CHAPTER VI
MENTAL DEFORMITY:

PROCESSION AND ENCOUNTER IN UMBUGLAND

How colourful the procession are. Processions full of words and sounds. I’m lost in the colours of the banners carried in procession, the sounds of marching feet, I’m moving about lost, groping lost. I walk through roads and high ways, the streams of humanity, through the bends, lost for ever. I’ve lost my way home. The way to my real home, my really real home....

- Procession

Human mind has also undergone division, differentiation and hierarchization since the dawn of civilization. The primal unity between rationality and intuition, the two faculties of mind, is lost. They are divided, differentiated and alienated. Hogie Wyckoff, a Transactional Analyst, observes that men are encouraged to develop their rationality and to suppress their intuition while women are encouraged to develop their intuition and to suppress their
rationality. This suits their roles imposed on them by sexist civilization as office work demands rationality while housework demands intuition. Similarly intellectual professions demand rationality while manual jobs demand intuition so intellectuals possess overdeveloped rationality while workers possess overdeveloped intuition. This mental deformity not only thwarts awareness but also impairs the communication between men and women and between intellectuals and workers. And rationality is considered superior to intuition in our hierarchized society.

The function of rationality and intuition is severely maimed by lying, discounting the perception of reality and drugs. Steirner exposes the invisible and widespread lying in his observation:

Lying is the rule rather than exception in human affairs. We are all aware of the fact that we are being lied to by those who govern us, by the media as well as those who constantly attempt to convince us to spend our money on their products whether we need them or not. But we are less inclined to be aware of the fact that lying is more common than truth-telling in our everyday relationships.

He then elaborates how we are trained to tell and accept lies by our parents, elders and teachers:

So, as we grow into civilized adult hood we are fully prepared not only to be liars but to accept lies from others. It's a small wonder that people passively accept the lies of their elected officials, advertisers, and the media; their training to do so is relentless from early childhood on. Lies in the schools are primarily by omission, though lies by commission also abound, especially when children are told outright lies about the functioning and administrative aspects of their school, their city, and their country.

Evan D Illich considers school worse than religion which Marx calls opiate. He discloses how school hampers our awareness instead of promoting it:
School seems eminently suited to be the World Church of our decaying culture. No institution could better veil from its participants the deep discrepancy between social principles and social reality in today's world. Steiner uncovers the myth of 'truthfulness' taught to children at home and school: "... 'truthfulness', as taught by grownups to children is simply a sophisticated way of lying as opposed to the crude, more simple way of lying which is punished." Parents, by example or injunction, unwittingly teach their children to get upset or confused and not to think when they face a problem. They often or always discount the rationality, the intuition and the feelings of their children, in addition to lying to them. Therefore, the children generally become mindless and even mad as they grow up. They also learn to discount and to accept discounting. The process of making people mindless is successfully effected through religion, fine arts, mass media, education and drugs. This is succinctly elucidated in Badal Sircar's Procession and Vijay Tendulkar's Encounter in Umbagland.

Sircar's Procession elucidates how mental deformity is effected and how it is perpetuated. The play has got neither a plot nor any characters in the conventional sense. Like Stale News it is rather a collage of various episodes taken from the flux of human life. The underlying unity behind this heterogenous collection is the theme of 'being lost' in civilization. The characters are not types but representative and symbolic. They are Khoka, an officer, and Old Man, a Master and a chorus of six people. Khoka and the Old Man form a group and the Officer and the Master another. Khoka is killed and the Old Man is lost in the labyrinthine roads of the city.

OLD MAN. Michhils, Michhils. I've lost my way. Through roads and roads I seek a road, through Michhils and Michhils I seek the road...
to my home.

KHOKA .... Every day in the streets, in the streams of masses, I'm being pulverized under the stamping feet in processions, I'm dying, I'm being killed, Michhils ....

The city stands for civilization for which the Officer and the Master are custodians. The officer orders the people to start the procession (Michhil in Bengali) that represents various rituals of our civilization. He says:

Nobody's been killed. Nobody's lost. Every thing's in order. Start it. sta-a-art the procession .... (17)

People accept and obey masters. They believe that civilization does not exist without masters:

There will be wealth to ensure a good life for all men. But that will eliminate the Master, and all civilization will come to an end. (23)

Conversely masters cannot exist without civilization and so they have to protect it for their own survival.

THE MASTER. Who upholds, preserves and protects civilization?
CHORUS. You, Master! (23)

In the play, Sircar aims at exposing the various devices of civilization in obscuring our awareness.

The play begins with an everyday happening of loadshedding in an Indian city. It is completely dark. A piercing death scream is heard. Some people light their matches and search for the victim. But they find none and one of them says: "They must've stabbed someone to death and whisked away the body." (5) There is a commotion and an Officer comes. He says: "Nobody was killed. Get back to your homes." (6) As he moves upto them threateningly, they sneak away. Then Khoka comes and tries desperately
to draw the attention of the Officer and the audience to himself. But the Officer does not notice him even when he comes right before him. Then Khoka says that he is killed every day. Thus even the beginning of the play shows how the perception of the reality is completely discouraged with oppressive force.

Khoka screams again and falls down. The officer does not notice it and goes away. The Chorus comes singing a funeral song. Then they carry the dead body of Khoka. Thus the first procession in this play is a funeral one. The Old Man comes and asks the people to join the procession. He then gives a list of various processions:

... Michhils for food and clothes, Michhils for salvation, Michhils for the revolution, Michhils in military formation, Michhils of refugees, Michhils for flood relief, Michhils mourning, Michhils protesting, Michhils festive, Michhils with stars. (8)

As the play progresses, all these religious and revolutionary processions are acted. The inclusion of revolutionary processions in the list unfolds Sircar’s own disillusionment with the existing Communist Parties and their movements. Gowri Ramnarayan also remarks: "The discovery that some respected leaders were liars and cheats who duped their followers led to disillusionment" 7 In the Introduction to Three Plays, Ella Dutta observes:

... He does not wish to create new myths in place of the old. He prefers to raise the consciousness and create awareness of the issues. (viii)

It is thus clear that Sircar does not intend to convey that the Communist Revolution is the real road to the real home.

The Old Man narrates how he as a small boy followed his father and how the criss crossing roads were labyrinthine:
... I held on to my father's hands, as the road winded and meandered along and receded under my feet giving place to yet new roads ... All the roads vanished beyond the bend till a new road flashed at the bend till it vanished again at the next bend and a new one again and a bend and the vanishing road the new road the road the ro-o-o-o-o-ad ... (8-9)

Then all the people start searching for Khoka. They describe his features. In press and on radio and wireless, they announce that Khoka is lost. Khoka is coaxed to return and is offered various things such as bats, balls, biscuits, chocolates, books, college, pass, job, land, house, car, gold, happiness, peace and salvation. The Old Man then gives more information about him:

His parents named him Khoka. Thousands of parents with thousands of Khokas. Khoka means one who hasn't grown up yet. Khoka means Green, Raw, Immature. (10-11)

The people call Khoka and request him to return home. The Old Man says that Khoka comes to the new home, the real home but not the old one. The words 'Khoka' and 'home' acquire new meaning here. Khoka symbolizes a child who is not spoiled by civilization. He still possesses humanity. He is not dehumanized. He is an embodiment of humanity. The old home is the present society where humanity is constantly destroyed. The old home is not at all conducive to the survival of humanity. It is a dehumanizing environment where we vainly search for humanity. And the solution of one problem invariably leads to another problem and in seeking solutions, we encounter the same problem again in the present society. This is symbolically expressed by the Old Man as "You go far and wide, you turn round and round, and come back to the same road." (11) The new home is the future society where humanity is regained. It is free from dehumanizing civilization. Sircar portrays this real home in his play Beyond the Land of Hattamala.
One-day life of middle class people in a city is then acted by the Chorus. People are on their way to work. They buy newspapers which are in the shape of fool's caps. This suggests the fooling of people by the press. Newspapers contain such news items as "Conflict in the Middle East," "Train accident in Italy" and "Examinations postponed again." (12) They publish such statements of ministers and leaders as "we should be prepared for more critical times" and "Spiritualism alone can bring prosperity to the nation." (12-13) Some people board trains and others take buses to go to work. Vendors sell various items and things on the train. For example, a salesboy sells pens. He advertises them in a fascinating manner:

... A Chinese pen of the same kind would have cost you eighteen rupees. But I offer you this pen for only one rupee. Only a rupee.
If you buy three pens at a time you pay two rupees and fifty paise.
... It's only on this train that you get a pen at this price. It's a very special publicity campaign by the company that brings you this pen for a rupee .... (13)

Then in an overcrowded bus, people struggle to obtain "a little space for a foot." (14) They reach their workplace and become busy working. After work, they seek entertainment and relief by seeing a film or a match or playing a game. This shows how the people in cities are too busy with their routine life to use their mind properly and how passively their minds receive misleading new items, indoctrinating statements of popular leaders and false commercial advertisements. This is followed by the processions of various religions. Thus the life of a man itself becomes a kind of procession, a ritual which is devoid of vitality or meaning.

Then the Freedom Struggle is acted. The ambivalence of Indians to the British Government is shown.
TWO Remember, at the moment of your birth your life has been offered in sacrifice to the great mother.

THREE. Glory to the generous British government. (18)

After freedom, the communal riots take place. But freedom does not solve problems. The rich are prosperous and the poor are miserable. Middle class people find life very hard as they have to buy rice, pulses, oil, sugar, kerosene, baby food and text books through black market. Potbellied profiteers dance and enjoy themselves. The poor and middle class people are too intoxicated with their patriotism to protest against the exploitation. Most of them believe in what their leaders say eloquently.

THE MASTER. Remember our national heritage. Remember the numberless martyrs in our struggle for freedom. Remember the revolutionary heroes of our fiery days. Remember - India is the country of Manu, Parashar, Kalidas, Bhavabhuti, Sita, Savitri, Sri Chattanya and Gandhiji. Remember the invincible strength of the principle of non-violence. Remember it's our responsibility to give spiritual leadership to the world. Remember the greatness of democracy in India. Remember the fundamental rights of the Constitution. Remember the Green Revolution, the Nationalization of Banks, Family Planning, the Dollar aid, the nuclear blast, arrests under Maintenance of Internal Security Act. (20-21)

Sircar exposes the myth of nationalism by juxtaposing it and the instances of exploitation and abject poverty.

Sircar does not blame any individual, any class or any government. He criticises the system. He incriminates civilization for all human misery. Civilization has caused all these deformities. The history of civilization is briefly stated by the Chorus.

ONE, The Sun is a star in the Cosmos. The Earth is a planet of the Sun. Man is the greatest creature on Earth.
TWO. All men were equal at the beginning of Creation. But they were uncivilized.

THREE. Even with a whole hard day’s work they didn’t find food enough to fill their stomachs. So they were equal!

FOUR. Then men learnt to use animals, they learnt agriculture. Then they had a surplus.

FIVE. Surplus brought civilization. Man became civilized. Civilization civilized man, civilized society.

ONE. Who would enjoy the surplus? Everyone? No. Only those who had quality, intelligence and force.

TWO. The Master has quality, intelligence and force so the world has masters and slaves, will have masters and slaves. That’s how the gods have laid it out ... (22-23)

Inequality is an indispensable part of civilization and so egalitarianism destroys civilization. That is why the Master tells the people that Communism is the greatest enemy of civilization. Then he explains:

Rest assured, my children, I’ll keep you civilized. Communism is the religion of the animals. Keep in mind that you are not animals, you are men. (23)

Communism is attributed to animals as they are free from social deformity. Whatever may be the noble aims of religion, it is usually used to approve the oppressive and exploitative culture and to obscure awareness. That is why the Master advises the people to endure suffering to enter heaven after death when they complain about their miserable life.

THE MASTER. There’s heaven for you after you die, and heavenly happiness. Animals have no heaven. I bless you, you’d die as men, not animals. (24)

Thus this aptly illustrates the famous maxim of Marx that religion is an opiate.
After some time, the people again approach the Master as their suffering becomes too intense to be pacified by religious faith.

ONE. Three years without a job, father's retired.
TWO. It's the thirty-sixth day of the factory lockout. There's not a morsel at home.
THREE. The untimely rain left all the rice rotting our debts with the money lender have risen to a mountain.
FOUR. The whole family's laid up with food poisoning from adulterated cooking oil. I don't have the money to pay a doctor.
FIVE. The police took my brother away, and beat him to death...

(24)

They all say in Chorus: "O Master, we can't bear it any longer?" (24) Then the Master gives them a bottle of liquor and advises them to drink it to forget their suffering. He says: "The elixir that will bring you oblivion". (25) They drink liquor and ironically say: "O Men! Let's be men." (25) The Old Man also drinks and says:


(25)

Thus people drink liquor and become mindless.

The Old Man's search for the real road to the real home symbolizes the search of mankind for the right way to regain their lost paradise, the primal bliss. So the Old Man says: "I must've been walking for ages, and yet every time I get stuck here". (25) He gets lost and he tries various ways again and again. As he walks on in the drunken state, he meets Khoka who says that he is killed. Then they both talk about themselves:

KHOKHA. I don't have a home. I had a home, now I don't have one.
I'm killed.
OLD MAN. you've just lost your way. Why do you have to be so round about? ... (28)

They then try to find out the way to their house. But they reach the same place where they have started. Meanwhile Khoka falls dead again. The Chorus takes his dead body in a funeral procession again.

The internalization of the values of deformed culture severely maims human mind. The internalized values form the Master in the mind of everybody. This internal Master is more harmful than the external Master as the former provides our deformed culture the resilience that it needs. That is why revolutions and reformist movements have failed to rectify the deformities of our culture and civilization. It is the internal Master in us that strongly objects to certain small positive changes in our society:

ONE. This country needs military dictatorship. They should be all thrashed into order. (32)

TWO. How could he marry that girl? A Brahman marrying a low caste? That's why they say: When it's love, one doesn't care whether it's this low caste or that!

THREE. The lower classes are getting so impertinent. Even the rickshaw-wallahs put on airs. (32)

ONE. Whips. They need whipping. Whips alone can straighten them.

TWO. All the housewives are out on the streets, in jobs. What else do you need to bring morals to a finish?

THREE. The servant demands higher wages. Ungrateful wretches! (33)

As long as this deformed thinking goes on, our mental deformity remains intact.

The Chorus starts singing a patriotic song:
It’s a fine world we live in, made of a jumble of pieces. In the midst of it lies a land, the best most of all.... It’s the best of all lands, the land of my birth. (33)

At once, Khoka runs in, followed by the Officer and says:

Stop it. stop fooling the people. It’s not the truth. (To the audience) How can you tolerate it? Don’t you see it’s all lies? A fraud on you? .... (33)

The Officer shuts his mouth and carries him away. Then the Master asks the officer to keep men happy and peaceful with fine arts:

... Keep men happy, in peace, and disciplined. Let people enjoy their lives. Give them art and culture. Art. Culture. Let people immerse themselves in a flow of aesthetic pleasure. When the dirty doubts surface, let the flow of pleasure wash over them. Keep in mind, men are not animals. Men alone can lose themselves in the flow of pleasure, sink into it. (34)

The Master thus uses various means of impairing human awareness such as nationalism, religion, liquor and finally fine arts. The people believe the Master and with reverence they carry him in a procession. They listen to his hypnotizing speech and the Officer also follows him slavishly.

The Old Man is disillusioned with processions and describes how he is fooled by various processions:

How colourful the processions are. Processions full of words and sounds. I’m lost in the colours of the banners carried in procession, the sounds of marching feet, I’m moving about lost, groping lost. I walk through roads and highways, the streams of humanity, through the bends, lost for ever. I’ve lost my way home. The way to my real home, my really real home .... (35)
Then a revolutionary procession passes by and it is followed by some processions with meaningless slogans. Khoka is vexed and says:

"Stop it, I don't believe in your processions. All processions have turned into processions of death, Death. Death alone (37)"

Then he illustrates his statements. There is a death from starvation in the world every six seconds. And millions of people are killed in wars all over the world every year. Khoka throws light on the collective responsibility of all the people in this ritual of killing one another:

"... you sit in peace watching murders, you are killed yourselves, you kill. Yes, you kill, you have killed. I'm killing, you are killing. We are all killers. We all kill, we all get killed. We kill by sitting quietly and doing nothing at ease, we get killed. Stop it. Stop it. (37)"

The officer comes with five men, takes Khoka and kills him in various places in various ways.

The old man convinces Khoka that he is lost but not killed. He infuses hope in the young man. He asks him to lead him ahead. Finally Khoka agrees to join the Old Man in his search for the real road to the real home. Then the old man hears a procession coming. He sees it approaching. He says, it is a real procession, He leads Khoka into the real procession where all the people hold one another's hands. Sircar does not describe the procession in detail. He says that it consists of men. Certainly, it does not represent any class or any party or any ideology. It is a human procession where all human belongs, shedding the differences of caste, religion and nation, are united and where they collectively endeavour to solve all their problems. Veena Noble Dass remarks:

"... The spectators and actors intermingle and the entire space of the room becomes a swirling mass of humanity. It is one of those..."
moments in the theatre when one becomes acutely aware of the possibilities of life and the essential brotherhood of man ...  

Throughout the play, Khoka is killed and the Old Man is lost repeatedly. Khoka speaks the truth and symbolizes it. So, the killing of Khoka suggests the destruction of the truth. The Officer says that nobody is killed and disperses the people who witness the death of Khoka. This shows how the police force is used to prevent people from perceiving the truth. Similarly nationalism, religion, liquor and entertainment are narcotically used by the Master to obfuscate the awareness of the people and to keep them mindless. The Old Man’s inability to find the right road is due to his mindlessness caused by our cultural deformity.

Tendulkar’s *Encounter in Umbugland* is equally concerned with mental deformity. India is traditionally called “Jambudwip” in Sanskrit and Tendulkar deliberately uses the word “Dambadwip”. The rhyme in these two words intensifies the idea of hypocrisy. The English translation “Umbugland” which rhymes with “humbug” also conveys the same idea effectively. The names of Vijaya, the Princess and Indira, the Prime Minister of India refer to one goddess, Lakshmi. The playwright draws parallels between the rule of Vijaya and that of Indira. In the Introduction to Tendulkar’s *Five Plays*, Arundhati Banerjee rightly remarks.

“It is not difficult to find reflections of the political situation in India of the late sixties and early seventies in the royalist regime of Dambadwip (Umbugland) ... Despite the distancing achieved through the creation of a fictitious milieu, it is easy to identify the characters with political figures who held ministerial positions in those years ...”  

The very life of politics is falsehood and hypocrisy and the political language becomes completely dishonest. As in India, in the play also, “Democracy has become a synonym for autocracy or dictatorship” as observed by Renuka.
Queen Vijaya introduces welfare schemes to strengthen her power. So there is more advertisement about the schemes than it is necessary. Prannarayan says to Vijaya: "... They hear a lot of drumbeating about the Plan, but they don't get a sniff of their welfare in it."\(^{11}\)

The play begins as Prannarayan invites the people to the sixtieth coronation anniversary of Vichitravirya, the king of Umbugland. He uses a beautiful euphemism to glorify the falsehood that they speak in their country. He talks about "three kinds of truth: conventional truth, diplomatic truth, and the real truth"\(^{(269)}\). Then two men enter, one from each wing, wielding huge pens like sceptres. They bang their pens on the ground three times, pronounce 'Victory' to the king and describe the ceremony of his sixtieth coronation anniversary. Each ritual is repeated sixty times. Prannarayan tells Vijaya, the Princess that many have happily spent all their lives in this abode of luxury without bothering to think at all \(^{(271)}\) Vratyasom, being emotional, speaks the truth about politics while waiting for the king:

Let us not open our mouth too wide about the principles and honesty. To observe these two virtues in politics is as inappropriate and stupid as celibacy after marriage ... \(^{(273)}\)

As Vratyasom and other Ministers go on talking about politics, Vichitravirya, the King arrives. He describes how eloquently he has spoken about various topics to the people who have listened to him with rapt attention. The Ministers hide their discontent and praise the king sycophantically:

PISHTAKESHI. His Majesty is the sole artist of the island's destiny.
VRATYASOM. His majesty is Umbugland and Umbugland is His Majesty. \(^{(277)}\)
Vichitravirya believes this and affirms it: "We have become so much one with Umbugland in these past sixty years, and our people of Umbugland have so identified themselves with us, that the thought of one without the other is impossible". (277) He is confident that he will live another hundred years and thinks that the island badly needs his leadership for at least another fifty years. (277) The Ministers go on increasing the period of his rule from fifty years to five hundred years.

Vichitravirya intuitively knows the ambition of his ministers to capture power after him. He says to them:

... There is not in any of you in the slightest measure the capacity to hold the reins of government in this island after us. Even though the responsibilities of government have been divided amongst you, it is still we who take all the decisions. Besides, there is no unity amongst you ... Power seems more important to you than duty! Selfish designs have replaced service! ... We have not cherished a lust for power even for one second ... If that is your only desire, take it, with pleasure ... take it this minute! we will abdicate, and become a hermit ... But our people will not release us. It is according to their wish, their pleasure, according to what their wish and will shall be that we shall stay in power. With this aim, we have planned to undergo an experiment in rejuvenation. Only today we have received medical advice as a result of which we shall be able to rule for at least a hundred years. (278-79)

He advises his Ministers to serve the people selflessly and to let him rule the country. As he speaks, he poses for the painter to paint his picture. Vijaya, his daughter, urged by Prannarayan, comes and congratulates him. She says that her father looks decrepit and old when he asks Aranyaketu how he looks in his royal costumes. He lies dead in the pose that he is as the painter finishes his painting. All are shocked by the
sudden death of the king. The two pen-bearers, clothed in black, sing a funeral song mournfully:

Darkness at the height of day. Umbugland in deep dismay. Sun sinks in gloom. Umbugland becomes a tomb.... (282)

A great question is asked everywhere, ‘After Vichitravirya, Who?’ It reminds us of the question of late sixties in India, ‘After Nehru, Who?’

There are five Ministers in the Cabinet: Pishtakeshi from the West, Karkashirsha from the North, Aranyaketu from the North-East, Vratyasom from the East and Bhagadanta. Each Minister wants to occupy the throne and brings some people to support him. The two pen-bearers describe the strengths and weaknesses of each minister. All the Ministers meet and discuss but fail to come to a conclusion unanimously. The political crisis feeds the press with sensational news. Finally the crisis is resolved when all the Ministers choose Vijaya to be the Queen, the hieress of Vichitravirya. They all plan to rule the country in her name.

Prannarayan takes pains to train Vijaya in ruling the country. He teaches her political diplomacy. He says to her:

One should take stock of the situation - give some advantages, and get some. Politics means sweetly - smiling enmity and the experience of sacrifice. A show of sacrifice is always profitable in politics. (306)

He instructs her how to be diplomatic in her relations with others. He enlightens her on the psychology of the people:

... Each of them is more important than the next. One must insult them so lightly that their self-importance won’t suffer (299)

Vijaya at first does not like the responsibility and wants to enjoy life spontaneously:
I don't think I can manage. I feel like dancing, laughing and singing. I feel like playing and running about! Some times, Prannarayan, I even feel like shouting loudly without any reason. (298)

Prannarayan then says:

With all due respect to piety and health, this is just human nature! But it doesn't do for a ruler to be human. He has to be superhuman, or even divine. (298)

Thus, it is clear that one should not be true to oneself in politics. One has to become dehumanized and mentally deformed. During the first Cabinet Meeting, the human child in Vijaya cries for freedom. She questions, 'What crime did I commit, that I've been imprisoned in the palace since childhood?' Gradually she learns enjoying power and succeeds in suppressing the humanity in her.

Vijaya agrees to the three proposals of the Ministers. Later she meets various people and gives a suitable message to each. The two pen-bearers report her activities and adore her. She mingles with tribal people and launches a plan to uplift them. She outwits her Ministers in diplomacy and becomes more popular than they. They feel, "... the pranks Vijaya has been up to recently are a challenge to the authority of the Cabinet", (311) They wanted to enjoy power by making a pawn of Vijaya but she started making pawns of them. Now they realise: "We placed her on the throne, and now she wants to plant one foot firmly on it and the other on us!" (312) They unanimously resent Vijaya's independent functioning without consulting the Cabinet. They decide to give the Queen a strong reminder of their existence.
The two pen-bearers report the successful completion of the first year of Vijaya's rule. Vijaya romantically explains to Prannarayan about her plans to uplift the people of Kadamba tribe:

This plan will raise my stature on the island. I will get the credit for achieving what has never been achieved before. This plan will make everyone understand that I am not just my father's daughters, nor a puppet ruler. From now on I plan to rule in earnest. (317)

Meanwhile the Ministers arrive and she welcomes them cordially. She takes the trouble of explaining to them her plan of uplifting the people of Kadamba tribe. But they ridicule her plans in every possible way. Yet she does not lose her patience. She requests them to sign their names on the plan so that she may start implementing it at once. Nobody likes her plan and everybody walks out. She expresses her resentment to Prannarayan who exposes her hidden motive.

VIJAYA (angrily). My motives are pure! I want to give status to the poor people of this island.
PRANNARAYAN. Perhaps thereby your Highness wishes to increase your own! The motive of improving your own position on this Island may also be hidden behind this pure motive... (325)

She declares emergency and implements her plans to uplift the poor because the Ministers have not approved of them. The two pen-bearers report the incidents and discuss the future encounter between the Queen and the Cabinet in Umbugland.

Vijaya conveys through Prannarayan to the Ministers that she is going to put the plan into operation on her own authority. The Ministers feel that this royal decree is tantamount to proclaiming that they are a puppet Cabinet. They are enraged and discuss how they can teach her a lesson. Vratyasom takes active role in the discussion. He says:
We must incite the people! We must loose upon her the tidal wave of an infuriated mob. That’s what’ll rock her! She’s still raw, she’s an inexperienced child. She’s calling like a jackal; she hasn’t as yet seen the angry roaring tiger of the mob. Brave men tremble when they see this fourteenth wonder of the world rushing towards them, shouting till throats are hoarse, attaching with stones. What’s a raw girl going to do? ... (334)

When Karkashirsha says that he does not know any people, Vratyasom tells him how they can buy people through agents for a rebellion. Aranyaketu asks whether this will lead to bloodshed and destruction. Vratyasom replies that it is inevitable to effect a change. Bhagadanta does not agree to the encounter that kills people. When he is gone, Pishtakeshi says that a battle with the Queen is inevitable. The Vratyasom explains his plan of action:

At least fifty martyrs must sacrifice their lives. Property worth at least five or seven hundred thousand must be wrecked ... (337)

Even in their plan, they are not united. The two pen bearers describe the encounter between the Queen and the Ministers.

Bhagadanta is a Kadamba so he does not support other Ministers who are against the Queen’s plan to uplift the Kadamba people. So he secretly conveys to the Queen the plans of the Ministers to incite the people against her. So Vijaya successfully plans her counter-attack. Prannarayan describes the arrangements:

All the arrangements have been completed according to your Majesty’s command. Armed guards are already hidden in every window of the palace. More guards are concealed in convenient houses near the palace square. Famished criminals in Kadamba costume have been stuffing their bellies with food behind the palace for the past two days. And a host of burglars, thieves and pick-pockets, disguised as the common people, have been let loose in the palace precincts on daily
wages. Their misconduct has sorely harassed the genuine populace. Of course, our spies, disguised as servants, have penetrated the households of each of the Ministers ... (342-43)

The two pen-bearers describe the demands of the Ministers and the details of their attack.

Vratyasom and other Ministers wait for the Queen in the palace. They are happy about their arrangements. A fierce fight goes on between the people and the soldiers. Vijaya comes and asks the Ministers to go to the people and know their demands. They say that they know the demands.

Vratyasom. 'Stop the Kadamba Plan!' Pishtakeshi. 'Give the Ministers back their power!' Karkashirsha. And 'Abdicate!'

Vijaya does not believe them and sends Bhagadanta to the people who kill him. Thus she shows that angry people always lose discrimination. The Ministers feel frightened. The uncontrollable mob is ready to burn down the palace. Then Vijaya herself goes out to face the people. The Ministers think that she will be killed by the furious crowd. The people throw stones and a few soldiers are injured lethally. Queen Vijaya addresses them boldly and orders them to be quiet. She says whatever comes to her mind and they express their applause. Having gained confidence, she announces that she will abolish taxation. Yet they are silent. Then she goes on talking about her future activities:

We shall institute a public enquiry into the private property of our Ministers, who have today gone against the interests of the people. .... Those Ministers who are found guilty will be severely punished .... (353)

This cheers the people. She shouts, 'Down with the Cabinet'. And they shout it back louder than she. When a few people demand her to scrap the Kadamba Plan, she shouts, 'Down with the Plan - and the Ministers who
made it!' Then they shout 'Death to each Minister'. The Ministers understand the gravity of the situation and surrender to Queen Vijaya who saves them tactically.

All the people in the play tell lies to one another. And the falsehood is translated into their behaviour, resulting in hypocrisy. They allow themselves to be dehumanized in order to enjoy power. In their scramble for power, they lose peace and happiness. Not only the rulers but also the ruled are mentally deformed. They blindly believe their leaders. Prannarayan, a eunuch, is the only person who perceives the reality as rightly pointed out by Veena Noble Dass. Towards the end of the play, he criticises the credulous people:

... I see you upside down, a formless, characterless, lifeless, existenceless gathering. The blind, deaf and dumb spectators of the whole encounter who allow men to become politicians, politicians to become statesmen, statesmen to become cunning, and cunning men to become robots, mechanical men. You are a force that claps its hands, makes strange noises with its mouth, an amazing untiring force - (356)

The play thus shows how leaders make people mindless and how mindless people allow their leaders to be hypocritical. It discloses how a great damage can be caused by mental deformity.

Sircar's Scandal in Fairyland elucidates the crucial role of the press in moulding the public opinion though it is a funny tale for children. Midas Speculatorotti runs Daily Fairy Green, the largest circulated daily in Fairyland. As his name suggests, whatever business he does turns out to be very successful (gold). He contrives a new plan to earn gold and wealth in plenty very easily. A prince and an ogre become pawns in his commercial game. The Ogre is old and weak yet he frightens people in a kingdom. The king announces that he will give half his kingdom and his daughter to the hero
who slays the ogre. Prince Thunderbolt goes to the ogre and pretends to kill him who actually disappears from the kingdom. The Princess accepts half the kingdom and takes gold instead of the princess. Midas takes thirty percent of the reward. This is repeated in another kingdom. Thus this has happened in six kingdoms: Goldlandis, Silver State, Pearl Kingdom Diamond Isle, Emeraldia and Land of Gems.

The people read Daily Fairy Green and believe the stories published in it. Now they learn about the seventh adventure of Prince Thunderbolt in Copperland:

FOUR The voice of the people of Fairyland, the daily Fairy Green.
ONE. Congratulates Prince Thunderbolt on his decision,
TWO worthy of a brave and true knight,
THREE It is our hope that Prince Thunderbolt will for ever remain loyal to his mission.
FOUR and save more such kingdoms from the onslaughts of ogres.13

They do not realize why Daily Fairy Green highlights Prince Thunderbolt's adventures. They feel thrilled to read about the nobility of the Prince Midas through his daily develops such a kind of reputation around the Prince as entraps him. For example the Paperboy says,

... Sacred vow to save Fairyland - the bachelor prince's noble ideals - sacrifices connubial bliss for love of Fairyland .... (38)

Prince Thunderbolt receives a call from Ironia. The paperboy announces while selling Daily Fairy Green:

Daily Fairy Green! Daily Fairy Green! Ogre threatens Ironia - Demands one human a day - King proclaims half the kingdom and hand of Princess Rose - Beautiful, educated, honey-voiced, well versed in royal
King Ironheart feels happy that Prince Thunderbolt has killed the eighth orge. The Prince loves Princess Rose and agrees to marry her. Midas does not like this as it will end his business of earning gold easily. So his daily criticises the Prince and then exposes the fraud:

'If a prince and a hero of the distinction of Prince Thunderbolt stoops to place his personal comfort and happiness over considerations of nation and state, like just any Tom, Dick or Harry, can the nation expect anything more from him?'... (42)

ONE (reading). One hears that Prince Thunderbolt has killed many an ogre in different countries in Fairyland.
TWO. (reading). But has anyone ever seen a single one of these dead ogres? (43)

Consequently, the people demand a proof from the Prince. On the advice of Thunderbolt, the King arranges a trial. The ogre confesses the truth and Midas is forced to admit his guilt. The Minister sentences Midas to exile. Thunderbolt marries Rose and the tale ends happily. The play shows how the press is used to influence the minds of the masses for the growth of business.

Sircar's Stale News exemplifies how people are made confused and mindless by education, press and mass media as already discussed in the third chapter. Mad Delight by Mohan Rakesh portrays the landscape of the mind of the modern man. The play resembles Becket's Waiting for Godot. It shows the activities of a man with a multicoloured mushroom. The sound and the light play a major role in the play and they almost become the very characters of the play. The sound of a stengun is heard whenever the man touches the mushroom. The sound, the change of lights and the actions of the man indicate the changing relationship between the mushroom...
and the man as rightly observed by Veena Noble Dass. The play demonstrates how our mind becomes fragmented as we try to adapt ourselves to the varied complex surroundings. Rakesh explains his idea of ‘today’s mood of life’ to Maharishi:

Today’s reality is something that is becoming increasingly complex. Something is constantly happening to us and in our desperate effort to strike an equilibrium with the surroundings. We are making constant adjustments. Everyone of us is living a life in fragments. During the course of one single day one is forced to play ten different parts and some times more than one version of each part. What remains constant is one’s sense of being; the idea of a crisis. It is this that I call today’s mood of life. And it is in this sense that one feels fragmented....

Thus, life has become a drama as men act the roles which are alien to their real nature and which are imposed on them by sociocultural environment. The isolation of the identity of the sound from that of the visual reflects the schizophrenic state of the present day human mind.

Parents, elders, teachers, leaders, religious preachers and business people go on telling lies by omission and commission and discounting the rationality and intuition of their children, students and people. This cultural programming in mindlessness begins at birth and continues throughout life. The mindlessness of people sustains other cultural deformities. In Sircar’s Procession and Stale News, people are made mindless through nationalism, religion, liquor, press, mass media, education and entertainment to sustain the exploitative and oppressive culture. The Queen in Tendulkar’s Encounter in Umbugland and Midas in Sircar’s Scandal in Fairyland make use of press to sustain her rule and his business respectively. Mohan Rakesh’s Mad Delight depicts the morbid mind of the modern man.
REFERENCES

3. Steiner, 158.
5. Steiner, 159.
13. Badal Sircar, *Beyond the Land of Hattamala* and *Scandal in Fairyland*, Trans. Suchanda Sarkar (Calcutta: Seagull, 1992) 37, (In subsequent references, only page numbers are given in brackets.)