

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN THE WORKS OF MAHESH DATTANI AND TASLIMA NASRIN

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Abstract:

It's possible to compare two writers who have the same issues or work in the same genres. They are both playwrights and novelists, respectively. That way they are the writers of different genres. Both, on the other hand, hold up a mirror to the world. Both artists aren't content with just capturing what they see in realistic detail. As a result of what they've seen, everyone of them is responding positively. Reforming the situation and altering people's collective mentality are strongly advocated. Each of them may be considered a problem literary author in some manner. As with Ibsen and Shaw, they're both calling attention to an important issue in their own times and places. Their work does not have a strong aesthetic motivation. They're not mainly motivated by the desire to produce a work of art. They rely heavily on literature to get their message out there. They don't read and write for the sake of it. This group of persons writes because they have a specific message for the people they are addressing with it. Despite their rebellious natures, both have the guts to remind their people that they must grow in compassion for the plight of others and show kindness to those around them. Their work demonstrates a humanist outlook. As existentialists, they write, not as just entertainers. Instead of receiving appreciation, they receive widespread outrage from their fellow citizens as a result of their actions. They've acquired a sort of reputation for their misdeeds. There is a reason why they are well-known: they are unpleasant.

Index Terms: Aesthetic motive, human suffering

He's an Indian thinker, and his name is Dattani. She's a Bangladeshi thinker named Nasrin. Both are genuine intellectuals in their own right. Both have the guts to stand up for what they believe in. Both of them appear to be agnostic when it comes to religion. They're both sincere and caring humanists, and that goes for both of them. Human life is viewed as precious, and any offence against the dignity of man is a sin, according to their vision of social order. In such an order, freedom of opinion and speech, as well as equality of opportunity, are essential. Except for our identification as human beings, all other identities are purely fictitious.

However, the two are not identical. By birth, both Dattani and Nasrin are Hindus, and Nasrin is a Muslim, but they have both renounced their old religious beliefs.

Taslina Nasrin is a citizen of Bangladesh, a theocratic state, while Dattani is an Indian national. That's a critical distinction to make. No one in India has ever been assassinated or sent into exile abroad because of a book they wrote that expressed unpopular opinions. If you insult the clergy in Bangladesh, you must be ready to be a martyr for humanism. Taslima Nasrin, a Bangladeshi, wins the Sahitya Akademi Award in place of Dattani, who receives the Sahitya Akademi Award. That's why her bravery has been lauded in other countries and she's received several prizes and honours as a result.

Nasrin is a Bengali writer, whereas Dattani is an English writer. Nasrin makes it clear that she is speaking directly to her people. As she engages her people in conversation, she makes criticisms about them in their own language. As a result, her mode of communicating is genuine. Dattani, on the other hand, does not hold up to scrutiny. Every Indo-Anglican author who works in English hopes to find an audience outside of India. He may occasionally find an audience in India, but mainly in the larger metropolises. His plays were not at all well-liked. His name is known only to English literature students and the upper crust of metropolis intellectuals. Nasrin has a wide fan base. There is a tiny and select group of culturally aware English-educated people who are attracted to Dattani. Dattani does not address his people in the same manner as Taslima Nasrin does. Dattani makes the following observation:

"There are several assumptions that city-dwelling English speakers are all progressive, whereas rural residents are conservative and communal in their thinking. What's more worse is when someone says something like, 'It would make sense in Hindi or Kannada,' and then continues on. In other words, 'We are not racists. It is those terrible vernacs who need to think about all this,'" 1

Okay, so Dattani isn't quite correct. His detractors are misinformed about their own motives and abilities. In comparison to the villagers, they don't have to drastically alter their mentality. But how many are there nationwide? Only a handful, perhaps. Is it possible to refer to them as the Indians? Because only a writer who writes in the native tongue of the intended audience can claim to be the intended audience's writer. A genuine literary setting would be one in which a writer converses with his own people in their own tongue. The literary position of Dattani is not real in this respect.

They are both playwrights and novelists, respectively. Both of them are creative individuals. Their fame has come more from their unorthodox and daring opinions than from the quality of their art. As far as Dattani's plays go, *The Final Solutions* is his greatest and most satisfying work as a drama.

The most well-known of Taslima Nasrin's works is *Lajja*, a drama. However, artistically speaking, it's not all that impressive. It's not particularly pleasing to the eye.

These two books, titled *Lajja* and *Final Solutions*, appear to deal with the most important issue facing respective countries at the time they were written. Both authors have a great desire to use writing to effect change in the world. *Lajja* explores the fallout from the destruction of the Babri Masjid. Nasrin describes the events that took place in Bangladesh and the suffering that the country's Hindu minority was forced to endure. Dattani illustrates how communal tension may be defused during Ahmedabad's 'Rathyatra,' when it is generally felt. The action takes place against the backdrop of rioting in both works. As a result, it's clear that both books draw on current events in Bangladesh and India as inspiration.

The minority in both works is not the same. Bangladesh's population is mainly Muslim, whereas India's is predominantly Hindu.

In addition, each country's nature differs; India is a secular society where individuals of diverse castes and creeds are equal citizens. Bangladesh, on the other hand, presents a unique situation. East Pakistan was an Islamic country. When Bengali independence from West Pakistan was achieved with Indian assistance, it was referred to as a secular state, and this lasted for a short period of time after 1971. But the joy quickly faded, and Bangladesh reverted to becoming a despotic Islamic state on par with Pakistan. Muslims are treated as first-class citizens in this country, whereas Hindus and everyone else is treated as second-class.

Religious extremism is the root cause of civil unrest. Hindu extremists razed India's Babri Masjid, sparking unrest in Bangladesh and Pakistan as well. This is due to the fact that Muslims are a tightly knit group. They are Muslims first and foremost, regardless of where they live or whatever country they call home. In other words, that's how they see the world. In *Lajja*, the research, this is made clear.

Islamophobia is blamed for causing riots in the novel *Final Solutions*. Politicians use uneducated kids like Javed as pawns. Indian authorities encourage the minority to instigate riots while Bangladeshi authorities discourage it. Politicians in India are vengeful. During election seasons, they make use of populist rage to further their political goals. As a form of holy war, people like Javed are encouraged or enticed to incite riots. When riots occur in the United States, only major cities are affected, unlike Bangladesh. Villages have a low chance of being hit. Rioting is not practised by the entire Indian Hindu community. In Ramnik's residence, Javed and Bobby seek refuge from the police. They have no idea who he is, yet he still defends them.

Sudhamoy-family has to take shelter in their Muslim friend's house. It's risky to seek refuge in the home of an unknown Muslim. Hindus, on the other hand, are required to hide their ethnicity. Maya will have to get a new Hindu given name. Muslims who stand up for Hindus face harsh criticism. There are excellent Muslims who stand up for their Hindu friends when things become tough.

Maya has a great friend in Parul, who offers her refuge in her home. The rest of the group, however, save for Parul, displays strange body language toward Maya, indicating their displeasure with Parul's treatment of the young woman.

It's all quite different from *Final Solutions*, where all of this happens. Even though Ramnik doesn't know Bobby or Javed, he nevertheless defends them. Even Javed is cruel to Ramnik, calling him names and calling him names. Ramnik, on the other hand, is patient with his misbehaviour. Smita is a close friend of Tasneem's who comes through for her when she needs it the most. When she learned that the hostel where she was staying had been bombed, she called Tasneem's father right away to calm his nerves and let him know what had happened. In addition, she's close with Bobby. She enthusiastically supports his cause and calls out her mother Aruna when she behaves in an unwelcome manner toward the couple. In India, the majority's treatment of the minority is significantly better than in Bangladesh, as shown in *Lajja*, which is a film about that country.

India's Muslim minority population is never targeted violently under regular circumstances. They only suffer during riots. In most cases, we discover that they are the ones that instigate violence, and then they pay the price for their blunder. Take the [Godhra railway derailment as an example](#).

Muslims are committing acts of terrorism! The Rathayatra is disrupted and the poojari is murdered once more in this drama by Javed and other young Muslims. That's the crux of the matter. Muslims are also not the victims in a passive way. They avenge themselves by using all of their force. Thus, a community war breaks out, in which both sides battle and murder each other.

Hindus, on the other hand, have always been the victims of violence and humiliation. There aren't any riots going on right now. To render Hindus homeless and completely destitute, the people of Bangladesh will only slay them at times of Indian riots. In addition, there is a craze to convert the Hindus forcibly. In India, nothing of the sort occurs. The issue in Bangladesh isn't rioting. Hindus are often subjected to oppression and exploitation. Persecution becomes even more severe in the wake of events like the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. However, riots or no riots, Hindus must endure the hardships of day-to-day existence.

Because India is a secular state and Bangladesh is thocratic, communal conditions in the two countries cannot be simply compared. Generally speaking, the Hindu mentality is religiously tolerant, yet caste-intolerant. Nirmalendu Goon is of the opinion that:

As many as 4,000 riots have broken out in India, according to one estimate. Muslims in India, however, have refused to leave the nation. The Hindus, on the other hand, have one foot in both Bangladesh and India. Muslims in India struggle for their rights whilst Hindus in Bangladesh flee the country."²

On top of all this, Muslims from Bangladesh are fleeing to India in search of better living and employment conditions. Bangladesh is encroaching demographically on Indian territory. The scales are already tipping in favour of Muslims in the Indian states bordering Bangladesh. Assam now appears to be a state where the majority of the population is Muslim.

True, but Goon goes on to say:

"Due to India's secularism, Muslims in India have the means to defend themselves." Fundamentalists wield power in this country. In this country, fighting has no place."³

During the partition, Ramnik and his father set fire to a rival Muslim businessman's store. They got the store for a third of what it was worth. However, Ramnik owns up to his transgression. He is deeply sorry for what he has done. He desperately hoped that Javed would accept the position in order to atone for his transgressions. No Muslim in 'Lajja' has shown any signs of repentance of this nature.

Bangladesh has a higher rate of intercommunal marriages than India. However, in these unions, there is rarely any love involved. Hindu women seek security, and Muslim men provide it for them by marrying them. However, they cannot marry unless they convert to Islam. Ratna and Maya's business shows all of this. In Bangladesh, it's uncommon of to marry for the sake of love, with full religious and philosophical freedom for both parties.

India, on the other hand, is in a slightly different scenario. Both Muslims and Hindus have a profound distaste towards interfaith unions. Nonetheless, education has had a significant impact. Compared to previous generations, the newer generation looks to be more giving. Cities are seeing an increase in intercommunal marriages. During the events of 'Final Solutions,' Smita and Bobby developed feelings for one another. Both are quite open about their feelings. Smita believes that her desire to Bobby is not love, hence she does not want to marry him.

There was no doubt in my mind that even in the face of overwhelming obstacles, we could have made it happen.

⁴ You cannot imagine Parveen of 'Lajja' speaking like this.

Both works' use of characterisation falls short of perfection. The characters in 'Lajja' are all flat. 'Final Solutions', on the other hand, has more likeable people. Smita, Ramnik, and Hardika all display a variety of characteristics. With its focus more on the subject of play than artistic features, Dattani's characters fail to capture our attention completely.

Both 'Lajja' and 'Final Solutions' arrive to similar and dissimilar conclusions. In this respect, they are comparable in that they both convey a humanist outlook. He then holds out a picture of God and declares that He loves people. Getting his hands on him is one of his favourite things to do. Nothing is more sacred than the well-being of others. Nothing compares to the kindness and compassion that people have for one another.

For most of 'Lajja,' Sudhamoy and Suranjan struggle to maintain their idealistic outlook despite living in a hostile environment. However, in the end, they crumble. At the novel's climax, Suranjan rips the works of humanist writers to shreds. According to this theory, what is important to all men cannot be preserved in Bangladesh.

As a result, the findings reached in each case are different. "Final Solutions" concludes with the goal of finding a conclusive answer. There isn't as much of a crisis in India's communities as there is in the United States.

Does 'Lajja,' which means humiliation, have the potential to spread to Bangladesh's majority population? When do you think a socio-political atmosphere where Hindus may peacefully coexist while having their human rights respected will be achieved in Bangladesh? It looks that the response is a resounding 'NO.' For this reason, in 'Lajja,' the books are torn and burned in the conclusion. The conclusion of "Final Solutions" is upbeat, but the conclusion of "Lajja" is depressingly so.

A young Muslim man serves as Dattani's spokesman despite the fact that Dattani is a Hindu. Nasrin, a Muslim, communicates with the audience via the Hindu hero. Both Dattani and Nasrin are humanists who have shunned any religious affiliations in favour of being openly themselves. For the sake of emphasising that all men are created equal, they appoint representatives from the community who are not members of the community in which they live. Humanism is a core value for both of the main characters.

Secularism is not a term used to define any of the Muslim characters in the story. In any case, Debnath informs us about something he read called "Debesh Roy on Bade Gulam Ali" by Debnath. Gulam Ali broke into a dance to Hari Om Tatsat in the middle of his show.

When it comes to the majority population in 'Final Solutions,' however, no one can be classified as a sectarian. As for Aruna, she's a boring old prude. She just wants some privacy. She can't possibly be a bigot. Additionally, the play's Hindu characters are notably kind and generous.

In light of recent events on the Indian subcontinent, there is cause for optimism if we leave the realm of fiction, such as 'Lajja' and 'Final Solutions,' alone. The hysteria that led to the demolition of Babri Masjid, hysteria that followed in the wake of the demolition, are a matter of past. Because of the global anti-terrorism campaign, India and Pakistan have developed a cordial relationship. With his recent visit to Pakistan, Shri Advaniji reminded the people of Mohammad Ali Jinnah's secularist speech in the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, trying to add to the euphoria.

I believe that in order for this fine nation of ours to be successful, we must focus solely on the well-being of its people, particularly its masses and poor. You will succeed if you cooperate, forget the past, and bury the hatchet. As long as you change your past and work together in the spirit that every one of you, no matter what community you belong to or what past relationships you had with him, is first and foremost a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges, and obligations there is no limit to the progress you can make."

"I cannot emphasise it too much. We should begin to work in that spirit and in course of time all these angularities of the majority and minority communities, the Hindu community and the Muslim community- because even as regards Muslims you have Pathans, Punjabis, Shias, Sunnis and so on and among the Hindus you have Brahmins, Vashnavas, Khattris, also Bengalees, Madrasis, and so on-will vanish."

The biggest obstacle to India's freedom and independence, in my opinion, has been this, and we would have been free people long ago if it hadn't been for it." You couldn't have been conquered by anyone and, even if you had been, no one could have kept their hold on you for as long as they did if it weren't for this. A lesson should be taken from this.

There is no restriction on your freedom; you are free to visit your temples, your mosques, or any other place of worship in Pakistan that you desire. That has nothing to do with the state's business. You can be of any religion or caste or creed."

Remember, conditions in England were far worse than they are today, as you may recall from history. Protestants and Roman Catholics were both persecuted at the same time. Even today, some states practise discrimination and put restrictions on members of a certain social class. Thank God, we are not starting in those days."

It is a time when there is no distinction between one society and another, no difference between one caste or creed and another. We're beginning from the premise that we're all citizens of the same country.

They proceeded through the fire step by step as the people of England faced the realities of the situation and had to shoulder the duties and obligations imposed on them by the government of their nation. There are no Roman Catholics or Protestants in today's society; instead, everyone is a citizen of the United Kingdom, and they are all equal citizens. You will discover, not in the religious sense since it is the personal religion of each individual, but politically, that Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims will cease to be Muslims in the future when we maintain it before us as our objective. 5

Bangladesh, no doubt, felt the impact of this as well. Religious tensions is a thing of the past, a scourge left over from the Middle Ages. As soon as possible is preferable. And yes, it will happen over time as rationality and humanism build traction.

End Notes

1. Mahesh Dattani, *Collected Plays*, (Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi:2000), p. xi.
2. Taslima Nasrin, *Lajja*, Translated by Tutul Gupta, (Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi: 1994), p. 81.
3. Mahesh Dattani, *Collected Plays*, (Penguin Books India Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi: 2000), p. 218.
4. *The Indian Express*, Ahmedabad, Thursday June 9, 2005. City, p. 7.

