PREFACE

Literary art attains cosmic value when it reflects human experience and sensibility faithfully corresponding to the universal codes. By virtue of its live performance and potential to facilitate direct communication between the artist and the audience, drama emerges as a potential literary mode. It is the oldest, and the most appealing form of literature. It has also been acknowledged as an instrument of entertainment and enlightenment for ages. Drama is a representational art, a visible and audible narrative which presents characters in a fictional universe. Drama has direct connection with human life. The dramatist attempts to reach the audience through performers and paraphernalia. India has a prolonged, proud and splendid past of dramatic art. Perhaps, no country can withstand comparison with India in this matter except Greece. The development of Indian drama had been staggering for over nearly two centuries. It doesn’t mean that there were no good writers.

Broadly known as the innovator of contemporary Indian theatre, Badal Sircar deals with the existential attitude of modern life through his dramatic works. Sircar employs theatre as a mode of social change and expresses his views and ideas pertaining to socio-economic issues.
For him the best theatrical art is that which reaches out to people. He evolved a new theatrical idiom by making it responsive to the needs of the people. He has a vast knowledge and experience of theatre which he gained from his frequent visits to various countries and his interaction with the theatre luminaries. Though he started his dramatic career with light-hearted romantic comedies, very soon he turned to serious plays. Sircar formed his own theatre group, Satabdi in 1967.

With his unique concept of Third Theatre, Sircar revolutionized theatre in all its forms and experimented with various innovations. His theatre did not aim at bringing about the change in the perception of the world but it strived to change the world to people’s perception. He added a new dimension to the concept of street theatre by exploring its potentialities to function as popular art within the paradigm of social relations. He devoted his whole life and work with a sense of commitment in exploring the exploitation, oppression, and alienation of the common man, peasant, the working class, and the urban middle class.

Chapter one sketches the origin of Indian drama. It also deals with the origin of Bengali drama and gives a brief account of the growth and development of Badal Sircar’s Third Theatre. Chapter two
is about *Evam Indrajit* which is a crystallized projection of all the prevalent attitudes, vague feelings, and undefined frustrations gnawing at the hearts of the educated urban middle class. It is a thought provoking play questioning the meaning of one’s existence. It is also marked as a watershed in the theatrical history of India as it shook off the prevalent conventions of the naturalistic drama.

Chapter three is about *Procession* which deals with the theme of search for a real home. The playwright imagines an ideal world in which man can live without exploiting others. Chapter four is on *Bhoma*, a dramatization of the life of a browbeaten peasant, Bhoma in Indian rural society through a series of scenes in which he is exploited.

Chapter five is Sircar’s criticism on the conceptual civil society in his play, *Scandal in Fairyland*. Chapter six is on *Indian History Made Easy* which is significant in counterfeiting unique relationship between form and content. It deals with the mechanism of colonial exploitation.

Chapter seven is about *Beyond the Land of Hattamala* which is a witty and tongue-in-cheek comedy written by Sircar to communicate relevant message to the contemporary society. Chapter eight discusses
Stale News with the theme of revolt that centres round a young man who is bombarded with shattering information full of contradictions.

Chapter nine deals with Life of Bagala which tells the story of a man who through supernatural intervention finds in himself an ordinary man and stands against injustice. Chapter ten is a conclusion which sums up the deliberations of the study and evaluates Badal Sircar as a significant dramatist.

I express my gratitude to my guide, Prof. P. Obula Reddy, for giving me an opportunity to work under his supervision. Like a father he loved me and like a teacher he guided me.

I extend my gratitude to Prof. V. V. N. Rajendra Prasad for cheering me with his timely words of encouragement and valuable support in completing my research work.

I thank the University Grants Commission (UGC), New Delhi for the financial support given for the Major Research Project on Indian Drama.

I am very grateful to my beloved parents for their keen support and prayers for me. I also thank my sister, Shaik Hussaina Begum, and
my brother, Shaik Shafi for their constant support during the period of my research.

I extend my gratitude to Mrs. P. Rajeswari for her warm and homely concern towards me during the period of my research.

I am greatly indebted to M. S. Anjanaiah who helped me in collecting necessary material for my research and K. Santosh Kumar for his help in printing of the thesis.


HUSSAINVALI SHAIK