

BADAL SIRCAR'S THERE NO END; EXPLORATION OF ANONYMOUS SELF

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Abstract

Badal Sircar is one of the independent Bengal's most poignant playwrights. Badal Sircar, Girish Karnad, Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, notable writers, foundation to Indian English drama with their preponderance of diction and themes. They undertook to investigate the social problems and lives of the people of India. Sircar's "There's No End" is like "Evam Indrajit". The protagonist of the play Sumanta, a Bengali young intellectual like Indrajit, faces the same problem. Sumanta is more progressive than Indrajit. He loves Manika when he is a student but doesn't marry her. In the end of the play that trial scene finally proves that every human being is a culprit. All human beings have brought about this crisis and all of them suffer one way or another. Badal Sircar relates the problems of middle people. There is no end is one of the most significant plays in Indian English Literature.

Keywords: - self-trial-middle class-suffering.

Introduction

Sypher uses the term to indicate that residue of life to which Beckett's heroes cling. According to Sypher, the existence of a Beckett hero is possible not actual. He is always the point of returning to nothing. To this minimal existence, things happen only dimly. "By a logic of contradiction", things happen only dimly. "By a logic of contradiction", says, Sypher." He (the hero) exists only as evidence of his own insignificance, and his experience is a way of raising doubts about the reality of his being¹.

The Beckett hero is only acted upon; he can not act or make a choice. For he is fixed in a condition. This condition is however not inert. The characters are affected by some disorder that depresses them. And this depression is low-pitched even as its effect is chronic. At the same time, the very stupidity of these sub-human creatures acts as a resistance to this depression and ensures their survival. In other words, this minimal existence is also comforting. But there are moments when its inadequacies are evident, for there are compulsions that the hero can't be rid of. These interfere with his passive existence. The hero feels the need to speak. But he is not even certain if the voice is his.

In Sypher's words: "There is a focus of attention, but it is unassigned"². The rest is silence. Thus the hero's selfhood has vanished though the human being remains. The

nothingness of his existence strangely keeps its tinge of pain. He has dim recollection of the intimations that are his, though they cannot give him a sense of selfhood.

I use the term “anonymous” in the Indian context in a slightly different sense to indicate the passive lifelessness characteristic of ordinary existence. This existence is a deception, for there is no reason to exist. The people are not really people with a reality of their own; rather they are simply accidental and are more reactions to the conditions they meet. They cannot break out of the cocoon of readymade notions which substitute for any real feeling. This absolutely innocent indulgence in everyday activities is actually the work kind of depravity which acts as its own resistance and leaves the self undisturbed very often; the possibility of emerging from this static existence takes the form of an introspective questioning about the self that justifies its own existence. The existence of the other selves only serves to strengthen this reality of nonexistence. All of Sircar’s heroes are anonymous in this sense. In fact, most of Sircar’s plays are dominated by verbal arguments³ and explicit developments of the theme through which Sircar attempts to state certain ideas of the self. However, this thematic node is opposed by the form which releases a meaning that indicates the reality of nonbeing.

Sheshnei,⁴ for instance, describes Sumant’s search for the self. Sircar’s *Sheshnei* is an apology for the self in the orthodox sense. Beginning in a Kafkaesque trial, the play puts Sumanta in a trial stand and forces him into self analysis. Sumanta defends himself against his accusers, who he is sure have merely looked on him as their own reflections, and deprived him of any identity of his own. Sircar highlight the authenticity of Sircar’s search by creating a dream like setting, indicated on stage by the dim lighting, with the specific purpose of unraveling the “unseen drama” of the self in the subconscious. However, the clear cut logic so uncharacteristic of the dream with which Sumanta actually maintains his identity, would seem only to prove the opposite. The wholly verbal defence by which Sumanta. Attempts to mould the reality of his existence, as he criticizes his accusers, appears as pointless as the people who seem to be threatening it. For the self does not emerge through this rationalization and explanation of one’s deeds. The words fall empty, as empty as the person delivering them. Both Sumanta and his accusers are victims of the same mania; the mania of what madame saurette calls a systematic stultification⁵. They expect no surprises, but ready-made ideas which are familiar to projections of the known world. Sumanta himself can define his self only in negation, as an absence. His presence does not really emerge. He realizes that the “I” has no basis for existence. It has become an empty hulk, static and dead in the presence of others, as also in his own past and his art. The “I” of the past which he is familiar with, and which the others have dared to presume has no living reality.

The total disregard for the court etiquette which Sircar uses as a theatrical device initiates the ruin of these assumptions and posts the truth of the role. The chaos that is wrought into the court reveals a similar chaos in identity. “Who is the witness, the jury, the judge, everything is mixed up”⁶ Sumanta has no “I”, but the roles he assumes as the situation demands. The others in this sense are indispensable for the existence of the self. For one imposes these roles on the other, as each one lives on a different level of experience. Sumanta becomes the victim or judge only by accident, not by conscious will. For it is only a conscious choice that paves the way for the making of the self. Not capable of doing this, Sumanta can only justify his nameless existence and give himself up to the trial that will never end.

A renowned critic Satyadev Dubey’s comments on an elite class of India in general and those of Bengal in particular, points out : The intellectually alive urban middle class regards itself as the back bone of the country. Their so called middle class values have been glorified

and yet their genuine and deeper values have always been attached by fashionable Marxist dogmas. The middle classes have been made to feel guilty for opting for stability, aspiring for culture and believing in a national identity. In Bengal, the contradiction was resolved at a certain level with the middle classes alienating themselves with the left forces.

Sircar's *There's No End* resembles his *Evam Indrajit*. The protagonist of the play. Sumanta, a Bengali intellectual like Indrajit, faces the same problem. The trial motif is repeated in *There's No End*. Sumanta is more progressive than Indrajit. The poet Sumanta faces a Kafkaesque trial, in a court where there is no judge and before a prosecutor who swoops upon even the most innocuous evidence to condemn him one by one, his mother, his professor, the girl who could have been his wife, his comrade in the political party – all the acquaintances are brought in as witnesses. Their common complaint against him is that he has let them down. His beloved mother alleges that he no longer cares about her. He loves Manika when he is a student in the school days. But he does not marry her. His old girls friend feels that he had deceived her. Then he discontinues his Studies and plunges into the struggle organized by communist party. He participates in the railway strike of 1949. His attempt becomes futile at that moment. He becomes disillusioned and leaves the communist party. The communist friend thinks that, by leaving the party, Sumanta has left him friend less. After leaving the party, he resumes his studies and completes M.Sc. The professor complains that he has deprived the sciences of his important contributions by quitting research.

He joins as a research assistant in S.K. industries and becomes a junior executive on promotion. He dislikes the duties of the post and loses a job by deliberately committing a mistake. His one time employer accuses Sumanta of denying him the right to exploit his brilliance for his firm.

He and Sumati become friends. Presently, he is writer of good reputation one day, he is arrested and taken to court. His mother, his lover, his leader of the party, his Professor and his employer accuse him of betraying them. Five more witnesses find fault with his not writing about the poor people, workers and the victims of communal riots and world wars. Sumanta's disillusionment with the communist movement reflects that of Sircar himself though he favours the leftist "The discovery that some respected leaders were liars and cheats who duped their followers led to disillusionment"⁷.

Sumanta has an explanation for every action of him. His character coincides with a lawyer's argument. He refused to remain imprisoned by his mother's possessiveness. He left the girl because of his political obligations. He left the party as he questioned the policies of the leadership and could not follow them through blind faith. Thus he maintains that he cannot be made responsible for the wounds that might have been inflicted on his relations and acquaintances because of his assertion of independence.

But then the court is invaded by a crowd of shadows. The dead and the living, characters from the "rest of history" who are victims of social injustice, war and famine while the conflict between the expectations of Sumanta's relations and friends on the one hand and Sumanta's reluctance to conform to their desires on the other has been magnificently brought out in the trial scene, its linking with the question of social responsibility remains a bit woolly. What is Sumanta expected to do? He is asked either to forget or accept the victims. Nor is it clear how he is responsible for their misery. If the playwright had in mind the belief that by being born in the affluent class, Sumanta is automatically an accomplice in the exploitation of the poor, it does not come out really.

The trial finally proves that every human being is a culprit. All human beings have brought about the crisis and all of them suffer in one way or another. Therefore, they all can resolve it collectively.

Sumanta : There is no accused. I am the accused you. You all of you are accused – we are all the accused.

The man : We are all the accused.

The Jury (together) we are all the accused.⁸

The play thus shows that we can overcome alienation only through unification characterized by collective awareness and endeavour.

Drama by its very nature is committed to human values. In the context of literature, commitment implies a clear involvement in a specific problem, arising out of a deep consciousness of the issues concerned. Social commitment comprises all the aspects of involvement and has a wider relevance and connotation.

Badal Sircar was committed to the individual and the society, considering even the deep seated psychological implication of social conflict in an individual's life.

Ultimately, Badal Sircar's creation was meant for poor and middle class people's heart throb. Through his plays he wants to create flawless society. His deed is superb. We can compare his play is discord. Most of his heroes are victims of the society.

Reference

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