

**A STUDY OF EUNUCH CHARACTERS IN MAHESH DATTANI'S *SEVEN STEPS
AROUND THE FIRE***

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ABSTRACT

Apart from the theme of oppressive nature of Indian joint family system and its morbid shadow on the individual's social and psychological, behaviour, Mahesh Dattani treads another area—human sexuality—both in its natural and so-called unnatural facets, in his play *Seven Steps around the Fire*. Eunuchs in India generally belong to the *hijra* community. *Hijras* are found all over India leading a pathetic life devoid of any social recognition. They are objects of mistrust, ridicule and contempt. Their marginal status is revealed in the very fact that they earn their living by collecting alms and receiving tips for performances given at weddings, births and festivals. They are viewed with suspicion for their 'unnatural' behaviour. In the present paper, Dattani examines and makes a threadbare analysis of how despite the fact that human rights are guaranteed for every human being irrespective of class, caste, religion, gender, sexuality, race, language, nationality, ethnicity or political beliefs, human rights of Eunuchs are blatantly violated everywhere in India, forcing many to lead a sub-human existence.

KEYWORDS: Eunuchs, *Hijras*, Unnatural, Marginal, Ridicule, Contempt