
COMMUNICATING IN THE THIRD SPACE: A PSYCHO-CULTURAL READING OF THE LGBT COMMUNITY IN MAHESH DATTANI'S RADIO PLAY DO THE NEEDFUL (1997)**AMANDEEP RANA**JC DAV College, Dasuya, Hoshiarpur
amanrana.hp@gmail.com**HARPREET KAUR**Panjab University, Chandigarh
hkaurbodal@gmail.com

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**ABSTRACT**

Homosexuality, gay/lesbian relationships and same-sex marriages are a few unconventional issues that still raise a lot of eyebrows in Indian society; these people remain marginalized and uprooted in Indian socio-cultural structure. Mahesh Dattani's first radio play *Do the Needful* (1997) focuses explicitly on some shared spaces among men, women and third gender people in Indian society which predominantly promotes the patriarchal family composition and discourages any change that challenges the established and existing structure of it. Dattani, very cleverly through the 'thought' technique, brings out his LGBT characters' subconscious thoughts and their conflict with the socially constructed hegemony. They are not what society thinks of them; they are not what they want to be; they are not what they actually are; they are the inhabitants of a different world – a third space. Not only the two lead characters, Alpesh and Lata, but all the marginalized characters search for ease in a third space. The 'otherness' that they feel in the psycho-cultural frame brings them to a common platform – *Teri bhi chup, meri bhi chup* (your silence and mine as well). The present paper aims at testing Bhabha's postcolonial concept of 'the third space' and 'in-betweenness' in the psycho-cultural sphere, by highlighting and analyzing the space created by various LGBT characters for themselves under the weight of repressed (homo)sexual desires, social structures and cultural constraints.

KEYWORDS: Mahesh Dattani; third space; in-betweenness; marginal; psycho-cultural; hegemony**RESUMEN** *Comunicar en el tercer espacio: Una lectura psico-cultural de Do The Needful, de Mahesh Dattani*

La homosexualidad, las relaciones de personas gay y lesbianas y el matrimonio entre personas del mismo sexo todavía despiertan zozobra en nuestra sociedad; estas personas siguen siendo marginadas y expulsadas de nuestro entorno cultural. La primera obra para la radio de Mahesh Dattani, *Do the Needful*, aborda explícitamente espacios compartidos entre hombres, mujeres, y personas del tercer género en la sociedad india, que privilegia el predominio de la familia patriarcal y sanciona cualquier cambio que desafíe esta estructura predeterminada. Mediante una inteligente técnica de "pensamientos", Dattani exterioriza los pensamientos subconscientes de sus personajes y los pone en conflicto con la hegemonía socialmente construida. Esos pensamientos no son lo que la sociedad cree que son o desea que sean, ni son lo que en realidad son; son los habitantes de un mundo distinto: un tercer espacio. Tanto los dos personajes principales, Alpesh y Lata, como todos los demás, buscan un desahogo en un tercer espacio. La 'otredad' que sienten en su entorno psico-cultural hace que converjan

en una plataforma común: *Teri bhi chup, meri bhi chup*. Este artículo se propone aplicar los conceptos postcoloniales del ‘Tercer Espacio’ y de ‘In-betweenness’ [lo intersticial] desarrollados por Bhabha en la esfera psico-cultural, subrayando y analizando el espacio que distintos personajes crean para sí bajo el peso de deseos (homo)sexuales reprimidos y de estructuras sociales y culturales que los constriñen.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Mahesh Dattani; tercer espacio; inbetweenness; marginal; psico-cultural; hegemonía

Gender discrimination and stratification exist at the heart of Indian society. People having different sexual identities, such as homosexual, bi-sexual and trans-gender exist all over the world, and India is no exception. In India, there are three officially recognized gender variants – ‘female’, ‘male’ and recently incorporated third-gender marked as the category of ‘other’. Owing to the multi-lingual and multi-cultural nature of Indian society, there are different perspectives and dimensions related to gender. One of the most burning issues of Indian society is the identity crisis, relating to homosexuality and trans-gender, in social and cultural milieus. The prevalence of homosexuality is a difficult phenomenon in the Indian social structure because of its association with stigmatization and repression. During the British colonial rule in India, many attempts were made “to regulate and eradicate both non-conforming gender expression and homosexuality—although, as we will see, these elements are inextricable from one another in the Indian context—resulting in laws that effectively criminalized these identities, including Section 377” (Shafi, 1). Concurrently, on 2nd July 2009, the High Court of Delhi ruled that the provision in Section 377 of India's Penal Code, which criminalizes private consensual sex between same-sex adults, violates the country's Constitution and international human rights conventions. The court announced that consensual sex, including gay sex, amongst adults, is legal.

The present paper explores how homosexual identities, such as the LGBTQs exist as a harsh and challenging reality in the Indian socio-cultural setup that has been largely disrupted by heterosexual societies for years. It fosters critical reflection over the inequalities and controversies surrounding homosexuality in India which,

proliferating under the category of a ‘third gender’ are defined not only in relation to the dimorphic male and female identities—being born in one of these two genders, or as a hermaphrodite, and identifying as another—but in terms of feminine or masculine-coded behavior or expression, sexual practices—both the role taken in sex and the gender of one’s partner—or asexuality, impotency, occupational and ritual roles, and so on.” (Shafi, 2)

It also highlights how societal control works as an essential element of patriarchy in order to maintain its privilege among the other gender categories which not only shape their social life but also frame their inner dimensions. ‘Cultures of sexuality’ in India, which are composed of common or shared sexual identities and experiences, is a complex phenomenon because of their deep embedding in various social, cultural, religious and political processes. The paper also retrieves the ideas revolving around sex and desire, with a particular focus on male sexual anxieties, female sexual desires and same-sex relations in the plays of Mahesh Dattani with a special understanding of his radio play *Do The Needful* (1997). Dattani is a well-known Indian playwright, stage director, actor, screenwriter and film-maker. He is the first Indian playwright to receive the Sahitya Academy Award, the highest Indian award in the field of writing. His plays depict contemporary Indian themes related to an urbanized middle-class society that is undergoing a noticeable cultural, ethical, and psychological change, as he generally emphasizes, what Erin Mee calls, the “‘invisible issues’ of Indian society” (Dattani, 320), such as domestic violence, child sexual abuse, male aggression, women’s submission and inter-caste marriages, etc. He examines the psychology of individuals who are distinguishable from heterosexuals in their sexual desires and thoughts “as a visible category beyond the biologically polarized markers of male and female” (Banerjee, 230). He presents their position in society by reflecting how society possesses them to maintain ‘silence’ against oppression and injustice. *Do The Needful* portrays how a gay individual is forced to live his life within norms laid down and defined by the heterosexual society and how a young woman is eager to prove her independence by breaking the conventions set by her conservative parents. It also reflects how, in contemporary Indian society, the identity of gays, lesbians, trans-genders and homosexuals has not yet been organized, and this ultimately leads to various unacceptable and oppressed social relationships. Dattani, thus, dramatizes the crisis of those relationships which are not rigidly demarcated in terms of socially accepted gender constructions, as Das remarks: “Dattani has done a good job by introducing a new theme to Indian English drama. Conservatives and social activists should not turn a blind eye to reality . . . We have to accept the reality of life, however, painful as that might be” (17). Hence, Dattani’s plays largely portray discrimination in our society on the basis of religion, class, gender and sexuality very insightfully and empathetically. He cleverly brings out his characters’ subconscious thoughts and their conflict with the socially constructed hegemony through the ‘thought’ technique.

They are not what society thinks of them; they are not what they want to be; they are not what they actually are; they are the inhabitants of a different world – a third space.

The concept of ‘third space’ was primarily propagated by Homi K. Bhabha in his most influential work *The Location of Culture* (1994). Bhabha developed this concept on Victor Turner’s key idea of ‘liminality, which reflects the dualistic and fluid nature of an individual’s identity. According to Bhabha:

Turnerian symbolic model of liminal social drama, is not just idle speculation, nor mere reflection, nor just a form of criticism, but a process of celebrating dynamic spaces of cultural change characterized by shifting identities . . . in this case liminality, is a response to and a real moment of intervention in people’s daily lives as they try to grapple with the cosmic eddies of change around them. (Kalua, 23)

The very idea of ‘third space’ is based on Bhabha’s post-colonial and socio-cultural theory of identity which is acquired through the medium of language and concerned with the “constitutive role of culture in mind, i.e., on how [the] mind develops by incorporating the community’s shared artifacts accumulated over generations” (Hatano, 78). This post-colonial and socio-cultural identity is the product of various global and cosmopolitan displacements which led to the collision of different cultures providing it with “a ‘liminal space’, which gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation” (Rutherford, 211). Later, Karin Ikas and Gerhard Wagner, in their edited volume *Communicating in the Third Space* (2009), raise a critical debate over the numerous interpretations of the concept of ‘third space’ in the contemporary globalized world. In their volume, they bring out a collection of essays by different thinkers, such as Homi Bhabha, Ulrich Beck, Edward Soja, Julia Lossau and others, representing similar ideas based on Bhabha’s notion of third space “where inter- and transcultural communication has become a norm rather than an exception” (Dalal, 1) and they also “take into account the social and political circumstances in which that intercultural communication takes place” (Dalal, 1). Dalal points out various opportunities to understand the concept of ‘third space’:

Bhabha’s unwillingness to offer a clear and concrete definition of third space leads this enigmatic and elusive concept to trigger off a range of new interpretations and ideas that are divided into five broad categories in this volume, addressing the contemporary relevance of third space in areas as diverse as inter- or transcultural communication, spatial turn, theorizing the third space, ‘literizing’ the third space and locations and negotiations. (1)

Pettersson also observes that “his cryptic and abstract formulations hardly help the reader to grasp, let alone effectively employ, his theoretical concepts” (3), and this consequently leads to the application of this concept in various other paradigms. The present paper provides a new way to apply Bhabha’s concept of ‘the third space’ in the most dynamic and controversial area of homosexuality and third-gender identities to create a better understanding of these positions and experiences in contemporary Indian society through the study of Mahesh Dattani’s play *Do The Needful*. The paper explores the in-betweenness and the shared space, through which sexual cultures are produced, controlled and contested and how the institution of family plays an important role in the reproduction of dominant sexualities and locates ‘desire’ within existing structures of power and society.

Do the Needful is Mahesh Dattani’s first radio play broadcasted on 14th August 1997 on BBC Radio 4. Based on the LGBT concerns, such as alienation, deprivation, subjugation, silence and repression, the play systematically examines several Indian issues related to arranged marriages, family conflicts and changing social patterns in a very unique way. Dattani himself admitted this in an interview:

Thematically I talk about the areas which the individual feels exhausted. My plays are about people who are striving to expand ‘this’ space. They live on the fringe of the society and are not looking for acceptance but are struggling to grab as much fringe space for themselves as they can. (Karthika, 127)

The play highlights how the changing social patterns lead the characters to unwillingly reject their age-old beliefs. Though written for the British audience, the play explicates typical Indian themes of arranged marriage, patriarchy and gender issues of multicultural Indian society.

The event of the play revolves around two culturally different families, the Patels, who are Gujaratis and live in Bombay (now, Mumbai) and the Gowdas, who are Kannadas and live in Bangalore (now, Bengaluru). They are about to organize a meeting in order to do the needful regarding the matrimonial alliance between their children Alpesh Patel, a thirty-plus divorced man and Lata Gowda, a twenty-four-year-old unconventional girl. They both have romantic sentiments toward their other partners and do not want to engage in this matrimonial alliance. The reason for the first divorce of Alpesh is his homosexual desires; he shares a psychosexual intimacy with Trilok, his body massager. He, again, does not wish to put himself into the same type of relationship as he feels uneasy about the meeting arranged by the parents of both

families: “It was just another mad window-shopping spree. They couldn’t all be agreeable to the . . . venture. Somebody would say no, so it didn’t have to be me.” (127)

On the other hand, Lata is also romantically involved with a boy named Salim, which is not acceptable to her family. Thus, the story interweaves various social, cultural and psychological dilemmas in the lives of these characters. The play portrays cultural conflict, doubt and bias as well as the unification of two families – the Gujaratis and the Kannadas. The marriage compromise of Alpesh and Lata reveals the increasing conflicts both at individual as well as social levels of Indian society. The play depicts how the inability of parents to arrange good partners for their children in their own communities demands inter-caste matrimonial alliances. When Kusumben asks Prema the reason for not being able to find a suitable partner for Lata in their own city and community, she claims that the hospitable and honest nature of the Gowdas is the main reason which never let them move out of their community. And also, being in a cosmopolitan city like Bangalore, they hardly move in their own community with the result that they fail to find a suitable match for their girl. Kusumben gives the same reason for their inability to find a suitable match for Alpesh in Mumbai. They accept the marriage proposal from the other community by considering it a symbol of modernity and social change, as Devraj Gowda puts it. “After all, if they can consider an inter-caste marriage, they must be broad-minded, like us.” (121)

The play reflects how the dominance of modernity and rationalism in the socio-cultural milieu gives way to promoting inter-caste marriages. Because of rumors of Lata’s sexual intimacy with Salim, the Gowdas find it difficult to find a good match for her in their own community. Hence, they accept the inter-caste marriage proposal from the Patels, which is traditionally permissive in the society which Devraj Gowda again justifies:

Who can stop change . . . I . . . don’t know what to say. I know my parents and my forefathers will be hurt very badly, and I am . . . betraying them, but . . . my daughter’s happiness is most important. Please, sir, please accept my daughter. (147)

The play also spotlights the role of marriage in Indian households as a symbol of parents’ respect and reputation in society. They do everything possible to fulfil their yearnings for the marriage of their children, such as gifting and donating money to religious shrines and poor people so that they may receive their blessings for them:

Chandrakant Patel (*barely audible in spite of shouting*): “Poojariji! Over here! . . . Put fifty-one, no, hundred and one rupees for a special prayer for my son . . . (*Louder.*) A special prayer! For my son! Alpesh Patel! Alp-esh! One hundred and one! (124)

Alpesh’s mother always remains worried about the second marriage of her only son as all her friends have daughters-in-law which they think provides them with comfort and prestige because it will lead their family into the next generation, as Kusumben Patel states:

So what if she has two daughters-in-law? But I will have one at least, no? . . . On the 21st . . . They are south Indian but nowadays all that is changing . . . Hope. Hope and faith. Okay? . . . I cannot call Swamiji. He will go to Manjulaben’s house only. She has two daughters-in-law to help her. (125)

Conversely, Alpesh requests his mother not to force him into a second marriage as he doesn’t want to take risks after his divorce, however, Kusumben assures him: “No. I will not let it happen again. It can never happen again. I might as well take poison and die if it happens again” (126). He also expresses his doubt about the Gowdas who accepted the proposal of a thirty-year-old divorced man for their twenty-four-year-old unmarried daughter. He finds it uneasy why they do not get a good match there in Bangalore, in their own community. But his mother explains: “If they have something to hide, then . . . Who will not expect too much from you” (126). The play also depicts the decrrial of socio-cultural norms and traditional values in contemporary Indian society. Devraj and Prema become involved in an argument over the rumors spread about Lata’s bad character. Devraj blames Prema for choosing a neutral family instead of living with his parents in their ancestral house: “Maybe if we were living with my parents, they would have kept an eye on her.” (121) They believe that a ‘no good’ family from their own community will accept their daughter and the only solution to provide her with a good household is an inter-caste marriage. When Lata resists her parents, who are trying to force a marriage on her, her mother warns her: “You should have thought of our lives before sleeping with that Terrorist!” (122) She further says “She has to do it in his hostel! Couldn’t they go to a hill station or somewhere?” to which, Lata replies: “You wouldn’t have allowed me.” (122) When her mother blames her for the rumors about Lata and Salim spread by the boys in the society, Lata responds by blaming her mother: “They don’t like you so they talked about me! . . . I am forced to be displayed to some has-been because you don’t have the courage to tell them all to go jump in a well.” (122-23)

Turner, in his idea of ‘liminality’, expresses the importance of different forms of spaces created by individuals which are culturally invisible and transformative in nature, as he writes:

Here I would like to repeat the 'Orphic' level of ritual, which transcends both structure and anti-structure, the opposition . . . become irrelevant, a new arbitrariness appears in the relation between signifier and signified - things cease to signify other things, for everything is, the Saussurean significative dualism yields to a basal non-dualism where signifier and signified dissolve into indiscriminable existence. (157)

The play, on the one hand, depicts the teeming masses of big metropolitan cities like Mumbai and Bangalore and on the other, provides a contrast by portraying the Southern rural countryside life. Both families boast of their rich heritage and ancestry and claim to have good names in their respective communities.

They belong to totally distinct localities and also enter into conflicts over their ancestral backgrounds. The Gowdas refer to the industrialists of big metropolitan cities as thieves, who are corrupt and 'bastards' and blame them for destroying their countryside and business. The Coconut Vendor also holds Devraj Gowda accountable for the marriage proposal from the north Indian Patels:

Those sons of demons! Who asked them to come here? . . . Go away! We don't want your money! . . . Born in the most Inauspicious time! (*To Devraj Gowda.*) And You! You we have served for so long, you give your daughters to them. Aiyo! Big people! Modern people! . . . Kaliyuga! Kaliyuga! Our mother is being raped and her own sons are watching! (141)

They become involved in a long debate over the issue as the Gowdas feel they are betraying their ancestors while accepting this, but while overriding his protest, Chandrakant Patel tries to convince Devraj Gowda:

But you can still consider a proposal from us for your daughter. I understand there will be reasons for not seeking a groom in your own community. We are also in a . . . similar situation. But it must be so difficult for you. (147)

This reflects how the dominance of modernity, rationalism and socio-cultural aspects in contemporary social scenarios generate a dilemma in making a choice between traditional social structures and exclusive modern styles. Both the families fail to arrange suitable counterparts for their children in their respective communities. Hence, in order to maintain their social structure, they leave aside their ancestral pride and form the hybrid 'third-space', an 'in-betweenness' that encourages the intermingling of and communication between two different spaces. They share a virtual space, which is:

loaded with ambiguity; it represents an act of unleashing that post-dialectical moment when people reject structures and hegemonies and occupy any one of the heterogeneous spaces where

they negotiate narratives of their existences as well as of particular spaces of meanings and different identities within the postcolonial condition (Kalua, 25).

The narrative of the play occurs at two levels – exterior and interior– to reflect the most conflicting situations between the idealistic and individualistic notions of the characters. Whereas the exterior reflects the idealistic socio-cultural fabric of the society, the interior depicts the complex and conflicting mental spectrum of the characters. Various devices such as ‘thought’ and ‘mobile phone’ conversations reveal the hidden desires and mental conflicts of the characters. The ‘thought’ technique decodes the inner-consciousness and desires of Lata and Alpesh for their romantic partners. While Alpesh’s mother demands that he should marry again, he keeps on thinking about Trilok and about his touch while being massaged: “Yes, touch me ... hold me ... That feels good, Trilok” (125). On the other hand, Lata also keeps on revealing her love and pining for Salim, while her parents are arranging a meeting with the Patels in order to do the needful about her marriage with Alpesh:

Salim, I know you are allowed four wives—what’s the point in thinking of all that now? I will have to be content keeping you as a lover. How are we going to work this out? What if you have to go back to Kashmir? . . . I will have to find another lover, I can have more than four... Why do I think all this? I am a bad girl, I will rot in hell. Oh! Damn the Bangalore Catholic School, sending me on a guilt trip now. (127)

She keeps on fantasizing about her meeting with Salim: “I couldn’t care less whether you do or don’t, but I will still ask you that when we meet. You would want to make love first, of course. Which is just ... fine ... (Pause.) What a journey!” (119). She resists her mother for forcing her to represent herself in front of different families: “This was the bit I hated. The last buffalo complained about my narrow hips. Honestly, I would have screamed if this one had done that. You don’t need wide hips to bear children, for God’s sake!” (132). When they met, they start searching for an opportunity to convince each other to reject this marriage proposal because of their different love interests:

Lata (thought): “I had the chance! I couldn’t lose it. I had to tell him about you, then or never” and Alpesh (thought): “What could I say, Trilok? How would I tell her to reject me?” (149)

The play displays a contrast between the thoughts and conversations of parents and children. Whereas, on the one hand, the parents were happy to accept each other’s children, the children were accusing each other: “Oh! This is no use. If we do get married, I will give you hell! That’s a promise!” (151). The moment Lata finds herself able to convince Alpesh to reject her in front of their parents, she converses with Salim in her thoughts: “That night I really thought and

thought about it. Would it make sense to get married to that lout and make everyone happy? And satisfy that thing in bed? What about me? I had to run away” (151). She keeps on revealing her inner conflicts to Salim in her thoughts that how, in order to escape the unwanted marriage proposal from the Patels, she secretly plans to elope at night with Mali, their gardener:

I said my goodbyes to everything that had meant anything to me. And I ran, Salim! I ran like I had done with Mali. As a child I had fantasies of running away from home, and there I was actually doing it. Nothing mattered except running away. I didn't want to think of the shame that I was bringing to my parents. For once I was thinking of myself and myself only. (152)

The play also unfolds the psychiatric issues faced by homosexual people and how they face extra complexities and challenges than heterosexual people in the revelation of their identity and earn understanding and respect for their different sexual desires in the Indian social setup. People with homosexual orientation face many hurdles – the conflicts in acknowledging their homosexual urges, the meaning of disclosure and the problems faced in coming out, etc. This is discernible in Alpesh who finds it difficult to express to Trilok his inner dilemmas and in his thought, expects Trilok to understand his situation:

I missed you too . . . (*Pause.*) I am so glad . . . You won't believe it. All kinds of thoughts went through my head. What if you had left? I come back to Bombay to find you . . . not here . . . I don't have your address . . . (*Pause.*) I couldn't possibly ask the receptionist. (120)

A similar situation, highlighting identity crisis and repression, surfaces in the play when Lata finds that the reason for Alpesh's divorce from his first wife is his homosexuality as she notices his sexual intimacy with Mali. She uses this as a tool to blackmail Alpesh for further decisions in their marriage. She sarcastically uses the same linguistic expression, which Alpesh had used when they both found each other's secret of smoking: “Teri bhi chup, meri bhi chup.” (142) (your silence and mine as well).

Ashcroft highlights the use of language, which is “a zone of difference, struggle and transformation rather than a zone of identity . . . a tool of resistance and a Third Space of enunciation between the poles of cultural identity, a space within which cultural identities themselves are transformed” (Dalal, 2). Lata persuades Alpesh to marry her as this alliance would not impose any obligation on her part in the sense of a typical matrimonial relationship where a woman/wife has to satisfy her partner's social, physical or psychological urges. When he refuses, she threatens him that she would reveal his (homo)sexual orientation to his parents. Therefore, Alpesh agrees to the idea of getting married to Lata but in return, he asks her to bring Mali with her as dowry to fulfil his (homo)sexual entanglements with him in future. Lata

agrees and a silent bond of maintaining mutual silence is sealed – “Teri bhi chup, meri bhi chup”. The play ends with the Patels feeling blessed by completing their matrimonial alliance with the Gowdas, finally inviting the Swamiji to their home as they have a new daughter-in-law who will take their Patel legacy to the next generation. Anzaldua, in her concept of *mestiza* or consciousness of borderlands, has argued a similar notion while considering it “a dual or multiple personality whereby a subject develops a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity” (79) because its “personality is plagued by psychic restlessness” (78). The parents find themselves successful in binding their children in a blissful bond of marriage, but the couple devises a new way of leading lives with each other’s consent. They share a space of matrimony only in front of their parents and society, as Aplesh instructs Lata:

You’ll do then shopping, right? Just let me know all the shops you’ve been to and tell her (Mother) I took you there. Here, use my credit card at Benzer’s. I will go there tomorrow and sign the vouchers. Don’t go to the temple, the poojariji knows my dad. He is sure to tell him I wasn’t with you. (158)

and then, each of them proceeds to their own ways while thinking about their romantic counterparts. Asha Kuthari Chaudhari, while discussing Dattani’s play *One Muggy Night* based on a similar theme of homosexuality, wonders how “gay literature seems to have been beleaguered by unhappy endings. Homosexuals invariably move towards death, isolation, or a sham heterosexual marriage of the kind Ed and Kiran are heading towards” (Dattani, 50). Similarly, Aplesh, unwillingly, represses his homosexual impulses for Trilok and accepts his heterosexual matrimonial alliance with Lata. The play, thus, perfectly showcases the shared spaces and a sense of in-betweenness among its characters which is discussed

as a site of confusion where individuals feel ‘caught/stuck in between’; alternatively – and perhaps more frequently – it is imagined to be a site of liberation, where interlocutors are freed from prior cultural roots, and openly negotiate and reconcile issues emanating from differences between neutrally juxtaposed cultures. (Zhou, 1)

To sum up, the play highlights the repressed urges of homosexuals; it depicts how men and women share certain different - but at the same time –common spaces secretly and silently in a society that promotes only the traditional hegemonial structures and the ideas of a patriarchal system, discarding any change in its existing stereotypes. Through the dramatic structure of the play, Dattani calls into question the institution of marriage which does not embrace homosexual and inter-cultural matrimonial alliances. It forces the individuals to remain ambiguous in an organized social system. Both Aplesh and Lata find themselves in a

situation where it seems almost impossible for both of them to fulfil their hidden desires which go beyond their socio-cultural boundaries. Neither Alpesh could reveal his gay identity in front of his parents, nor could Lata fulfil her romantic cravings for her lover. Although they are forced by their families to marry each other against their own wishes, they successfully establish a 'third space' in which they can realize their romantic notions in the disguise of a false matrimonial alliance. The play transcends the linguistic and socio-cultural barriers in the homosexual community, and reflects how they are "dragged in darkness, doomed to survive in perpetual silence bearing the oppressive burden of hegemony of the elitist class" (Kumar 4). The play, thus, demonstrates the negotiating strategies they employ to deal with the heterosexual world and hegemonic discourse, and this leads them to deliberately undertake a double existence for a peaceful movement in a patriarchal world.

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DR. AMANDEEP RANA teaches English at JC DAV College Dasuya, affiliated to Panjab University Chandigarh (India). In addition to research papers in journals of repute and book chapters, he has also worked on a UGC research project and edited a book on R.K. Narayan.

HARPREET KAUR is a PhD scholar at the Department of English and Cultural Studies, Panjab University Chandigarh (India). Her area of research is literature and popular culture.