



INDRAJIT AS AN ANGRY YOUNG MAN IN BADAL SIRCAR'S *EVAM INDRAJIT*

MOHAMMED AHMEDUDDIN

Assistant Professor in English
Sir Sayyed College of Arts, Commerce & Science,
Aurangabad. (MS) INDIA

ABSTRACT

*Badal Sircar is one of the most prominent, influential modern Indian playwrights. Sudhindra Sircar popularly known as Badal Sircar began his career as a town planner. Later on he developed his interest in drama and started acting in plays and directing them. Sircar started his writing career with light and humorous plays. He has more than fifty plays to his credit and his writing career spans over fifty years. Badal Sircar gained popularity with the writing of the play *Evam Indrajit* in 1963. His other significant plays are *Baaki Itihaash* (Remaining History), *Tringsha Shatabdi* (Thietieith Century), *Pagla Ghoda* (Mad Horse), *Shesh Nai* (There's No End). In 1967 he established 'Shatabdi' his theatre group. Sircar did not like artificiality and dispensed with aids such as sound, light, elaborate costumes and make-up. He is also regarded as the pioneer of Third Theatre, a kind of an experimental form of theatre that focuses on direct communication with the audience. It focuses on bringing the change in the thinking of the audience.*

INTRODUCTION

The spectators too have to participate in the performances of the plays. Sircar wants a kind of an interaction between the actors and the audience. *Procession* (1972), *Bhoma* (1974) and *Stale News* (1979) are the most significant plays based on the concept of the Third Theatre. Santwana Haldar opines:

Badal Sircar added a new dimension to the genre, enabling the audience to share a new experience, not only of the external world but also of the internal world of psyche.

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{ed. Dhawan 2005:97}

Badal Sircar became one of the leading figures in the Street Theatre in Bengal and wrote anti-establishment plays during the Naxalite movement which became the voice of a generation. We find Sircar criticizing the government, the caste system and overall problems in the society. He was awarded Padma Shri in 1972 and Lifetime Achievement Award in 1977 by India's National Academy for Music, Dance and Drama. Badal Sircar remains one of the most translated Indian playwrights.

The present research article seeks to analyze the character of Indrajit as an angry young man in the play *Evam Indrajit*. Badal Sircar depicts a true picture of the contemporary society in this play. Girish Karnad translated the play *Evam Indrajit* into English. It is a landmark play by Badal Sircar in which he tries to present the loneliness of Post-Independence urban youth with remarkable accuracy. His main concern is the meaninglessness of modern life where the youth have no goals to live by and this makes the people like Indrajit angry at the meaninglessness of their existence. Satyadev Dubey says:

With the performance of Evam Indrajit, theatre practitioners all over the India became aware of a major play. The play provided for them the shock of recognition. It was about the Indian reality as they knew; it was a theatrically effective and crystallized projection of all the prevalent attitudes, vague feelings and undefined frustrations gnawing at the hearts of the educated urban middle class.

The after effects of Partition of India had created a spiritual trauma in the hearts and minds of the people. The educated urban middle class youth is frustrated as they do not see the real causes that they should live and die for. Indrajit becomes a spokesperson for all the youth of the country who want purpose and meaning in life. Indrajit is quite similar to Jimmy Porter of *Look Back In Anger* (1956) a pioneering play in the Theatre of Anger. Jimmy also doesn't find any real causes to live and die for. He shows his anger toward everything, the establishment, the press, the religion, his wife, his in-laws etc. *Evam Indrajit* is the story of a character namely 'Writer' who attempts to write a play but he tears up the papers as he feels the matter is not good and he doesn't have anything to write about. He says:

What shall I write? Who shall I write about? How many people do I know? And what do I know about them? (EI, 197)

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He is trying to write a play but he admits that he knows nothing about the suffering masses, toiling peasants and sweating coal miners and he finds no beauty in the people around him.

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is unable to find any suitable subject because he finds nothing meaningful and mentionable in the lives of intellectually alive urban people. People are too busy with their jobs, promotions, anxieties of profit, loss, insurance, marriage etc. that they cannot be made fitting subject for a play. The writer doesn't respond to his Auntie who repeatedly asks him to eat the food. Manasi suggest that he may choose the characters for his drama from the persons he already knows- Amal, Vimal, Kamal and Nirmal (Indrajit). Nirmal fears to utter his real name Indrajit as he thinks it would invite unrest by breaking the norm. As the friends talk about cricket, football, literature and politics, Indrajit finds nothing exciting in them. He is angry because of the monotony of life. He exclaims:

Indrajit: I'm tired of being a student.

Writer: What do you want to do?

Indrajit: I don't know. Sometimes I just want to run away. (EI,204)

Indrajit wishes to escape to a world which is far away and beyond these monotonous activities, but the cares of this world like mother and exam become a hurdle before him. The entire movement of the characters is circular, there being no change system and no forward movement. The characters like Amal, Vimal and Kamal are insensitive and they have no idea of the nature of their activities and are therefore not disturbed. They do not think over the things and just do what the society expect from them. But the characters like the writer and Indrajit who have the ability to think and critically evaluate themselves and to raise questions regarding the futility of their life style are disturbed. They suffer as they fail to give meaning to their lives. This is the reason that Indrajit is accepted by the writer as a hero of his play. There is a hurdle in the relationship with Manasi. She happens to be Indrajit's cousin and the class Indian society will not accept their love. It will be like breaking the norm.

Indrajit likes talking to Manasi because it is quite different from daily chatter. The behavior shown by Indrajit here is quite similar to the angry young man image. One of the main reasons of his anger is the monotonous boring things that take place in his life. He wants from life diversity which is missing most of the time. It is only in the company of Manasi he finds it but again the norms of the society become an obstacle in his way of marrying Manasi. Indrajit remarks about the unchanging things to the writer:

Indrajit: That all these minutia- they are all meaningless

There is just a large wheel going round and round.

And we go round and round with it. (EI,211)

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This remark by Indrajit shows his anger and speaks about the futility of living life as there is no destination to arrive at. There is no forward movement and the past and future is mixed completely. Amal, Vimal and Kamal have responsibilities on their shoulders like the retiring father and the unmarried sisters. Now they are badly in need of a job. Indrajit admits that he also accept several rules of the society like study, taking exams, job. He wants to stand on his own feet. Again in the play we see a glimpse of the anger in the personality of Indrajit when he questions Manasi in the following manner:

Indrajit: Is there a rule that one has to abide by rules?

Manasi: What else can one do?

Indrajit: One can hate rules. Why should they be there at all?(EI,215)

Indrajit is ready to tear the rules and fight with the whole world. He is quite upset with the state that Leela is in whose husband has died of T.B and her in-laws have taken the money from her and thrown her out of the house. He is also very much concerned about the condition of the shoe polish boy. Manasi feels scared to see Indrajit in this angry mood:

Manasi: When I see you like this I feel scared.

Indrajit: Like this? Like what?

Manasi: All this-this anger. Anger against rules

Indrajit: {Laughs} It's pointless anger. It's blind. Powerless.

It only beats it head against the wall.(EI,216)

It is quite clear that Indrajit understands that his anger towards society is pointless, powerless and blind. If he had no knowledge about the problems existing in the society, he would have also lived a blissful life. Manasi says she also becomes sad seeing all this. She feels a sense of pity but can't be angry like Indrajit because she likes life. Indrajit reiterates that when this anger will be gone, he will be finished. Amal, Kamal, Vimal and Indrajit have got jobs and they discuss about children, medicine, cars etc. The writer thinks and wonders about the purpose of life. Auntie scolds him for not marrying at the right age. Indrajit frequently changes the job. Manasi is teaching in a school at Hazaribagh and needs more time to decide about marriage. Indrajit makes a reference to the atomic weapons and their use. Amal is not promoted in his office although he is working there for last six years. Vimal is transferred to Ranchi and gets bad quarters. Kamal suggests insurance for the writer.

In the beginning of the play, Indrajit shows his romantic temperament but gradually he is disillusioned. A daring attitude is demonstrated by Indrajit to protest against the rigid norms of society, but he does not find the same kind of co-operation from the side of Manasi, who

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prefers to be a school teacher at a distant place from her home. He goes to London and finds the similarity with his previous life. He even thinks of committing suicide but can't. He finally returns to accept the existing system.

Indrajit's approach towards life is entirely different from other pseudo-modern people. He is seen making several attempts – protesting against the oppression, injustice, exploitation and hypocrisy of the society. Indrajit as an angry young man raises a voice against man's existential crisis, his absurdity, death-wish, unemployment and anarchy prevalent in the society. Life is to be lived with full enthusiasm, zeal and zest, in place of being relegated to death. The play quite accurately depicts the passion, ambition and frustration of the youth. It deals with the existential question as well as about the urban youth of sixties. In the play both the characters, 'Indrajit' and 'Writer' remain in the constant search for their aim of life and do not find anything worth living and writing, respectively. Indrajit in the first Act in an Angry young man, a rebel who doesn't want himself to be controlled by the so called norms of the society but as we proceed in the play he is succumbed to the pressures of social system. Indrajit even marries some other girl and bear the burden of meaningless existence. Still it is his sheer consciousness of the world in which he is living, and his independent existence in the callous social system which is a point of great concern. The play ends on the note that there is no destination, only road. One must not lose hope and do continuous efforts.

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