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# Introduction to Modern Indian Drama

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Good morning. Let us now complete our discussion of the last playwright for this course, which is, who is called Badal Sircar, very important playwright from, from Bengal. Born in 1925 and died in 2011, and he is a very important playwright who wanted to make theatre or medium of social and political change and transformation.

He was born to a Christian family and he got a very colonial education. He studied in a Bengali medium school at the Scottish Church Collegiate School. He read lots of Bengali playwrights as a young man, and he also wrote his own plays and then became an engineer.

He joined the Communist Party of India and he was deeply affected by the political events of the Second World War in his time, but and also his loyalty, his relationship with the Communist Party also underwent many changes and transformations. His loyalty to the Communist Party was not unquestioned because he also questioned, of course, for example, the Communist Party's support for the Congress government, the Nehru government in the wake of Independence.

He later left the party after he lost faith in politics, and then he studied later on to become a town planner and left the party to lead an academic life of his own and also to support the family. He realized that being a member of the Communist Party of India may not actually give him a regular and secure source of livelihood or be a secure source of money and livelihood, and so he went on to pursue his own academic life.

He initially worked as a town planner as an engineer. He joined the Damodar Valley Corporation. Then later on he went to pursue a Diploma in Town Planning in London, which is where he was first exposed to the finest theatre from Europe and America.

And then he also spent much of his time later on in Nigeria where his professional career blossomed along with his career as a playwright where he wrote most of his best plays in during his time in Nigeria and it is also there in his experience of Nigeria where he also discovers the very intimate connection between the rural and the urban world of Nigeria, something which he then later on tried to do in his, during his stay in Calcutta.

He formed his own theatre group called Shatabdi, which only lasted for two years because of for want of good plays and actors who, many of whom left to act with other theatre groups. He is most known for his play *Evam indrajit*, but Sircar's plays represent largely the anxieties of an urban man.

So even though initially, you know, Badal Sircar made use of certain western technologies of drama and theatre, certain Western dramaturgical devices, like the proscenium arch, and the backdrop and lighting and so on, he gradually left the proscenium stage behind to create something called the *angan manch* or which is literally translated as the theatre in the round, right?

So these were largely, you know, raised circular stages that were, that was surrounded by the audience, right? So the actor could see as many people in front of him as there were behind him. So there was never a -- there was never a -- the actor never face the audience and he did not have a flat backdrop at the end behind him. So it wasn't, it was a circular setting, which exposed him to the audience all around.

So he gradually, of course, abandoned the proscenium stage and then he began to produce open air performances that were more intimate in the interactions with the audience and he also tried to partly replace conventional characters and themes with groups. So he would have groups of actors who were on stage who would, who would engage in a direct communication what he called direct communication with the audience.

He also made use of poetry and dance in his theatre which as the theatre scholar of Badal Sircar Manujendra Kundu, his book is what I rely on his book on Badal Sircar, which is called *So Near, Yet So Far: Badal Sircar's Third Theatre* published by Oxford University press in 2016 is very revealing the insightful study of Badal Sircar's theatre and his relationship with theatre and his idea of the form and function of theatre where Kundu argues that Badal Sircar, his plays were largely reflective of the urban anxieties of an urban man.

So I don't think as Kundu says Sarkar wasn't, didn't have any pretensions of, you know, actually, consciously, adopting folk forms, folk theatre traditions, like *jatra* into his plays because, you know, just the introduction of poetry and dance in his or just performance of any kind, any kind of movement in his play did not imply his knowledge or his direct experience of these folk forms.

As many other scholars of theatre including Ananda Lal and Shivaji Bandyopadhyay have argued that Rabindranath Tagore had already experimented with this kind of theatre earlier. So Badal Sircar who was by no means the first person to try and incorporate some of these elements of non-western theatre into his plays, right?

So it's true, of course, that Sarkar wanted to challenge the divide between the rural and the urban because he did, but he largely performed plays that were reflective of the anxieties of the urban world to a largely urban audience or even a working-class audience in a language which was accessible to everyone.

He also wanted to make theatre a very affordable, if not free, event. So he would encourage people to, you know, donate money for the performance if they wish to, but it was not compulsory.

So his primary concern was to use theatre as a medium of social and political change and he wanted to actually address contemporary, social, and political issues that were, you know, contemporary to his times including, you know, many issues of corruption, political corruption of nuclear war of, you know, social issues of marriage, and dowry and so on and so forth.

He also emphasized on a particular skill and technique of acting and he basically wanted to ensure that theatre was a very accessible, and affordable and popular medium of art and performance.

So he very clearly says that, that he did not have any personal experience of jatra when he was growing up. He may have watched it here and there. He has had glimpses of it, but then that doesn't necessarily mean that his theatre, which he began to then call Third Theatre, it's not something which, you know, consciously drew from these rural folk forms because he is still identified with his own urban upbringing and the kinds of issues that haunted his, his urban world.

So let us first, let's then move to one of his plays that has been translated and published by Seagull in 2009. The plays, we will be discussing Three plays by Badal Sircar: Procession, Bhoma, and Stale news that were published by Seagull, Calcutta, in Calcutta 2009 translated by Samik Bandyopadhyay, Badal Sircar himself and Kalyani Ghose respectively.

So look at the first play called Procession or Michhil. It's a very, it's a play that that makes use of, you know, a very, a rather complex stage again, which is surrounded by the audience, right? So it is not a play that has the audience as the fourth wall, but there are people sitting all around the performance area and the actors, you know, or many of the actors who are acting in the play are anonymous. They remain anonymous, and they are only named, you know, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and so on.

There were six anonymous characters. There is another character called Khoka, a young boy who then we later discover is also a symbol, symbolic character, and you also have the chorus

who sings now, and then and you also have an old man and we also discover that Khoka and old man are interchangeable versions of each other, interchangeable characters.

So if you look at the stage directions of the play, it says the Procession, the Procession, which is the name of the play, is not meant to be performed on the proscenium stage. It has to be staged in an open space with the audience seated all around or on the floor of a large room. So this is Sarkar's idea of *angan manch*.

If performed indoors, the chairs and backless benches for the audience should be so arranged as to suggest a maze with a road going in knots and rounds. The road will constitute the acting area with the audience sitting on both sides the way people stand on both sides of a street to watch a Procession passing. The actors will have two entrances or exits. The diagram offers a possible scheme, right?

So Badal Sircar, when he imagined, when he thought of this play, he imagined Calcutta as a city of processions, which is why the play is called Procession. So you have many processions that happen in the city. Whether it's a procession by the Communist Party protesting against fuel hikes or the underpaid, you know, workers or procession of Durga Pooja, it's a city of processions. So the procession itself becomes a symbol that connotes many things in the play.

And so you have a performance area, which is surrounded by people, and it is open and it's like a maze. So you have a road which is, which goes through the performance area, which is, which turns round and round in knots and that also becomes symbolic in the play.

Now nothing much is happening in the play by way of plot. It's not a densely plotted play. It's just an idea to express the play's sense of disillusionment with the urban world. So you have a boy called Khoka who is missing and who then becomes a rather anonymous symbol of political corruption and loss of estrangement and alienation in the urban world, and he also then becomes an elusive promise of social security to the socially and politically disfranchised and marginalised.

So the play itself becomes a comment on the marginality of certain sections of the population who are poor, lower caste, women, children, poor children, so on and so forth, many of whom, you know, hope to see a better future with the help of the government, but the government is always an elusive entity, the state is always an elusive entity that is unable to fulfil its promises.

So, for example, you have in the beginning a bell that rings. You have a chorus, five young men — ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR, and FIVE, and a young woman SIX enter the space in the manner of the audience disperse the space and seem to search for places to sit. The bell stops. The light goes out at once. Voices from the dark, right? So it's almost like as though these characters suddenly emerge and appear and they seem to almost take the place of the audience. You have to sit with the audience and you can't distinguish them from the audience initially.

Out in the open the first sequence is usually dropped. The play opens with Khoka entering the acting area, coming to the centre, dropping dead with a screen, and the chorus bursting in immediately with, “What’s that? What's that?” and spreading all over the acting area. Later on actors enact being obstructed at bends and crossings to convey the sense of an intricate maze of roads and routes criss-crossing all through.

So the actors through the very bodies have to give the audience a sense of the space of how the space is an intricate maze of roads and routes that are criss-crossing all through. And so they are always, they are always looking for something.

They are always trapped in that maze looking for a way out, and the chorus is actually wondering, the six characters are wondering what happened. ONE: what's happened? Why did the lights go out? TWO: is it a fuse? THREE: load shedding. What a bother every day! FOUR: no, it's sabotage. Someone must have cut the wire. FIVE: careful. It's perfect for pickpockets and thieves. SIX: can't see a thing. What will happen?

And so it's almost like as though the maze, the performance area itself becomes a space for the city, for the city of Calcutta where it's a city of processions. It's a city where there are power cuts, where there is a lot of petty theft going on, petty crimes are being committed. It's dark. It seems dark because of the power cuts. Then they suddenly discover, they suspect a murder has happened. They hear someone crying and they are convinced that somebody has been murdered, but they are not sure who it is.

Looking for matchsticks or a lighter to find the body, but are not able to find anyone, right? But they are convinced that somebody has been stabbed and the body has been whisked away, but they are able to still hear screams and then they suddenly hear the police arrive. The police comes and the officer asks, well, who's been killed? No one was killed because they're unable to find the corpse. This is a very elusive corpse, a very elusive murder, crime, right? Somebody has been murdered, but you can't seem to find the corpse.

Then Khoka himself speaks as the officer who is keeping guard walks around. The voice of Khoka is heard, faint at first but growing louder. Khoka sits up as he speaks; then stands, walks, runs, tries desperately to draw the attention of the officer and the audience to himself. But the officer does not notice him even when he is right before him.

Khoka: I was killed. I. Me. Here I am. I've been killed. I. I, Here — here I am. They killed me. I'm dead. I was killed just now. I was killed today. I was killed yesterday. I was killed the day before yesterday. The day before the day before. Last week. Last month. Last year. I am killed every day. Every day, killed everyday, dead every day. I'll be killed tomorrow. Day after, the day after that, next week. Next month. Next year. I. Me. Why can't you see me? Why can't you hear me? I. Here I am. I — was killed — I am dead — I am killed every day — everyday, everyday killed every day dead every day.

So you notice here that Khoka is not an actual person who has been killed or murdered inasmuch as he is a symbol of the violent expulsion, the violent marginalisation of certain

sections of society. So there are a lot of people who are, there are people who are being killed every day. There are people who are being exploited every day. They are being killed in the name of religion, in the name of war, right, in the name of patriarchy, in the name of caste. So you have many people who are being killed, who are being symbolically or actually marginalised and you know violently expelled from society.

So you see Khoka becoming a pervasive, invisible and therefore pervasive symbol of this kind of political persecution and corruption. So he is at once present everywhere and yet he cannot be seen, right? So this in some sense Khoka becomes the very trace, the elusive traces of the state itself, and state persecution, state violence.

Then you also have the old man, the old man who was one of the characters in the play, who says when I was small, very very small, one day, one morning, halfway between fall and winter, a lovely morning with a chill in the air and sunshine dripping with sweetness, I was walking along the road, holding on to my father's hand. I trampled along the earth road, dry leaves crushing under my feet filled with a smell of decaying leaves while flower was in the slushy mud . . . holding on to my father's hands as the road wound and meandered along and kept vanishing under my feet only to yield an ever new road. He begins to walk. All the roads vanish around the bend. Then a new road, which vanish at the bend and a new road to let vanish again at the next bend and a new one again and bend and the vanishing road, the new, the road, the bend vanished, new, the road. Then father said Khoka, let's go back. I said just little more to the next bend so I can see what's beyond the bend. Beyond the bend, the new road. Father said let's go back. I said little further. What's beyond the bend, the new road, let's go back a little further the next bend, a little further the next bend.

So you look at how Badal Sircar uses language in a very repetitive fashion until he fragments a sentence and you just have a repetition of the same phrase or the same word again and again to give a sense of the futility of this world, right? So this is -- there is an old man who is probably an older version of Khoka who remembers being Khoka when he was a young boy taking a walk with his father and as he is walking, he is also capturing the maze-like structure of the performance arena and he is walking round and round in a spiralling road that seems to end nowhere, right? So the more you turn, the more you keep arriving at the same bend. You are not able to find the end of the road. There is no destination, right? There is this deep sense of feeling and trapped and of a feeling futile, right? So where is the -- so where is the solution? How does one get out of this structural problem of inequality, of injustice, of poverty, of death, starvation and so on?

And in the meanwhile you have the chorus and the old man also joined the chorus always looking for the Michhil, looking for the true procession. Where is the real procession? Where is the procession of hope? Where is the procession of change?

Then, again, let's pay attention to how, again, Sarkar uses language repetitively in terms of these very punctuated phrases. So the chorus is again looking for Khoka wondering where he's gone missing. So ONE says, "Lost. Lost. Name Khoka, age young, nose snub, body thin, brains, slightly deranged. Any kind person with information of any kind should please get in

touch with the nearest newspaper office.” TWO: Missing, assassination, abduction. A boy named Khoka, political stand unknown, report to the nearest police station or the Central Missing Squad if caught dead or alive or if information is available. THREE: Hello, customs. Hello, border security. Hello, Interpol. Khoka lost. Khoka at large. Alert everybody. SIX: All India Radio Calcutta, All India Radio Delhi, All India Radio Bombay, Madras, Kanpur, Bangalore, Guwahati, Imphal, information required about Khoka’s whereabouts. Dingdong. FOUR: SOS, SOS, my Maruti, SOS Liberty and so on.

Then ONE again. Khoka come back from wherever you are. TWO: your father and mother keep crying all the time and have taken to their beds. THREE: your brothers and sisters cry as they play, play as they cry. FOUR: your aunts and uncles, maternal and paternal, cry as they eat, eat as they cry. FIVE: Khoka, come back. You will get whatever you want. SIX: bats, balls, biscuits, chocolates. ONE: books, notebooks, school, college. TWO: pass, fail, job, business. THREE: land, possessions, house, property. FOUR: house, car, gold, jewellery. FIVE: happiness, peace, religion, salvation. SIX: wife, son, grandchildren, great grandchildren.

Chorus: you’ll get it all. Come back. You’ll get it all. Come back. Come back. Come back. Come back home. Your folks are shedding tears for you. Where for do you roam? His name Old Man. His name, his parents named him Khoka. Thousands of parents with thousands of Khokas, Khoka means little. Khoka means one who hasn't grown up yet. Khoka means green, raw, immature. Khoka rhymes with Bhoka, Dum and Dhoka, betrayal, right?

So you see you again these false promises of social security, and happiness and joy that the poor and the disenfranchised seem to be, that seem to be getting from the state, but the state never actually follows up, fulfils its promises, and so the Old Man says there are many, many such Khokas, right, who are betrayed, who are betrayed by the state, betrayed by others. They have no sense of security whatsoever. They are lost and they are rendered anonymous.

So that is I think the Badal Sircar’s primary experience of the city that he seems to convey in his plays this deep sense of anonymity and a self-estrangement and alienation in the city, right, that you don’t know who you are anymore in that vast mass of humanity, which is all, which is divided along social, and economic and political lines. They are all competing for greater and greater share of the resources. They are all, you know, vying for the state's attention. They are all rendered in some sense anonymous and insignificant.

You also notice how the actors very often become different characters in the play, anonymous, again, unnamed, nameless characters. They also become props because Badal Sircar also believed in the minimal or eliminating the use of props in his plays and they also recreate constantly new spaces, right, through their bodies. So the body of the actor becomes very important in Badal Sircar’s theatre.

Again, you have a similar, you know, statements being made by different characters in the play. Fresh conflict in the Middle East, TWO says. THREE says, oil crisis all over the world. FOUR: Another hydrogen bomb explosion in the Pacific. FIVE: Another experiment with the



artificial heart. ONE: Earthquake in Peru. TWO: Cyclone in Bangladesh. THREE: Uprising in Chile and so on and so forth. So all these different voices seem to reflect the different global and national issues that seem to affect the nation from including, you know, rise in fuel prices, rise in, you know, grains and the oil, losses for the State transport, breakdown in the Railways, the postponing of exams. So it's constantly, the play is constantly punctuated with these voices that suggests the complete breakdown of the system, right, of any kind of economic and political structure of governance.

There is also the play also becomes a satire of certain institutions of the family of religion, of course. There is a lot of, there are a lot of comments being made on the nature of religious communalism and communal violence that divides the country and then there is also a critique of nationalism, right, I mean, the voice of nationalism and religion. There are also reflections of violence from different historical periods from the partition onwards of how the city has been divided amongst Hindus and Muslims and so on and so forth, right, between the upper caste and the lower caste and so on.

There are descriptions of, you know, people sharing certain public forms of transport, certain public spaces like the tram or the bus. There are all bus link for, there are all, you know, basically trying to acquire space in the bus, but unable to. They are jostling for space and in the midst of all this chaos, this complete utter chaos in the city, every character is trying to find the real, the true procession, looking for the real Michhil, where is the real Michhil?

Then there are again as I mentioned earlier, you know, certain cries of that reproduced the violence, the riots between Hindus and Muslims or the struggle against for freedom against the British colonial system. So there are shouts of Vande Mataram and then there is TWO says, character TWO says, "Remember at the moment of your birth, your life has been offered in sacrifice to the great mother." THREE: Glory to the generous British government. CHORUS: God save a noble king. Long live our gracious king. God save the king. FIVE: Death to the British dogs. FOUR: Death to the terrorists. Freedom to nonviolence. THREE: Non-cooperation. FOUR: Satyagraha. FIVE: Charkha. This is all, you know, lines, words that bring back our memory of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement.

ONE: Hindus and Muslims unite. TWO: Quit India. THREE: Do or die. FOUR: Kareng ya mareng. FIVE: British imperialist leave India. Then ONE: Ladke lenge Pakistan. We will win Pakistan by force. One part of chorus Allah-hu-Akbar, other part of the chorus Vande Mataram. Chorus: Thrash the bastards, thrash the bastards. Chorus: Oh, sir, please, which way to the refugee camp? ONE: Yeh Azadi joothi hai, jootha hai. This freedom is a phoney freedom. Chorus: Bhoolo mat. Bhoolo mat. Never forget. Never forget. Right?

So these are all cries that are, you know, capture those days of communal violence in the wake of partition and the hollowness of freedom, right? So what does freedom mean to the people who are -- who do not belong to the nation, those who are on the fringes and the margins of the nation, right? So the elitism of nationalism, which includes only some and excludes the other is only a phoney kind of a freedom, right? So the freedom, teh

independence, which is one for a nation to be, which does not include everyone, which is built and based on exclusions is a phoney freedom.

So the play, of course, is a satire that exposed the hollowness of nationalism and patriotism. Remember the master says, remember our national heritage. Remember the numberless martyrs and our struggle for freedom. Remember the revolutionary heroes of a fiery days. Remember India is the country of Manu, Parashar, Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, Sita, Savitri, Sri Chaitanya and Gandhiji. Remember the invincible strength of the principle of nonviolence. Remember that it is our responsibility to give spiritual leadership to the world. Remember the greatness of democracy in India. Remember the fundamental rights of the Constitution. Remember the Green Revolution, the Nationalization of Banks, Family Planning, Dollar aid, the nuclear blast, MISA arrests and so on.

So in the wake of all these memories that you have to remember your heritage of tolerance of democracy, but that is in stark contrast to the reality of post-independence India where there is this deep sense of disillusionment with the country, with the nation where freedom is saffron, revolution is green, the pocket is red, the market is black, right.

Then the chorus says, "Glory be to Lord Krishna, avatar of the markets. We bow at the feet of the Lord Black market. Hail to the Black God. The Black God will save us all. Vote for Mr. Blackie Marketwala" Vote for Mr. Blackie Marketwala, right? So Sarkar is obviously paradigm ridiculing, satirising the black market, the kind of the vast sense of corruption that is the state of the post-independent country. So all the basic commodities are not affordable to the majority of the population. Coal, bran, kerosene, baby food, textbooks, rice, dhal, oil, sugar, flour and and so on.

There are also voices of the poor where there are people who are fighting for food, who are begging for food. So there is a deep sense of deprivation and poverty. Then there is also a sense of, there is also satire of human civilisation, right? So he says, so, for example, TWO said, TWO says, "All men were equal at the beginning of creation, but they were uncivilized. THREE says all day long they worked. Yet there was never enough to eat, so they were equal. FOUR: Then men learnt to use animals, learned how to farm. Then they had surplus. FIVE: Surplus brought civilization. Man became civilized. Civilization, civilized man, civilized society.

One: Who would join the surplus? Everyone? Who would enjoy the surplus? Everyone? No. Only those with virtue, with intelligence, with strength. So only those who have power, those who have access to education and wealth, they are the ones who actually enjoy the surplus of civilization. So civilization itself is built on discrimination, on violence, and on depriving some people of freedom. They are the ones who work for the rest who are their masters, right? So there is a very clear unequal access to resources, right?

So the progress of science and progress of civilization is built on inequality and hierarchy, on a divide between the haves and have-nots between the intellectuals, the atheists, the ones who are, you know, who believe the intellectuals and those who are the working class, the ones

who labour, the ones who are exploited. And what is the greatest enemy of civilization is communism and who protects, preserves and uphold civilization? You, the master, chorus cries.

So the master, of course, can be anything because the master could be capitalism in this case. It could be imperialism and they are the ones who keep us civilized. It's a civilizing force, right, while communism is believes in common shared access of, shared access of resources and not private property and so that becomes the other battle between communism and capitalism, which is now being reflected.

And again, there are again further voices of, you know, the struggles, the strive that farmers have to face in terms of unseasonal rain, in terms of mounting debt, the fact that the state will not redeem the debts and they have to suffer with debtridden being, I mean, unable to redeem their debts. Many of them have been given adulterated cooking oil, which leads to the food poisoning of the entire family. So the (inaudible 33:26) farmers or their families, and the poor, the urban poor who are dying because of their inability to access good, pure resources. There are, there is a lot of police corruption, lot of police violence, you know, who police were, you know, prosecuting innocent people, innocent poor simply because they are poor, they exploit them and they beat them up and so on and so forth, right?

So they are constantly in search of Khoka and they are unable to find where Khoka is, right? And they are all climbing. The Old Man is climbing along with the rest up the spiral road and they are unable to find Khoka, and it's only towards the end of the play that we have a sense which actually aims in the sense of hope.

Now there is no solution to these problems as such. There is no vision of what, of how these problems can be redeemed, how humanity can be redeemed, how these problems can be resolved is not something which is clearly spelt out. Right? So there are many other problems which are being listed as we go along the play, especially, for example, people who are killed for, you know, marrying outside their caste. There are, there is violence against rickshawalas, for example, who some claim are becoming arrogant. They are putting on airs.

So then there is another fourth voice, which is complaining that that the whole world has turned atheist that only in our country, only our country had some religion, but even that is going out, right? So the fact that there are some who are being persecuted for their complete utter lack of faith in God or worship of any kind and so in some sense the missing boy Khoka is becomes a symbol of all this of this deep sense of alienation, of estrangement, of violence, of intolerance, of different kinds of violence, communal violence, sexual violence, you know, caste violence, class violence.

So he says, Khoka says towards the end of the play that, "Stop it. Stop these lies. It's not the truth. How can you tolerate it? Don't you see this is all rubbish, deceit and attempt to confuse you? I have been killed. I am killed every day. I will be killed every day. That's the truth. In the dark of the night, in the din of day, every day, you're trying to cover up that truth, but you cannot. I won't let you cover it up. You, all of you, don't let them cover it up."

So there is always this fear that there are some people, especially, the way in which a state and those who are in power tend to bribe the poor, the disenfranchised, disadvantaged with promises, right, that they will somehow be redeemed. They will somehow be freed of all their problems if they decide to vote for those who are in power, right? So there is this deep sense of this, the ways in which art and culture are being used as ideological mechanisms to delude the people, right, to, you know, deceive them, to play a game in which the lower classes, the women, those who are disadvantaged are kept in their position of servitude and subordination, right?

So Khoka is a voice that wants to make everyone wary. He is a voice of the disenfranchised, of the poor, the marginalised that wants to be wary of all these games, these power games that those who are in power play in order to deceive them, and so all these characters in some sense are lost in these many several processions in the city, these processions that seem to be stand, that seem to stand and represent different causes, but then all in the name of power and corruption, but then that is where is the true procession, right? Which is the real procession? Which is a procession of hope? Which is an inclusive procession that includes all those who have been left behind earlier? Right?

So Khoka represents the elusive truth, the hollow name of injustice and ethics. It is the voice of hunger, of starvation, of disease, poverty and death, and the Old Man and Khoka are also versions of each other, which suggest that nothing much has changed over the generations, right, that the country is still plagued with all these and haunted with all these problems.

And so there has to be some way in which we can form a procession, right, which is a note of hope. It is a procession of hope, which is able to expose the ideological mechanisms, the ideological means through which those who are in power, the elite, those who use art and culture as a medium of deceit can be exposed, right, for what they are, right? So can be exposed for their corruption, for their power hunger, right?

So this, this performance really, I mean, this, this play really is suggestive of that very thing where the play becomes in many ways a statement and a satire on various problems that plagued the country. There is economic and social problems of seasonal employment, unemployment, the debt ridden uncertain lives of farmers and peasants, the unavailability of jobs despite qualifications, despite being qualified, all this is being represented through the voice of Khoka who also symbolizes the loss of self, right?

In the midst of all these problems, there is a loss of a sense of self. Everyone becomes anonymous. Everyone suffers a deep sense of estrangement and alienation that comes from exploitation and the forces of capitalism, and so the only way in which one can perhaps arrive at a sense of hope is to have a new procession, a new procession which symbolically includes everyone that entails the joining of forces between those who are victimized, those who are disenfranchised, the powerless and in an attempt to try and self-consciously expose the self deceptive mechanisms of capitalism, of patriarchy, of urban politics, right, and so on and so forth.

So that ends our very brief discussion of Badal Sircar's first play Procession or Michhil.  
Thank you.