

Psychology of *Rasa*, Emotions and Experience in the Stage Plays of

Mahesh Dattani

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ABSTRACT

"नाट्यंभिन्नरुचेर्जनस्य बहुधाप्येकंसमाराधनम्"

**"Only *Natya* entertains and gives pleasure to the people of
immensely different interests."**

- Maha Kavi Kalidasa

According to Kalidasa, the primary purpose of theatrical productions is to offer amusement and gratification to those with a wide range of interests. The genre of drama has seen significant evolution and has transcended its origins in ancient times. The theatrical domain serves as a dynamic platform for artists to depict and explore *Rasa*, as well as the intricacies of human experiences and emotions. The writer Mahesh Dattani, who is widely recognized in India, has achieved a notable standing within the industry by crafting dramatic works that evoke a deep resonance among audiences and offer perceptive insights into the intricacies of the human psyche.

This research project "Psychology of *Rasa*, Emotions and Experience in the Stage Plays of Mahesh Dattani" provides a critical examination and analysis of the stage plays of Mahesh Dattani, specifically focusing on the psychology of *Rasa*, Western and Indian views on emotions and experience. The plays that will be scrutinized include *Where There's a Will* (1988), *Dance Like a Man* (1989), *Tara* (1990), *Bravely Fought the Queen* (1991), *Final Solutions* (1993), *Seven Steps around the Fire* (1998), *On a Muggy Night in*

Mumbai (1998), *Thirty Days in September* (2001), *The Big Fat City* (2012), and *Where Did I Leave My Purdah?* (2012).

One of the first extant treatises on the field of dramaturgy is the *Natyashastra*, authored by Bharata Muni where he propounded,

"वस्तुनेतारसस्तेषां [नाट्यानां] भेदकः।"

"The plot, characters, and *Rasa* serve as the foundational elements of the literary composition." (Unni, 2014).

Based on the aforementioned principle, the present research aims to establish the potential, importance, and extent of psychological investigations into *Rasa*, encompassing the constituents of *Vibhava*, *Anubhava*, *Vyabhicharibhava*, *Sthayibhava*, and *sadharnikarana*, as well as their interaction with psychological studies and their interpretive implications. This investigation specifically focuses on the emotions associated with *Rasa* and their manifestation in the stage plays of Mahesh Dattani who is widely recognized in India, has achieved a notable standing within the industry by crafting dramatic works that evoke a deep resonance among audiences and offer perceptive insights into the intricacies of the human psyche. This study utilizes a psychological framework to substantiate the significance of the title by investigating the psychological underpinnings of character analysis, the impact of *Rasa*, the portrayal of emotions, and the experiential elements found in Dattani's plays. This study highlights the importance of integrating psychological analysis into the examination of stage plays, particularly in the context of Dattani's artistic achievements. This study seeks to deepen our understanding of the complex aspects of human behaviour, motivations, and emotional landscapes portrayed in theatrical performances by integrating the fields of *Rasa* psychology and theatrical studies.

This study demonstrates the contemporary significance of the *Rasa* theory in the 21st century, focusing on its psychological aspects and its use in Modern Indian English plays.

Keywords: *Rasa*, Emotions, Experience, Modern Indian English Plays, Mahesh Dattani, Psychology of *Rasa*, Indian Aesthetics