Sitting in Badal’s Circle: Artist and pedagogue, the theatre of Badal Sircar

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Abstract:
The work of Indian theatre practitioner Badal Sircar represents a socially committed model of physical theatre which has significance for drama educators. His work in Third Theatre bears many relations to Educational Drama practice, yet there is still more to be learned from his example. In the context of the separation which exists in British culture between educational and professional arts, Sircar proposes an important alternative model for the artist in education in which educational and professional concerns connect.

Introduction:
It is notable that the role of the artist in Initial Teacher Education has not been a priority area within the developments in Arts Education in England. Even during the four years of the Arts in Schools Project (1985-9) a time of widespread activity and interest in the development of arts education, no initiatives were undertaken to monitor the representation or to initiate the role of the artist in ITE. And yet since Bourdieu (1971), it is now commonly accepted that schools have a crucial role to play in forming culturally held values. ITE by implication has an even more onerous role in representing social role models. The recent work of Paul Willis, following Williams (1961), identifies the conception of artist perpetuated in the West as that of the "special creative individual artist" (Willis 1990). Through such a selective representation, a common view emerges of the professional arts as elitist and largely irrelevant to the lives and needs of the people. If such a portrayal forms the 'cultural consensus' (Bourdieu) of student teachers, ITE has an important role to play in initiating a critical view of the artist and in proposing alternative models. It is in this context that the work of Indian theatre practitioner Badal Sircar proposes some important principles for drama teacher educators.

Badal Sircar: setting the scene

Badal Sircar spent a week at Warwick University in November 1992, working with student teachers. He led a series of half-day workshops for undergraduate and postgraduate student groups. This account draws upon interviews, work with him and
observation. It describes the ways of working and the principles underpinning Badal's practice.

Badal Sircar has been one of India's leading theatre practitioners for thirty years. He has earned a reputation as the father of the 'Third Theatre' in India. By 'Third Theatre', Badal means neither the imported colonial western theatre of the cities nor the traditional folk theatre of the villages, both of which he sees as oppressive. In recent western traditions, Third Theatre has conventionally meant neither mainstream nor the avant-garde (see Watson 1993 - on Barba). The characteristic that is shared by the Third Theatre of the west and Badal Sircar is an emphasis on the social value of theatre, particularly in terms of community making and building. Badal does not accept that Third Theatre is his unique creation:

> Many people ask me, ‘So you are the creator of the Third Theatre in India?’ All wrong. Third theatre is the need of the country of India in times like ours.

The evidence he says is that there are other groups, responding to the same set of circumstances, the same needs in Indian society, who have also rejected existing models for theatre and evolved alternative Third Theatre forms, socially committed theatre forms, unaware of the existence of other similar practice. Nonetheless Badal's work with his group *Satabdi* remains the most well-known and perhaps the inspiration for Third Theatre work in India. Badal's international reputation has been developed by his own initiative to find other theatre practitioners working in similar ways. He has learnt from practitioners such as Augusto Boal, Jerzy Grotowski, Richard Schechner and Eugenio Barba. In educational drama, we are familiar with the impact of socially committed theatre on the evolution of our work, especially of Boal's theatre of the oppressed. Boal and Schechner he notes are of his 'family' - driven by a similar philosophy, a similar vision of the role of theatre as change agent.

Badal initiated *Satabdi* in 1967 and arrived at his theatre form after many years working with them. The evolution of the form has involved paring away and rejecting many of the trappings and conventions traditional in theatre to arrive at what is essential theatre. This form of theatre connects most readily with oriental and ritual theatre forms which centre on the performer's body. The energy of the actor's physical

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1 Unless otherwise noted, all quotations are taken from an interview conducted with Badal Sircar at Warwick University on 28th October 1992.
performance language replaces scenic elements conventional in the West: costumes, props, lighting, make-up, sound. An emphasis on the performer's body allows Satabdi to operate a theatre form which is mobile and can be taken to different locations, to reach the people with whom they wish to communicate. Typically their plays will be shown to villagers within their home village during one of Satabdi's 'parikrama' or walking tours. We might recognise that similar constraints of space, scenic and technical resources operate in educational drama although this has not to date predicated an emphasis on physical work. Badal's work with Satabdi can be described as a journey to recover a model of theatre in which the educational uses of drama are organic to the performance form, through a focus on the process. His theatre practice articulates many of the values of educational drama and it is for this reason that he presents an important and new role model for the artist in education. It is an empowering and immediate model for theatre which reconnects spectators and participants in new and ancient ways.

Third Theatre: content and form

The roots of and relationship between the different forms of theatre in India suggest a connection with high and low art forms of theatre in Britain. It is interesting to note that on the occasions when Badal has visited England, he has been invited by educational drama or community groups, rather than theatre practitioners.

India's long colonial history is responsible for the urban-rural dichotomy which shapes Indian life. Unlike countries in the west, whose cities have developed as part of the economic development of the country as a whole, Indian cities were developed to serve the economic interests of a foreign country. The British education system likewise was introduced into the cities. Indian cities grew by exploiting rural areas rather than in complement to them. Urban and rural cultures then developed separately in parallel but not in connection. This is reflected in the theatre. City theatre was imported from Britain and whilst Indianised in some respects remains western and largely naturalistic at root. Rural folk theatre has retained its indigenous characteristics. It speaks of gods and goddesses, kings and princes and of their worlds. Because both forms have continued unconnected there has been no debate between the forms, no challenge and no opportunity to adapt existing forms to a more contemporaneous and social role. Theatre has moved apart from the needs and nature of the common people. We are familiar with a similar dichotomy in theatre in Britain. The work of Paul Willis cited earlier, Kwesi Owusu (1986) and Richard Schechner
(1988; 1993) all describe the problem. Disconnection exists in the divisions both between high and low arts within professional performance work and between drama in professional and community or educational contexts.

Third, or 'free' theatre, as it is sometimes known is a non-commercial, accessible theatre which whilst not party political, is political. There is a freedom from the typical commercial transaction between performer and spectator which turns theatre into a commodity and people into sellers or buyers. Instead Third Theatre proposes a human relationship where the performers and spectators are equal in status and contribute some responsibility towards the theatre event. This freedom also ensures the *Satabdi* is not bound to patrons or government funding bodies who would constrain or influence the kind of work it chooses to do and the way in which it does it. In describing Third Theatre, Ian Watson suggests a quality which is common to Badal's Sircar's form:

> [T]he focus in third theatre is on relationships ... This focus on the network of relationships … has its foundations in the individual and his/her role in the collective. (Watson 1993)

Sadabti’s work begins with the choice of potent content and therefore involves research, reading

- government papers, census reports … or talking to economists doing study cycles for example. So we find out those truths which are dangerous for the ruling classes and therefore are either suppressed or distorted, wrapped up and presented [as myths]. We try to break those myths, to say, 'this myth is created so that we do not question other matters... who is really responsible'. We want to expose the real truth.

The purpose, as proposed in genre theory and commonplace in educational drama, is to access the codes of human interaction; to make explicit what, by being implicit, is mysterious and disempowering. Analogy and humour are key tools in this. Badal quotes one such example about a subversive play told as part fairy tale, part farce:

> two petty thieves in a village being chased, who jumped into a river, got drowned then woke up in a new land and in this land, there is no money, everything is free, but everybody works, which is really the principle of communism. Everybody working according to his ability and everybody getting according to his needs.

Socially relevant themes to *Satabdi* are virtually synonymous with being anti-establishment.
Third theatre is an attempt both to raise urban audiences consciousness of rural exploitation and to awaken rural audiences to the possibility of change within themselves and within their society.

'Change' is like a magic element. A person belongs to a given world at a given time, but the world changes in time, and he changes with it. The world changes him, but he, along with others, also changes the world. Herein lies his power. He is a product of a particular society in a particular period, but he can influence the change of that society by every single choice he makes, every single action he takes. He is not alone. The choices made, the actions taken by many many people like him ultimately change the world, for better or for worse. (Sircar 1982)

This emphasis on the power of the individual to impact upon their world through the communal action of theatre is also central to educational drama.

In order to realise his vision of a theatre which might awaken and empower people, to engage in shaping the future, Badal has undergone lifelong practical research into the nature and potential of theatre:

How can one express in theatre?..... What is theatre for that matter? How does one communicate through theatre? How much of the theatre is entertainment? how much is aesthetics? and how much a means of communicating messages? What are the similarities of theatre with other art forms? What are its distinctive features?....... The answers that are found are seldom full or final; but the process of asking questions and trying to find answers is the process of change and that is the thing that really matters. The change comes from a growing awareness - not just of theatre, but of theatre in relation to life and society and time. The process is complicated and many-faceted, even confusing; but when the answers are not stored in the mind at an abstract level, but are tried out in action, confusion is gradually dispelled and a pattern begins to emerge. (Sircar 1982, my italics)

In this theatre form the fact that theatre is a live form is pointed up. Ideas are tested through action; doing is the process of exploration. The rehearsal process, if you like, is acknowledged as core. Ian Watson suggests that this focus on process is a direct result of this kind of theatre being a socially committed form:

[How theatre is made takes precedence over what is produced. For members of the third theatre, content and form are often less important than a group's socio-cultural philosophy and how that philosophy is realized in its daily productions. (Watson 1993)
This emphasis is also evident in educational drama where the entire purpose of the drama is the journey of the live event.

As a live event, theatre "depends on the imagination of the spectator". Acknowledging this predicates particular consideration of the spectator.

Can we afford to put the spectators at a distance? at a different level? in darkness? Have they not come to meet us? Are they not an integral part of the theatre event?....

(Sircar 1982)

This is a conception of spectator as participant. Badal's theatre is a participatory experience: involving direct communication and human action. It is a meeting place of two sets of human beings and the forum for four-way communication. We are familiar with performer- to-spectator and performer-to-performer communication (the basis of theatre). Spectator-to-spectator and spectator-to-performer communication is not typical but is possible, albeit in a different mode. If the spectators are in the same light and on the same level as the performers, ideally with some freedom to move if they wish, he suggests these relationships are possible. Both psychologically and physically this creates intimacy in the theatre in which spectators' responses as shown in their faces and their bodies, can inform both performers and each other. In demonstrating their empathy, or curiosity, or anger, a spectator's "voice" may be known to the performer and impact upon their work. In this way Badal's theatre, a form of ritual, is one in which all present have a role albeit different ones for performer and spectator.

Ritual is a theatre in which the whole community participates ..... but there are performers also who have special roles - shaman, guides and initiators, trance dancers, high priests, chosen seniors (Sircar, 1982).

The transformational role of theatre and the ability of the performer to guide the community is key to the performer in third theatre.

For Badal, theatre must refuse the familiar and comfortable qualities of the narrative and naturalistic forms, which emulate life. It must "come out of the story, come out of the characters" to suggest universal meaning. In this way it can utilise the unique potential
of drama not as a representation of reality but, as Schechner might say, 'not not reality' where, it "reaches beyond itself" (Langer 1954) to communicate another significance. This demands a plastic use of time, space and action:

Continuity of time and separation of space are not respected; the action flows from one time to another, without any break, without changing sets or props. Even events occurring at two or more different places or two or more different times are enacted simultaneously. Sometimes space is expanded, sometimes time is telescoped....events and actions are suggested by signs rather than by actual actions - like a series of abstract movements and gestures, like a burst of body energy and sound energy.

Bharucha (1983) notes that Satbdi's plays have

no plots that can be summarized, no characters of any consistency. Even the scripts are of a non-verbal nature where words and fragments of sentences are punctuated by gestures, movements and tableaux.

It is a theatre which works with

An increased dependence on the human being - the performer's body on one hand and the spectator's imagination on the other ....
The language of this theatre involves being within and experiencing not viewing and hearing from a separate sanctum at a distance.... (Sircar 1982)

With such simple reflections, Badal articulates the essence of theatre's potency and challenges students who had been brought up on a diet of naturalistic theatre where the spectators are, as Artaud suggests, 'peeping Toms'. The child-like delivery of this slight and aged Indian man exerted a magical effect on our students and communicated what we were ourselves struggling to express: that at root it is the experience of theatre which matters - a sense of participation in which what happens matters to each and everyone of us. The context of public performance or classroom learning does not change this.

Training for third theatre
Our theatre is not professionally done. It is done by a band of people who believe in certain things in common, mainly social change. They want to put forward these ideas through theatre. So they are motivated, right from the beginning. There’s a philosophy of theatre. They do not do any play. When a band of people group together to do a theatre of this kind, each member’s own feelings, own consciousness is very important. It is their involvement not how skilled they are that matters. So in the training process, the human being is the primary point, not the theatre person, but just the man or the woman, that’s the primary point.

So we try to devise the training process in such a way that we become aware of our own inner selves, our consciousnesses, our emotions, our inhibitions, our blocks, our way of thinking, way of feeling. All these things we have to deal with. So in a way, the fundamental distinction between our training process and a conventional training system in a drama school is this: that in a drama school they go on adding skills; it’s an additive process. A student comes with certain skills, more skills and techniques are added. They know how to speak, they know how to interpret the characters, how to stand, how to move on the stage. So they are adding, their inner feelings are quite often not brought into play. Their individual characteristics are not taken into consideration. It’s outwards additives. Our processes are subtractive. We try to take away rather than to add. What we take away are the blocks and the masks and the armours we have put on, having grown up in a society like ours, where the rule is to hide rather than to express. The rule is to present a facade to doubt the world, rather than the real self. The rule is to present oneself in a better light than one really is, in order to survive in competition. Because this society is based upon competition. But our theatre has to be something different. We have to speak right from our guts. Therefore layer by layer we try to remove the masks and armours and clothing we have developed. In that way, it’s a risky theatre because we are making ourselves vulnerable by taking off our masks in this world. But maybe only in the field of theatre we can afford to take off our masks; no other field. In the theatre we can jump about, turn somersaults, do something which would be considered ridiculous outside because it is theatre. Now, if we can take off our masks in the theatre, it’s almost an appeal to the audience. ‘Look, I’ve made myself vulnerable taking off my mask, I’ve revealed my inner self to you, won’t you take off your mask?’ And if they do, then it’s a communication which is person to person, gut to gut. And that way of acting is different from acting by techniques or skills. In other words, acting by enactment. This is acting by a state of being. (my italics)

Badal acknowledges a debt to Grotowski, who advocates acting training through an inductive technique (i.e. a technique of elimination) ... a discarding of masks (Grotowski 1969)
It is an approach to actor-training which begins with the person. It does not assume skills or knowledge and does not impose a method or school of training. Badal's account of his approach to actor training echoes many of the concerns of educational drama, but his is grounded in a physical training, often not considered a great priority in educational drama. Badal asserts the centrality of a physically led approach to drama because of a belief in the holistic mind-body-spirit relationship. Within the dynamic of the psycho-physical, physical action is simply the easiest mode of initiation.

The elements of the work

Badal began by working practically with each of the different groups. From the experience of working, students developed an understanding of his work which Badal would then 'unpack' and invite discussion about.

Always he began with the circle. He asked everyone to sit cross-legged in a circle, close enough for knees to be touching. He then asked us to hold hands with our neighbours so that there was an uninterrupted circle of linked hands and contact through knees. He explained that he would send a 'pulse', a gentle squeeze by the hand to his neighbour and that if we felt a squeeze we should pass it on. Finally he asked us to close our eyes. This was a simple but vital and tangible example of his actor training:

Theatre is no place for competition, we are all a team ... So there is no question of somebody elbowing out the others as quite often in professional theatre, we find.....
The circle which is a community, [establishes] the feeling that if I give to others the others will give back to me - tenfold.

Students valued the establishment of rules which made them all operate in the same way. They enjoyed the experience of equality, of co-operation, inclusion and intimacy with each other. The circle is the foundation stone and a first illustration of trust. The feeling that one can trust others and that they will keep that trust is common to all exercises. Through the sense of community which this way of working evokes, a new understanding of its significance arises. Badal explains that this is because all physical work is in essence, psychological:
I drop from a terrible height and six persons, standing below, save me from injury. It appears physical, almost like a circus, but in reality it is more psychological, because once I can see that I can take this risk which in description seems to be very difficult, it is actually very easy. It is a wonderful feeling and a bond begins to develop amongst the members. So we go through these exercises [because] inhibitions and psychological blocks, the fear of being ridiculous to others, these have to be done away with.

The game of **mirroring**, was frequently used as such an example. Badal explained and demonstrated this exercise. In pairs we were asked to mirror everything our partner did and said. The role of leader is shared. Badal's example was noted by the student he demonstrated with as "physical, noisy and wild" and in stark contrast to other pairs who were far more restrained in their work, using words rather than sounds, pre-meditated rather than free movements and working with parts of the body rather than a whole. As time wore on - and Badal would always allow an exercise to run and run - greater experimentation occurred and students became more comfortable with sounds and with the strange effect of repeating questions and statements rather than responding to them.

We can do anything we like, because it’s a game ...but the psychological part is more important that the physical although the students in the beginning don’t know it.

Many students expressed a feeling of increased confidence as they discovered that they could invent and respond quickly. They became aware of the psychological areas that the work touched.

Gradually, through the mirroring exercise, the students were using space more freely. Badal then focused particularly on **spatial awareness**:

We have to be very aware of our relationship with the different elements in space, both inanimate and living. Living means the audience, and also living means our colleagues and other performers. So that way, we can relate much better with the audience, if we are aware and develop a sense of our relationship with space.

He began by asking us to spread ourselves out and use the whole space. From this simple task we were asked to move and yet retain the equidistant relation whilst still using all of the space. We all found this difficult and were aware of heightened alertness to each other and our use of space. Then Badal asked us to form a line from which we would move to form a series of shapes using the space fully and ourselves
equidistantly in space. We were asked not to speak which assisted our spatial awareness. We were asked to form the shape of letters: I, O, H, M... developing in difficulty. Individuals had to decide when to break off from the line to form the bar in H and their single decision effected the whole group: too early or too late and it would not be possible to achieve equidistance.

We also worked on developing rhythm in sound and movement. We began as a whole group with a rhythmic sound instigated by Badal to which he set a movement. Sustaining the underlying rhythm, we all in turn instigated a gradual modulation of either sound or movement.

The next stage built on the foundation principles implicit in the early games and focused on exploring one's own creative potential.

How many sounds are in me that I was not even aware of? What kinds of movement can I do, which I was never taught, which I am able to do?..... There are many games which make us realise that [our] potential, is much more than [we] thought it was.

By working again with games and exercises but now with a particular subject as focus the mind/body relationship became apparent. Badal set a theme which would stimulate associations and asked us, one by one, to immediately, without thinking about it, create a sound and a movement in rhythm and to repeat it again and again. The themes may suggest contexts that might prompt memories such as 'the sea' or a theme like 'competition' or an even more abstract reference such as the colour 'red'. He asked us not to feel responsible to express the subject but to express the rules of the game: sound and movement in the same rhythm. But of course associations inform the work. This is one of the initial exercises he suggests in mind/body relationship. Another included the creation of human sculptures both individually and as a whole group, likewise stimulated by associations suggested by a given theme, such as 'fire'. An exercise incorporating free movements and the creation of frozen images or sculptures combined many of the earlier elements. Badal asked us to explore different ways of travelling using as much space as possible for the count of ten and then to hold an image for the count of five. Students found themselves exploring the space anew, using the moments of stillness to notice something to be explored in the next movement. After a length of time, any initial tendency to plan disappeared and the energy of the physical released spontaneity.
Despite the briefness of our workshop experiences, many of our students, in subsequent weeks, articulated how a new framing of the experience of games had facilitated a realisation of the significance (the mind-body relationship) implicit within all action. Badal explained how:

There’s a process through which, as days go by, the games become enmeshed ...... I’ve been written to by people who have undergone actor training in a drama school, saying 'It’s true most of the games are not new to us. We have done it in some form or another. But the way you led from one game to another, that is something new to us'.

In an anonymous review of the term completed by three-quarters of the group, virtually all students commented how helpful the experience of working with Badal had been for integrating the theoretical and practical issues of drama and education. Because practical experience had been the mode or learning, a single session provided a forum for understanding: "I do therefore I understand".

At Warwick, where he was restricted to half-day experiences with a range of groups, there was a limit to the depth of the students' experience. But Badal used the example of his recent week of work with Drama students at Birmingham University where he was able to continue working with the same group to illustrate how he develops such work. Badal introduced the Birmingham students to ‘certain phenomena like manipulation, hunger, imprisonment, torture ... and presented them practically, non-verbally.’ He describes the experience of hunger and witnessing hunger as both universal and culturally different.

I have seen many, many people being hungry, or even dying of starvation.... Here, the media raises charitable instincts, we know it exists, but have no direct experience.

To put in hunger, we used the mirroring exercise and there were students who wept after that workshop.... they could see the hungry people at least, as I saw. They could create. That was imagined experience. So, that is the way we can come together, cross boundaries. How could they see hungry people in that workshop? Because they went to another state of mind ..... We have a name for it - Internal workshop..... through the workshop we will be able to leap to another state of being.

The deeper effects of the earlier 'games', which we had sensed and occasionally touched on are apparent here.

Badal also discussed the importance of another simple exercise, slow motion in creating work and rehearsing with Satabdi.
The most obvious and outward benefit is, it is probably the best exercise to bring control over your body (as the obvious function of the mirroring game is to do away with inhibitions), but that’s not the end, that’s the tip of the iceberg.

If you practise dance in slow motion for quite some time, you can close your eyes, because you can’t possibly injure yourself moving in slow motion. You can’t hit the wall; you can touch the wall. ... Very soon you lose the sense of time, you relax ... and you are automatically, quite pleasantly brought to another sense of being, then your mind sort of floats and you look inward, you come to that state. Now, say you’re dancing in slow motion for twenty minutes ... and somebody is reading certain lines to you, or maybe you have half prepared a play and now you begin to say the lines, without feeling the obligation of cues or saying the lines correctly, still dealing with the subject while you are doing it, that would be an internal workshop: Very much of the mind/body relationship and very much the workshop process of preparing and doing it, because you’re using lines from the play that way....

When we find, in rehearsing we are getting away from the meaning of the lines, then we come to a workshop situation to bring back the meaning of lines again...

The plays Satabdi perform combine sections which are choreographed and fixed as a result of a workshop process with free, unchoreographed sections. The balance between the fixed and the mobile remains important in performance.

The training is the work

Badal is emphatic that his work is most valuable to and valued by the disempowered. He has worked with development workers untrained in theatre, but concerned with the 'conscientisation of the people'. Having observed Badal at work in India, Bharucha (1983) confirms this:

Sircar was not interested in teaching the villagers of the Sundarbans 'how to act'. What concerned him was something far more fundamental, ....'the training of the person' .... to make his participants realise the strength of their interrelations as people.

Both in rehearsal and workshop Badal describes his role as that of a catalyst agent; the work is generated by the performers / participants themselves. Badal's role is to ‘enable the participants to discover themselves as people by confronting their inner resources, tensions, and moments of communion.’ (Bharucha 1983). The way of working whether for performer or workshop participant is essentially the same. The same agenda and model operates in both contexts, so workshops are integral to the work of Satabdi. This is a clear
example of the mode of production defining the work. For Britain at least where different models operate between performance and workshop contexts, Badal's is a new and important model. As Badal explains:

In a way, it’s the de-mystification of theatre art. It’s the vested interest of the ruling class to mystify things, to say ‘Theatre is esoteric. If you are not educated, then you have no right to understand theatre or enjoy theatre.’ That’s all wrong… So through these workshops we are de-mystifying it and we are telling people, or showing the way, making them confident that everybody can make plays. In every single workshop of mine which is more than four or five days, the last session is play-making. I’ve done workshops with illiterate people [where everyone has] to make a five minute play in ten minutes time. No single one has ever refused to do that. That means that they acquire the confidence to do it.

The work of Badal Sircar, like that of Boal, offers an important opportunity to reconnect the drama in education tradition with the avant-garde in theatre. There are common themes across the two domains and by paying attention to artists like Badal, drama educators can find a way to reconnect their practice with a strong and increasing area of arts practice.

Badal's theatre practice already relates closely to drama education. He does not demand skill or knowledge in theatre. His starting point is the person. His actor training is not competitive. On the contrary, Badal establishes a context which eradicates competition and facilitates a communal feeling of trust in which people can feel allow themselves to explore, take risks, be vulnerable. The material for the work is within the people with whom he works. It is searched for, not imposed. The development of the voice of the individuals and group is central to the work. These elements point to a belief in humans as essentially creative. Badal presents a humble figure, talking of himself as an amateur rather than a professional. This reflects a new view of an artist as one who invites their own vulnerability as part of a process which is on the edge: the artist as fellow rather than expert.

The work is defined, as in educational drama, by its process and its participants. Badal's work is an acknowledgement of the lengthy and experimental rehearsal process which is the prerequisite of performance as well as of a growing group of theatre artists (in evidence since Stanislavski) who are concerned to have a greater personal investment in their work.
For all the common ground outlined above, the work of Badal Sircar is significant for us. But there is a major difference too. Badal emphasises the necessity to work in a physical form. In the West we are more familiar with a psychological form, in performance and in educational drama. Badal's work suggests that the physical work of the body, experienced through participation and through witnessing, engages us more fully and directly, at an instinctive gut level. As such it is the means to holistic mind-spirit-body experience of theatre. It is also the means of communication with the illiterate rural populace of India. The language of gesture, image, rhythm, movement and montage are immediate and are read instinctively. Performance relies on an 'inner film' playing for performer, participant and spectator and this inner film is triggered by the feeling and significance of doing. This is an alternative to the literary model of theatre which dominates much of formal education. A literary model is not only disempowering for many children, but does not draw upon their own instinctive and experienced understandings. The model of an artist like Badal Sircar who in his life as an artist offers an effective example of a physically lead approach to socially committed theatre suggests an important source for drama educators. The model of avant-garde artists like Badal proposes the fertility of this kind of artist for initiating an important shift in perception about the artist, in education and beyond.

References