

Humour in the play 'Where There Is Will'

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Abstract: Mahesh Dattani began his career as a copywriter in an advertising firm. He (b. 1958) is a reformist playwright of modern India whose works have been interpreted as texts of social critique. Dattani is widely appreciated for his technical excellences as well as displaying a wide range of themes and subjects. In 1986, he wrote his first full-length play, *Where There's a Will*, and since 1995, he has been working as a full-time theatre professional. Dattani solved this problem by writing his own play *Where There's a Will* in 1988, and the playwright came into being. He has also worked with his father in the family business. [Mahesh Dattani's](#) "Where There's a Will" (1986) employs sharp satire and light farce to critique patriarchal ego, focusing on the comedic, post-mortem power struggle of a tyrannical patriarch, Hasmukh Mehta, who continues to control his family from the afterlife. Humour arises from Hasmukh's ghost watching his family misuse their sudden freedom and his chaotic interference in their lives. The play ultimately uses this humour to expose the dysfunctional nature of Indian patriarchal family structures, showcasing how greed and control lead to foolishness. When one looks only on the surface level it appears to be the play of a top businessman by name Hasmukh Mehta. When one dives in deep, the play appears to be rich and copious revealing its different interpretations. The plot of the play revolves around the life as well as after-life of a man named Hasmukh Mehta, who is a rich and successful businessman. He is a dissatisfied patriarch with the typical problems of familial expectations from his indifferent wife, Sonal and colourless married life; his spendthrift son Ajit, and a crafty and conniving daughter-in-law, Preeti; and last but not least his mistress Kiran Jhaveri.

Keywords: It explores the use of humour in Dattani's play, *Where There Is a Will* (1988), through Henri Bergson's concepts of comical inversion, rigidity and symmetrical repetition, to examine the comical elements of the events, dialogue and characters.