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## Myth of Social Psychosis in Tara by Mahesh Dattani

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**Abstract:** *Feminine Sensibilities interpreted in "Tara" are very close to the sensibilities of the second Sex, which seeks primary inquiries of modern feminism. In present scenario Feminism is a historically specific movement rooted in French English thought and in British Liberalism and consequently embedded in deeply critical style of notions of truth, justice, freedom and equality. This ideology is political because it is concerned with question of the position to dictate and direct action and thinking of other from men and it is possible because in modern times the strength is all powerful and can be achieved through intellect rather than through physical strength, the ideology is revolutionary because it is against status quo.*

**Key Words:** Speaking trees, Post Colonial English Drama, Genre, Patriarchal system, Freak case, yardstick.

"Theatre is a reflection of what you observe. To do anything more would be became didactic and then it ceases to be theatre." (Profiles-md.html)

"Mother am the one, You sent away, When the doctor told youl would be a girl." "Voice of the Unwanted Girl".

Mahesh Dattani, a name considered as a chief exponent for proponent of the "Third Theatre" in India. His plays are "speaking trees", to the audiences of India. He is the voice of weak down for drown trodden and particularly the marginalized group. He occupies a global status in Post Colonial Indian English Drama and the first Indian English dramatist to be awarded the prestigious Sahitya Academy Award for his collected plays in 1998. He occupies the top position among the contemporary Indian English Directors. He is acclaimed an actor, writer, director all rolled into one. "Many of his plays have been staged to Universal acclaim. His best radio plays have been aired on BBC radio." (my resume P. 2 of 5)

He loves for love the art of directing play, "The minute write a play, the minute it's ready and finished on my computer, I want to direct it." (my resume, 3)

He further says, "I would choose to direct first before I write." (anitanair.net). He also remarks, "I always direct the first production of any play I write. That enables me to put in more stage instructions which go on to become a kind of blue print for other directors. That way, there is no conflict and the other director can interpret it, as they will. (anitanair.net)

Dattani never wants to infuse his idea in his art. He handles the situations according to the demand of the genres. He is very close to, "The minds of the poet are the thread of Platinum. It may partly or exclusively operate upon the experience of the man himself; but the more perfect the artist, the more completely separate him will be the man who suffers and the mind which creates; the more perfectly will be the min digest and transmute the passion which are its material." (Eliot P. 21)

Dattani always tried to maintain objectivity in his work. Like G.B. Shaw and John Galsworthy, he also thinks that drama is the medium of exposing the realities of the various ills and maladies that afflict the societies world over. He observes Art for Society's Sake- "I am certain that my plays are true reflection of my time, place and socio economic background. I am hugely excited and curious to know what the future holds for me and my art in the new millennium in a country that has a myriad challenges to face politically socially, artistically and culturally." (Dattani p. XV)

Another observation of Dattani's plays follows as- They "fuse the physical and special awareness of the Indian Theatre with textual rigour of western models like Ibsen and Tennessee Williams. It is a potent combination, which shocks and disturbs through its accuracy and its ability to approach a subject from multiple perspectives. Post



colonial Indian and multicultural Britain both have an urgent need for a cultural expression of the contemporary; they require public spaces in which the mingling of eastern and western influences, Mahesh creates such a space." (Michael P.229)

Dattani's characters are in the search of their identity or struggling to form it. His plays are replete with messages that relate to issues stemming art of society. He unveils the means, ugly and unhappy side of life in particular the dishonest and partial attitude of men and women in society. "Tara" is a similar such a play of Dattani which represents the marginalized section of society whose longings are often suppressed in patriarchal system. Through this paper I wish to explore the victories and defeats of an Indian family, coping with the trauma of the freak children and their survival, while exposing the patriarchal stereotypes of the Indian mind set which has always preferred a boy child to a girl child..... It makes use of a rather unlikely freak case to lay bare the injustices in the conventional Indian family meted to the girl child. Tara and Chandan are the Siamese twins, joined from the breast bone to the pelvic region. "Tara" exposes the harsh realities of the Indian society conflicting ideas and society issues like gender discrimination, religious prejudice and quest for identity.

Thematic concerns of Dattani's plays are the mores of contemporary society. He exposes all that is "being swept under the carpet, "which shocks the traditionalists. Family as a bedrock of trust and care has been totally demolished by Dattani in almost all his plays, whether it is in the form of domestic violence or gender bias. He proves that in modern scenario human relationships are doomed by selfish and egoistical cancers.

Through this paper also tried to focus upon the present scenario of women in India facing the consequences of dual yardsticks that have led to their remaining on the societal periphery rather than the centre.

In Indian society the atmosphere within the home is charged with varying degrees of personal grudges that the family members have for one another. The relationship between the parents and their children is so changed with animosity and hatred and a feeling of revenge that it seems more like a battle grounds with silent battle being fought at various levels. As family sociologist Margaret Wynn remarks-

"Home and family are at the centre of ambition and self-respect for ordinary men and women. The family provides the supreme comfort and support for persons of alleges. The successful reusing of a family provides the main sense of achievement for most people. Family joys and family grief's are the most keenly felt joys and grief's for most men and women. P. 32.

Existential concerns relate to Identity of a women are sincerely debated but solutions are yet to come. "Pardah", "Ghunghat", "Kitchen" are the synonyms of their life. The sufferings of Tara are not new. Even in the scriptures of Indian we find the male members of the family never care for the psyche of women. They always tied to cut their privileges under the name of security and protections so that they might not be able to take even single breathe of liberty. It would be illustrated in the following lines-

**पिता रक्षति कौमारे भर्ता रक्षति यौवने। रक्षन्ति स्थाविरे पुत्राः न स्त्री स्वातन्त्र्य मर्हति।**

In childhood must a female be dependent on her father, in youth on her husband, her lord being died on her sons, on the near king men of her husband; if she be left no kinsmen, on those of her father if she has no parental kinsmen, on the sovereign a women must never seek independence.

The Play "Tara" weeps on a society that treats children to share the same womb differently. In psycho analytical perspective it presents the women's need to love and be loved as individuals. The play presents a mirror to the Indian society to see its true face. It tries to shock, the society out of its grooved thinking." (Chandra P. 67)

In Tara dramatist clearly and strongly condemns the attitudes of contemporary society towards the girl child. "The play looks at the battles, the victories and defeats of an Indian family." (Asha, Pg. 37)

This play is based on the Post Modern Criticism which pays much attention to the cause of the deserted and the downtrodden world of women also. Indian society is so constituted that girl child could not inherit the properties



of her forefathers. Tara is denied of the money her grandfather left. When Chandan wants to know about the share of Tara, his own father convinces Tara and Chandan differently as mentioned:

**PATEL:** Not to say that Chandan will have to work for a living. Your grandfather has left all his wealth to you. Since your mother was his only child, you and Tara inherit their home in Bangalore.

**CHANDAN:** That huge house. It gave me creeps. I remember

**PATEL :** He left you a lot of money.

**CHANDAN :** And Tara?

**PATEL :** Nothing

**CHANDAN :** Why?

**PATEL:** It was his money. He could do what he wanted to do with it.

Tara was first performed as Twinkle Tara at the Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore on the 23rd of October 1990 Playpen performing Arts group, Mahesh Dattani, directed this two act play. It is most performed play.

The most often performed play, I think has to be "Tara". It used to be "Twinkle Tara". But Alygue Padamsee suggested that this might make it sound like a children's play, which it isn't. It's about young people but issues are serious.

It's performed all over the place, in schools and colleges, amateur groups and repertories. As for the "best" play-I really can't name anyone after all they are all My Plays!

(It is most favourite play of Dattani, above quoted reply he gave to Uma Mahadevan Dasgupta in response to a question related to most performed play.)

Through this play Dattani observes the society and exposes the maladies of gender discrimination and related issues. As the title tells that the play should revolves round Tara, a female character but it focuses upon. But as Dattani himself observes: "I also know that I have a lot to say and am probably not saying it well enough. But my characters have a lot to say too and they seem to be doing rather well at having their say I am completely aware that it is my character that has done the work for me." (preface PXI)

(Women) have gained only what men have been willing to grant, they have taken nothing, they have only received. The reason for this is that women lack concrete means for this is that for organizing themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative Unit.

They have no past, no history, no religion of their own and they have to such solidarity of work and Interest as that of the proletariat. They are not even promiscuously herded together in the way that creates community feeling among American Nergoes... Male and Female stand opposed within a primordial Mitsein and women has not broken it." (Beauvoir P-19)

In an interview Dattani mentions - "Tara is about a boy and a girl, Siamese twins. I have taken medical liberty over here because Siamese twins are invariably of the same sex and they are surgically separated at birth. but it focuses upon the boy child was important for their survival and the play deals with their emotional separations (Mohanty P. 47). Because of traditions "Tara" gets a secondary positions, "Tara is a portrayal of woman as a victim and she was denied the opportunity to became a normal human being because she was a female and preference has to be given to her twin brother (SPIEC P.59). Through Tara Dattani exposes gender conscious society and communal phobia which exposes the myth of social psychosis. He carried the Bakhatian notion of carnivalisation which fits in well with the post modern notion of neteroglosia.

The play ends with the dead Tara hugging Dan and his saying "Forgive me, Tara Forgive me for making it my tragedy (380). The tragedy is certainly man made because it is done even against the advice of the doctors yet at the end of the under is stunned, the invisible issues are visible are visible as bath of them are complete now with two legs each.





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