

Theme Of Transferred Resentments In The Context To Family Relations In Mahesh Dattani's Final Solutions

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Abstract: *Indian performance traditions have roots in ancient times. The flowering of those traditions in different directions and forms through the centuries has enriched Indian expressive systems although their development may not necessarily show any chronological or stylistic continuity. However, there are traces-tenuous, heterogeneous and hybrid-which are the crumbs that mark the genealogical networking of these varied foliations. But this is only to be expected as the centuries-old history of the vast subcontinent is fraught with radical changes and transformations. English plays gained more popularity through the following decades especially in the Presidency towns of Calcutta, Madras and Bombay and thrived with the patronage and participation of the officers of the East India Company. Plays by Shakespeare and other European dramatists becomes regular fare for playgoers. Such was the draw of these plays that sometimes actors and specially actresses were brought in from England. Gradually, more play houses were built and the audience began to include wealthy and literate Indians.*

Mahesh Dattani has written many illustrious plays but his Final Solutions have been considered as the masterpiece among the other plays. It centers on the Hindu-Muslim problem Final Solutions foregrounds. It also tackles the theme of transferred resentment in the context to family relations. The large part of the play is good theatre and that makes it technically sound. The language is handled quite competently. Our present concern is with the play's thematic side so let us focus on that. Dattani has attempted a neat balancing act when It comes to tracing the malady of communal disharmony to certain elements within both the communities-Hindu and Muslim. The diagnosis offered is also sound enough. Paid people cause riots or neither plays upon the susceptibilities of the two communities on certain key issues. The chorus is a good device to express the broad way in which the thinking of excitable elements within the two communities goes. Processions being taken out and then attacked and then relation somebody there always is who throws the first stone of the two communities are brought into focus.

Dattani conveys all his concepts dramatically and allow his characters room to develop. He has a good theatre-sense and his command of language is good. He often takes up tricky issues and is able to bring lot equanimity to his handling of these. The dialogue is mostly crisp. Character-contrasts work well, He is able to delve deep into the unconscious levels of community thinking and brings a lot of objectivity and balance to his analysis of the problems that bedevil us.

When it comes to the film version of the play, the tilt perhaps is too much to one side. That possible was reason for some other problems the film version had with the censors. In 1998, Mahesh Dattani won the Sahitya Akademi award for his *Final Solutions* and Other Plays, published by East-West Books, Chennai, thus becoming the first English language playwright to win the award. His plays have been staged to critical and public acclaim all

over the country and abroad. Mahesh Dattani has completely transformed the face of urban theatre in India.

Final Solutions is a stage play in three acts. The play was first performed at Guru Nanak Bhavan, Bangalore, on 10 July 1993. The play was performed at Tara Theatre, Mumbai, on 11 December 1993, directed by Alyque Padamsee. Most of us experience anger in some form or other almost every day. Anger is a negative emotion it can cause violence it can ruin relationships. When a person is angry, he tries to take out his/her anger on anybody closest to him.

The characters in the play motivate us to think that angry outbursts lead to chain reactions. The play opens with Daksha reading from her diary. An oil lamp converted to an electric one suggests that the period is the late 1940s. Daksha is the grand-mother of the Gandhis, who sometimes is seen as a girl of fifteen on the stage. Daksha thinks that she is “a young girl who does not matter to anyone outside her home” (166). She says: “Last year in August, a terrible thing happened...and that was free grade citizens. There is the sensitivity to music being played near a mosque. There is the Hindu sensitivity in the matter of general Muslim food habits that go against vegetarianism. There are fears of contamination. Neither exploit most of these things and hired goons help them. Saner voices like Bobby’s are drowned, ignored or brushed aside pent up feelings take a violent shape.

As far as the Ramnik Gandhi family goes, it is a lot like Pinter’s play *Homecoming*. Everyone wants his/her own space but something keeps simmering secrets tumble out under pressure. Unconscious and conscious fear and prejudices rule. Quite a few kinds of liberalism are often only skin deep these are needed nevertheless. Collectively a lot of healing needs to be done. Better education and greater mixing would be a part of the answer. Crisis situations bring out both our better parts and our worse parts. We can be quite cruel as a collectivity and (with the best of intentions) can be touchy for all the wrong reasons. All of us have the basest emotions hidden inside us. A demon lurks all the time. We all look for scapegoats. The false feeling of superiority is perhaps one of the worst things in such situations.

When it comes to the film version of the play, the tilt perhaps is too much to one side. That possible was reason for some other problems the film version had with censors. Now that has been sorted out but one can’t help feeling that greater objectivity, sensitivity and pragmatism is needed when transferring such issues to the film domain for India. Daksha closes her diary and now Hardika appears on the stage. She feels the things have not changed that much. A period of forty years is not a long period for a nation. But on the stage, the drumbeat grows louder and the Chorus slowly wear the Hindu masks. The words spoken by Chorus show the beginning of disharmony and painful period ahead. As long as the persons are on the stage they are normal but as soon as they are behind the masks, their thirst for blood rises. Whether we are angry with someone or someone is angry with us, each outburst takes its toll on both parties. The words spoken by Chorus are the indications of domestic violence, political mischiefs and social unrest. The effective use of the Chorus in the play is a dynamic technique used by the playwright. In the stage directions, the playwright gives hints on the Mob Chorus. The mob chorus comprises five men and ten masks on sticks. The masks are strewn all over the ramp.

The Muslim Chorus is on the highest level of the ramp. They sit with their legs folded under them in prayer position. The wordy duel between Ramnik and Javed goes on, accusing each other. The flames of hatred are still in their minds. Ramnik says to Javed that his life is based on violence. Ramnik thinks that Javed is a riot-rouser and criminal. Ramnik emits a few curses on Javed.

Daksha’s complaint about her in-laws that they don’t allow her to play gramophone makes Zarine sympathetic about Daksha. Zarine’s father is busy narrating the stories about

the clash between two communities and how his shop is burnt purposely. Javed sarcastically remarks: "You scream with pain and horror, but there is no one listening to you. Everyone is alone in their own cycles of joy and terror" (205). Javed written that he himself doesn't know, what he is doing. He is totally disillusioned Smita frankly tells her mother, Aruna, not to burden her anymore with religious prejudices. In the last lines of the Third Act, Bobby picks up the image of Krishna and tells everybody: "He does not burn me to ashes! He does not cry out from the heavens saying He has been contaminated!" (224). Aruna feels uneasy by seeing this act but Bobby clarifies: "if you are willing to forget, I am willing to tolerate" (225).

Ramnik transfers his anger at his own father's black deed (burning the shop) to his mother. In the name of communal hatred, this shameful act is done by Ramnik's father. This is the reason why he does not want to go to his shop. In the play Smita looks very innocent. She doesn't like hypocrisy or over-reaction to religious duties. So she openly opposes her mother: "I can see so clearly how wrong you are" (20). Aruna is proud of her religion. Aruna listens to the stories of Gods while Smita thinks It is all rubbish. Aruna's own daughter does not show any respect for all the religious rituals her mother observes. Smita boldly says to her mother: "You have to admit you are wrong" (21). One has to outset anger from his life and *Final Solutions* finds an apt solution to the problem of communal riots, disputes and acts of hatred. Mahesh Dattani gives no answer but asks: "Is life a forward journey or do we travel round in a circle, returning to our starting point?" (161).

The play is a fine example of transferred resentments Smita, who is unable to express her love for Babban, criticizes her mother bitterly and Smita hates praying and fasting. Her mother accuses her of running away from religion. The characters in the play express their anger at every stage. The members of the raging communities do not know that negative emotions like anger tend to release harmful toxins in the body. The mob seems to be symbolic of our own hatred. We, the people of different communities, must stop this hatred and bitterness. The play mocks at the neither who use people as their puppets. These puppeteers are the real culprits. The playwright, at the end, wishes to stop this game of hatred and communal tension through the character of Ramnik accepts that his father has done the black deed. We should forgive the offenders and forget the past. This can be the final solution and certain things should not be remembered.

Indian Literature, including represents the typically complex Indian experience which is historically multilingual and multicultural but does not fail to underscore well-defined concepts of national identity. Indian English Literature has steadily moved towards self-assertion and self-definition and acquired an unmistakable sense of selfhood.

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