

ELEMENTS OF PASTICHE, MONTAGE AND COLLAGE IN BADAL SIRCAR'S PLAYS**Neha Makin^{1*}, Prof Parul Mishra²**^{1*}Research Scholar, Amity School of Languages, Amity University Rajasthan, India,²Professor, Amity School of Languages, Amity University Rajasthan, India,***Corresponding Author: Neha Makin*****Research Scholar, Amity School of Languages, Amity University Rajasthan, India****Abstract**

Badal Sircar is a playwright of the postmodern century. A significant section of his audience comes from the urban middle class of society. Nonetheless, he made unforgettable interventions with the rural poor people. His was a theatre that relentlessly and self consciously chose to operate as a Paulo Freirean kind of pedagogy for the oppressed. Sircar has internalized a dictum that to wash one's hand off the conflict between the powerful and the powerless meant not neutrality but a tacit siding with the powerful. Sircar's search was never for something as abstract as coherence. He did not believe in specific places, accessories for his plays. Whatever existed he would make it possible to use in the performance of his plays. He freely jumped from idea to idea, concern to concern. He hated the overrated virtues of structure and form. He refused the importance of sets, props, costumes lights, etc. To an extent he even questioned the need to learn acting techniques. Therefore, he believed in whatever is available should be used to perform on his stage and even in his writings. The postmodern call this technique pastiche, montage, and collages. In simple language of using cut copy paste method and creating something out of which is already standing. Badal Sircar in his plays have used this postmodern technique not because his imagination lacked but because he thought it useless to waste time in having something which is already there and can be used. Furthermore, this paper is investigation of the aesthetics of collage/montage with the background of its significance in artistic representation during the emergence of the unconventional in the early twentieth century, focusing on the intersection of the formal invention of collage/montage with photography and artistic production that took place in the twenties and thirties within the origins of the technique of montage. The approach of this text is made transversely, considering Badal Sircar's plays who treated the practices of collage/montage indirectly or frontally. The use and aesthetic tactics of collage/montage in postmodernity are reflected in his different extensions and influences. Certainly, this occur mainly in thinkers and philosophers of postmodern times and as a final extension of the term of montage, the analysis refers to its spatialization in the production space of the city in relation to the aesthetic-artistic world of contemporary art.

Keywords: Pastiche, Montage, Collage, Postmodern, Theatre.**Concept of Pastiche, Montage and Collage:**

FREDRIC JAMESON's concept of "pastiche" is usefully contrasted to Linda Hutcheon's understanding of postmodern parody. Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique, idiosyncratic style, the wearing of a linguistic mask, speech in a dead language. But it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without any parody's



ulterior motives, amputated of the satiric impulse, devoid of laughter" (Postmodernism 17). In such a world of pastiche, we lose our connection to history, which gets turned into a series of styles and superseded genres, or simulacra: "The new spatial logic of the simulacrum can now be expected to have a momentous effect on what used to be historical time" (Postmodernism 18). In such a situation, "the past as 'referent' finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts" (Postmodernism 18). We can no longer understand the past except as a repository of genres, styles, and codes ready for commodification. Aesthetic postmodernism has revived a genre of artistic expression that through the centuries was regarded as both indefinable and tarnished. This refers to the Pastiche technique of postmodern time. Various definitions are available for giving it a new concept. It can be seen in postmodern architecture, design, fashion, literature, sculpture etc. Certainly aesthetic postmodernism is nothing to be regarded as an amalgamated homily formation. By pointing to Pastiche styles as a conspicuous presence in current artistic practices, we may, however, regard this postmodern style as constituting one of the few markers of pastiche postmodernism shared by various interpretive communities that participate in making of cultural consciousness. Although Pastiche has been a buzz word for most of the contemporary arts nothing much has been written about it. Most of the users are vaguely aware of the actual meaning and usage of the word and form. To situate the current use of the genre mineur in artistic production, it becomes important to briefly trace the history of changing valorization. The term "Pastiche first occurs at the end of the seventeenth century in French Beaux Arts discourse, a borrowing from the Italian 'Pasticcio'. Literally, "pasticcio" denotes a plate of various ingredients—a hodge-podge of meat, vegetables, eggs, and a host of other variable additions. Pastiche (pronounced pass-TEESH) is an innovative work that copies another author or genre. It's a manner of shelling out respect, or honor, to significant compositions of the past. Pastiche is different from parody in the sense that pastiche isn't making fun of the works it imitates – however, the tone of pastiche is often humorous.

Postmodern Technique:

Upon the historical use of the technique of montage it is started from Bertold Brecht to Le Corbusier, Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov, Jan Tischoff, etc., spanning through literature, theatre, typography, cinema, photography, etc. outlined firstly, the extension of the term and the strategy of montage/collage in the recovery of its functionalities during the 60's and 70's and its influences in theories of postmodern art and culture, and in so doing recomposing the way this strategy is part of the aesthetic and philosophical thoughts of postmodernism. And secondly the transposition of these theories to the spatial and urban field finds in the city a place to develop in artistic contemporaneity. A.C. Danto quotes, "The extension of the term collage to other artistic fields and areas of knowledge has been a topical singularity and has fascinated many theorists, from music, cinema, theatre, poetry, architecture, philosophy, etc. This contemporary debate has mainly concentrated on the tracks of the mission of modernity in the present era" (35). Thus, it is also the centre of argument in the advent of postmodernism and the effects produced there. However, the scope of the various fields in which the collage/montage is inserted in one way or another, and understood in its broadest sense, is so vast that it is necessary to reduce the comments about its impact on the artists and their subjects covered in this text. There is a general perception that the term postmodernism has come to mean a wide range of cultural, political and social attitudes in which, in the broadest sense, it would represent a new perceptive mode encouraged by an era of instant communication.

Montage: The Word

Montage derives from the French verb *monter*, which translates as “to assemble.” With the advent of film technology, montage became the term in French to denote the process of film editing. In aesthetics, montage has a more conceptual meaning. In the context of film, it refers to the technique of combining disparate images or elements to form a composite work. Montage is related to the practice of collage; however, it differs from collage most fundamentally in the greater emphasis it places on juxtaposition—a technique often used to make a rhetorical point. The theory of montage blossomed during the 1920s when it became a charged aesthetic concept for the Soviet avant-garde. As a literary device practiced in avant-garde movements such as Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism, montage refers to the conjoining of heterogeneous discourses in a given text. Within the frame of the literary artwork, montage provokes unmediated clashes between genres and styles, often featuring non-narrative fragments from various sources such as newspaper clippings, slogans (whether commercial, political, or religious), or popular songs. Literary montage, moreover, favors disembodied discourses linked to the impact of modernity: the languages on which it draws are those of bureaucratization, commercialization, and serialization, among others. Contrasted with more character driven narrative strands, these discursive montage elements question the agency of the modern subject. Montage literature tends to playfully dissect language itself, breaking down traditional syntax and semantics in the process. It favors ambiguity, irony, and paradox over narrative unity or totality. Montages are the visual equivalent of the idea that a whole can be greater than the sum of its parts. It’s also a useful tool every screenwriter should have in their writing arsenal. Audiences understand and love them, they help compress narrative and save valuable page space, can be used in infinite ways in any genre imaginable, and — arguably the best part — if you’re using them for the right reasons, they’re pretty damn effective. There are montages for good times and sad times, failures and successes. There are falling-in-love montages, costume-test montages, boredom montages, planning montages and training montages, death montages and sex montages, terrible interview montages, and writer’s block montages. Audiences know and understand what montages do because we see them so often.

When we watch something, we go in with the understanding that it has been edited and implicitly understand that there will be invisible cuts between shots and scenes. Indeterminate amounts of time often go by in those minuscule cuts, which is something we accept as an element of filmmaking. So unless it is a real-time narrative, it will probably be found in need of simplifying something in the story. That’s where the montage comes in.

Use of Pastiche, Montage and Collage in Sircar’s Plays:

It was a tradition of Badal Sircar not to focus on getting accessories, plot, or structure. He believed in using what existed. Almost all his 50 plays have illustrations of the use of cut copy paste theme. In *Evam* Indrajit Sircar successfully tried to give the banality of everyday life a dramatic garb. The exploration of the theatrical quality of everyday life, the assigning of different roles to the same character were new experiences for the Indian theatre which often dealt with traditional characterization. The play left the audience disturbed and spell-bound with its central issue: that the problem in the contemporary life is not to live or to die but to endure. That is why the play has ended with a message that to be among the living is to be living. Writing about Badal Sircar’s *Evam* Indrajit is like going on a sentimental journey; a nostalgic foray into the recent past of the Indian theatre; an encounter with the bitter sweet memories of a struggling sensibility trying to strike roots in a barren land; because, after all,

it is only in relation to Indian theatre history that Evam Indrajit really makes its presence felt. (Dubey 1). For Satyadev Dubey, Evam Indrajit is about the residue of the middle class, “ Who have failed to adjust, align and ceased to aspire and also those who are enmeshed in the day to-day struggle for survival.”(Dubey 2). The protagonist believes firmly that human life starts and ends in nothingness. So, he is confused with the questions: “Why should one carry on? What is there beyond the path?” The answer to these questions is given by the Writer who performs the role similar to that of a commentator. Walk on. Be on the road! We are the cursed spirits of Sisyphus. We have to push the rock to the top— even if it just rolls down.” (59) However, the more the Writer ties him (Indrajit) up in a plot with the chains of Acts, the more he escapes saying—“it isn’t real.” According to K. Venkata Reddy, “The play is a theatrically effective and crystallized projection of the prevalent attitudes, vague feelings and undefined frustrations, growing at the hearts of the educated urban middle class.” (Reddy 58-59) Perhaps no other theatre personality has had such a deep and pervasive influence on theatre practice and theory in post-independence India as Badal Sircar. As a writer of proscenium plays in the 1960s, all of which have been widely produced by leading directors in several Indian languages; as the pioneer of non-proscenium political theatre in the 1970s; as the mentor of countless directors and theatre activists who have carried his ideas to far corners of the country, his work is an integral part of contemporary Indian theatre history. In *Procession*, Sircar recreates the city of Calcutta with its slogans and demonstrations and rallies, too often losing their human focus. In *Bhoma*, a Sundarban pioneer, one of those who cleared the forests and now starves to death, confronts a city demanding ever more luxuries and comforts at the cost of the majority that continues to be exploited in rural India. In *Stale News*, the same ironic design recreates as a model for protest and resistance a tribal revolt in the nineteenth century in eastern India. Written for the environmental theatre, all the plays have been staged widely in the widest possible range of situations and environments, not only by Sircar’s own group, Satabdi, but other groups as well.

The plays mentioned so far, both under the PreIndependence and the Post-Independence phase were originally written in English. Among the plays translated into English, there are a few, which were first written in the regional languages and subsequently translated into English by the authors themselves. Though, strictly speaking, these works cannot be called fully English plays, they can be mentioned under the topic, in view of the fact, that at least some of them are transcreations and not simply translations. Rabindranath Tagore, Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar, and Girish Karnad have remained the most representative of the Indian English drama not only in Bengali, Hindi, Marathi and Kannada respectively but also on the pan Indian level.

Montage helps in portraying bigger shorts in quick span by using images and symbols. This does not mean that the plays of Badal Sircar lacked uniqueness. The repeated settings and background of the place gave a feel of familiarity. Above all, the objective of Sirar was to convey the message and not to impress the audience by settings and accessories, it can be acting as well. He did not focus on trained actors. Acting for him was a passion, taste, hobby. He expected same with his actors. He said that objective of the play is to impart a social message and not to show the setting and background. Montages are handy and effective ways writers can condense information, convey some kind of change or development in the story, or give the audience crucial information without sacrificing valuable page space.

Conclusion:

The driving force behind the “third theatre” (alternate theatre or street theatre performed in villages as opposed to auditoriums), Badal Sircar (15 July 1925 – 13 May 2011), popularly known as a ‘barefoot playwright’ for Bengali theatre was a legend. Through the seventies along with Girish Karnad(Kannada), Vijay Tendulkar(Marathi) and Mohan Rakesh (Hindi) Badal Sircar spearheaded the Indian playwriting movement providing with it some great masterpieces. “The theatre of Badal Sircar”, was described by Rustom Bharucha “as the most rigorously non -commercial political theatre in India”. (Raustom Bharucha: 1993:127). He uses contemporary situations to project the existential attitude of modern life. Popularly known as a ‘barefoot playwright’, he stands in the forefront of a new theatrical movement in India. He has created a genuine people’s theatre known as Third Theatre, supported and created by the people and not merely performed by the people. Badal Sircar emphasized on performance and setup and settings. He believed in live performances which gives substance to the message hidden in the play. Therefore, he used, already existing setups, background, accessories which in literary terms are called use of Montage , Pastiche. He followed the cut copy paste method without any hesitation.

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