for the *Veera Rasa*, or the sentiment of courage and bravery.

“NAZIA: Don't be so foolish! Always dithering. For once in your life make a decision that will do some good. Obedient girls like you always end up in unhappy marriages)... Well, you make up your mind now. (*Taking off her burqa*) I am going, and here are no two ways about that. Either you come with us or you stay here all by yourself.

Nazia makes to leave.” (Dattani, 2014)

Nazia exhibits a progressive mindset as she critically examines and challenges traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and religious dogmas. Nazia actively questions the legitimacy and power dynamics of institutions that are predominantly controlled by males, with the objective of liberating herself from the constraints and restrictions imposed upon her due to her gender which is an exponent of *Veera Rasa*.

In the context of traditional Indian Sanskrit theatre, it is noteworthy that plays were characterized by a distinct definition and exhibited traces of *Veera Rasa*. This particular aesthetic experience was evoked through the portrayal of scenes depicting war, battles, or heroic actions of the protagonist. It is imperative to acknowledge that the *Sthayibhava* of *Veera Rasa*, known as *Uthasa*, suggests that any action performed with enthusiasm has the potential to evoke the sentiment of *Veera Rasa*. The presence of *Veera Rasa*, a heroic sentiment, can be observed in contemporary Indian English plays, that is evident in the courageous choices and struggles faced by the characters in their personal journeys. One such battle is depicted in the life of Nazia, a central character in a specific play. Each incident of Nazia's life evokes a sense of *Kanura Rasa* and her response to these circumstances and her subsequent fight back that truly embodies the essence of heroism, thus invokes *Veera Rasa*.

The protagonist, Nazia, experiences a complex internal struggle regarding her identity as a Muslim woman within a societal structure that upholds patriarchal norms. The individual experiences a conflict between her adherence to her religious and cultural background and her aspiration for personal autonomy. The internal conflict she experiences serves as a driving force behind her introspective journey towards self-discovery and the pursuit of personal autonomy and emotions she experiences.



Fig.21 <http://surl.li/jbhcc>

Nazia Describing her Experience and Memory of Rape

The development of *Karuna Rasa* is evident in the play, as Nazia's struggles and experiences contribute to the increasing tragedy in her life. These include the loss of her sister, the untimely death of her career, the abandonment of her child Ruby, Suhel's departure, her separation from her parents and nation, and her traumatic and painful experience of her rape. The various experiences are stored as memories in the *Chitta* of Nazia, resulting in a range of psychological and emotional experiences for the character and subsequently evoking *Rasa* in the audience.

Dattani adheres to the Sanskrit tradition to a certain degree, employing the technique of *Shuddha Vishkambhaka* in instances where it is impractical to portray a rape scene on stage. Given that the aesthetic experience of *Rasa* would not relish through such a scene, the protagonist assumes the responsibility of depicting it. In the Sanskrit tradition, it is customary for the protagonist to refrain from providing such information; however, Dattani deviates from this convention.

Dattani effectively depicts the scene through his skill and experience as a playwright, using the theme of rape may evoke the *Sthayibhava* of *Jugupsa* and the relish of *Bibhatsa Rasa*. In this instance, the portrayal of Nazia's suffering and the delivery by the performer of Nazia's character transform the emotions from disgust and revulsion to compassion and relishes *Karuna Rasa*.

“NAZIA: The butchers were on her and all others. Suhel dragged me away. We walked all the way to the border. We crossed the border after bribing someone. But... you see...I was still wearing that piece of black cloth. But we were in another country, with a different set of demons. They came at us. They came at me. They pushed me down behind the bushes, Five or six or seven, eight of them. I don't know. They tore at my clothes and at my flesh. All I could think of was why isn't Suhel saving me? These are his people! I stopped looking at those eyes, so much anger and hatred! Hell-bent on humiliating me. I stared back with hatred to0, but they hurt me even more til I stopped looking into their eyes.

A woman walks by with a bloodied face, limping. It is not clear if she is Hindu or Muslim. She lets out a dirgelike wail, which stays through the scene.

The young Nazia walks in wearing a tattered burqa. In a daze. She looks around.” (Dattani, 2014)

Nazia has undergone profoundly distressing events, including the bereavement of her sister, the relinquishment of her child, and her experience of rape, which have contributed to the development of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a psychological disorder characterized by enduring distress and intrusive recollections of the traumatic incident. Nazia may manifest clinical manifestations such as intrusive recollections, distressing dreams, emotional detachment, heightened arousal, and deliberate avoidance of stimuli linked to her traumatic encounters. Nazia exhibits a strong aversion towards cobwebs in multiple instances, to the extent that she vocalizes her displeasure, thereby indicating her psychological state during those specific moments. She has encountered adversity in various aspects of life, including her battle with cancer.

The experience of depression, grief, presence of abandonment issues and attachment trauma can be influenced by a series of distressing events in an individual's life, as observed in the case of Nazia. These events include the unfortunate passing of her sister, the termination of her career, and the separation from her parents and homeland. As a result, Nazia may experience intense emotions of sadness, a lack of optimism, and a profound sense of grief. These experiences possess the capacity to evoke symptoms of depression, disrupt sleep patterns, and result in a pervasive state of low mood, as evidenced by her interaction with the new actress, Nikhat and Ruby. The individual exhibits a persistent state of anger, displaying a preference for pursuing tasks according to her own preferences, and expressing dissatisfaction with her current circumstances. It is plausible that Nazia is experiencing grief due to the various losses she has encountered, encompassing the loss of her significant others, her perception of self, and her aspirations. These experiences have the potential to significantly impact her ability to form secure attachments and develop trust. The aforementioned experiences could potentially have enduring consequences on her capacity to establish and sustain healthy relationships, resulting in a heightened apprehension of being abandoned, challenges in cultivating intimate bonds, and a perceived emotional detachment from others. The separation

between Nazia and her husband and her long-term partner Suhel, can be attributed to her psychological condition.

“NAZIA: I knew you weren't Suhel's child. Although we married, I couldn't hide the fact from him.

He said he would bring up the child as his own, me every time he came close to me I could see that look in his eyes, I could sense it in his touch. Somewhere, we had forgotten each other... We only remembered the pain.” (Dattani, 2014)

Nazia may experience feelings of self-blame and guilt due to a range of circumstances. These emotions have the potential to contribute to the development of a negative perception of oneself, a diminished sense of self-worth, and an enduring feeling of shame. The psychological state of Nazia can be characterized by the manifestation of self-critical thoughts, feelings of insignificance, and an enduring internal struggle concerning her past decisions and actions. This becomes particularly evident towards the conclusion of the play, as she discovers the truth about Suhel's demise and is confronted by Ruby, who compels her to acknowledge her as her own daughter. This specific revelation pertains to Ruby's true parentage, indicating that she is not Zarin's daughter, but rather the offspring of Nazia. This conclusion is drawn based on the visual similarity observed between a young Nazia depicted on a poster of Shakuntala Play and Ruby's daughter, Nikhat. Dattani skillfully employs various theatrical techniques to effectively project this scene on the stage, thereby evoking a momentary experience of *Adbhuta Rasa*.

In the context of traditional Sanskrit theatre and drama, the inclusion of *Adbhuta Rasa* in the *Nirvahana Sandhi* contributes to the play's happy ending. However, in this particular instance, the utilization of *Adbhuta Rasa* is deemed futile due to Dattani's adherence to the Western dramatic tradition of introducing conflicts. This is evident when Dattani discloses the demise of Suhel, causing Nazia's anguish to escalate to the level of *Parakastha* and thus invoking *Karuna Rasa* within the play.

The experience of being separated from one's parents and nation can potentially induce feelings of cultural displacement and provoke an identity crisis in individuals such as Nazia. These aforementioned experiences have the potential to elicit emotions characterized by confusion, internal discord, and a quest for a sense of affiliation. The

potential challenge faced by Nazia in reconciling her cultural heritage with her present circumstances may result in an increased sense of disorientation and a strong desire for a sense of belonging within a particular setting. Nazia discovered this sense of belonging within the realm of theatre. Following a series of significant personal losses, she made the decision to immerse herself in the world of theatre as a means of self-recovery and reinvention. She directed her focus and efforts towards the field of theatre in India, ultimately establishing herself as a prominent figure within the theatrical realm of her time. The play appears to exhibit a certain deficiency in terms of its overall plot or narrative structure, as Mahesh Dattani intended for *Karuna Rasa* to dominant the play, superseding *Veera Rasa*, thereby transforming the play into a *Karuna Rasa Prtadhan Karunantika*.

The recollection of Nazia's sister's demise evokes a profound sense of sorrow within the actor portraying Nazia on the theatrical platform, namely Lilet Dubey. The actor's ability to effectively portray a scene is contingent upon their acquisition of relevant experiences, which in turn contributes to the manifestation of a distinct emotional essence known as *Rasa*. Nazia is observed donning an artificial prosthetic resembling a pregnant abdomen, with the intention of simulating a visible baby bump. This act is accompanied by her experiencing a persistent presence or psychological manifestation of her deceased sister, Zarin. The emotional distress resulting from these circumstances gives rise to a state of *Karuna Rasa*.

“SUHEL: ... talaq, talaq, talaq.

Suhel exits the green room and goes on stage, taking his position on the throne.

Nazia, almost in tears, puts on her ghagra which has a false belly attached to it. She now looks six-months pregnant.

As she gets out of her green room for the Scene-

An apparition of Zarin dressed as Shakuntala, holding an infant, appears in front of her.

The sound of a train whistling by.

Zarine smiles. She rocks the baby in her arms to the rhythm of the moving train.

Nazia takes in a sharp breath.” (Dattani, 2014)

Nazia possesses an inherent inclination towards artistic expression. The individual exhibits a profound enthusiasm for dance, employing it as a means of self-expression and defiance. The act of dancing assumes a metaphorical role, symbolizing her yearning to liberate herself from the limitations imposed by her cultural and societal norms.

Nazia assumed the role of Shakuntala, while Suhel portrayed Dushyant during the play-within-a-play sequence. Their portrayal of affection towards one another in the dressing room can be categorized as *Sanyoga Shringara Rasa*, a dramatic convention in which the characters adorn themselves in the attire of Shakuntala and Dushyant, thereby establishing a particular ambiance. The audience's engagement with the performance of *Abhigyanshakuntalam*, whether in a theatrical or cinematic format, elicits a profound emotional response centered around the theme of love. This response is facilitated by the seamless integration of various artistic elements, such as the costumes and physical expressions of the performers, which effectively arises the *Rati Sthayibhava* and consequently, the audience experiences the emergence of *Sanyoga Shringara Rasa*, as they witness a poignant drama.

The incorporation of *Sanyoga Shringara Rasa* is essential in order to evoke *Karuna Rasa* bring it to *Parakastha*. To achieve this, a renowned scene from Kalidasa's *Abhigyanshakuntalam*, which serves as a quintessential illustration of *Sanyoga Shringara Rasa*, has been selected.

“DUSHYANT: Oh, black bee! You are truly fortunate for you are being watched by her restless glance. You are touching this trembling young woman again and again, humming close to her ears as if trying to tell her a secret.

SHAKUNTALA: Oh! This wicked bee does not give up!
(*Going to another spot*) Oh! Has it come here too? What should I do now? Friends! Save me!

Anasuya and Priyambada giggle.

ANASUYA: Who are we to Save you? And why don't you call for King Dushyant? It is the king's duty to protect this sacred grove.

SHAKUNTALA: *(still troubled by the bee)*. Oh, what do I do now? Who will save me?

Dushyant suddenly appears in front of Shakuntala and splits the bee in two with his sword.

DUSHYANT: *(going to Shakuntala)*. The black bee will not trouble you any more.

They look into each other's eyes. Shakuntala looks shyly away, trying to conceal her excitement.

The two look at each other. An awkward silence.” (Dattani, 2014)



Fig.22 <http://surl.li/jbhef>

Romantic Scene of Suhel and Nazia as Dushyant and Shakuntala

Typically, the drama encompasses two distinct manifestations of *Shringara Rasa*, namely *Sanyoga Shringara* and *Vipralambh/Viyoga Shringara*. Dattani has made a deliberate effort to draw parallels between the characters of Shakuntala and Nazia by highlighting their experiences of adversity and their interactions with their respective partners. The distinguishing factor between Shakuntala and Nazia is the act of abandonment, both experienced abandonment by their partners respectively Dushyanta and Suhel. However, Shakuntala's situation offers a possibility of reunion, thus giving rise *Vipralambha/ Viyoga Shringara Rasa*. On the other hand, Nazia's circumstance lacks any prospect of reuniting with her husband Suhel, leading to *Karuna Rasa* instead of *Vipralambha/ Viyoga Shringara*.

Nazia demonstrates exceptional intellectual abilities and exhibits a remarkable talent for effectively expressing her thoughts and ideas. She actively participates in intellectually stimulating discussions and debates, frequently questioning and challenging the viewpoints and convictions of others. She exhibits a lack of fear in expressing her viewpoints and actively promoting transformative action.

Nazia possesses a profound sense of compassion and empathy towards individuals, despite her outwardly strong demeanor. The individual possesses a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by individuals in her vicinity and demonstrates a willingness to provide assistance and motivation as required. The inclusion of empathy in her character makes her highly engaging and easily relatable, fostering a shared experience even among the spectators. The *Sahardaya* audience has the opportunity to intimately engage with the pain and suffering endured by Nazia, owing to Dattani's skillful portrayal of her character. Dattani's empathetic disposition towards victims and his fervent advocacy for marginalized individuals contribute to this immersive experience. (Dhawan and Pant, 2005).

Thus, Nazia can be characterized as a complex individual who exemplifies qualities such as fortitude, resolve, and an innate desire for autonomy and self-exploration. The examination of personal identity, defiance of established social conventions, and fervent dedication to artistic creativity exhibited by the protagonist in Dattani's theatrical work, *Where Did I Leave My Purdah*, contribute to her captivating characterization.



Fig 23 <http://surl.li/jbfri>

Various Characters in Where Did I Leave My Purdah?

In addition to the portrayal of Nazia's character, the inclusion of gunshot scenes during the performance of *Abhigyanshakuntalam* on stage serves as a catalyst for the immediate transition of emotions from love to fear and *Rasa* from *Shringara* to *Bhayanaka*, thereby the scene evokes *Bhayanaka Rasa*.

“A gun is fired. Screams among the audience. Pandemonium breaks out. The actors are scared as well. Shouts of Maar dalo un haraamion ko! In sab ki talaashi lo! 'Stage pe kaun hain? Chalo! Sab Musalmaan ja sakte hain!' 'Kafiron ko pakdo!' etc. A commotion.” (Dattani, 2014)

The play exhibits elements of *Bibhatsa Rasa*, as it includes a depiction of a train between India and Pakistan, during which the lifeless body of Zarin is discovered alongside the deceased bodies of fellow passengers.

“NAZIA: The train arrived from across the border. Filled with bodies. On the train was written in blood: 'A from Pakistan, For all the wrong you have done.' Blood Present from maimed bodies spilling out of the train. Suhel went first, to the bogey we were in, . He couldn't-he couldn't tell who was Zarine. her clothes were bloodied. He called Even I Saw

her hand. On her finger ...the ring with the inscription from the Koran. I recognized the ring. I recognized Zarine. Only just then. She was killed by her own people. I..." (Dattani, 2014)

After the 10th century, scholars popularized another manifestation of *Shringara Rasa* known as *Vatsalya Rasa* that is a profound expression of the love that parents have for their child, characterized by a deep sense of care, concern, and sacrifice. In this context, Zarin, the sister of Nazia, assumes a parental role by demonstrating care and making a selfless sacrifice to preserve the life of Nazia. The depicted scenario involves instances of violence targeting Hindus perpetrated by individuals identifying as Muslims, with the burqa/purdah being portrayed as a distinctive symbol associated with the Muslim community. Nazia inadvertently neglected to bring her Burqa/Purdah, prompting Zarin to selflessly offer her own Burqa, ultimately sacrificing her life for the sake of her sister. The scene is effectively portrayed, evoking strong emotions and resonating with a wide range of viewers.

“NIKHAT (*As young Nazia*): Quickly! Wear your burqa.
Where did I leave mine?

The young Nazia looks elsewhere. Zarine puts her burqa in Nazia's trunk.

ZARINE. It's right here, Nazia! In your trunk! Wear it quickly.

More gunshots and screams.

The young Nazia wears the burqa quickly.

Zarine helps her.

NIKHAT (*as young Nazia*): Why haven't you worn yours?
(*Shaking Zarine with urgency*) Hurry,

Zarine!

Zarine just stares at her, smiling.

Nazia slaps her.

NIKHAT (*as young Nazia*): Move! Wear it, you stupid girl!
For once in your life think fast! Your life depends on it. They
are coming! Where is it?

(Suddenly, looking at the burqa she is wearing)

Oh no! Zarine....

NAZIA: She gave me her burqa! She was always the one
who was uncertain. She was always afraid of making a
wrong decision! But now-she did not think twice! There was
no doubt in her mind. Why did she do it? I didn't deserve it!
What had I done she should give her life to save mine?

Gunshots and shouts.

Ruby/Zarine slowly walks away from Nikhat and Suhel.

*Constant gunshots and screams even as the older Nazia
speaks.*

NAZIA: Later, when Ammi wrote to me, I came to know.
She she had promised our parents she would look after me ...
She swore by the Koran that she would take care of me.

ZARINE (*waving goodbye*): Goodbye, my sister! Do well!
Make a name for yourself. Let your dreams be fulfilled!
Inshallah, I will see you one day in Paradise!” (Dattani, 2014)

The play evokes a range of psychological ideas, emotions, including sorrow, love, and happiness, among the actors portraying the various characters. The play addresses themes such as the experiences of *Abhigyanshakuntalam's* stage and cinematic performance, the partition of India-Pakistan, and the struggles faced by theatre artists in the modern era dominated by cinema. Furthermore, the play places significant emphasis on the primary emotion of *Karuna Rasa*, which contrasts with the traditional approach of ancient Indian plays that typically incorporated a combination of two major *Rasa*, namely

Shringara and *Veera*, or *Shringara* and *Hasya*. The Sanskrit plays encompassed two principal *Rasa*- *Sringara* and *Veera*. The play also encompasses various subordinating *Rasa*- *Hasya*, *Bibhatsa*, *Bhaya*, *Shringara*, and *Raudra*.

4.3 *The Big Fat City*

The title, *The Big Fat City*, seems to use wordplay and linguistic duality, implying that comparable occurrences may be found within the play. The presence of 'Big Fat' in the city poses a perilous threat to the well-being and safety of individuals, as it has the potential to cause harm or even fatality. In his two-act play *The Big Fat City*, Mahesh Dattani portrays the lives of diverse characters residing in Mumbai, as they navigate through their individual challenges. *The Big Fat City* has garnered critical acclaim for being recognized as India's inaugural black comedy. The play is situated in the urban centre of Mumbai and presents a sombre and satirical narrative of a homicide, encompassing various dramatic elements such as love, avarice, deceit, pretence, envy, infidelity, violence, narcotics, organized crime, familial reputation, and moral decay. Black comedy, alternatively referred to as dark comedy or black humour, explores topics that typically possess a serious nature and are approached with a sense of gravity, such as insanity, death, murder, war, and violence. Playwright explores distressing themes, yet employs a humorous and ironic approach, leading to a striking contrast between the pitiful and the comical elements within the drama. In his essay *The Mode of Black Humour*, Brom Weber provides a definition of black humour as a form of humour that finds amusement in subject matters that are typically considered too grave for lightheartedness. These subject matters include the demise of individuals, the breakdown of societal structures, mental and physical ailments, deformities, suffering, distress, deprivation, and terror (Weber, 1940). According to Weber, black humour has the potential to have a disturbing effect on the audience's psyche, and is considered to be in direct opposition to light humour. The depiction of these scenes, coupled with the internal states of the characters, elicits a range of emotional experiences and *Rasa*.

The narrative is set in *Maya Nagari* Mumbai, individuals residing in Mumbai or other metropolitan areas may find it relatable. However, individuals residing in small towns or villages may struggle to establish a connection with the story of Lolly, Shailesh, Niharika and Murli. The issue presented in the play pertains to its classification as the inaugural black comedy in India. Consequently, members of the audience who lack

familiarity with the concept of black comedy or are not inclined to embrace it may perceive the play as unconventional or peculiar. Furthermore, it is noteworthy to mention that Mahesh Dattani employs an indifferent style of intertwining narratives of diverse individuals within a theatrical production, a practise that bears resemblance to the prevalent trend observed in select Bollywood films. The play lacks a central protagonist, as each character or pair of characters holds equal significance and contributes to the overall narrative of the play. In this analysis, it is observed that Dattani has the option to focus on either a singular major character/pair or incorporating additional characters such as *Pataka Nayaka*. These characters could potentially form the plot of *Pataka Sthanaka*. However, the play fails to present itself as a cohesive whole due to the equal importance given to all characters and the intertwining of their stories. Consequently, the play is unable to fully embody its title and Mahesh Dattani appears to have downplayed the theme of Honour Killing, which is a significant incident that is directly or indirectly relevant throughout the play. Addressing the topic of Honour Killing in an Indian play inevitably invites controversy and cannot be done without careful consideration. The title of the work appears to intentionally mislead readers into believing it is solely a narrative about the bustling metropolis of Mumbai. However, beneath this facade, the story delves into the sensitive topic of Anu and Puneet's honour killing. It is evident that the emotions and experiences attributed to the character of Anu possess a universal quality. Individuals from diverse backgrounds, irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, region, literacy level, age, can comprehend and derive pleasure from the aesthetic essence known as *Rasa* through such characters.

It is noteworthy to acknowledge that while light humour serves to elicit laughter and invigorate the audience, black humour brings attention to distressing realities of the world and leaves them unresolved for contemplation. However, in this particular instance, Dattani presents us with a dual experience in which one part of the play contains elements that can be considered a source of Neo *Hasya Rasa*, as it falls under the category of black comedy. It is important to note that Neo *Hasya Rasa* differs from conventional comedy as discussed by Bharata Muni, as it introduces a new concept that is contrary to the principles outlined in the *Natyashastra* by Bharata Muni or in *Dasharupakam* by Dhananjaya. The emergence of errors committed by individuals and the occurrence of comic incidents in everyday life are discussed by Bharata Muni as sources of *Att Hasya*. On the other hand, Black comedy is a source of *Hasya* that arises from pitiable situations

experienced by individuals, where the pain of others becomes a source of pleasure and amusement for the audience. This form of *Hasya* continues to be relevant as a source of Neo *Hasya Rasa*. And In contrast, Dattani deviates from convention by introducing the theme of honour killing. The abrupt shift in tone within the theatre may cause discomfort for the audience as they are required to transition to a new topic. This transition involves delving into the matter of *Khap* and honour killing, departing from the previous focus on the concerns prevalent in *Maya Nagari* Mumbai. However, this particular theme captivates the audience and explores the emotions of compassion and empathy and leads to *Karuna Rasa*. Anu, a seemingly minor character in comparison to Lolly and Niharika, takes on the role of the protagonist due to her consistent presence from the very first scene and her story taking centre of the play. A careful analysis of the play reveals that Dattani strategically planted the seeds of Anu's character development early on, showcasing various psychological traits such as her obsession with love, her complicated relationship with Puneet, Puneet's tendency to doubt her, their decision to dispose of Kailash's body, and their approach to handling subsequent challenges. These elements contribute to *The Big Fat City's* narrative, which transitions from an initial phase of dark comedy, highlighting the humorous aspects of Anu and Puneet's relationship leading to *Hasya Rasa*, to a later phase characterized by compassion and empathy and relishing *Karuna Rasa*. The play concludes with Anu and Puneet's demise at the hands of Harjit, Anu's brother, evoking *Karuna Rasa* in the audience. This particular scene represents the *Parakastha* of *Karuna Rasa*. However, it is important to acknowledge that Bharata Muni, in his *Natyashastra*, has explicitly prohibited the inclusion of scenes involving killing, gunshots, violence, and similar elements on the stage. Nevertheless, Dattani, being a prominent Modern Indian English Playwright, does not hesitate to depict the death of the protagonists through a gunshot. This portrayal may evoke *Bhayanaka Rasa* in certain members of the audience. It is worth noting that the absence of *Arthopkshepaka* allows for the *Vibhava*, *Anubhava*, and *Vyabicharibhava* of both *Bhayanaka* and *Karuna* to be conveyed to the audience through the *Abhinaya* of the actors. This simultaneous presentation of emotions is a novel sight that was not previously witnessed in conventional plays due to the limitations imposed by the stage and *Aharya*. A subtle manifestation of *Shanta Rasa* becomes evident as Niharika and Murli, having experienced chaos and death, express their readiness to depart from Mumbai. Their waning allure towards the bustling metropolis signifies a minor but discernible shift in Lolly's character.

The description of the puking scene in the play exhibits *Bibhatsa Rasa*, while the suffering of the characters Niharika, Murli, Shailesh, Lolly, and Kailash elicits a *Neo Bhayanaka Rasa*. These characteristics are commonly found in typical Modern Plays, where situations and the resulting suffering serve as sources of *Bhaya*. This *Neo Bhayanaka Rasa* differs from the traditional *Bhayana Rasa*, which derives pleasure from witnessing visuals of terror and violence. In Modern Plays, the audience experiences a sense of insecurity and evokes emotions of *Bhaya* by considering the possibility of encountering similar situations themselves.

The comic universe depicted in *The Big Fat City* perpetually unfolds with a series of perplexing, exasperating, and unpredictable actions undertaken by its characters and they relish *Neo Hasya Rasa*. In ACT I, Scene I, Murli's portrayal exhibits a notable lack of self-esteem and confidence, which stands in stark contrast to the assertive and cunning nature of his wife, Niharika. Niharika articulates her inclination for Murli to attire himself in his traditional silk *kurti* with the intention of creating a positive impact on his prosperous associate, Sailesh. Nevertheless, Murli is experiencing a state of perplexity and uncertainty in relation to the underlying meaning behind this suggestion. The subsequent conversation between the couple evokes amusement while concurrently depicting the artificiality and lack of genuineness that is pervasive in metropolitan society and The drama features numerous talks between couples, namely Niharika and Murtli, as well as Puneet and Anu, which serve as a continuation of the *Neo Hasya Rasa*, although not being a direct source of *Att Hasya*.

“MURLI: Can’t I wear my regular shirt, please?

NIHARIKA: Stop fidgeting with that kurti. You will tear it. No, you can’t.

NIHARIKA: It’s torn! (Most upset) One chance! We have this one chance and you want to ruin it?

MURLI calms down for a second before he goes back into his befuddled state.” (Dattani, 2014)

Niharika, a multifaceted and intricately developed character in Dattani's work, acquaints Sailesh, a close associate of Murli, with Lolly, her neighbouring individual.

Lolly is a multifaceted character who attempts to fulfil the tasks of a mother, wife, and actress. Upon initial examination, the focal point of the drama revolves around the character of Lolly and the demise of her spouse, Kailash, resulting in a state of anguish experienced by all other people involved. Lolly is regarded as a preferred actress by Sailesh. During the introductory moment, Lolly is introduced to both Sailesh and the audience. The modern Indian-English playwright Mahesh Dattani employs the use of a screen to depict a conversation between the characters Lolly and Ekta in his contemporary play. The plays of Dattani are characterized by a consistent theme of conflict between the protagonists and their inner selves. This leads to the development of complex characters that serve as embodiment of *Rasa*, Emotions, and Experience. *The Big Fat City* is classified as a Dark Comedy due to the portrayal of several persons and their respective lifestyles, encompassing both trivial and significant worries relishes Neo *Hasya Rasa*.

“LOLLY: You know, please call me Lolly. I am done with Yamini!

SAILESH: Oh, yes, yes, Sorry, Lollyji. . .

Lolly’s cell phone beeps. Lolly has her phone in her hand and keeps waving it around. She checks her message.

SCREEN (*From Ekta*): Lolly I got 46 missed calls from you, stop bugging me, I have 6 films releasing this Friday. If I need you I will definitely call you. Love. Ekta.

LOLLY: Oh, that is Ekta Kapoor trying really hard to get me in her next soap. Oh, how I hate turning down friends!” (Dattani, 2014)

Lolly, who portrayed the famous role of Yamini, a female lead in the daily serial *Saas Bani Saperan*, is now unemployed and attempting to convey that she is weary with daily operas and wants to appear in a genuine stage play. Her on-screen conversation reveals her split identity, a fabricated persona that finally leads to a person with survival instincts. The portrayal of Lolly's character exhibits elements of Neo *Hasya Rasa*, Neo *Bibhatsa Rasa*, and Neo *Veera Rasa*. Lolly's pretentious personality contributes to the Neo *Hasya Rasa*, while her treatment of her husband and kid exemplifies the Neo

Bibhatsa Rasa. Additionally, her resilience and refusal to give up in the face of numerous challenges evoke a momentary sense of Neo *Veera Rasa* all these incidents throughout the play give the list of emotions and their manifestations.

Recurring happenings in the city, in the lives of all the people, and notably Lolly, are the source of Neo *Bibhatsa Rasa* because they unsettle our brains as an audience. In Neo *Hasya Rasa*, Mahesh Dattani has a remarkable aptitude for integrating disparate themes and portraying weighty subjects through a comedic lens, reaching the pinnacle of his artistic prowess. The play's title exhibits a satirical disposition and mockery towards the urban centre, while simultaneously downplaying the theme of honour killing in the latter portion of the play, which serves as a catalyst for the emergence of Neo *Karuna Rasa*. Consequently, the play concludes with a sombre tone, effectively blending elements of black humour and tragedy.

4.4 *Thirty Days in September*



Fig.24 <http://surl.li/jfstv>

Poster of Thirty Days in September

The play's title, *Thirty Days in September*, is notably unconventional and evokes a multitude of inquiries about its underlying concept. In light of the given information, it is an unusual title that questions who are the characters? What is the rationale for selecting the month of September? What is the rationale behind the choice of the number thirty? The title of the play exhibits a considerable degree of suggestiveness and piques attention, indicating that it imbibes mystery.

The play is about Mala and her suffering and it commences with Mala engaging in a conversation with the counsellor, so exposing her state of mind characterized by confusion. By utilizing counselling and recorded voice on tape as mechanisms for self-disclosure, Dattani exposes the internal struggle between Mala's conscious and unconscious thoughts. Mala openly discloses her true identity as Mala Khatri and asserts with confidence that the individual responsible for her molestation should conceal his identity, since she has not been a willing participant but rather a victim of his abhorrent actions. The playback of Mala's recorded speech during the blackout transports her to September 30th, 2001, portraying her as significantly more perplexed and predominantly anxious. The individual in question bears personal responsibility for the turmoil that has influenced her outlook on life. On occasion, she entertains suspicions that her mother may be the catalyst behind her own downfall. The individual, having experienced sexual exploitation prior to the onset of puberty and during their early youth, as well as betrayal from their mother, develops a sense of uncertainty regarding their future actions sets a tone of the play and the scene explores multiple significant *Rasa* throughout the play, specifically focusing on the *Neo Karuna Rasa Pradhan*. The *Neo Karuna Rasa* is pervasive throughout the entirety of the play and is referred to as "Neo" due to its portrayal of distinct concerns that deviate from those typically found in traditional plays, such as child abuse. According to Mala,

“I-I am uncertain about the appropriate starting point for this task. Today's date is September 30, 2001, and I am identified as . . . I am disinclined to disclose my name. I apologize for my previous statement. I acknowledge that the responsibility for the situation lies mostly with me. It is imperative. I am solely responsible for the consequences that have arisen, given it was my own request that led to this outcome. Occasionally, I

find myself desiring that my maternal figure . . . “ (Dattani, 2005)



Fig.25 <http://surl.li/jfttv>

Mala in Pain that Relishes Neo Karuna Rasa

Shanta endeavors to redirect Mala's attention by framing her distressing encounter as a narrative, so augmenting Mala's ire, to which she responds as a manifestation of the Neo *Raudra Rasa* and Neo *Karuna Rasa* one and the same time that is the distinctive characteristic of Neo *Rasa* lies in its ability to evoke the enjoyment of two entirely distinct *Rasa* through a single scene.

“MALA: I am not talking about a bad dream! I am talking about the time when uncle Vinay would molest me. When I was seven. Then eight. Nine. Ten. Every vacation when we went to visit him or when he came to stay with us. You were busy in either the pooja room or the kitchen. I would go to papa and cry. Before I could even tell him why I was crying he would tell me to go to you.” (Dattani, 2005)

In addition to the violation of her physical being, the individual's emotional well-being, personal boundaries, and moral purity are also subjected to assault. Dattani's

intention in this manner is to underline that coerced physical relationships, symbolizing male dominance over females, have the potential to utterly devastate a woman's life. Mala articulates her profound want for affection, having endured the distressing experiences of molestation and manipulation perpetrated by her uncle, while simultaneously enduring emotional neglect from the mother exhibits Neo *Bibhatsa Rasa*, as she actively engages with the repugnant aspects of society and her mother's reaction to such a grave situation is deemed as absurd.

“MALA: You know, I couldn't say anything to you. You never gave me a chance to. If only you had looked into my eyes and seen the hurt, or asked me 'beta, what's wrong?' Then may be, I would have told you . . . But ma, I did look to you for help, while you were praying, your eyes avoiding mine, and I knew, deep down I must have known, that you will never ask me that question. Because you already knew the answer.” (Dattani, 2005)

Compelled by Mala's anguish, here it is disclosed the veracity of her existence and elucidates the rationale behind her reticence. This source exemplifies the portrayal of child abuse in an artistic manner within the context of Neo *Bibhata Rasa*. However, the inclusion of such a theme in a theatrical production might be considered as an embodiment of Neo *Bibhatsa*.

“MALA: I was six, Mala. I was six. And he was thirteen . . . and it wasn't only summer holidays. For ten years! For ten years!! (Pointing to the picture of God.) I looked to Him. I didn't feel anything. I didn't feel pain, I didn't feel pleasure. I lost myself in Him. He helped me. He helped me. By taking away all feelings. No pain no pleasure, only silence. Silence means Shanti. Shanti. But my tongue is cut off. No. No. It just fell off somewhere. I didn't use it, no. I cannot shout for help, I cannot say words of comfort, I cannot even speak about it. No, I can't. I am dumb.” (Dattani, 2005)

Dattani's play, *Thirty Days in September*, explores the complex and sensitive topic of child sexual abuse, with a particular focus on cases involving incest. This form of abuse has a profound impact on the lives of victims, resulting in both physical suffering and psychological trauma. The traumatic experience is stored in the child's *chitta* as memory, which subsequently becomes a source of ongoing trauma and evokes a range of emotions throughout their lifetime. The drama effectively portrays the challenges of overcoming traumatic situations, as demonstrated through a psychological examination of the character Mala. Dattani's play explores the tension between a mother and daughter, serving as a critique of society standards that reinforce the perception of women as passive beings who endure suffering. This portrayal also contributes to the generation of *Neo Karuna Rasa* inside the dramatic work.

4.5 *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*

The assertion is made in *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* that the focus of the play should be directed towards the inhabitants of Mumbai. The title of the play implies the presence of intricate elements, aquatic themes, obscurity, and an atmosphere of doubt. The inquiry also emerges as to why a nocturnal event is chosen over a day one.

On a Muggy Night in Mumbai is a significant milestone in Indian theatre as the first explicit exploration of homosexuality on the Indian stage. This drama delves into the themes of homosexual love and the prevalence of vulgarity among the youth in a contemporary materialistic society. The main characters, Kamlesh and Prakash, have strong romantic feelings for one another. However, due to Prakash's internalized shame regarding his homosexuality, he chooses to conform to societal expectations and assumes a heterosexual identity. As a result, he enters into a romantic relationship, either genuine or feigned, with Kamlesh's sister, Kiran. However, it is worth noting that Kamlesh, who still harbors feelings for Prakash, has found satisfaction for his sexual desires through his relationship with Sharad. Interestingly, Prakash reenters Kamlesh's life as a romantic partner to his sister Kiran. When Kiran, identifying as straight, becomes aware of the gay connection between Kamlesh and Prakash, she exhibits a compassionate attitude towards same-sex relationships.



Fig.26 <http://surl.li/jbfrl>. Stage

Performance of On a Muggy Night in Mumbai

Based on the principles outlined in the *Natyashastra*, the plot and characters of a drama play a significant role in determining the experience of *Rasa* (Unni, 2014). This ancient Indian dramatic text presents a selection of exemplary character types as protagonists, each intended to evoke a specific emotional response (as described in the *Natyashastra*). However, it is noteworthy that Bharata Muni, the author of the *Natyashastra*, does not explicitly mention transgender individuals as protagonists, despite their existence during that historical period. In contrast, Mahesh Dattani, a contemporary Indian playwright, explores contemporary characters and topics in his theatrical works, delving into the lives of individuals within the LGBTQIA+ community, specifically focusing on the experiences of homosexuals. Based on the principles of Indian Aesthetics, it is posited that the protagonist in a dramatic work assumes the role of a leader (referred to as *NayatiIti Neta*). This implies that the leading character or protagonist should possess qualities of leadership. Furthermore, it is believed that a male or female protagonist should embody the characteristics of an ideal individual. It is also suggested that only certain types of protagonists have the ability to evoke and experience specific emotional flavors, known as *Rasa*. For instance, Bheem is said to relish the *Veera Rasa*, Krishna is known to evoke the *Shringara Rasa*, and the sage Durvasa is said to elicit the *Bhayanaka Rasa*. The protagonist can be equated with *Alambana vibhava*, a concept that, when misapplied, results in *Rasa Bhasa*. However, the determination of propriety or

impropriety is contingent upon the prevailing norms and values of a certain time period and society.

In accordance with the principles of *Rasa* theory, specifically within the domain of Shringara *Rasa*, the *Sthayibhava* is identified as *Rati*, the *Alambana Vibhava* encompasses the male and female protagonists, the *Uddipana Vibhava* pertains to the garden setting, and the *Anubhava* refers to the experiential aspect of observing the male and female characters within the garden. The characters of this play deviate from the list of protagonists listed in the *Natyashastra*. The debatable question remains as to whether homosexuals and transgender individuals can assume the role of protagonists within the framework of *Rasa* theory, despite the legalization and acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community in India under section 377 of the Indian Penal Code. An examination of *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* may provide insights into this matter.

Kamlesh and Ed, who identify as homosexual individuals, are engaged in a conversation about love while situated in a garden. This exchange of affection between them, or alternatively between Kamlesh and Sharad, has the potential to evoke the aesthetic sentiment of Shringara *Rasa* specifically for individuals who identify as homosexual. However, it is important to note that individuals with different sexual orientations may experience a conflicting response, such as *Rasa Bhasa*, *Hasya Rasa*, or *Bibhatsa Rasa*, as discussed by Dattani in his work *Me and My Plays* when examining people's reactions to the play.

“*On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* was received with dismissal mostly. ... Most people chose to ignore it completely, as if they had never watched it.” (Dattani, 2014)

And here is a scene from the play,

“KAMLESH: Every Single Word

ED: Let me hear your story.

KAMLESH: No. not tonight. Hold my hand.

...

...

ED: Come closer...closer.

KAMLESH: If only they could see how beautiful we are together.” (Dattani, 2000)

The question pertains to the *Rasa* that would be most appreciated by an audience in such circumstances. The inquiry of the potential of (LGBTQIA+) characters to elicit the aesthetic experience of Shringara Rasa raises an issue that can be addressed via the lens of *Rasa Bhasa* theory. Either *Rasa* or *Rasa Bhasa* can be experienced individually from the *Sthayibhava*. However, it is not possible for an individual to simultaneously experience both *Rasa* and *Rasa Bhasa*. Nonetheless, a work of art, literature, or drama has the potential to encompass both *Rasa* and *Rasa Bhasa*, particularly in the context of LGBTQIA+ plays that cater to individuals with diverse sexual orientations and members of disparate societies. When one individual assumes the perspective of a character in order to engage with *Rasa*, the distinction arises in terms of whether one has sympathy relating to the character's emotions or empathy.

Simultaneously, an inquiry arises regarding the gender neutrality of *Rasa*. It is noteworthy that none of the Indian theorists or scholars have thus far examined *Rasa* in the context of gender. This absence of discourse suggests that *Rasa* is considered to be applicable to both male and female individuals, encompassing the two genders prevalent during the *Natyashastra* era. A study conducted on the portrayal of *Rasa* in these theatrical works concludes that all *Rasa*, with the exception of *Shringara Rasa*, exhibit a gender-neutral nature. The absence of male and female protagonists in the presentation of Shringara Rasa is a significant aspect that cannot be overlooked. Indian citizens, who form a diverse audience for web series in various languages, cultures, traditions, and featuring different characters, may demonstrate acceptance towards the LGBTQIA+ community and appreciate plays or literature centred around their lives. However, they may find it challenging to fully engage with the *Shringara Rasa*, as they may not be able to relate to or empathize with the characters involved. In such circumstances, the experience of Shringara Rasa is enjoyed mostly when the sexual orientation of the LGBTQIA+ character remains unknown. However, when the truth is revealed, this experience transforms into either *Hasya Rasa* or *Rasa Bhasa* or Neo *Shringara Rasa*. The

term Neo *Shringara Rasa* denotes a romantic portrayal with characters who identify as LGBTQIA+. The alteration in the nature of theatrical productions might also result in a modification of *Rasa*.

Similarly Neo *Hasya Rasa* is further enhanced by the inclusion of Sharad's character, whose gestures and verbal delivery contribute to its effect. This impact is heightened by his portrayal of homosexuality, aligning with the notion of Performativity. Conversely, another category of individuals may perceive these words as derogatory towards heterosexuals, thus evoking *Raudra Rasa* and the same incident in daily life leads to evoking anger emotion.

“SHARAD: Oh, my Gawd! Those heterosexuals are at it again!

KAMLESH: If you can see them, they can see us. ...

SHARAD: Are you crazy? Just look at them! Yeech! That guy is just bad news.

KAMLESH: ...

SHARAD: Of course he is her husband! He is too fat and bald to be her lover.” (Dattani, 2000)

Therefore, this play serves as a manifestation of Neo *Shringara* and Neo *Veera Rasa*. However, it is important to note that Neo *Karuna Rasa* is also present throughout the play, albeit subtly emphasized by Dattani. It is not immediately or easily discernible, but a careful analysis or a deep understanding of the context can reveal its presence.

4.6 *Seven Steps around the Fire*

The title *Seven Steps Around the Fire* evokes a sense of romance, leading one to infer that the play likely explores themes related to love relationships or marriage. The use of the term "Fire" in the title suggests a potential association with purity, since fire is often understood to possess purifying qualities. Through topic, ‘Whose marriage?’ evokes a sense of intrigue and curiosity among us.

The focus of *Seven Steps around the Fire* pertains on the homicide of Kamala, an aesthetically pleasing *Hijra*, allegedly perpetrated by Anarkali. In certain societal contexts,

individuals who identify as transgender may face restrictions on their ability to enter into marriage ceremonies. This is seen in the tragic case of Kamala, whose union with Subbu, the son of a Minister, culminated in her untimely demise. The act of taking seven paces around the fire, symbolizing a marriage ritual, served as evidence of their marital bond. Regrettably, this sacred fire ultimately became the catalyst for Kamla's tragic demise, signifying the destruction that befell her. Uma, a research researcher who is also married to a Chief Superintendent of Police, and holds familial connections as the daughter of a Vice Chancellor and daughter-in-law of a DSP, uncovers the facts about a heinous murder within the *Hijra* community of the city.



Fig.27 <http://surl.li/jbfri>

Stage Performance of Seven Steps around the Fire

The experience of *Karuna Rasa* can also be encountered through the narrative shared by Anarkali, a leader within the *Hijra* community, as she unveils the story of Kamla's anguish.

“ANARKALI: Would you have believed me? So many times I warned her. I fought with her. I scratched her face, hoping she will become ugly and Subbu will forget her. I told her to run.” (Dattani, 2000)

Contemporary theatre has distinct thematic elements in comparison to its ancient counterparts, drawing inspiration from realistic incidents and events that transpire in the

lives of individuals from various societal strata, irrespective of their economic status or sexual orientation. Contemporary theatre hardly explores the subjects of warfare or conflict, unless one assumes the role of a law enforcement official or a military personnel, as only then can one effectively embody the essence of *Veera Rasa*. In the context of contemporary theatre, individuals engage in verbal confrontations or vocalise their dissent against societal norms in order to assert their rights, pursue truth, or seek justice. This can also be observed in the portrayal of Neo *Veera Rasa*, where the characters Champa and Anarkali engage in a struggle to secure their rights in the context of Subbu's marriage, who happens to be the son of a prominent Minister.

“CHAMPA: May God bless this house with many children!

ANARKALI: May God always smile upon this house!

...

...

CHAMPA: Do not be so angry, sir. It is a happy occasion.

...

...

CHAMPA: Thank you, sir, but we must sing and dance to
bless this house and the handsome couple.” (Dattani, 2000)

The affection that Subbu harbours for Kamla, an aesthetically pleasing *Hijra*, may not elicit the experience of Neo *Shringara Rasa*.

“SUBBU: I am leaving you all! You can't keep me away from
Kamla.” (Dattani, 2000)

The concept of appropriateness or impropriety is contingent upon the context. In recent history, there existed a disparity between Indian society and other parts of the world about the legal permissibility of same-sex marriages. Presently, there are still places where such marriages remain illegal or socially unacceptable. The proliferation of technological advancements has facilitated the transformation of the global landscape into

a closely interconnected community. This epoch is characterized by the dissemination of translated works, the emergence of world literature, and the popularity of web series. Boundaries of place, region, country, or continent no longer confine the dissemination of ideas, resulting in individuals from various locales and continents being exposed to diverse beliefs, traditions, cultures, and customs. This exposure has played a significant role in fostering acceptance of the LGBTQIA+ community. There exists a substantial distinction between the acts of accepting and adapting to something, and it may be argued that the Rasa experience is primarily rooted in the process of adaptation rather than mere acceptance.

4.7 *Final Solutions*



Fig.28 <http://surl.li/jfuea>

Poster of Final Solutions Introducing Various Characters

The play's title, *Final Solutions*, suggests that it aims to address and resolve an issue, imply a conclusive outcome, and maybe bring an end to a discussion. The term alludes to a state of enduring tranquilly after a series of tumultuous events or disruptions experienced by a person or a collective entity.

Ramnikbhai assumes a pivotal role in the *Final Solutions* that won Dattani Sahitya Akademi Award. The individual in question is an elderly adherent of the Hindu faith, whose beliefs and attitudes align with the ideology of communalism and religious fanaticism. Ramnikbhai exemplifies the utmost degree of religious fanaticism and intolerance and possesses ingrained biases against individuals who identify as Muslims and perceives them as adversaries. The individual's convictions are motivated by a stringent analysis of sacred scriptures and a distorted perception of superiority predicated on their religious affiliation. Ramnik bhai exhibits an authoritarian disposition by exerting control and asserting his power over both his immediate family and the broader community. He anticipates unwavering allegiance and compliance from individuals in his proximity, particularly Javed. Frequently, he leverages his authoritative role to exercise dominance and enforce his personal convictions onto others, displaying a reluctance to consider divergent perspectives. Ramnik bhai's demeanour of authority belies an underlying motivation rooted in fear and insecurity. The individual harbours profound apprehension regarding the perceived menace attributed to Muslims and subscribes to conspiracy theories pertaining to their motives. The individual's apprehension compels him to employ drastic actions in safeguarding his community, frequently resorting to acts of aggression and endorsing retribution. Ramnik bhai in the play exhibits predominantly negative traits; however, Dattani skillfully incorporates additional layers of complexity to his character. The individual is depicted as a manifestation of their surroundings, influenced by historical occurrences and societal indoctrination. Instances arise in which Ramnik bhai's susceptibility becomes apparent, alluding to the presence of an internal struggle within his character. Ramnik bhai exhibits a notable absence of empathy towards the experiences of others, particularly in relation to the Muslim community. The individual in question demonstrates an inability to recognize the unique qualities and characteristics possessed by individuals, instead relying on preconceived notions and broad categorizations. The character's lack of empathy hinders his ability to recognize the human consequences of his fanaticism, rendering him a character with significant flaws. Ramnik bhai embodies the perilous ramifications associated with communalism and

religious extremism. Dattani's portrayal of the protagonist effectively underscores the detrimental impact of animosity, emphasizing the pressing necessity for open communication, empathy, and benevolence in order to surmount these divisive forces. In a broader context, Ramnik bhai assumes the role of a didactic character, exemplifying the perils associated with inflexible ideological beliefs and the consequent propensity for aggression stemming from intolerance and apprehension. Thus, such multilayered character who is conflicting with himself and the reality continuously is a source of Neo *Veera Rasa*.

The inclusion of *Aarti* and the worship of Hindu and Muslim gods in the drama serve as a catalyst for the experience of *Rasa Bhava*, wherein the divine is placed at the focal point and momentarily supersedes all other emotional experiences. Furthermore, the auditory perception of a collective entity situated outside Ramnikbhai's residence, poised to inflict harm upon Baban and Javed, serves as a manifestation of the Neo *Bhayanaka Rasa*.



Fig.29 <http://surl.li/jdxha>

Chorus in Final Solutions

The utilization of Chorus in Dattani's play serves as a notable manifestation of Neo *Adbhuta Rasa*, contributing to a visually captivating theatrical experience.

“CHORUS1, 2 They hunts us down!
 They’re afraid of us!
 They beat us up!
 We are few!
 But we are strong!
 They beat us up!
 They’re afraid of us!
 They hunt us down!
 They want to throw us out!” (Dattani, 2000)

The portrayal of Ramnikbhai's mother, both in her youth as Daksha and in her old age, serves as a representation of Neo *Karuna Rasa*, highlighting her experiences as a victim within a patriarchal culture. This victimization occurs within the domains of her father, husband, father-in-law, and eventually her son, at various points throughout her life.

Therefore, by examining the multifaceted characters and their progression across different time periods as they preserve their religious beliefs and navigate societal challenges, the audience is able to experience a range of emotional responses, such as feelings of heroism, compassion, and wonder. This analysis is conducted through a psychological study of the characters, which involves exploring their emotions and connecting them to the experiences of the viewers. Despite being written prior to the Babri Masjid Incident in 1993, the play consistently evokes a sense of nostalgia among its audience, transporting them back to that tumultuous period.

4.8 *Bravely Fought the Queen*

‘It is really intriguing how Dattani has titled *Bravely Fought the Queen*’s Act 1 - Women, Act 2 - Men and Act 3 - Free For All!. Act 1 introduces all of the female characters - Dolly, Alka, Lalitha and Baa in the play, every one of them is unique in and of itself, and their uniqueness serves as a source of *Veera Rasa* because of their fight against their life and *Karuna Rasa* due to their never ending pain in thew life as depicted in the play as Dattani has created female characters with a wide range of emotions. In the second Act, the play introduces several male characters, namely Nitin, Jiten, and Sridhar.

These characters represent a diverse range of male archetypes prevalent in society and serve as a source of the Neo *Bibhatsa Rasa*, mostly owing to their involvement in prostitution, unethical business practices, and the manifestation of male ego.

JITEN: They didn't like the model? We can dump her. (Dattani, 2000)



Fig.30 <http://surl.li/jfwee>

Poster of Bravely Fought the Queen



Fig.31 <http://surl.li/jfulp>

Various Characters in Bravely Fought the Queen

Another notable occurrence involves the situation where Sridhar is tasked with procuring a sex worker for Jiten. It is quite disheartening to witness the reprehensible manner in which Jiten mistreats Sridhar after he refuses to comply with the request.

JITEN: Listen, you asshole. Tomorrow I want you to go back and tell them we are sticking to our original campaign. They can take it or shove it up! (Dattani, 2000)

This instance exemplifies the concept of *Rasa Dosha*, wherein the utilization of such language on a theatrical platform may impede the full immersion and appreciation of *Rasa*.



Fig.32 <http://surl.li/jfwci>

Nitin and Jiten As a Source of Neo Bibhatsa Source

The third act uncovers the characters and delves into the multifaceted nature of the male and female characters. By its conclusion, it unveils that Nitin, who is married to Alka, is actually homosexual and engages in an affair with Alka's brother. This revelation brings the play to a close in the *Neo Karuna Rasa*, following a brief presence of the *Neo Adbhuta Rasa*. Throughout the act, the audience is presented with numerous ambiguous scenes and uncertainties surrounding the characters, ultimately leading to the disclosure of an unimaginable truth.

“The decor is expensive, perhaps tasteful, but badly maintained.” (Dattani, 2000)

This is Dattani's unique manner of referring to the human mind in his play. Dattani is attempting to depict the mental condition of those who reside in such a dialogue. Together, the play's location, *Aaharya*, characters, plot, and performing constitute a source of *Rasa*. This depiction of the house categorizes the character and their belonging to the elite class.

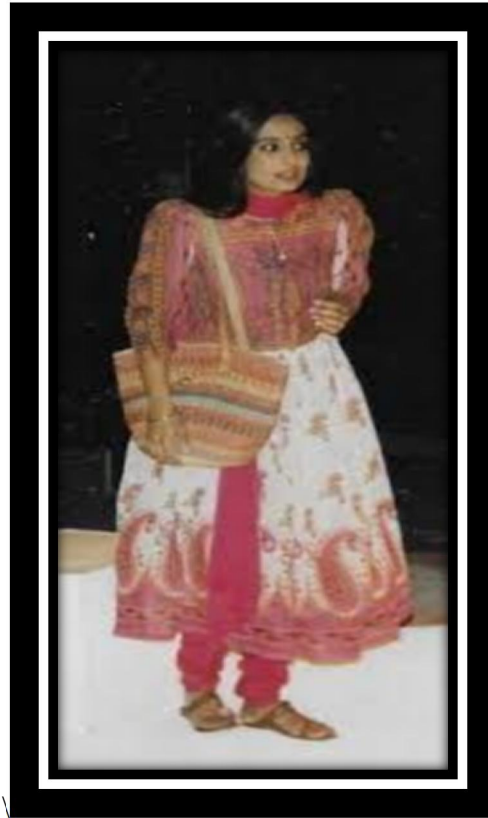


Fig.33 <http://surl.li/jfwec>

Lalitha in Bravely Fought The Queen

Within the theatrical production, each female character is engaged in a personal struggle as they navigate the societal expectations imposed upon women, while also endeavoring to attain personal liberation from these constraints. The central conflict revolving around the three main characters, Baa, Dolly, and Alka, serves as the foundation for the title *Bravely Fought The Queen*, which in turn embodies the essence of Neo *Veera Rasa*. Alka's experience as a wife and sister of individuals who identify as homosexuals is characterized by her enduring hardship, which she is unable to openly express to society. Despite this, she exhibits resilience and determination, embodying *Veera Rasa*.



Fig.34 <http://surl.li/jfwii>

Bonsai that Lalitha Carried Everywhere in Bravely Fought The Queen

Among the various female characters depicted, one can identify a victim of the upper-class society, Lalitha who is portrayed as an individual who holds a deep affection for Bonsai, which serves as a symbol of the desired life for women. This portrayal contributes to the emergence of Neo *Hasya Rasa*, as the inclusion of comedic dialogue amidst a series of serious scenes adds a touch of humour to the overall narrative.

The play exhibits a significant presence of Neo *Karuna Rasa*, with occasional instances of Neo *Veera Rasa* and fleeting moments of Neo *Hasya Rasa*. These manifestations arise from the many and multifaceted characters within the play, which explore various issues.

4.9 Tara

The presence of the title *Tara* suggests that there is a central character of Tara inside the play. Tara is a well known figure in Indian Vedic literature, revered as the spouse of *Bruhaspati/Guru* and referred to as *Maha Vidhya*. The term ‘Tara’ in Hindi signifies the concept of initiation or commencement, and is often associated with the notion of twinkle. Consequently, one may infer that the title suggests that many characteristics ascribed to the character of Tara can be related to this notion of initiation.

Tara is a two-act play that made its debut under the title *Twinkle Tara* on October 23, 1990. The inaugural performance took place at the Chowdiah Memorial Hall in Bangalore, produced by Dattani's Playpen Performing Arts Group. On November 9, 1991, Theatre Group, Bombay staged a performance of the play titled *Tara*, under the direction of Alyque Padamsee. This production was subsequently recognized with the Sahitya Kerala Academy award for the year. The play explores the prevalent issue of gender discrimination within the context of modern Indian society. Currently, there is a prevailing discourse on global transformation, with discussions centred around women's empowerment, the preservation of female offspring, the pursuit of gender parity, and the advocacy for feminism but research has indicated that there exists a disparity in survival rates between boys and girls, with boys being afforded greater opportunities for survival. When faced with the choice between boys and girls, there tends to be a preference for boys over girls. Throughout the course of history, there has been a persistent pattern in which men have been granted power and advantages, often at the expense of women. This phenomenon serves as a significant point of connection between ourselves and the play. The inclusion of factual details in the discourse elicits a sense of melancholy inside us, owing to our personal encounters with similar phenomena within the broader societal context and encountering such scene in the play leads to *Karuna Rasa*.

In a patriarchal society, women are

“The image of the woman holding the mirror to her face is the typical feminine image. In a male-dominated society, a woman is valued for her beauty and sex appeal. She is always afraid of her beauty withering with time and therefore she holds up a mirror which tells her of her youth, beauty and sexual attractiveness remain intact” (Halder, 2009).

In this work, Dattani has endeavored to explore issues pertaining to women and the female gender on a broader scale, employing a distinctive approach that incorporates medical themes. Narrative of *Tara* revolves around a pair of Siamese twins who were anatomically joined from the hip region downwards, thereby possessing a total of three lower limbs. The individuals underwent a surgical separation procedure, potentially resulting in one of them possessing a duplication of lower extremities. The allocation of the two legs to Tara's body was justified due to the significant blood supply provided by

her body. However, these legs were subsequently transferred to Chandan. Unfortunately, the connected leg was ultimately detached as it lacked the necessary viability to sustain itself as deceased tissue. The central theme of the play *Tara* revolves around the emotional detachment that arises between two conjoined twins as a result of their mother and grandfather orchestrating their physical separation in order to prioritize the male twin, Chandan, over his sister, Tara. In the play, Dattani effectively portrays the influence of patriarchal attitudes, authoritarian behaviour, and societal norms on the lives of young women. Tara's likelihood of survival is enhanced by possessing two legs; however, in the absence of a designated heir, the patriarchal structure exhibits a preference for a male successor as opposed to a female (Tara) is a source of *Karuna Rasa*. A person who has never personally encountered gender discrimination may perceive the decision made by the patriarchy as an opportunity to experience Neo *Bibhatsa Rasa*.

Tara holds a prominent role in Mahesh Dattani's theatrical work, notwithstanding the absence of any widely recognized plays authored by Mahesh Dattani under the title *Tara*. The character of Tara in Mahesh Dattani's play is anticipated to possess a multifaceted and intricate nature, which aligns with the playwright's inclination towards delving into complex human emotions and societal concerns. Tara is anticipated to demonstrate resilience and tenacity when confronted with challenges. The individual in question can be depicted as a resilient individual who confronts obstacles directly and exhibits a tenacious disposition. The strength has the potential to manifest in diverse manners, including but not limited to her ability to withstand and overcome personal or societal pressures. Tara is anticipated to exhibit characteristics indicative of independence and assertiveness. Tara exhibits a sense of autonomy by possessing personal desires, opinions, and goals, which she confidently articulates. These characteristic has the potential to engender conflicts within the dramatic work, as the protagonist challenges established societal conventions and engages in confrontations with other characters due to her unorthodox ideas and is the pure source of Neo *Veera Rasa* where Tara has been grappling with her medical conditions, unbeknownst to her since birth, alongside her mother Bharti and a society that labels her as an anomaly. Upon discovering Bharti's emotional breakdown, Tara realizes that her own journey is nothing short of a courageous endeavour, given her enduring physical impairment.



Fig.35 <http://surl.li/jfsro>

Patel Reveling Reality of Bharti in-front of Tara

PATEL: Tara, please believe me when I say that I love you very much and I have never in all my life loved you less or more that I have loved your brother. But your mother. . .

....

....

TARA: I never doubted it, daddy. I . . I don't feel too . . .
(Slumps like a rag doll into Patel's arms) (Dattani, , 2000)

The theme of identity struggle is prevalent in numerous plays by Dattani, wherein characters frequently find themselves grappling with the conflict between traditional values and the contemporary milieu. Tara's character can be depicted as an individual who wrestles with her sense of self, attempting to reconcile her individual aspirations and personal desires with the societal and familial expectations imposed upon her. Dattani's characters exhibit a propensity for emotional complexity, and it is highly probable that Tara will adhere to this pattern. The individual in question may undergo a variety of emotional states, encompassing affection, yearning, dissatisfaction, and susceptibility.

The protagonist's emotional trajectory has the potential to constitute a substantial component of her overall character progression.



Fig.36 <http://surl.li/jfsro>

Tara and Chandan in the Play Tara

In the play, Tara and Chandan's comedic inclinations contribute to the creation of *Att Hasya* and relished *Hasya Rasa*, as they engage in playful banter at the expense of Roopa, who is portrayed as less intellectually adept than the sibling combination. Roopa's portrayal as a character who has been influenced by bribery from Bharti to befriend Tara, resulting in her derogatory remarks towards Tara in the presence of Prema and her labeling of Bharti as mentally unstable, serves as a manifestation of the Neo *Bibhatsa* Rasa in the play. This is due to the fact that Roopa is depicted as a young individual, and the audience's exposure to such inhumane behaviour from a character of her age is indeed repulsive.

Tara's character functions as a catalyst for change within the play, as she actively challenges established norms and motivates others to critically examine societal conventions. The actions and choices of the protagonist have the potential to influence the other characters, leading to a series of transformations and moments of self-reflection within them. .

4.10 *Dance Like a Man*

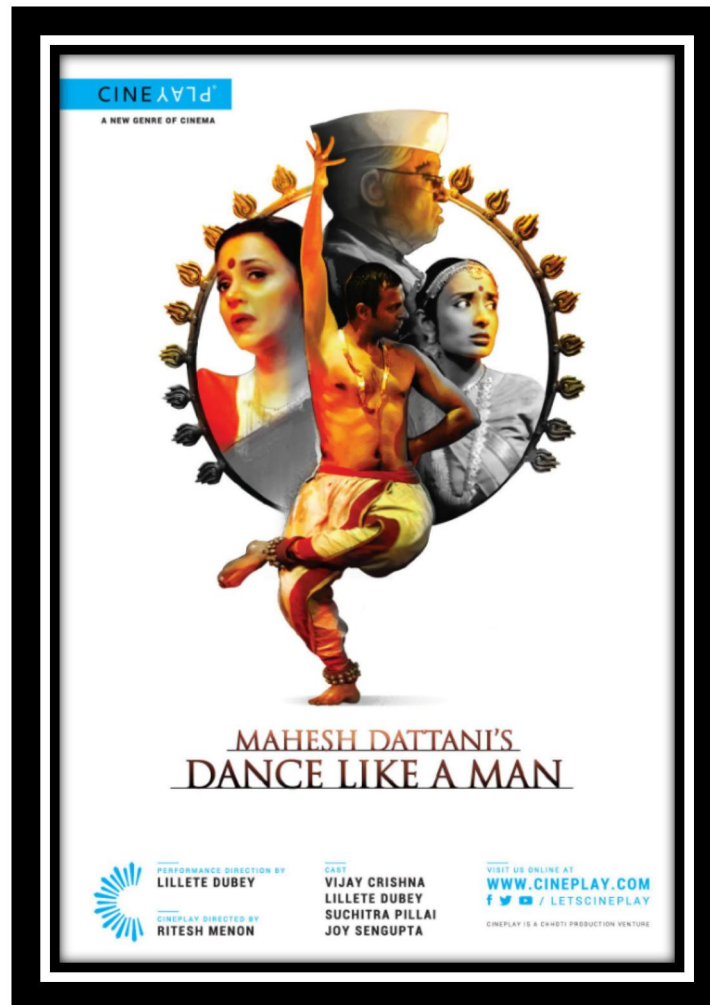


Fig.37 <http://surl.li/jbwvvy>

Poster of Dance Like a Man

The title of the play *Dance Like a Man* suggests a potential irony, since it may serve as a vehicle for mockery. The juxtaposition of the terms ‘Man’ and ‘Dance’ remains incongruous within Indian culture, even in the contemporary context of the 21st century. Expressing such sentiments in 1989 would likely have been seen as a contravention of societal expectations or a deliberate challenge to established social standards. Additionally, it suggests that the piece explores a certain kind or genre of dance.

The central focus of *Dance Like a Man* predominantly centers on the character of Jairaj, who assumes the role of the ‘Man’ as indicated in the play's title. The narrative structure of the plot exhibits a non-linear progression, characterized by temporal shifts

from the present to the past, reminiscent of the prevailing style observed in many of Mahesh Dattani's plays. The theatrical production spans a temporal range commencing in 1942 and concluding on the date of its staging. The artistic presentation of young and old characters and their interactions is distinguished by its incorporation of diverse emotions, *Rasa*, and character experiences, set within the context of the patriarchal Indian society and the world of dancers, depicting their struggles in Mumbai.

Rasa pertains to the affective essence or sensory experience elicited in spectators through the medium of artistic expressions, such as dance, drama, or music. *Rasa* holds significant importance in various Indian classical arts, such as *Bharatanatyam*, which is prominently showcased in the theatrical production *Dance Like a Man*. In the play, Mahesh Dattani examines a range of *Rasa*, delving into the emotional states and experiences.

In the Indian or Sanskrit intellectual tradition, the occurrence of paradigm shifts is not observed, as there exists a longstanding practise of composing *Teeka*, which involves augmenting or revising existing theories rather than outright rejecting them. In the context of *Rasa* theory, it is observed that *Kavya* encompasses nine *Rasa*, *Natya* is limited to eight *Rasa*. This distinction arises from the belief that *Santa Rasa*, one of the nine *Rasa*, is deemed unsuitable for the realm of *Natya*. Subsequently, the concept of *Shringara Rasa* underwent further categorization, resulting in the emergence of *Bhakti Rasa* and *Vatsalya Rasa*. The term "*Ishqmijaji*" denotes affection towards an individual who embodies the essence of *Shringara Rasa*, while "*Ishqhaquiqi*" pertains to love directed towards a divine entity, specifically associated with *Bhakti Rasa*, wherein love serves as a fundamental emotion.

In this theatrical production, a complex interweaving of three generations is depicted, showcasing the presence of love, care, and concern towards the younger members of the family. Amritlal's apprehension regarding Jairaj's pursuit of dance as a male, and Ratna's concern for Lata's professional prospects, emphasizing the importance of opportunities for recognition and acclaim, serve as manifestations of societal norms and exemplify the expression of *Vatsalya Rasa*. In contemporary society, individuals are inherently embedded within a social framework that invariably includes familial units. It is a rare occurrence to encounter a family wherein parental figures do not exhibit a profound level of concern for their offspring. This concern persists throughout the various

stages of the child's development, extending beyond their attainment of adulthood and even when they themselves assume the role of parents. This specific scenario evokes a sense of parental affection in the viewers, and these emotions are ingrained in the audience, whether they are parents or children. As a result, they become empathetic and capable of comprehending the character's circumstances and the interplay of *Bhava*, *Vibhava*, *Anubhava*, and *Vyabhicharibhava*, which elicit the aesthetic experience known as *Rasa* in the audience, stemming from the primary emotion of love. In the narrative, *Vatsalya* is consistently portrayed as a dominant emotional sentiment.

Mahesh Dattani, an accomplished playwright, has demonstrated a keen interest in the study of Western poetics and plays along with the Indian ones. It is widely acknowledged that any material that is read, studied, or referenced has the potential to significantly influence an individual. Mahesh Dattani, a playwright driven by the desire to make a lasting impression on the audience, sought to create plays that would resonate with and captivate viewers. In his pursuit, Dattani aspired to incorporate a multitude of conflicts within his works, a prominent attribute often found in Western theatrical productions. *Dance Like a Man* explores a multitude of conflicts. Firstly, the divergent political and social interests of Amritlal Parikh, a man driven by ambition, and his son, a passionate dancer, create a noticeable clash between their respective pursuits. During their interactions, the pair exhibits a notable lack of receptiveness towards each other's perspectives and principles. The stark contrasts between the two Parikhs are so pronounced that an observer is inclined to instinctively align themselves with one of them. Eventually, the viewer becomes personally invested in the conflict.

A comparison of the skillful spouse to the discontented spouse in light of potential gender bias, presents the concept of the male ego. The ambiguous nature of the relationship between Ratna and Jairaj takes on a foreboding tone due to Jairaj's failure to recognize his wife's artistic abilities. Nevertheless, he appears to mitigate his criticism by attributing Ratna's alleged negligence to her family. He poses a rhetorical question to his wife, expressing his intense and self-sacrificing affection for her. During his youth, Jairaj encountered numerous challenges as an artist, particularly due to societal expectations associated with gender roles. His chosen artistic pursuit, which his father derogatorily referred to as

“The craft of a prostitute for displaying her wares” (Dattani, 2000)

further compounded his difficulties. He appears to acknowledge that a man who engages in such behaviour is lacking in true masculinity. On the contrary, the individual's spouse firmly disapproves of such frivolous behaviour, reminding him in a stern manner that he consciously opted out of engaging in a dance with her due to his apprehension of revealing his own lack of skill or talent.

A comparative analysis of maternal aspirations and filial realities is reflected through the contrast between the two women, Lata and Ratna, is significant. One with expertise in human resources would likely possess the ability to discern the variation in personality types exhibited by the two individuals. The audaciously ambitious Ratna manages to maintain a harmonious relationship with her daughter Lata, who possesses a strong sense of independence. It is intriguing to observe how Lata occasionally exhibits traits reminiscent of her grandfather Amritlal, such as a pragmatic and astute demeanour, as well as a comparable level of individualism. Lata's youthful, educated, and cosmopolitan background is advantageous in terms of her perspective, as she effectively maintains a harmonious equilibrium between her dedication to dance and other aspects of her life.

The recurring inquiry of whether the cost of fervour can become excessively burdensome is a topic that resurfaces on multiple occasions. Ratna expresses her concern to Amritlal, cautioning against depriving his son of the one thing that brings him immense joy, as it has the potential to cause significant harm and devastation to him. In a subsequent occurrence, she disregards her astonished father-in-law with a reproachful statement, asserting,

"You ought to be aware - you have ultimately instilled a sense of maturity in him!" (Dattani, , 2000)

Amritlal experienced a significant and unpleasant surprise when he was reminded of the unintended consequences of his efforts to instill maturity and responsibility in his son.

A comparative analysis of marriage and business prospects refers to the phenomenon of concealing a commercial agenda within the context of a marriage

proposal becomes apparent where Vishal, Lata, and their respective families re featured. The family belonging to the North Indian business class, specifically the Marwari community, lacks knowledge about *Bharatnatyam*. Their primary concern revolves around whether Lata has any intentions of pursuing a career in the film industry. At this juncture, it is conceivable for one to perceive Lata as a privileged and impulsive adolescent who developed affection for an unsuitable individual. Lata's parents, who exhibited a discerning attitude towards her career choices, appeared to display significantly less concern when it came to contemplating her future. This sentiment is reflected in Ratna's sole inquiries, which revolve around the financial status of Lata's prospective partner and his willingness to allow her to continue pursuing her passion for dance after marriage.

The scene in which Ratna, adorned in her elaborate dancer's attire, experiencing a profound moment of personal tragedy while ascending the staircase, as she becomes aware of the demise of her infant. This occurrence serves as a poignant representation of the intersection between personal and professional realms, with Ratna's professional triumph juxtaposed against her personal anguish. Additionally, her fervent dedication to the art compelled her to relinquish her familial responsibilities.

The recurrence of disillusionment in history becomes evident as Ratna's aspirations for her daughter prove unsuccessful. Lata exhibits a proclivity towards introspection and self-discovery rather than displaying a steadfast commitment to her artistic pursuits. She engages in dance primarily with the intention of pleasing me rather than as a form of spiritual practise. Being an artist, it is undeniably evident that she belongs to the new generation. Similar to the majority, she can be characterized as a perplexed adolescent who hails from a family facing various challenges. Broadly speaking, she embodies the predicament faced by women in modern society, wherein they must make a decision between pursuing a professional career and prioritizing personal fulfillment. The play, which was composed in 1989, remains pertinent in contemporary times, as it explores the enduring themes of parental authority, the desire for parental control over their children's lives, the existence of a generation gap between parents and children, and the inclination of young adults to assert their independence, often resulting in conflicts with their parents. Despite the significant progress made in the world, Indian culture, tradition, customs, and rules continue to exert a profound influence. Within this

cultural context, the relationship between parents and children remains enduring, eliciting a wide range of emotions such as fear, love, hatred, and anger in various circumstances. The portrayal of the parent-child relationship in the play exemplifies a concept that transcends time and remains endearingly relevant.

Sacrifices and Losses are reoccurring elements in the play. The senior couple incurred significant costs in their pursuit of artistic development. The individuals encountered significant resistance from Amritlal Parikh, encountered difficulties in establishing their reputation, and were compelled to prioritize their commitment to dance over familial considerations. This even entailed making compromises in their selection of a mentor, as exemplified by Ratna's discontinuation of her studies under Chenniyamma due to external pressures. Jairaj made significant personal sacrifices, including his talent, desires, and self-respect, in order to facilitate his wife's assumption of his career and life. Historically, Amritlal demonstrated a willingness to make concessions by supporting his daughter-in-law's professional pursuits, despite potential conflicts with his adherence to Gandhian principles. Nevertheless, each sacrifice is accompanied by a corresponding loss. Ratna and Jairaj were unable to achieve the levels of success they had envisioned for themselves due to the hindrance caused by their feelings of guilt surrounding Shankar's demise. It is postulated that Lata has attained a state of tranquilly in her role as a homemaker, albeit at the expense of her artistic development. The burdens borne by Jairaj, as an individual who experienced the dual losses of his spouse and his artistic pursuits, are substantial. Equally problematic is the situation faced by Amritlal, who realizes his son's interests only after it is too late, resulting in the unfortunate loss of Jairaj to a state of self-destruction. This phenomenon prompts the audience to engage in introspection, reflecting upon their own personal experiences and drawing parallels between their lives and the themes depicted in the play. The play effectively combines various psychological experiences of individuals, such as femininity, masculinity, motherhood, fatherhood, and daughterhood, resulting in the emergence of *Vatsalya Rasa*. However, it should be noted that while the play explores the theme of parental love, the manifestation of *Vatsalya Rasa*, or the sentiment of parental affection, is not present in every scene or dialogue.

The transition of an artist from recognition to ridicule is a common phenomenon within the artistic realm, albeit one that is often accompanied by significant emotional distress. Jairaj experienced defeat prior to commencing his game. Ratna was compelled to

prematurely withdraw from the prominent position she had developed a dependency on. When their daughter reached the point of being ready for *Arangetram*, the circumstances had undergone a transformation. The era of admirers has become a thing of the past for Ratna, as she comes to the startling realization that musicians and other artists are primarily interested in her financial resources rather than her talent or abilities. The individual in question demonstrates persistent efforts to highlight ethical concerns surrounding the selection process of Indian artists for international conventions, albeit without achieving desired outcomes.

In this context, it can be observed that the play lacks a consistent presence or amalgamation of *Rasa*, because Dattani has intensified these conflicts. The playwright's focus primarily lies on the narrative arcs of the various characters, resulting in a plot that has garnered significant popularity among the audience, who have expressed great admiration for the play's storyline.

The theories related to *Rasa* - *Rasa Bhasa*, *Rasa Dosha*, and *Rasa Bhaga*, are not widely recognized, yet they find relevance within the context of the play. In particular, *Rasa Bhaga* is depicted as a flaw within the play, hindering the audience's enjoyment of the aesthetic *Rasa* experience. In the context of traditional Indian Sanskrit Plays, it is observed that when a story, plot, or character deliberately or inadvertently deviates from the prescribed rules of Bharata Muni, the experience of *Rasa* is hindered, resulting instead in *Rasa Bhanga*. Upon examining the works of Mahesh Dattani, it becomes evident that his plays deviate from the conventional principles established by Bharat Muni. Nevertheless, these plays continue to evoke the aesthetic essence known as *Rasa*. Although not necessarily a fusion of two distinct *Rasa*, Dattani's plays often feature a single *Rasa* that is intermingled with various other *Rasa*, creating a dynamic and ever-changing experience. In this particular play, the attainment of complete immersion is hindered by the compelling narrative and the presence of conflict; however, fleeting moments of emotional experiences and *Rasa*, can still be observed.

Shringara Rasa is closely associated with the themes of love, beauty, and sensuality. The characters of Lata and Viswas in the play grapple with their personal aspirations and ambitions, thereby shedding light on the intricate dynamics of their romantic and marital connections. *Veera Rasa* embodies qualities of valour, bravery, and unwavering determination. *Dance Like a Man* depicts the characters' tenacity in

challenging prevailing social norms and expectations. Ratna's daughter Lata exhibits *Veera Rasa* as she tenaciously pursues her passion for dance, undeterred by the obstacles and resistance she encounters. *Raudra Rasa* embodies emotions of anger, rage, and conflict. The theatrical production highlights the various tensions and conflicts that emerge within the family as a result of unmet aspirations, conventional gender norms, and disparities between generations. *Bibhatsa Rasa* elicits sensations of intense aversion and repulsion. The play explores the impact of societal biases and the repulsion experienced by individuals who defy conventional gender norms and societal expectations.



Fig.38 <https://shorturl.at/ciwI4>

Various Characters in Dance Like a Man

Jairaj holds a significant role within the narrative of Mahesh Dattani's *Dance Like a Man*. The character exhibits a nuanced and multifaceted nature, assuming a crucial and influential position within the narrative. Jairaj is an individual who exhibits a deep passion for the art of dance, having committed his entire existence to its pursuit. The individual demonstrates a profound dedication to the customs associated with Indian classical dance and maintains a firm conviction regarding its cultural importance. The individual's profound affection for dance is readily apparent through their unwavering commitment, diligent efforts, and relentless quest for achieving the highest standards of performance. The narrative of Jairaj's struggle can be viewed as a contemporary

manifestation of heroism, as he confronts societal norms by pursuing a career in *Bharatnatyam*, thereby defying his father's wishes and ultimately leaving his familial home. His determination to fulfil his wife's desire to learn dance from a *Devdasi*, in order to protect her virtue, evokes a sense of valour, akin to the *Veera Rasa*. However, this heroic sentiment gradually transforms into a sentiment of compassion, or *Karuna Rasa*, as Jairaj faces repeated failures in his endeavour. These failures can be attributed to his wife's self-centered motives and Jairaj's lack of familiarity with the challenges he encounters, resulting in a pitiable situation that elicits a sense of empathy and compassion.

Jairaj exhibits commendable qualities of passion and dedication, despite enduring personal adversity. Jairaj's profound enthusiasm for dance and his resolute dedication to the art form exemplify a robust sense of purpose and motivation. The individual's entire being is centred on his dedication to the art of dance, indicating that he may derive satisfaction and significance from this form of artistic manifestation. This level of dedication suggests that Jairaj is presumably highly motivated and inclined to allocate substantial time and exertion towards the attainment of his objectives. Jairaj's unwavering belief in the cultural significance of Indian classical dance demonstrates a profound attachment to his cultural heritage and a commitment to safeguarding and advancing its customary practices. This implies that the individual places importance on the significance of tradition, historical context, and the safeguarding of cultural heritage. Jairaj perceives dance as a potent medium through which cultural values, emotions, and narratives can be effectively communicated. The act of Jairaj choosing to pursue a career in *Bharatnatyam*, despite facing disapproval from his father and leaving his familial home, can be interpreted as an act of heroism that challenges societal norms. Through the act of challenging established societal norms and pursuing his personal passion, Jairaj exhibits traits of courage, independence, and a readiness to confront potential repercussions, all in the pursuit of leading an authentic existence. This implies that the individual places a high importance on individual autonomy and the ability to express oneself, even in circumstances that may contradict conventional societal norms.

The display of courage and compassion by Jairaj, as he endeavours to fulfil his wife's aspiration of receiving dance instruction from a *Devdasi*, with the intention of safeguarding her moral integrity, exemplifies a profound sense of bravery reminiscent of the *Veera Rasa*. The individual assumes the responsibility of a guardian and exhibits an

altruistic act of courage in order to defend the dignity of his spouse. Nevertheless, as Jairaj encounters a series of setbacks in his pursuit, his courageous emotion gradually evolves into a sentiment of compassion. The aforementioned transition implies that Jairaj's persona exhibits profound emotional complexity and flexibility, demonstrating the ability to develop and react to demanding situations. The repeated failures experienced by Jairaj, potentially influenced by his wife's self-centered motives and his own limited understanding of the difficulties he faces, give rise to a situation that evokes both empathy and pity. This evokes a feeling of empathy and compassion among the viewers. Jairaj's character elicits sympathy as a result of his vulnerability and the juxtaposition between his initial idealistic aspirations and the harsh realities he encounters. The individual's expedition can function as a poignant illustration of the intricate and unpredictable nature that accompanies the pursuit of personal aspirations.

Jairaj exhibits a strong adherence to traditionalism, as evidenced by his deep-rooted connection to traditional values and beliefs and holds a strong belief in preserving the sacredness and integrity of Indian classical dance, frequently expressing opposition towards contemporary interpretations or departures from the established conventions. The individual's traditional perspective is in conflict with the evolving dynamics of present-day society and the ambitions of the younger cohort.

Jairaj is renowned for his exceptional discipline and unwavering commitment to perfection. In spite of possessing considerable talent and achieving notable accomplishments, Jairaj experiences feelings of insecurity and frustration. The individual experiences a sense of being eclipsed by his spouse, Ratna, who formerly enjoyed a distinguished career as a dancer. The lack of parity in terms of recognition and success between him and his wife serves as a contributing factor to his emotional distress.

The character of Jairaj exhibits emotional complexity, indicating that he is not portrayed as a one-dimensional character. The individual undergoes a diverse array of emotional states, encompassing affection, ire, envy, self-importance, and susceptibility. The individual's emotional experiences are frequently influenced by his fervent dedication to dance, his ambitions for his family, and his endeavour to exert authority over his personal life and interpersonal connections.

The character of Jairaj functions as a catalyst for the examination of various themes, including the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, gender roles, familial dynamics, and the quest for artistic fulfillment. Within the dramatic narrative, Jairaj is depicted as being socially and economically disadvantaged, undergoes a profound emotional experience characterized by the prevailing sentiment of *Karuna Rasa*, commonly understood as a feeling of pity or compassion. The presence of the *Karuna Rasa* is evident from the outset of the play. Despite Jairaj's maturation, he exhibits a diminished emotional intensity compared to his childhood, rendering him less capable of challenging his father's staunch beliefs. His father considers Jairaj's dance as a poor portrayal of his character. The protagonist's request for his potential son-in-law to remove the shawl inherited from his late father reveals his emotionally distant relationship with his own father.

“JAIRAJ: Please put the shawl back.

VISHWAS: Yes, yes... (*Folds it clumsily*)... I'm sorry... it is a lovely shawl.” (Dattani, , 2000)

Dattani's literary works afford women a discernible advantage within the domain of cultural practise. In this context, Ratna, the wife of Jairaj, is observed to possess a support system that inherently enables her, in contrast to her husband, to exert influence over the cultural milieu. The enduring impact is attributed to the persistent adherence to the ideological concept of the collective unconscious. In the forthcoming era, it remains the prevailing societal expectation that women will predominantly excel in the realm of cultural arts. The aforementioned phenomenon is exemplified through the inadvertent efforts made by Jairaj and Ratna to foster their daughter Lata's success in her preferred domain within the cultural sphere. However, in terms of emotional well-being, the male individuals within the household experience a lack of attention or care. The consequences of this lack of knowledge can be analyzed for two individuals. The first individual is Jairaj, the male offspring of the family, who faces challenges in his ability to flourish within the cultural domain due to persistent barriers stemming from patriarchal forces, societal norms, and familial dynamics. As the individual engages in the act of consuming alcohol as a means to satisfy his oral fixation, the resulting emotional distress stemming from his lack of attentiveness becomes evident.

When influenced by the consumption of an alcoholic beverage, his *Karuna Rasa* becomes evident through the expression of heightened emotional reactions. In his critique, the author highlights society's failure to provide him with monetary incentives as a means of motivation. Upon witnessing his wife falling victim to the actions of a close relative, this circumstance compels him to retreat to his father's residence. Consequently, he possesses the ability to protect the virtue of his spouse, yet is compelled to comply with the directives of his paternal figure. The father's perceived failure can be attributed to the influence of societal factors, which hinder his ability to achieve success in his creative pursuits.

Even his wife, Ratna, aids in stunting his development by plotting with her father-in-law. At this point, he offers to support her creative aptitude. This is clear when he enables her to pursue and succeed in the skill of her choosing. Notwithstanding the fact that the control also influences the development of other guys in the household. The fatal power of this is shown by the mother Ratna's neglectful behaviour towards her kid. Due to the administration of a double dosage of opium by the mother and the maid, this action results in the death of the son. This particular scene elicits the emotion of *Karuna Rasa*, and to a certain extent disgust leading to *Bibhatsa Rasa*, for individuals who are unfamiliar with or have not previously encountered or experienced the act of giving opium to a child.

“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!” (Dattani, , 2000)

The bereavement of Jairaj's child is an ongoing emotional experience characterized by the sentiment of *Karuna Rasa*. Lata's aspirations are ultimately fulfilled due to the sacrifice and diligent efforts made by her mother. The future son-in-law assumes a subordinate role, pledging to adhere to all of Lata's marriage requirements and refrain from hindering her cultural endeavour. Hence, this observation illustrates that the

societal norms promote the cultivation of artistic pursuits among women, while concurrently subjecting men to scrutiny and criticism in the same domain.

In the play, Jairaj's character exhibits a multifaceted amalgamation of fervour, commitment, belief, bravery, benevolence, and understanding. The author's personal journey as an a person who has learn *Bharatnatyam* and subsequent evolution offer valuable perspectives on the universal human experience, the inherent tensions between individual aspirations and societal norms, and the emotional obstacles encountered in the pursuit of one's aspirations.

In addition to the character of Jairaj, Ratna, his wife, also plays a significant role in the play, contributing to the overall Rasa experience through her character. The character exhibits a multifaceted and intricate nature, assuming a pivotal role in the examination of gender norms, societal demands, acts of selfishness, and the pursuit of individual contentment. Ratna is portrayed as a woman in her middle age who is wedded to Jairaj, a former practitioner of *Bharatanatyam*, a classical Indian dance form. In spite of her personal ambitions to pursue a career in dance, she was compelled to relinquish her aspirations in order to provide support for her husband's professional endeavors. Ratna serves as a representation of the challenges encountered by numerous women who are compelled to subdue their personal aspirations and wishes in order to prioritize the advancement of their partner's ambitions.

Ratna's character is characterized by her notable attribute of selflessness. She prioritizes the advancement of her husband's dance career over her personal aspirations and well-being. The individual exhibits significant levels of commitment and fidelity towards Jairaj, displaying a willingness to make concessions and sacrifices in order to uphold and nurture their relationship. Ratna's altruistic nature is apparent in her willingness to assume the responsibility of caring for Jairaj's authoritarian and manipulative mother, despite the latter's disapproval of Ratna's personal ambitions.

Despite the numerous sacrifices made by Ratna, her character also exhibits a profound sense of frustration and unattained aspirations. The individual in question harbors a strong desire to actively engage in the pursuit of her personal passion for dance. However, her aspirations are curtailed by the prevailing societal norms and the obligations she bears as a spouse and daughter-in-law. Ratna's repressed aspirations and

unrealized ambitions engender a palpable atmosphere of tension within her persona, ultimately culminating in a burgeoning sentiment of resentment and remorse. The character of Ratna experiences a significant metamorphosis throughout the course of the play, as she engages with her personal aspirations and begins to critically examine the compromises she has made. The protagonist experiences a transformation in her demeanour, becoming increasingly assertive and displaying a willingness to question societal norms and the expectations imposed on her by both her spouse and the broader community. Ratna's journey serves as a poignant illustration of the significance of individual satisfaction and the imperative for women to possess autonomy in their own existence. Ratna's character additionally functions as a form of criticism towards gender roles and societal expectations. The author challenges the conventional belief that a woman's primary responsibility lies in supporting her husband's aspirations while sacrificing her own personal aspirations. The play interrogates the constraining gender roles and societal pressures that curtail women's autonomy and ability to express themselves, using Ratna's character as a vehicle for this exploration. Despite receiving criticism from scholars, Ratna's character is portrayed in a negative manner. The portrayal of the character depicts her as a self-centered spouse, an individual who strategically married a husband who shares her passion for dance, ensuring that her desire to dance would never be hindered. This characteristic reflects a person who consistently prioritizes their own needs and desires, a perspective that can be argued as morally neutral. The act of placing oneself above others, including one's family and society, is not inherently unethical. In the context of airlines, it is commonly advised to fasten one's seat belt before assisting others. Therefore, it is not inappropriate for Ratna to prioritize her own well-being when her husband is struggling to break free from the influence of his father, who has exerted significant control over him. It is commonly posited that one of the expected roles of a woman or wife is to provide support to her husband, attend to his desires, and assist in advancing his professional pursuits. However, after fulfilling these responsibilities for a certain duration, the Ratna recognizes the need to fortify herself in order to navigate life with such a life partner. She faces criticism for engaging in social interactions, such as shaking hands and collaborating with her father-in-law, as well as for curtailing Jairaj's career as a dancer, thereby diminishing competition in her own professional sphere. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that these actions were necessitated by the prevailing circumstances and demands faced by Ratna. Subsequently, the individual in question began to exhibit concern for her daughter, a behaviour that has

garnered criticism from certain commentators who perceive her actions as an attempt to exploit her daughter's fame and financial potential. However, it is important to acknowledge that such behaviour is not uncommon among parents. Consequently, it is unjust to hold Ratna solely responsible or to single her out for engaging in such behaviour. Ratna's character embodies the construction of a female figure within Indian society, both consciously and unconsciously. This construction plays a significant role in generating conflict within the play, while also addressing the diverse life experiences of the audience and evoking various emotions. However, the enjoyment of one *Rasa*, a concept in Indian aesthetics, is hindered because Ashish Nandy, in reference to the Indian Psyche, projects that plurality is the most essential characteristic of the Indian audience (Nandy, 1983). The concept of unity in diversity is deeply ingrained in the Indian culture, where diversity is observed across various aspects of life. According to popular belief, the actions or inclinations of the majority are often regarded as the norm. This concept also applies to the concept of *Rasa*, where the majority's experiences determine the prevailing emotional essence. However, in *Dance Like a Man*, it is observed that different members of the audience perceive the characters in distinct ways. For instance, the play *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai* can be interpreted differently by individuals in the audience based on their varying sexual orientations. The perception of a play varies among individuals based on factors such as literacy, urban or rural background, gender, and age. Consequently, a single piece of art can evoke diverse emotional experiences in people with different inclinations, influenced by their life experiences and the lessons derived from them. However, it is important to note that these experiences may not necessarily align with the concept of *Rasa*.

Ratna can be characterized as a multifaceted individual serving as a representation of the challenges encountered by numerous women within a patriarchal social structure. The character's selfishness, frustrations, and subsequent transformation contribute to her compelling character. The journey undertaken by Ratna prompts significant inquiries regarding societal gender norms, individual satisfaction, and the endeavour to achieve personal aspirations.

Various *Rasa* like Veera in Jiaraj's character, Vatsalya in Amritlal, Jairaj and Ratna's character, Shringara in Lata and Vishwas's character, Hasya in Vishwas's character and *Karuna Rasa* in the suffering of Jairaj and in the death scene of his child are

incorporated in the narrative and performances of *Dance Like a Man* contributes to the enrichment of the characters and their stories, imbuing them with profound emotional significance. The investigation into *Rasa* serves to augment the overall aesthetic encounter of the theatrical production and contributes to its artistic and cultural import.

4.11 *Where There's a Will*

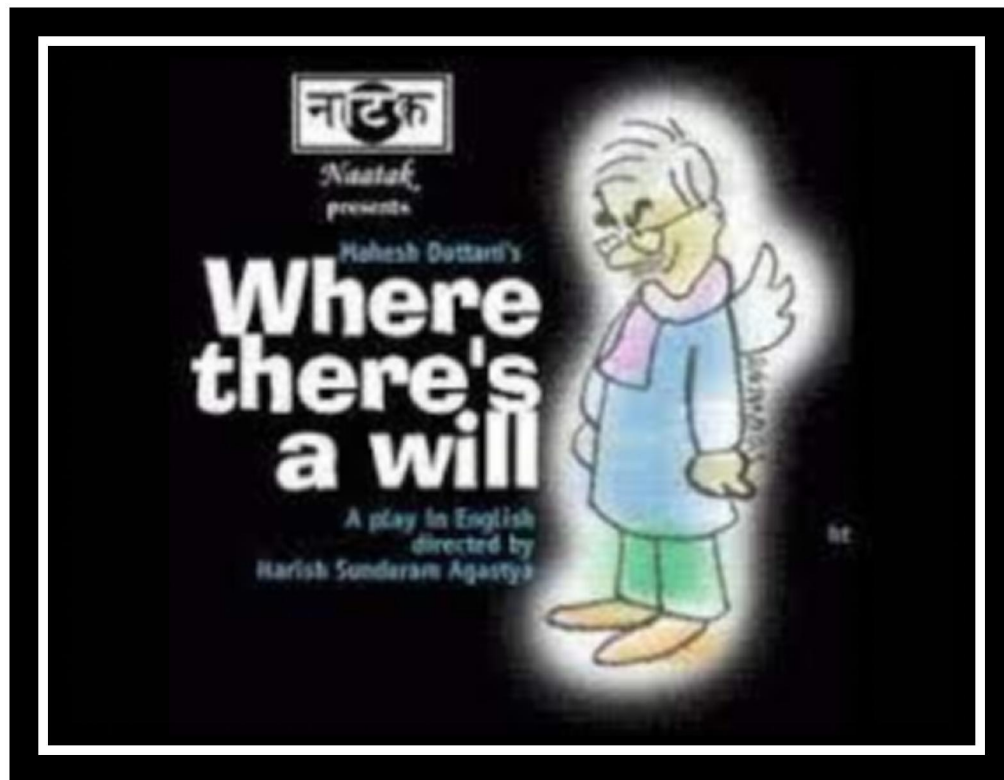


Fig.39 <https://shorturl.at/txyVZ>

Poster of Where There's a Will

The title, *Where there's a will* leads us to "*Where There is a Will there is a Way*" has been used by Dattani as a pun in his work. The first perception of the title evokes feelings of hope, optimism, and determination towards achieving goals, while also seeming to include philosophical undertones.

Where there's a will serves as a notable illustration of patriarchal hegemony, effectively reflecting its presence within our society. Although the play does not explicitly state the exact duration of the events, the narrative structure and pacing strongly imply that they unfold over a relatively brief period. The limited duration of this play allows for a focused and immersive exploration of Hasmukh's journey and the thematic elements that are addressed. Hasmukh serves as a clever male character and a comedic

ghost, delighting in the *Hasya Rasa* as he satirizes other characters throughout the play. Additionally, he embodies both *Hasya* and *Neo Hasya Rasa*, as the play also incorporates elements of *Att Hasya*. It is worth noting that this play marks Dattani's debut as a playwright, with his primary objective being to establish a connection with and garner appreciation from the audience for his artistic creation.



Fig.40 <http://surl.li/jdxog>

Hasmukh on the Stage

The play revolves around a Gujarati family, led by Hasmukh Mehta as the patriarch, with his wife Sonal, son Ajit, and daughter-in-law Preeti. Another significant character in the narrative is Kiran, who serves as Hasmukh's mistress. Despite his given name, Hasmukh exhibits the characteristics of a cantankerous patriarch, displaying a notable sense of self-importance and exhibits authoritarian tendencies within his familial domain, displaying a lack of value for autonomous cognitive processes, even when they originate from his own offspring. The character of Hasmukh possesses a combination of traits that convey strength, authority, and dominance. However, the comedic nature of the dialogue and the actor's delivery on stage imbue the play with sarcasm, resulting in a pure manifestation of *Hasya Rasa*. The ghost of Hasmukh serves as a manifestation of the *Adbhuta Rasa*, although it does not contribute to the overall resolution of the narrative,

thus rendering it a transient emotional experience. Hasmukh's character engages in the act of eavesdropping on conversations among family members and subsequently expresses his perspectives in a comedic fashion, thus serving as a genuine embodiment of *Hasya Rasa*. The spouse, who assumes the role of a homemaker, dutifully adheres to the patriarchal norms established by her husband, the daughter-in-law also adheres to his code of rules. The familial dynamics within the household are characterized by a lack of contentment. The son engages in frequent disputes with his father, disregarding the wife's admonitions to Hasmukh regarding his dietary choices in light of his heart condition. Additionally, the daughter-in-law maintains a facade of compliance, although this does not necessarily indicate genuine respect.

The narrative undergoes a comically unforeseen shift as Hasmukh's demise ensues, subsequently manifesting as a spectral entity that remains inexplicably tethered to the events unfolding within his residence, despite the cessation of his mortal existence. In addition to the ensuing chaos, the audience is introduced to a novel character named Kiran Jhaveri, who assumes the role of a marketing executive within Hasmukh's company. The revelation of her alternate persona unveils Hasmukh's hypocrisy, as it is discovered that she was, in fact, his mistress, despite his derogatory comparison of his wife to a 'loyal canine.' Kiran assumes the role previously held by Hasmukh within her family following his passing, employing her actions, control, power, and authority as granted by Hasmukh's will.

The ensemble of actors effectively portrays a diverse range of characters, including the authoritative Hasmukh, the subservient Sonal, the independent-minded Ajit, and the seemingly compliant Preeti. The primary topics of discourse centre on the manifestation of patriarchal double standards, the role of women within and beyond the domestic realm, and the presence of generational disparities. However, these matters are downplayed by Mahesh Dattni, as there is never a moment during the theatrical performance when the audience does not exhibit amusement or mirth. The ability to skillfully combine serious concerns with comedic elements and sustain a sense of amusement through the *Hasya Rasa* is a distinct art form. Typically, the demise of an individual evokes feelings of *Karuna Rasa*. However, in the case of Hasmukh's death and subsequent transformation into a ghost, it simultaneously engenders *Adbhuta Rasa* and *Hasya Rasa*. This is attributed to the comedic disposition inherent in Hasmukh's nature.



Fig.41 <http://surl.li/jdxog>

Hasmukh, Sonal, Preeti and Ajit on the Stage

The catalyst for the remaining characters to assume prominent roles and confront one another is Hasmukh Mehta's will, which serves as an additional means for him to exert control over his family. Mr. Mehta, a senior individual, bequeaths his entire wealth to a trust, which will be overseen by Kiran Jhaveri. The female individual who joins the Mehta family as per the stipulations outlined in Hasmukh Mehta's will.

According to Bharata Muni's *Natyashastra*, the selection of plot and characters should align with the desired emotional experience, known as *Rasa*. In this context, Mahesh Dattani, a contemporary Indian English playwright, aimed to create a satirical comedy that not only reflects Indian society but also conveys a message to the audience. To achieve these objectives, Dattani has meticulously crafted the plot and especially characters in a manner that they highlight their distinct characteristics, weaknesses, qualities, positive attributes, and negative traits. These elements have been carefully designed to evoke the comic emotion and *Hasya Rasa* in the play. The foundation of Bharata Muni's theory of *Natyashastra* (dramaturgy) and *Rasa* in Ancient Indian plays involves the inclusion of *Vidushaka*, comedic instances, and the introduction of unfamiliar concepts to evoke the emotion of *Hasya*. However, in contemporary society,

the source of laughter for individuals often stems from the pain or distress of others, resulting in the emergence of *Neo Hasya Rasa*. It is important to note that death itself cannot be considered comical, here the death and subsequent birth of the ghost of Hasmukh serves a specific purpose and contributes to the development of *Hasya Rasa*.

The character of Hasmukh exhibits a nuanced and intricate nature, contributing significantly to the overall narrative of the play. Hasmukh is depicted as an individual who possesses strong ambition and unwavering determination. The individual is motivated by the aspiration to ensure the long-term financial stability of his family and exhibits a willingness to undertake significant efforts in order to attain his objectives. Hasmukh exhibits traits of shrewdness and calculative behaviour. The individual utilizes a range of manipulative strategies in order to exert influence over the volition and its constituents. The individual exhibits a willingness to engage in deceptive and manipulative behaviors towards individuals within his familial circle, with the primary objective of advancing his personal interests. Hasmukh exhibits a strong focus on familial relationships and prioritizes the well-being and unity of his family. Despite exhibiting manipulative tendencies, Hasmukh demonstrates a profound level of concern for the welfare of his family. The individual holds the belief that acquiring his sibling's wealth will ensure a more prosperous future for both parties involved. The individual's behaviors, albeit subject to scrutiny, originate from a motivation to support his family members. Hasmukh's character is situated within moral grey areas, thus rendering it morally ambiguous. The individual's behaviour is motivated by the well-being of his family; however, he frequently transgresses ethical limits in order to accomplish his goals. The presence of moral ambiguity in the character's actions contributes to the complexity of his persona and prompts inquiries regarding the extent to which individuals may be willing to go in order to ensure the well-being of their family in the long term. Hasmukh is depicted as a character with imperfections and susceptibilities. The individual possesses personal insecurities and vulnerabilities that occasionally motivate their behaviors. The individual's unwavering determination to achieve their goals can be traced back to their apprehension regarding financial instability, thereby highlighting the vulnerability inherent in their current circumstances. Hasmukh's character is characterized by a complex relationship with money, as it holds a significant position in his life. The protagonist's preoccupation with achieving financial stability exerts a significant impact on his decision-making process and propels the narrative. The individual's behaviour

serves as an embodiment of the societal fixation on wealth and the ethical trade-offs that individuals encounter when confronted with financial difficulties. In essence, the character of Hasmukh in the literary work *Where There's a Will* exhibits a multifaceted and intricate nature. The individual's strong drive, unwavering resolve, strategic manoeuvring, and genuine care for the welfare of his family render him a captivating character. The character's morally ambiguous disposition and intricate association with finances contribute to the depth of his persona, thereby emphasizing the tensions that arise from the pursuit of personal benefit and the adherence to ethical principles. The presence of such a character in a theatrical performance allows the audience to establish a connection with the character, enabling them to comprehend the psychological state, emotions, and experiences of such individuals. This is because every Indian family is likely to have a similar character, who may not always bring happiness but instead evoke feelings of sadness. When such a person is present in one's own life, it elicits the emotion of sadness rather than the comedic sentiment of *Hasya Rasa* found in literature. This distinction between *Rasa* and emotions lies in the association of the *Aham* with the character, resulting in the emergence of *Karuna Rasa*.

The climax, *Nirvahana Sandhi* of the play involves Kiran discovering that Preeti, her sister-in-law, is responsible for the death of their domineering father-in-law, Hasmukh, by tampering with his heart medication. This revelation evokes a sense *Adbhuta Rasa* due to the presence of Hasmukh's ghost on stage, which diminishes the feeling of loss associated with his character's demise. Furthermore, the sudden transformation of Sonal, Ajit, and Preeti, as well as Kiran's decision to forgive them for their role in Hasmukh's death, concludes the play with *Hasya Rasa* tone rather than *Karuna Rasa*. The presence of such a character in a theatrical performance allows the audience to establish a connection with the character, enabling them to comprehend the psychological state, emotions, and experiences of such individuals. This is because every Indian family is likely to have such a character, who may not always be a source of happiness. However, having such a person in one's own life can evoke feelings of sadness, as opposed to the comedic sentiment of *Hasya Rasa* found in literature. It is important to note that while *Rasa* exists in literature, when it is applied to one's own life, where the concept of “*Aham*” is associated, it becomes the source of *Karuna Rasa*. This distinction highlights the fundamental difference between *Rasa* and emotions.



Fig.42 <http://surl.li/jdxog>

Preeti and Kiran in Nirvahana Sandhi

The climax of the play involves Kiran discovering that Preeti is responsible for the death of her oppressive father-in-law, Hasmukh, by tampering with his heart medication. This revelation evokes a sense of *Adbhuta Rasa* due to the presence of Hasmukh's ghost on stage, which diminishes the impact of losing the character. Additionally, the sudden transformation of Sonal, Ajit, and Preeti, as well as Kiran's forgiveness towards them for their role in Hasmukh's demise, concludes the play with *Hasya Rasa* rather than a sense of *Karuna Rasa*. Therefore, the performance serves as a genuine medium for the audience to experience *Hasya* and *Neo Hasya Rasa*.

4.12 The Classification of Plays Based on the Principles of *Dasharupakam*

Dhananjaya's *Dasharupakam* is a widely recognized Sanskrit literary composition authored by Dhananjaya, an erudite scholar from 10th century India. The *Dasharupakam* is a scholarly treatise that methodically classifies theatrical works into ten discrete categories, distinguished by their thematic elements, structural composition, and overarching emotional ambiance. The ten classifications are commonly referred to as *Rupaka*, a term denoting forms or dramatic styles. The classification system developed by Dhananjaya has exerted significant influence in moulding the comprehension of ancient

Indian play. The first is *Nataka*, also known as Tragedy, encompasses theatrical works characterized by their sombre tone and exploration of tragic themes. Frequently, these narratives revolve around protagonists of heroic or noble stature who confront challenging circumstances, ultimately resulting in their tragic demise. The predominant emotional responses elicited are sorrow and empathy. The same traits exhibited with female characters are sometimes referred to as *Natika*. *Prakarana*, often known as domestic drama, is a genre that centers around the portrayal of ordinary individuals and their daily experiences. This phenomenon brings attention to moral and ethical quandaries that arise within the context of household environments. *Prakarana* genre encompasses a wide spectrum of emotions, incorporating elements of both humour and sadness. The same traits exhibited by female characters are sometimes referred to as *Prakranee*. *Anka*, a one-act play, is a condensed theatrical structure designed to be presented within a single act. Typically, it centers on a certain theme or event, offering a succinct and compelling dramatic encounter. *Vithi* is distinguished by its incorporation of humorous elements, utilization of satire, and presentation of ludicrous circumstances, of exaggerated characters and settings serves to elicit amusement and provide entertainment. The narrative technique employed in *Samavakara*, known as parallel play, involves the presentation of two distinct tales that finally intersect. This particular stylistic approach facilitates the examination of divergent issues and individuals, all the while constructing a cohesive and interconnected narrative. *Ihamrga*, a genre known as heroic comedy, combines comedic elements with themes of heroism. Frequently, it encompasses the utilisation of disguises, instances of mistaken identities, and comedic circumstances, all the while upholding a modicum of courage. The historical play entitled *Dima* is characterized by its commitment to recounting significant historical events, with a particular emphasis on highlighting the courage and accomplishments of previous kings and heroes. The plays integrate historical elements with dramatic techniques to construct a captivating tale. *Vyayoga* emphasizes inner conflict as its central element. *Madhyamvyayoga* is a well-known *Vyayoga* drama authored by Bhasa. *Bhana* centres around a solitary individual who engages in the act of telling or articulating their innermost thoughts, emotions, or personal encounters. This particular activity offers a distinctive chance to engage in comprehensive analysis of characters and articulate emotions. *Prahasana*, a form of satirical comedy, seeks to scrutinize and satirize diverse facets of society, encompassing its rituals, traditions, and social conventions. The primary

characteristic of this genre is the utilization of satirical humour, which serves to stimulate contemplation and reflection. (Hass, 1912)

The categorization method developed by Dhananjaya has played a crucial role in influencing the field of research on Indian dramatic traditions. The author's analysis of many genres of drama has enhanced our comprehension of the intricate interplay between human emotions and society dynamics shown in these theatrical works. The ten categories not only serve as a structural framework for the analysis of classical Indian play, but also provide valuable insights into the abundant cultural and creative legacy of ancient India. Mahesh Dattani is a renowned modern Indian playwright recognized for his intellectually stimulating and socially significant theatrical works. Although Dattani's plays do not conform precisely to the *Dasharupakam* categories established by Dhananjaya, it is possible to classify certain works by Dattani by examining their topics and tones, plot, characters, Rasa establishing associations with the conventional categories. It is important to acknowledge that these categorizations are not rigid and may comprise a combination of components from many categories.

The primary emotional theme of Dattani's *Where Did I Leave My Purdah?* is *Karuna*, and the narrative centers around the experiences of Nazia. The storyline prominently features female characters, including Nikhat, Zarin, Ruby, and a newly introduced actress. The male characters, Vinay and Suhel, make only occasional appearances throughout the production. Nazia's persona embodies that of a thespian, commonly referred to as *Nata*, rather than a character of elevated social standing, therefore situating the play within the realm of *Prakranee*.

The Big Fat City presents a peculiar amalgamation of disparate events, wherein Niharika and Murli grapple with the challenges of existence in Mumbai, Lolly endeavours to secure a role in a daily soap opera, Sailesh confronts financial hardships, and subsequently, Anu and Puneet's tragic honour killing by Harjeet is abruptly introduced. The play initially evokes *Hasya Rasa* and *Karuna Rasa*, and the inclusion of characters of a certain social standing who find themselves in dire circumstances classifies it as a *Natika*.

In the theatrical production titled *Thirty Days in September*, the characters of Maya, her mother, and her uncle are prominently featured on stage. The fundamental

theme of the play revolves around Maya's inner battle, while *Karuna* embodies the concept of *Rasa*, thereby classifying it as a *Vyayoga*.

In the narrative titled *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, there is a notable predominance of male characters within the LGBTQIA+ context, while the presence of female characters is limited to only two. *Karuna*'s character embodies the essence of *Rasa*, particularly exhibiting elements of *Hasya Rasa* intermittently. This categorizes the narrative under the framework of *Goshthi*, as proposed by Bharata Muni, specifically within the subcategory of the play.

The play *Seven Steps Around The Fire* features the character of Uma, but its central narrative revolves around Kamla, a Hijra who has limited stage presence. However, the portrayal of the pain and suffering experienced by the *Hijra* community is effectively depicted through the characters of Champa and Anarkali. These characters, in contrast to the heterosexual characters, represent a form of deviation (*Vikruti*) and contribute to the play's incorporation of both *Hasya* and *Karuna Rasa*, placing it within the genre of *Vikruta Prahasana*.

Final Solutions is a theatrical production that explores the issue of religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims. The play centers around the concept of *Veera*, a dominant emotional sentiment, and features prominent characters such as Ramniklal, his mother and daughter, as well as Baban and Javed. The inclusion of numerous scenes depicting acts of adoration towards God and the fervent battles fought in His name categorizes the play as belonging to the genre of *Samvakar*.

Barvely Fought The Queen exhibits a strong appreciation for *Veera* and *Karuna* as prominent *Rasa*. The play features characters of both genders, with equal significance in both the stage performance and narrative. However, the focal point of the play revolves around the suffering experienced by female characters and their subsequent resilience in overcoming adversity. The presence of an internal struggle within oneself is a recurring motif in which each character engages in a battle with their own self, thereby placing it within the category of *Vyayoga*.

The play *Tara* once again brings to the forefront the inner turmoil experienced by Bharati and Chandan as a result of their guilt. Additionally, the character *Karuna* assumes a prominent role, embodying the main *Rasa* of compassion. Despite Tara's physical

concerns, her survival instincts serve as a manifestation of *Veera Rasa*, placing the play within the category of *Vyayoga*.

Dance Like a Man is a meticulously crafted and comprehensive theatrical production that skillfully combines the elements of *Karuna* and *Shringara*, with occasional hints of *Hasya Rasa*. Although the narrative primarily revolves around Jairaj, it is noteworthy that the characters of his father Amritlal, his wife Ratna, and his daughter Lata hold significant importance. Consequently, this work may be classified within the genre of *Nataka*

Lastly, *Where There's a Will* is a narrative centred around Hasmukha, who assumes the role of a ghost inside the play. The play itself is replete with elements of *Hasya Rasa*, characterized by an abundance of sarcasm and mockery, hence classifying it as a *Prahasana*.

It is imperative to acknowledge that the plays of Mahesh Dattani frequently surpass conventional categorizations, since they amalgamate components from diverse genres and mirror the intricacy of present-day social concerns. Dattani's works demonstrate the progression of Indian play and its enduring significance in addressing contemporary issues, drawing upon Dhananjaya's categorization as a framework for analysis.

4.13 Conclusion

An examination of Mahesh Dattani's stage plays from the perspectives of *Rasa* theory, emotions, and experiential analysis unveils a deep understanding of the human psyche and a skillful manipulation of theatrical components. Dattani demonstrates exceptional skill in constructing intricate psychological characters, allowing him to elicit a diverse range of emotional reactions from his viewers. This engenders a profoundly impactful experience that remains with the audience even beyond the conclusion of the performance. The utilization of *Rasa* theory in Dattani's literary works and an introduction of Neo *Rasa* theory and exploring *Rasa Bhasa*, *Rasa Bhava*, *Rasa Bhanga* and *Rasa Dosha* demonstrates his adeptness in evoking the fundamental nature of emotions, enabling viewers to experience a cathartic release as they engage with the predicaments and trajectories of the characters. Dattani skillfully employs a combination of *Rasa* to create a multi-dimensional emotional terrain that reflects the intricate nature of

the human experience. The incorporation of emotional elements into the portrayal of the characters serves to emphasize the complexities inherent in their individualizes, so blurring the boundaries between the realm of fiction and reality.

Dattani's theatrical works provide a platform for an examination of the profound and extensive spectrum of emotions, shedding light on the weaknesses, fears, and wants that shape the inner realms of his characters. Through adeptly intertwining the nuances of characters' psychological states with the exterior conflicts that unfold within the narrative, the author effectively encourages viewers to engage in introspection regarding their own emotional landscapes and the shared human experiences that transcend individuality. Dattani's literary works provide a transforming experience that surpasses the limitations of the theatrical medium. The individual's skillful utilization of emotional stimuli engenders a deeply engaging encounter for the spectators, cultivating a profound sense of empathy and affinity towards the depicted personas. The active involvement of the audience in the emotional journeys of the characters cultivates a deep level of engagement, resulting in an enhanced comprehension of the complexities of human behaviour.

The stage dramas of Mahesh Dattani demonstrate a complex interweaving of psychological understanding of the character and embodiment of *Rasa*, *Neo Rasa* and emotional involvement rooted in experiences. The characters in his works serve as conduits for a thorough exploration of the human condition, prompting the viewer to navigate the complex realm of emotions and experiences. Dattani's theatrical prowess solidifies his position as a prominent figure in the domain of the Modern Indian Drama, creating a lasting impression on both the theatrical platform and the cognitive faculties of individuals who engage with his artistic creations.

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