

## **Drama, Dattani and Discourse: Position and Exposition**

Ankur Konar

---

The multi-directional talent Mahesh Dattani and his progressive parenting of dramas need no introduction. First and foremost a dramatist, then a screenplay writer, dancer, thespian, teacher and director, he was born on 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1958 in Bangalore where he later founded his favourite theatre group Playpen in 1984 and where many of his settings are constructed; for example, *Bravely Fought the Queen* is set in the ‘suburb of Bangalore’ (233) and the Patels in *Tara* are ‘from Bangalore’ (337). Dattani’s playscript casts its focus and locus entirely on the urban space, specifically rooted in the dynamics of domestic space. Environmental sustainability of the cities like Bangalore or Mumbai in his plays are the symbolic tropes and modes of economic power that can be categorized as the material element for discussing the issue of citizenship that “raise(s) questions around notions of equality and rights, issues of individual, group and community rights, active and passive citizenship and the relationship between, and relative primacy of, rights and duties” (Roy 131). India, be it Bangalore or Mumbai, with the socio-cultural pluralism becomes a trope where differences are immensely negotiated and Dattani is successful in capturing that, in Appadurai’s phrase, “intersocietal relations” (2).

Dattani can be described as the glorious ‘taker’ of Indian English drama from the imaginative land of expectations to the space of glorious reality through his creative

## **Drama, Dattani and Discourse: Position and Exposition**

synchronicity of constructive spirit.<sup>1</sup> In his art, there is no Macbeth, but there is ambition; there is no Iago, but there is utter villainy; there is no grand royalty, but there is the strong sense of community; there is no imaginative great Wessex, but there is real India. His plays lack the grand presence of hero and heroine because there is no self-flagellation appearance of the characters in his dramas:

1988 *Where There's a Will*

1989 *Dance Like a Man*

1990 *Tara*

1991 *Bravely Fought the Queen*

1993 *Final Solutions*

1997 *Do the Needful*

1998 *Seven Circles Round the Fire*

1998 *On a Muggy Night in Mumbai*

2001 *Thirty Days in September*

2007 *The Girl Who Touched the Stars*

2009 *Brief Candle*

One conventional conviction against Dattani is that his dramas are more about the present socio-political issues and problems and when these problems will be erased out of society or will be solved then his dramas will no longer appeal to the readers for their redundancy.<sup>2</sup> Unlike Girish Karnard, Vijay Tendulkar and Mahesh Elkunchwar who have come to the scenario of Indian drama in English through the tropes of translation, Dattani have written directly into English. Right from his early career, he was dissatisfied with the mode of translators and started writing in English that is hybrid, home-grown and regularly spoken by the urban people.<sup>3</sup> One cannot but praise the uniqueness of Dattani's use of language in the direction of common everyday English with the mongrelizing elements of code-mixing ['bloody tamasha' (486)] and code-switching

[“Kem chcho? Majhja ma? Is Prema in?” (327)]. Dattani even directly exploits the possible communication through regional language: “Mere kuch dost ane wale hain. Tum unko ana dena. Tum to pehchate ho sub ko.” (50) The following statement from Multani is definitely a tripartite tribute to Dattani’s craft for using the language of his characters:

One of the most striking aspects of Dattani’s characters is that they use an English which is neither stilted, nor archaic, nor uncomfortably directed only towards a really elite and upper-class audience. Looking at the history of Indian drama in English, Mahesh Dattani stands out as perhaps the one of the very few (if not the only), and certainly, one of the most commercially successful Indian English playwrights. (12)

Language in the dramas of Dattani has the congruity of convincing and coherence, fitting the characters according to their social status; it is natural outcome of tongue; only accents make the difference. It is only through the use of language that play becomes more realistic and the common audiences in the Indian scenario begin to feel rapport with the common language-users on the stage. His plays are replete with the use of the colloquial register through telephone, functional mode of address through the market register of business world [‘advertising professional’ (286) ‘purchasing power’ (285) ‘market survey’ (274)], medical world [‘kidney transplant’, ‘surgery’ (338), ‘blood pressure’ (344)]. During the random *raj* of the ‘Big Four’ in 1980s - Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar and Girish Karnard, Dattani appeared in the Little Theatre of Bangalore and began to learn the crafts of drama through workshops that helped him to understand the life’s epiphany:

Man has created a very complex language called theatre. A language that has the ability to redefine the natural concepts of time, space and movement. A language that goes beyond the verbal, a movement that goes beyond the physical. Through this language of theatre he has been able to see himself for who he is, what he has made of himself and what he aspires to be. (Dattani 2002: 1)

By solely using English as the means of his emotional expression that posits a contrast to the linguistic plurality of the traditional theatrical practice in India, Dattani has been able to unify the problems of diverse Indians. Irrespective of place and space, multilingual Indians may take Dattani’s texts as a ‘mirror up to society’ (Dattani 2000: xv). Dattani goes for the innate

## **Drama, Dattani and Discourse: Position and Exposition**

naturalization of English as a powerful medium for mass communication in India. Telephonic relatedness abounds in Dattani's plays. Examples can be input from *Bravely Fought the Queen*, *Dance like a Man* and *Final Solutions*.

Without “unnecessarily hark back to the past” (Choudhuri 21) Dattani's middle class family centered plays are about the mandatory day to day life – conflict of conservations, root of relationships, attraction and repulsion, love and hate, association and dissociation, unity and diversity, fundamental and radical, ontological sense and ideological essence, bodily identity and sexual security, generation gap and sexual map of common people. The representative range from *Where There's a Will* to *Brief Candle* is heavily focused on the pull and push of social urban life, not on the representation of historical incidents from the dusty pages of chronology as we generally find in Girish Karnard; Dattani's plays are the true textual reflection of “contemporary time, place and socio-economic background” (Dattani 2000: xv). Another unique feature of Dattani is that he, not like the other dramatists, merely presents and represents but in a way interprets the issues involved in his dramas; there is always a strong undertone of various ‘isms’ in his plays, without particularly highlighting any one. Naturally, his dramas, by textualising the elements of tricks and taboos, nurture textual concurrence and convergence of all inclusive society – its contents and discontents; but there is no dragging out to unnecessary length. Dattani's plays, through the candid conversation of the characters, are in no way pedagogic propaganda, but sensitive representative of issues and isms, in depth discussion of different dynamics: construction of India, typology of home, inter-subjective, ephemeral, fugitive characters, their buccaneering twists and turns with the fusion of unusual experimental themes and usual aberration of themes related to post-coital thoughts. In most of his dramas, he uses the concept of ‘family chronicle’. His women characters are sometimes new women; for example, in *Dance Like a Man*, *Seven Steps Round the Fire* and *Final Solutions*, women are taking initiatives; Smita, Uma, Ratna from Dattani's portrait-gallery are modern girls of self-responsible, having social aspiration, they are women with individuality. In a general observation, his characters have been thrown into an osmotic process when the bitter hidden truth is ultimately revealed in the final page of the play.

His first published play *Where There's a Will* is about the directional dominance that lies under the smug surface of relationship. When dominance is thrown upon abundantly, it casts a

negative impact on the dominated; the natural outcome is resisted and man/woman becomes mechanical to be acted on the pressure of a switch, otherwise not. Under the constant surveillance, individuality is lost and personality becomes a sign of subversion. The action moves round the 'lavish house' (455) of 'proud' and 'stubborn' (472) Hansmukh Mehta, the 'Big Boss' (460) who declares himself to be 'one of the richest men in this city' (464) is the uttermost dominant to his son. A shadow of Hardy's Henchard in *The Mayor of Casterbridge* can be traced. The presence of three male generations can be compared to the three female generations in *Final Solutions*. Allied with the patriarchal construction in society, the play is also about 'property' (487), measurement of property, division of property and some revelation through the participation of the Gujarati characters like Ajit, Preeti, Sonal. The last part of the play deals with the unhappy Hansmukh's death and his 'will' becomes active to determine the characters' behaviour. The play, with a sensitive mode, projects how sometimes the absconding signature of authority becomes an isolating caricature of normality.

*Dance Like a Man* falls in the same category with *Where There's a Will* – the presence of authoritarian father. Jairaj is eager to take dance as his profession but his father is vehemently critical of Jairaj's standpoint because the socio-political structure of our society does not allow a man to take dance as his profession and consider dance to be for a different kind of women. Jairaj desperately tries to break away with such traditional social custom by delving deep into the world of rhythm and dance and further marries a dancer named Lata who also belongs to a dancing family. After a series of clash of view points, the play culminates with an artistic revelation through the dramatic dance of powerful sensibilities.

*Tara*, originally titled *Twinkle Tara*, dramatizes a rigid sense of gender discrimination practiced by patriarchal society. Through the chains of ideological pride and biological parallax, the play which unleashes a pathetic story of Tara, textualises that a Siamese twins with three legs can also be subject to patriarchal hegemony by forceful attribution of the third leg to the male child in spite of its prone to be fitted in the female one.

*Bravely Fought the Queen* absorbs different perspectives – gender construction, capitalistic mode of relationship, deviant sexual identity of gay relationship, market ideology, professional insecurity etc. Dealing with the lives of Jiten, Nitin, Dolly, Alka and Baa, the play is about identity formation – be it social, conjugal, sexual, positional, and instinctual. Through the

## **Drama, Dattani and Discourse: Position and Exposition**

ironic reference to the Rani of Jhansi in the title, the women in *Bravely Fought the Queen* have been projected as the 'second sex' and it culminates with the sense how the female being 'becomes' woman. It is a pity that though the female beings can realize their frustration they cannot attempt to be out of their somewhat passive assigned role. As far as sexual map of society is concerned the play ends with a dramatic and unexpected revelation.

Dattani's Sahitya Akademi Award (1998) winning play *Final Solutions* which is written just after the Babri Masjid destruction unfolds the state of communal riot in the post-Partition India. By using the domestic space of Ramnik family as the setting, the play moves forward with the intrusion of two young Muslim namely, Javed and Bobby in Ramnik household. The conversation reveals that the sense of communalism is very much part of Indian socio-political territory and it is being repeated again and again. Along with the lack of trust and tolerance the play abounds with the themes like generation gap, politics, communities and identities in the lives of Ramnik, Aruna, Smita, Daksha, Javed and Bobby.

Dattani again touches the disturbing issue ('disturbing' at least in the Indian context) and the off-beat theme of gay in his first radio play *Do the Needful*, broadcasted in BBC Radio in 1997. Through the broad dimension of inter-caste marriage between Gujarati Alpesh Patel and Kannadigas Lata Gowda, Dattani presents the aura of forceful marriage in Indian society and ultimate revelation of extra-marital affair: in spite of being a homosexual individual, Alpesh is forced to marry a girl; and in spite of being a lover of a terrorist named Salim, Lata is forced to marry Alpesh. The ultimate message of the text is that people, the social being, should do the needful act not according to the traditional rules but according to individual schedule; otherwise marriage will always be a cage. Forced harmony will ultimately bring the sense of confrontation that is always out of 'control' (126). The play ends with a sense of mutuality between the two.

Dattani is in no way a trend follower but definitely a trend setter, dealing with the issues of the marginalized in the Indian urban society. Marginalized and victimized figures get abundant space in his dramas. His radio play, *Seven Steps Round the Fire*, broadcasted as *Seven Circles Round the Fire* by B.B.C. Radio in 1999, dramatizes the encounter between the mainstream society and the eunuch community. The play, a rare example of Dattani's detective play, moves through the eyes of the wife of the Police Superintendent Suresh Rao, Uma who tries to delve down the mysterious death or rather murder of Kamla, a eunuch who is supposed to be

married to Subbu, the son of a powerful minister. Police department attempts to project this murder as an act of class conflict in which Anarkali has killed the beautiful Kamla who ‘was everyone’s first choice’ (25). Unconvinced Uma, a woman with dignity [“I teach at Bangalore University” (12)] and with hefty individuality [“I teach sociology” (12)] goes deep into the mysterious matter and becomes astonished when she, surprisingly enough, finds that his own husband is associated to this dehumanized incident, bribed by that minister. Constable Munswamy plays an active role in Uma’s investigation. Incidentally, Subbu, out of frustration of conscience, kills himself. The play, focusing bright light on the cultural rituals and social basis of the eunuch community, puts an indirect critique of our so called civilized mainstream society its limitations and its anarchical reservoir of perversion: “All murder cases. Man killing wife, wife killing man’s lover, brother killing brother. And that shelf is full of dowry death cases.” (7) The sacrosanct idea of ‘seven steps round the fire’ related to the traditional Hindu marriage has been deflowered by the brutality imposed by political power as well as by administrative power. As in Mahasweta Devi’s *Mother of 1084*, police department is vehemently criticized with the strong note that justice is being denied because police is failing to offer protection and violently suppresses *hijra* community to “have no voice” (42). Anarkali’s lamentation sounds pathetic to bludgeon the police department: “One hijra less in this world does not matter to your husband” (35). Uma appears again in Dattani’s other detective plays like *Swami and Winston* and *Uma and the Fairy Queen*.

*On the Muggy Night in Mumbai* is the “first play in Indian theatre to handle openly gay themes of love, partnership, trust and betrayal” (McRae 45). The play moves through the figuration of Kamlesh, Ed, Bunny, Prakash, Deepali – the homosexual variations of Gays and Lesbians whose self-reflexive positioning defines the new metro-sexual identity formation in the newly ‘created world’ (49) through the assertion of own ideology, flamboyancy and rejection of traditional approach, with the undertone of wedding music in the background. Much like the Shavian stage direction, the play concentrates “the secret private space of the bedroom and the deeper space that belongs to the inner thoughts of the characters” (49). It is a play of reorientation “to change society” (69) to “be happy as a gay man” (69), to get out of ‘depression’ (78). There seems to be reason to be wanted “to be straight” (99), as Deepali asserts: “I am all for the gay men’s cause. Men deserve only men!” (60) When Dattani revisits the same context in *Mango Scuffle*, the celluloid adaptation of the drama, the setting changes from ‘muggy’ Mumbai

## Drama, Dattani and Discourse: Position and Exposition

to his favourite Bangalore. Once again, like in other dramas, *On the Muggy Night in Mumbai* gives the marginalized a wide free space. It is only because Dattani dares to handle the sexual choice of gay and lesbian rights, having the capacity of 'strong' sense of right.<sup>4</sup>

In *Thirty Days in September* Dattani's theme is sexual abuse of children. It is a story of Mala who like Benare in Tendulkar's *Silence* has been physically harassed by her uncle in her childhood days. Such dramatic trauma makes Dattani's text a traumatic drama. Though such brutality is well known to her mother, yet there is no trace of protest. Shanta, Mala's mother, like Benare's mother instructs Mala to remain silent. The play nurtures a space of maternal transmission as Mala says to Shanta: "While I accused you of not recognizing my pain, you never felt any anger at me for not recognizing yours. We were both struggling to survive but – I never acknowledge your struggle." (138) Such incident is not an exceptional one but women in any patriarchal society have to regularly encounter such sexual bestiality.

With its allusive reference to Macbeth, the locale of Dattani's latest play *Brief Candle: A Dance between Love and Death* has been set at a cancer hospital in Mumbai. To celebrate its founding, all the members - the doctors, nurses and some patients – unleash their plan to perform a play. It is interesting to note that the script of the play has been written by a fellow patient who has been passed away. Due to storm outside the characters are awaiting their departure and are tossed between the zones of life and death. During their waiting, characters like Deepika, Mahesh, Amarinder eventually indulge in comicalities and grotesque love affairs. In spite of the trivialities the play denotes a strong sense of our 'brief' span on earth. To produce a poignant and tragic outcome, *Brief Candle*, like Tendulkar's *Silence*, uses the technique of a play within a play which captures an unpredictable 'tomorrow'.

In *The Girl Who Touched the Stars* the story moves round the astronaut Bhavna who has been able to create her own space of ambition even in a patriarchal society. It is that patriarchal society (as we find in *Tara*) which always votes for a male child instead of a female one. Through Dattani's typical dramatic strategy Bhavna meets Young Bhavna and analyses the journey from being to becoming which further paves the way for the other female characters too create their own space of liberation. It is ironical enough that Bhavna's father who behaves like a patriarchal agent very proudly says when Bhavna achieves success: "I am thinking of the responsibility on my daughter as the first indian woman to step on the moon. The responsibility



of making this a successful space mission that will pave the way for future generations of Indians who have similar aspirations.” (Dattani 2010: 73) The play is based on the real life story of Indian astronaut Kalpana Chawla and there are constant references to the words and phrases from the field of science.

One most interesting feature of the names of Dattani’s characters is that they are always the faces of our daily day-to-day life – the names that have been used many times by the other Indian writers and Dattani himself in their art. Examples of repetition of the characters’ names may include Daksha in *Final Solutions* and in *Bravely Fought the Queen*, Salim in *Do the Needful* and in *Seven Steps Round the Fire*, Aruna in *Final Solutions* and in Elkunchwar’s *Sonata*, Lalita in Elkunchwar’s *Desire in the Rocks* and Lalitha in *Bravely Fought the Queen*, Dolly in Gieve Patel’s *Mister Behram* and Dolly in *Bravely Fought the Queen*, Samant in *Brief Candle* and in Tendulkar’s *Silence*, Kamla in *Seven Steps Round the Fire*, Kamala in Tendulkar’s *Kamala* and Kamal in *Evam Indrajit*, Dolly in *Bravely Fought the Queen* and Doll in Karnard’s *Hayavadana*, Umakant Thakkar in *Tara* and Umakant in Tendulkar’s *The Vultures*, Kiran in *Where There’s a Will* and Kiran in *On the Muggy Night in Mumbai*, Champa in *Seven Steps Round the Fire* and Champa in Tendulkar’s *Sakharam Binder*. Auditory resemblance of the characters’ names like Dara in Indira Parthasarathi’s *Aurangzeb* and Tara in *Tara*, Subbu in *Seven Steps Round the Fire* and Somu in Mahasweta Devi’s *Mother of 1084*, Bobby in *Final Solutions* and Bunny in *On the Muggy Night in Mumbai*, Nalini in *Tara* and Nandini in *Mother of 1084* should also be marked. Similar to Tendulkar’s presentation, Champa and Kamala are figures of subjugation in Dattani. In many of Dattani’s dramas, one should also note the presence of the Patels who generally have “a low place in the traditional caste hierarchy” (Nussbaum 25) in our Indian society. In addition, there are some sentences that have been used many times in Dattani’s different texts: Chandan in *Tara* says: “It’s all the same. You. Me. There’s no difference” (361) and Javed in *Final Solutions* says: “We are not very different. You and me.” (214); Ratna in *Dance like a Man* says: “Times have changed” (412), Hardika in *Final Solutions* says: “things have not changed that much” (167) and Amritlal in *Dance like a Man* says: “Times haven’t changed” (419).

With no exaggeration, theatrical personality Dattani brings a strong sense of, in Dharwadker’s terms, ‘interdependence of drama and theatre’ (59). Dattani’s self-reflexive

## **Drama, Dattani and Discourse: Position and Exposition**

comments and reciprocal interview-bites have brought both clarity and popularity in the academic institutions. The attitudes and aptitudes of all encompassing theories always 'bore' him. On that basis he refuses to be a categorically rigid postcolonial dramatist:

I think they call me a postcolonial dramatist because I write in English. They wouldn't dare call Tendulkar or Karnard postcolonial. That way even English writing in England today can be called postcolonial by the same argument. It seems equally silly though. (Dattani 2009: 405)

Achieving the academic stardom in Indian academic institutions, he refuses the message of the theorists for their all indulging process of categorization. Let me also quote another part of the interview when he emphasizes that the rigid labelling process should be rejected and discarded:

I think I would like my work to be received as an engaging piece of drama first and foremost. Yes I am a political person and that is reflected in my choice of subjects. But the politics of my writing is just another aspect. How can we avoid the ghettoisation? Simply by not recognizing these labels. By not recognizing the categories other people put you in. if you want to be categorized, that is your choice. But even so, be prepared that you might just be doomed to stay in that category and not grow out of it, or not grow at all" (Multani 167)

The use of split stage that needs a strong theatrical base does avoid the unnecessary loss of time for stage decoration. Fractions and factions of characters' psychological revelation are presented through realistic mode. In that sense, Dattani, Tendulkar and Elkunchwar may be bracketed to mark their differences from Mahesweta Devi, Badal Sircar and Habib Tanvir. The flash back technique puts side by side the time-in-clock and the time-in-mind that makes a comparison between different moral values separated by time. Different zones and levels on the stage indicate the different psychological impasse of different characters because it is only through psychological actions and reactions Dattani makes us visible the true representation of society. Such linguistic networking equipment brings a natural consequence that his "English plays have enjoyed successful runs here and abroad" and have "broken the jinx between stage and page." (Das 236) Maintaining so well equipoise between 'stage' and 'page', Dattani becomes the moderator and modifier of existing Indian English dramas.

Economic liberal approach, cultural globalization, commercialization and the growing sense of consumer's point of view have their networking impact in Dattani's plays.<sup>5</sup> He uses mask for the thematic expression of his plays. Total collapse of geographical location through the innovative stage direction and its performative aspects and accretion of different episodes through a regressive process ultimately bring a progressive approach. The burden of the past, with an amount of abruptness, affects the growing sense of relationship. In the qualitative progression of thought through the interpretative impasse of dislocation, collocation and allocation, there is no abrupt break with society. Issue of generation gap stands paramount in almost all his texts. The severe conflicts of the elders input the germs of differentiation with the members of other generation in the family that brings disturbing chaos at home. Old generation finds degeneration in new generation while new generation finds regeneration in themselves. A clear generation gap is visible in the very short quotations from *Bravely Fought the Queen*:

BAA. Karma. It is all karma.

ALKA. Karma, my foot! (284)

And from *Dance like a Man*:

RATNA. Times have changed. (412)

AMRITLAL. Times haven't changed. (419)

Similar generation gap and skirmish between opposing views of life can be well noticed in *Final Solutions* between Javed and his remote parents, between Smita and her mother Aruna, between Ramnik and Hardika, in *Tara* between Chandan and his father and of course in *Dance like a Man* between Jairaj and Amritlal and between Viswas and Jairaj.

Dattani deals a lot with the typology of home and the various issues regularly encountered in it; theme of being – ontological exploration – sexual and gender difference – man (not means of brutality) – woman (not follower of man), verbal onslaughts of the characters, fulcrum of relationship. Since culture is not “merely the vehicle of human progress but also its substance” (Ayers 12), Dattani's strong cultural, social texts have the substantiative basis of reculturation because they “provide that public space which post-colonial India and multi-cultural Britain may use for their cultural expression of the contemporary” (Dey 3). In the

## **Drama, Dattani and Discourse: Position and Exposition**

education map of enlightenment, Dattani's artistic snippet is very difficult to be disliked and there is reason to rejoice the private promise and public face made by his innovative and impressive ego-puncturing dramas.<sup>6</sup>

### **Notes:**

1. In the Indian academia, the dizzying aggregation of Dattani and drama is becoming an obligatory presence. If one goes through the syllabi of different academic institutions of India where Indian English drama is taught must have any prescribed text of Dattani. He is the first Indian English dramatist to be awarded the prestigious Sahitya Akademi award in 1998 for *Final Solutions and Other Plays*.
2. Sahitya Akademi award citation: “[Dattani’s work] probes tangled attitudes in contemporary India towards communal differences, consumerism and gender ... a brilliant contribution to Indian drama in English.”
3. “The great majority of Indians, rural or urban, still communicate orally with each other in the vernacular. Dramatic performances are generally seen as a slice of, an extension of that lived experience itself. Hence, the difficulty for the audiences to come to terms with English as the language of performance. This remains the major problem that must be tackled before the playwright begins to envisage a play in English for Indian audiences.” (Choudhuri 13)
4. The formation of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ sense of right as far as the personality of the character is concerned has been vividly analyzed in Dworkin 188.
5. “By pulling taboo subjects out from the closet and placing them on stage for public discussion, Mahesh Dattani challenges the constructions of ‘India’ and ‘Indian’ as they have been traditionally defined in modern theatre.” (Dey 3)
6. Some points of this article have been discussed in my book *On Drama In Dattani*.

### Works Cited

Dattani, Mahesh. *Collected Plays*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2000. Print. [Page references have been made from this edition.]

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Delhi: Oxford UP, 1997.

Ayers, David. *Literary Theory: A Reintroduction*. London: Blackwell, 2008. Print.

Choudhuri, Asha Kuthari. *Mahesh Dattani*. New Delhi: Foundation Books, 2005. Print.

Das, Sanjukta. *From Derozio to Dattani: Essays in Criticism*. New Delhi: Worldview, 2009. Print.

Dattani, Mahesh. Preface. *Collected Plays*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2000. Print.

Dattani, Mahesh. "Contemporary Indian Theatre and Its Relevance." *Journal of Indian Writing in English* 30.1 (2002): Print.

Dattani, Mahesh. Interview by Satarupa Ray. *Anxieties, Influences and After: Critical Response to Postcolonialism and Neocolonialism*. Ed. Bakshi et al. Delhi: Worldview, 2009. 405-9. Print.

Dattani, Mahesh. *Brief Candle: Three Plays*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2010. Print.

Dey, Naina. "The Flip Side of Tradition." *The Statesman*, 4<sup>th</sup> April, 2010, 8TH DAY. Print.

Dharwadker, A.B. *Theatres of Independence: Drama, Theory, and Urban Performance in India since 1947*. New Delhi: Oxford UP, 2005. Print.

Dworkin, Ronald. *Taking Rights Seriously*. London: Duckworth, 1977. Print.

McRae, John. "A Note on the Play", *On the Muggy Night in Mumbai, Collected Plays of Mahesh Dattani*. New Delhi: Penguin, 2000. Print.

Multani, Angeli. Introduction. Ed. *Mahesh Dattani's Plays: Critical Perspectives*. New Delhi: Pencraft, 2007. Print.

**Drama, Dattani and Discourse: Position and Exposition**

Nussbaum, Martha C. *The Clash Within: Democracy, Religious Violence and India's Future*. New Delhi: Permanent Black. 2007. Print.

Roy, Anupama. "Citizenship." *Political Theory: An Introduction*. Ed. Rajeev Bhargava and Ashoke Acharya. New Delhi: Pearson Longman, 2008. 130-47. Print.

**About the Author**-Ankur Konar, Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, Burdwan Raj College, Burdwan, Burdwan University, West Bengal.

**Email:** ankrknr@gmail.com