

## Hegemony element in the play of Badal Sircar's Bhoma

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### Abstract

In the post Independence era dramatists like Badal Sircar, Girishkarnad, Mohan Rakesh Vijay Tendulkar achieved recognition through their impulse to creation, and greatly extended their popular appeal to the audience. It is a variegated activity. Badal sircar hailed from west Bengal, had shown stern consistency of purpose in his plays. Roughly contemporary with Girishkarnad, Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar Badal Sircar created the choice of themes but their themes are dissimilar ones. "Bhoma" is completely different from the point of approach to the writing of the play. Bhoma is a protagonist of the play. It weaves the dramatization of the life of the oppressed peasant in Indian rural society through a series of scenes in which he is socially and economically exploited. As a committed playwright, Sircar doesn't simply present the heaviness of a problem, but offers a solution by employing powerful symbols and images. Sircar portrays the urban-rural dichotomy in his play Bhoma.

**KEYWORDS:-**oppression-urban-rural dichotomy-symbols

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Introduction:

Hegemony is a term coined by Gramsci, an Italian thinker. It describes how the domination of one over others gets achieved by a combination of political and ideological means. A state of hegemony is achieved when a provisional alliance of certain social groups experts and consensus which makes the power of dominant group appear both natural and legitimate.

"Hegemony is unlikely ever to be complete. In contemporary capitalist societies, for example, the working class has a dual consciousness partly determined by the ideology of the capitalist call and partly revolutionary determined by their experiences of capitalist society. For capitalist society to be over thrown, workers must first establish their own ideological supremacy derived from their revolutionary consciousness."<sup>1</sup>

Institutions such as the mass media the family, the education system, and religion play a key role in the shaping of people's awareness and consciousness and thus can be agents through which hegemony is constructed and maintained.

In villages, landlords exploit poor peasants while in cities, industrialists exploit craftsmen. Bhoma play illustrates this. Mahamaya Engineering Company manufactures diesel pump sets for Samson and Black Bird company. They stick their name plate on the set and prepare the specification literature for them. They get only two thousand rupees for each set which Samson and Black Bird company sells for four thousands six hundred and twenty five rupees. Mahamaya Engineering Company gets its money only after the

sets are sold .They need working capital to manufacture new sets so they approach the manager of a bank for a loan of a few thousand rupees to them but he readily sanctions Samson and Black bird company a big loan of one hundred and thirty thousand without security. The poor crafts men sell their Mahamaya Engineering Company because they cannot maintain it any more for lack of capital.

Industry is the manifestation of excellence in people excellence of body, mind and soul. People interrelate with each other to achieve results. No individual or his function is complete in itself. It is only the sum of total of all activities that creates completeness and brings full results. So every worker in an industry has to interpret with others and that is why we are able to see the manifestation of perfection in others all the while. Every person working in an industry must love and respect every other co worker. This love, respect, and togetherness can best be expressed by eating together. There should be no hierarchy in the dining hall.

When we look ahead to the twenty first century and further, we have a choice to make. We can either continue the present exploitative way of management and end up as a highly polluted, scarcity prone, and strife –ridden urbanized society.

Lovelessness is hinted at again. The exploitation of ages facilitated by lovelessness is also referred to :

"ONE: My heart bleeds can a drop of it germinate even a prickly thorn on this earth?

TWO: This earth has sucked up so much blood already, has not it?"<sup>2</sup>

The intensity of exploitation is expressed very effectively by exploiting the image of blood. It is repeated in Sircar's another play in another manner. Blood has an advantage. The rains wash away all the blood on the earth. It is washed in to drains, from the drains to the rivers, from the rivers into the sea. It is not generally known that sea water has a high blood content and the blood content is increasing day by day.

Similarly, Five uses the word blood conveying various meanings. He says, "give me blood, I will give you jobs", "give me blood , I will give you permits" and "give me blood, I will give you a kingdom"<sup>3</sup>. The word blood means money, murder and sacrifice. But it invariably implies exploitation, and oppression. Sircar invigorates the image of blood step by step.

The image is finally hurled at the urban middle class to make them feel remorseful for their apathy to the rural poor peasants:

"Bhoma's blood, red blood, blossoms into white jasmines of rice on our plates. Twice every day" <sup>4</sup>. ONE again conveys this towards the end of the play:

"There is the taste of Bhoma's blood on the tongue. We drink Bhoma's blood, laugh and play. There is blood dripping down the sides of our mouths, dripping the poisonous trees are growing, growing. My blood, man's blood, becomes cold, C-o-l-d, C-o-l-d,..."<sup>5</sup>

The play repeatedly attempts to prove that exploitation is not only in human in it self but also caused by the love less ness of man. love less ness in encouraged and promoted in several ways. Fine arts are used to make people love less and thus in different to the suffering of the poor:

“TWO: (in agony) Beggars and dogs fighting over left overs from the wedding feast thrown out on the street.

ONE: Drown that noise with Ravi Sankar’s sitar”<sup>6</sup>

Competitiveness and individualism make people love less and materialistic, so material things become more valuable to them than men. They forget loving in their mad scramble in this hierarchized society:

“ONE: lots of things, lots and lots... in life’s walls there are many shelves, and niches. There are rows and rows of fascinating objects. Look at them, mark them, choose them.

THREE: Is there love on those shelves, in those niches?

ONE:(very seriously) not on the shelves, not in the niches”<sup>7</sup>

Sircar’s Bhoma depicts the impact of love less ness in our society. The play Wright approached the head master of Rangabelia village school and he learns about Bhoma and Sundraban. But Bhoma story is not there in this play. Seeing, feeling and learning about our surroundings shock us, hurt us, anger us, these have come out in disjoined, dramatic pictures. Bhoma’s picture was then part of those pieces. But when those pictures were strung together into a play then. Some how it was Bhoma’s image which started to become the link and at the end the play could not be called any thing but Bhoma.

Competiveness and individualism strain the relations between parents, children and the love less ness boomerangs in very family. The parents of middle class families sell their property and borrow money to educate their children. Even the country also spends a great deal on their education. But being highly educated, they leave their parents and their country, in debts and serve abroad:

“TWO: I will sell my pots and pans, but will get his education.

THREE: yes, yes, sell your pots and pans

FOUR: your country will also sell it’s pots and pans to educate him.

FIVE: thousands and thousands pots and pans will be spent to educate him.

SIX: educated he will depart in glory for America.”<sup>8</sup>

This throws light on the fact that third world countries like India are exploited by the advanced countries like America in the same manner as villages are exploited by cities.

Individualism destroys our love of nation and breeds dishonesty and corruption. The rulers exploit their nation and deposit their money in Switzerland. So the country becomes more and more bankrupt while the rulers grow more and more affluent. They make use of the press and mass media to conceal their fake patriotism and to present themselves as noble states man to the people:

“ONE: you will barrow a hundred, and repay a hundred?”

TWO: that is what it amounts to

ONE: that means you will become bankrupt then?

TWO: bless me, it is the country that will become bankrupt, why should I?  
my money is in a bank in Switzerland.”

The egotism in every body, supported by love less ness, sustains the exploitative system. In democracy, all people are provided with equal opportunities in principle. But the result is that only a few privileged people reap the fruit in practice. Consequently individual rulers become affluent while the government becomes bankrupt.

Sircar portrays the urban-rural dichotomy in his play Bhoma. “In the final analysis, it turns out to be a matter that takes into account the legalities of class alignments. That is why barucha aptly uses the term the oppressed in his final opinion about the play Anderson states a similarity between sircar’s third theater of the oppressed of Augusto Boal. “10 Bharucha might have detected that the play Wright without serious consideration, had setup in Bhoma a false dichotomy between the urban and rural life.

Bhoma is an archetype of the oppressed exploited peasant, who at long lost takes up his rusty axe grinds and sharpens it to cut the poisonous trees that grow around him. What sircar seems to appeal to the audience at the end of the play is that if they don’t take the axes and riseup with Bhoma to cut the poisonous trees in the forest of society, there will be no end to exploitation of man by fellowmen.

Even when sircar says that “Bhoma is not a play aiming at entreating the well dressed front row audiences in a lush theatre I am sure that those who do that kind of theater will not touch my play any way.”<sup>11</sup>. He appears to have noticed that Bhoma has latent class leanings.

In the contemporary Indian theatre as an urban writer, sircar admitted that he wrote his plays for the urban middle class and catered to their western tastes. In sircar the growth from a modernist out look to a perspective that is more socially oriented is most natural. All of sircar’s earlier works are modernist both in content and form. His later works, have embodied a different version of reality, truly democratic one, in sense that it

is more public, more social and closer to the needs of a democratic form. Sircar's Bhoma and Spartacus are outstanding examples of his later works.

Ultimately, as a dramatist sircar's contribution to the contemporary Indian theatre is magnificent one. He wrote plays to reform the society to get rid it of its evils.

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