Chapter – IV

Individual Freedom and Patriarchal Code of Conduct:

*Where There's a Will and Dance Like a Man*

Mahesh Dattani takes up new contemporary issues, one after the other and he stands forth with singular distinctness, striking artistic perception, and immense dramatic guts. His plays contain some important elements like human pathos, passions, conflict and appeal to human sentiment, which can immediately touch and stir common audience. His dramatic art has often appreciated been for its fine fabric of philosophical undertone and social consciousness. The philosophical reflections on the predicament of human destiny against the odds of socio-cultural practices, impart an exceptional depth and richness to his plays. However, *Where There is a Will* is a positive justification to the observation that Dattani’s genius is equally fertile both in comic plays and serious plays. The comic mode has even a far reaching effect.

The play, *Where There's a Will* is a comic caricature with the family as a locale. The focus is on the issues like gender discrimination and the domination of patriarchal authority. The dramatic structure, the setting of the play, verbal repartee and incongruity in human behavior make the play a fine entertainment. Besides, the ease and brilliance of dialogue, the straight exposition of action, provide better opportunity for the direct communication between the audience and the actors. Mahesh Dattani describes it as the exorcism of patriarchal code. Sita Raina, a well known theatre director, in a note on the play appreciated it for its 'philosophical twist' because Dattani efficiently manipulates the incidents for self enlightenment to expose the illusion of false authority. He promotes the idea that the passion for power and domination signifies the insecurity of an individual. One can nourish the dream of dominating others for a short while but the fact is well known that each individual frames his own dreams of life and the essential spirit can never be checked. Sita Raina further
observes on this aspect, Mahesh described it as the exorcism of the patriarchal code. Women be it daughter-in-law, wife or mistress are dependent on me and this play shows what happens when they are pushed to the edge. What interested me particularly was its philosophical twist. To be the watcher of one’s self is to make intelligent changes in the life. In Where There’s a Will, the protagonist has control over his family through his money and forges an opportunity to improve his interpersonal relationships. As do most of us. Consequently, when he became the watcher of his actions, he perceives that his desire for control has led him to be the victim of his own machinations unlike Kiran who uses power play to essentially improve her relationships. (CP 451)

A serious thought presented in a comic mode elates the pleasure of a live theatre, liberating the text from the burden of inter-textual pressures. The humour in the play through the visible and invisible presence of Hasmukh, especially after his appearance as a Ghost, his mute observations and the free display of the inner feelings of different characters against the authority of Hasmukh, is a unique device for self assessment for the characters.

Where There’s a Will is one of the four earliest plays of Mahesh Dattani. The play is a drawing room comedy of a rich businessman, who tries to control his family even after his death through his ‘will’. The play is really very interesting and appealing. It generates a lot of laughter and mirth among the spectators. Despite its humorous trait, the play is very introspective and thought-provoking.

The play possesses several trademark qualities of Dattani’s play. Like other plays, this play also chronicles typical Gujarati milieu, in which the follies and prejudices of Indian societal set-up are reflected through an Indian middle-class family, and successfully runs on the stage. In the play, the ‘traditional’ family values completely subvert the existing stereotypes. It presents how women in their own homes are marginalized. Though the kitchen or home is described as the kingdom of women, they are no longer ruling over them. Instead, they are pushed on the margins of invisibility.
Dattani excels in fusing western models with native theatrical tradition. In the same way, his artistic perception shows also a fine fusion of both tragic and comic insight. If *Thirty Days in September* is the most solemn play of Dattani, *Where There’s a Will* is the most comic in tone and treatment. The play is a satire on the water tight patriarchal code. He satirizes human follies and foibles in a very interesting way. In fact, no character escapes from the stroke of his satire.

*Where There’s a Will* does both delight and teach. This play was first performed by Dattani's theatre group, *Playpen* at Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore, on September 23, 1988, as a part of the Deccan Herald Theatre Festival. The play then was translated into Hindi by Rajendra Mohan. The Hindi production was directed by Jaspaul Sendhu and was performed at Tanzil Theatre, Mumbai, on December 25, 1992. The play also was translated into Gujarati. The Gujarati translation was directed by Suresh Rajda in 1998. The Play is set in Mumbai. All the characters are Gujaratis. Thus, there is no usual Gujarati-Carnatic combination here.

*Where There's a Will*, an amalgamation of emotion and comedy, is the very first play of Dattani, but he handles the spacing out of performance admirably and provides a structure to fit in with the needs of the plot so deftly, notwithstanding the fact that this is his first play. The play is divided neatly into two halves, one prior to the death of Hasmukh, and another post death or rather the first part deals with the construction of gendered stereotypical identity and the second is going to deconstruct that. Even the patriarch who exercises his power through the entire play got the realization of his true self, even though he is present the whole time in the play, alive or as a ghost.

The stage is set simply in those spaces – two bedrooms of Hasmukh/Sonal’s and Ajit/Preeti’s and the fancy dining-cum-living room. With family relationship as the focus of dramatic representation, Dattani's handling of the performance space suggests to his audiences the variations in the signification allotted to different spaces. The plot of the play is...
apparently simply; the relationships between the four main protagonists of a joint family are painfully twisted as the play begins to come alive in performance, through the complicated design of the will.

The seriousness of the issue is hidden behind the comedy in Where There's a Will, which accomplishes something quite extraordinary; it explores grim issues such as loveless lives and unhappy families, using the comic medium. Dattani’s wicked humour is at its best in the first half, revealing itself in the abrasive venom that Hasmukh spits at everybody in general. But the latter half of the script is problematic as Hasmukh had ‘goofed his plans’ and is confronted by a need to have changed. He lost out because it dawned on him too late, after he had run out of options. Instead, we are given a comic variation, which causes a break from the first act and left little room for the heavy humour.

The preoccupation with individual freedom and patriarchal code of conduct, which we are dealing with, becomes apparent from Dattani’s very first play itself Where There's a Will, a comedy with slight farcical touches. Dattani has often referred to the subversion of patriarchy in the play as one of its major concerns. It also points out about the way patriarchal men invariably fail to exist as true individual human beings as he always exists as an epitome of these conservative values.

The events of the play take places in the lavish house of Hasmukh Mehta, a successful businessman with a patriarchal mindset. The dramatist has introduced the ghost of Hasmukh Mehta to make watcher of his own actions. The stage is divided into three spaces, namely the fancy dinning cum-living room, the bed room belonging to Hasmukh and Sonal Mehta, and the hideously trendy bedroom of their son Ajit, and his wife, Preeti. Hasmukh strictly followed steps of his father in his life. He wants his own son Ajit to follow his footsteps in real life. He believes in ‘absolute power’. The dramatist focuses on fractured interpersonal relationship within the range of familial relationship. Like all modern families, there is a lack of emotional attachment and understanding towards others’ views and opinions. Thus,
Hasmukh Mehta is embodied with patriarchal canons and tried to control family even after his death through his ‘will’. He is both dead and alive, but his business remains unobstructed and unceasing.

The play is divided into two acts and these two acts are subdivided each in two parts. The play begins at the lavish house of rich protagonist Hasmukh Mehta. All the four members of the Mehta family stand in sharp contrast to their counterparts. Hasmukh Mehta is the autocratic head and demands unquestionable obedience from his family members, whereas his wife Sonal is quite subservient and subordinate to her husband. She has no choice of her own. She has learnt how to execute her husband’s instructions and orders in toto. In this sense, Hasmukh is anti-thesis to her. The play depicts how women are subjugated and suppressed by their male counterparts in patriarchal social set up. When the play begins, Ajit is talking on phone and Hasmukh Mehta enters through the main door with his walking staff:

Ajit. (on the phone). Five lakhs. That’s all. Give me five lakhs and I’ll modernize the whole bloody plant. That’s what I tell my dad. I mean, come on, five lakhs is nothing!

Hasmukh. (to the audience) My son, the business man. Just listen to him. (CP 455)

Hasmukh is a self made and led a deprived childhood. He is forty five year old man. He is described as Garment Tycoon. He criticizes his son Ajit’s ways. He observes categorically; “one of the richest men in this city. All by my own efforts. Forty five years old and I am a success in capital letters. Twenty -three years old and he is on the road to failure, in bold capital letters...” (CP 464). Ajit, young man of twenty three years, is the joint managing director of his father’s factory. According to Hasmukh, he is wasting money and is on his way to bankruptcy. He makes a very satirical statement that God has just forgotten to open an account for Ajit.

Hasmukh Mehta is projected as very autocratic father. He controls and checks every movement of this son. He wants his son not as partner or owner of his property, but he wants
his own son as a slave. Ajit Mehta is quite meek and occupies little importance at both the spaces. He can be called the filial subaltern. The play dramatizes the politics of patriarchy which doesn’t only marginalize the women folk of the family but also other male members of the family. Ajit is excluded from decision making process in business. His father is highly egocentric and horribly self-opinioned man who doesn’t allow Ajit to use his skill and talents for the business enhancement process. Strangely enough, Hasmukh Mehta has made Ajit the managing director of his companies. However, he is not supposed to undertake any business errand and affairs at his own. He has to execute his father’s orders and command keeping his own say aside:

Ajit. Don’t I have any rights at all?

Hasmukh. You have the right to listen to my advice and obey my orders. (CP 458)

Like Sonal to Hasmukh, Preeti is counterfoil to her husband Ajit. Preeti is a young, charming and graceful lady. She expects a baby. She is quite calculative and assertive lady. Hasmukh knows her well. Therefore, he says; “That’s my daughter-in-law, Preeti, pretty, charming, graceful and sly as a snake.” (CP 456)

The theatre attempts to articulate mores and manners of the society intending to cheer people by lifting them from physical, social and mental problems and afflictions and also offers a piece of advice for leading life in a healthier and happier way. Dattani’ plays have Gujarati family as the setting or locale. The present play Where There’s a Will deals with the mechanics of middle class Gujarati family, showing how patriarchal canons control not only the lives of women of the family but also of men.

Since Hasmukh was leading businessman of the city, every newspaper limelighted the news of his death under the caption ‘Garment Tycoon Dead’:

Hasmukh. … I even got a mention in the newspapers. (Picks up a paper cutting.) ‘Garment Tycoon Dead.’ That felt good. You never really know how famous you are until you are dead…. (Throws the paper away) Now it’s all over. My life is over and I have no business hanging around
here. I should be flying to heaven on a buffalo…. You see, I have made a special will! *(Laughs.)* They are going to hate me for doing this to them! *(CP 479)*

Dattani’s plays reveal at the end the skeleton in the cupboard. *Where There’s a Will* also has the skeleton in the cupboard. The skeleton is his mistress and his will. Soon after his demise, the will was read. It sets forth avenues of varied reaction and revelations, charges and counters charges, surprises and shocks, protestation and acceptance. There is an air of turmoil and upheavals in the family of Hasmukh Mehta caused by his ‘will’. It was soon clear among them that authorization of patriarch and garment tycoon will continue to dictate their lives through the terms and conditions inset in ‘will’. The will can be viewed as whip and the mistress can be viewed as the agent. As per the ‘will’, none of the three Mehta family members has any legal right over the property of Hasmukh Mehta including their present living room. Hasmukh has formed a charitable trust named Hasmukh Mehta Charitable Trust. He has donated all his property including finances, shares etc. to the trust. As per the will, they get a regular allowance from the trust. The trust will be dissolved when Ajit Mehta turns forty five. Everything remains with the trust till he is not forty five. He can use and utilize the property and the money after he turns forty five.

The will has several other kinds of bindings on Ajit as well as other members of the family. Thus, Hasmukh Mehta shuns his family by making the will and further more by making Kiran Jhaveri, as the trustee of the trust. He has a kept namely Kiran Jhaveri who was a very shrewd and hard headed marketing executive. She lives in the company's flat in a posh locality. Hasmukh has taken meticulous care and every precautionary step to avoid any challenge to the validity of his will. He had a qualified physician as a witness number one to his will and attached a certificate stating that signatory was of sound mind etc. The certificate was signed by their family doctor, Jhunjhunwalla, who attends him regularly. So contesting the will was out of question.

Soon after the death of Hasmukh, Kiran Jhaveri comes to his house to stay with his family members. The family members are surprised and shocked. They don’t want to let her
stay with them. However, they obey the instructions provided by Hasmukh in his ‘will’. When Preeti asks Kiran what if they don’t keep her with them, she retorts:

Kiran. *Studies Preeti*. As the trustee of the Hasmukh Mehta charitable Trust, I have the right to make a statement declaring that since the recipients of the trust, namely you all, are not complying with the rules set down by the deceased, the holdings of the trust will be divided between certain charitable institutions recommended by the founder. Which will mean that you won’t ever get to see even a single rupee earned by your father-in-law. Now will you refuse to let me stay here?

Preeti. Welcome home. *(CP 494)*

Kiran Jhaveri is a very well preserved woman who looks anywhere between thirty and forty years. Her husband was a drunkard, especially fond of imported whisky, Jonnie Walker. He was suspended from the job for this malpractice. Sacked from the job, he couldn’t afford buying whisky. So he allowed his wife meeting and seeing Hasmukh. Kiran admits: "Anyway, it all worked out to be quite convenient. I got a husband, my husband got his booze, and your father get … well, you know." *(CP 491)*

Preeti is quite scheming and selfish lady. Soon after the reading of the will, she begins to behave differently. She shows true colour of her personality. She wants to contest the will but all in vain. Hasmukh Mehta has made it leak proof. No one can find way out. Moreover, he has made Kiran as the trustee. So, she can put a check on them and stops them finding any loophole in the will. All the three members of the Mehta family have to learn new lessons every day under Madam Jhavari. She is teaching them lessons both at home and office. At home, she is guiding and instructing Sonal and Preeti, whereas she is taking hard task from Ajit in the office. Now, they realize the very complexity and toughness of the situation.

Hasmukh ruled his family when he was alive. After his death, he tried to control his family from his grave through his will. Kiran says: “Hasmukh was intoxicated with his power. He thought he was invincible. That he could rule from his grave by making this will.” *(CP 508)*
Actually, Hasmukh didn’t trust any of his family members. He reserves his doubts about their ways and intentions. He trusted completely Kiran Jhaveri, who was working as an executive in his office and won his confidence. She has got both brain and body. She caters to his physical and emotional needs. Hasmukh ponders:

I mean, a man in my position to be careful. I needed a safer relationship. Something between a wife and a pickup. Yes. A mistress! It didn’t take me very long to find her. She was right there in my office. An unmarried lady. Not an ordinary typist or even a secretary. A shrewd hard-headed marketing executive…. She lives now in a company flat in a posh locality. I won’t tell you where. Well, it’s walking distance from here. Convenient for me. All right, what’s wrong with having a bit on the side? Especially since the main course is always without salt. Okay, okay, less salt.” (CP 473)

Hasmukh Mehta is all praise for her. She has fine figure to cater to his sensual desires and brilliant brain to run his business in an effective manner. No one knows about their affair until he dies. After his death, the inside saga comes to the forefront as it was also desired by him. She could succeed in having his accolades. All others have lost his sympathy and confidence.

Hasmukh criticises her wife by calling her dry and good for nothing. He calls her mud. To Hasmukh, Ajit is not competent enough to run his business. He lacks the nitty-gritty of the business world. Only person who possesses the guts, the shrewdness and proper spirit to reign supreme in industry is Kiran Jhaveri, who is quite commanding and courting as well as daring and diplomatic lady.

It seems that initially he succeeds in his intentions. Gradually, he realizes that his desire to control over his death is collapsing slowly. He has appointed Kiran to set his family order and check them leading lives in their own fancies. Moreover, Kiran makes certain revelations about his personality. Kiran tells Sonal, “He depended on me for everything. He thought he was the decision maker. But I was. He wanted me to run his life. Like his father had. (Pause) Hasmukh didn’t really want a mistress. He wanted a father. He saw in me a woman who would father him! (Laughs. Hasmukh cringes at her laughter.) Men never really grow up!” (CP 510)
She added that she felt pity for his attempts at ruling over his family after his death, through his will. His desire of ruling over the family results from the fact that his family was ruled over by his father. He was just a good boy to his father throughout his life. That’s why he couldn’t tolerate Ajit objecting to him. He wants Ajit to him as he was to his father. His life was overshadowed by his father’s and wants Ajit’s to be overshadowed by his life.

The play focuses on emptiness and uselessness of strict adherence to patriarchal code. It depicts the clash between conservative notions and contemporary generation. Both father and son have their own viewpoints regarding life and business. The father strictly believes that he has right notions regarding his son’s life, whereas the son rejects the idea of complete command over his life. He doesn’t respect anybody’s say in decision making process. Hasmukh thinks that his son is very novice and silly in the world of business. He makes mockery of his son and shows his displeasure towards his attitude.

Later in the play, Kiran Jhaveri appreciates Ajit’s invincible spirit for telling truth on the face of his father. Ajit is not a blind follower of his father Hasmukh’s footsteps as Hasmukh did to his father. However, Ajit doesn’t raise much voice against the autocratic regime of his father. He just disapproves his father’s views and ideology. Kiran appreciates his revolutionary spirit in this manner. “He may not be the greatest rebel on earth, but at least he is free of his father’s beliefs. He resists. In a small way, but at least it’s a start. That is enough to prove that Ajit has won and Hasmukh has lost.” (CP 510)

Ajit asserts his individualistic identity. He protests against parental hegemony. In this sense, father-son relationship is a post colonial dichotomy of contemporary society. He is content at the idea that he is defiant. He has challenged the dictatorship of his father.

Ajit. All right. I can’t fight him now. He has won. He has won because he’s dead. But when he was alive, I did protest. In my own way. (Laughs) Yes, I’m happy I did that. Yes, I did fight back. I did do ‘peep peep’ to him! That was my victory. (CP 501)
Thus, the play dramatises the discord and disharmony between the father-son relationships. Both are shown at constant fight. There is a nerve-war between them. The play depicts the forced harmony among the members of the same family. In this sense, the play may be deemed as the postcolonial protest against the colonilaizations of self and identity.

Sonal Mehta is a parasite who lacks self confidence and discreet. Her life is dominated by others. In the play, she constantly depends on her sister Minal in every matter of her life. Her character lends a humorous touch to the play. Tragedy of her life is that most characters in the play blame her by one or another way. After the arrival of Kiran in her house, her condition becomes more pathetic and now she has to depend upon the mistress of her husband. However, she found a good friend in her soon. Sonal has learnt so many new lessons and also new things about her husband through Kiran. Therefore, she tells Kiran. “How little I knew him. If I had understood him when he was alive, I would have died laughing.” (CP 510). A sea change occurs in her nature and thinking at the end. Her attitude towards her sister and others is totally changed. The play ends with her denying any help from her sister Minal:

Kiran. (to Sonal) Your sister just said some of the rudest things to me.

Sonal. Oh, did she? Give me the phone. (On the phone.) Hello? Yes, Minal, this is Sonal! … No. Maharaj hasn't come back … No, I don’t another maharaj, not from you at least! …I just don’t, that’s all... Well, as far as I’m concerned you can go jump into a bottomless pit! (Slams the phone down and turns towards Kiran.) (CP 516)

Dattani’s plays peep into the past and find out the reality. His peeping into past is not myth-seeking attempt, but he dives into the past for bringing out the reality lying in the darkness, at the dark bottom of the past. The realization of past error helps the character understanding present in a better way. It has got contemporary relevance. It is because of this his plays are seen and enjoyed again and again.
Where There's a Will shows that there is no significant improvement in the plight of women though there is spread of education and progress in almost all the human sectors. It seems that male pride or ego is the root cause of the present plight of women in our society. Earlier, it was strongly believed that empowerment of women can be done through imparting proper education and employment. The play seeks to present that education and economical empowerment have failed to improve the quality of women’s lives in our society. This is quite explicit through the conversation between Kiran and Sonal. Kiran is well educated and employed in the office of Hasmukh Mehta, who later on, rises to the position of the director. Sonal is not fortunate enough to have proper access to education. So, she considers Kiran a fortunate lady. This is how Kiran falsifies Sonal’s notion by narrating her unhappy past.

Sonal. You are so lucky. You are educated, so you know all this.

Kiran. Wrong. I learnt my lessons from being so close to life. I learnt my lessons from watching my mother tolerating my father when he came home every day with bottles of rum wrapped up in newspapers... (CP 508)

It is quite identical that women are suffering on account of no fault of their own. Nor are they suffering due to lack of education and employment. They are the victims of man’s vain pride and false ego.

Dattani has rightly been considered the spokesperson of the marginalized people. His plays display his deep concern for gendered subaltern i.e. the marginalization of women. The play presents two kinds of images of the women. Firstly, there is a woman who suffers throughout her life. Sonal Mehta has been victimized and exploited by the patriarchal social system. She is silent sufferer. Secondly, there are women who contend with patriarchal unjust authority for their right and equities. Kiran Jhaveri, and Preeti are bold, assertive and at times, defiance. They don’t let patriarchal authority rule over their lives. Of course, both these women are shrewd and money minded. They are scheming and cunning. However, they have guts to contest with what is not right from their point of views.
Dattani’s dramatic art moves between the centre and the margin. In this play, Kiran occupies periphery. She is living at the outskirt rather in the darkness. Soon after the demise of Hasmukh, she appears to the front and takes over the Mehta Group of Industries through the will made by Hasmukh. She has become the symbol of Hasmukh’s passion and power, amour and authority.

The playwright reflects on the issue of gender roles and their miserable plights. Even in modern times, women are being treated as sex object and exploited physically and mentally. Feminine self has not been restored yet. The dramatist is worried at the continuation of sorry state of women from one generation to another one. Following words of Kiran may be taken as Dattani's comment on the miserable life of women:

Kiran. Isn’t it strange how repetitive life is? My brothers. They have turned out to be like their father, going home with bottles of rum wrapped up in news papers. Beating up their wives. And I – I too am like my mother. I married a drunkard and I listened to his swearing. And I too have learnt to suffer silently. Oh! Where will all this end? Will the scars our parents lay on us remain forever? (CP 508)

The playwright succeeds in foregrounding the people thrown to the periphery for giving vent to their pent up fillings. Such characters interact directly with psyches of the audience and thereby make audience self-critical of their own thoughts and ideas.

Dattani extensively exorcises patriarchal code through his dramatic art. Hasmukh Mehta wants unquestionable obedience and unchallengeable authority at home and at the office respectively. Therefore, he doesn’t allow growing the ‘self’ of his son, Ajit who defies the autocratic father, but he fails to articulate his own space. Neither he surrenders to patriarchal authority nor does he revolt against his father significantly. He just wants to assert his identity before his father. The introduction of supernatural element is a very humorous and interesting one. The most amazing thing is that the ghost of Hasmukh Mehta watches his own actions after his death. So, the play has two Hasmukhs-the dead and the alive.
*Where There’s a Will* dramatizes the social realism in a very comical and satirical way. The play is replete with laughter and mirth. The tone of sarcasm and humour runs throughout the play. Dattani’s creative genius handles sobriety and humour side by side very successfully. The familial interaction is often very comical and satirical. One of the most notable things is that the names of all the characters signify certain virtues and ideas, but none of the characters act according to the virtue or merit symbolized by their names. For example, Hasmukh meaning a smiling face. Hasmukh never provides his family members the opportunity to smile. In the same way, Ajit means unconquerable. Ajit can’t win free heart accolades from Hasmukh.

The ghost of Hasmukh generates a lot of laughter and mirth in the drama. It observes and analyzes posthumous activities and events taking place in his own house. When alive, he has managed to dictate the rules and regulations for controlling the members of his family by preparing a will. He has invested powers and authority in Kiran Jhaveri to carry out the business and household affairs as per terms and conditions specified by him, but the ghost is disappointed when it sees that Kiran is using power so invested in her for strengthening her own interpersonal relationships with the members of Hasmukh Mehta’s family. This is how the ghost of Hasmukh expresses its displeasure. “You are here to set my family in order. Don’t forget your job.” (*CP 508*)

The play ends with Sonal’s assertion of confidence in Kiran denoting the newly developed bondage of mutual understanding and trust between the wife and the mistress. The death of Hasmukh is used as a dramatic device—the soul of Hasmukh surveying and commenting on the ongoing affairs, the ensuing responses—all these definitely have comic overtones but simultaneously these are also imbued with philosophical import. When alive, Hasmukh was suffering from certain diseases like high blood pressure, high cholesterol etc. The ghost’s remark about this is quite comical: “There’s nobody home. Ah! (*Rises and stretches*) It feels good to be dead. No more kidney problems, no backaches, no irregular heartbeats,” (*CP 479*)
The play exposes the illusion of perfect and complete control over the family for a longer period. Here the question arises in our mind why a man aspires too much for authority and power. Does it signify any value of life? Apparently, it doesn’t attach any meaning to human existence. Nor does it help in improving quality of human life. Dattani is convinced that it is an attempt to make one secure and survive. So, man’s drive for the domination arises out of his own apprehension of insecurity. Though *Where There’s a Will* is described as a drawing room comedy, it functions better than a tragedy in its effect and appeal on the minds and hearts of the audience. The play has thematic richness, brilliant dialogue delivery, touch of humor and satire, suitable dramatic structure.

The dramatist mainly reflects on the issues of gender discrimination and evils of patriarchy along with host of other issues like father-son, husband-wife relationship, evil of capitalism in the post colonial purview. Hasmukh blames his wife for his own extra-marital relationship. Hasmukh observes:

Twenty-five years of marriage and I don't think she has ever enjoyed sex. Twenty five years of marriage and I haven’t enjoyed sex with her. So what does a man do? I started eating out. Well, I had the money. I could afford to eat in fancy places. And what about my sex life? Well, I could afford that too. Those expensive ladies of the night in the five star hotels! (*Smiles at some pleasant memories.*)… Yes. A mistress! It didn’t take me very long to find her. (*CP 473*)

Hasmukh has no respect and love for his wife Sonal. She is to him good for nothing. In fact, she is a chaste and obedient wife, but what Hasmukh expects from wife is something disgusting one. As he says; “Then I should be very happy man. I’ve got a loving wife who has been faithful to me like any dog would be.” (*CP 473*) Hasmukh’s words suggest that his notion of faithful wife is as good as faithful dog that acts as per provided training without using her own discretion. Actually, Sonal is innocent and ignorant woman who doesn’t know about his sexual lust and his enjoyment with night women. She is devoted and descent wife, but her husband is perverted and a rude creature. At the end, Sonal and Kiran join hands to eradicate the evil of sexual colonialism. They are endowed with the ability to assess and subsequently
shaking off the unjust shackle of patriarchy. As a matter of fact, all trouble comes out of Hasmukh’s false notions of joy and happiness of life. He considers domination as the only and final system which can bring joy and happiness in the family. Ironically he fails to understand that domination kills joy of human heart and soul. Domination flourishes killing others’ self and identity. It is, in fact, biggest hurdle in building up the premise of happiness.

The play explores the deteriorated inter-personal relationship among members of the same family. Dattani forces the audience to look at the imaginary and fanciful myths concerning men and women built by patriarchal society. Men too are forced to adhere to socially prescribed gender roles against their wishes but Dattani poignantly presents an individual’s struggle for freedom and acceptance as his characters refuse to follow accepted norms and traditional ideologies. Dattani through his major works brings to light disintegrated relationships between the married couple, father and son and mother and daughter, and endeavors to expose the politics of gender in the Indian society.

Dattani's significant contribution in the exposition of female suffering is that he tries to establish that social conventions can't suppress the autonomy of individual self of woman. Every woman possesses the will and strength to make a reaffirmation of her identity against the organized system of oppression. Resistance is adopted as a mechanism of defense of ego against the system that permits no liberty to individual. Therefore, familial conflict and no personal attachments in any relations, only the selfish motive of power in contemporary middle class Indian family is transparent clear after the death of Hasmukh. Everyone wants to live freely with some individual identity and a personal way of living, a hope of all the family members in Mehta family, which shatters by the dominating, will even after the death of chauvinistic Hasmukh.

Structurally, the play has a simple plot. The complications of the movement back and forth in time or the movements simultaneously happening in different places, evident in others plays are not here. This play is nearest to the traditional drama as far as the enfoldment of the action is concerned.
The play *Dance Like a Man* looks at the patriarchy in a different way. It focuses on the dilemma arising out of parental pressure to 'fit in' the 'given' roles of the society. Dattani’s plays are mostly centered on the marginalized. He wants to bring the people in the periphery to the center stage. All his plays question the accepted norms, politically generated attitudes, Gender identities and social stereotyping. Quite objectively Dattani portrays marginalized people’s struggle for acceptance in the society. He says, “Thematically I talk about the areas where the individual feels exhausted. My plays are about such people who are striving to expand ‘this’ space. They live on the fringes of the society and are not looking for acceptance, but are struggling to grab as much fringe space for themselves as they can”. (Nayar 90)

Dattani seems to suggest that a father should not remain as a barrier in the path of their son’s ambition and moreover the parents must not force their aims and desires on their children. If a man or woman fails to identify himself or herself with the spouse, marriage becomes hellish. There must be strong bond of relationship between the husband and wife. They must overcome all sorts of problems in their life. In the play, *Dance Like a Man*, Dattani examines interpersonal human relationship within the range of familial territory.

*Dance Like a Man* was first performed at Chowdiah Memorial Hall, Bangalore, on September 22, 1989 as part of the Deccan Herald Theatre Festival. The first performance was directed and acted by Dattani himself. Thereafter, the play was performed at the NCPA Experimental Theatre, Mumbai on February 14, 1990 and again directed by Dattani. The stage performance of the play has earned a critical acclaim in Indian and abroad.

In this play, Dattani explores pathos of human predicament in the subtlest way. It embodies a brilliant study of human relationships as well as human weaknesses. The play depicts the clash between issues such as marriage, career and the place of a woman in patriarchal social set up. It deals with the lives of the people who feel exhausted and frustrated on account of the hostile surroundings and unfavourable circumstances. The story is unfolded in time past and time present.

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Dance Like A Man centers on an individual's plight in the backdrop of a dying art form. Lillete Dubey's direction makes a powerful story more realistic. A man stifled by his ageing father's principles, must find a way to escape, in order to create an alternative world that will enable him to practice the one thing that he loves the most—dancing. The son makes a mockery of his father's revolutionary acts. Calling himself a reformer, a freedom fighter, he ridicules the reforms that freedom fighters fought for. However, his father has different plans for his son. Taking advantage of his son's financial dependency on him, the father altogether stops his sons' dancing classes. He wants his son to become an adult. In anger, the son leaves home, only to return, as he cannot support himself or his wife. This works marvelously for the father. He thinks of a new scheme. He persuades his daughter-in-law to discourage her husband from his passion and to criticize, albeit subtly, his mediocrity. The wife (Ratna) is overly ambitious, and she will sacrifice her husband's career for her career to take off. What is extremely disturbing is that the man turns into a drunkard, and the parents lack of commitment towards their infant Shankar, results in his death. The flashback techniques used by the director are done very cleverly and in one instant we are transported back and forth in time. Through the flashback techniques, Lata's father plays the role of his own father and Lata's fiancé becomes the young man, haunted by his art, and Lata herself portrays her mother when she was much younger. We go into flashbacks at a much later stage of the play.

The play comprises two acts and deals with a family dedicated to the art of dancing. The members hunt for fame at odds with basic household duties involves certain moral considerations which are artistically dealt with. The didacticism, however, is not irksome as Dattani uses symbols and avoids plain statements to indicate his views. The play evinces Dattani's accurate knowledge of the Indian classical dance, especially Bharatnatyam and Kuchipudi.

The play opens with Ratna's daughter Lata who brings her fiancé to her parents' home. Through their conversations we get a slight idea of the family history, the nature of
Lata's parents and a little about their ancestry. Just when Lata's fiancée is in the process of imitating her grandfather, Lata's parents enter. Some confusion seems to envelope the entire household. Lata's mother makes a big fuss about her debut dance performance before the entire nation. Lillete Dubey's character is extremely interesting. Somewhere the characters of Lata and her fiancé fade in the background. We focus more on the mother and father, whose characters are very strong and they seem to form the core of the story. All her life, Ratna does not think her husband is man enough, mainly for two reasons. He is not man enough to realize his dreams, and therefore he is responsible for his self-destruction. And secondly, he cannot support himself or her. Images of a dancing man, dressed in the garbs of a woman, and that of a weak man, are brilliantly juxtaposed. Lillete Dubey has to be complimented for her brilliant techniques because the subject matter is handled very delicately. The way the story is directed matters a lot, because such a powerful story can either be a mess or it can transcend into something new. Each character plays a dual role and the performances are highly appreciated. The set is simple yet extravagant. Old photos of family members hang on the ceiling. The antique furniture gives one a feeling that it is still the post-independence era. And in the end, we seek solace in the fact that husband and wife will reunite in heaven and dance to please the gods.

Dattani's plays are so realistic that sometimes they generate a lot of discussion and controversy. At the same time his plays embody many of the classical concerns of world drama. All the plays of Dattani have multi-layered stage. The dramatist gives detailed stage details before the play opens. This analysis helps directors to present the play just as Dattani has visualized. Different stage levels indicate different time spans. Moreover, detailed stage description helps in creating an atmosphere of a specific time span or a specific situation. This play also has three-layered stage. In the centre of the upper stage level, there is '… Up Centre is the entrance of the room—a huge arched doorway. There is a rather modern-looking rear panel behind the entrance with a telephone and a modern painting on it.' One can see a
garden when this panel is slid. Then in the up-stage left is 'a dance practice hall. Upstage right, a staircase going to the bedrooms. Downstage right, exits into the kitchen.' The room has antic furniture 'at least forty years old.' (CP 387)

The play can be read as a configuration of the characteristic grip of human identity that strongly interfaces the elements of identical autonomy and autonomous identity. Much like R. K. Narayan’s novel The Guide, Dattani’s play is about the incidental identity crisis where the identity of a dancer clashes with the identity of a son—the two identities of a same person. Amritlal cannot tolerate his son to be a professional dancer because such profession is categorically restricted for the women. As far as the gender issues of our socio-political status are concerned Jairaj cannot be a dancer because there is a coincidental conflict between a manly man and a professional dancer.

The play directly hits out at torn relationships in a pseudo-sophisticated society. It examines the authority and prejudices, socially and culturally revealing the darker secrets of family lives and the conflict between generations. It tells the tale of human hearts, trapped in conflicting situations. Running at two levels, represented by two generations, the play stands on the platform of tradition, and yet transcends the limits of time and space to expose the cracks in contemporary socio-cultural setting. It's a battle against society that prevents us from reaching out to our roots. What we call a 'modern India' is really a negation of the real India. It doesn't work that way. The story revolves around two Bharatnatyam dancers Jairaj and Ratna and now their daughter Lata. It is a reminder of those times when dance used to be considered the profession and craft of prostitutes in India. A woman as a dancer was bad enough but a man trying to become a dancer was something unheard of.

Ratna and Jairaj, two Bharatnatyam dancers, a middle class south Indian couple, two individual entrapped in a cultural chasm, reflect the past and the present Indian culture, identities and gender roles. The play opens in the living room in an old-fashioned house, an antique mansion that once belonged to Jairaj's father, Amritlal Parekh, an autocrat who is
dead but a stiff reminder of their authoritative past. On the one side, he is a freedom fighter and liberal minded enough to allow the son to marry a girl from another community, and on the other hand, he is entrenched in his own tradition, and believes that Bharatnatyam is a craft of prostitutes, and therefore, is not able to understand Jairaj and Ratna's devotion to the classical Indian dance form. His role in the destruction of their lives comes to us later on in their memories, the play rather begins with the entrance of Lata (a third generation) and her lover Viswas (a rich mithaiwala), whom Lata brings to meet her parents. But the parents, Jairaj and Ratna are busy making preparations for her debut and do not pay the desired attention to Viswas.

The parents Jairaj and Ratna are worried about their daughter's debut at an international concert. They want Lata to achieve distinction as a danseuse as she herself had been thwarted in her desire to make her as a dance artist because of the repressive patriarchal dominance exercised by her father-in-law, Amritlal, who expected all the members of the family to prostrate themselves before him. She considers herself a failure and for this she blames Jairaj. She vents her frustrations on Jairaj and accuses him of being a jelly in from of his dominating father. So, now from arranging the mridangam player, to requesting the media to cover the event, Ratna is taking care of everything for her daughter. Lata is on the verge of arangetram, and there are only a few days left when the mridangist breaks an arm. Ratna is stressed and cannot rest till an alternative is found. She visits another artist and requests her to send her mridangist.

Ratna's necessity is to find some kind of consummation for her specific femininity and for herself as a human being. The circumstances, with which she is now surrounded, as well as those of her upbringing, tend to prevent these two consummations- instinct and ego- from being fused together. Conflict and compromise are almost inevitable. In attempting to gain these, an individual identity of herself as a dancer, she carries her outside her home, away from children and childbearing. She has at least formally won but in winning, she was
forced, too, into dubious battle for all the other rights auxiliary to them. Thus she finds herself squarely in the middle of the most serious kind of divided purpose.

Unable to relinquish either satisfaction, she necessarily attempts to obtain both. In making the attempt, she must divide her attention and one of her occupations must be sacrificed in some measure to the other. Certainly, the tasks of a woman in bearing and educating children as well as maintaining, as best she may, the inner integrity of her home are more capable of demanding all her time and best attention. It is becoming unquestionably more and more common for the woman to attempt to combine both home and child care and an outside activity, which is either work or career. When these two spheres combine it is inevitable that one or the other will become of secondary concern and, this being the case, it is certain that the home will take that position. The same case happened with Ratna too, when she used to leave her son Shankar in the hands of ayah on the times when she was out for her dance performances without knowing that she used to give him opium to get rid of her duties.

The play develops out of the conflict of three generations. Amritlal carries the baggage of his own times and tries to manipulate the next generation- Jairaj and Ratna to transmit it forward. Jairaj and Ratna, ironically, do the same with their own progeny, and try to pass on their preferences to Lata. Therefore, a complex story of a one generation dancing couple feeling the insecurity of advancing years and lack of financial cushion, yet hoping that the next generation will take to the craft, and also keep the kitchen fire burning with it! There are numerous revelations and several 'hidden' stories are told that begin to unravel the secrets.

Lata is constantly under pressure to 'achieve all that her parents couldn't'. She goes through her own angst. She loves dance, but she wants to do that on her terms. She often tells Viswas that she wants to dance for herself and not to please anyone. But at the same time, she is aware of her parents, particularly her mother's aspirations for her. How can she let them down? Lata is not a failure like her parents and her success is because of her own hard work and their supports. She becomes a sensation overnight. Then, there are her own plans for the
future and is quite happy to marry Viswas, whose father owns half the buildings on commercial street and makes mithai and who for his part is suave and comfortable with his complete ignorance of Bharatnatyam- the passion of the preceding generation. Finding no one around himself, Vishwas removes the old shawl of Amritlal from the cupboard and wears it and struts around, and mimics him as his son Jairaj is in front of him and he is opposing his dancing hobby:

Viswas. So, you want to be a dancer. Hah! Hah! Hah! Son, you will never amount to anything in life. Look at me. Look at what I have achieved. Yes. Look. Look. Look. (Points to the furniture.) What's that you say? There's more to life than money? You ungrateful wretch! (CP 369)

…

Viswas (continues dramatically). Where will you go being a dancer? Nowhere! What will you get being a dancer? Nothing! People will point at you on the streets and laugh and ask, 'Who is he?' 'He is a dancer.' 'What does he do?' 'He is a dancer.' 'Yes, but what does he do?' 'He is a dan ... ' ...I love dancing. Not disco or anything like that. You know, our dances. There's so much more in them. You know what I mean? (Shouts) Lata! (CP 397)

Or when after the sensational performance of Lata, he comments of its too much exoticness:

Viswas. I admire your courage…. It is her passion and it wouldn't be fair for me to ... All I'm saying is that … Yes! That it really isn't necessary to make it so ... you know. At least I don't think so. Of course, you may think so, but I don't. And I don't know what she thinks about it so ... (Shrugs his shoulders and laughs nervously.) (CP 435)

Lata and Viswas have a happy married life, opposite of that of Jairaj and Ratna, whose hypocritical life began to unravel with this new couple's getting success in their career and in their life. The calm and funny exterior, with which the play began cracks and reveals the demons that they had swept under the carpet all these years. But, this couple of third generation is not the key aspect of the play, not even the life of Ratna, who may not be called and escaped as being true Indian woman, plays somewhat 'negative' character in Jairaj's life and is an example of Dattani’s 'strong’ woman, successful in the survival of man's world,
lived her life on her own way and runs the life of Jairaj too. She paid attention to her own career rather than encouraging her husband's. She was more successful in the past times than her husband because somewhat she was accepted as a dancer for being a woman and in the present times too, she has a daughter to continue her own passion, even if she herself left her career because of familial hindrance. As a self-obsessed and fascinating woman she accepted the offer of Amritlal to ruin Jairaj's career in dance life to achieve her ambitions:

Amritlal. Help me make him an adult. Help me to help him grow up.

Ratna. How?

Pause.

Amritlal. It is hard for me to explain. I leave it to you. Help me and I'll never prevent you from dancing. I know it will take time but it must be done.

Ratna. I'll try ... And once he stops dancing – what will you do with him then?

Amritlal. Make him worthy of you. (CP 427-428)

And, in the present, Ratna has moved from half-heartedly pushing her marginally talented husband to dance, to shoving her daughter into the limelight, to make up for the fame she never had:

Ratna (shouting). I heard Rave reviews! The star of the festival! The dancer of the decade! And why shouldn't she get reviews like these? I deserved it…. My hard work has paid off, hasn't it? Hasn't it? (CP 439)

She was so self-obsessed that she considers Lata's hard work and success as her own and wants to paste those reviews in her own album of dance. Ratna's jealousy surfaces when Jairaj makes her realize that it is only Lata's success and achievement and she begins to weep.

We realize that at the receiving end of the politics of gender is not Ratna so much as is Jairaj, a victim of familial and social conceptions: kept on a leash by his father, eclipsed by his wife, a failure as a dancer, and an alcoholic. He is the only son of a successful businessman, Amritlal, a nationalist in the pre-independent era married Ratna, a Bharatnatyam artiste and abandoned family trade to continue his passion for classical dance.
The father is appalled by this challenging behaviour and his stratagems finally destroy Jairaj. After the wife's betrayal, it is liquor that keeps him going.

Amritlal, a freedom fighter, comes across as a rather conservative character when it comes to dealing with 'deviance' from gender stereotypes and as one who represents the middle-class morality. Jairaj and Ratna live within the domain of this patriarch. His honor at the knowledge of his son's choice as a professional dancer and his relentless pressure at dissuading him from embarking on an effeminate career are expressed in these words of him:

Amritlal. A woman in a man's world may be considered progressive. But a man in a woman's world is only pathetic.

Ratna. Maybe we aren't 'progressive' enough. (CP 427)

Like many prejudiced people, he too thinks that Bharatnatyam is a craft of prostitutes, improper for his daughter-in-law and absolutely unimaginable for his son. He felt that no self-respecting person should perform such a dance, let alone a man, and therefore did not understand Ratna and Jairaj's devotion to dance. He forbids Ratna from visiting the old devdasi who teaches her the intricacies of Bharatnatyam and cannot tolerate the sounds of dancing bells that ring through their practice sessions. He wants his son to behave like a 'man'. The underlying fear is obviously that dance would turn him 'womanly' - an effeminate man and so, he must oppose Jairaj's passion for dance as a man's happiness, in his opinion lies in being a man.

Amritlal looks down upon dancing as a feminine occupation and succeeds in persuading Ratna to thwart Jairaj's motive of dancing. Juxtapositions worry Amritlal–Can a prostitute be a dancer? Can one be a man and still dance? What kind of guru wears his hair long and walks funny? A powerful patriarch's imprinted Amritlal, therefore, vigorously disapproves of his son's career choice and the 'disreputable' company he keeps. Forced to succumb to mounting family pressures, Jairaj lives with a sense of mediocrity and his wife's treachery.
Amritlal and Ratna reinforce their own sense of security at Jairaj's expense. He will consent to Ratna's career in dance only if she helps him pull Jairaj out of his obsession and make him a 'manly' man. The tragedy of Jairaj is that he has chosen to pursue a career that is considered 'right' only for women. Society versus individual is again a dominant theme in the play and again here it is the family, as the microcosm of society, lays down its unwritten rules. Jairaj follows his heart's desire and becomes a dancer but has enraged his father in the process. Amritlal Parekh is disappointed because his son's ideas of happiness do not fit in with his. He says:

Amritlal. I have always allowed you to do what you have wanted to do. But there comes a time when you have to do what is expected of you. Why must you dance? It doesn't give you any income. Is it because of your wife? Is she forcing you to dance?

Jairaj. Nobody's forcing me. (CP 415)

One can notice the persuasive language of the father in forcing his son to accept the social stereotypes. Dattani asserts in an interview to Ranu Uniyal about Dance Like a Man:

It is about Bharatnatyam dancers. Again in their old age, when they are in their 60s and they are looking back on to their struggling days, when they had their ideals and in the 50s where there was a stigma attached to the dance forms; that it is a dance form of the Devdasis. It's a prostitute’s dance and people from respectable families didn’t perform or practice that dance form. It is doubly difficult for the man. You know, what business does a man have learning a prostitute’s dance? So it brings about gender roles, what is expected of gender as well. And also the tensions between the couple and how, they solve, how they felt that they used their relationship to develop their careers, dances and how they reconcile to the fact that the time wasn’t right for them. (182–183)

Dattani's words focus on two aspects: one is the conflict between the artist and society in India today, and the other conflict between the relationships in modern Indian family (wife/ husband and father/son). In the materialistic society of contemporary India, Dattani raises a few unlikely questions about the social construct that a man is in terms of sexuality,
as the head of the family and as an artist. The stereotypes of gender roles are pitted against the idea of the artist in search of creativity with the restrictive construction of the world that he is forced to inhabit. Jairaj, as a dancer is treated as a man in a woman's world. In a society, where gender equations and change in the world is defined by tacit rules cannot associate dance and man together. It is given 'female' identity, which is used to question the social structure that constructs male stereotypes too.

The play provides multiple frameworks of gender and gender roles: the prostitute as a dancer and an artist to whom Ratna used to go to learn dance in her prime age; the man Jairaj as a dancer; the guru of both in their early lives who sports long hair and has an 'effeminate' walk and the clash as how the property and money play a deciding and manipulating role in the construction and acceptation of identities. Patriarchal operation imposes certain social standards of femininity as all biological women and men in order to prove that these standards for 'femininity' are natural. Consequently, a woman or man, who does not conform to the chosen standards, is considered unfeminine or non-masculine and therefore unnatural. Therefore, man can also be constructed as marginalized to the symbolic order.

Masculinity as a concept has evolved over centuries based on human experience, cultural patterns, religious beliefs and social psychology born of economic determination. The characteristics associated with the ideology of masculinity are supremacy, loftiness, premordiality, ascendancy and creative, generative capacity. The male attributes of values, valiance, value, virtue, virility, violence and power have evolved universally through the civilization process.

Cultural issues such as social roles, personal ambition, passion, and a cultural dilemma and conflict faced by exponents of a fading art form are weaved together into the story. Jairaj is abandoned for having chosen a career suitable for women, therefore it is a story, all about passion and the life of an artiste, a range of human emotions, of the fire within, of ambition, hard work, understanding, sentiments, sacrifice and the price of passion-
of having a frustrated and futile life. He is ostracized for he chooses to dance like a woman though his dancing is a way of expressing his identity and is shown the door because he goes against the expressed wishes of his father in opting to dance his way through life. Rebellion surfaces in the family the very moment Amritlal breathes his last. Consequently, after his father's death, he destroys all things that are dear to his father. He does not even spare the rose garden. Too much of stringency leads to revolt which, though remains undercover, gushes forth, whenever it finds an outlet and he wonders whether it has been worth all the sacrifices. All his life he has tried to achieve perfection but has always made mistakes and found it not easy to dance to different tune. The outcome is a man, sad and disillusioned who is crushed by his wife's ambition and father's inflexibility.

Both, Jairaj and Ratna have paid a great price to reach at this stage–Jairaj has compromised on his manliness but could not dance like a man, a regret he felt till the end of his life, and Ratna on her motherhood, pay the price with the life of her son, Shankar for being a successful dancer. There were testing times and difficult situations and one tragedy which made them both give up their dancing career. So strong is the feeling of this guilt that the albatross hangs from Ratna's neck for the rest of her life and a mere mention of her child's name puts her off. Like in all battles, a completely innocent individual becomes the victim: the baby son of the dancing couple, a loss of both for their neglect. The story unfolds the condition of both in their past and the way past affects their present and is to affect their future. What the couple could not achieve in their life, got after death, free from the demands of family and society, are able to "dance perfectly. In unison. Not missing a step or a beat." (CP 447). Though the play ends happily with a contented married life of Lata and Viswas and union between Jairaj and Ratna, the audience/ reader knows that the latter pair has undergone much loss because of the socially strong stereotypes.

*Dance Like a Man* is a play everyone can identify with as it comes with all the emotions we all have experienced- on one way up or down. There are layers to every
emotion, ambition, greed, love, loneliness, just the way it is in life. The last lines of the play reverberate: We were only human. We lacked the grace. We lacked the brilliance. We lacked the magic to dance like God. (CP 447)

The success of the play surprised both Mahesh Dattani and Lillete Dubey because it gained a life of its own running into more than 500 shows which is ‘a rarity for English language theatre in India.’ (MMP 35). Even when the play was converted into a film by Pamela Rooks, it became a National Award-winning film which shows how significant the content has been for the Indian viewers.

At the end drama becomes dance and dance becomes drama when the epiphany momentum of ‘dance like God’ occurs to resist the stagnant anti-life of the present world. By rejecting the dyspeptic unbelief and by projecting an apotheosis of unified pleasure, the stellar sight of the final dance brings the sympathetic alliance of lyric and rhythm by poeticizing dance and dancing poetics when man and woman is superb stalwart to each other. The discussion leads me to conclude that Dattani very adroitly creates the binaries like–the individual and the society, woman and man, daughter and mother, son and father, and sister and brother and through his dramatic art stands in favour of the former in the listed binaries.