

# ON AN IDENTITY: A REREADING OF MAHESH DATTANI'S SELECT PLAYS

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*Abstract* : Indian theatre, since its inception, underwent several layers of changes due to contemporary needs and issues. Mahesh Dattani's plays in English attempt to decode various social issues prevalent at different points of time. The plays by Dattani seek to dismantle the existing heteronormative structure of sexuality and the characters of the plays, thereby, build identities based on their characteristic instincts and impulses. The present paper attempts to show the identities which the characters of the plays acquire through different body gestures and performativities. These characters, often termed as dissident, show their tenets of identities which work both as appropriation of and resistance to the so called establishment. The present paper aims at decoding the rooted identity inherent in the characters and seeks to present the characters in the select plays under the template of their newly achieved identities.

*IndexTerms - Identity, Body, Sexuality, Resistance and Theatre.*

Nandi Bhatia defines the imperatives of Modern Indian theatre as "a static or essentialist evocation of tradition that gets set off 'against modernity' and is projected as 'the loss of authenticity'" (Bhatia, Modern Indian XXXVI). Indeed, the trajectory of Indian theatre in English shows the development of thematic progression keeping in view the demands of contemporary society. As a result, the entire genre of theatre becomes a mirroring tool by means of which the dramatists sought to portray and delineate the issues prevalent in the society. Rooted in the classical Sanskrit Drama for its tradition, early Indian Dramas written in English seem to imitate the western tradition relying much upon the hermeneutics of thematic formulation on theatre and as a result, till 1970s Indian Drama in English hardly had its essentialism which later developed by the dramatists through the proper reinforcement of Indianness with the emergent themes. It refers "to disparate forms of representation, reading practices and values...bound up with historical experiences." (McLeod 4). Thus Indian Dramas in English after 1970, unlike their predecessors, seem to take up issues with authenticity and any act of taking up of issues in favour of representing the emergent themes does give the licence to the dramatists to weave characters not as an epitome of singularity but a fusion of different cultural and social inscriptions. This culminates into building an identity of its own and hence a celebration of free will, not depending on the impositions but ensuring a deviation through its own adaptation, interfaced with acquired consciousness and liminality woven by a simultaneous free play of guilt and desire to move beyond that guilt.

In the plays of Mahesh Dattani, the issues of the present and so to say the issues of the contemporary society get challenged and questioned by the dramatist so much so the inefficacy of the prevalent normative patterns of the society do surface in his works. Dattani's plays, therefore, seem to contest the societal prevalent norms due to its inability to provide security to those who may not be following the patterns prescribed for them and hence they are treated as abnormal to the eyes of the society. But the characters are shown to be not submissive and succumbing to that machinery but do find the ways to make the home and world on their own, this making of home and world is metaphoric and psychic because literally they remain at the same location but it is their mental space which determines the desire for change and they do perform much on the basis of their psychosis than the physicality and hence in Dattani, the invisible becomes an important issue than the visibility, the unknown and the search and quest for it whose effect is shown in and through the building of their identities turns out to be the crux of his plays.

Unlike his contemporaries, Mahesh Dattani puts emphasis on the exploration of Indian identity and it is precisely because of his act of identification of characters with the situation; while the apparition of homosexuality on Indian stage is configured with the name of Dattani who rather further proliferates its notion by terming it as 'metro-sexuality' because of its foundation on Indian urban society, the question of Indian identity still looms large in his dramaturgy and by way of giving it a proper shape and

destination he does not hesitate to create characters who subvert and resist the traditional notion of being a 'normative' because for them "resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention, nor is it the simple negation or the exclusion of the 'content' of another culture, as difference once perceived...[but] the effect of an ambivalence produced within the rules of recognition of dominating discourses..." (Qtd. in Loomba 149). Thus, the urge in Dattani's plays relies much on the humanist representation of his characters whose identity becomes the outcome of an inhuman torture ironically resulting into a humanist, often seen as ambiguous due to its multiple layers, identity and as for the construction of his dramaturgy Dattani himself confessed, "Indian drama/theatre is not a homogeneous unit. It can be understood as a hybrid form which comprises pluralities of expressive forms and can easily accommodate a lot of experimentation." (Qtd. in Mukherjee 27).

Commenting on the dramaturgy based on the formation of a new setting inclining towards Naturalistic theatre, Mahesh Dattani proclaims, "I am practicing theatre in an extremely imperfect world where the politics of doing theatre in English looms large over anything else one does. Where writing about the middle class is seen as unfashionable...I am certain that my plays are a true reflection of my time, place and socio-economic background...in a country that has a myriad challenges to face politically, socially, artistically and culturally." (Qtd. in Chaudhuri 24). In fact, Mahesh Dattani's position in relation to the trajectory of Indian English drama is not only determined by the changes brought about by him in the theatricality, so to say changes on 'stage' but also with the imperatives he drew, both as a playwright and a wisher of driving away social taboos in a heteronormative societal structure, and exposed in and through his writings and therefore via 'page'. In his articulation of the themes, Mahesh Dattani, from the very first attempt, was simultaneously careful and conscious to make his works aware of the contemporary Indian scenario and therefore, even when he deals with issues like Gay relations, communal Violence, the contest and conflict between familial members, incestuality, child sexual abuse which were quite unusual at that time. Dattani treats the themes with frankness exploiting the hollowness of culture and monolithicity of the governing force of the society. Out of this tussle between the oppressors and oppressive, centralised and marginalised what ultimately surfaces at the telos of the (re)presentation is the birth of an identity which had to suffer at its blossom for gaining the ground but at last through various struggles and toleration of oppression it gets its due cognition.

The characters of Dattani's plays, rounded as they are, often show a sort deviation from the prescribed pattern of behavioural ethics formulated and implemented by the patriarchy and definitely those holding power in a phallogocentric society. The uniqueness of Dattani lies in the illustration or furtherisation of the panorama of this ill treated class which is not only subordinated by the gendered virility but also through sexuality and here unlike some other social playwrights who often sought to put a balance in inequality through critiquing the actions and performance of the privileges and therefore highlighting what could be the situation but still is not, Dattani takes interest in the entailment of the marginalised itself and then proceeds to compare that with the mainstream highlighting the fissures in the mainstream but never undermined the potentiality latent in the subordinated and therefore the exposition of the 'silent' voice does not remain an act but a hermeneutics of unleashing the ontology of the dramatist where each layer is unlayered by the very consciousness in other words the inception of the conception. Here the dramatist is not dependent on the social matrix but creates a matrix, of course a reality based, which itself shows its potency to absorb heterogeneity but somehow could due to various imperatives. As a critique, Dattani sought to interrogate this hiatus created by the 'Self' holding the power by way of unmasking the prevalent norms and so as to calling into question the ideologies based on which the identity of a person is determined. Notwithstanding the prescribed notions of gender identity, Dattani includes in his plays a free play of gender performances and also the 'subverted' one and thereby making the so called 'subverted' another version which has so long been not accepted as a normative fixation of gender identity but creating the realms of their own Dattani, somehow, empowered and established them in his plays. Hence, gays, lesbians, hijras, third gender all find effective outlet replacing the so called heteronormative societal gender structure. These identities are definitely newly gained because in Indian society before Dattani there was hardly any play based on these issues and therefore Dattani plays the role of a

beginner which is both challenging and effective in making sense of a societal paradigm which is postcolonial in sense if not in essence.

As a matter of fact, like other subaltern imperatives Postcolonialism, as a literary theory, seeks to unlock those victims of subjugation from the clutches of subordination inverting the prevalent binaries between self and other; those holding the power and those thrown to the margin and in Indian context the handling of postcolonial ethos merged even from the time of Raja Rao and flows through the hands of Salman Rushdie, Girish Karnad, Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Elkunchwar and so on. In Indian theatre attempts have been made to dramatise and represent those invisible issues in society which got suppressed in course of time due to various hegemonic implications but Mahesh Dattani, like other playwrights of post 70s, went to uncover the covered realms of cultural domination by showing figures on stage who face the taboos in surviving yet rise as individuals overcoming the suppression, gaining the consciousness and ultimately forming a new identity acquired by themselves. Taher Ben Jallouin remarks, "We have two cultures, it is as if we have two mothers and two fathers, perhaps we don't have total control, like writers in the west, but we have two possible inner worlds, I think we are doubly clever; first to use the narrative techniques of the west and secondly, to exploit the narrative traditions, of the folklore, the stories from our respective countries, and we have come up a third type of literature which is unlike western writing, which is essential provincial, egocentric and onward looking." (Qtd. in Dhawan and Pant 152). Mahesh Dattani, by the dint of his representational ethics, seems to subscribe to the above mentioned third type of literature which shows the lacuna inherent in the established culture and so to form a new type of production by exploring the vacuum of Indian culture and proves the dominant as an absurd one. Characters in Dattani, such as Kiran in *Where There's a will*, Ratna in *Dance Like a Man*, Tara in *Tara*, Old Baa, Dolly and Alka in *Bravely Fought the Queen*, Deepali in *A Muggy Night in Mumbai*, Gowda and Lata in *Do the Needful*, Uma in *Seven Steps around the Fire* do face the question of feminine identity and suffer at the hands of patriarchal mode of subjugation and their suffering metonymically refers to Spivak's concern of female subaltern as doubly colonized in colonial paradigm. Spivak says "Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject the track of sexual difference is doubly effected...It is rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominate, if, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the female as female is more deeply in shadow." (Qtd. in Dhawan and Pant 151). Albeit, we cannot deny the difference created by Dattani in representing his women characters in his plays who often going beyond the imposed autonomy, proclaim and celebrate the 'imposed', for example Deepali in *A Muggy Night in Mumbai* "Every time I menstruate, I thank God I am a Woman." This the celebration of acquired identity notwithstanding the stereotypical role of 'second sex' as a body meant for the work of 'needle'. Therefore the creation of new identity empowered by self-consciousness working against chauvinism is unique in Dattani because it can both resist and perform via celebration.

Dattani's women often suffer from the incapacity of going beyond, so to say surpass, the role of mere commodity as in Tara in *Tara* and Old Baa, Dolly and Alka in *Bravely Fought the Queen* yet on the other hand we have figures like Ratna and Kiran who from the very beginning, both on page and stage, show the consciousness of postcolonial womanhood. Dattani's *Seven Steps around the Fire* is a dramatic representation of the subjugation done to a particular community called 'hijra' in India; Uma, a research scholar, pursues in search of the truth of this subjugation and the ideologies working behind the subjugation and in result found the callousness of the society in providing equal protection to each of its community. Although Uma was the daughter of minister and wife of commissioner, yet she was not able to bring forth the true cause of the death of a hijra called Kamala and although known to all that Kamala was killed by the instruction of the minister for marrying his son Subbu and total representation shows as if the decision taken by own choice in marrying each other, the couple coasted amount of violation to the society; everything is hushed up and the culprit remains static in enjoying the power status thus the corruption in the societal structure is deliberately juxtaposed with the bonding Uma found with Anarkali, a hijra, in terms of a shared ground of the feeling of subjugation and oppression. The commonality between the two constitutes a bonding which is sensibly superior than the so called given superiority enjoyed by the authority; therefore, the continuous process of disruption of moral values and formation an

uncanny liaison gives the play an effective site of critiquing the contemporaneity with the provision of replacing it by the new order. The survived being though a figure of cultural and oppressive inscription and the body undergoing several stages of atrocities is allowed to “speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and in so doing, to speak for, or to sound the muted voice of truly oppressed.” (Qtd. in Gandhi 2).

In *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*, Dattani simultaneously legitimises the need and justification of human sexuality which is a selection by choice of the individual and hence not collective force. The concept of male and female only puts a social security to a human body but this has hardly anything to do with the desire of beings but still, those who do not fall under these two categories, just because of not having the consent to bind the self with the collective consensus, immediately are called ‘outsiders’ in the heteronormative pattern of society and the suffering starts for them for not fitting into the societal programmed institution. With the presentation of characters like Ed and Bunny and Sharad and Kamallesh, who are proved to be gays in their actions, Dattani shows the trauma and crisis these characters need to undergo resulting out of the tussle between their choice and what they are expected to perform. “The fact is that although sex represents a natural part of their biological needs, many of these men do not want to have casual sex relations only to satisfy their sexual appetites; they would prefer to have a stable relationship in which there is sex but above all friendship and love. These men yearn for their “*yaar*”, their special bond or soul-mate.” (Qtd. in Arroyo 92). Ranjit’s opinion and definition of gay men getting forced to marry and consequently leading a double life only to hide the innermost identity from the heterosexual gaze is somewhat symptomatic to ‘being a Bunburyist’ as may be reflected in and through Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The continuous contest between the real and imaginary shows the chaotic psychology of the characters and Deepali, woman character, is also shown as a female constituting her sexuality by her own choice. In an interview with Raj Ayyar, Dattani himself confessed, “My women protagonists fight, scheme and get a piece of action albeit at great personal cost. They are seen as ‘negative’ qualities, sadly by some women too...but really, we have yet to see feminism find expression in Indian society.” (Qtd. in Agarwal 163). Dattani never searches for womanhood as an epitome of idealised goddess, nor do his plays conform to the ethos of radical feminism rather the entire focus he lays on the drives of women and therefore, his womanhood becomes a site of contestation and conflict between love and compassion versus identity formation plus basic self.

The coalescing impact of heterogeneous desires finds its way in *Do the Needful* where the personal tension of a gay Gujarati boy Alpesh and a South Indian girl Lata in marrying against their own choice to go in line with the parental consent creates the postcolonial ambiance where the dramatic conflict is focused not on the external forces but within one’s hidden terrains of unconsciousness. It is the free choice of the young generation which has been usurped by the parents and in result, although the children do marry as per their parents’ choice but they continued their secret relationships with their lovers respectively and the irony looms large but before that what turns out to be the more practical aspect is the free choice enjoyed by the young generation of India. Amar Nath Prasad calls the play an ‘unconventional romantic comedy’ (Prasad 185) because “It is romantic as it ends happily. It is unconventional as the couple has their own likes and dislikes of their physical needs” (Prasad 185) and the stress here is laid on the individual choice which makes the identity as an active, workable and decisive one because Alpesh’s second marriage with Lata may last long, moreover its foundation is premised on consent and compromise which speaks of “*Teri bhi chup, meri bhi chup*” (Qtd. in Chaudhuri 61).

*Thirty Days in September*, by Dattani, critiques the issues related to childhood sexual abuse. In the play, this has been depicted in and through the character of Mala who is at once a victim of perversion of male heritage and also a perceiver of the hostile around her where only the spark of betrayal glitters. Her angst becomes even more traumatic and powerful when she comes to know that after being informed about her child’s getting raped by one of the family member, the mother prefers to maintain silence and complacency with the issue with an innermost desire to hush up the news from the eyes of the public. Hence, Mala suffers at two planes—first with her own self which has become an object of desire to her uncle and also with the ease of her mother who sharing same sex keeps muted forgetting her motherhood and womanhood. Sudhir Kakar locates another insight into this sort of practice

while asserting “In the Indian family, the hierarchical ordering of relationships, and their durability, even timelessness, provides some fulfilment of the individual’s lifelong need for external authority figures; the maternal mode of family care salvages some of the continuity between the individual’s early and later experiences, while the emphasis on the primacy of relationships seeks to counteract the individuals’ narcissistic orientation and self-absorption which, if unchecked, would seriously undermine social stability and cooperation.” (Kakar 164). Shanta, the mother of Mala, ultimately exposes the reason behind her silence maintaining that she was under the financial assistance of the uncle Vinay and therefore required to tolerate and digest what went with her daughter and it is her silent screams which pave the way for broken dreams for her daughter. Dattani her shows how the valorisation of masculine power pushes the horrified women imperatives to its limit and the suffering of Mala and Shanta shows the state of stupor felt by the woman psyche before all engulfing sexual colonisation done by phallogocentric society and any mode of breaking the silence will not only constitute the postcolonial resistance put against that colonisation but also an affirmation of the identity which is a complete new representation on Indian stage done by Dattani.

*Bravely Fought the Queen* is a presentation of the subjugation done to women, weaker class and at the same time the inversion of the subjugation in terms of building new identity on the basis of individual choice. Jiten is a violent, alcoholic, lecherous wife beater who survives with a very distress memory of childhood and Nitin is a gay who is torn between his public life and personal life (also split by the collective consent and individual desire). Women figures like Old Baa, Dolly Alka all suffer at the hands of patriarchy and they suffer from the pangs of past which is equally present at present, they cannot remove the experience and sometimes try to forget by masquerading but in effect are bound by reality. Sutapa Chaudhuri points out, “Dattani’s plays are not just about victimization. In fact as the title of *Bravely Fought the Queen* itself signifies, the play also focuses on women’s resistance against male atrocities and the simultaneous attempt to evolve their own identities beyond the barriers set up by patriarchal discourse.” (Chaudhuri 82). *Where There’s a Will* is a significant configuration of comments and counter-comments taking place between Hashmukh, the father and his son, wife and daughter-in-law. Hashmukh actually tried to dominate his son and wife by patriarchal atrocities and dies with a will to reform everyone. The close invisible fusion between his wish and the programmed expectation through the will opens up the real intention of the survivors who wanted to enjoy the will with greedy mentality showing least respect, a cultural stuff and practice, to the father and this shows the hollowness and void of culture and on the other hand the greedy human mentality which works even beyond the sphere of emotion and affection. The play surely proves the existence of a different version of mentality pre-existing beneath the apparent simplicity of human gestures.

Dattani’s preoccupation with the suffering of women, projected and delineated as the object of patriarchal subjugation, often tends to have an essence of humanity and this is what characterised the play *Tara* where we find “the courage and spirit of a handicapped Siamese twin who could have survived but for her mother’s decision to give the extra leg to her twin brother.” (Dhawan and Pant 121). In fact, Tara’s mother got a leg amputated from her Siamese twins when there was a great deal of probability of the survival of the girl child. Through this pathetic story of a girl who is denied to have the privilege of surviving like a normative being, Dattani shows the tortures done by the patriarchy towards the second sex. In fact, for the sake of having a male normative infant, parents never thought for the second time to utmost harm to a girl child; this gender discrimination is also done by a woman acting as the mother in case of parental consent and the dramatist shows effective his own conscience fighting against this act of disparity. Yet ironically speaking, Dattani makes the accomplishment of the practices inherent in a hetero-normative pattern of society not by the free will of the males but also through the resistance of females. As he himself declares, “I see *Tara* as a play about the male self and female self. The male self is being preferred in all culture. The play is about the separation of self and the resultant angst.” (Subremenyam 134). Hence, the feminine identity is represented not as a tortured self but as a proclaimed authentic manifesto.

*Final Solutions* is a play in which the playwright sought to delineate the aftermath of partition resulting into communal violence. “In *Final Sollutions*, Dattani has captured a socio-political issue with the vision of a partaker in the chain of events. Instead of repeating the mechanical response of characters, he grips the turmoil of emotions associated with them.” (Mukherjee 181).

Dattani is truly successful in conveying the sense of futility inherent in the human behaviour guided by the sense of separation fused with the mentality of communality. Ramnik, Auna and Hardika had to share the burden of guilt they bear with their memories even after independence yet Simta and Babban(Bobby) share a psychosis which is transgressive of the religious cults nurtured by the parents of Smitha. The sense of secularism, whether delineated as a creative tool to maintain the status-quoeness or to formulate a new sense of aesthetics of collaboration, is hugely taken as an imperative to be ushered to form cosmos out of chaos in terms of religious assimilation.

Through the seamless movement in time and space, Dattani weaves in the intricate web of gender relationships and gives it the societal norms in his plays and this is evident in his *Dance Like a Man* which shows that society mythologizes gender as natural but actually it, in effect, demonstrates societal codes of gender conduct which enacts the risk of temptations to forego the tussle of liberty and embrace the imperative to be condemned to perform because the society, in fact, prescribes the act of dance only for women and hence a man's performance of dance, to social eyes, is at once heinous and unmanly. Jairaj's rebellion against his father can be taken as a son's rivalry against the father within the matrix of Oedipal economy of rivalry is both masculine and open for critiquing the proper birth of the subjugated other as the rising self; the very act of dance, therefore, is a coupling of performance of gender and performance of art and the entire play renames, an act of postcolonial formation, Tandava of Siva where the detachment with feminine or 'yonic' is also an act of the surplus of the phallic and the ultimate contestation between the two results into a site of conflict and procedural matrix of birth of new identity where man can dance like a 'man' and on the other hand the suffering of Ratna creates the subjugation of a woman who undergoing several restrictions can perform what she desired and her outburst on anger not to let her child suffer what she personally suffered is an act of empathy which Dattani wanted, out and out, to attach with the women where the suffering becomes a lesson not to allow to be under that.

In a nutshell, Dattani's plays provide enough space to critique issues which were quite prevalent at the then society and by way of exploring those issues Dattani not only creates in his dramatic oeuvre a matrix devoid of atrocities found in the real society but also identifies his characters with multiple facets of identities and in doing so he never binarised or attempted to taxonomise his male and female figures in terms of assigned performance in accordance with prototypical gender roles rather he subverts the canonical view of 'man for field' and 'woman for needle' and presents before us both the categories in a unified way which is at once ambiguous because it keeps on changing at regular length due to situations it faces but after all rises at a height epitomising certain aspects required for becoming. The dramaturgy of Dattani is not a mere trajectory of the growth of identity because the acquired identity is a result of subversion subverted by the identity holder and therefore equal stress should be laid upon the performance through deeds of the characters so much so they attain the height seriousness and at the same time authenticity living in their own domain. Hence, the crux of identity becomes a site of collision and collusion with several social issues out of which the ultimate surfacing turns out to be transgressive and resistant in nature and at times the identity of the dramatist and his men and women seem to be synonymous as Dattani himself confessed, "I wanted my writing to explore area that people wanted to be kept in darkness. In doing so, I was clearing the clouds that loomed over my life and my identity as a dramatist." (Dattani, *Me and My Plays* 32).

The formulation of identity, whether as a pre-determined one or as an outcome of the spontaneous progression of the dramaturgy, actually delineates the struggle one required to undergo to survive in an unfavoured societal matrix and therefore the marginalised in the plays of Dattani suffer at large due to various social oppression and repression albeit the marginalised stands unmoved and shows the authenticity which is required for a postcolonial being in preference to achieve a postcolonial. Dattani remarked, "You can talk about feminism, because in a way that is accepted. But you can't talk about gay issues because that's not Indian [that] doesn't happen here. You can't talk about a middle-class housewife fantasizing about having sex with the cook or actually having sex life-that isn't Indian either-that's confrontational even if it is Indian." (Qtd. in Das 7). This remark by Dattani actually shows his intention to delineate figures on page/stage who do possess a curse from a genesis of or on which they hardly have any control therefore they go with a given status, unchangeable at least to the degree of its (re)construction.

Dattani belongs “to a generation of writers who use the English language without either pride or guilt.” (Mehrotra 349). Dattani’s characters show enough resistance, both on page and stage, which brings them under the focus of Postcolonial Indian figures on stage which seems to blur the rigid bifurcation of Western imperative of Orientalist stage and Indian traditional theatre which was expounded by Bharata in *Natyashastra* and incepted on stage by Sanskrit dramatists’ figures. Kathryn Hansen in *Grounds for Play: The Nautanki Theatre of North India* remarks that the emergence of urban drama under European influence “did not completely supplant indigenous theatrical genres, but the reformist discourse that resulted from the colonial experience pushed the theatres to the margins of respectability...the campaigns against popular culture dramatically diminished the number of practitioners, leading to their eventual exile from urban society.” (Qtd. in Bhatia 67). But Dattani holds a different stance altogether because his plays promote a critical depiction of the trauma and plight which individuals, preferably the marginalised, “have continued to face in post-independence India and at the same time offer us visions of an alternative world that may yet be possible. His sensitivity as an author seems to display what Virginia Woolf...called ‘manwomanly kind’ as his representations of women are always able to transcend those patriarchal stereotypes that often crowd the literary scene while stressing their material conditions.” (Qtd. in Chaudhuri 86). The characters, in Dattani, may be assessed as figures in liminality of doing/performance because they do tend to do rebel against the oppressive agencies of society but ultimately cannot drag the society out the oppression rather finding an alternative one, they make a home of their own and therefore the establishment remains what it appeared to be, got shaken by a tussle of imposing and resistance but in effect its rigidly binarised periphery is pushed to a limit. Therein lies the success of Dattani’s figures, they cannot create an ‘alternative’ in a viable term but they have been able to alter their sociological nativity, they realise a need of an ‘acceptance’ and ‘rebellion’ and hence they traditionally, in relation to their performativity within society, remain in a process interfaced by the act of hovering between centre and boundary hence not becoming the telos of the process, they “perceive their task as making a theory of consciousness or culture rather than specifically a theory of change.” (Qtd. in Lazarus 146).

Indeed, what I find is that Dattani’s figures dismantle the celebrated notion of normative pattern of being and behaviour and as a result, they constitute and re-mantle the question of identity as a continuous mutual proliferation of two inherent parts of the human self, the feminine and the masculine debunking their given essence and thus re-creating a sense of the playwright’s own which might proclaim “heterosexuality is so normative that it does not need to be named as a sexual practice. Only those who resist this norm are called upon to define their sexuality.” (Qtd. in Arroyo 95). Indeed, Dattani’s characters moving in a seamless movement of his dramaturgy seem to explore what the dramatist sought in people to build a society which can entail the differences to procure a matrix of multiplicity.

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