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From Page to Performance: An Actor-Centric Study on Character Construction in Badal Sircar's Plays and its Relevance to Personality Development

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Abstract

This paper explores how an actor understands and builds complex characters, moving them from the written script to a live performance. Focusing on five major plays by Badal Sircar—*Saari Raat*, *Baaki Itihaas*, *Pagla Ghoda*, *Evam Indrajit*, and *Julus*—the study examines the deep mental and emotional work an actor must do within the craft of drama. Sircar's plays do not rely on expensive sets; instead, they place the entire focus on the performer's body and mind. By treating psychological understanding purely as a practical tool for character construction, this paper shows that the actor's process of building a role is a powerful journey of personal growth. The intense dramatic preparation helps individuals overcome personal fears, understand deep human emotions, improve body language, and build confidence. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates how these core actor-training methods serve as a practical tool for shaping balanced, confident, and empathetic personalities.

Keywords: Badal Sircar, Actor's Process, Character Construction, Drama Techniques, Personality Development, Stanislavski.

Introduction

A written play only finds its true meaning when it is performed live on stage. The journey from the written page to the live performance depends entirely on the actor's imagination, interpretation, and creative effort. Through the actor's physical body and mind, a character stops being just words on paper and becomes a living, breathing presence. In modern Indian

theater, the plays of Badal Sircar are highly significant. His characters are not simple or mechanical; they are emotionally layered, socially aware, and psychologically complex. Performing these roles requires careful interpretation and deep internal work. Within the field of Fine Arts, the actor acts as a human bridge, turning a character's hidden motivations and internal conflicts into visible actions on stage. This paper examines this actor-centric process, showing how analyzing a character's internal mind not only creates a better performance but also acts as a brilliant method for overall personality development.

The Actor's Tool: Using Psychology Inside Drama

While many scholars have studied Badal Sircar's plays for their social and political messages, very few have looked at the actor's internal process of building a character. In the study of acting and drama, understanding human behavior is an essential internal tool, not an outside discipline. To build a character from the inside out, theater practitioners have always relied on behavioral analysis:

Konstantin Stanislavski's concepts of "emotional memory" and the "magic if" are fundamental acting tools that help performers find authentic feelings within themselves to match the character.

Sigmund Freud's ideas on the unconscious mind help an actor decode a character's hidden secrets and defense mechanisms.

Carl Jung's work on archetypes helps actors connect deeply with universal human traits.

By utilizing these tools within theater practice, character preparation shifts from simple line-reading to a rich, believable performance.

Character Construction in Sircar's Selected Plays

Sircar's scripts demand that the actor look deep into human behavior. Because his plays strip away heavy background sets and props, the actor cannot hide behind material objects. The character must be constructed purely out of human emotion, voice, and movement.

In *Evam Indrajit*, the characters experience a deep sense of boredom, loneliness, and the exhausting routine of urban life. The actor must map these complex feelings of existential sadness onto their performance.

in *Pagla Ghoda*, the characters deal with heavy hidden guilt, personal secrets, and complex relationships. The actor has to explore internal conflicts and defenses to make these characters believable to the audience.

In *Julus*, the actors constantly switch between being distinct individuals and merging into a large, moving crowd. This requires high mental alertness, physical control, and absolute teamwork.

In *Saari Raat*, three characters are trapped in a room during a stormy night, go through a night of deep conversations and self-realization, requiring the actor to show intense emotional shifts and great stamina where they end up sharing their deepest secrets and facing their true selves. For an actor, this play is a massive test of mental stamina because there are no commercial stage sets or distractions to hide behind. The actor must show a massive emotional journey, changing from a normal, everyday person into someone completely vulnerable. This process directly helps in personality development by building deep self-awareness. To show a character who is being completely honest about their life, the actor must first learn to break down their own personal walls and hesitations. Playing this role teaches an individual how to stay highly focused, listen deeply to others, and handle intense emotional situations calmly. Ultimately, this training builds inner strength and creates a confident person who can communicate openly and handle stressful real-life relationships with ease.

In *Baaki Itihaas*, the script forces the actor to explore the heavy emotional weight that people carry inside themselves every day. To make this performance believable, the actor cannot just memorize lines; they have to analyze why people feel guilty and how they hide their pain.

Working on a complex play like *Baaki Itihaas* is a brilliant tool for building emotional intelligence. When an actor takes on a character filled with guilt or sadness, they learn to look at human mistakes without judgment. This practice of stepping into a troubled character's shoes develops a deep sense of empathy and sensitivity in the performer. By understanding these complex human emotions on stage, the individual naturally becomes a more mature, thoughtful, and emotionally balanced person in their everyday life.

How Building a Character Develops Personality

The rigorous process an actor goes through to build these characters directly connects to core areas of personal growth and personality development

Overcoming Personal Inhibitions

Before an actor can embody someone else, they must understand their own habits and hesitations. Through physical and mental exercises, individuals learn to break through their personal shyness and awkwardness. This results in greater self-confidence and a stronger personal presence in daily life.

Developing Empathy and Emotional Intelligence

To build a complex character, an actor must avoid judging them. Whether exploring the guilt in *Pagla Ghoda* or the sadness in *Evam Indrajit*, the performer practices radical empathy. This constant practice of stepping into someone else's shoes broadens a person's emotional intelligence, making them more sensitive and understanding toward others.

Mastering Communication Skills

Sircar's style focuses heavily on direct communication. Without microphones or stage barriers, actors learn the immense value of non-verbal communication—such as posture, eye contact, and tone modulation. This dramatic training directly improves a person's ability to speak clearly, listen actively, and command attention confidently.

Relevancy to the Sub-Theme (Personality Development through Drama)

This actor-centric framework shows that drama is not just for entertainment; it is an active tool for human transformation. The methodology an actor uses to research, internalize, and perform a character can be directly introduced into personality development workshops. When individuals learn to use their voice, body, and emotions as tools of expression, they develop a well-rounded, expressive, and highly confident personality.

Conclusion

The journey "from page to performance" in Badal Sircar's plays is an excellent model for human transformation. By stripping away external stage materials, Sircar forces the actor to rely entirely on internal and physical strength. Studying how characters are constructed across *Saari Raat*, *Baaki Itihaas*, *Pagla Ghoda*, *Evam Indrajit*, and *Julus* reveals a clear path for personal growth. Ultimately, using deep character-building methods helps individuals break their inner hesitations, develop deep empathy, and build a highly effective and confident personality.

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