

Psychological magnitudes in Mahesh Dattani's *Bravely Fought the Queen*

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Abstract

Mahesh Dattani is distinguished as a foremost Indian dramatist who writes in English and holds the distinction of being the inaugural recipient of the National Sahitya Akademi Award for his significant contributions to English theatre. What elevates him above typical playwrights is his fervent commitment to social reform, positioning him alongside influential figures such as G.B. Shaw. His dramatic works investigate pressing contemporary socio-cultural subjects, including the dynamics of homosexuality, gender identity, the circumstances of marginalized populations—specifically the hijra community, women, children, and people with disabilities—along with victims of communal unrest and the AIDS epidemic.

*In his conception, *Bravely Fought the Queen*, Dattani scrutinizes the pervasive social duplicity that governs relationships, family life, and societal conduct among women. He lays bare the deceitful nature of individuals who pursue existence based on pretense, particularly concerning sexual orientation and faithfulness in marriage, simultaneously underscoring how financial ambition frequently overshadows ethical and moral principles. This analysis intends to dissect and illuminate these characteristic traits within Dattani's body of work, drawing upon various established critical discourses.*

Keywords: Indian Theatre in English, Post-Modern Drama, Same-Sex Identity, Gender Roles, Societal Hypocrisy

I. Introduction

Mahesh Dattani holds the honor of being the first Indian dramatist writing in the English language to be presented with the *National Sahitya Akademi Award* for his literary achievements. His theatrical pieces vividly capture the diverse facets of human experience; encompassing themes, that society often prefers to evade, such as same-sex relationships, transidentities (hijras), HIV/AIDS, the abuse of children, the subjugation of women, fractured community politics, and the hardships faced by disabled and excluded groups. *Dattani* also engages with matters of social disunity, political pragmatism, and the psyche of creative individuals. He has consistently put on display the defects, follies, and ingrained biases prevalent within Indian society.

Dattani himself articulated his purpose, stating,

"My thematic focus revolves around spheres where the individual feels emotionally drained. My dramas center on characters attempting to broaden their scope of living. They inhabit the edges of society and are not seeking mainstream acceptance, but fighting to secure as much marginal territory for themselves as possible."

(Nair, 2012)

This declaration succinctly encapsulates *Dattani's* core concerns. Across his various plays, feature films, and screenplays, he maintains a steadfast focus on individuals positioned outside the mainstream and their efforts to redefine what constitutes the social norm. His central characters challenge widely accepted values and disrupt established patterns of social and gender identification.

Mahesh Dattani's Bravely Fought the Queen provides a keen, analytical look at the psychological and emotional rifts existing within a wealthy, urban Indian household. Against a backdrop defined by authoritative patriarchy and suppressed desires, the drama exposes the concealed internal realities of its characters their bottled-up feelings, pretenses, and stagnation in emotional growth. Utilizing techniques such as fractured timelines and potent symbolic imagery, *Dattani* highlights the complex psychological mechanisms that dictate their conduct and instigate conflict.

II. Psychoanalysis of the characters

Mahesh Dattani's Bravely Fought the Queen (1991) delivers a trenchant critique of the gender-specific power relationships that underpin the contemporary Indian metropolitan family structure. Set within the Trivedi family residence, the play exposes how the outward appearance of prosperity and social achievement masks profound emotional fragmentation. Fundamentally, the story dramatizes the friction between individual aspirations and the

moral mandates imposed by both family and society, making it an excellent vehicle for exploring the concept of psychological androgyny.

❖ **The Emotional Landscape of the Women**

The play is structured in three segments *The Women*, *The Men*, and *Free for All* with the initial section concentrating on the constricted domestic environment of the female figures. This home setting becomes the stage where their profound emotional suffering, mental constraints, and feeling of being caged are dramatically revealed.

➤ **Dolly's traumatic suppression**

Dolly's physical injuries and mental scars are disclosed through incomplete memories. She consciously buries the trauma resulting from her husband, *Jiten*, assaulting her while she was pregnant an act of violence that led to her daughter *Daksha* developing cerebral palsy. As a means of surviving her bleak existence, *Dolly* withdraws into fantasy, imagining an affectionate connection with a young male figure named *Kanhaiya*. Her choice to deny her husband's cruelty and her daughter's condition serves as a fragile psychological defense, one that ultimately fails, compelling her to face her sorrow and self-reproach.

➤ **Alka's flight and denial**

Dolly's sister, *Alka*, manages her desolation through heavy drinking. Confined within a sterile, childless marriage to *Nitin* her husband's brother, who is secretly homosexual she relies on alcohol to dull the sting of rejection and loneliness. Her unfulfilled libido and emotional neglect manifest in outbursts of defiance, such as her uncontrolled dancing in the rain and her furious confrontation with the men who have misled her. *Alka's* self-harming behavior is both an act of defiance and a symptom of grave psychological turmoil.

➤ **Baa's ingrained patriarchy**

Even the matriarch of the family, *Baa*, carries the wounds inflicted by patriarchal oppression. Having herself suffered mistreatment from her deceased husband. She has absorbed his misogynistic values and perpetuates them by encouraging her sons to turn against their wives. By doing this, she sustains the very cycle of abuse that damaged her life, illustrating how intergenerational trauma is passed down alongside patriarchal norms.

❖ **The Mental Vulnerability of the Men**

In Act II, *The Men*, *Dattani* uncovers the male characters' own suppression of emotion, duplicity, and deep-seated insecurities. Far from holding true authority, these men are shown to be emotionally disabled, trapped by their own anxieties and society's rigid expectations.

➤ **Jiten's hostility and remorse**

Jiten's violent expressions of masculinity conceal profound self-hatred and guilt. His aggression toward *Dolly* and others springs from unresolved anger issues and a compulsion to dominate. When forced to admit to striking his pregnant wife, he tries to shift the blame to his mother, seeking to rationalize his maliciousness rather than accept his culpability. The shocking scene in which he runs over a homeless woman an action symbolizing his total moral bankruptcy dramatizes his eventual moral and psychological breaking point.

➤ **Nitin's suppressed desires**

Nitin's homosexuality is concealed beneath layers of shame and fear of social repercussions. Reliant on his overbearing brother and bound by societal conventions, he becomes a passive victim a "marionette" controlled by others. His silent devastation highlights the devastating impact of a culture that refuses to grant emotional and sexual freedom.

➤ **Praful's moral void**

The character of *Praful* embodies the moral compromises and ethical decline that flourish within systems of patriarchal power. His involvement and silence regarding the family's secrets and deceptions emphasize the essential hypocrisy lurking beneath the family's respectable exterior.

III. Symbolism and dramatic technique

Dattani masterfully uses rich symbolism and an innovative structure to delve into the characters' complex internal worlds.

➤ **Bonsai trees**

Lalitha's bonsai collection serves as a metaphor for the state of the women pruned, molded, and deliberately inhibited to meet patriarchal expectations. Just as the trees are prevented from growing naturally, the women's identities and desires are restricted and regulated.

➤ **Naina Devi's thumri**

The recurring thumri performed by *Naina Devi*, a professional singer, symbolizes defiance and true emotion. As a musical style traditionally associated with marginalized women, it represents a challenge to restrictive social rules and allows an outlet for suppressed feelings and longings.

➤ **Non-linear narrative**

The play has shifting narrative focus from the women, to the men, and finally to the disorderly "*Free for All*" gradually exposes hidden facts and internal inconsistencies. This fragmented structure mirrors the characters' fragmented emotional states and the slow revelation of their personal truths. In the final scene, when pretenses are dropped and secrets revealed, Dattani highlights the vast gap between outward appearance and personal suffering. Through its multi-layered structure, symbolic imagery, and psychological insight, *Bravely Fought the Queen* is not just a family narrative but also a profound assessment of the human cost of patriarchy. Dattani illustrates how suppressing one's true nature desire, guilt, and individuality damages both men and women, leaving a legacy of suffering and moral disintegration within the contemporary Indian family.

IV. Art of characterization in the play: reconnoitering inner psyche

By situating the action primarily within the confines of a home, Dattani skillfully explores the demarcation between the personal (private) and societal (public) realms that perpetuates gender inequality. Within this domestic sphere, women are confined to subjugated, reproductive functions, while men wield authority over both home and career realms often through manipulation, lies, and physical force. The play comprehensively examines the fractured interior lives of all characters, revealing how these inflexible social frameworks distort human experience.

Dolly and Alka, the two primary female figures, reject conventional definitions of femininity in distinct ways. Dolly engages in subtle non-compliance, whereas Alka opts for more visible defiance through drinking and unvarnished honesty. Paradoxically, Baa the family's elderly female figurehead actively reinforces patriarchal norms despite being a historical casualty of those same norms.

In contrast, Nitin illustrates the internal division caused by a concealed identity. His clandestine homosexuality forces him to lead a double existence, demonstrating the mental damage inflicted by the necessity of upholding a socially expected heterosexual facade. Nitin's internal conflict projecting conventional masculine behavior externally while suppressing what are considered "feminine" feelings positions him well within the critical framework of psychological androgyny. This fluidity serves to undermine the rigid gender classifications expected within a traditional Indian household, offering a nuanced yet powerful challenge to heteronormativity.

Nitin's outward persona characterized by professional achievement, assertiveness, and emotional rigidity conforms to the stereotype of traditional masculinity. However, this surface hides significant emotional suppression and moral failing. His concealed sexual orientation forces him to maintain the appearance of a family head while denying who he truly is. This self-denial compromises his integrity; constrained by inflexible standards of manhood, Nitin disappoints as a spouse, an offspring, and an individual. For him, dharma ceases to be an ethical guidance system and instead becomes a psychological burden. His participation in required social behaviors is insincere, resulting in emotional distance and dishonesty. Through Nitin, Dattani highlights how the suppression of gender-neutral qualities such as sensitivity, vulnerability, and emotional openness leads to an inability to act ethically.

Jaya stands out among the characters as an example of ethical balance, expressing traits typically assigned to both genders. Unlike her sister-in-law, Dolly, who is mostly passive, Jaya exhibits inner strength and moral clarity. While she sees her family's problems, they do not manage to break her spirit. Jaya embodies both "feminine" attributes like deep feeling and understanding, and "masculine" traits such as determination and self-reliance. When faced with her husband's infidelity, instead of retreating into silence, she responds with quiet resolve and a clear moral stance.

Through the character of Jaya, Dattani suggests that psychological androgyny is vital for ethical perception. She grasps that her social roles as a wife and daughter-in-law do not exhaust her moral responsibilities. Her understanding of dharma is not about mindless conformity, but a sincere dedication to honesty and compassion. This perspective aligns with Sandra Bem's concept that being psychologically flexible allows people to make more objective moral judgments.

Similarly, Alka demonstrates a form of cross-gender traits in her own manner. Her direct challenge to her husband's authority and her refusal to fit the mold of an obedient wife represent a subtle yet powerful rejection of male-dominated norms. Through her defiance, emotional detachment, and reliance on alcohol, Alka subverts conventional expectations of womanhood, establishing her identity in ways that disregard social limitations.

V. Discussion

Dattani's play *Bravely Fought the Queen* is set within a family context yet serves as a commentary on societal psychology its prohibitions, obsessions, preferences, and overall ethical framework. The play dissects these established norms to expose their inherent weaknesses. It investigates the dynamics of an affluent, middle-class family grappling with the tension between tradition and modernity.

As Tanu Pant observes, "*A call for embracing evolving Indian values, this work depicts the conflict between ancestral and modern cultures that has shaped a new social environment.*"

(Pant, 2011)

The female characters also experience hardship due to the undisclosed homosexual tendencies of the men, particularly the dynamic between *Nitin* and *Praful*. *Jatin*, although heterosexual, is a cruel abuser of marital obligations. His brutality affects not only his wife *Dolly* but also his sister-in-law *Alka*. *Jatin* is a sadist who enjoys inflicting pain and disrespects the dignity of his employee, *Sridhar*. He is unfaithful and even pressures *Sridhar* into finding women for him.

The title *Bravely Fought the Queen* refers to *Dolly Trivedi*, who is ironically labeled the "Queen." The title is an allusion to the famous Hindi poem by *Subhadra Kumari Chauhan*, which celebrates Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi, the heroic figure who fought the British in 1857. *Dattani* creates a symbolic parallel *Dolly's* personal battle for respect and identity within a conservative society becomes a modern act of courage.

The play commences in the lavish living room of *Jiten* and *Dolly Trivedi*, complete with a well-stocked bar and a music system playing a *Thumri*. *Lalita*, their guest, contrasts sharply with the two housewives; she is educated and self-reliant, working as a freelance writer and poet. Bestowing to one critic, *Lalita* acts as "comic relief" and a reflective surface that exposes the silence and marginalization faced by women in society.

(Kumar, 2016)

Lalita visits *Dolly* at the request of *Jatin*, her husband, to discuss a marketing campaign for a new line of women's sleepwear, *ReVaTee*. However, *Dolly* is completely unaware of the details—*Jatin* failed to inform her. *Dolly* is preparing to go out with *Jatin*, her sister *Alka*, and *Alka's* husband *Nitin*. The two brothers reside in adjacent houses "in the middle of nowhere," and share the duty of caring for their aging mother, *Baa*. This arrangement symbolizes the decay of the traditional Indian extended family structure.

During their conversation, *Dolly*, *Alka*, and *Lalita* share rum, albeit with hesitation. Drinking alcohol is often forbidden for women in middle-class Indian society, and *Dattani* uses this transgression to highlight middle-class hypocrisy. The women's secret indulgence signifies their resistance against restrictive patriarchal rules.

Praful, *Dolly* and *Alka's* brother, embodies patriarchal dominance. *Dolly* adores him, but *Alka* harbors resentment because of his past cruelty—he severely punished her for a perceived indiscretion when she was young, by burning her hair on a stove. This traumatic event shapes her defiant personality. Years later, during a drunken episode, she even questioned her mother-in-law about her husband's parentage, resulting in her being expelled from the household. Through such occurrences, *Dattani* challenges the irrationality of moral taboos and encourages the audience to reconsider rigid moral codes rather than imposing new ones.

Another symbolic figure is the homeless woman who repeatedly appears outside the house, representing the neglected ethical conscience of a materialistic society. Each female character represents a distinct aspect of womanhood *Lalita* symbolizes awareness and equilibrium; *Dolly* is trapped in an unhappy marriage; and *Alka* embodies rebellion against patriarchal oppression. *Baa's* constant bell ringing signifies the intrusive presence of tradition in the private lives of the women.

In the second act, titled *The Men*, the focus shifts to *Jatin*, *Nitin*, and *Sridhar*. *Dattani* employs an innovative structural device: the events in this act unfold simultaneously with those of the first act but are shown from the men's perspective. This technique reveals what the male characters were doing or discussing while the women's stories were being told. *Baa's* raised room remains a consistent feature, symbolically connecting both acts. The repetitive use of the bar first by *Alka*, then by *Jatin* further emphasizes the parallel nature of their lives and the shared dysfunction linking them.

The play begins with *Nitin* examining the company's financial records. He expresses frustration with the firm's progress, complaining that despite an increase in revenue, they continue to incur losses. *Jiten*, conversely, is only concerned with borrowing more money from his brother-in-law, *Praful*. This is ironic, as both brothers publicly despise and humiliate *Praful*. *Jiten* himself acknowledges their duplicity when he states:

"We mock him and treat him like garbage, yet when it matters, he actually comes to our aid. [...] I can accept his money and still treat him contemptuously. He is nothing. The fact that he feels compelled to demonstrate his ability to help us only proves his inferiority."

(*Bravely Fought the Queen*, P-21)

When these characters need *Praful's* financial assistance, their animosity toward him conveniently vanishes. *Jiten's* discussion with *Praful* further illuminates their insincerity. He feigns cordiality while deliberately misrepresenting the location of his wife and sister-in-law, even going so far as to accuse their mother, *Baa*, of disparaging *Praful's* background. An ultimate revelation surfaces: *Praful's* and the sisters' mother was, at one time, a sex worker.

The advertising firm is seeking to finalize a contract for *ReVaTee* women's nightwear, but a recent pitching session proved unsuccessful. The female assessors found the presentation "vulgar," leading the Board of Directors to reject it as well. *Jiten*, embodying a ruthless executive, threatens *Sridhar* with termination unless he secures the account. *Jiten* is the quintessential manipulative businessperson alternately merciless and ingratiating. His discriminatory rationale for targeting men as the essential purchasers of female sleepwear underscores his male chauvinism:

"It is men who will purchase it for their women! They are the ones with the funds. So, why solicit the opinions of a cohort of disgruntled women?"

(Bravely Fought the Queen, P-18)

This perspective mirrors the moral decay prevalent in the advertising realm and, by extension, within capitalist business practices where profitability justifies any action. Later, as *Sridhar* prepares to conclude his workday, *Jiten* instructs him to hire a prostitute. A stunned *Sridhar* objects, deeming the request unethical and wrong, but *Jiten* ridicules him, asserting that a skilled advertising professional must know how to "*procure*." *Sridhar*, feeling degraded, complies, which highlights the harmful dynamics of their employment relationship. His resentful self-talk afterward—

"You can have my leftovers" represents a minor yet meaningful act of defiance.

(Bravely Fought the Queen, P-16)

After *Sridhar* departs, the siblings discuss selling *Baa*'s ancestral property, which is bequeathed to *Nitin*'s child, *Daksha*. They must persuade *Baa* to authorize the property transfer, and *Jiten* proposes that *Nitin* permanently expel his spouse, *Alka*, to appease *Baa*. This reveals the siblings' severe materialism where marital bonds are sacrificed in pursuit of wealth.

Through historical sequence breaks, *Baa*'s history is exposed. She endured an abusive spouse who prohibited her from public performance and assaulted her and their sons. *Jiten* mirrors his father's brutality, while *Nitin* inherits his mother's passive temperament.

In Act III, titled "*Anarchy*," *Dolly* and *Alka* talk about *Kanhaiyya* possibly a romantic partner or domestic worker while *Lalitha*, an outsider, overhears. The accompanying musical backdrop of a *thumri* (a romantic classical style historically linked to courtesans) connects to their discussion of a singer who was dismissed as a courtesan simply for performing romantic songs. This exchange prompts *Lalitha* to recall the celebrated verse concerning the Rani of Jhansi, a courageous queen who defied gender conventions.

Simultaneously, a drunken *Alka*, encouraged by *Dolly*, dances in the rain, only to lose her footing and fall into the mud just as the men arrive from work. *Jiten* demands that *Nitin* banish *Alka*, but *Nitin* hesitates. Then, *Baa*'s voice resonates from the upper floor as *Nitin* attempts to convince her to transfer the house to him in exchange for permanently removing *Alka*. This moment emphasizes the ethical deterioration of a society in which human relationships even within marriage and family are dictated by financial concerns.

Nonetheless, *Baa*'s final testament appoints *Praful* as the steward of the estate intended for *Daksha*. *Nitin* is enraged and feels betrayed. He mourns that despite a lifetime of compliance with his mother, she has "*punished*" him for the single instance of his defiance. His enmity toward *Praful* resurfaces, as he attributes his unhappy marriage with *Alka* to him. *Nitin*'s indifference toward *Alka* is unmistakable when he states:

"Alka is free to remain here, depart, or drink herself to death. It is inconsequential to me."

(Bravely Fought the Queen, P-12)

Jiten, throughout, embodies the classic misogynist viewing women solely as objects of desire and treating them savagely. *Baa* also represents an antiquated, conventional perspective, unable to accept that *Dolly* and *Alka*'s mother was kept in ignorance of her husband's initial marriage.

Yet, *Dattani*'s female characters are not entirely subservient. *Alka* possesses the fortitude to question her husband's infidelity and confront her brother *Praful* for his deception:

"Our virtuous brother cautions us against men like you. And what does he do? Hands his own sister over to a sinner and then disappears!"

(Bravely Fought the Queen, P-11)

Kanhaiyya's identity remains intentionally vague he could be a staff member, a chauffeur, or even *Nitin*'s lover. *Nitin* later confesses to his own same-sex relationship with *Praful*, acknowledging his internal conflict and suppressed desires.

Ultimately, all individuals in the play lead fragmented existence feigning roles that contradict their true selves. *Dattani*'s play is fundamentally a performance about performance revealing how individuals fabricate false personas to conform to social expectations. *Dolly*, for example, maintains the illusion of a happy wife; *Nitin* plays the part of a traditional husband while hiding his sexuality. *Dattani* thus exposes the hypocrisy and emotional void in contemporary Indian middle-class existence.

The women in *Mahesh Dattani's Bravely Fought the Queen* are not figures destined for suppression or neglect. They are prepared to resist and demand acknowledgment for a revised moral framework suitable for the modern era. Among them, *Alka* the sister who has suffered more profound injustice gains inspiration from her sister *Dolly* and adopts the persona of the Rani of Jhansi. With a nonexistent blade fastened to her waist, *Alka* fantasizes about killing men, much like the historical queen supposedly did during India's Rebellion of 1857.

Dattani himself purposefully emphasizes this fighting quality in his characters. As he communicated to *Lakshmi Subramanyan* in an interview:

"They are human beings. They want something. They encounter resistance. They will use any method available to them to achieve it. My focus is exclusively on the vulnerability of these people."

(Subramanian, 2014)

The narrative of *Naina Devi*, the vocalist whose recording is heard repeatedly in the home, reinforces this central concept. Married into aristocracy, she could have enjoyed a life of privilege and elegance, eventually becoming the esteemed *Rajmata* (Queen Mother). Instead, she chose to pursue her musical passion and perform *thumris* songs traditionally performed by *tawaifs* or courtesans. Her choice scandalized the public:

"The queen desired to sing love songs typically sung by prostitutes! Why? No one understood." Yet, she followed her conviction, inspired by a tawaif's act she witnessed in her youth. With her husband's support, she continued to sing and eventually earned the title "Queen of Thumri."

(*Bravely Fought the Queen*, P-12)

In contrast, *Alka* who also enjoys dancing faces a harsher reality. Her husband is weak and deferent to his overbearing brother, while her mother-in-law holds animosity toward *Alka* and *Dolly* because their mother was rumored to have been a mistress. This likely explains why the sisters gravitate toward *thumris*, a musical form associated with women existing outside conventional respectability. As *Dolly* remembers, their mother "*sought to be a singer*" (*Bravely Fought the Queen*, P-19). Through their subtle acts of defiance, the sisters challenge the rigid social norms surrounding them.

Dolly, too, exhibits resistance in her unique way. When her husband *Jiten* rudely tells their guest *Lalitha* to leave, *Dolly* objects. *Jiten* reminds her that he has not asked her to leave, and she asserts, with spirit, that he would not dare. He challenges her, asking, "*Care to wager?*" Their clash reveals historical pain *Jiten's* interference with her brother *Praful* and his abuse that led to the untimely birth of their physically disabled child, *Daksha*. Overwhelmed by remorse, *Jiten* rushes out and vents his frustration by fatally wounding a homeless woman with his car.

Lalitha, conversely, is in a relatively better position. When her husband urges her to depart the house, she calmly chooses to remain. Her perspective on gender roles surfaces during a conversation about the Hindi poem honoring the Rani of Jhansi:

Alka: "Khoob ladi mardani woh toh..."

Dolly: "Bravely fought the manly queen?"

Lalitha: "Absurd, isn't it? I suppose it sounds better in Hindi."

Dolly: "Why masculine?"

Alka: "Because she was courageous."

Lalitha: "I always laugh when I recall that poem. I suppose it simply means that she was brave." (*Bravely Fought the Queen*, P-13)

This dialogue exposes the ridiculousness of classifying courage as "*masculine*," as if valor were exclusively a male attribute and women could only infrequently demonstrate bravery.

Subir Dhar notes that "*Dattani's work questions society's rigid assumptions about gender identity. The phrase "Bravely fought the manly queen" suggests that a woman must adopt male characteristics to be deemed courageous—a patriarchal assumption that Dattani dismantles.*"

(*Dhar, 2002*)

This implies that moral standards are often abandoned when personal happiness is denied. When life fails to meet expectations, individuals begin to question and even reject the established societal principles.

VI. Conclusion

In every civilization, a minority resists conforming to majority beliefs. When moral principles are considered sacred, it primarily signifies that most people still adhere to them yet dissent is always present. In *Dattani's* play, the sources of disappointment are revealed through the intoxicated confessions of *Alka* and *Nitin*. Beneath a veneer of sophistication, women continue to endure exploitation, now disguised by the vocabulary of high culture and refinement.

The play depicts patriarchy across a spectrum of manifestations, notably featuring *Baa* a female character who herself upholds and reinforces male dominance. Having previously experienced a state of powerlessness, *Baa* now wields patriarchal influence within her family unit, going so far as to prompt her son, *Jiten*, to physically abuse his expectant spouse. She transforms into "*a patriarch in the guise of a woman*," internalizing and exhibiting the very masculine ideals that were once the source of her own subjugation.

Ultimately, *Bravely Fought the Queen* shines a light on how tenacious obsolete principles are in hindering genuine progress. The play serves as a provocation for society to address its contradictions and critically assess its prevailing ethical and social conventions via conscientious, rational introspection instead of resorting to suppression or avoidance.

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