

Lecture 25

Bhoma

Good morning, let us now, continue our discussion of Balu Sarkar's plays. Let us now, shift to the second clip which is called, 'Bhoma' which uses very, similar kind of devices the tree devices, has similar form to the previously we discover, we discussed in the last session, which again had you know, which is called, 'Precession' or 'Mitchell' and both precession as well as Bhoma, have anonymous characters, in them, like Mitchell Opposition in this play you again have six actors, who are anonymous, they are all wearing the same dress. The stage directions are like this, six actor's identical dress; they may begin with

some warm-up exercises to enter into the spirit of the work. This dense stand in a circle, hold hands and make eye contact with one another. Then they move and eat separately trying to make eye contact with the spectators, at the end they stand in different positions, our melody of four and ascending notes, each crouches and becomes a seed, sprouting, standing up, stretching and spreading, trees, bird singing, wind through the leaves. Two of the actors turn into wood cutters, felling trees, with a customary, heave-ho, etc clearing the jungle, paddy fields, ploughing, sowing, harvesting and the group forms a machine, complete with the rhythms and sounds. So, you get a sense that these actors, are all trying to use their bodies, to create, a scene of agricultural labor and work. And they're all busy, trying to clear the jungles, trying to cultivate paddy fields, they're sowing and harvesting and so. On let's you have the rhythms of agricultural work and labor being embodied, in these six actors.

So, the play has very similar themes, similar to the previous play we discussed, which is again as you know, functions as a satire, of corruption, of inequality, of injustice and Balu Sarkar does this in many ways. But, primarily through the very, intimate connection that the actors established through their own bodies, with the audience. And again, he is making use of a all-round and of an angle munch, where you have audience the people sitting around, the actors, watching them perform and the actors assume, different voices, through the play and they also, become props, where necessary. And the plays also called, 'Bhoma' because the Bhoma itself, like coca, in the previous play, becomes a symbol of many things. Right? He Bhoma is invisible, but at the same time pervasive, symbol of exploitation, of suffering, of disease, of poverty and of the exploitation more specifically, of the rural farmers, of the peasants. Right? Who have you know, soaked, this the soil, with their own blood, as they work, to feed the rest of the country. Right? So, it's it really, is in some sense a an acknowledgment of the and it's also an indictment, a satire of the exploitation, of the rural masses, of the rural peasantry, as they invest their sweat and blood, in trying to harvest. But, of course it's also not a romanticized, picture of agricultural life, of rural life. But, it is also trying to, expose the harsh realities, of what it billa means to belong, to rural world, to be a debt ridden, exploited peasant or farmer, who is at the mercy of the state and the government and you know and has to also bear the burden of paying taxes. Right?

So, or is also at the burden of having to repay loans to the banks and this is also, a reality that we see even today, with the large and widespread Kiss an marches that we have, or farmers who have to, who commit suicide, because able to actually, repay the loans: that they have been given by the banks or by the government. So, this big play, in some sense also has a lot of contemporary, significance and relevance to the present reality of farmer, X the exploitation of farmers and farmer suicides. So, if you look at the, the voices the different six voices that, of the actors, who act in the play, there are, they're largely anonymous voices and they're not, you're not sure what the conversations are about generally, this there is no in fact as, Balu Sarkar himself, himself says in the stage directions, in the play he says that, I was introduced to the Sunder bans district, by Tushar kanjilal, headmaster of the wrong Abellio village school, I had heard Bhoma story from him. So, the story is this play is inspired from a character called, 'Bhoma' that the playwright, Balu Sarkar knew, from the Sundarban district in West Bengal, southern West Bengal. This is the, kind of mangrove you know, Delta, Delta explains in the mouth; of the weather Ganga meets the Bay of Bengal. But, Bhoma story is not there in this play, seeing feeling and learning about her surroundings, shockers, hurt us, anger us, these have come out in disjointed dramatic pictures. Bhoma's picture was then part of those pieces. But, when those pictures were strung together into a play, then somehow it was Bhoma's image which started to become the link, in the end the play could not be called anything but, Bhoma. When the pieces were being put together as a play, there were others in Shatabdi that is Balu

Sarkar's group, who had also created images out of the experience and feelings, which had been incorporated in the play. In that way, Bhoma is not entirely my creation, in this play there is no character, no story, no continuity, whatever there is to say, the actors say directly to the audience. Through sounds, words and their whole body: that was how Shatabdi staged Bhoma.

The first performance was in Rancho Bella a village, on 21st March, 1976. Bhoma can be performed by eight to ten actors, Shatabdi used six actors, with another four or five from joining the singing and in creating sounds. The speeches can be distributed, differently in keeping with the resources and requirements of the producing group, as long as, one consistently, consistently goes on searching for Bhoma. And three, as in one, as in the actor number one, consistently goes on searching for Bhoma and actor number three, speaks of love. Shatabdi productions have gone through such changes and so on and so forth. Right? So and then you also have two basic tunes, musical tones that are used, in the backdrop, of the play. So, as Balu Sarkar says, you have a lot of many refrains in the play, the lots of repetitions in the play, which are supposed to impress the memory of the audience, with feelings of, of you, know of deprivation. Right? A sense of protest, against deprivation against, against exploitation and the longing for, for love, to be loved, to be able to bind humanity through love. Right? By sharing resources. Right? Because the entire play really is about, reflects the inequitable, access and distribution of resources, between different sections of society and so this in some sense also, exposes the social hierarchies, social and economic hierarchies, between the haves and the have-nots. Right? So and Bhoma, it becomes a symbol of that sense that deep sense of exploitation and the protest against, exploitation. So, there are certain reference for example, if you look at page 61, there is a actor number two, constantly says, there's one discussion, which goes on. So one of them is, actor number two saying, I'm a stenographer, in Samson and Blackbird company, my salary is now and this, line has no punctuation what so, it's one continuous sentence, I am a stereographic and Samson and Blackbird company, my salary is now four hundred fifty five rupees, my take-home pays four twenty eight point four zero rupees, after Provident Fund deductions. I have a wife two sons at daughter and mother to young brothers and a younger sister at home, the elder of the two brothers has passed his BSC, but, hasn't got a job in one and a half years, he gets hunter in ten rupees, through tuitions, the youngest brother is going to sit for the bf, a part of an examination and sisters at school and last end my wife has passed her school final, she cooks my mother, cooks my eldest son, is in class 4 and this is how the entire, line is. Right? So, this is repeated off and on. Okay? Another refrain that you see, in the play is this actor number three, constantly saying oh! Shut up, so he can't stand actor number two's constant, complaint or in this constant reporting, a description of his own life, right of his own family life. So, after about three says, oh! Shut up, you know I fell in love with a girl, now note how language it's a break stop. Right?

He's unable to construct, a clear sentence and in the process he gets muddled up and confused and then he is finally silenced, you know I have fell in love with a girl, the others laugh out aloud, three gets mixed up no, no a girl fell in love with me, I mean a love fell in me a girl, I heard that is that girl, my love, I love, a girl the laughed has become a roar, three puts his hands to his ears, I'll kill you, laughter becomes louder, three Falls the ground, laughter becomes softer and stops in the end. Right? So, he's unable to construct a clear sentence, confessing the love that he feels for a girl, because the people are laughing at him. Right? So, he's unable to confess, his love affair and this again becomes a repeat, repeated refrain throughout the play. One more refrain of course is this whole discussion about, blood. Right? So, this constant talk about warm blood and cold blood. Right? So, actor number. Two says, 'The blood of fish is cold, actor number'. One says, 'The blood of man is also, cold, reactor number'. Three says, 'No the blood of Warm, the man

is warm, actor number'. One says, 'It was before, now it's cold, theory of evolution, Darwin, had man's blood not grown cold, he wouldn't have survived'. 'Three what would he have done then'. 'One died, become extinct like dinosaurs'. 'Three the blood of the dinosaurs, was a cold a warm'. 'One I don't know'. 'Three the dinosaur was a reptile, wasn't it, blood of a laser is cold isn't it. So, this again is another different. Now, what do these reference mean it's a further, further the last roughly, we discussed is about, how man has become cold-blooded. Right? And that, becomes a suggestion of how man, has become more and more insensitive, he has been desensitized to his own natural, environment. Right? Through his own social environment, he's unable to respond anymore, to the needs of others. Right? The, the ecological system, right the balance of nature, he seems to be primarily responsible for upsetting, the balance of nature and even the balance of human life itself. Right? So, he has grown cold blooded, simply out of his own desire, to survive. Right? So, how half men, how if people become so, cold-blooded that are not able to be sensitive anymore, to the needs, of others. Then again like the previous play, there's again a satire of nationalism, of the glory, of the nation. Right?

So, what is India? What is India mean to these characters practice, two, four, five, six, say see India, see India, see India, 'One India', 'Two here Bharatvarsha', 'One Mohenjo Daro Ayodhyapatli Putra'. 'Two the city the great city, the great, great, great city, one Harappa, Indraprastha, on Varanasi and two, four, five, six, kalsa calcutta, 'One Delhi, Bombay, Madras and two, four, five, six, Calcutta, 'One the great, great, great city, 'Two, four, five, six, Calcutta'. Right? So, the one of course is the, the Hawking back to the, ancient past of the country, of the nation, in terms of its historical Indus Valley sites, or through the sides of his ancient kingdoms, but, then there's also this other reference to the metropolitan cities. Right? So, the metropolitan cities like Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta, are the ones that, get the maximum share of resources, they're the ones that are most powerful. Right? The ones who have the richest of the rich and Calcutta of course, it seems to be ambiguous, because it is also, they're not able to make out with the Calcutta, is a rural, town or an urban city. Right? It seems to have, at least you in the time when this play was performed, they're not show but, the Calcutta is a proper City or not. Right? Partly because of its power cuts, partly because, of the water logging that happens during the rains, they're not show whether Calcutta is a modern city or not and what does it mean to be a part of a modern city. Then there are gains are in very familiar reference, an actor now number one says, what is the sign of urban modernity? Right? So, two says Hindustan mark to fear two hundred thousand five hundred, the Maruti is coming, the small car the people's car. Right? So, there are all these new technological innovations and immediate amenities: that make a city, what it is? Right? So, one is the car, the people's car, one is television, one is the Metro Rail, flyovers, the second Hooghly bridge and so on. Right? So, these are all signs apparently of the modern city. Now at number, number one says but, seventy five percent of India's population, live in villages, not in cities, three so what? 'One village' three the village, the lovely village, the charming village, the beautiful village and so on. Right? So, the eroticization of the village, as though the village were, this repository of Indian culture, when actually it is not, the village is also not innocent space, of culture. Right? It is, it is already being divided by many differences, many hierarchies of caste, class and so on. Right? Then, one more common refrain in the play, is these actors resume the voices of farmers, who need water land, who need money, to buy water. Right? To pump, water from the ground, they need money to buy fertilizers, they need money to buy seeds. Right? So, there's one common refrain, throughout the play is the voices of the farmers, the poor farmers, who don't have any access to credit, to get access to these kinds of basic resources the need for their own life, for their own farming. Right? So, at number. One says and acres of gray Arid Land, others gray Arid, gray Arid one, a handful of green Boro paddy, in a sea of gray soil, for Boro paddy, what the hell's that? One the ravine season paddy, when

there is no rain, when the soil is dry, then everybody's at work, movements of drawing water, 'Two' actor number two, we want water, give us water, we want water, give us water, we want water, give us water, for plenty of water deep down the earth, a lot of water, a lot.

Five who's going to draw it? Who will draw it? Who'll draw it? Draw it. Two we need fertilizers, give us fertilizers, we need seeds, give us seeds, we need water, give us water, we need seeds, for there's nothing, nothing, nothing one no water, no fertilizers, no seeds, no land, no clothes, no food, no water, no work. So, you see the, you notice the formula, of that Balu Sarkar uses, you know when it comes to, folk theater or not folk theater, but you know, body centric theater, theater which focuses on the actor's body, there has to various constant repetitions, refrains. Right? Then, there is another scene in the play, which is about, the farmers, they need, the poor farmers desperately need loans from banks, in order to buy, water pumps, water pumps that are fueled by diesel. Right? But, diesel is expensive and they're unable to get loans to buy water pumps, because they don't have any, security. Right? They don't have any assets: that they can give to the bank, in exchange for loans. Right? So, they are struggling with that also. So, actor number one for example, says that he talks about, the sorry state of farmers, in the district of 24 Parganas, in West Bengal, there are 250 families in the village, of which 60 families have each less than an acre of land, 90 families have no land at all, they work on other people's lands as higher laborers they get four rupees a day as wages, each of these laborers has five, six, ten dependents, at four rupees a day you can't afford to buy rice, wait yes but not enough for chapatti's, if you make a porridge of it, with water and salt, it goes a long way and fills you up, if you can't get a wheat flour there's corn flour, if you can't even get hold of that, you starve, you can't always get a four rupees a day job, maybe at most for 100 or 125 days a year. Nowadays thanks to tube, wells and pumps to draw out ground, ground water for irrigation, you get some spring cough, drops wait, Ravi Paddy, there's some work even in April and May, but then there's no electricity. If it's a diesel pump, diesel is expensive and you don't get it always, you don't get fertilizers, the price of fertilizers has doubled, youriya used to be one rupee fifteen paisa per kg, at the control rate, now, it's one rupee ninety-five paisa per kg. Then again Act number one says please, please I haven't finished my story yet, there is no electricity, but there are the poles and wires, all these three years, now the polls have, have come loose, the wires I uses cloths, as clotheslines by the villages. If we get electricity, if the canals are dredged, if we have more tube wells, only three million rupees, then the whole of the symbol poor uncial, all the three thousand acres of land, will yield gold, gold the second Hooghly bridge, actor number, 'Two says, the second Hooghly bridge' when shall we have it'. Actor, 'Three stadium, when should we have it'. 'Actor' 'Four the Metro Rail, when shall we have it'. 'Actor', 'One listen, listen you get seven quintals of the old car if, per acre, if you depend on the rain alone'.

So, one crop of your yields, only seven quintals per acre, while the high yield Paddy, weight and vegetables, three crops a year, the same plot of land yields, four times as much of it, if there's a water. That's only three million rupees. 'Actor' 'Two the second Hooghly bridge, only six hundred million rupees'. 'Actor' 'Three digging in Calcutta, for better streets and better sewers, only 2000 million rupees spent so far'. 'Actor' 'Four that metro rail will cost only three thousand million rupees'. 'One' 'Actor number' 'One only, one only three million, I've calculated it, only three million for the symbol per engine'. So, there's this constant refrain, asking that, imagining that they only need three million rupees, to be able to buy diesel pumps: that will help them, pump water from the ground. Right? If they have, three million rupees, right they, only need in just more enough, are they, they it will be enough, to get electricity, to dredge the canals. Right? And if they have more tube wells, then they hope that the entire district of symbol pour, will, yield, crops, will yield a lot of food grains. Right? And that is their dream.

Right? But, they keep this these are all empty dreams, right they, they never get fulfilled. They're all empty promises, empty dreams, there just is elusive, promises the government, makes to the farmers and peasantry but that, never happens, while the city seems to be spending, a lot more money on its technology, in terms of the Hooghly bridge or the metro rail. But, they're not willing to spend, even half the amount for, agriculture and for the survival of the, rule masses. Then, when some of the poor farmers go to you know, are not poor farmers, but the manufacturers of the parts, of this diesel pump, when they go to ask for a loan, from the bank, the bank wants to first know, what security? What assets they have, that they can give to the bank and exchange for the loan. Four, actor number, 'Fours sir, can we get some loan from your bank, 'Five how much', 'Four say, twenty thousand', 'Five and who are you? 'Four Mahamaya engineering company', sir, melodious road horror, 'Five what do you manufacture? 'Four we make diesel pump set sir, Sam board, 'Five horsepower', 'Five angrily but that's made by Samson and blackboard company', 'Four yes sir, it's sold by Samson and blackboard company, we supply them'. 'Five parts', 'Four who know sir, not just parts, we assemble the whole set, we even stick their nameplate for them, we even prepared a specification, literature for them and supply it printed and ready' two, three, six, Sam boards, Sam boards. 'One diesel pump set', two, three, six, Sam boards, Sam boards. 'One 4695 rupees only, the machine starts again', 'Four we get 2500 from them, even that is not paid in cash, they appears only after sets are sold'.

So, we are always short of capital to make new sets: that's why? We need this loan sir. five, the bank interest rate is fourteen percent now. Four we know its fourteen percent sir, that's why we ask for it, we don't get it below 35 percent, from them private money lenders. Whatever assets five asks, four says, 'Assets sir'? 'Well the factory shed is there', five, 'How big'? Four, '1,100 square feet sir', five, 'Your own or rented'? Four, 'There's 20 years leaves my Lancer sir, for the shed is ours'. Five, 'How many workers'? Four, 'We have 28 working on including the unskilled labor' and so on and so forth. Right? So, they need our loan from the bank, because they don't have enough capital, I mean they don't have enough money, you don't get enough money, from the sale of these pump sets. Because, they are not paid in cash, they're only paid in cash after pump sets are sold, to the farmers. So, we always short of capital, which is why they need a loan. But, then the bank is not willing to give them, money without securities of assets. Five asks, 'The banker asks in that case, what will the security what, what will be the security here'? Four says, 'We will repay the six thousand from the twenty thousand, of that the loan we get and get the shed back for you sir, with the remaining fourteen thousand ,we shall meet the new order we've already got, in the meantime we are sure to get the seventeen thousand, a over's for old consignments'. Five, 'Nothing doing'. Four, 'Sir'. Five, 'You can't have a real art security, get the shed back first, if everything else is satisfactory you can get up to ten thousand on it ,they're not able to get a loan, from the bank. Right? and finally, the machine itself seems to break down. Right? So, the five the banker says, if we give you a loan without any security, the bank will have to be closed, what about that? Again, picks up the phone speaks, hello Mukherjee, 1 lakh 30 thousand 12%, to Sampson and Blackboard Company, yes. Puts down the phoned and announces Sam board diesel pump set, power unlimited, crops unlimited, unlimited water the lowest cost, the farmers find is sampled, in the mean time, for comes and puts his hand on the, middle of the machine, it breaks down'. Four also breaks down beside it. Or tune, tune to, one and to get up stony eyes closed, palms touching barely, moving story to a common rhythm. Okay? So, the machine, the machine itself breaks down towards the end, earlier of blood. So, 'Actor number two'. 'Actor number one says, my, 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, hasn't it'. One, 'Yes hollow earth, deep down, deep down, drop by drop his blood has seeped through and gathered in a subterranean reservoir'. Two, 'From deep down the earth comes the water, which turns a small patch of the vast, wasteland into green in April'. One, 'Water from deep down the underworld'. Two, 'Who draws it up, who draws it up'. Five, 'Sam board'. Two, 'Does a summer crop grown blood'. One, 'Drops of blood trickled down the golden years of corn'. Two, 'Golden corn that's what you see, only through a train windows and so on. Then look at the plight of poorer farmers, who don't have enough land, to cultivate crops, they're poor'. One asks, 'Is that your own pump set'. Two, 'Good heavens, no sir, where could I get it, I have only one acre of land sir and that to mod cash the moneylender, what can I get bank loan on? Remember the loans that these farmers get with money lenders, have a much higher rate of interest, of 35 percent. Number, One says, 'Who's the pump sector'. Two, 'God I Victor's, he doesn't have much land aside, so he sells water'. One, 'What's the price hike'. Two, 'This year it's risen to seven rupees per hour, till last year we got it for five, for poor people like us it's crazy to cultivate paddy in the dry season, you can call it beggars craving to ride horses, say I have hardly an acre and it's going to cost me at least, thousand two hundred rupees for water alone, on top of that ,there are fertilizers pesticides. But, then with good luck, if there's not much trouble with pests, with their good wishes sir, it's not going to be too bad. How did Gaadha I will get his own bump, at the number one asks. After two replies, 'Are for him it's easy enough, he has more than 25 acres of land, he had a Ruston pump already, five horsepower and last two he took a loan from the bank and brought the Sun bird'. Three, Six, 'Sunbird, sampled'. Five, 'Nationalized banks in the service of agriculture'. Four, 'A running factory for sale going cheap'. One, 'Those fields there, do they belong to Gaadha Amither'? Two, 'No sir, these laugh though, the land belongs to three different people, Gaadha Amither cultivates those and sharecropping terms'. One, what a rich man like Gaadha Amither or sharecropper'. Two, 'Well sir, it's a different kind of sharecropping, those people have no money, how can they cultivate in the dry season? The land would have lain fallow if left to them, so Gaadha Amither cultivates it on her share basis, gives them three quintals per acre'. One, 'Only three, from an yield that's going to be, at least twenty cleared Quinton's'. Two, 'Yes sir, that's how things are in the villages, if I don't have any luck this year, that's what's going to happen to me next year, what's we done so we have no money. So, you see the importance that, money that, that money has in the rural economy, if they don't have any money, then poor farmers who cannot grow anything in the dry season, have to become sharecroppers for, richer farmers like go diameter and they have to work, on their on the, on the lands of richer farmers, as hired laborers and they get, a very small share of the land that they cultivate.

Because, they are being exploited. Right? So, the, the, the only, they are unable to cultivate anything in the dry season and that is when they are, most susceptible to exploitation. Right? So, the very fabric of the rural economy seems to, depend on getting bank loans and being able to repay a bank loans or very low interest rates. Right? Because, they don't have any assets of securities, against which they can get loans. So, it becomes a vicious cycle of, of death and poverty. On page 82 and 83 again, there is this constant refrain, of the I. right ? So here, it's again there is, this discussion of who Bhoma is, three, four, actor three, four, five, six, ask, who's Bhoma? One Bhoma is a, Bhoma is one, Bhoma is I can't Bhoma, I just can't put you into neat and tidy formula'. Two, 'There is no Bhoma'. Three, Four, Five, Six, 'There is no Bhoma, no Bhoma, no Bhoma'. One, 'There's no Bhoma, there's only I'. Three, 'No, no it's I'. Four, 'No not you it's I, four oh no it's I'. Six, 'Stop, stop, it's I,I,I,I,I. right? Now, there's this constant, injustice contrast between, the individualism. Right? The individualism that comes with privilege, with the economic privilege, economic conference. Right? That you are, you don't are for those ,you're, you know, you're selfish I. Right? But, then you also have Bhoma, which represents many I's Right? The Bhoma all

so simple, a plural symbol of many I's, of many people of many poor farmers and peasants, who have been exploited, who have suffered the plight of poverty and, and being debt ridden. Right? So, in some sense Bhoma is also a symbol of these different, of the rule, of the exploited rural folk and masses. And there's also an 84 satire of, how a lot of the hard-earned money, the taxes that people pay, they are going towards sending students to Kanpur, Delhi, Bombay, Madras, to the prestigious IITs. Right? So, they're being sent to IITs to educate and the entire country, nation seems to be selling its pots and pans, to send them and then abroad to be educated further, the other problem in the play, has to do with the problem of nuclear war. Right? Can the production of nuclear power, have any peaceful and harmless consequences. Right? It seems impossible that, even if nuclear power is being used for peaceful and harmless you know, uses as for example for, you know production of power, then it still seems to harm the environment. So, they harm that, that you create towards the environment, becomes in terms of really, radioactivity. Becomes, another problem in the play. Right? And this always there's also this, nightmare that, haunts humanity in terms of the hero, bombs at work, atomic bombs that were, that were, dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in terms of the generations of deformed children that were produced, from the bomb blast. Right? So, there's this fear of disease and deformation. Right?

So, One actor one says, 'Explosive, explosion of peaceful use, they will be the ashes, atomic waste, how will you calculate the radioactivity'. Three, 'All that's going to be destroyed'. One, 'How by sealing it in a lead box and thrusting it down a salt mine that's what is done. But, how many salt mines are there on this earth? Two, Four, Five, Six, 'This earth'. One 'How many are going to be left'. Three, 'Crap all this is crap'. One, 'Even then, the minimum time it will take for the radioactivity to be destroyed as 400 years, do you know the maximum time it can take?' Three, 'How much? One, 'Twenty four thousand years'. Three, 'Stunts 24'. One, 'Twenty four thousand years, human civilization is only five thousand years old, within this time, man has made arrangements for the next 24 thousand, yes'. Two, Four, Five, Six, 'They rejoice, rejoice, rejoice'. One, '24 thousand years, if you calculate twelve years as an age, then two thousand ages, the atomic advance this world lived for ages, this is obviously a parody or satire of how human beings have apparently taken care, of the next twenty four thousand years, when which is the time it takes to four need, for nuclear waste to be, to disintegrate, to destroy radioactivity. And this constant refrain that, then the play in terms of you know, farmers who need water, can you give me a drop of water is being juxtaposed, to the amount that the countries, seems to spend on its technology, in nuclear power. Right? And there's a stark contrast and irony between the two that the country's willing to spend, millions of rupees on bridge is, on her flyovers, on nuclear power. But, is not willing to make its priorities clear, by spending money, even the smallest amount on agriculture and on the lives of the rule, of masses. Right? So, there's no money for to provide them or there's no, there no loans to be given, interest-free loans to be given to farmers, for them to be able to, acquire diesel problems that will give them access to water, from the ground during the dry season. Right? So, there's something as basic as, this is not being taken care of and then, they're actually the nation seems, to be more interested in producing, radioactive nuclear power, which has produced deformed generations of children. And then, Bhoma here are 94 who Bhoma is becomes clear'. When doctor number one says, Bhoma as the jungle, Bhoma is the cornfield, Bhoma is the village, three quarters of India's population live in villages, millions and millions of Bhoma's, in the cities we live on the blood of Bhoma's. So here, it's become very clear that Bhoma represents the blood, the exploited rural bosses. And of course, the play ends with the, with the, the actual Bhoma that Bala Sarkar heard about, the Bhoma from the Sunderban. And again, the play ends on this note of, how the Sunderban, a natural landscape of mangroves is, being destroyed in the human desire to expand, further expand, the cultivation of their lands, the cultivable land. Right?

So, many forests are being destroyed, animals like the Tigers and the snakes and crocodiles are being true and being destroyed, the habitat is being ruined and there are people who live in Sunderban, who are also being trapped between, the expansionism of, urban modality of, the urban modern world of, urban modernism of technology and on the one hand and on the other hand, they're also the victims of tigers and crocodiles. So, you're talking about a section of people who live, in indigenous communities, who live in the Sunderban and who are constantly being displaced and exploited, by human civilization but also by the animals that they, cohabit with act'. Act number one says, 'No not me longer, it's not a forest now, the forest now is cleared'. Jungle hustle, two, three, four, six, 'Hustle, what do you mean'? One, 'The around' s the Mundas , the Santhous, the Abboritionals, the jungle hustle, the forests cleared, the forest cleared to make way for Harbath, for cultivation'. Three, four, five, three, two, three, four, six, asks, 'Harbath, what's that? So, that is the cultivation the, the, the, the chopping of trees, the deforestation of the land and the clearing of the land, for cultivation'. 'Bhoma whose Bhoma's, Bhoma's hungry, Bhoma wants rice sir, asked them, to make it for him. Who was Bhoma? Bhoma who's that, Bhoma, Bhoma of the Sunderbans, who was Bhoma? Bhoma who's that, when Bhoma was 16, he came to clear the forest, father, mother and two kid brothers, the jungle and Sunderbans, let the rice cook sir, Bhoma of interest, a jungle Hassan, the Sunderbans the principal speaker today, is Dr. sir Angus under Sunderbans chief planning advisors, Sunderban Planning Commission, when boom was 20, the tree that he could fell alone in three hours, two men couldn't work a whole day through. Right?

So, Bhoma is that, also that, man from the Sunderbans , who is again one of those many endangered, indigenous populations, whose habitat is being threatened by, by urban society. Now, the Bhoma is also someone who has left us Sunderban in search of education, in search of jobs, has come back to Sunderbans and has also again responsible for the clearing of the forest, for the purposes of cultivation. So, Bhoma represents many things, it also represents the transitions that, population, certain populations make from their indigenous habitats to cities, there are migrations that happen, the displacements that happen, the exploitation of these displaced populations, the aspirations of young men and women, who come from these populations, from these regions of the world, to two cities in search of employment and education. So, there's again this interesting contrast between, the rises of, the rate of interest the unfair distribution of investments, the disaster of inflation. Right? Hunger poverty and that's also being contrasted to Bhoma. Bhoma's mother died of snake by a snake bite, his father was dragged away by a crocodile before his very eyes, the younger, younger brother couldn't stand the tamarin and salt water mixture and died of diarrhea. Bhoma blind in the right eye, there's a gaping hole, where his right cheek was, the Tigers also dead, killed by Bhoma axe and his brothers. The brother next to Bhoma still living, he lives in the aboriginal neighborhood of the village of Ranga Badhiya he's landless, an agricultural laborer, he gets work early 90 days, a year at 3 rupees a reality a day. So, Bhoma represents these different realities, realities of a family that has been, has been killed by snakes or by crocodiles. Bhoma who is, who, who was once, who survived a tiger attack. Right? Bhoma whose brother, you know, lives in the neighborhood, in the neighborhood. But, he is a landless agricultural laborer, who and I laborer, who only gets work 90 days a year. So, the problems of seasonal employment of farmers. Right? So, you have all these problems that Bhoma represents and embodies.

So, the Sunderban in some sense becomes that, very precarious place that is threatened both by, urban expansionism and by didn't act the forces of nature. Right? So, the land is gone, the crops are gone, the salt water, remember it's all salt water, so you can't cultivate too much, when you have salt, what when

you have the, the water of the Bay, of Bengal moving into the river and spreading into these different islands, you have salt water, the land is gone, the crops are gone, homes are gone'. Three says, 'Take off my land was eaten away by the bitter River, three years ago'. Four, 'But we have to pay revenue still on that piece of land'. Two, 'And we will have to go on, paying to the next government surveyor'. Three, 'My land was eaten away by the bidhya vidhav so look at the plight of these indigenous communities, who are you know, threatened by natural calamities, by the shifting coast the river and by the problems of brackish saltwater, on which they can't cultivate anything and on the other hand they, have forced to repay the loans at they owe the government. Right? So, they have all these problems. Right? So, plate does a very sensitive job of, of exposing the social realities, of endangered displaced to communities like, then there are always, on the verge of bankruptcy of debt, of death. Right? Both the natural forces and diseases. Actor one asks, 'No wait, we can't really just tell now, whether man's blood is cold or warm, not yet perhaps, perhaps, no it's again getting confused, becoming a tangle, gone mess, who was Bhoma? An Aboriginal and barbarian woodcutter, why should I bother with, why should we go to him and'. Five, Bhoma wants to eat, so eat rice'. One, 'How can you eat Bhoma? If you eat rice, we won't get our delicious Briyani's, a queer picture for one rupee, a picture for 10 rupees, pictures with 10,20, hundred rupees. We have brought up your blood, with these pictures Bhoma', we have brought up the rice and taken it away from the mouth, no, no, wait a minute, again everything is becoming confused.

Then actor one, 'This earth belongs to everybody, all of us, doesn't it Bhoma, you wielded your axe, kill Tigers got mauled by the tiger. So, that you could dig some rice, out in the major leader fist of this earth, didn't you Bhoma this earth, this earth, yes, yes, this earth. This earth belongs to all of us, doesn't it Bhoma if, if we all of us, could work our hardest, to make everything we need and then, all of us shared all be produced, then that clear picture that lets us, buy up your blood to drink, the picture that you don't have and therefore can't get your rice, if we could destroy for that, forever that queer obscure ob, scene picture. I can't explain it Bhoma, I can only understand, if you don't rise up with your axe and the forest of poisonous trees will never cleared. My Harbath our Harbath, the Harbath in a splendor of gold and green, the Harbath of our dreams, Bhoma, Bhoma, Bhoma. Right? So here, Harbath also acquires the connotation of, of being clear. What are you clearing? You're clearing not just the land, you're also clearing the very notion, of private property. Right? Of yes, I mean it's exactly that, that if the earth belong to all of us, if we are shared all our resources, if we shared all that we produced and there would not be, there would be no room for, for competition. Right? For rivalry, for individualism, there will be no room for hierarchies. Right? So, the play actually seems to end, on a very socialist and communist note. Right? One says, 'Hungry, hungry, Bhoma lies almost lifeless hunger, Bhoma the beggar, his axis rusty, all around there grows a jungle of poisonous weeds and parasites, poison missus men of poison in the air, there's the taste of Bhoma blood on the tongue. We drink Bhoma blood and laugh and play, there's blood dripping down the sides of our mouths, dripping, dripping, the poisonous plants are growing, growing, my blood, man's blood becomes cold, cold, cold. But, Bhoma is there, I know Bhoma is there, I know that's why I have dreams'. Dreams Bhoma has risen, Bhoma has risen, he has taken up his dusty, axe he's grinding it's sharpening it, there are forests all around him, there's the forest and Bhoma eyes, Bhoma's grip becomes stronger, the Vice the grips presses hard on the handle of the axe, the tone I lights up to the fire that killed the tiger, Bhoma 's rising ,we are rising the forest, the forest, the forest of poisonous tree, of poison trees, pick up your axe Bhoma, it's too heavy, I can't pick it up, you pick it Bhoma, come on hit it, heave-ho. Right? So, the a play actually ends, on these wood cutters, who are chopping down, these poisonous trees that have taken on, the environment, the habitats of the Sunderban. But, these poisonous trees, aren't you know, literally poisonous trees, they're also symbolic of, the danger that, that urban

societies, that urban modernism. But, the state poses in the forest, in the incursion, incursions it makes into, these other marginalized habitats, these, these are eco systems that are fragile. And that have been, rendered fragile and endangered by the activities of, the state and an urban cities. Right? So, in some sense the play exposes, the realities of, the inequalities structural, inequalities between, the city and, and the non city spaces. Right? And the moment Bhoma becomes, a symbol of just that, of exploitation, of poverty it also becomes a symbol of hope that perhaps, if we could all be Bhoma's, then we would actually be able to, we would realize that, the need to share resources, to, to, to be able to have an equitable, distribution of resources that we can all, you know in some sense, the cohabit live together, in with a greater sense of peace and, and in harmony. Right? So, that was actually one circus play called, 'Bhoma'. Thank you.